



**Griffin, B. (2018) 'William Millar Woodside (1860-1890): Coleraine's forgotten cycling champion', *Bann Disc: The Journal of the Coleraine Historical Society*, 24, pp. 25-34.**

Official publisher site: <http://colerainehistoricalsociety.co.uk/>

## ResearchSPAce

<http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/>

This pre-published version is made available in accordance with publisher policies.

Please cite only the published version using the reference above.

Your access and use of this document is based on your acceptance of the ResearchSPAce Metadata and Data Policies, as well as applicable law:-

<https://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/policies.html>

Unless you accept the terms of these Policies in full, you do not have permission to download this document.

This cover sheet may not be removed from the document.

Please scroll down to view the document.

# WILLIAM MILLAR WOODSIDE (1860-1890): COLERAINE'S FORGOTTEN CYCLING CHAMPION

Brian Griffin

On 24<sup>th</sup> May 1890, Alma Beaumont, a balloon parachutist from Omaha, Nebraska who, along with Stanley Spencer, an experienced British 'aeronaut', was in Brazil during the early stages of a worldwide tour of their famous parachuting act, wrote a letter to *Wheeling* magazine to relay the news that her business manager had died of yellow fever in Rio de Janeiro on the 18<sup>th</sup> May. The English doctor who examined the manager knew that his condition was hopeless but did not inform Beaumont that this was the case, which meant that she spent several days nursing him in the vain hope that he would recover but he eventually succumbed to his illness, and, in Beaumont's words, 'so died the finest bicycle rider America knew'.<sup>1</sup> The parachutist's manager was William Millar Woodside, from Coleraine. Almost forgotten today, Woodside, when in his prime, was, according to the editor of *Wheeling* magazine, 'one of the finest riders the world has ever seen'.<sup>2</sup> Woodside achieved some success as an amateur racer in the USA and Ireland, but achieved his greatest fame as a professional rider in America in the 1880s, in which decade he was considered by many to be the USA's champion professional<sup>3</sup> and was also reputed to be the wealthiest professional cyclist in the world. So great was his fame on and off the race track that it was announced in June 1888 that Madame Tussauds planned on including a waxwork figure of the Ulster cyclist in its exhibition.<sup>4</sup>

William Millar Woodside was born on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1860 in Philadelphia, where his father, William, a native of Carnduff, near Ballycastle, was a partner with his brothers, John and

Robert, in one of Philadelphia's largest and most prosperous teahouses.<sup>5</sup> William senior returned to Ireland for health reasons in 1862 and in 1864 he purchased Dr John Boyd's Dunduan House near Coleraine, with forty acres of land, paying some £3,500, where William junior and his siblings were raised.<sup>6</sup> William senior, newly retired from business, embraced his gentlemanly role in the Coleraine district with enthusiasm, exercising paternalistic direction over a host of public institutions until his death on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1887,<sup>7</sup> and one may assume that his son, William, had a relatively comfortable upbringing in the 1860s and 1870s. William was schooled in the Coleraine Academical Institution<sup>8</sup> and Methodist College in Belfast. He learned to ride a bicycle at the age of 13. After completing his education he returned to Philadelphia and entered into business. By 1879 he was residing in New York, where he became apprenticed in a teahouse, and he became a member of one of the leading American bicycle clubs, the Manhattan Bicycle Club. According to *The Bicycling World*, Woodside and three colleagues, George H. Taylor, Rawson Underhill and Philip T. Timpson were the club's racing men, who 'generally hold their own against representatives from other clubs'.<sup>9</sup> Amongst Woodside's notable achievements at this early stage of his cycling career were coming second in the League of American Wheelmen's amateur one-mile race – effectively the US championship – at the Manhattan Polo Grounds on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1881, and coming third in the two-mile championship race at the same venue on the same day.<sup>10</sup> By the end of 1881 Woodside had won some 24 medals in the USA, and on 6<sup>th</sup> October he set sail for the UK to compete in races on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>11</sup>

Woodside oversaw the construction of a cinder cycling track at his father's Dunduan estate, which he used to prepare for the 1882 racing season.<sup>12</sup> This paid off, as Woodside competed in numerous races in Ireland in 1882 and won most of them, and finished either

second or third in the others.<sup>13</sup> He won the Irish 10-mile championship race at Lansdowne Road, Dublin, on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, in a race in which he took an early lead, which he never relinquished, finishing the distance in a time of 34 minutes and 4 seconds. According to the *Dublin Daily Express*, 'The splendid manner in which Woodside carried off this race extorted general admiration from the spectators, and he dismounted from his machine apparently little more fatigued than when he had started'.<sup>14</sup> Woodside's greatest success came in Dublin's Phoenix Park on 30<sup>th</sup> September, when he won Ireland's 50-mile championship title. The inclement weather conditions had rendered the Park's roads so soft and muddy that most of the contestants had initially wanted the race to be postponed, but it went ahead because a few of the Dublin competitors disagreed with this opinion. Woodside's victory was all the more remarkable as, in addition to slogging through the muddy roads and fighting against a very strong wind, he also lost some seven minutes on his rivals after the rubber tyre of his rear wheel came off in the fifth round and he had to mount a replacement machine. He won the title in a time of 4 hours 14 minutes and 4 seconds. When Woodside returned in triumph to Coleraine on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October, he was welcomed at Dunruan by a 'host of friends'. According to the *Northern Constitution*, 'Tar-barrels were lighted by the country people on several hills in the neighbourhood, and the greatest enthusiasm was manifested by all classes at Mr Woodside's splendid achievements'.<sup>15</sup>

Woodside returned to the USA in December 1882, where he competed in a two-mile race in Boston, which appears to have been his final race as an amateur.<sup>16</sup> He announced his decision to become a professional rider in January 1883, challenging the leading US professional cyclist, John S. Prince, to a 25-mile race for a stake of \$200 a side.<sup>17</sup> Prince won the contest in New York after what appeared to the enthusiastic audience to have been a

genuine contest, but some of the cycling press believed that the race was a sham, with each rider participating for an agreed fee rather than the advertised stake, and with Woodside saving his energy for the 26-hour race in which he was entered to compete after finishing his race against Prince.<sup>18</sup> This was the beginning of six years of intense professional racing competition for Woodside. Travelling throughout the USA, but basing himself for considerable periods at New York, Philadelphia, Chicago and Minneapolis, he participated in a bewildering variety of contests, ranging from conventional distance races of from one mile to 50 miles to 26-hour races – a popular feature of American cycling in this period, with Woodside setting at least one record of 266 miles in a 26-hour ride that he completed in Minneapolis in 1885<sup>19</sup> – and six-day races against horses and their riders.<sup>20</sup> One of his most notable achievements was smashing the US 50-miles record on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1884 in Chicago, with his time of 2 hours, 54 minutes and 1.5 seconds lowering the record by more than five minutes. In the process, Woodside set new US cycling records for each mile from 11 miles to 50 miles inclusive.<sup>21</sup> Probably in recognition of this achievement, Woodside was elected an honorary member of the Golden City Bicycle Club of San Francisco, the only professional cycling club in the USA at this time.<sup>22</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> October 1885 he set new US professional records at Springfield, Massachusetts, for each mile from four to ten inclusive.<sup>23</sup> On the next day he rode 50 miles and once again set new records for every mile covered from 11 to 50 miles, and the records from 21 to 34 miles and from 36 to 38 miles were world record times. What made Woodside's feat even more impressive is that he accomplished it without the aid of pacemakers.<sup>24</sup>

Woodside amassed considerable wealth as a result of his strenuous cycling endeavours. Some of this came from his endorsing various cycling accoutrements, such as Strickland and

Pierce's 'Boston' cycling shoes, which cost \$4,<sup>25</sup> or the New York Toy Company's 'Duryea' bicycle saddle and spring, which cost from \$3 to \$3 and 75 cents.<sup>26</sup> Most of his earnings came either from prize money or his share of gate receipts from endurance race meetings, with the latter proving the more lucrative source of revenue for the Ulster rider. For example, typical cash prizes included two sums of \$20 that he won for finishing third in a 2-mile and 3-mile race at Lynn, Massachusetts, in September 1886, and prizes of \$75 and \$100 for winning the 5-mile and 10-mile races at the same meeting.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, when he was beaten by Albert Schock in a six-day race at Minneapolis in January 1886, Woodside's share of the gate receipts was \$600, with Schock receiving \$960. It was no wonder that *The Bicycling World* claimed on 12 February 1886 that 'Woodside must prefer six-day racing to tournament work as a financial investment'. Woodside's business affairs were first looked after by another professional cyclist and leading six-day racing promoter, the Canadian rider T.W. Eck,<sup>28</sup> but Eck was later replaced as Woodside's manager by another professional on the US circuit, Monmouthshire's T.W. 'Senator' Morgan.<sup>29</sup> Morgan claimed in February 1887 that Woodside was the world's wealthiest professional cyclist, with property investments worth \$6,000 in Minneapolis and \$4,000 in Dakota (which included half a dozen lots in Wahpeton, North Dakota), as well as 'a very snug bank account'.<sup>30</sup>

Not only was Woodside an attractive proposition for cycling managers, he was also popular with unmarried women, probably due to a combination of his athletic prowess, his good looks and possibly his wealth. According to the editor of *Cycling* magazine in 1891, 'Woody', during both his amateur and his professional careers, was always regarded as 'the dandy of the path', adding the envious comment that 'He was a handsome fellow, forsooth! and as genial as he was good looking.'<sup>31</sup> One wealthy Minneapolis family, who looked with

disfavour on Woodside's profession and fearing that their daughter would marry 'the six-foot record breaker', sent her two hundred miles away from the city, much to Woodside's sorrow. Four days later, when in the middle of a six-day race, Woodside was handed a telegram which read 'Keep up courage. Although far away, my heart is with you. Emily'. This encouraging message allegedly spurred Woodside into a renewed effort that shocked his opponent in the race.<sup>32</sup> 'Senator' Morgan stated that Woodside's arrival in Minneapolis 'was the signal for a general flutter among the gay young maidens of the "Flour City", and the American champion's studio was the holder of many daintily perfumed missives filled with burning admiration ..... containing also many petitions for locks of hair, autographs, kisses, and "sich"'.<sup>33</sup>

In February 1887, Woodside, Morgan and another of Morgan's clients, Ralph Temple,<sup>34</sup> left the USA to engage in a lengthy round of cycling contests in the UK and Europe. According to A.J. Wilson – 'Faed' of the cycling press – the US trio's visit 'formed the chief feature of the year's cycling' in the UK in 1887.<sup>35</sup> After a stay of about 10 days at Dunruan, and touring various sights in Ulster and Dublin,<sup>36</sup> the tourists finally got down to business at the Irish Cyclists' Association Easter tournament at Ballsbridge in Dublin. In preparing for this tournament's one-mile professional race, Woodside lowered the Irish record for the mile by three seconds on 29<sup>th</sup> March,<sup>37</sup> and duly won the one mile and five mile professional races on 9<sup>th</sup> April.<sup>38</sup> In the next month the American team travelled to Britain, where much larger winnings were to be made than in Ireland. In an interview with *Pall Mall Gazette*, Morgan outlined their ambitions when he declared that 'We have come across to hunt glory and dollars. We want to whop the best man England can show us – and I guess his name's Howell; and if we can do that – that is, if "Woody" can – we don't mind the dollars so much.

We shall race whenever we get the chance'.<sup>39</sup> This was a reference to the English champion, Richard Howell, the self-proclaimed champion of the world, who challenged Woodside to race against him in a series of races to decide who was the better rider.<sup>40</sup> The two rivals agreed to race a series of five races, with the first rider to win three races to be considered champion of the world.<sup>41</sup> It was a series that ended in disappointment for Woodside as Howell won the first three contests and the final two races in the series were therefore abandoned.<sup>42</sup>

Later in 1887, Howell and Woodside teamed up for an event that captivated the imagination of people throughout the world. Held at the Royal Agricultural Hall in Islington in November, this was a six-day contest in which Howell and Woodside rode for 8 hours a day against horses ridden by Marve Beardsley and Broncho Charley, two cowboys belonging to Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. The gruelling competition, which was watched by thousands of spectators and received worldwide press coverage, resulted in a narrow victory for Buffalo Bill's men. Woodside could probably gain some satisfaction from the fact that he rode a greater number of miles than any of the riders in the competition.<sup>43</sup>

According to Robert Rydell and Rob Kroes, the cowboys' victory was seen as 'evidence of the vitality and virility of the American frontier as represented in the Wild West shows',<sup>44</sup> but the contest in Islington did not finish the matter. A rematch six-day event was held in Bingley Hall, Birmingham, in December 1887, and this resulted in the cyclists beating the horsemen by almost 9 miles. On this occasion, Woodside and Howell were teamed up with Charles Terront of Bayonne, who had shortly beforehand won what was considered the world championship 100-miles race in Birmingham.<sup>45</sup> The final six-day race between the cowboys and Woodside and his companions was held once again in Islington's Royal

Agricultural Hall in March 1888, resulting in a narrow victory of less than one mile for Charley and Beardsley. On this occasion, Woodside's teammates were the French champion Jules Dubois, and Jim Young, the Scottish professional.<sup>46</sup>

Morgan and his team – lampooned as ‘Morgan’s Marionettes’ in a comical poem by the budding humourist, Percy French<sup>47</sup> – competed in numerous races throughout Britain in 1887 and 1888, as well as making a brief foray onto the European continent in the latter year. In June, they attended the three-day international cycling tournament at Berlin, which *Sporting Life* described as ‘The most important and thoroughly international cycling tournament that has ever been held on the Continent of Europe’. More than 20,000 people attended the Berlin race meeting, at which Woodside came third in the two-mile bicycle contest.<sup>48</sup> Woodside and Temple competed successfully in two 25-mile races in Amsterdam and Scheveningen in July against horses ridden by James Bellow, described variously as an ‘American cowboy’ and ‘the well-known flat and steeplechase London long-distance jockey’. The second of these races was for the sum of 1,000 florins.<sup>49</sup>

The touring party returned to the USA in August 1888. Woodside participated in what appears to have been his last professional race in Buffalo in the following month, as his name does not feature in press coverage of cycle races in America after this. He did not win any races on the first two days of the Buffalo tournament, and failed to put in an appearance after the second day, ‘as he considered the track too cut up for safety’. The *Wheelmen’s Gazette* speculated that what it regarded as Woodside’s ‘abnormal caution’ on this occasion was down to the fact that he had recently inherited ‘quite an extensive landed estate in Ireland’ on his father’s death.<sup>50</sup> When Woodside’s name next appeared in the

press, it was as business manager of Alma Beaumont, the parachutist performer. He became her manager after a chance acquaintance with her father when she made her second parachute jump, at a fair in Lincoln, Nebraska.<sup>51</sup> They announced in September 1889 that they were to begin a world tour in November of the same year.<sup>52</sup> It was on this tour that Woodside met his end at the young age of 30 years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Undated extract from *Wheeling*, reprinted in *Wheel and Cycling Trade Review*, 4 July 1890.

<sup>2</sup> Undated extract from *Wheeling*, reprinted in *Wheel and Cycling Trade Review*, 4 July 1890.

<sup>3</sup> *Wheelmen's Gazette*, December 1886; *The Bicycling World*, 17 December 1886, 21 January 1887; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 May 1887.

<sup>4</sup> *Wheelmen's Gazette*, June 1888.

<sup>5</sup> *Coleraine Chronicle*, 14 January 1888.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce S. Elliott, "'Settling Down': Masculinity, Class and the Rite of Return in a Transnational Community' in Marjory Harper (ed.), *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600-2000* (Manchester and New York, 2005), p.173. William Millar Woodside had two sisters – Mary and Millicent Jane, and three brothers – Robert, James and John: details from William Woodside senior's last will and testament, dated 18 March 1876 (Public Record Office of Northern Ireland).

<sup>7</sup> As well as being a justice of the peace, he was a member of the Coleraine Board of Guardians, a director of the Ballycastle Railway Company, a member of the Coleraine Harbour Board, vice-president and treasurer of the Coleraine and Ballymoney Farming Society, a member of the managing committee of the Coleraine Academical Institution, and a member of the Committee of the First Presbyterian Church in Coleraine: Elliott, 'Settling Down', pp. 173-174.

<sup>8</sup> According to the school registers, William and his brother, Robert, both began attending at the Academical Institution on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1869, when William was 8. I would like to record my thanks to Joe Cassells of Coleraine for consulting the registers for me.

<sup>9</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 29 July 1881, 12 August 1881, 7 January 1887; *Coleraine Chronicle*, 5 March 1887. In August 1881, Woodside's address was recorded as 120 West 45<sup>th</sup> Street, New York.

<sup>10</sup> Details from *The Bicycling World*, 1 May 1885. Not all of Woodside's races proved as successful as these two. For example, *The Bicycling World* of 2 October 1880 recorded that the Manhattan Athletic Club's two-mile bicycle race on 18<sup>th</sup> September 'came near to being a hurdle race as well', when 'W.M. Woodside proved out of place on the track by running into the club-house, and then falling with his machine across the track for Underhill to run

---

into'. The same newspaper's edition for 27 May 1881 detailed how Woodside came a cropper in the one-mile amateur race at Elizabeth, New Jersey, when he crashed into a fence while trying to avoid a fallen competitor, which resulted in a buckled wheel for Woodside's machine.

<sup>11</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 18 November 1881.

<sup>12</sup> *Coleraine Chronicle*, 5 March 1887.

<sup>13</sup> Amongst the race meetings in which he competed were those held at the Ulster Cricket Club in April, the Templepatrick, Queen's College and Dublin Athletic Club sports in May, and the North of Ireland Cricket Club, Lurgan, Ballymena and Dungannon sports in August: *Belfast News-Letter*, 11 April 1882, 6 May 1882, 15 May 1882, 30 May 1882, 7 August 1882, 21 August 1882; *Coleraine Chronicle*, 12 August 1882; *Northern Constitution*, 7 October 1882. According to *The Wheel* of 27 December 1882, 'The photographs of the prizes won by him in Ireland resemble the interior view of a jewelry store'. Woodside also won the five mile bicycle handicap race at the Bristol and West of England meeting at Clifton Zoological Gardens in June 1882: *Bristol Mercury*, 19 June 1882.

<sup>14</sup> *Dublin Daily Express*, 25 September 1882. Setting a blistering early pace was a feature of Woodside's racing technique. In its account of a 5-mile professional race that was run in Hartford, Connecticut, *The Bicycling World* stated on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1885 that Woodside adopted 'his old trick of leading at a cracking pace', although on this occasion he eventually tired and was overtaken by two other competitors.

<sup>15</sup> Details from *Sporting Life*, 5 October 1882; *Coleraine Constitution*, 7 October 1882; *Northern Constitution*, 7 October 1882. According to the *Northern Constitution*, the 'Sanspareil' bicycle that Woodside rode to victory weighed only 26 lbs. and was the lightest bicycle ever ridden in Ireland.

<sup>16</sup> Woodside won a total of 125 prizes during his amateur career: *The Bicycling World*, 21 January 1887.

<sup>17</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 22 December 1882, 12 January 1883.

<sup>18</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 2 February 1882, 9 February 1882; *Sporting Life*, 10 February 1883.

<sup>19</sup> For Woodside's 72-hour race against the German champion, Albert Schock, at the Washington Ice Skating Rink in Minneapolis in March 1887, see *The Bicycling World*, 19 March 1886; Peter Joffre Nye, *The Six-Day Bicycle Races: America's Jazz-Age Sport* (San Francisco, 2006), p.24. For his record 26-hour ride, see Ross D. Petty, 'Bicycling in Minneapolis in the Early Twentieth Century', *Minnesota History* (Autumn 2010), p.86.

<sup>20</sup> In six-day races, each cyclist (teams usually consisted of two or three riders) rode for an hour at a time before being replaced, while each horseman (teams usually consisted of two men) switched horses after an hour, with a limit being placed on the number of horses that they could employ. In Woodside's first six-day competition, which started at the Casino, Boston, on 30 April 1883, he was teamed with John S. Prince against the horseman Charles Leroy. This resulted in a relatively easy victory for Leroy, who rode some 921 miles while the cyclists clocked up some 899 miles. However, *The Bicycling World* of 11 May 1883 praised Woodside's effort and criticised that of Prince, stating that 'If the latter had ridden as well as his partner Woodside, the total score of the bicyclists would have exceeded that of the horses by forty-nine miles..... Woodside's performance was little short of a wonder, and is by far the best showing he has made in this country. The way he romped around the track on the last day, gaining lap after lap on the horses showed him to be speedy and capable of great endurance'.

- 
- <sup>21</sup> Woodside's feat featured prominently in the advertisements of the Rudge bicycle company, as he had ridden a Rudge 59-inch machine when setting the new 50-mile record: *The Bicycling World*, 19 December 1884.
- <sup>22</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 26 December 1884.
- <sup>23</sup> His bicycle on this occasion was a Columbia, as that company was quick to point out in its advertisements: *The Bicycling World*, 30 October 1885.
- <sup>24</sup> *Springfield Wheelman's Gazette*, December 1885.
- <sup>25</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 8 August 1884.
- <sup>26</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 3 October 1884.
- <sup>27</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 1 October 1886.
- <sup>28</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 4 June 1886.
- <sup>29</sup> On 1 May 1884, Woodside and Morgan started off from City Hall, New York, on the first stage of an attempt to ride from the East coast of the USA to California in 70 days. They planned on raising part of their expenses by giving cycling exhibitions en route, but when the first two exhibitions proved to be financial failures, they abandoned their cross-country attempt: *The Bicycling World*, 9 May 1884, 16 May 1884.
- <sup>30</sup> *The Bicycling World*, 10 December 1886; *Wheelmen's Gazette*, February 1887. He also claimed that Woodside's share of his father's will was worth an additional \$60,000. *The Bicycling World* stated on 21 January 1887 that Woodside 'could, at any time abandon the [racing] path and live the life of a country gentleman, but he prefers the excitement of racing, and is a fervent lover of the sport'.
- <sup>31</sup> *Cycling*, 17 October 1891. Woodside liked to wear silk hats and sealskin coats: *The Bicycling World*, 10 December 1886; *Wheelmen's Gazette*, February 1887.
- <sup>32</sup> *Wheelmen's Gazette*, July 1886. According to one commentator, Woodside also cycled more quickly when bands at race meetings struck up 'The Wearing of the Green' in his honour, although it seems unlikely that Woodside, given his Ulster Presbyterian upbringing, would have viewed such an Irish Nationalist tune favourably: *The Bicycling World*, 15 May 1885.
- <sup>33</sup> *Wheelmen's Gazette*, February 1887. Woodside's admirers could also buy mail-order photographs of their hero from Oswald Brothers of Minneapolis: *The Bicycling World*, 25 March 1887.
- <sup>34</sup> Although Temple did race professionally, he was more noted as a skilled trick or exhibitionist cyclist. It was claimed that he had spent two years in captivity as a prisoner of 'Indians' who rescued him after he had been wounded in an attack by a bear, whose attack Temple fought off with his knife. Temple eventually escaped from his captors after killing one of them with a tomahawk: *Sporting Life*, 10 November 1887.
- <sup>35</sup> *Wheelmen's Gazette*, September 1887.
- <sup>36</sup> Morgan penned lengthy accounts of their visits, during which they were treated as celebrities, in *The Bicycling World*, 1 April 1887, 15 April 1887, 22 April 1887. The *Belfast News-Letter* of 2 March 1887 stated that 'The greatest interest is manifested by cyclists in the arrival of these leviathans of the wheel', and added that 'Woodside has doubtless the finest collection of cycling photographs extant. He has over 1,000 pictures, and has a dozen albums. This, doubtless, accounts for his excessive luggage, for he has five trunks and eight valises'.
- <sup>37</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 30 March 1887. Woodside was paced by Morgan and Temple when he broke this record.

---

<sup>38</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 11 April 1887.

<sup>39</sup> *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 May 1887.

<sup>40</sup> *Sporting Life*, 12 March 1887, 25 March 1887.

<sup>41</sup> *Sporting Life*, 5 May 1887.

<sup>42</sup> The first of the three races that were run was a 20-mile race on 14<sup>th</sup> May at the Belgrave Road Grounds in Leicester, before 20,000 spectators. The second race, which drew a disappointingly small crowd of around 2,000 (mainly because it clashed with a local horse race meeting) was a 10-mile race on 23<sup>rd</sup> May at Aston Grounds, Birmingham. The final race, a one-mile contest, took place at the Molineux Grounds, Wolverhampton, on 30<sup>th</sup> May, before a crowd of 10,000: *Athletic News*, 17 May 1887; *Sporting Life*, 24 May 1887, 31 May 1887.

<sup>43</sup> The final stages of the contest were watched by an enthusiastic crowd of 20,000 people. The horsemen, who were allowed to ride an unlimited number of horses, rode 814 miles and 1,004 yards, while the cyclists, who rode for an hour at a time, rode some 812 miles and 660 yards. Charley rode 407 miles, Beardsley rode 407 miles and 1,004 yards, Howell rode 389 miles and 1,540 yards, and Woodside rode 422 miles and 880 yards: *Sporting Life*, 14 November 1887; *Leicester Chronicle*, 19 November 1887.

<sup>44</sup> Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (Chicago, 2005), p.109.

<sup>45</sup> *Birmingham Daily Post*, 26 December 1887, 2 January 1888.

<sup>46</sup> *Sporting Life*, 26 March 1888.

<sup>47</sup> *Irish Cyclist*, 7 November 1888. French wrote comical sketches and verses for the *Irish Cyclist* for several years from the late 1880s to the late 1890s, before becoming a full-time comic performer.

<sup>48</sup> *Sporting Life*, 20 June 1888.

<sup>49</sup> They were teamed in these races with Frederick William Allard of Coventry, a fellow contestant at the Berlin meeting, who was considered the world's tricycling champion in 1887 before he became a professional: *Sporting Life*, 18 February 1887, 7 July 1888; *Manchester Courier*, 16 July 1888.

<sup>50</sup> *Wheelmen's Gazette*, September 1888. Woodside's caution was out of character, as suggested by a contemporary observer's summary of his usual approach in races: 'He is best known by his having done so much "donkey work" in races, i.e., he has set the pace for others and thus sacrificed his own chances for a position': Howard Merrill, 'One Man's Work for Cycling', *Outing*, vol. xiii, issue 1 (October 1888), p.38.

<sup>51</sup> Alma's father, Glynn Beaumont, was a noted balloon maker and aeronaut, with over 60 years' experience in the business. Stanley Spencer, of Messrs Charles Green Spencer and Son, aeronauts and balloon manufacturers in Holloway, was her equipment manager. He had completed at least 210 parachute jumps when he became Beaumont's equipment manager. She made her first parachute jump from a balloon at Jacksonville, Nebraska, in 1888, for which she received \$500, which was half of the gate receipts. Her first jump in Britain was made at North Shields on 28 August 1889. Details from *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 17 September 1889; *Shields Daily Gazette*, 10 September 1889, 15 November 1889; Stella Margetson, *Leisure and Pleasure in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1969), p.209.

<sup>52</sup> *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 17 September 1889.