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ROUND BRITAIN AT WHITSUN

From the Evening Standard helicopter, our cameras had a bird's eye view of the 1954 Daily Express Tour of Britain, one of Whitsun's big sporting events. Fifty crack riders - this is a Frenchman - took part in the 1400 mile marathon that started at Great Yarmouth and will end eventually in London. Belgian, Italian, French and British cyclists competed. The foreigners are nearly all new to Britain, but most have had more experience than our lads of long-distance races.

Near Sutton Bridge came a casualty. It was Jemaux, a Belgian. He wasn't badly hurt. Meanwhile, the rest of the field headed North-West to Lincoln, where victory in this first stage went to France.

On across country to Sussex, where John Mills and the Mayor of Wivelsfield arrived for the races. These were the runners. True it was hardly an Epsom or Ascot affair, but to the local people the Donkey races are tops. Besides they could lose their money here just as easily as at one of the more famous courses.

All the jockeys made Lester Piggott look like an old-age pensioner. Then the racing got under way. Rightaway the pace makers got cracking, thundering up the first straight. Atom Bomb and Colliweg were going well - others, unfortunately, weren't. Nausea Bagwash was almost lapping the field.

Racing up the last stretch, the rest of the field pulled out all the stops, but no go, it was a walk-over victory for the "Never Say Die" of the Donkey Derby. Another race meeting was at the White City where the two-mile was one of the highlights of the British Games, sponsored by the News of the World. All eyes focussed on three men - Bannister, Number 2, Chataway number 5, and Brasher number 4. Bannister quickly set the pace for Chris Chataway who had high hopes of cracking the world record. Thus Bannister repaid the debt he owed Chataway who helped to pace him when he ran his four-minute mile.

Then Chris Brasher took over as pacer. Just behind Chataway, Bannister began to fall back. The Czech, Jungwirth moved up. It was he who beat Bannister in the half-mile, and the British Champ had obviously run himself out of that race. With neither Brasher nor Bannister left to pace him, Chataway was on his own - but he rose to the occasion magnificently. Doggedly he set out after the world record of 8 minutes 40.4 seconds held by the Belgian Gaston Reiff. Look at his almost perfect action.

At a storming pace, the 23 year old former Oxford Blue broke the tape.

He'd beaten three British records, but he'd failed by just three-fifths of a second to snatch the world title.

Beauty was on parade at the Lyceum in London when a group of lovely young ladies took the stage. All were contestants for the title "Miss England" in a contest organised by Mecca Dancing. What a job for a windy day being a judge. As nice an eye-ful as ever decorated Stockport was Marylyn Davies!

Andrey Harrison from Nottingham was another after that title. Strong opposition was there in the lovely shape of Birmingham's June Mitchell. Well, what was the verdict to be? - a tough task indeed.

One last look at the luscious line-up. And now for the winner. It was June Peters of Manchester - just eighteen years old.

A worthy Miss England indeed, but who'd say no to the runners-up - Miss Ann West of Ilford, and Miss June Woodcraft of London. Talking of London, Battersea's Fun Fair provided a chance for the star-spotters. So get guessing - yes, pretty Lana Morris.

Another bright young star at this garden-party-plus, was pert petite Susan Stephens. Its tiring work on the wrists being a film actress. Up and coming Yvonne Furneaux agreed. Also present - Kenneth More. A couple of other favourites there were fair haired Peter Reynolds, and Patrick Barr.

A Chewsome-twosome, John Frazer and starlet Senia Rava. One now to Bury St. Edmunds, and a rare sight indeed. Yes, a genuine coal-gas balloon. The local association of Round Tables asked M. Charles Bellfuss, a Parisian balloonist, to make a trip, and the 61 year old adventurer was only too willing to oblige.

And up she went, higher and higher above the heads of the 10,000 crowd who watched and marvelled below. About an hour later down it came again - slap into an asparagus field!

The Circus came to town in a big way over Whitsun. Glasgow was the town - the site was Thistle Street. What a sight it was - all the ingredients of the B g Top were there to keep a promise made to little Kitty Joyce, a victim of Polio. Kitty, who's only 5, is unable to go to the circus, so Billy Smart gave the order - send the circus to Kitty. And there it was - right under the window of her home - her greatest wish had come true.

Not to be outdone, Billy Smart himself tried to tumble his twenty stone about, but found it wasn't so easy. Anyway, Kitty should worry, the real thing was there. Thanks to the willing help of all the artistes, the glitter and

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glamour of the Big Top came to a humble Street in the
Corbals. And while this was going on, those cycling
chaps were still at it. Racing through town and country.
They spent Whitsun the hard way.

Up to Glasgow, down to Morecambe, round to Llandudno,
down to Torquay - and so to the London. That's how they'll
go. Keep at it you blokes - only a thousand miles more.