

Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip.

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CYCLING.

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AT the time of writing my Gossip the weather is, to say the least, unsatisfactory. The quantity of rain we have had is beginning to make a lot of difference in the condition of the roads, which are in many places quite heavy and muddy. If this state of things lasts a little longer I fear we shall get our cycling muscles pretty rusty, even if we do not lose the gentle art of wheeling altogether. Few cyclists can appreciate a rainy fortnight in June.

Certainly the weather had the effect of keeping most riders at home on Sunday, for during a run of over thirty miles with some of the "boys" I scarcely saw half-a-dozen wheelmen.

However, our party had a fairly good time of it, though the quantity of mud we found to say nothing of a puncture in the first mile—was not exactly exhilarating in its effect.

We went by Washington to Pulborough, where the folk were expecting the arrival of some members of the Anglers' Club on the morrow, to commence the season's fishing.

Looking up the mud-coloured and rain-swollen Arun, with sodden fields on either side of it, I felt a little sorry for the disciples of Izaak Walton.

By way of a change we came home over Bury Hill and through Arundel. Bury Hill was in a very sticky state, and in spite of a fair tussle we were unable to ride the whole of the way up.

At the top we took the road skirting Arundel Park, and found more mud than ever. Still, if riding was hard work it was only the penalty we had to pay for choosing a road which was overhung with beautiful trees thickly clothed with green, and looking at their best.

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We certainly did not begrudge our labours when we reached the highest part of the road. It commands a view extending to Littlehampton, and taking in a big tract of pastoral Sussex, dotted here and there with villages and Churches; the deep blue sea in the distance lending enchantment to the scene.

Before we reached home we met Atkins, the Arundel veteran, and a friend, both on motor bikes. They were bowling along at a good pace, and sending the mud in all directions. Both of them looked happy, though, for they had a tidy acreage of mud-guards on their machines.

Last Wednesday W. R. Paine and Captain Shaw, aboard Bert's tandem, set out for Lewes, where the Sussex Centre meeting was to take place. Our men were deputed to secure three County Championships on behalf of the Excelsior C.C.

Lewes was not reached without adventures, for the crew had four bursts in one tyre at Brighton. Nevertheless they arrived in time to enjoy the hospitality of the Lewes Victoria C.C., in company with the other Union delegates.

The Lewes boys trotted their visitors over the Phoenix Iron Works, the Baths, and the old town generally, and finished up with a high tea at the Club's headquarters.

When the business part of the programme was reached our men succeeded in getting the Centre to grant the Excelsior Club the one and twenty-five miles' Championships, and also obtained a half promise of the fifty miles later in the season.

Then came the homeward journey. Sam Clark had turned up after the meeting, and together they got out their machines, lit the lamps, and blew up the troublesome tyre.

The troublesome tyre obliged the company with a good imitation of a shell exploding!

A repair was effected, and it was again inflated; but the tyre subsided with a long

loud hiss of derision. Again the patient trio mended it, but the result was only an encore.

Fortunately E. L. Tappin, of Lewes, chanced along, and, with a true cyclist's eagerness to help his brother wheelmen, he lent them a new inner tube, which gave no further trouble.

They reached home a little before one in the morning.

The Excelsior Club have decided to amalgamate with the Biggophone Band and the Sports Ground Company in carrying out the Evening Meeting on July 16th.

The Club's contribution to the joint programme consists of the five miles race for the Hallett Cup; a one mile scratch race; running handicaps at one hundred yards and one mile; and an obstacle race.

The Biggophone Band is quite a novelty; I believe no similar band has yet appeared in England. The instruments are absolutely unique, and the thirty performers appear in Indian dress.

"Rajah He Wep," a member of the band, tells me they are all carefully kept in Turkish baths when our English climate is too much for them. I don't fancy the Rajah was quite serious, though.

Next Wednesday the Tarring and Worthing Clubs join in a run to Storrington.

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