

CYCLING

Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip

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ROADS are considerably improved by the recent rains, and the lot of the wheelman will be a happy one if we get some reasonable weather, which will enable us to travel a little farther afield than has been the case up till now. For myself I positively blush to make the admission that I have only ridden twelve hundred miles this season! The spirit was willing, but wheeling opportunities have been few.

Last week a happy band of fifty pilgrims—Excelsiorites and friends—wended their way to Thistledown, at Findon, where Honorary Secretary Fibbens had arranged an *al fresco* tea, to be followed by music, dancing, and other etceteras of an enjoyable character.

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The weather was not at all promising, but the threatened rain kept up whilst a tempting tea went down before the onslaught of half-a-hundred wheelers.

A cricket match, Ladies versus the Rest of Mankind, was then commenced, but the ultimate issue of the encounter is veiled in that delightful uncertainty which not infrequently obtains in sporting events in which ladies engage.

I understood some quite original styles were introduced by the graceful disciples of Grace, and the novel "cuts" and "drives" which the fair ones executed would have made the great "W.G." open his eyes in amusement—no, amazement, I should say.

The match over, a musical programme was commenced, and songs and dances sent the time merrily along until the shades of night had fallen fast, when down the Findon road there passed, with gleaming lamp and tinkling bell, a Club who gave one single yell—"Excelsior!"

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The Tarring Club visited Bramber last week, and on their arrival heard of a Fair in the vicinity. "None but the brave deserve the fair," says the old saw, and as the courage of the Figleaves is undoubted, I presume they considered their right to the festival as duly and legally established.

At any rate, they graced the proceedings with their presence, and had a good time. I have no authentic record of the number of bottles killed by "Ben" at the shooting saloon, or how many laps on the roundabout were accomplished by his bosom friend, so will not commit myself beyond saying that all enjoyed themselves to the top of their bent.

At Wakefield on Saturday A. S. Ingram won the Quarter-mile Amateur Championship of England, beating two sterling provincial riders in Benyon and Longstaff.

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Curiously it was only last week a cycling journalist was expressing his fear that Ingram had seen his best days, but the famous Poly. boy—who has now held the title four times in succession—won by a clear length from his doughty opponents.

Leon Meredith, another London rider, won the Twenty-five Miles Amateur Championship in sixty-five minutes, whilst Sid Jenkins won the Quarter, One, and Five Mile Professional Championships.

At Ilford Sports on Saturday W. Solomon, an Essex rider, had a real day out. He scored first in both handicaps, and romped home with the Five Miles Local Championship, and won the Obstacle Race.

In addition to this collection he and H. W. Smith won the Two Miles Tandem Race Handicap; the latter also did well by gathering in a second and a third in the handicaps.

The lucky pair must have required a carrier, I imagine—eight prizes, two single bicycles, a tandem, and usual path-racing impedimenta would exasperate the best cabby that ever was tipped.

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When our man had recovered his breath he, with considerable difficulty, convinced the wanderer that his geography was at fault, and that he had not yet reached Littlehampton, whilst Bognor was a good fifteen miles ahead.

Many years ago I recollect sallying forth on my solid-tyred thunderbolt of those days, and after much labour I was expecting Arundel to burst on my delighted gaze, when a bend in the road showed me the Coach and Horses, not half-way there.

I came back!

Next week's runs are: Excelsior C.C., Arundel; West Tarring, Shoreham.

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