

CYCLING.

Dick Turpin's Weekly Gossip

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WITH the Excelsior Club's proverbial good luck as regards weather, the sun shone upon their annual Race Meeting on Wednesday, and helped to tempt the public in paying numbers to a fixture which proved both a sporting and a financial success.

Shrabb was, of course, the star of the day, and his brilliant running in the mile handicap was a treat to see.

In the cycling events Kingsbury naturally stood out from the rest, but it must be remembered that few riders in England can equal him on a grass track.

Considering his totally untrained condition, W. R. Paine rode very well and easily beat all but Kingsbury. Halse, too, showed good form, and would, I believe, have scored a first in the open mile but for his unfortunate spill.

The Captain of the Excelsior Club cannot quite relinquish the race-path, and although he has allowed the County Championship to go, he has proved his ability to beat the new holders of the titles.

On Thursday, at Preston Park, he got up

in the Brighton Club's annual five miles' scratch race for the Feldwicks Bowl, which he won last year.

Five men started, Jack Phillips doing most of the pacing at a good speed, the others in close attendance.

Towards the finish W. R. Paine made a dash and romped home an easy winner from G. N. Charman in 13min. 33secs. Ingenheimer, who is the five miles County Champion this year, could get no nearer than third!

I should not be surprised to see Bert ride at Brighton to-morrow in the Varley thirty miles' race, though I expect he would be handicapped with the usual severity which may be noticed in Brighton Club events.

Local road men still continue plugging away at the unpaced hundred-mile and twelve-hour rides.

By way of ascertaining their form, T. A. Durant and W. Stephenson have recently been on the course. After fifty miles the former decided he was not going well enough, although he had only taken three hours and ten minutes for the distance; and he therefore toured along homewards.

Stephenson reached Woodhatch five minutes under two hours, but punctured whilst there.

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In the process of repair the valve parts became lost, and after about fifteen minutes delay he borrowed the necessary fittings from his follower, F. Young, and got going again.

Young, by-the-by, patiently effected a most ingenious substitute for the parts taken from his own valve by means of some string, and later on discovered he was carrying the missing valve parts about in his pocket! Whereat the "boys" laughed.

Stephenson, owing to the delay, did not reach Offington Corner until four hours and ten minutes from the start, and therefore had only two hours and five minutes left for the westward journey.

But he kept on, and reached Westhampnett in sixty-five minutes. Here Stephenson decided his luck was out, so he, too, had some food, and came home to wait for better fortune.

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A London man out on the same day punctured at Offington when over half-way through his "hundred," and had to "pitch it," as he had no suitable spare machine available.

Writing of bad luck reminds me that an Excelsior quartette had quite a series of minor troubles last week.

Tires were more bothersome than usual to begin with; one of the party ran over a dog; another got "lost" in sundry sprints; a brake-wire snapped at a critical moment; and finally they all got drenched through heavy rain.

They had a nice time!

The motor cycle reliability runs concluded on Saturday with a five miles' speed test on the Crystal Palace track, E. Baruch Blaker scoring third place amongst the twenty and odd riders.

Throughout the fortnight Baruch's steed behaved splendidly and gave no trouble; even his tyres only suffered one puncture. He qualified for the first-class certificate, and came through the ordeal of a journey of one thousand and forty miles, under various trying conditions, with flying colours.

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On two occasions he was stopped by the Police, though not travelling faster than sixteen miles an hour, and I understand Baruch has received from County J.P.'s a couple of invitations of a pressing nature to their official "At Homes."

But still the motorist's path to glory is beset with legal thorns, and Blaker doesn't mind as long as he secured the much-coveted first-class certificate.

Next week's runs are: Excelsior, Shoreham and Washington; Tarring O.C., Lyminster.

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ⁱ Richard routinely uses the feminine spelling.

ⁱⁱ Yes - as written!