

Researcher's note: this proved to be the last of Richard Long's Dick Turpin articles.
For detail see the Gazette editorial dated 24th August, 1909.

THE WHEELING WORLD

Source: Worthing Gazette.

Worthing Local Studies Library

Turpin: 11.11.1908 P2C4-5

<p>THE WHEELING WORLD. A WEEKLY SURVEY. Dick Turpin's Cycling Gossip.</p> <p>An Autumn Reverie.</p> <p>ONLY a few miles had I ridden the other day, when I had a curious experience. A dreamy, languorous feeling stole over me; slowly but completely it grew more intense, until it permeated every fibre of my being. Or, anyway, the penny novelist would so express it! You, good reader, would say I had a lazy fit on. The speedman would affirm I had the "knock."</p> <p>Be it as you will! I soon exchanged my seat in the saddle for one on a fallen tree trunk a few yards off the road, and, half dozing, set some gentle wreaths of tobacco smoke a-floating in the air.</p> <p>Anon a light footstep caused me to look around. A young and charming girl was regarding me amusedly. Her look of freshness and vigour, youth, and energy, was striking; her smile was encouraging.</p> <p>I resolved on the time-honoured crammer. "Good morning! I believe I have had the pleasure of meeting you previously, Miss ——" I broke off lamely.</p> <p>"You have known me a little while," the young lady admitted; "I'm Miss Nineteen-hundred-and-eight—you may call me Naught-eight."</p> <p>What a Wheeling Year!</p>	<p>What a Wheeling Year!</p> <p>"Well, Miss Naughtly—I mean Naught-eight—you'll be leaving us soon, I suppose; I hope Miss Naught-nine will treat us as kindly as you have done. It has been a rare year for wheeling."</p> <p>"True," said the young lady; "look, and you shall see the pageant of the year." And with one clap of her little hands the pageant started.</p> <p>A solo by a cuckoo, with a strong chorus of wild birds, and the leafless trees began to don bright green buds. A few wheelers had been circling about the stage, most having mudguards and mackintoshes; but spring was now in the air, and the number increased and grew more lively.</p> <p>Miss Naught-eight pointed to a tandem pair—'twas the irrepressible and myself. "They went to Bath and Bristol at Easter, and took three days," said she reproachfully. "Medhurst does it in one ride!" I protested that we had three days' fun instead of one day's hard work; but the lady murmured "Slow coaches!"</p> <p>Meanwhile the sun was growing warmer, the trees putting on leaf, the fragrance of ripening hay greeting the swarm of wheelers. I recognised we had got on to June.</p> <p>The Call of Summer.</p> <p>Then I espied a crowd of Excelsiorites—I counted seventy—enjoying dinner and tea in the joiest fashion. "President Warne's annual outing," observed Miss Naught-eight; "and look how happy he is to see the Club in such good spirits."</p> <p>No sooner had this passed than a cluster of fourteen speedmen went racing along. It was the Excelsior Club's twenty-five miles road race; the exciting struggle ended in a win for Victor Cowan with Edgar Henson second and Fred Flint third.</p> <p>A crowd of Excelsiorites cheered the racers, and the scene ended with the innocent revels of the annual Strawberry Feast, whereat half a hundred wheelers made merry.</p> <p>Next a glimpse of Sawkins, Fred Flint, and</p>	<p>Next a glimpse of Sawkins, Fred Flint, and Cowan riding along a hundred miles of rather moist roads in the Southern Hundred. "Fine riding!" exclaimed my guide, as Sawkins finished in five hours and fifty minutes, with Fred Flint four minutes longer, whilst Cowan's machine gave out. I replied that only motorists get fined nowadays, and received a look of disdain for my jockey.</p> <p>The lady, whose charms had by this time grown more mature, pointed to the golden corn which brightened up the countryside. "We have reached August" was her remark as she nodded to Captain Duffield, who was gaily leading his Excelsiorites hither and thither. And right happy they looked, boating at Barpham, taking tea <i>al fresco</i> at West Grinstead, shooting bottles in Bramber Castle, tramping on to Chanctonbury, and so on.</p> <p>A Vision of Speed.</p> <p>Then came the Annual Race Meeting. I watched Kingsbury win outright the silver Challenge Trophy in the five miles race; Hodgkinson, on his speedy motor bike, was thrilling the spectators as he made President Warne's silver Cup his own; Jack Flint was earning the cheers of his Club-mates as he won a well-ridden race in the Club mile, with L. A. Tribe and Chipper close on his heels.</p> <p>"Victor Cowan makes a good Race Secretary!" I remarked. "Yes," replied Miss Naught-eight. "I'm sorry his knee is not right yet; Miss Naught-nine will find it cured, I hope."</p> <p>Again the scene had changed. Edgar Henson,</p>
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Again the scene had changed. Edgar Henson, buffeted by the wind, was riding a twelve hours trial on the road; a hundred and seventy-five miles was his total, a well-earned gold-centre medal his reward.

Sawkins followed, rattling off a hundred miles in five hours and forty-seven and a half minutes in happy style, and qualifying for a gold medal.

Then came Stephenson intent on a twelve hours' ride. The clouds gathered; the rain fell; the mud flew; Miss Naught-eight shed many tears. But Billy went on with dogged pluck, and rode a hundred and seventy and some odd miles, finishing up drenched and bedraggled, but happy with a gold centre medal!

Meanwhile our old friend Sam Clark, with thirty-five yards start, had won a Veterans' Running Race at Emsworth; whilst Henson, on scratch, got fourth. Jack Standing was there also, and won third prize in the Open Mile Bicycle Race. "Bravo! Tarring for sportsmen!" cried Miss Naught-eight.

Autumn's Charms.

I noticed the lady was now looking much more mature, whilst the scenery on the pastoral stage was changing rapidly. Trees were clothed in the hues of copper and gold, and some of the leaves were falling. Harvesting was over; blackberries were ripening everywhere; and fruit trees drooped under a profusion of apples and pears; and ever the busy wheelers kept coming and going.

Geoffrey Cumines, from Bognor, had no sooner reduced the record from Worthing to Hastings and back than another excitement manifested itself. Sixteen Excelsior men raced twenty-five miles, Jack Flint winning from Albert Standing and Fred Flint in one hour and forty-five minutes.

And now, as the sun was drooping, the journeys became shorter, and the busy swarm of wheelers thinned out. Even Ashford for awhile ceased to

ply his pedals on the hilly road to Tunbridge Wells. "Why," inquired Miss Naught-eight, "does he always go there? I've counted twenty journeys this year!" I smiled and held my peace. Fancy a lady failing to guess!

Then Medhurst finished a long ride to Canterbury and back, and smiled with satisfaction over a season's riding of seven thousand miles. And Miss Naught-eight, now turning grey, again clapped her hands.

Farewell!

Lo! The stage was cleared; the pageant had vanished; and I awoke! So, good readers, I will now imitate Miss Naught-eight, and clear my little stage in the GAZETTE for awhile. Or methinks the pageant will grow wearisome.

During the winter months we hope still to go a-wheeling and to enjoy it; but it were well you should be relieved awhile from my prosing.

So, pending the arrival of Miss Naught-nine, I bid you "Au revoir!"

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A WEEKLY SURVEY.

Dick Turpin's Cycling Gossip.

An Autumn Reverie.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dick Turpin". The signature is written in black ink on a white background. Below the signature, there is a horizontal line that ends in a small flourish or arrowhead pointing to the right.