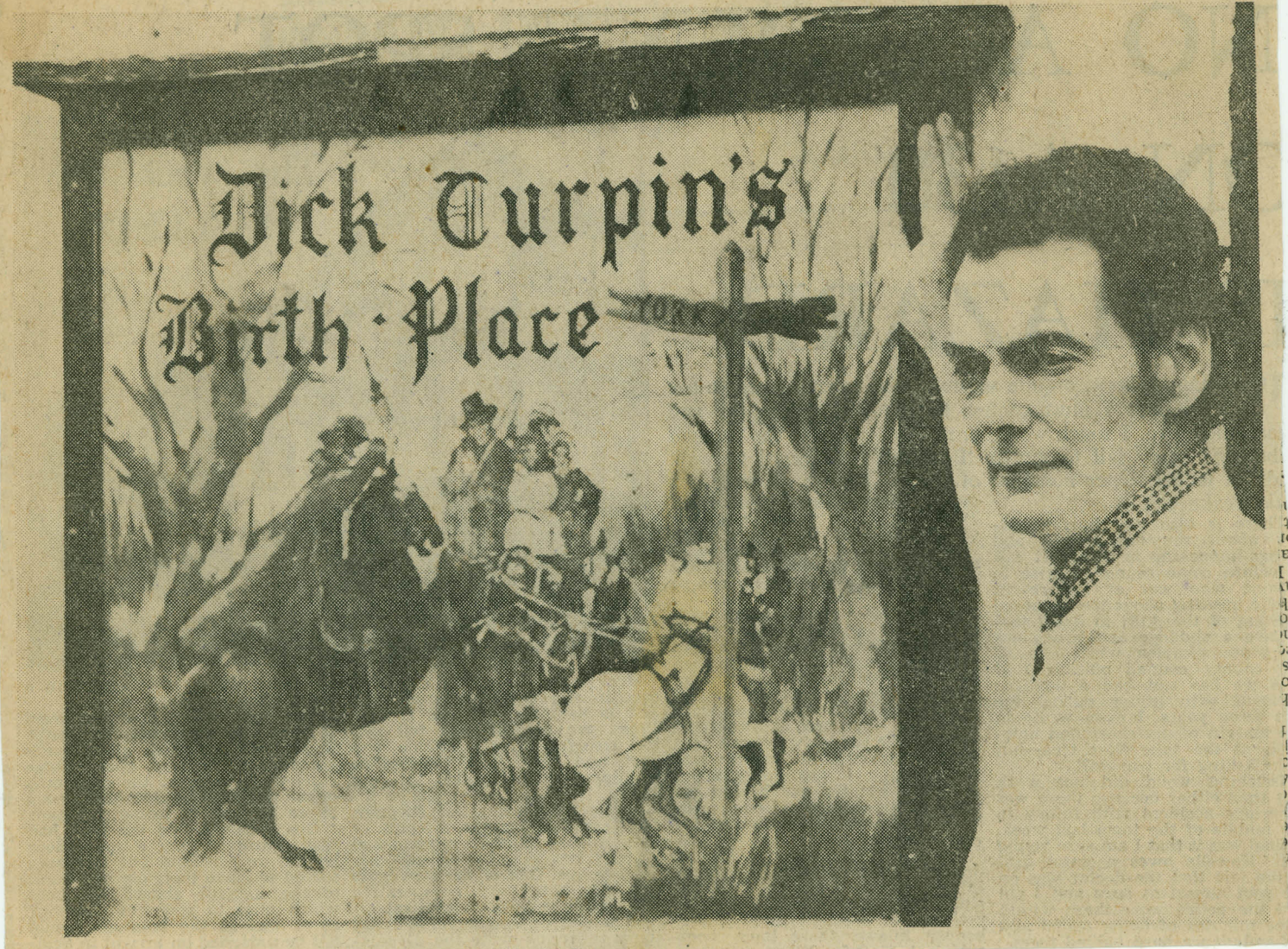


... But you worked with a good
set of plikes it became a

17/8/1972



DICK TURPIN

DICK TURPIN, highwayman, earned himself a place in English folk history when, at the age of 33, he was hanged at Tyburn, York, never have been incriminated never have been incriminated but but for evidence given by a Schoolmaster in the tiny village of Hempstead, near Saffron Walden.

"The Gentlemen's Magazine," of 1739, recorded that Turpin, at his execution, "behaved in an undaunted Manner; as he mounted the Ladder, feeling his right Leg tremble, he stamp'd it down, and looking round about him with an unconcerned Air, he spoke a few Words to the Topfman, then threw himself off, and expired in five Minutes."

At the time of his arrest Turpin, with a reward on his head for his notorious crimes as a highwayman, had been posing as John Palmer, country gentleman, who was sent to a "house of correction" for shooting a prized gamecock in a moment of drunken reverie.

Legend has it that Turpin wrote home to Essex for £100, which would have secured his release, but that by a chain of coincidences the letter fell into the hands of his old schoolmaster who instantly recognised his handwriting—and the game was up.

Photostat

Taverns the length of England between London and York claim association with Turpin, the most infamous highwayman of them all, but it is somehow fitting that the Bell, Hempstead (now the Rose and Crown) still stands, and that it can be substantiated in the parish register as his birthplace.

Jack Gee, licensee for the past four years, is obviously very proud of the Turpin legend.

"We have a photostat of his birth certificate on the wall," Mr. Gee explained over a foaming mid-morning pint, "a copy of the

PROFILE of Jack Gee

letter that incriminated him, and the Turpin family tree, presented by a descendant, Richard Turpin, who comes in to see me sometimes."

A small notice draws attention to Turpin's "spyhole" in the low hanging ceiling, through which it is possible, in the large bedroom above, to hear every word uttered in this tiny bar.

Small, intimate, the Rose and Crown is a pub with real character, much better for being tucked back on a "B" road through the centre of Hempstead linking the A11 to the A604.

Mr. Gee, newly-elected parish councillor, will do all he can to perpetuate the Turpin legend which is good for business; but he acknowledges that soon he will be the tales about the highwayman at the height of his daring, obviously fanciful.

For one thing, Turpin rode Black Bess or any other horse the 200 miles between London and York in order to provide himself with an alibi for a crime he had committed; if anyone did so, it was "Swarner" Nevison, using a team of some 60 years before.

Keeping up the legend of Dick Turpin

By Deryck Harvey

highwayman, for three years, until he accidentally shot King dead during an ambush.

It is ironical that Mr. Gee, 49, a Yorkshireman, whose wife, Clarice, actually comes from York, should have taken on "Dick Turpin's pub" in order to escape the "rat race" of modern life, for he, too, has been a man of action.

An engineer by trade, he was on 24-hour call as a plant maintenance engineer for J. Arthur Rank for 30 years, and during the war he served in North Atlantic convoys in Capt. Walker's famous B5 group.

"I stayed on North Atlantic convoys for 2½ years," he said, "and then we went into the Mediterranean, and we were brought back for the Invasion. We had some fun there."

His escort destroyer was hit on D-Day-plus-three: "We were crippled, but there was no loss of life. We didn't sink. But we were just a sitting duck, off the coast of Normandy."

Like Dick Turpin, he lived constantly in danger for a sustained period. "You'd always got this thought at the back of your mind . . . But you worked with a good set of blokes . . . it became a bond you'll never break."

The pub is both Mr. Gee's work and, I suspect, his relaxation, but he enjoys both motoring and shooting. Now that he is living in the country, he has more time for shooting. I felt confident that Dick Turpin would have approved.

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Research undertaken
Lofts, president of the C
Old Boys' Book Club,
firmed Turpin's comp
nature, revealing at l
instances in which he m
robbed the rich to pr
the poor.

But he was, undou
rogue of the highway, c
standing that he was ig
Captain Charles Johnson
the "General History o
waymen," only three yea
he was hanged.

Turpin, after a brier
conversed pleasantly wi
hangman for a few momen
fore flinging himself off the
fold. Never a coward, he
with his life for his crimes
no-one can ask more of a
than that.

He is quoted as saying: "I
not speak to the multitude
ent, as is the custom of m
offenders. My regret is tha
suffer for so base a crime; I h
rather it had been for so
offence more fitted to my care
It would take long to relate
many robberies. In none did
ever shed blood, though life
have taken in self-defence. I
avails me naught to conceal it
but the murder, if you may so
call it, of a servant, was the act o
this hand. I am justly sentenced
and I fear not to meet my fate."

Why did Turpin take to a life
of crime? The answer is that he
twice failed as a butcher and
businessman, while also spending
a short time as landlord of a
public house at Thaxted.

Although married to Betty
Millington, at the age of 23—they
had one daughter—Turpin en-
joyed an extravagant way of life,
and as a butcher he resorted to
stealing his "stock" from the
surrounding countryside.

Mr. Lofts, who has ferretted
out as much information as pos-
sible at the British Museum
London Record Office, has ob-
served:

In those days cattle- and sheep-
stealing were capital offences,
punishable by hanging. Eventu-
ally the law caught up with him
and investigators found at his
slaughter house two specially-
branded cattle hides. A warrant
was soon out for his arrest.

Turpin fled and joined a gang
of smugglers, later joining the
infamous Gregory gang in Epping
Forest; and later still, he went
north and joined Tom King, the