

CYCLING

Opening of the Active Season.

Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip

25th March 1903 - P2C4:

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THE cycling season proper has dawned! That is to say, all the world is wheeling; some are aboard trusty steeds that have already done good service for many a mile on the King's highway, the others are putting new jiggers through their first paces—breaking them in ready for the Club run, the tour, and the speed jaunt.

Already the tender butterfly rider has emerged from his chrysalis, and may be seen fitting about the countryside on sunny days, glad of fresh air after the winter round of indoor festivities.

Even the hardy all-the-year-round rider shows signs of the times. A local wheelman who rides in all weathers, and has covered well over three thousand miles since the wane of last season, was busy a week ago fitting a more speedy free-wheel to his machine. All because a brother free-wheelist had beaten him in a coast down Washington Bostel!

Yes, the season has dawned; and the Editor says I may Gossip again. May I have many a jolly run and many a pleasure trip by local wheelmen to recount!

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Three intrepid Excelsior-ites — Messrs. Durant, Medhurst, and Young—have already covered one fresh piece of road this season. But they had to go far afield for it!

Setting out in the early morning, they rode the first thirty-five miles of the Club's hundred mile course—through Horsham and Crawley to Woodhatch—in two hours and thirteen minutes. Good work for an early ride!

Through Reigate they went, and Medhurst, who was very fit after a lot of winter riding, rode the stiff climb up Reigate Hill. The other two rode two-thirds of the pull, and then were seized with a wise determination. They walked the rest.

Continuing northwards, they took their fresh bit of road and reached Banstead, after which they bore westwards to Epsom, where swarms of cyclists were seen, and then through Leatherhead and across to Guildford.

After leaving Banstead a heavy head wind had considerably added to the exercise afforded by the spin, and things were not much better as they plugged back to Horsham.

But our men were made of sterner stuff than the railway-train cyclist, and stuck to their guns—there were no trains handy!—despite the attentions of rude Boreas. So they kept

on slogging, and reached home fit and well after a ride of one hundred and five miles, over half of which had been against a good healthy wind, which contested every yard of the way.

In company with several Excelsior-ites I had a spin up the Horsham road last week. The road was in grand order, thanks to its good habit of rapidly drying, and we got along famously.

Various circumstances had prevented me from doing much wheeling during the winter, and I had not expected to find things come so easily, especially as I was on a low-g geared roadster borrowed from the Irrepressible.

I conclude the Excelsior Club dances must have kept me in condition, as I twirled the pedals to a rollicking polka time. But I was soon undeceived, for on turning back we found a good hearty wind had been helping us along.

On the return I sheltered from the blast behind "Captain" Paine's burly form, until two speed motor cyclists passed us—and took our Captain with them!—after which the rest of us came along at a more solemn pace.

Quite a lot of the "boys" were awheel, but the breeze had the effect of scattering them out somewhat. The largest group we mustered at any time was when half a dozen of us took cover behind Baruch Blaker's motor triocycle whilst he made pace between Washington and home.

Just before reaching Broadwater a speedy motor car ripped past us, but whether the driver read a warning in our faces, or whether one of our party accidentally mentioned "Police trap!" is more than I can say.

Anyway, the motor dropped speed in a remarkable way when it reached the measured quarter-mile. The touring gait lasted through Broadwater and past the man in blue, who returned the smile from the car with a good-tempered nod and a suspicious glance in our direction.

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