

## FAMOUS CYCLISTS OF THE DAY.

BY FREDERICK PERRIMAN.

*Illustrated from Photographs by R. W. THOMAS.*



YCLING since the days of the Ordinary has advanced by leaps and bounds. The introduction of the Safety type of machine brought quite a different class of riders to the front. Prior to that it was the lengthy man who scored most heavily, but upon the smaller machine it was found a cyclist not so liberally dealt with by Dame Nature in the matter of inches possessed an equal chance of securing distinction upon the track and road. Such riders as J. Platt-Betts, C. C. Fontaine, A. J. Watson, J. Michael, P. W. Brown, and others who might be named, are short men. None of them are of more than medium height, yet records and races were established and carried off by them.

At the present time England holds the

majority of world records for all distances and times. Pacemaking—at one time the monopoly of the foreigner—has been reduced to a fine art, and this season our pacers have been enabled to hold their own against all comers.

The same may be said of the riders of the single Safety. Training behind quads and quintets, they have brought back the times for the majority of distances to these shores. Records established on the Continent or across the Atlantic have been broken, and the only advantage that may be claimed by a stranger—as I may be pardoned for calling him—is that indoor track records of any importance have yet to be made here. Unfortunately, in one sense of the word, under-cover racing has been tried and found wanting in England, both in London and the



provinces. We take our pleasure sadly, perhaps, and where the volatile Frenchman would turn up in his thousands to witness a match or series of races, Englishmen are only present in scores.

Be that as it may, we yet have reason to be proud of the men who have upheld the honour of their country on the track. J. W. Stocks, for instance, has ridden over 32 miles in the hour, while he was also the first man in this country to cover 10 miles inside 20 minutes. A Yorkshireman by birth—for Hull is Stocks's native place—he earned distinction and first came prominently to the front while racing at Herne Hill, at that time undoubtedly the best built and fastest track in the country.

Although he was engaged in the post office at his home, Stocks had found time for practice a wheel. He had ridden as a lad, and a scar upon his lower lip still bears witness to the time when he "came a cropper" off one of the high machines. But as soon as the Safety came into vogue he at once exchanged machines. He won many local events, and at length, as I have already mentioned, came to London. There he did so well that he secured special leave of absence from his duties, and his name at once became a household word. He had a brilliant career as an amateur, but then entering the trade, his licence was withdrawn by the National Cyclists' Union, and after a season of hesitation he took the plunge into professionalism.

Since that time he has never looked back, and has raced all over the country and throughout the Continent with remarkable

success. Personally, Stocks is a favourite with all. He is a thorough sportsman, and when riding is certain to accomplish a fine performance. In the earlier months of the summer he set up fresh figures for the mile paced, while at the time of writing he holds the world's record for sixty minutes. He trains carefully and steadily, giving up tobacco and spirits, living plainly but well, and riding twice every day when the weather permits.

C. F. Barden is another man who may be said to have come to the front at one bound.

At one time he was engaged in a much humbler occupation, but at the present stands head and shoulders above other professionals, Gascoyne being perhaps his most dangerous opponent, although he was vanquished without much difficulty in the professional championship decided at Exeter. Barden's first real appearance was made at Herne Hill at the time when A. A. Zimmerman was in this country. The Putney man had entered for

a handicap event, and, upon a machine geared up to 84 inches, literally ran away from his field. Almost directly after that he became a professional and crossed the Channel. He raced all over the Continent, gaining speed and experience, until at length he became almost invincible. One of his most recent performances was his defeat of Huret, this feat bringing the wrath of the spectators down upon him. Barden was pelted with paper balls and programmes, but he refused to be frightened off the track. He is trained by his father, "old Joe Broughton," although he does not believe in too much hard work.



J. W. STOCKS.





C. F. BARDEN.

He is also a very fast tandem rider, the speed which he got upon the machine while at Olympia last season being a revelation to many who had not seen him riding upon that type of cycle previously.

M. A. Holbein was the first man to cover over 400 miles in 24 hours upon the road, that feat being accomplished early in the summer. Prior to that, however, he had established many records, although he was content with one big ride per annum. Holbein is extremely painstaking in his preparation. At the commencement of the season he does a great deal of quiet riding, and takes plenty of walking exercise, thinking nothing of covering 30 miles a day two or three times a week. Some of

his training spins upon the cycle are also considerable in extent. For instance, last summer he rode from Bath to York prior to his onslaught on the 24-hours' record.

Holbein was also the first man to be paced by a motor car. At the time he was engaged on his ride a gale was blowing over the route he had to cover. His pacers, a triplet in advance, followed by a tandem tricycle, could scarcely force their way against the wind, and in many places could not cover more than five miles an hour. Behind the motor car the case was very different. He was paced at quite 20 miles an hour, and at the finish it was calculated he was travelling at the rate of 30. While training, Holbein eats well, but of plain viands. After his ride has been finished, however, he does not bar pastries, pickles, butter, etc. Mrs. Holbein, I may add, attended to his creature comforts at the time he accomplished his 24-hours' record.

J. Platt-Betts is a little fellow—he stands but 5 feet 4 inches in height—but, as may be seen in his photograph, there is a tremendous muscular development in his thighs and



M. A. HOLBEIN.





J. PLATT-BETTS.

calves. At the present time he holds the world's record for the mile, made at the Crystal Palace last summer. In 1896 he set up fresh figures for the distance named on two or three occasions. This year he challenged Stocks to a series of matches, in one of which the Hull man made a surprising onslaught upon the time for 60 seconds. Only a few days later Platt-Betts regained his title, his last quarter being ridden at a tremendously fast pace.

Known to his friends as the "farmer"—although his vocation was widely apart from agriculture—Betts first came prominently

before the public as an amateur, riding under the colours of the Catford C.C. His form was so good that it was not long before he embraced professionalism. He trains steadily upon the track, weather permitting, twice every day, and considers he is equally good at a mile, ten miles, or an hour. I may perhaps be pardoned for thinking that he is seen to the greatest advantage at the distance first named.

T. Osborne is one of the speediest riders ever brought out by the Polytechnic C.C., under whose colours he still rides. Last season he did scarcely so well as might have been desired, but this year he has quite regained his old form. He has raced against and beaten such men as C. F. Barden, F. W. Chinn, Armand Impens (the Belgian champion), and others. His strong point is the manner in which he appears to jump into his sprint at the finish of a race, and once fairly under way, there are few riders who are capable of overtaking him.

Osborne does not altogether eschew tobacco when training, smoking an occasional cigarette, although he admits he would not advise anyone to dally with "my Lady Nicotine" just before riding in a race. The whole of his training is done upon the track, as he considers road-riding tends to decrease speed; his morning practice is devoted to steady pedalling, and the sprints commence later in the day.

Mr. F. J. Osmond, a champion amongst



T. OSBORNE.



champions, was the one to discover F. W. Chinn. The latter, comparatively speaking, is a new man, for he has been racing but a few seasons. The first of his performances was effected in the Midlands, while he also made some very fast times upon the road. Then at the time the Catford track was opened he rode and made fresh records for the quarter mile. During the afternoon he mounted his machine upon three occasions, establishing fresh times on each, notwithstanding that a stiff breeze was blowing across the track.

He is but young—just twenty-one—and newly married. While training, Chinn drinks no spirits and is a non-smoker. He, however, considers that Burton ale is a most refreshing beverage to be drunk while at meals, but that care should be exercised in training not to overdo matters, and so become "stale." He is a very speedy mile rider, while he has also accomplished some capital performances in ten-mile races. Chinn has also won a considerable number of events, in company with Osborne, upon a tandem.

F. C. Armstrong came prominently to the front while in Paris last winter, riding in and winning the great three days' race in the French capital. Prior to that he had scored a fair number of wins as an amateur and under the National Athletic colours. Since joining the ranks of the cash prize-riders he has rapidly come to the front, and it is seldom he has competed and been unplaced. During a recent tour in Scotland he carried off a considerable number of first and second prizes, while he also established a couple of track records.

Naturally he has not escaped the usual number of falls while racing. In one, at

Paris, his pacers came over, and he could not escape the wreck. In falling, the pedal of one of the machines hurt his ribs severely, and although he pluckily remounted he was forced to retire from the contest a few minutes later. That was his most serious mishap. Armstrong never smokes while training, neither does he drink spirits, unless under medical orders. Poached eggs, toast, coffee, and well cooked beef-steak, that is his usual bill of fare for the day, bitter ale being drunk with his midday meal.

George Hunt occupies a foremost place in the ranks of long-distance road-riders. As an amateur he carried off a considerable

number of prizes, while his good fortune still attends him. Early in July he started upon the task of breaking the 12 and 24-hours' road record. He succeeded at the half-distance, although the roads and the weather were unfavourable, but had then to stop on account of punctures and bad surface. Two days later Holbein covered over 400 miles in twice round the clock. Hunt again made an attack upon these figures,



F. W. CHINN.

and on this occasion rode 422 miles in the twenty-four hours, paced by nothing but triplets and tandems propelled by human aid. The greater part of his training is done upon the road near his home in the Midlands, although he is by no means a stranger to the London streets, and upon the routes leading to and from the great metropolis.

The Polytechnic C.C. must be accounted fortunate in possessing a rider of the class of Mr. P. W. Brown as a member. There are few speedier racers upon the track, although this season the 1896 mile amateur champion has been fearfully unlucky in the matter of





F. C. ARMSTRONG.

accidents. These mishaps have naturally retarded his getting and remaining fit, yet prize after prize has been added to his already monster list. Mr. Brown is a Londoner—that is to say, London is his home, although many of his greatest successes have been scored upon provincial tracks. Mr. Brown's most serious accident also occurred in the country. Ranged round the walls of his study, it is difficult to see an inch that does not bear a medal or some other memento of a hard-run race. The Plymouth Corporation Challenge Cup, a massive silver bowl, standing almost a couple of feet above the pedestal, occupies the post of honour, but it is flanked by goblets of all sizes and kinds, gold watches, diamond rings, dressing-cases, liqueur stands, gold, silver and bronze medals—in fact it is impossible to describe Mr. Brown's prizes in detail.

His training, up to the season that has just passed, was done at Paddington, where there was nothing but a cinder track upon which to ride. But despite this drawback, the Polytechnic flier has had an almost unbroken series of successes. One season, in 1895, licence troubles certainly cropped up, and he was forced to play the part of a spectator. But in the following year the

N.C.U. saw their mistake, and restored the necessary permit. Since then nothing has occurred, from a legislative point of view, that would interfere with his racing.

As regards training proper, Mr. Brown commences to get fit long before the season opens. He is not a butterfly rider, and is quite as much at home on the saddle in the autumn and the spring as in the summer. His mount is an ordinary light roadster, weighing about twenty-four pounds, and of a not very high gear. On this machine he rides for pleasure, and also uses it for his racing engagements.

His accidents have not been serious, with one exception. On one occasion, while training at Paddington, Mr. Brown came over, and fell with such violence that the whole of the enamel was scraped off the club badge he was wearing in his cap at the time. Yet he did not injure himself in the slightest. Another spill occurred in the North, where he could



G. HUNT.



not escape two fallen riders in front. The pedal of one of these machines tore several spokes out of his front wheel, but he kept his seat until after he had passed the judge.

At Plymouth, however, a portion of the fencing at the edge of the track collapsed under the pressure of the spectators, and caught his back wheel just as he was finishing. Machine and man were flung past the winning-post in a bunch, and Mr. Brown lay unconscious for over two hours. Yet, although this happened on a Saturday, he was riding on the following Monday, and raced at the Crystal Palace four days later.

Mr. F. R. Goodwin forced himself upon public notice by carrying off the Cuca Cup, run for at Herne Hill, after Frank Shorland had made the original trophy absolutely his own. Mr. Goodwin, when at home, lives in one of the North London suburbs, and, in himself, is an unassuming young fellow, who would not give a casual acquaintance the idea that he was a racing man. But when upon the machine, he appears to be part and parcel of the whole. There is a total absence of straining while he is riding, his ankle action being especially good.

This season Mr. Goodwin carried off the Century Cup in the 12-hours' race at Herne Hill. He did not appear to be pressed at any time during the contest, and although he rode the last lap at sprinting pace, was quite fresh when he dismounted. His training is done upon the road at the commencement, with a few finishing touches added upon the track.

Mr. W. H. Bardsley, who in 1896 carried off the fifty miles N.C.U. championship,

run at Catford, is closely identified with the cycle trade as London traveller for one of the largest firms upon Holborn Viaduct. He is an engineer by profession, and has ridden a cycle in far-off Palestine. There, he remarks, the roads are not calculated for comfortable cycling, and it is quite possible that a rider may discover ruts and pits of eighteen inches in depth upon the

routes running across the country. Mr. Bardsley is not only a long-distance rider of considerable merit, but he has put up fresh time for shorter distances at Wood Green.

Unfortunately for him, his business engagements will not allow him to train steadily. His practice has to be taken at irregular intervals, and as a natural consequence, the average excellence of his racing suffers in comparison with that of men who are more fortunately situated. Could he train steadily at the commencement of the season, Mr. Bardsley would indeed become a dangerous opponent for any of our distance men.

Messrs. Pellant and Leitch are almost too well known to need introduction, one being a member of the North Road C.C., and the other of the Polytechnic Club. Mr. Pellant, who occupies the front seat of the

tandem (p. 544), has been a cyclist (racing man and tourist) for years, while he is now interested in the trade itself. While an active member of the North Road C.C., he was induced by his friends to enter in a few of the club events. He raced, and was very successful, although he was unable to devote sufficient time to training.

When engaged in a long-distance event, Mr. Pellant found tea to be the most



P. W. BROWN.



refreshing beverage, and jellies the most sustaining food. As a tourist, he has ridden in all parts of England, but considers about



F. R. GOODWIN.

forty miles a day a sufficient distance for the average holiday-maker.

Mr. Leitch has partnered Mr. Pellant in many of his rides, while only a few seasons ago he was no mean performer on the single Safety. The whole of his prizes were won under the Polytechnic colours, while upon his departure for Australia, where he is now engaged in the cycle trade, the club united in giving him a hearty send-off. He appears to have at length deserted the cycle track for more serious business, but the memory of his races still remains green in the minds of those who knew him while he was in England.

In conclusion, a few words concerning records may not be amiss. Pacing means everything to the record-breaker, both upon the track and the road, the former more especially. Behind a triplet or a quad the rider of the single Safety is "dragged" onward, the wind being kept off, and a partial vacuum created. Very frequently, when a stiff breeze is blowing, the pace-maker upon the back seat wears his coat, and holding it wide open, it forms what is practically a wind shield.

Records are ridden strictly to schedule time, the mile being perhaps cut up into

five or six portions. Longer attempts are also engineered upon similar lines. In a half-mile or mile dash the establishment of fresh times is entirely in the hands of the pacers. Unless the joins are made without the loss of a fractional part of a minute, failure is the result. The quads and triplets must slip into their places without lessening speed in the slightest. This is where the Dunlop pacing is so greatly admired; the manner in which the crews drew Stocks to victory in the International championships in Scotland being almost incapable of improvement.

In making these joins the record-breaker hangs about a couple of inches from the back wheel of his pacing instrument. Flying up the straight, when a fresh crew is to be followed, the old crew draws to the outside edge, in a measure. The other crew must then be travelling at an equal rate of speed, and the rider of the single has just to swing a few inches to the left and is behind the fresh quad or

triplet at once.

This is where the art of pacemaking lies. If the single Safety man has to sprint continually to reach his pacers he is rapidly



W. H. BARDSLEY.

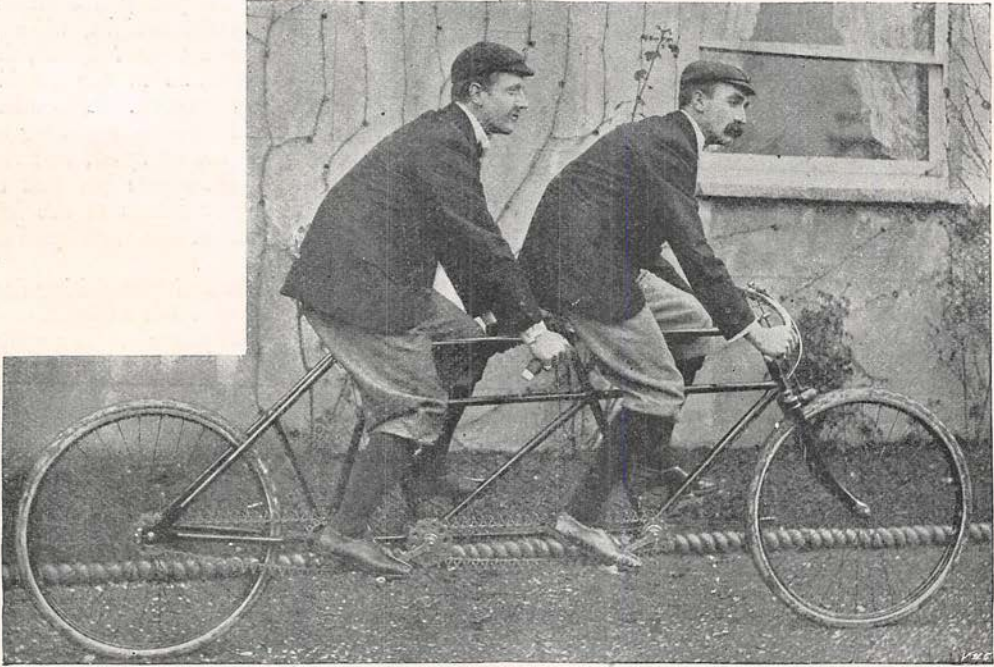


distressed, while if he has to slow up again and again the case is even worse. The French were the first to take up pacing as a business, and the difference in the home and foreign styles was clearly seen in the great Chain matches at Catford.

During the summer just passed records have been set up again and again. To secure a reliable list at the time of writing is impossible, when almost every day witnesses a reversal of former bests. The following

British records, however, are not likely to be altered appreciably, the times having been brought down so frequently of late :—

1 mile (standing start)	1 min., 45½ secs.	J. Platt-Betts
5 miles	8 mins., 53½ secs.	J. Platt-Betts
10 miles	18 mins., 2½ secs.	J. W. Stocks
1 hour	32 miles, 448 yards	J. W. Stocks
50 miles	1 hour, 38 mins., 21¼ secs.	A. E. Walters
100 miles	3 hours, 25 mins., 53½ secs.	A. E. Walters
6 hours	162 miles, 780 yards	A. E. Walters
12 hours	288 miles, 460 yards	G. A. Patterson
24 hours	502 miles, 280 yards	G. A. Patterson



E. LEITCH AND A. PELLANT.