

THE CAPTAIN

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FOR BOYS & "OLD BOYS".



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BICYCLE BELLS.

THE bell is a very important adjunct to the cycle, and especially so since it has become a practically silent carriage. I have known blind men who could hear a bicycle, however slowly it might be creeping upon them, but the average person hears nothing at all, unless the machine is "speaking" in some part or other of its mechanism, and that, of course, is a sure sign that something is out of order and requires immediate attention. From the very first, when bicycles did, indeed, make what we should now consider a great deal of noise, they were still rather quiet as compared with other road vehicles, and in very early times a bell of some sort was usually carried. The most ridiculous type employed was the old house bell, with its crude clock-spring arrangement—a form of bell which, in these days of electricity, is becoming less and less seen even in our homes. When fixed to a boneshaker it was kept at work by the vibration set up between the iron tyre and the road, and added yet another to the many annoyances and discomforts endured by the early pioneers.

In those days, and, indeed, for long afterwards, the English law took no account of bicycles. There were plenty of things which riders might not do, but their legal status was unknown, and a great many difficulties and hardships arose in consequence. One of the first things that happened was that all the local authorities in the country—and there were many hundreds of them—began to legislate on their own account. There was no doubt need for some regulation of the new traffic, but anything more inconsistent than piecemeal legislation for riders of so cosmopolitan a vehicle as the

bicycle, destined as it was to roam all over the land, could hardly be imagined. Most cyclists who were keen—and we were all keen in the old days—took the trouble to learn their own local by-laws. We knew whether we might ride on the footpaths or not in our own districts, and possibly we knew how matters stood in one or two adjoining localities. But obviously nobody could possibly be acquainted with all the varying rules laid down by parish wisecracs scattered from one end of the kingdom to the other.

I remember once being on a tour from the Midlands to the west of England. If I could only show you a picture of the mount this journey was undertaken upon you would laugh hugely. But I was very proud of it at that period. I carried with me both a bell and a whistle, because I knew that while some local authorities required the use of the one, there were also some who would have none of it, but insisted upon the tourist employing the other. Well, when I reached the beautiful old city of Bath, I was just pedalling quietly through a rather well-frequented thoroughfare with my whistle between my lips, and

ringing my bell at short intervals, when I was accosted by a policeman, who called out: "That bell must be continuous, sir," and he demanded that I should alight. This I did. I drew his attention to the fact that I was riding slowly, ringing the bell as often as seemed necessary, which I had to do if only for my own sake, and I offered, if he would allow me to proceed, to promise to ring the bell continuously as long as I was within the confines of Bath. But no, the constable was obdurate. The bell

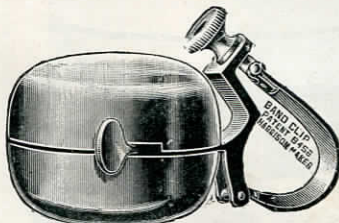


THE "STOP" BELL.

must be one of those "that goes on ringing by itself!"

What he meant was a sort of big cat-bell then much in vogue. It was kept jingling by the vibration of the frame-work and handle-bars. It was only by much soft speech, and the final parting with a shilling of my pocket money—a sum not to be trifled with in those days—that I regained my liberty, but the dubious policeman went with me as far as the city boundary to make sure that I kept my word and made that distance on foot.

On the next opportunity I laid in stock the best continuous bell at that time obtainable. It was called the "Facile," and possessed the advantage of convertibility into a silent bell, or back again into a speaking one, at any moment. This was done by pulling the loose tongue or clapper into a ring just the proper size to confine it, afterwards liberating it when desired by a mere push of the knuckle. There is at least one old firm of cycle accessory makers, Messrs. J. Harrison & Sons, of Birmingham, who still make a device of this description. They call it the "Stop" bell. I was much amused to see a contrivance of the same kind shown at the last cycle show in Paris by an inventor who thought it a novelty. He was twenty years or thereabouts behind his English competitors. Nowadays there is little call for such a bell. Its principal advantages were that it provided you with the means of keeping the law in localities where continuous ringing was required, yet left you free to jog along without



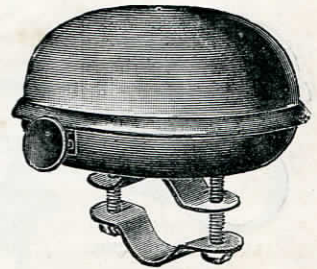
THE SMALL "48" BELL.

its annoyance when you were travelling through other places. Happily, all doubt as to what particular law, or set of laws, the tourist is subject to has long since disappeared. In 1888, an Act of Parliament was passed which abolished all these confusing by-laws, and forbade any others being made. At the same time it laid down certain very sensible rules of its own, that should thenceforward apply to cycles and cycle riders. It declared

a cycle to be a carriage for all purposes of legal action. It also set forth two regulations, one of which has a direct bearing upon the subject of bells. Without repeating the roundabout lawyers' phrases, I may say that it requires every cyclist who overtakes any cart or carriage, or any animal drawing or carrying anything, or a pedestrian, or another cyclist, before doing so to give "audible and sufficient warning." He must do this by sounding a bell, whistle, "or otherwise."

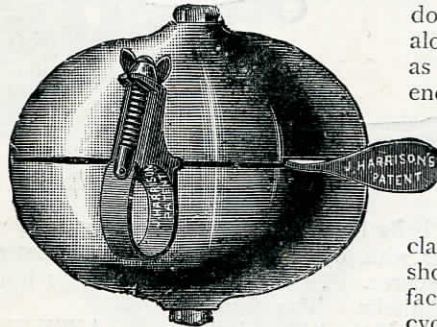
This leaves some doubt as to whether the voice alone is sufficient. So long as the warning is really loud enough for an ordinary person to hear it, and if it is also given soon enough, it seems reasonable that a shout is a proper warning. But it is "no class" to go along the road shouting, and, apart from the fact that magistrates often fine cyclists for relying on their lungs alone, I should dissuade my readers from the practice.

The law clearly recognises either a bell or a whistle, and of the two the former is on many grounds the better. It is by far the best known kind of warning of the approach of a bicycle, which is one good reason for using it. Then, too, unlike the whistle, it still leaves the voice free for a shout should that become necessary. There have been many kinds of warning instruments invented, and some of them have had the run of fashion for awhile. Rattles, air pistols, the hideous "cyclorn," now by general consent given up to the motor-car, and the "deviline," with its vulgar siren shriek—all these have practically ceased their connection with cycling. The whistle still remains, but I should like to see it follow the others. A good bell properly used will answer all requirements, and that there is abundance of



NEW DEPARTURE "ELECTRIC" BELL.

choice among the wares of the really good makers we shall presently see. Bells can be had in a considerable variety of forms and sizes, made upon several different principles, and at prices ranging from a shilling up to half a sovereign or more.



THE LARGE "48" BELL.

The firm already mentioned have a fine assortment to suit all tastes and all purses. Their "Demon" and "Don" bells are large and small varieties made on similar principles. A large bell generally gives a louder as well as a deeper note than a small one—a point to be observed when you are buying. Bells of the "48" type give two notes, hammers hitting both the upper and the lower dome when the lever is moved, and the domes being purposely made of different sizes. Then Messrs. Brown Bros., of Great Eastern Street, E.C., have a number of knacky bells from America, which they market together with other useful accessories from the same source. The "New Departure" bell is one of theirs. The form of it which is sometimes called the "Electric" is not, of course, worked by electricity. It is actuated by clockwork, which you wind up by turning the dome round a few times before starting out. A mere touch liberates this clockwork for a moment whenever you want to give an alarm. You can have "New Departures" with all kinds of fancy designs upon them if you are of opinion that these look better than the simple polished dome. Then you can invest in a tyre bell, which means one that sounds only when it touches the tyre in motion. An advantage of this class of bell is that the faster you are going the more noise it makes.

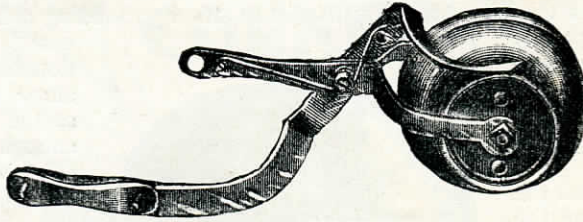


LUCAS' "BABY KING."

There are other bells on the market that have been made abroad, notably bells from Germany. But English makers nevertheless maintain a high place for the excellence of their productions. There is the old firm of Joseph Lucas, Ltd., of Birmingham.

My favourite bell at the present moment is one of their "Challis" bells, with a 3in. dome. You can ring it very loudly if you want to, or very softly, while by holding the lever at a sort of half cock you make the bell continuous for as long as you like. I generally give it a caressing little tinkle at first, and then, if I find that, through deafness or stupidity, that is not

sufficient, I sound a louder stroke. There is a great deal in knowing how to use a bell properly, and some day I may have more to say upon that point. For the present I would say that it is important, having once selected a bell, to attach it so that it will be out of the way when the machine is at rest leaning any-

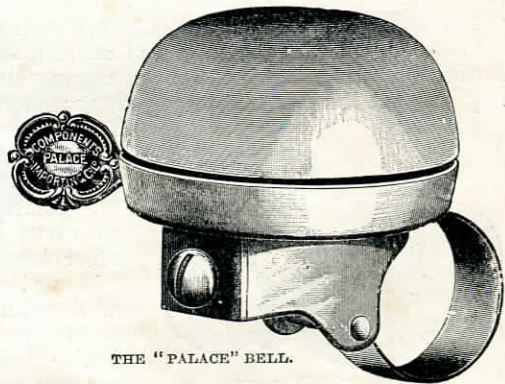


A GERMAN TYRE BELL.

where, and yet quite handy for the finger to be used in working it. Then, too, it should be very firmly screwed on, and once in place it should be regarded as part of the bicycle, and should be carefully cleaned and looked after as if it were. A good bell is worth all the care that a fellow commonly bestows upon the things he values.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Invicta" (ST. HELENS).—The noise you describe probably comes from the saddle springs. Take your oil-can and just touch every point at which one coil makes contact with another. **Jack and Harry F.** (YARMOUTH).—The Mohawk tandem is all right. The firm were one of the first to turn out a machine of the kind that was free from "whip," and they have kept up the quality of their work. "Little Miss" (ANTIBES, ALPES MARITIME).—(1) Yes, there is a quite practicable road all the way to Genoa. Much of it was made by Napoleon for military purposes, and it is to-day splendid in parts. (2) Palmer "C" tyres. "Jack"



THE "PALACE" BELL.

and "Jill" (KENSINGTON).—It is better for the lady to have the rear seat of a tandem; better in every way, except for the smart appearance of the turnout when the other arrangement is adopted. The Raleigh design is the best I have ever seen for the lady to ride behind. "Jan Ridd" (BLUNDELLS).—The Swift and the Royal Enfield are both in the very first flight. **F. F. H.**—You must give your full name as well as your address. Even if you had done so, are there not many of your questions that you could

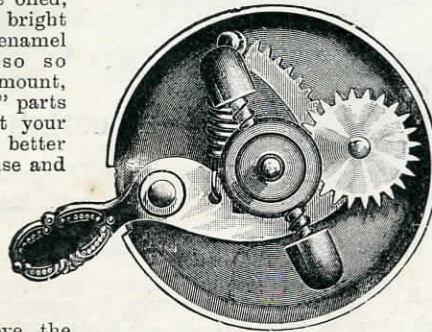
answer yourself with very little trouble? I will answer your ninth by saying that the Bradbury is made of sound stuff, and is to be recommended. **L. S.** (TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE).—(1) It never does so. (2) Good ones are to be had from Messrs. Joseph Lucas, Ltd., of Birmingham. (3) No. **W. H.** (FULHAM).—No. “**Rough-Rider**” (ROSSALL).—Yes, you need not hesitate; but don't gear over 72 unless you are a fellow of exceptional strength. It may be all right when you are full grown. **L.** (SHEFFIELD).—The best place of all in which to keep a cycle in winter-time is a living room, or some other place where similar conditions prevail. A reasonable amount of warmth and a dry atmosphere are the chief desiderata. When the machine is put by let all bearings be oiled, and it is well to cover all bright parts with vaseline. The enamel may advantageously be also so treated in the case of an old mount, in order to protect “chippy” parts from rust. But at the best your machine cannot be kept in better condition than if it were in use and properly looked after. You talk of giving up riding in February. Why, after the vile weather of December? **A. K.** (HAMPSTEAD).—I do not recommend the parallel top tubes. To my eye they in no way improve the appearance. But that is not everything. It has been demonstrated that they are no stronger than a single top tube with the same amount of extra metal put into it. You see, what it gains in one way it partly loses in another, by putting a thrusting strain sideways on the main down tube, which it is not constructed to withstand. A tube passing from the seat lug to the fork crown has not this disadvantage. It breaks the frame into two triangles, and only sets up thrust at points where there are strong joints. The special frame of the Raleigh, or the one lately brought out by the Cycle Components people, are to be recommended for such exceptional weights as yours. **A Cycleman** (LIANGOLLEN).—If you know the hills of your own land well, and want an entire

change, I can recommend no finer one than a tour in the eastern counties. The scenery is quite unique, and not by any means uninteresting. Indeed, I have toured there by the month together and still would go. The almost absolute flatness is beautifully broken up by wood and water, and the colouring is at all seasons such as to please and soothe the eye. You might vary the trip with a little exploration of the Norfolk and Suffolk broads, although, alas! they are not the unknown and sequestered region they were when I first steered my way amongst them. **E. Jones** (GREAT MARLOW).—Acetylene may be the light of the future, and the genius of inventors has done much to make it more manageable and more

trustworthy than it was at first; but it is still in the transition stage, and not on all points satisfactory. To my thinking it is too bright as at present arranged in any cycle lamp I know, and makes a breach of the good road rule of doing as you would be done by, by dazzling other fellows who may chance to meet you. There are plenty of good oils to be had. To name only two, “Springvale” or Lucas’ “Britenwite” may be relied upon if properly used. I shall devote a future article to the subject of lamps and how to keep them, but have no space now. **Edward Morris** (DULWICH).—Yes, go back by all means and see the old places from your saddle.

You will probably find the roads a trifle better than they used to be, but speaking generally they are still atrociously bad. The best roads I have struck in Ireland are in the romantic regions of the west, of which you speak—far from the railway and from civilization generally. The answer to your other question is “No.” **W. J.** (BRIGHTON).—The idea is very old, but it has never been successfully carried out. Consult the patent books and see what others have done. Sails might be an advantage under some circumstances, but they would have to be used by skilled hands. They would be very dangerous in such a wind as is blowing while I write.

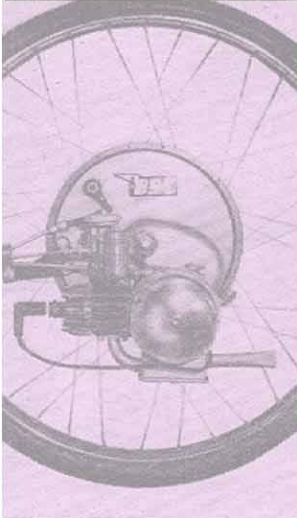
H. P.



INTERNAL MECHANISM OF THE
“PALACE” BELL.



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