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“Count Konstantin Norbert Stadnicki, Poland’s Irish Cycling Champion”

In recent years, following Poland’s accession to the European Union in 2004, Polish immigrants have made an important contribution to Ireland’s social, cultural and economic life, on both sides of the border. According to the BBC News website dated 15 May 2010, there were around 35,000 Poles living in Northern Ireland at that time, constituting less than 2 per cent of the region’s population.¹ South of the border, according to the 2016 census returns, there were some 122,215 Polish people residing in the Irish Republic, or around 2.57% of the overall population of the Southern state. While this influx of Polish immigrants undoubtedly plays an important role in modern Irish society, these new migrants are not the first Poles to have enriched the country’s social life. Over a century ago, a Polish student in Dublin achieved fame by winning several Irish, British and European tricycle and bicycle championships. One wonders how many of Ireland’s Polish community are aware of the sporting exploits of their countryman, Count Konstantin Norbert Stadnicki, who for a few years in the late 1880s and early 1890s was a leading figure in the Irish cycling world. Almost certainly his name is now forgotten, both in Poland and in Ireland;² indeed, I only chanced upon it whilst researching the broader topic of the social history of cycling in Victorian Ireland, and I was struck by the unusual surname of this racing cyclist and decided that at some time in the future I would try to find out as much as I could about him. I hope that this short article will help to rescue Count Stadnicki’s name from its undeserved obscurity.

Konstantin Norbert Stadnicki was born on 25 May 1867 in Boguszowka, Podolia, a largely Polish-speaking province of the Russian Empire.³ In 1877 Stadnicki was taught by an Irish tutor,⁴ presumably in English, who seems to have been employed to help prepare Stadnicki and his brothers for studying abroad in the English public school system. On 7 June 1879 Stadnicki and his elder brother, thirteen-year-old Stanislaus, enrolled at Beaumont College, near Old Windsor in Berkshire. Two other brothers, eleven-year-old Caesar and Casimir, who was almost ten, enrolled in the college on 17 September 1880.⁵ Founded in 1861, by 1865 this Jesuit-run college was already considered to be one of the leading Catholic public schools in Britain.⁶ As well as its prestigious reputation as a Catholic educational institution, it is possible that it proved an attractive choice of school for the Stadnicki brothers due to the fact that it was dedicated to a Polish saint, St. Stanislaus Kostka, a youth who died in 1568.⁷ When Stadnicki enrolled at Beaumont College, he could already speak Russian, Polish, French and English, and had some knowledge of Latin.⁸ Although little is known about his time at Beaumont, one can safely surmise that his wide-ranging sporting interests, such as shooting, horse-riding, swimming and cricket,⁹ helped him to settle into life at the Bedfordshire school.¹⁰ After finishing at Beaumont College in August 1883,¹¹ Stadnicki resided for a while at Torquay, and it was at Torquay that he was taught to ride a bicycle, by a man named George Edwards.¹²

On learning that his former tutor from Ireland had established a “grinding establishment” in Dublin – a school that specialised in preparing candidates for police, civil service and university entrance examinations – Stadnicki relocated to the Irish capital, possibly in October 1883,¹³ to study engineering at the Royal

University of Ireland. He and his brother, Stanislaus, passed the matriculation examination of the Royal University in October 1884, and Stadnicki continued to study under his former tutor for his engineering degree.¹⁴ He took his first steps into the Irish cycling world early in 1886, when he was a guest at one of the Irish Champion Cycling Club's "smoker" concerts, entertainments that cycling clubs put on during the winter and spring off seasons, when the roads were too muddy for bicycle or tricycle riding. The Irish Champion club was one of the leading Dublin cycling clubs. Founded in November 1875, it was instrumental in organising the first Irish cycling championships in June 1876, which function was taken over in 1882 by the Irish Bicycling Association (whose name was changed to the Irish Cyclists' Association in 1884).¹⁵ Stadnicki became a member of the Irish Champion Cycling Club in the autumn of 1887, keeping up with his fellow participants on club runs with difficulty as he was, in his own words, "quite a duffer" at first. He tended to ride an Ordinary on the roads, and usually raced on a tricycle.¹⁶ He seems to have been a relatively gregarious individual, as suggested by the fact that he was eventually elected captain of the club, and one commentator on the Irish cycle-racing world stated of Stadnicki in 1892 that, "Though hardly an Irishman, we have always thought of 'Stad' as one of us, and whether on the path or elsewhere, he is a prime favourite."¹⁷ In March 1888, Stadnicki was involved in an assault case which featured in Irish newspapers. Stadnicki was one of five members of the Irish Champion club who were assaulted by a farmer named James Flood as they cycled down Bohernabreena Hill, in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains, as they were returning from Brother Paul's, a teashop in the mountains which was a favourite resort of Dublin cyclists. Flood, who was described by one witness as "not drunk" but

“under the influence”, was leading his horse and cart up the hill and he struck at each cyclist with his whip as they passed him. Flood falsely claimed that the cyclists had frightened his horse as they passed it and that he did not assault any of them with his whip. Only one of the five cyclists, Edward Seymour, who had been struck in the face with a whip, brought a case against Flood: according to Seymour’s solicitor, Isaac Molloy, this was because the cyclists’ intention “ was to make it a prosecution not a persecution”. The presiding magistrate at Tallaght petty sessions fined Flood five shillings, with an additional four shillings and sixpence in costs, but on learning that the defendant was unable to pay, the prosecuting solicitor paid the amount, as the purpose behind the prosecution had been to uphold the right of cyclists on the road, rather than to punish the defendant.¹⁸ An important result of this episode is that the *Irish Cyclist’s* artist at the petty sessions provided us with a pictorial representation of Stadnicki, a small sketch of his head (see Fig 1). This was not the only court case in which Stadnicki was involved. He was the plaintiff in another case, which was tried before the Recorder for Dublin, Frederick Falkiner. Unfortunately, the details of this case do not appear to have been published in the Irish press, but according to E.J. O’Reilly, who wrote for the *Irish Wheelman* using the pseudonym of “The Scorcher”, once Falkiner discovered that Stadnicki was a Count, “it took the officials of the court all their time to prevent the judge from standing ‘Stad’ a drink right off”.¹⁹

Stadnicki began his cycling career on Whit Monday in 1887, in a mile tricycle race, in which he had a start of 90 yards but was still beaten by half a yard at the finishing tape.²⁰ In June 1887 he participated in the 20-mile inter-club bicycle

race that was held in Dublin's Phoenix Park, and was one of twelve of the forty-six contestants that failed to finish the race.²¹ He had more success later in the same month, when he finished second to Thomas Atkins of the Cork Cycle Club in a one-mile safety handicap race at Cork's Mardyke grounds. Stadnicki, who rode a bicyclette safety on this occasion, won a biscuit tin for his efforts.²² At first, the Polish nobleman would "suffer dreadfully from nervousness" before competing, and would often be seen to "shake all over before the start of a race", but over time his confidence grew and his pre-race nervousness disappeared.²³ As early as 28 May 1888 the *Freeman's Journal*, one of the most influential Irish newspapers, referred to Stadnicki as "the coming three wheeler" competitor, in recognition of the fact that he had ridden a mile on a tricycle in a time of 2 minutes and 53 seconds, whereas the fastest competitive mile ridden on a tricycle was achieved in 2 minutes and 58 seconds. The newspaper rightly declared that Stadnicki's unofficial finishing time "stamps him as a rider of the first water". Stadnicki's confidence in his racing ability grew steadily throughout 1888, especially as his performances against the reigning one-mile tricycle champion, R. J. Mecredy, the editor of the *Irish Cyclist* newspaper, improved on each occasion that they competed against one another. At first, Stadnicki was given starts of from 40 to 60 yards against Mecredy, but eventually they both started at the scratch mark in a race in July 1888; on the first occasion on which this happened, Mecredy beat Stadnicki by a mere six inches.²⁴ Stadnicki was so determined to unseat Mecredy as the Irish one-mile tricycle champion that he risked falling foul of the Russian authorities by staying in Ireland rather than returning to Russia in 1888 to report for his compulsory military service of from five to seven years. The penalties for not undertaking military service included

the loss of all civil rights, and a possible prison sentence. A limited number of exemption tickets were issued each year, but they were difficult to procure and also cost around £2,500, a huge sum of money. Stadnicki succeeded in getting a special permit signed by the tsar, Alexander III, which allowed him to postpone his military service until he was twenty-seven years old.²⁵ Stadnicki finally wrested the Irish one-mile tricycle crown from Mecredy at the *Freeman's Journal* sports day at Ballsbridge, Dublin, on 24 August 1888, finishing in a time of just over 3 minutes and 21 seconds. Unusually for Stadnicki, who usually raced from behind or in the middle of the competitors, relying on his speed in the final stretch to outpace his rivals, on this occasion he raced in front throughout the entire race. Mecredy almost caught Stadnicki at the end of the race, but he took too wide a turn at the final bend of the course, and failed to recover from this mistake.²⁶ Stadnicki later modestly suggested that Mecredy had taken the bend too widely because he had become rusty at steering a racing tricycle, due to his having recently spent several weeks steering a Singer "Victoria" Ten-in-Hand machine – a monster cycle ridden by ten riders – during a cycling and camping holiday in the north of Ireland.²⁷

Stadnicki proved that his victory over Mecredy was not a fluke, not only by beating him in a rematch one-mile tricycle race a week later,²⁸ but, more importantly, by winning several tricycle and bicycle championships in the years that followed. At the Irish Cyclists' Association championship meeting at Ballsbridge on 15 July 1889, Stadnicki was runner-up to Arthur du Cros in the Irish one-mile tricycle championship race.²⁹ On 19 August 1890, Stadnicki won his only Irish bicycling championship title by winning the Irish Cyclist

Association's ten-mile championship bicycle race in Portadown in a time of 33 minutes and 56 seconds, the fifth quickest time in which the race had been ridden since it was first competed for in 1876. Stadnicki was in third position for most of the race, until the final lap, when his trademark end-of-race spurt allowed him to pass the leaders and to finish ahead of the second-placed man, B.W. Pigott of Dublin.³⁰ Stadnicki was one of the six members of the so-called "Irish Brigade" that took the English racing world by storm when they won numerous races, including several National Cyclists' Union (NCU) championship races, in July 1890, whilst riding pneumatic-tyred machines (see Fig 2). Stadnicki therefore played a part in publicising the virtues of the pneumatic tyre to the British cycling public, thereby helping to revolutionise cycling not only in Britain but, eventually, in the rest of the world.³¹ Although the veteran cycling champion, R.J. Mecredy, was the most successful member of the Irish Brigade during its English tour, winning some four NCU championship titles, Stadnicki triumphed in the NCU's one-mile tricycle championship race at Paddington, and finished a creditable second in the twenty-five mile tricycle championship contest.³² In the one-mile tricycle race, Stadnicki's opponents rather played into his hands by riding at what the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* described as a "disgracefully slow" pace; if a quicker pace had been set, it probably would have made it much more difficult for a tired Stadnicki to bring his devastating final spurt into play.³³

William Percy French, later famous as a professional entertainer and songwriter, wrote a comic verse about Stadnicki in the *Irish Cyclist*. The verse's title, "The Pop-Gun Spurt', and How It Succeeded", refers to Stadnicki's distinctive

short but rapid spurt when racing,³⁴ something which he practiced at in training for the 1890 season. Stadnicki claimed modestly that his training “system” consisted largely of sleeping “a great deal”, eating heartily and doing a lot of walking, but that he worked at his sprinting in training in 1890: “At the beginning of this season I could not spurt at all, but it came by degrees. My spurt is short, but very sharp, and I jump into it at once, and this has gained for it the name of the ‘pop-gun’”.³⁵ French’s verse, which also focuses on the author’s difficulty in pronouncing “Stadnicki”, is as follows:

A gentleman of Polish fame,
Now claims your kind attention:
I know it well, and, yet, his name
I do not dare to mention.
No coward fear withholds me, though
I do not care to tell it;
His name, in full, is Sta----- but no,
I really cannot spell it.

Before the grim Recorder he
Provoked some cachinnation,
As “Sandywick” – for that you see
Was not his appellation.
His lordship quickly changed his tone,
And never even fined him;
On hearing that the youth was known
As -----, well there – never mind him.

This noble is a sporting youth,
When on the track you meet him;
I think I merely state the truth
In saying few can beat him.
He’s won a lot of prizes, tho’
In fact, a racing crack is----- : no,
I really can’t pronounce it.

“Quite easily he’d win the cup”,
His friends are oft asserting,
If only he would once give up
That silly way of spurting;
If only he would bide his time
Before he tried to press it,

There's not a man could beat young-----
I'm
Afraid you'll have to guess it.

The Polish noble took the tip
And said "I do not vunder
If starting at zee bell, to rip
Is vun outrageous blunder;
Nex' time I play a vaiting game,
And den I go like blazes".
You notice how young----- What's his
name?
Picks up our English phrases.

And so he kept his "pop-gun" spurt,
Till at a proper distance,
And won the race, and friends assert,
Without the least assistance:
You doubtless now have guessed his name,
Although I cannot spell it;
So write it on the scroll of fame,
That is – if you can spell it.³⁶

On 13 September 1890, Stadnicki won the Irish five-mile tricycle championship at Ballsbridge, with his finishing time of 16 minutes and 7 seconds knocking a massive forty seconds off the previous record that had been set by du Cros; Stadnicki also received a walk-over in the Irish one-mile tricycle championship at this race meeting.³⁷ In addition to his victories in Ireland and England in 1890, in August of the same year Stadnicki also won what was billed as the 5,000 metre tricycle championship of Europe, at Nijmegen, defeating B.W. Crump of London in a time of 10 minutes and 18 seconds. He also beat Crump in a one-mile tricycle handicap race and a one-mile and seven furlongs tricycle race at this meeting. A band played "the Polish national air as a compliment to the land of the Count's birth" at the end of the proceedings.³⁸ When Stadnicki went on a home visit at the end of 1890, the most successful year of his cycling career,³⁹ W.P. French provided the *Irish Cyclist* with a rare drawing. French's sketch, in the form of a

church stained glass window, depicts Stadnicki on a tricycle (see Fig 3), and was accompanied by a prose verse: “Our only Count is off at last, and now is homeward bounding, with praises of his mighty deeds, the air is still resounding. How would the sketch of him I give just starting for a spin do, to ornament a panel, or an I.C.C.C. window?”⁴⁰ French’s drawing and verse give one an idea of the Count’s popularity with his fellow Irish cyclists.

After his return to Ireland, Stadnicki never succeeded in replicating the form that brought him such rich success in previous years. His best competitive performance was finishing third in the NCU one-mile tricycle championship race at the Bristol County Grounds in July 1891.⁴¹ However, he added one notable addition to his sporting achievements in May 1891, when he set a new Irish five-mile tricycle record at the race meeting that was held on the newly-laid track at the People’s Park in Waterford. Stadnicki, described in an overblown manner by the *Munster Express* as “the champion tricycle rider of the world”, originally intended to race against A.J. Wilson of London, but when the latter failed to turn up Stadnicki decided to try to break the five-mile tricycle record instead. Helped by three pacesetters, he finished the course in 15 minutes and 20½ seconds, smashing the previous record by 90 seconds. According to the *Munster Express’s* reporter, “On completing this marvellous piece of riding the Count was rewarded by the deafening cheers of thousands; indeed it was a feat that will never be forgotten by those who had the good fortune to witness the performance”.⁴²

While Stadnicki enjoyed numerous successes in his brief cycling career, he was also involved in a number of controversial episodes and mishaps during it. One

of these was relatively minor, when Stadnicki was unable to complete the Wanderers Cycling Club's annual hill-climbing competition at the Magazine Hill in Dublin's Phoenix Park in October 1888, after clashing with a pedestrian who crossed in front of his cycle during the competition.⁴³ A more serious incident involving Stadnicki occurred in the sixth heat of the NCU's one-mile tricycle championship at Paddington, when Stadnicki, described by the *Pall Mall Gazette* as "the Irish Pole or the Polish Irishman", was beaten at the line by a few inches by Louis Stein of the Frankfurt Cyclist Club. Stadnicki, exhausted by his efforts in the race, collided with Stein's machine, causing both men to crash into a fence. Stein's machine was badly damaged and both men were injured, Stein being so seriously hurt that he could not compete in the final.⁴⁴ After a lengthy interval, the makers of Stein's tricycle sent him an invoice for £3 10 shillings, the cost of the repairs to his tricycle arising from the collision, and, in turn, Stein returned the invoice to the Coventry manufacturers, with instructions that they were to apply to Stadnicki in Russia for payment. Stadnicki sent the firm's invoice and letter to a staff member of *Bicycling News*, the cycling newspaper edited by G. Lacy Hillier, to see what he thought of the matter, and probably also to embarrass Stein. Lacy Hillier was in no doubts that Stein's conduct was unsporting:

There is an unwritten, but clearly understood, law of the amateur race-track, that every competitor takes part in races at his own risk as far as accidents are concerned, and only where it can be proved that a collision was intentional, or at least very grossly negligent, would it be either legal or "good form" for one competitor to demand recompense from another. In the case under notice, the occurrence was a pure accident, attributable to Stadnicki's

exhaustion after a punishing finish; and Stein can no more demand his expenses to be paid by Stadnicki than *vice versa*.⁴⁵

Stadnicki was badly injured in another cycling accident in Bristol's County Ground in August 1890. The Pole, who won the NCU's one-mile tricycle championship at Paddington in the previous month, had travelled to Bristol in the hope of breaking several tricycling records there, but he had to abandon his plans when the forks of his tricycle's front wheel gave way during a practice run with R.J. Mecredy on the day before the races were scheduled to begin and he was pitched over onto the track "with tremendous impetus". Stadnicki's injuries were so serious that he had to drop out of the races in which he was scheduled to compete.⁴⁶ Bristol was not the happiest of racing venues for Stadnicki. In June of the following year, while competing in the NCU's 25-mile tricycle championship race at the County Grounds, Stadnicki failed to finish the race after he crashed at the finishing line. As *Cycling's* reporter wrote, "Stadnicki generally does something out of the common, and this time his *piece de resistance* consisted of running right into the midst of officials and pressmen",⁴⁷ an incident which the newspaper's artist recorded (see Fig 4). Had he not crashed, Stadnicki would have finished third in the race. In the following month, Stadnicki returned to the County Grounds to compete in the NCU's one-mile tricycle championship, a race which was won by the Dutch rider, Peter Scheltema Beduin. W.H.G. Bramson of the Speedwell club narrowly beat Stadnicki to secure second place, with "the latter gentleman this time sparing the reporters and officials" at the finishing line, as one newspaper noted.⁴⁸

Although Stadnicki's racing career was on the wane after the extraordinary success that he enjoyed in 1890, he was still considered of sufficient calibre to be named as one of the twelve-man Irish team to compete against an English selection in a 10 mile bicycle race in Dublin in August 1891.⁴⁹ His name also features in a list of Irish and English "cracks" who allegedly endorsed "Athlene", a sports supplement aimed at cyclists, in an advertisement in June 1892.⁵⁰ By this stage, his racing career in the United Kingdom was already over, with his final race appearing to be the 50-mile bicycle race from Dublin to Drogheda that was organised by the Leinster Cycling Club in September 1891.⁵¹ The final mention of Stadnicki in the British or Irish press is a brief announcement in April 1893 stating that he was in Russia and had ordered a helical tube safety bicycle from one of the Russian agents of the Premier cycle company.⁵² It would be fascinating to learn how the Count fared on his return to his homeland, but this must remain the task of somebody who can read Polish. It is apparent from the brief mention in the press in April 1893 that he retained an interest in cycling. Did he continue with his cycling career? Did he make a successful career as an engineer after finishing his military service? I hope that a Polish reader reads this short account of Stadnicki's cycling exploits in the 1880s and early 1890s, and is intrigued enough to follow the Count's story in Polish-language sources. In the meantime, I hope that this short article will go some way towards restoring Stadnicki's name in the annals of cycling racing.

¹ BBC News website, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/8673012.stm Accessed 5 July 2017.

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- ² It is a telling detail that even though Stadnicki was the most famous Pole living in Ireland in the 1880s and early 1890s, he is not mentioned in Róisín Healy's recent ground-breaking study, *Poland in the Irish Nationalist Imagination, 1772-1922: Anti-Colonialism within Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).
- ³ *Cyclist* Christmas edition, 1888-1889.
- ⁴ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ⁵ Beaumont College register 5/3/31B (Jesuits in Britain Archives, London).
- ⁶ *The History of St Stanislaus' College Beaumont: A Record of Fifty Years 1861-1911* (Old Windsor, 1911), p.34.
- ⁷ *Ibid*, p.xi.
- ⁸ Beaumont College register 5/3/31B (Jesuits in Britain Archives, London).
- ⁹ *Cyclist* Christmas edition, 1888-1889. Luckily for one of Stadnicki's brothers, the Count did not display the same prowess with a gun as he did on a tricycle. On one occasion when their native area "was very disturbed", Stadnicki and some others were returning from a party one night, when one of his brothers decided to play a trick on them, by hiding as they approached and then jumping into the middle of the road and calling on them to "stop on their lives". Stadnicki instantly fired three shots at his brother at a distance of fifteen yards, but missed him in the dark; he naturally had "an awful shock" when he discovered the identity of the mysterious figure who had leaped out at them in the dark: *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ¹⁰ The sports regime at Beaumont College is outlined in *History of St Stanislaus' College Beaumont*, pp 114-131, and Peter Levi, *Beaumont (1861-1961)* (London, 1961), pp 54-56, 68-72.
- ¹¹ Beaumont College register 5/3/31B (Jesuits in Britain Archives, London). Stanislaus also finished at Beaumont in August 1883; Caesar and Casimir finished there in August 1884.
- ¹² *Western Times*, 30 August 1890; *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890. Cycling was unknown in Podolia when Stadnicki was growing up there. He told an *Irish Cyclist* interviewer that the Podolian roads were "mere tracks, running between fences sixty or seventy yards apart", with deep ruts worn into the tracks by the vehicles that passed over them. His brothers started a cycling club in Warsaw, which was still thriving in 1890, but when one of them took a bicycle home with him to Podolia, it was soon "hopelessly smashed" on the roads there.
- ¹³ The "Fashion and Varieties" section of the *Freeman's Journal* newspaper of 3 October 1883 contains a brief mention of the fact that "Count Norbert Stadnicki arrived at Kingstown yesterday from England".
- ¹⁴ *Daily Express*, 30 October 1884; *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ¹⁵ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890; Brian Griffin, *Cycling in Victorian Ireland* (Dublin: Nonsuch, 2006), p.34.
- ¹⁶ *Cyclist* Christmas edition, 1888-1889; *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ¹⁷ *Cyclist* Christmas edition, 1888-1889; *Irish Cyclist*, 9 March 1892. Stadnicki also served for a period on the race committee of the Irish Cyclists' Association. He was elected to the committee in July 1888: *Freeman's Journal*, 27 July 1888.
- ¹⁸ *Weekly Irish Times*, 10 March 1888; *Irish Cyclist*, 14 March 1888.
- ¹⁹ Undated *Irish Wheelman* extract, in *Wheel and Cycling Trade Review*, 24 April 1891.
- ²⁰ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.

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- ²¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 6 June 1887.
- ²² *Cork Examiner*, 30 June 1887; *Cork Constitution*, 30 June 1887.
- ²³ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ²⁴ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ²⁵ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ²⁶ *Cork Examiner*, 20 August 1888; *Irish Cyclist*, 2 March 1892.
- ²⁷ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890. Mecredy published an account of this trip in *The "Irish Cyclist" Third Annual Tour (1888) Through the North on a Ten-in-Hand* (Dublin: *Irish Cyclist and Athlete*, 1888).
- ²⁸ *Dublin Evening Mail*, 25 August 1888; *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ²⁹ *Daily Express*, 16 July 1889.
- ³⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 13 August 1890; *Belfast News-Letter*, 13 August 1890; *Irish Cyclist*, 2 March 1892.
- ³¹ For the revolutionary impact of the Brigade's racing triumphs in 1890, see *Sporting Life*, 14 January 1891; Arthur du Cros, *Wheels of Fortune: A Salute to Pioneers* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1938), p.56.
- ³² *Gloucester Citizen*, 21 July 1890; *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 27 July 1890. Stadnicki and the other members of the Irish Brigade were the guests of honour at a celebratory dinner hosted by the Irish Cyclists' Association in Dublin's Central Hotel, after their triumphal return from the Paddington meeting: *Freeman's Journal*, 6 August 1890.
- ³³ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 28 July 1890; *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 2 August 1890.
- ³⁴ For an admiring account of Stadnicki's successful use of his "pop-gun" technique in the NCU one-mile bicycle race, see *Irish Cyclist*, 30 July 1890. Stadnicki rode a pneumatic-tyred Humber cycle in this contest.
- ³⁵ *Irish Cyclist*, 1 October 1890.
- ³⁶ *Irish Cyclist*, 25 June 1890.
- ³⁷ *Daily Express*, 15 September 1890; *Sporting Life*, 15 September 1890. He received another walk-over in the one-mile championship race at Ballsbridge on 2 May 1891: *Northern Whig*, 4 May 1891.
- ³⁸ *Irish Times*, 18 August 1890; *St James's Gazette*, 18 August 1890; *Times*, 19 August 1890.
- ³⁹ In addition to the major racing victories outlined above, Stadnicki was also one of the three pacemakers for R.J. Mecredy when Mecredy set a new world record for cycling five miles at Trinity College Dublin in June 1890, beating the previous record recently set by the Irish champion, P.P. Kilkelly, by 42 seconds. Mecredy rode a pneumatic-tyred bicycle for this record-breaking ride. What was particularly remarkable about Mecredy's feat is that he achieved it while riding on a grass track: *Daily Express*, 20 June 1890; *Freeman's Journal*, 21 June 1890.
- ⁴⁰ *Irish Cyclist*, 26 November 1890.
- ⁴¹ *Sporting Life*, 22 July 1891.
- ⁴² *Munster Express*, 23 May 1891. According to another newspaper, an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 people attended the Waterford races: *Waterford Standard*, 20 May 1891.
- ⁴³ *Freeman's Journal*, 15 October 1888. This competition was normally held on the much steeper Knockmaroon Hill, but this was out of bounds at the time as its road had only recently been laid with shingle.

⁴⁴ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 July 1889.

⁴⁵ *Bicycling News*, 2 November 1889. It is not known whether Stadnicki paid Stein the compensation that he demanded.

⁴⁶ *Western Daily Press*, 25 August 1890; *Western Times*, 30 August 1890.

⁴⁷ *Cycling*, 20 June 1891.

⁴⁸ *Birmingham Daily Post*, 20 July 1891.

⁴⁹ *Sporting Life*, 10 August 1891; *Freeman's Journal*, 13 August 1891.

⁵⁰ *Cycling*, 4 June 1892. According to the advertisement, "Athlene" was "a magical elixir – a stimulant which leaves no after depression, but enables the Athlete to put on a final spurt when otherwise feeling 'baked'. 'Athlene' prevents distress in severe contests, gives strength and endurance, and secures free respiration. In a short race, a dose is taken by the man on his mark, immediately previous to the start. In a long distance race, a dose taken about five or ten minutes before the finish pulls a man together and braces him for the final push". The stimulant cost 2 shillings and sixpence per bottle.

⁵¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 19 September 1891. This appears to be the last mention in the British or Irish press of a race featuring Stadnicki.

⁵² *Dundee Courier*, 10 April 1893; *Cycling*, 15 April 1893.