

# John "Swift Nick" Nevison

Much about his life is shrouded in mystery, Most probably, Nevison was born at Wortley near Sheffield around 1639/40. He came from a good family He worked as a brewer's clerk in London for several years and then became a soldier. He seems to have lived quietly with his father until his father died.

It is claimed that Nevison never used violence against his victims. One of the most famous stories of his life is his ride to York which some people attributed to Dick Turpin

At 4am one summer morning in 1676, a traveller at Gads Hill in Kent, England was robbed by John Nevison. He then rode off on his horse. He arrived in York at sunset after a journey of more than 200 miles, a stunning achievement for both man and horse. He stabled his weary horse at a York inn, washed and changed his travel-stained clothes, When he got to York he met the Lord Mayor and played a game of bowls with him.

Later, Nevison was arrested for the robbery in Gads Hill and in his defence, produced the Lord Mayor of York as his alibi witness. The Lord Mayor could prove Nevison was in York at 8pm on the day of the robbery and the court refused to believe that a man would have committed that time in Kent and ridden to York by 8pm the same day. He was found not guilty of that crime and emerged as a folk hero, even impressing the king of England.

His gang of six outlaws met at the Talbot Inn at Newark and robbed travellers along the Great North Road as far north as York

. He was arrested several times - in 1674, when he escaped from Wakefield goal before charges could be brought, and again in 1676 on charges of robbery and horse-stealing. Nevison was sentenced to transportation to Tangiers, but returned to England (or escaped before the ship disembarked from Tilbury) and once more took to highway robbery. He was arrested yet again in 1681 and escaped again.

He killed a man called Fletcher, a constable who died while trying to arrest him. He was targeted by bounty hunters, and after a tip-off from the landlady was captured while drinking at the Magpie Inn at Sandal, near Wakefield. His execution was never in doubt and he was hanged at York Castle on May 4, 1684.

