

THIRTY YEARS AGO.

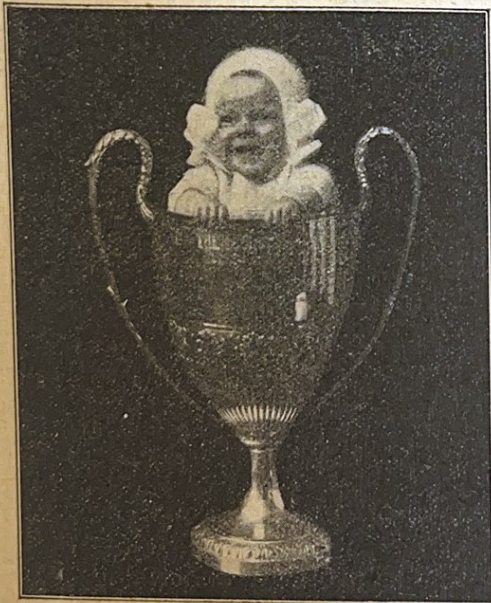
How F. W. Shorland Won the Cuca Cup Outright at Herne Hill in July, 1894. A Wonderful Climax to a Brilliant Career.

Shorland's achievements, which set all the sporting world ablaze 30-35 years ago, are described here by F. T. Bidlake, who was a competitor in the Cuca 24-hour races in 1893 and 1894. In the former year he rode into second place on a tricycle, covering over 410 miles.

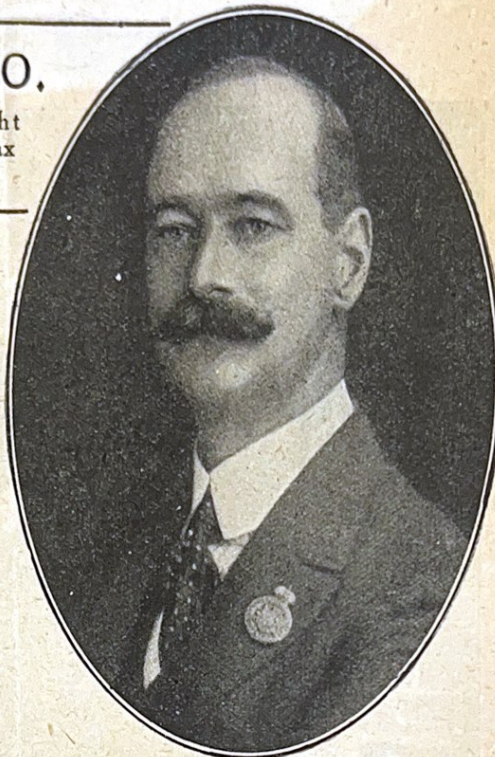
As in 1894.

To win a great scratch race in three successive years, in company selected as the hottest available, is no mean feat. A performance such as that just achieved by Andrew Wilson, in running fastest in the North Road Club's Memorial 50-mile race for the best twelve men of the day, forms a point of current interest from which we can throw a bridge across the gulf of time, and, on an arch of thirty years' span, reach the period when a very famous thrice-repeated win thrilled the racing world, and Frank Shorland made the Cuca Cup his own.

Jumping thus to the July of 1894, let us look round the cycling world as it then revealed itself to the lover of long-distance work. Shorland was unquestionably the distance king. He had, on the road, proved unbeaten in three successive twenty-four-hour races, his North Road victories in 1891, 1892 and 1893 being with the rising totals of 326, 366½ and 370 miles. And in that July he stood before the public as the winner, twice already, of the great race upon the Herne Hill track for twenty-four hours, organized by the London County Cycling and



The third generation. This photo shows the Cuca Cup with Mr. Shorland's grandchild in it. The child's mother was similarly shown, some years ago, in a photograph in *Cycling*.



Mr. F. W. Shorland, now prominent in the automobile trade.

Athletic Club, in which the trophy was a massive silver vessel, weighing quite an appreciable fraction of a hundredweight, and bearing the name of the "Cuca Cocoa Challenge Cup."

The Cup.

It was, admittedly, a cup presented by a firm of sweetstuff manufacturers, and although in general talk the full title dwindled to the curtailed form of the Cuca Cup, I think that all advertisement has since evaporated from the title, as the concoction is no longer made, and in the light of later knowledge it is generally recognized that the preparations of the cuca leaf are rather more of the nature of a drug than a food, and it is quite possible that cuca cocoa to-day would come within sniffing distance of the regulations dealing with cocaine. But so far as 24-hour racing was concerned, the trophy was a symbol only. No competitor had to pledge himself either as a consumer or as an abstainer. There was the pot, but the pride of victory was the real stimulant. The achievement, not the trophy, was the object in view. Even when the cup was won outright, and the winner, at his own club's dinner, was given a tiny silver shield recording his three-fold victory, he said he valued this memento more than the cup itself. Shorland in that short phrase revealed his club loyalty to perfection, and it need now be no secret that the N.R.C.C. received the original offer from the donors to put the cup up for a road event, but declined, as the club's policy had always been to refrain from offering prizes except their own, and, additionally, the *quid pro quo* of publicity was quite impossible in connection with a road event. And so the fixture became a path venture, and the London County Club, with G. Lacy Hillier as its most forceful and energetic hon. secretary, ran the series of events in great style.

Previous Wins.

Getting back, however, to the July of 1894, when