

# THE WHEELING WORLD

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Turpin: 5.6.1907 P3C6

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE WHEELING WORLD.</b> A WEEKLY SURVEY. Dick Turpin's Cycling Gossip.</p> <p><b>A Wayside Picture.</b></p> <p><b>A</b> LONG, straight stretch of undulating road, with no beginning and no ending; on either side broad open common, spreading out to join a cloudy sky in the extreme distance; a weather-beaten post, surmounted by a battered iron rooster, and looking strangely solemn as the sinking sun gave the flying rain clouds a "Good-night" kiss.</p> <p>Such was the picture which a chum and I saw as we stood on Ditchling Common one day last week.</p> <p>Our ride had taken us to Steyning, on through Partridge Green, and across to Henfield, Hassocks, and Ditchling.</p> <p>We had pedalled in leisurely fashion, for the hedgerows, gay with hawthorn and freshened by a recent shower, invited us to linger. Thrush and cuckoo seconded the invitation, and we were in no wise loth to accept.</p> <p>But ultimately we arrived at Ditchling, having declined an offer of being included in a rustic cricket match on the roadside common near Partridge Green—one of those cricket matches in which the ball frequently loses itself in the furze bushes, and the players, pending its discovery, indulge in a smoke.</p> <p><b>What Ditchling Showed Us.</b></p> <p>As we rode into Ditchling we were at once impressed with the ancient village. On our right was a fine specimen of an old house, half-timbered, with gabled front, its roof all moss-grown, and its diamond shaped window-panes set in lead. The ambling old building, which claims to have sheltered the ex-Queen Anne, looked fully deserving of its name—The Old Palace.</p> <p>Facing the venerable building was Ditchling Church, itself very old, standing, it is believed, on the site of a much older Church of Saxon origin. Its low shingled spire and Horsham stone roof at once give it a picturesque appearance, and mark it as an object of interest.</p>	<p>We peeped inside, had a look at the stained windows, admired four large arches supporting the tower, and at the same time giving dignity to a somewhat plain interior. Then we fell into a lengthy chat with the Verger—a sixty years old inhabitant of Ditchling.</p> <p>We inquired the way to Jacob's Post, and after directing us, the old boy, with a chuckle, related how he once missed a good opportunity of making a little fortune.</p> <p><b>A Crime of Other Days.</b></p> <p>His story began in 1734, when Jacob Harris, a Jew pedlar, murdered and robbed a man and wife on Ditchling Common, subsequently being hung at Horsham for his crime.</p> <p>As a gentle hint to others with a leaning towards murder and robbery, Jacob's body was hung in chains on a gibbet upon the Common. This spot is now marked by Jacob's Post, which has replaced the original gibbet.</p> <p>Some years ago our Verger was engaged to splice a small new piece into the post. He did so. Then it dawned upon him that he would have been wise to have put in a large piece of new wood.</p> <p>A piece of the old post, corresponding in size, might have proved an El Dorado for the worthy Verger. For a much believed local legend has it that small fragments of Jacob's Post, carried in a pocket, guarantees one against suffering from toothache. These fragments ought to fetch some money!</p> <p>Leaving Ditchling we rode northwards over the Common, dismounting to have a closer look at the Post, before continuing on to Wivelsfield</p>	<p>and Cuckfield. Here we cut across to Cowfold, and came through Henfield and Beeding.</p> <p>Undecided whether to ride home by way of Shoreham or Steyning, we spun a coin; it selected Steyning for us, thereby adding four or five miles to our ride, which totalled sixty-three miles when we reached home.</p> <p><b>A Gallant Wheelman.</b></p> <p>My enraptured gaze frequently discerns a gallant knight of the pedals engaged in succouring some distressed damsel a wheel, his sturdy arm assisting her to make headway against wind and hill as they pedal along in closest company.</p> <p>But a wheelman well known in local circles has gone one better in gallantry. He has rendered the welcome assistance to two ladies!—two ladies simultaneously I mean; that is the great point! I know other wheelmen who—but there, I won't give 'em away.</p> <p>As the doubly gallant one is a chum of mine, I mustn't give him away either. For, did I do so, I can well imagine the result. You see, there are quite a number of ladies who appreciate a friendly push when head wind has to be encountered. And I shouldn't like to see him overtaxed.</p> <p>Still, I have a great inclination to make provision for my old age out of the discovery. For instance, a missing word competition—six stamps and a coupon from page, so-and-so. Prizes—anything the Editor can spare. And a four-line specimen of doggerel as follows:</p> <p>A cyclist bravo went forth one breezy day, With ladies twain to cheer him on his way; The ladies found head wind hard labour spells, Our cyclist towed them both, brave Charlie W—</p> <p>But I will refrain from pursuing the subject, lest greed for gold get the better of me.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Dick Turpin</i></p>
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**THE WHEELING WORLD.**  
A WEEKLY SURVEY  
Dick Turpin's Cycling Gossip.

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But ultimately we arrived at Ditchling, having declined an offer of being included in a rustic cricket match on the roadside common near Partridge Green - one of those cricket matches in which the ball frequently loses itself in the furze bushes, and the players, pending its discovery, indulge in a smoke.

#### ----- **What Ditchling Showed Us.**

As we rode into Ditchling we were at once impressed with the ancient village. On our right was a fine specimen of an old house, half-timbered, with gabled front, its roof all moss-grown, and its diamond shaped window-panes set in lead. The ambling old building, which claims to have sheltered the ex-Queen Anne, looked fully deserving of its name - The Old Palace.

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We peeped inside, had a look at the stained windows, admired four large arches supporting the tower, and at the same time giving dignity to a somewhat plain interior. Then we fell into a lengthy chat with the Verger - a sixty years old inhabitant of Ditchling.

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We inquired the way to Jacobs Post, and after directing us, the old boy, with a chuckle, related how he once missed a good opportunity of making a little fortune.

#### ----- **A Crime of Other Days.<sup>i</sup>**

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*Dick Turpin*

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<sup>1</sup> The story is told in greater detail in Charles Harper's

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"The Brighton Road". That day three people died at Jacob Harris's hands; Mr. Miles, landlord of the Royal Oak (Wivelsfield), the serving-maid who had come downstairs to investigate, then Mrs. Miles, murdered on her sick-bed. Harris cut the throats of all three: none died at once, and Miles lived long enough to identify his killer.