

THE WHEELING WORLD

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DICK TURPIN'S CYCLING GOSSIP.

In the Early Morn.

THERE was a sight at Offington Corner for the early riser about a week ago. A knot of cyclists were congregated there shortly after five o'clock awaiting the arrival of competitors in a two hundred miles road race arranged by the Catford Cycling Club.

A London man was in charge of a hand truck loaded with bananas, rice - pudding, Bovril, eggs beaten in tea or lemonade and various other forms of speed diet. Sam Clark was on duty with watch and list of competitors, and helpers generally were there in plenty.

About five-thirty Captain Duffield and W. H. Long descended a moving speck, far up the road. It was Carre, the first man, and soon he was at the Corner, and easing up to receive a bottle of tea and egg and some rice. Heated comments upon the behaviour of Dame Fortune and the slothfulness of the man in charge of his own machine flew about as the racer hurried on again upon the borrowed mount which he had been riding for thirty miles.

A minute passed, another speck hove in sight. 'Twas J. Dudley Daymond, who steadied his pace to partake of Bangor's food, and inquired tenderly "Where's Carre?" Encouraged by learning that he was gaunting on number one, he sped away towards Arundel, looking none the worse for his forty-odd miles.

One by one nineteen other men followed, being duly fed by the group of wheelmen and carefully timed by Sam Clark. Hastily some told tales of punctures or responded cheerfully to the query "How are you going, old boy?" during the brief pause in their long ride.

The last to arrive sat in the road whilst the group removed the back wheel from his machine and exchanged a leaking tyre for a fresh one. Five minutes sufficed for the operation, and away he went, leaving the punstured tyre to be repaired ere he returned.

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Feeders and checkers now went home to breakfast, whilst the host went away westward through Arundel, Chichester, and Havant to Cosham. Here they turned and again made for Offington Corner, the sixty-three miles to Cosham and back being done well under four hours.

Sam and the party were awaiting the men, who had now covered over a hundred miles. Daymond came first, and in a trice he was taking in food whilst willing hands sponged and lightly massaged him.

Carre came next, the programme being repeated. And so on, with but little variation, as man after man came along, some looking worn and anxious, and others, notably Daymond, Ayden, Smith, Fisher, and Cannon, looking none the worse.

The youthful enthusiast, Dudley Walker, took the racers' machines and saw all was right; Sam recorded the time of arrival; Humphreys, of the Catford Club, superintended the corps of feeders; and Edgar Henson saw to the sponging and massage.

But as the day wore on numbers of men had to retire through punctures and other troubles, and eventually only eight of the original twenty-one were riding.

The finish took place near Coulsdon, where it was found Ayden had made fastest time, having ridden the two hundred miles in twelve hours and thirty-six minutes; Smith, Patmore, Cannon, and Carre got through during the next hour, the other three to finish being Starke, Haigh, and lies.

During the progress of the race S. F. Edge, a once famous speed cyclist, now known to the world as a winner of the Gordon-Bennett motor trophy, came up and looked on comfortably from the seat of a sixty horse power racing car.

T. W. J. Britten, another old rider, prominent as a leading official in the National Cyclists Union, chanced along. He too was greatly interested, and especially pleased to see the Worthing boys, from young Dudley Walker to the Veteran Sam, helping the sport along.

A Pleasing Prospect.

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By the invitation of the Club's genial President, Councillor Warne, the Excelsiorites visit Selsey on Sunday next. The start will be made from the Railway Bridge at 9.45 a.m., and an easy, pleasant day is arranged. Captain Duffield hopes for a specially big muster, and asks that all members who propose to join in the run will notify him by Thursday.

The Excelsiorites were at Fittleworth for the run last week-end, and greatly enjoyed themselves. Threatening rain in the morning had made the spin look doubtful, but King Sol broke out of his cloud-prison and smiled genially on the cyclists. Arrived at Fittleworth, a crew of Clubmen voyaged up the Rother, whilst four or five others wandered along thy river banks.

Chaffeurs Hewer and Gale arrived on the scene in time to swell the number to eleven at tea, after which an amateur made a brave attempt to photograph the little crowd of laughing wheelers.

Then the Club dawdled leisurely out of Fittleworth on the homeward run, an artist being espied upon Fittleworth Bridge busily engaged upon a large canvas. Hopes that a group of Excelsiorites might soon figure on the walls of the Royal Academy rose in every wheelman's breast. But no; a glance as they rode past showed the wielder of the brush to have chosen a view up the river with a sunset effect in preference to the group. And it was so fine that the wheelers admitted the wisdom of his preference!

Taking the bye-road through Greatham, the party pedalled leisurely along over the Common. It was looking its best in the evening light, faintly echoed as it was in the numerous small patches of water beside which cattle placidly grazed, whilst here and there a tree gave relief to the broad flat waste.

At Washington it was lamp time, and soon the cluster of lights trickled along through Findon and home in the cool of the evening.

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A Weekly Survey.

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