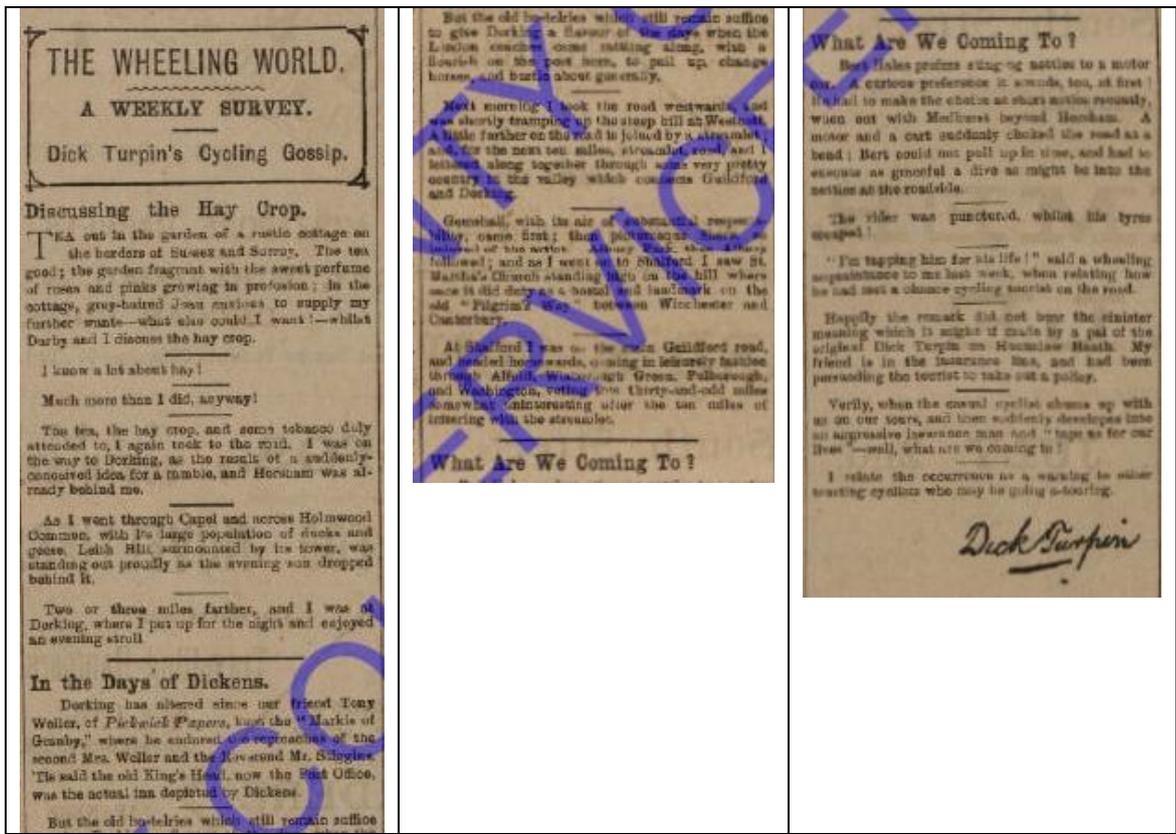


THE WHEELING WORLD

Source: Worthing Gazette Archive
at Worthing Local Studies Library
Turpin: 24.6.1908 P3C5 - 01



THE WHEELING WORLD.

A WEEKLY SURVEY.

Dick Turpin's Cycling Gossip.

Discussing the Hay Crop.

TEA out in the garden of a rustic cottage on the borders of Sussex and Surrey. The tea good; the garden fragrant with the sweet perfume of roses and pinks growing in profusion; in the cottage, grey-haired Joan anxious to supply my further wants - what else could I want! - whilst Darby and I discuss the hay crop.

I know a lot about hay!

Much more than I did, anyway!

The tea, the hay crop, and some tobacco duly attended to, I again took to the road. I was on the way to Dorking, as the result of a suddenly-conceived idea for a ramble, and Horsham was already behind me.

As I went through Capel and across Holmwood Common, with its large population of ducks and geese, Leith Hill, surmounted by its tower, was

standing out proudly as the evening sun dropped behind it.

Two or three miles farther, and I was at Dorking, where I put up for the night and enjoyed an evening stroll.

In the Days of Dickens.

Dorking has altered since our friend Tony Weller, of *Pickwick Papers*, kept the "Markis of Granby," where he endured the reproaches of the second Mrs. Weller and the Reverend Mr. Stiggins. 'Tis said the old King's Head, now the Post Office, was the actual inn depicted by Dickens.

But the old hostelries which still remain suffice to give Dorking a flavour of the days when the London coaches came rattling along, with a flourish on the post horn, to pull up, change horses, and bustle about generally.

Next morning I took the road westwards, and was shortly tramping up the steep hill at Westcott. A little farther on the road is joined by a streamlet; and, for the next ten miles, streamlet, road, and I loitered along together through some very pretty country in the valley which connects Guildford and Dorking.

Gomshall, with its air of substantive respectability, came first; then picturesque Shere, so beloved of the artist. Albury Park, then Albury followed; and as I went on to Shalford I saw St. Martha's Church standing high on the hill where once it did duty as a hostel and landmark on the old "Pilgrim's Way" between Winchester and Canterbury.

At Shalford I was on the main Guildford road, and headed homewards, coming in leisurely fashion through Alfold, Wisborough Green, Pulborough, and Washington, voting this thirty-and-odd miles somewhat uninteresting after the ten miles of loitering with the streamlet.

What Are We Coming To?

Bert Hales prefers stinging nettles to a motor car. A curious preference it sounds, too, at first! He had to make the choice at short notice recently, when out with Medhurst beyond Horsham. A motor and a cart suddenly choked the road at a bend; Bert could not pull up in time, and had to execute as graceful a dive as might be into the nettles at the roadside.

The rider was punctured, whilst his tyres escaped!

"I'm tapping him for his life!" said a wheeling acquaintance to me last week, when relating how he had met a chance cycling tourist on the road.

Happily the remark did not bear the sinister meaning which it might if made by a pal of the original Dick Turpin on Hounslow Heath. My friend is in the insurance line, and had been persuading the tourist to take out a policy.

Verily, when the casual cyclist chums up with us on our tours, and then suddenly *developes*¹ into an aggressive insurance man and “ taps us for our lives ”—well, what are we coming to?

I relate the occurrence as a warning to other trusting cyclists who may be going a-touring.

Dick Turpin

¹ Yes, “Developes” is how Dick spelled it.