

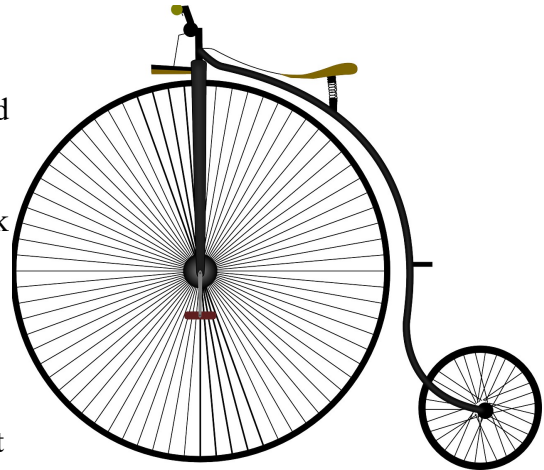
22nd April 1877

Memory Verses

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth:
and the heavens are the work of thy hands.
They shall perish,
but **thou shalt endure**:
yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed.
Psalm 102:25-6

Something to read

On 22nd April 1884 Thomas Stevens (1854-1935) started out from San Francisco on the first ever bicycle trip round the world. His bicycle looked like the one pictured here which is called an “ordinary” bicycle and sometimes a “penny-farthing” because the sizes of the two wheels look like a big old-style penny and a little farthing coin. The kind of bicycle you *now* might ride is called a “safety bicycle.” These ordinary cycles were tricky to mount and dismount. You can see why from the picture!¹ The “peg” which sticks out from the frame (on the right in the picture) is used for this purpose. The rider places one foot on the peg and in a standing position scoots the cycle along until it has some momentum. Then he puts both feet on the peg allowing the cycle to glide. From this position he cannot pedal and the cycle will eventually just slow down and stop. In order to pedal he has to swing himself on to the saddle, moving his feet as he does so off the peg and then onto the moving pedals. To stop and dismount the rider has to take his feet off the pedals and, as the cycle glides along under its own momentum, put them onto the peg. This enables the rider to stand and then dismount.



Thomas Stevens took with him socks, a spare shirt, a raincoat that doubled as tent and bedroll (how I would love to know what that was like!) and set off for New York via Sacramento, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming and Boston, walking when the trail was too rough or steep for him to ride which was about one third of the time!

Mr Stevens stayed in New York during the winter and a cycling magazine funded his passage to Liverpool, making him their special correspondent.

From Liverpool he rode to New Haven where he took the ferry to Dieppe. He crossed France and travelled through Germany, Austria, Hungary, Slavonia (part of modern day Croatia), Serbia and Bulgaria to Turkey where he stopped to rest and overhaul his cycle in Constantinople (Istanbul). Then he set off again through Anatolia (a province of Turkey), Armenia, Kurdistan and Iraq to Iran. Here he spent the winter and was entertained by the Shah or ruler of Iran. From Iran he had hoped to travel across Siberia but could not get permission so he attempted to go via Afghanistan instead. This was a disaster as he was captured and arrested, although well treated, and then made to return to Iran – but not before the Afghans had damaged his cycle.

Undaunted he took a steamer across the Caspian Sea to Baku, and then went back by rail to Batoum where he crossed the Black Sea in steamer back to Constantinople (Istanbul). He then set out again by steamer across the Mediterranean and through the Suez Canal and on to Karachi. He cycled

¹ You can see it done here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJ5QjdDSodU>.

through India via **Dehli** to Calcutta (now called **Kolkata**). Here he took ship again to **Hong Kong** from where he cycled to **Shanghi**. Here he took a steamer again to the western tip of **Japan** and cycled through the country to **Yokohama**. Then he took a steamer back to **San Francisco** to complete his journey. It had taken him two years and nine months and he had cycled about 13,500 miles.

Map Work

I have **highlighted** all the places Mr Stevens visited so that you can look them up in an atlas. You can then construct a map of his journey. If you can use a printer you can print out the map which is in the additional resources file. This will give you an outline of the world. If you put a dot on the map for each place highlighted above you will be able join the dots and trace his journey. You could use a different colour line for parts of the journey where he was on board a steamer (and another for his train trip). If you cannot print the file you may be able to trace an outline for a map or draw an outline map of your own. It does not have to be exactly accurate to give a picture of his achievement.

Using Your imagination

I have not given here any details of all the amazing adventures Mr Stevens had with native American Indians, bandits, Chinese officials and Indian roads to name but a few of the things he encountered. If you enjoy adventure stories you might like to make up an imaginary episode of his travels and write it down perhaps as a diary entry, making it as exciting as you can.

Exercise

If you can, go out for a (shorter) bike ride yourselves today. If you have a stationary bicycle you could set yourself a target (perhaps not 13,500 miles!) such as the distance from Liverpool to Newhaven and see how long it takes you to complete it in daily sessions. Or even if you can only ride up and down a garden path you could measure the distance and calculate how many times you would have to do it to cover the equivalent distance. If you have no bicycle you could still set yourself a distance target to walk and see how long it takes. I heard of someone who climbed the equivalent of Mount Everest using their stairs and that someone else ran a marathon (26 miles) on their balcony! These ideas might give you inspiration for a challenge of your own. We all need physical exercise so make sure you have an exercise programme of some sort in place to make sure you take regular exercise.