

Dick Long first used the expression "time- trial" to describe Mungeam's and Hooker's medal rides in September 1905 - but in July of the same year while out for a Sunday potter he saw something new. Let him tell .....

"Road races have changed since the early nineties. Then fierce- (*tape garbled*) 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 bicycle. Such was road racing in the good old days.

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Things altered suddenly when pacemaking 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.

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A 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 further 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.

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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 to sixty miles to perform their slight but welcome services, they vanished down the road.

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

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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(s?) is a sportsman right through.

***Dick Turpin"***