

## **Coventry Cycle and Motor Carnival, 1892**

**Submitted by forum member 'Heritage'**

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**CYCLE AND MOTOR CARNIVAL IN COVENTRY**

**SUCCESSFUL DISPLAY**

**SUBSTANTIAL COLLECTION FOR THE HOSPITAL**

The first annual cycle and motor carnival, promoted by the cycling clubs of the city in aid of the funds of the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital was held on Friday evening and proved very successful, in spite of the bitterly cold weather. Next year doubtless, the event will be fixed to take place some evening during the summer, when the display may be expected to yield even better results. Large crowds congregated in the centre of the city on Friday evening to await the passing of the procession, which assembled in the Barrack Square, and the judging for the prizes having been carried out by Alderman Drinkwater, Councillors Halliwell, Wood, Mander, Batchelor and Liggins, Messrs M.J. Schulte, C.V. Pugh, A. Hill, W.H. Casley, carnival got under way at about half-past seven, and moved along its widely extended route. The display was an interesting and effective one, and the great variety of decorations and fancy costumes which was on view reflected credit upon the inventive powers of Coventry cyclists. At the head of the procession rode a couple of mounted police officers, clearing a way for it through the throngs of spectators who were assembled along the route in numbers surprisingly large, considering the frostiness of the evening. Between the mounted police and chief marshal, Mr. T.P. Furman rode, and the carnival was led off by the two steamers of the City Fire Brigade, the "Peeping Tom" and "Sherbourne" glittering bravely in the light of the torches carried by the helmeted firemen who manned them. The engines were under the command of Captain Armishaw. They were followed by the band of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and to their military music there defiled a long line of cycles, decorated with many singular and curious devices, illuminated by the dancing light of Chinese lanterns and ridden by ladies and gentlemen in well-nigh every conceivable kind of fancy dress.

There were TASTEFUL AND PRETTY COSTUMES, quaintly humorous attires, military uniforms, and historical characters of many countries and ages. There were negro minstrels, whose flapping attires were decorated with buttons not much larger than saucers, soldiers in khaki, sailors in navy blue, jovial huntsmen in scarlet and white, clowns and Pierrots of assorted kinds, gypsies, bold Mexican horsemen, Buffalo Bills, kilted Highlanders, complete with Glengarry, sporran and brogues, fairies in diaphanous raiment and gauze wings, Weary Willies, Tired Tims, and Languid Lucases, and many other quaint characters serving to tickle the risible faculties of the crowd. The Trafalgar Cycling Club were at the line with their decorated cycles and characters, and at their heels rode St. Paul's C.C., as a troupe of merry

minstrels, with outrageously high hats illuminated from within. The Crown Cycling Club among other varieties, had an ambulance corps with attendants in khaki. The "Indian Chief," who rode in the ranks of the Crown C.C., obtained a prize for the completeness of his get up. The display of the Triumph Cycling Club was preceded by the horsed tender of the Triumph Fire Brigade, the firemen carrying torches. One of the prettiest sights of the whole procession was among the Triumph cyclists, a dainty Chinese pagoda erected over a trailer, in which sat a charming little lady of the Celestial Empire, who was drawn by a couple of pig-tailed Chinamen on a tandem. Connected with the same club was an astonishing conveyance, which looked as though its component parts had been picked off a scrap heap and tied together with pieces of string. This was termed "Mulligan's" Motor Car," and a placard carried between two uprights on it, bore the proud announcement, "NO HORSE-POWER."

This was an unmistakeable truth, for the propelling force was a diminutive donkey, and while a fiercely goggled chauffeur vehemently twirled the steering wheel, Mulligan pushed behind. The Lockhurst Lane, E.M.S. Cycling Club preceded a large decorated car conveying a tableau of a child in a cot with hospital nurses in attendance. After a collection car marched the drum and fife band of the Boys' Brigade under Mr. R. Jarvis, the juvenile musicians performing with their wonted energy. Singer's Cycling Club made a smart turn out, the members being in a uniform fancy costume with effectively bedecked and illuminated cycles. The display of the Clarion Cycling Club was, however, the best on view, and was awarded first prize. It included, among other figures, a couple of heralds in appropriate costumes, performing fanfares on their trumpets, while the club members had turned out as a band of Pierrots and Pierrettes in crimson and white. The Arab Cycling Club were all in white, with blacked faces and turbans, as so many Arabs, Singers' Band, under Mr. W. Sidwell, marched in front of the King William Cycling Club, who came out strongly in the humorous line, their characters including four jolly anglers, with rods, creels, and fish, a Weary Willie and Tired Tim, and a "member of the K.W.C.C. as a prevaricator of the truth," a somewhat novel idea. The gentleman, as far as could be discerned, was not in fancy costume. Probably it was thought that no disguise was necessary. The Church Lads' Bugle Band, under Mr. E. Rudd, came behind the King Williams, their drummer causing great envy among the juvenile spectators by the dexterous manner in which he "slung the double sticks." The Demon Cycling Club had the appearance of having been suddenly aroused from bed. They were in nightcaps and fluttering white drapery. The order of the procession was a little difficult to follow, as some of the contingents appeared to be missing or out of place, but somewhere in the display was a line of ancient cycles; dating away back from the eighties, which were bestriden by members of the premier Cycling Club. The Gloria Cycling Club and the Rover Cycling Club were also represented by decorated cycles and members in fancy costumes. The rear of the procession was brought up by the Salvation Army Band, under Mr. R. Minton, the Red Lane Drum and Fife Band, under Mr. W. Horwood, and the steamer of the Dunlop Fire Brigade, which was, like the other engines, lit up by torches.

TWO MOTOR CARS Accompanied the procession. One was a large brake, hung with Chinese lanterns, and in the other one rode Ald. Drinkwater, Councillors Halliwell and Jackson.

One cycling turn out, mention of which should not be omitted, was a representation of the "Anglo Japanese alliance," a typical John Bull towing a trailer, in which was seated a Geisha girl. It was a very neat little device. The carnival, on its way through the streets, was accompanied by an alert and industrious skirmishing party, armed with collecting boxes and nets, with which they made great play among the spectators. The prizes, which were distributed by Ald. Drinkwater at the Centuries Bazaar after the procession had safely accomplished its long journey, were awarded as follows:- Best fancy dress (lady) 1. Miss. Smith; 2, Miss. Ellen Smith. Decorated cycle (lady): 1, Miss. E. Andrews; 2, Miss. Ellen Smith. Fancy dress (gentleman): 1, Mr. Vale; 2, Mr. Athersuch. Decorated cycle (gentleman): 1, Mr. Robinson; 2, Mr. Millidge, Club turn-out: 1, Clarion C.C.; 2, Triumph C.C.; v.h.c. King William C.C.; h.c. St. Paul's C.C. Most novel or effective costume (lady or gentleman): 1, Mr. Millidge; 2, Mr. Can Roberts, Comic costume: 1, Mr. W. Gee.

The prize for the largest collection taken was won by Mr. Watson of the Demon Cycling Club, who obtained £2 6s 4d. The lady's prize was taken by Miss. N. Warden, who had collected £1 13s 7d. The result of the carnival, as far as has been ascertained at present, is the sum of £78 17s 4d, but there is still a little to come in. The committee are indebted to the kindness of Mr. John Paybody for the loan of a waggonette, to the Pargetter-Morton Car Co. for a waggonette and pair of horses, to Mr. Andrews (of Foleshill) for a pony and dray, and to the Kitson Lighting Co. for placing one of their patent lights in the centre of the Barrack Square.