

CYCLING.

Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip.

AT midnight on Saturday I joined a little knot of Excelsior wheelmen who had gathered at the Town Hall for the ride to Winchester. The night was hardly a perfect one for cycling, as the moon, though at the full, was frequently obscured by ominous-looking clouds. However, after a stirrup cup with Mr. Endersby, who is an Excelsiorite, we set out, ten in number, with Captain Shaw in command.

After a mile or two a heavy wet mist enveloped everything and made us pretty moist. This state of things lasted through Arundel and Chichester, but gradually cleared away as daylight advanced.

Through Havant and Cosham to Fareham the road was splendid; and the early morning air soon produced some appetites, so we made a wayside halt outside Fareham.

Sandwiches at four o'clock in the morning, forty miles from home, with the birds warbling to the rising sun, made an enjoyable break in the journey.

Bishops Waltham was sound asleep as we rode through; and at the end of our sixty-mile ride we found the inhabitants of the ancient city of Winchester similarly engaged.

The landlord of the City Arms gave us a hearty welcome, and didn't seem to mind being turned out at 5.30; but he is an old sea-captain.

Very soon a big breakfast was put on, and equally soon we removed it, after which we explored the city.

Most of the city gates, monuments, old houses and older Churches—to say nothing of the second oldest Cathedral in England—were familiar to the Excelsior men, who had been there before.

The magnificent statue of Alfred the Great,

who was buried in Winchester a thousand years ago, was erected since our last visit. We greatly admired the enormous bronze figure, standing on two granite blocks weighing fifty tons.

We saw the Mayor and Corporation go to the Cathedral in state, headed by three maces, then filled in our time by strolling round till dinner.

At the mid-day meal everybody was in the humour for fun; Peto's antics as a waiter made some sides ache with laughing.

Just before two the party started for home, choosing the route through Petersfield, which meant a long climb at the start.

Further on Captain Shaw's tyre went wrong, and caused nearly an hour's delay to some of us; but at Midhurst we all formed up for tea. A pretty ride through Cowdray Park, the deer staring at the travel-stained riders; then the Irrepressible punctured, but executed a quick repair, and we went on through Petworth to Pulborough.

Here we stayed a few minutes, and then came through Storrington, over the Boistel, and home in the cool of the evening.

Every member of the party enjoyed the run thoroughly. The distance is nearly a hundred and twenty miles; but no one was distressed, and the boys all kept together except when a casual sprint up-hill was indulged in. It was useless to race against Bert Paine, however, despite his eighty-eight gear.

A couple of famous racing men, "Dick" Palmer and Platt-Betts, ran down from London to Worthing on fast motor-cycles last week. Both machines were said to be capable of over forty miles an hour on the race-path, so the riders, who have both held world's records for cycling, evidently don't mean to get left behind.

Last Wednesday the afternoon section of the Tarring Club rode to Chichester, returning to Littlehampton, where they were joined by the evening contingent.

Host Redman put his large new room at the Club's disposal, and the Figleaves had a free-and-easy concert in their usual happy manner.

Next Wednesday the Excelsior C.C. go to Bramber; whilst the Tarring Club run to Old Shoreham at the special invitation of Mr. H. Head.

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