

THE WHEELING WORLD

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A Weekly Survey.

DICK TURPIN'S RANDOM RECORDS.

RECENTLY I had occasion to remark on the similarity which the cyclist bears to the salamander and the lark. Since that occasion I have discovered that no small number rival the owl in their nocturnal habits. Yes, candour compels the confession that some of our local wheelmen are, at times, out all night. And, so far from being ashamed, they unblushingly assert they enjoy the experience! I am inclined to believe they do, for I have been on all-night rides either alone or in company on nearly a dozen occasions, and liked them all.

One night last week it was that a Tarring trio cycled away to the west, being overtaken by the morning and their friends simultaneously at Portsmouth.

After a day there the riders went on to Fareham, and struck right across Hampshire and on to Reading. Then to Chertsey, and from there home again unless an extension of the trip should be decided upon, which is possible, as Messrs. Norris, Chessell, and Tulett have wisely left their plans open for any addition they may fancy.

F. G. Bleach, of the Excelsior C.C., and Banbury, are also qualified owls. Last Saturday night they set out eastward. A hurried calculation tells me the sun was illuminating New Zealand when they started. But he came and met them with a bright smile at Tunbridge Wells. So did breakfast, the bright smiles this time being turned on by the wheelmen who had ridden two score miles.

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A pleasant ride home in the morning completed their journey.

Another knight of the night is Frank Hedger, who frequently rides by lamplight to Southampton, and yet another is C. T. Wells, of the Excelsior Club, who has seen many a sunrise when well on his way through Horsham and Dorking to Chiswick. At this time of the year, however, the latter pair belong rather to the larks than the owls, for the July sun is astir almost as soon as they. Only in the darker months do they become owls.

There is a new *entente cordiale*. It is between two cycling clubs, so does not involve crossing the seas or learning another language. On several occasions members of the Worthing Excelsior Club have met the Brighton Primrose League Cycling Corps; lately these occasions have been more frequent.

Last Sunday seven Worthing riders demonstrated the brotherhood—and sisterhood—of the wheel by joining the Primroses at Bramber, where all sat down to tea and fraternized.

Next Wednesday the two Clubs will again meet, the venue then being Beeding. I hope to see the Excelsiorites muster in strong numbers; the Primroses are very jolly, the Club being solely a social body, and a good evening should ensue.

Road races have changed since the early nineties. Then fierce-looking tandems swept along with two or three hard riding speed men in their wake, the riders heralding their approach with a discord of bell-ringing and hoarse cries. The competitor who entered a big road race in those days without at least three or four tandems at his disposal usually wasted his efforts.

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In one case I remember a little army of wheelmen was engaged to feed and pace one rider who was on a twenty-four hours' jaunt. This rider revelled in the luxury of riding well-sheltered behind tandem tricycles, which were in their turn paced by the more easily propelled tandem bicycles. Such was road racing in the good old days.

Things altered suddenly when pace-making was generally disallowed, and a day or two ago, when out in the early morning, I saw a good example of the new road-racing.

A one hundred miles race was in progress, but there was little to attract the attention of an outsider. A couple of wheelmen stood at Offington Corner; a little group waited farther on; and at awkward corners on the road to Arundel I noticed other watchers. I knew the badge they wore—that of the Southern C.C.—and recognised the Club colours in the dark and light blue ribbon, at the same time observing that bottles protruded from the pockets of many of the wheelmen.

Presently the scent grew warmer, and one by

Presently the scent grew warmer, and one by one about thirty competitors came along, quietly and unobtrusively, at intervals of half a mile or so in most instances. They looked like scorchers, and only checked their pace to hurriedly take speed drinks, rice, or fruit, and perhaps to sponge their faces before resuming the stern struggle. With a cheery word of encouragement from their clubmates, many of whom had ridden out fifty or sixty miles to perform their slight but welcome services, they vanished down the road.

An hour of this and the string of dusty riders had passed and were on the way back to Crawley, where, after much arithmetic, officials would ascertain who had won the race.

No noise, no tandems, no gangs of speedmen, and consequently no police interference. Arundel had hardly finished breakfast when the road racers had been and gone. Such is the new road racing. It is harder work than the old, and the new road racer is a sportsman right through.

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