

A toast: Who is the Solitary Cyclist?
by Richard Krisciunas
before meeting of the Watson's Tin Box
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Who is the "Solitary Cyclist" that we should toast by name?
Was it old Bob Carruthers or Violet Smith as others claim?

It's not surprising there's confusion in a Watson written plot.
The Canon's full of many questions like where Watson first got shot.

Did Smith visit Holmes on a Tuesday, instead of Saturday as written?
It sometimes makes you wonder if they had calendars in Britain.

As he introduced the story, Watson's words laid out his list,
"the facts connected with Miss Violet Smith, the solitary cyclist

of Charlington, and the curious sequel of our investigation,..."
But before you think it's her, please compare the rest of his narration.

Later, when Watson spied Carruthers, after Miss Smith disappeared,
"*That's the man!*" he gasped. "A solitary cyclist" with his blackened beard,

Peddling with every ounce of energy to find the missing lady,
Rushing to help Holmes and Watson put an end to something shady.

The term "solitary cyclist" appears twice in the tale's account.
If you add the title, then that's only three by my last count.

Holmes nor Watson rode a bike, so that should make it easy.
Which of the two persons was it? Was it he or was it she?

Is "*the* cyclist" a definite article, used to describe Miss Smith?
Or is "the cyclist" separate and just a part of Watson's list?

The answer to our query can be found where Watson wrote it.
I read the original manuscript, so let me try to quote it.

The original phrase written was "Miss Violet Smith, comma,
The *man* from Charlington and" then there's more about the drama.

"The *Solitary cyclist*" was added; the words "the man" crossed out.
That should bring an end to our discussion; leaving us no doubt.

A Sherlockian Toast (posted 2021-2-7)

The question's answered. The solitary cyclist identified.
It was Old Bob Carruthers and *not* the girl forced to be a bride.
Let's raise our glasses to Bob Carruthers, The Solitary Cyclist!

Stay safe!

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