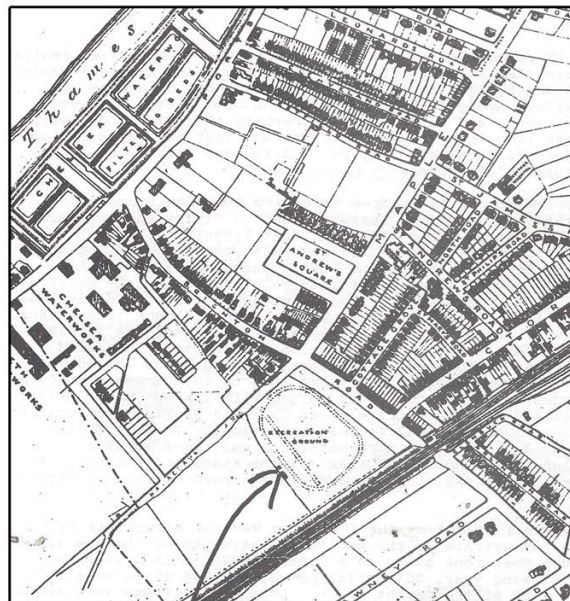
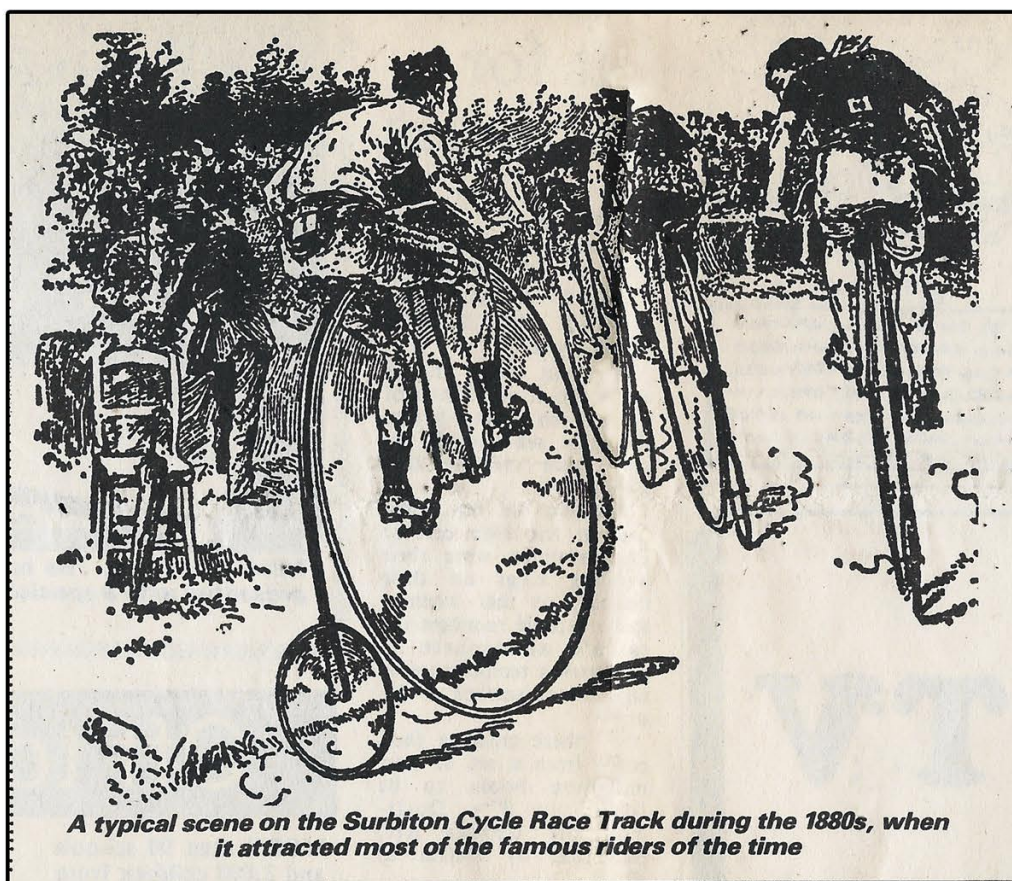


Surbiton Race Track

Surbiton Racetrack, located on the corner of Brighton and Balaclava Road, was the premier cycle track in the London area during the 1880s. The slope down from the railway ensured a fast start and its wide cinder track and banked corners meant it was known for its speed. Surbiton was also considered one of the safest tracks owing to the fact it did not have any fencing round either side that could have impaled falling riders.



The track was built in 1879 under the management of a 'committee of gentlemen' and consisted of four straights and four corners with four laps to the mile. However, off the track the facilities were lacking. Badminton gentleman's magazine noted in 1889 that there was no pavilion and the dressing rooms were 'very poor with no bath and few conveniences.' But the main problem was the considerable cost to cyclists of getting there from London (4/6d return third class with a machine). This resulted in the track becoming increasingly overlooked and falling into decline.



A typical scene on the Surbiton Cycle Race Track during the 1880s, when it attracted most of the famous riders of the time

In 1891 Badminton magazine recorded that it had been broken up and built over, although the adjacent plot of land was secured by a cricket club and is still used for recreational purposes today.