

THE NORTH ROAD 24 HOURS.

RECORD BEATEN AS USUAL. SHORLAND RIDES 367 MILES. "ECLIPSE FIRST, THE REST NOWHERE." DISMAL COLLAPSE OF THE TRICYCLING DIVISION. THE FACE KILLS.



F. W. Shorland.

September 1896.

The starting-place and finish were taken even further away from London than last year to avoid the ever-increasing crowds of interested sightseers at Hitchin and Biggleswade, the County Club House at Eaton Socon being headquarters for the occasion, and facilities for checking were increased by the provision of marshals, who checked all men whom they could recognise without necessitating a dismount. The route was much the same as last year, but with a few improvements upon even that capitially-arranged itinerary, Wisbech being, of course, the centre of interest about mid-

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day, and at this sportive little town there was a greater assemblage than ever of interested visitors, hordes of speedsters from London, and visitors from distant places, as Bradford, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Amsterdam, being around; and of pacemakers there was ample supply at every time with the solitary exception his particular moment when Shorland passed through before mid-day, when the timekeeper had to take the rider out towards Downham with no other assistance than a voice on a solid—a state of things strangely at variance with that during the last hour, when over a dozen riders accompanied Shorland to the finish. The day passed without any accident to speak of, beyond one man—Lancashire being put hors de combat during the first hour by a collision, sustaining only slight skin wounds.

The conditions of the race were naturally stricter than last year, the club always aiming at first-class performances rather than a great number of mediocre rides, so that the entries were eleven fewer than last year; and out of the 35 names sent in only 23 came to the post, as against 34 in 1891. These were:—

- WENTY-ONE SAFETIES.—M. Adler, Amsterdam B.C.; G. Bateman, North Road C.C.; J. A. Bennett, Anfield B.C.; R. H. Carter, Polytechnic C.C.; R. H. Carlisle, Anfield B.C.; W. M. Crosbie, North Road C.C.; J. H. Cocker, Sharrow C.C.; W. F. Cottier, Belsize Park C.C.; W. Duncan, Edinburgh Eastern C.C.; H. Hammond, North Road C.C.; J. James, North Road and Stanley C.C.'s; J. Lancashire, Sharrow C.C.; H. Mitchell, South London Ramblers C.C.; C. D. Pagniez, North Road C.C.; F. W. Shorland, North Road C.C.; A. McM. Todd, North Road C.C.; W. Ward, North Road and Stanley C.C.'s; E. J. Waygood, North Road C.C.; W. F. Walton, Polytechnic C.C.; J. F. Walsh, Catford Bath Road C.C.'s; G. Wackerbarth, North London C.C.
- THREE TRICYCLES.—C. H. Banyard, North Road C.C.; F. T. Bidlake, North Road and Stanley C.C.'s; F. W. Butterfield, North Road C.C.; W. Briggs, North Road C.C.; E. P. Moorhouse, North Road and Stanley C.C.'s.

ONE TANDEM TRICYCLE.—R. J. Halsey and J. P. K. Clark, North Road and Stanley C.C.'s.

The absentee entrants comprised R. J. Atkinson (Surrey B.C.), A. Lindsett (Catford C.C.), W. J. A. Butterfield (North Road C.C.), M. A. Holbein (North Road C.C.), T. G. King (North Road C.C.), P. A. Ransom (North Road C.C.), and J. G. H. Browne (North Road C.C.) To avoid the descent of the dangerous, though short, Chicken Hill, the start was taken out a mile or so to a lonely part of road, notwithstanding which quite a considerable crowd of pedestrians were present from Eaton Socon and St. Neot's when "Faed" carefully marshalled the men and got them safely off at midnight. Shorland and Walsh at once setting off at what was described as a wicked pace, and a cloud of dust raised almost blinded those in the rear, frequent aw-uck cries of caution being heard during the first few miles, the crowd being in perilously close proximity. Crosbie and Browne had burst a tyre (the result of a previous repair with bad materials) on the way to the start, and Crosbie rushed back, borrowed a safety, and started five minutes late. Adler was the first victim of misfortune after the start, puncturing a tyre at Alconbury Hill; and his imperfect knowledge of the English language made the others apprehensive for his subsequent adventures, but he managed to get repaired, and helped in the pacemaking later on. Soon afterwards, Lancashire ran into Carlisle's back wheel, grazing an arm and a knee, and went back. The straightaway course to Lynn enabled miles to be done without a check; but the first level crossing gate jarring Wisbech was locked, and all the machines had to be lifted over, the safeties thus getting away from the tricycles.

At Lynn, the arrivals were timed by W. W. Robertson, the leading ring at 3.22 comprising Carlisle, Walsh, Walton, Hammond, Duncan, Shorland, James, Carter, Bennett, and Cocker; at 3.23 the tandem and tricycles arrived, having gained one of the lost minutes since Wisbech—Halsey and Clark, Bidlake, and Moorhouse checking together with Pagniez; Ward came at 3.27; Crosbie and Todd, 3.51; Waygood, 4.0; Mitchell and Bateman, 4.7; and Cottier at 4.20; the field being thus truly reduced to twenty.

At Huntingdon (103 1/2 miles) the checker was Habershon, and the first rivals, at 6.28, were Shorland, Carter, Bennett, Cocker, Carlisle, Hammond, and Walton; Walsh coming in at 6.37, James at 6.42, Bidlake and Pagniez, 6.44; Halsey, Clark, and Ward at 6.55; Moorhouse who had dropped behind Bidlake near Chatteris, 7.16; Mitchell and Bateman at 8.0; and Cottier at 8.12.

Shorland here slipped the others, going off, after checking, without topping for refreshments, and he was never after caught by anyone. Only the leaders went to Cambridge, the detour thither being omitted by all not seeking to occupy first place, so that on the return from Cambridge to Huntingdon (133 1/2 miles) the times were: Shorland, 8.14; Carter, 8.24; Bennett, Cocker, and Hammond, 8.27; James, Walsh, and Carlisle, 8.37. Here Carlisle retired, while the leaders checked by Sandy Mills at Somersham (142) were: Shorland, 8.40.30; Cocker, Bennett, and Hammond, 9.31; and James, 9.35. Carter's name is not on this list, although he is reported to have gone the whole route up to midday.

At Wisbech, Holbein was waiting with some refreshments for Shorland, who arrived at 11.40, and was taken out by the timekeeper towards Downham, reaching Outwell at midday, with 193 1/2 miles to his credit—a mile behind his own record made en route from London to York with the wind, but a mile in advance of his own record made in last year's North Road race. The second string, consisting of Bennett, Hammond, and Cocker, passed this point 35 minutes later, together with Walsh, who, however, had missed his way as usual near Chatteris, and not gone the whole route. The rain, which had been descending lightly for nearly three hours, now ceased. The arrivals at Wisbech after Shorland comprised Carter at 12.2 (who stopped, having done 183 miles in twelve hours), Bennett, Hammond and Cocker at 12.15, and James at 12.51. Returning to Wisbech (212 1/2 miles), Shorland checked at 1.7, and Bennett, Cocker and Walsh at two o'clock. Hence they went to Long Sutton and back