

# Penny Farthing Bicycle 1860s, Singer, Royal Challenge, - on e-Bay - from Alan Hillier

When I first saw this on e-Bay at a 'Buy-it-Now' price of £5,000 I thought it might be something special. I had heard Singer were an innovative company, and as I read through the list of features on this machine - generally known as an 'Ordinary' bicycle - I realised just how advanced or 'Extra-Ordinary' the design of this model must have been - the vendor thought it was probably built in the 1870s.

The 50in main wheel has what appears to be a free-wheel device, and an approx 13in trailing wheel (the e-Bay advert says 24in, but that's clearly wrong), and the pedal cranks have sliding slots so the 'gearing' can effectively be changed in advance for hilly or flat routes. The pedals have been rebuilt with new wooden bars to match the originals, and the saddle is mounted on a sprung slider for comfort and ease of adjustment. This is also stamped 'Singer & Co' and 'Royal Challenge'.

The steering head can be unscrewed for ease of transportation and storage.

We're told the black enamel paint work needs touching up, that the bike is in good working order and that it rides beautifully, being best suited to a rider 5ft 8in to 6ft tall.

I've seen several 'Penny Farthings' on e-Bay over the years, but none I can recall as special as this one. **Alan.**

