

The Pickwick Magazine

*The World's Oldest Cycling Club
and Oldest Dickensian Society Extant*

Founded in 1870



Pickwickian Racers at the Hillingdon Track

153 years old and still going strong

Looking back on 2023....

Last year's Club events continued to be well supported as we drifted into the autumn, with the second running of the Hillingdon Ordinary Races in September - which were quite spectacular, very entertaining, and with an extraordinary number of Ordinaries assembled in one place. Thanks to Matthew Trott for his excellent reporting, which you can enjoy in this issue. This was followed by a record breaking support for the well established Hampton Court Ride - courtesy of Hunt & Pruffle, with 46 participants. Sadly I don't think we will ever reach the giddy heights of the 1870's with 2000 cyclists on the event, but this event numbers continues to grow, much to the delight of the organisers.



Like many of the Club officers, their work continues behind the scenes, and members only see the results of their endeavours. Therefore, Dr Slammer needs a special mention - having been charged by the now Past President, to compile an inventory of the Club's possessions of cups, trophies, minute books, and other collectibles - he did achieve this during Charlie The Pot Boy's year of office. Many of the trophies etc, were on display at the December Garden Party, carefully guarded by members of the Household Cavalry and hopefully seen by many of you. Well done Dr Slammer!

I would like to thank Mr Grundy(Carlton Reid) & Stephen Downham(Sgt Buzfuz -Retired) for their contributions to this issue, as it makes it easier for me to fill the pages. Remember, I am always pleased to receive contributions for your magazine. In the meantime, I hope that you have an enjoyable, safe, and dry summer of cycling..... *Editor*

Closing Date for the October 2024 issue will be 31st August 2024

All contributions are most welcome, the more you send, the less I have to do(!), and they should be sent to the Editor by email: pickwick2610@hotmail.com or to: Taverners, Warninglid Lane, Plummers Plain, West Sussex RH13 6NY

An Update from your Secretary...

[email: stuart.elliott@elliotts.uk](mailto:stuart.elliott@elliotts.uk)



It was splendid to see most of our members attending our Garden Party in December, which hopefully means that we are back to where we need to be with attendance. There were 164 members, with just 52 not attending, and 371 guests; so an average of over two guests per member. The Connaught Rooms were close to bursting, but there were a lot of smiling faces, which says it all!

We need to keep up this momentum for the President's Luncheon on Thursday 9th May 2024, so please make a diary note, get your guest invitations out and commit to attending the event **now!**

You will all now have received your new Membership Book, which was a mammoth task to achieve! Despite chasing twice, by the end of September I was still awaiting replies from 30 members and had to resort to phoning and texting to get the necessary information. Next time, we will have to do better!

We now have 216 members, including 23 retired members and 24 available sobriquets. The waiting list, which was formed in January 2019, now has just 6 nominees awaiting membership, so at the AGM it was agreed to re-open the waiting list during the month of January 2024. We anticipate around 50 nominations, so subject to the availability of sobriquets, admitting 10 new members each year, it could take 5 years to admit all to membership. Importantly, they will reduce the average age of our club and bring youth and enthusiasm for the future.

I look forward to working with our new President and the Committee to help move our bicycle club forward, while respecting the history and traditions that we value so highly.

Tally Ho!

Mr Watty

The Life of a President....

I am honoured to be your President this year.

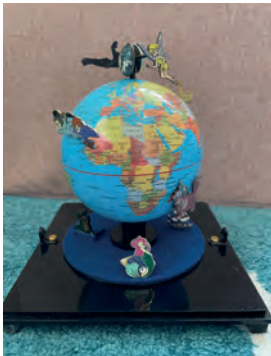
For those that don't know me, I would like to tell you a little about my background. My passion for all things cycling started at the age of 4, but I have never been a professional (cyclist that is!)



For those that do know me, will know that I am an ardent model maker, one of which the Club owns -in fact it is back in my home during my year as President!

One of my other great passions is for aviation, and in fact I have held flying licenses for fixed wing, helicopters, and airships (of which there are only 40 airship pilots in the world). I have been Chairman of the Helicopter Club of Great Britain, and I am an international aviation judge for various competitions. I have held many international patents in my role as machinery designer, inventor and supplier to the furniture industry. For 22 years I was a Justice of the Peace in West London; President of my Rotary Club, and spent 18 years as a Samaritan. I am still an active Mental Health Act Manager.

I followed my father in joining the Pickwick Bicycle Club, and in fact my son also became a member at the December luncheon and has the soubriquet of The Zephyr. I have always been enthusiastic about bicycles and my first one was a blue Birmingham Small Arms bike, over 70 years ago. I have an old 1930s Raleigh, and in fact, still own an original Bickerton folding bike. For the future, the emphasis of this Club is of course cycling, and another part is its dining, but cycling has to, or will be, pre-eminent.



A Peter Pan
mechanical
globe; one of many
built by your President

I wish you all a great year, and I will be listening to you with your hopes and requirements for our Club.

With Pickwickian Greetings

Samuel Pickwick Esq



Captain's Words

My dear fellow Pickwickians, another year passes!

This one having been special to me, with my brother, Adrian Stevens, Charley The Pot Boy, being our President, he has made me proud. One of his highlights has to be the introduction of our own FACEBOOK page, which is slowly gaining momentum and keeping Club Members in touch.

As I approach the end of my final year as your Club Captain, it is important for me to thank you all for giving me the privilege and support of holding this Office. I have, and will continue to look back on many happy memories. However a few special thanks for my last year. Mr Watty, thank you and congratulations for organising a great Garden Party Lunch, last December. For those members and guests who were able to join us and behaved most honourably, in getting to the table in time for lunch to be served on time - Thank you too!

Also a special tribute to our Chief Trumpeter, Warrant Office Class 2, Matt Screen has to be given. Matt, who has now retired after attending our lunches for many years, will hopefully, on being proposed by Paddy, and seconded by yours truly, be joining us as a member and sitting down to enjoy lunch alongside us in the not too distant future..

When I hand over to Paddy Green (Dumkins) in December, it will open up a vacancy for a new Vice-Captain. Please do consider yourself for this important and most enjoyable role and speak with Paddy or myself if you have any questions, but please do put your names forward next December.

Please remember the President's Luncheon this May. We need members to attend both lunches if at all possible; in order to make the Club financially viable we do need you and your guests support. This will be my last President's Luncheon, but I will hopefully see many of you at events during this year. Thank you for your continued support over the years.

With Pickwickian Regards...

Dr. Payne of the 43rd-Club Captain

The October 2023 Hampton Court Ride as reported by Hunt

Once again, last year's Hampton Court annual ride was graced with a fine day on October 6th; well supported by 50 members and guests, riding an array of machines with no less than 3 Dursley Pedersens including one ridden by our president Mr Pickwick "Charlie the Pot Boy"; 3 Penny Farthings - Mr Gunter taking centre stage and of course, "Ramsey" Paul Woodman, with his 1950 Butcher's bike complete with 12 fresh loaves of bread in the basket.



Ready to go ?



There were 2 -honest!

The ride started at 10.00am with road-riders heading off on their Richmond Park ride, lead by "Mr Griggs" Martin Guest. I would love to tell you more about this ride, but I could not keep up with those fit youngsters! You will find Martin's report on the next page. So, I headed off from the Thames Yacht Club with the rest of the riders, along the Thames towpath towards Kingston and on to Bushy Park where we were treated to the spectre of two large stags directly in front of us, going head-to-head in the rutting season. One or two of the riders were a little startled at the sight of 2 x 25 stone 7ft tall animals going full tilt at each other only 10 miles from the centre of London. A sight talked about at great length at our pit-stop at The Star in Hampton Hill, where we were reunited with the road riders for a plentiful supply of sandwiches supplied by PJ and Mary - the landlords.



Which Way Now?



Jingle with Minder (Brown of Muggleton)

Then, setting off back around the famous Diana Fountain in the park [check out the 1877 Hampton Court Meet photo] for our regular photo-call at the Palace itself, before heading back to the Yacht Club for our Pickwickian luncheon.



Hampton Court Palace Photo Call

At the finishing line it was great to see all 46 starters arriving back, with a look of glee on their faces whether you were one of the 12 riders that the (Marquis de Filletoville) Phil Saunders invited along; (Brown of Muggleton) Andy Cook riding a tandem with (Alfred Jingle) Ron Beale - who never stopped talking for 2 hours on the 12 mile ride, or the very welcome guests on a modern E-bike, a Brompton, or a Pashley Princess.

I'd like to thank Pruffle (Aiden Hegarty) for his help and support along with all the Club members, about 24 in total that supported the event, along with the guests that joined us on the day.

Thank you also to Clive for his "you only have to ask" policy. Celia Marr and her team for the fabulous lunch at the Thames Yacht Club and Mr Pickwick for his kind words. Great to see Mr Brooks joining us for lunch too. Finally, I would also like to thank (Hon Mr Crushton) Nick Gritton, for the pint of beer he bought me in The Star, that he's been promising me for the 16 years the ride has been going !!! I expect that will cost me dearly at the 17th event on October 10th 2024!!!

I thoroughly enjoyed this year's event and already looking forward to the next one!

Regards Hunt

Mr Griggs reports on the Lycra Clad riders.....

We had 7 riders for the Lycra Clad road ride, setting off at 10am. We headed out between the walls towards Richmond Park. Making our way through Kingston and heading off to our first 'climb' that was Kingston Hill. We entered the Royal Park through Ladderstile Gate.

It was the first time for many a year I had ridden around the park and was very impressed by the lack of traffic due to the traffic calming measures. We enjoyed the peace and tranquillity of being able to ride side by side without some angry motorist informing us of our lack of road tax. Our challenge was to complete as many circuits of the park and arrive at The Star, as instructed, by 12 noon for a libation and sandwiches. We managed 3 laps and arrived on time at the venue, to find the 'ye oldie riders', who clearly had a great hunger, leaving a few dog-eared sandwiches for us. Upon our return to the boat-house we had completed over 35 miles. Good riding, good weather and great company.Martin

Charles Dickens' Exhibition on the Isle of Wight

On Southern TV News this week (early February) was Boz (Ian Dickens) great, great grandson of the great man, speaking enthusiastically about the new exhibition on the Isle of Wight, called "Technicolour Dickens: The Living Image of Charles Dickens". Boz also gave some background to the writing of **David Copperfield**, which is celebrating its 175th anniversary, whilst his Dickens was staying at Ventnor. He also mentioned the connection of the real life characters that formed the basis of Dickens' story, possibly became the idea for another his well known books, **Great Expectations**.



The exhibition, commissioned for the 150th Anniversary of his death-when our Club was formed-is quite unique, inasmuch that Dickens' life is told through Victorian photography which has been transformed into full colour.

There is also a film, "Dickens' Island" by Jamie Langton, about Dickens' time on the island, which is also part of the exhibition at the Dimbola Museum in Freshwater IOW until 19th May 2024.

If you have the chance to visit the IOW, then this exhibition should be a MUST.

The Penny Racers at Hillingdon.....

With unsettled weather forecast, we headed for the Hillingdon Cycle Circuit in West London on a surprisingly mild morning in September, for the second running of The Grand Old Ordinary Trophy by the Pickwick Bicycle Club, who took over stewardship of the event in 2022. Back in 1910 a group of 62 Ordinary riders clubbed together and funded the "Challenge Cup" to perpetuate the memory of "The Grand Old Ordinary"; this magnificent trophy is awarded to riders using machines of pre-1910 production over a 1-mile course. A further trophy, the Veterans Tankard, was added in 1932 to be awarded to the first rider over the age of 50. This trophy is now awarded to the first rider over the age of 65, (following a pragmatic rule change in 2022 to avoid one rider winning both trophies!)



With the recent resurgence in the popularity of these machines, the Club has introduced a new trophy for the "British Penny Farthing Championship". This is a race lasting 30 minutes plus 2 laps for riders of modern machines of the "penny-farthing" type, built post 1910.

The Hillingdon track was already busy with riders from across the UK and Europe ready to race. With an hour to go, 9 riders had registered for the Grand Old Ordinary Race, and 22 for the Penny Farthing Championship

NAVCC club Bygone Bykes members, had travelled from Yorkshire, plus those of The League of Ordinary Riders and the V-CC Highwheel group were in attendance. Pickwick BC members, Mr Watty, The Marquis of Filletoville and Mr Gunter were ready to represent their Club. A special mention should be made of Rik Vernack & Evi Dumon, who had travelled from Belgium and for the second year running the furthest travelled competitor was Andreas Carduck who had driven from Germany.

The start for the 1-mile race meant starting back around the final corner of the 0.93 mile circuit, with competitors crossing the finish line in front of the clubhouse twice to complete the course. A light headwind meant going would be tough around the final long straight of the course. Jim Brailsford made a strong start and was first to come into sight at the end of the first lap. Jim continued to lead and took the win with Christian Richards & Douglas Reed fighting it out for 2nd & 3rd place respectively. The PBC's own Marquis of Filletoville took the Veterans Tankard for the second year running. A special mention goes to Tony Huntington, the days oldest rider who finished 9th.

Full Results: The Grand Old Ordinary:

- 1st Jim Brailsford (New Rapid)
- 2nd Christian Richards (Singer Challenge - 1884)
- 3rd Douglas Reed (Hillman, Herbert & Cooper - 1885)
- 4th Paul Sellars (CMC -1886)
- 5th Phil Saunders (Victor - 1882)
- 6th Alex Faulkner (Hillman, Herbert & Cooper - 1884)
- 7th Stuart Elliott (Singer Apollo - 1885)
- 8th Andy Gray (Rudge)
- 9th Tony Huntington (New Rapid)



Winner - Jim Brailsford

The Penny Farthing Championship was next up with the 22 riders ready on the start line and following a short race briefing and explanation of the 1874 Wolverhampton Rules regarding lapping riders, Mr Pickwick started the race with a wave of the Union Flag, as the riders mounted and were off. The sun had started to show through, although the wind remained a problem for riders. The race soon sorted itself out, and despite falling on the first lap, last year's winner, Roger Davies, soon took the front position, with Charlie Burrell close on his wheel. The women's race was also close with Melissa Eisdell & Evi Dumon evenly matched and trading places every couple of laps. At the 30-minute mark both sets of lead riders were still closely matched and with two laps to go it was anybody's race. As the final lap bell rang Charlie made his move, emerging from the final corner a good 150m ahead of Roger, to take the win in the men's race.

In the ladies race, not realising that they had been lapped on the final lap and being slightly ahead of the bell, Evi and Melissa rounded the final corner to see the chequered flag and the sprint for the line was eventually won by Belgian rider Evi. I was particularly happy with the results, as both winning riders were riding one of my Trott & Sons machines.



Winner Charlie Burrell with
Roger Davies & Andy Neath



Winner Eva Damon with
Melissa Eisdell

Full results of the Penny Farthing Championship:

- 1st Charlie Burrell (Trott)
- 2nd Roger Davies (UDC)
- 3rd Andy Neath (UDC)
- 4th Rik Vernack (Mesicek)
- 5th Rolf Woodward (Summerfield)
- 6th Andreas Carduck (SHW)
- 7th Graham Earl (Mesicek)
- 8th Doug Reed (Eddie Spoke)
- 9th Neil Laughton (UDC)
- 10th Jim Brailsford (New rapid)
- 11th Evi Dumon (Trott)
- 12th Melissa Eisdell (Trott)
- 13th Michael Gruetzner (Mesicek)
- 14th Graham Wood (UDC)
- 15th Christian Richards (ROE)
- 16th Martin Wynne (UDC)
- 17th Mel Glass (Trott)
- 17th Les New (UDC)
- 18th Joff Summerfield (Summerfield)
- 19th Russell Burford (UDC)
- 20th Brian Cobbold (Trott)
- 21st Phil Saunders (Victor)



I must say thank you to Mr Watty once again, for organising a fantastic day of racing. Also, thanks to JK and Lisa for the catering of delicious refreshments: to Ken Jackson (Ben), Brian Vanderbilt (Bulman) and the rest of the marshalls; and finally, Horatio Fizkin and the staff of Hillingdon Cycle Circuit for hosting us.

Matthew Trott – Trott & Sons Handmade Penny Farthings



The 153rd Annual Garden Party....

Your Secretary Mr Watty had been quite vociferous with his appeal to support the December luncheon, as numbers hadn't been up to expectations since the pandemic, and it clearly worked as you will have seen in his report. Once again the Household trumpeters sounded their warning salvo opposite the Connaught Rooms, bringing those incumbent members to the Grand Hall ready for another Garden Party.



So an extremely crowded hall was a hubbub of noise, which The Captain very ably, brought to heel on his command. That in itself was unusual and with 535 present, not an easy task! He craved the usual applause welcoming the President and principle guest 'The Stig', to the top table, whereupon grace was proposed and we were ready for lunch.

Vice Captain Dumkins then accompanied The Original member to the top table, and although his looks belied the possibility of having been around in 1870, The Marquis of Filletoville duly took wine with the President. All of this heralded by Pickwickian choruses which were sung with gusto given the numbers present.

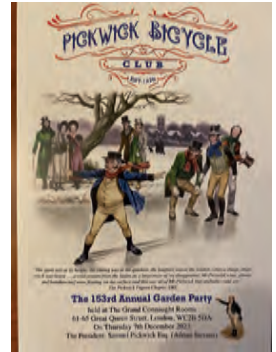


The Connaught rooms provided another excellent lunch, which of course was interspersed with various toasts. The loyal toast naturally came first, and it's quite strange how easily God Save the King has become the norm'. The Committee then took wine with the President, before The Honourable Mr Crushton, returned by popular demand to welcome the guests. (See pp16)

He extended a welcome to all of the guests, and those of particular note around the room, and the members as always stood and raised their glasses to them all. Our lunches are a continuous process of eating, talking with our respective guests and then silenced by the Captain for the next announcement.

And so it was thus, that Mr Watty then claimed ownership of the microphone to call upon the newly elected members to stand in their turn when called to do so. There were six such new members this time starting with Callum Coade, who will henceforth bear the Club name of Baillie Mac Something; next to be called was Tom Quinn, and whilst he wore no headwear, will be known as The Man with the Cocked Hat. Ed Porteus followed, and received the soubriquet of Blink for his sins; David Taylor was then announced as the future Landlord of the Bush Hotel; Basil Stevens was next up and given the name of Serjeant Buzfuz (very significant as it's only recently become available with the departure to the Antipodes of our former long suffering secretary); and finally rising to his feet under the close attention of his father(about to become our next President) was Louis Benmax, who will be known as The Zephyr. Our new members are always most welcome into our Club and we trust that they will remember that it is a cycling club, and participate or support the many events that are on the calendar, and help to maintain the Club traditions.

Time then for the Captain to remind members that to be improperly dressed was subject to a charitable fine - with guests to also contribute if they so wished. The money collected in boaters from each table, was then delivered to the Vice-Captain at the top table. Whereupon it disappeared, to be counted by three ladies, one of whom was Household Cavalry trumpeter Lucy Perring. Nearly £5000 was raised, and was split between the President's chosen charities of Prostate Cancer UK, & the UK Sepsis Trust.



The Counting House
- how much can you
collect in a boater?

The refrain of The Boys of the Old Brigade began as Dumkins lead the way to the top table, but....the Josph Atto Bowl resplendent on its trolley wasn't being brought in by the boys in scarlet. What's going on? It was in fact being delivered by two of the Household Cavalry trumpeters. Following the usual greeting by the President, there was clearly some banter about ages, as Warrant Officer Class 2 Mathew Screen and Musician Lucy Perring introduced themselves.

It was notified after the luncheon that this was Matthew's last appearance at our luncheons as a trumpeter, but it is anticipated that his name will be entered on the waiting list to become a Club member.



Punchbowl Ceremony with Matthew & Lucy

The Captain then announced that the President would like to take wine with anyone who had ridden a bicycle within the past 3 months- and it was pleasing to see so many of those present rise, and raise their glasses. However, everyone was put to shame when it was highlighted that one guest- Jeff Summerfield -set off in 2006 to ride around the World, visiting 23 countries and covering 23000miles on his Penny Farthing!



Jeff and his Penny Farthing closely guarded by the Household Cavalry trumpeters



Almost unnoticed by many, but during a pause in proceedings, Past President Hunt was summoned to the top table, where he received his Past President's badge from the current President. Returning to his table he briefly showed it to a few onlookers and then stuffed it in his pocket!



Time for a pause in proceedings before the principal guest The Stig took over the mike, to entertain us with tales of his involvement in Formula 1 motor racing, and more prominently in the TV programme *Top Gear*, where he was the very first Stig, the specialist driver, and wore a black race suit. Perry McCarthy to give him his real name, came up the hard way in motor racing, funding his early career by working on the oil-rigs. Starting in Formula Ford, he progressed through the ranks to Formula 3 at home & to F3000 in the USA, before testing with the Footwork Formula One team in 1991. He was also a BBC commentator for F1 in 2009. He regaled us with his many exploits, but mainly with the *Top Gear* trio of Clarkson, Hammond & May. Concluding by asking the guests to raise their glasses to the "Immortal Memory of The Pickwick Bicycle Club".



The President was quick to thank Perry for his fascinating speech, and saying how much he had enjoyed his year as Samuel Pickwick, meeting so many members at the different events he had attended. He called upon Sir Geoffrey Manning to attend the top table for the hand over of the President's chain of office to our new President. The new President begged permission to say a few words about himself as he thought that not so many members knew too much about him. He gave us a potted history which was quite incredible, and contained many attributes that we certainly didn't know about him. (see pp4 for the full story).

We had thus reached the end of proceeding for another luncheon, and Auld Lang Syne reverberated around the Connaught Rooms hall.

NOTE - for the first time in over 25 years I will be unable to attend the President's Spring Lunch, as I shall be on holiday, so I am looking for a volunteer to write up the report on the luncheon. You can write it in your own words, and send it to me- and I will do the rest.....Editor/Winkle Snr

The Guest List

On Table 6 as guest of Mr Grundy is Josh Reid. In 2019 Josh Reid, 23, picked up a Giant bike from the company's factory in Shanghai - after a slap-up lunch He then rode it for four months across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and then Europe He cycled along a road known as the 'roof of the world' and was welcomed into the homes of strangers.

On Table 13 as guest of Jem, we welcome Alan Dediccoat. Alan is a well-known English BBC announcer as the "Voice of the Balls" on the National Lottery since 1995. He was a [BBC Radio 2](#) newsreader until his retirement in March 2015. He is also the announcer on [BBC One's Strictly Come Dancing](#) and its American version.

On Table 11 as guests of Bullman, we welcome two former professional footballers. Andy Gray played for Crystal Palace, Aston Villa and Spurs as well as for England in the 1991 Euro qualifiers against Poland. And Tony Finnegan, a midfielder for Fulham and Crystal Palace before becoming a player's agent with Ian Wright and Andy Gray. **And** as a guest of Mr Crawley (retired) we welcome another footballer, the striker Peter Kitchen who played for Doncaster Rovers, Leyton Orient, Fulham and Cardiff.

On Table 6 as guests of The Marquis of Filletoville we have Joff Sommerfield, who has ridden his Penny Farthing here today. It is the same Penny Farthing that in 2006 he set off to ride around the World visiting 23 countries and riding 23000 miles! He is probably the best Penny Farthing rider in the World and would be pleased to show you his machine after our luncheon. Also on **Table 6** is Mike Parsonage, ex-Royal Navy who in June 2024, will embark on the Talisker Challenge to row 2800 miles across the Pacific Ocean from Monterey in California to Hawaii. He will be part of [Team Itsallinthemind](#), raising sponsorship for [Mind and Naco](#). Another guest is Bob Damper, current Vice-President of the Veteran Cycle Club and life-time cyclist and member of the CTC, now Cycling UK and Sotonia. The final guests of the Marquis of Filletoville are Matthew and Keith Trott, who run the Ordinary Bicycle Company, making modern Penny Farthings and selling them around the World.

On Table 5 we welcome a mix of guests and members, all part of team Legro's LEJOG. Guests Steve Cronshaw, Peter Jacques, Mark Zaschke, Glen Mitchel, Neil Johnston, David Marsh, Paul Dodd and our member The Cobbler, David Le Grys, set off from Lands End back in July, averaging around 100 miles a day to reach John O'Groats. The weather was brutal, every day but one, they all got hammered with heavy rain, hail and high winds. Each day was a challenge because of the conditions but they all got there and raised nearly £14,000 for Prostate cancer research. A mention must go to Bob Sawyer (Gerry Taylor) who had withdrawn for health reasons but lent them a 9-seater support vehicle, and special thanks to the driver and helpers Alan Rouse, Gordon Johnston They are still raising money for Prostate Cancer UK.

Finally, **On Table 7** as a guest of Count Smalltork, we welcome another serious cyclist, James McLaughlin. Born on the Island of Guernsey after a youth of dedication to bike racing, this is James' first time at the Pickwick Cycle Club lunch. Prior to hanging up his wheels he spent most of his 20s pursuing a career in bike racing; having raced all over the globe (Tour de Taiwan; Tour Alsace; Mallorca; Tour de Yorkshire), enjoying a number of years at professional level, as well as participating at 3 Commonwealth Games (where he ultimately retired after a career defining 6th in the Time Trial in the 2018 Australian Gold Coast) as well as a dogged performance in the road race, spending the whole day up the road - getting caught with a matter of kilometres to go along with Tom Stewart - the last 2 standing. James also competed in the 2014 Glasgow Games and 2010 Delhi Games in TT and Road Races. Interestingly he knew Tom, having been team-mates in Madison Genesis in 2015 - his one year in the UK, of a career that was mostly spent on the continent. It was for this reason it was particularly special as despite a season that year in 2015, that was plagued by overtraining and illness; being part of Dom Langan's historic set up, was something that he still has very fond memories of and something he says he'll always be grateful for, with the belief they had in him *The Honourable Mr. Crushton*



All photos courtesy of
Mark Thomas





Who Were Your Early Namesakes? Researching Your Ancestors.

The Pickwick Bicycle Club has been in continuous existence since its formation in 1870, and the soubriquets of its members have been faithfully passed down from generation to generation. If you would like to receive the available history of your soubriquet, please contact Joseph Smiggers at:

steve@stephenbullen.com and you will have this information by return.

Prince Bladud - Son of Lud Hudibras, King of Britain -

- legend of the sources of waters of Bath:

“Less than two hundred years ago, on one of the public baths in this city, there appeared an inscription in honour of its mighty founder, the renowned Prince Bladud. That inscription is now erased.”

E. Hearle	pre 1881	
J A Hawkins	1881 to 1914	
G B Hemming	1920 to 1923	
Charles Reginald Willis	1925 to 1927	Son of Robert Willis (Joseph Smiggers). Presented the Robert Willis Cup – 100-mile annual road race to stimulate road racing. Died tragically on 7th June 1927 aged only 24
H J Brueton	1941 to 1952	
Walter Flory	1955 to 1983	Captain (addressed as Mr Pickwick, Esquire).Died 1983
Chris C Tyler	1978 to 2010	President (1980); Soubriquet changed from Staple 1978
James Tyler	2014 to 2017	Son of Chris C Tyler
Tim Clark	2021 to present	

The Infant Lambert -Did not exist-this is Sam Weller's name-

-for Joe, The Fat Boy:

“The old gentleman nodded; and two ragged boys who had been marshalled to the spot under the direction of the infant Lambert, forthwith commenced climbing up two of the trees. 'What are these lads for?' inquired Mr. Pickwick abruptly. He was rather alarmed; for he was not quite certain but that the distress of the agricultural interest, about which he had often heard a great deal, might have compelled the small boys attached to the soil to earn a precarious and hazardous subsistence by making marks of themselves for inexperienced sportsmen.”

Stanley A Brunning	1927 to 1938
James Anderson	1991 to 1998
Micky G Vickers	2002 to 2008

Sam the Driver – the pugnacious cabbie No. 924:

“Come along, then,’ said he of the green coat, lugging Mr. Pickwick after him by main force, and talking the whole way. Here, No. 924, take your fare, and take yourself off--respectable gentleman--know him well--none of your nonsense--this way, sir--where's your friends?--all a mistake, I see--never mind-- accidents will happen--best regulated families--never say die-- down upon your luck--Pull him UP--Put that in his pipe--like the flavour--damned rascals.’ And with a lengthened string of similar broken sentences, delivered with extraordinary volubility, the stranger led the way to the traveller's waiting-room, whither he was closely followed by Mr. Pickwick and his disciples.”

Sam J Cross	1912 to 1919	President (1917); Hon.Sec (1919-25). See Easter Tour 1913
J D Bassett	1920 to 1936	
A W Dulson	1942 to 1952	
F J Osborne	1963 to 1980	
Harry F Cole	1984 to 1995	
Martin O'Regan	1996 to 2020	

Long Vacation – who goes out of town every long vacation to see his father:

“ There is the artiled clerk, who has paid a premium, and is an attorney in perspective, who runs a tailor's bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street, and another in Tavistock Square; who goes out of town every long vacation to see his father, who keeps live horses innumerable; and who is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks.”

L D Sinclair	1926 to 1936
T Satchwell	1942 to 1960
Wing Commander I Roberts	1960 to 1965

Mr Struggles – Dingley Dell cricketer:

“All-Muggleton had the first innings; and the interest became intense when Mr. Dumkins and Mr. Podder, two of the most renowned members of that most distinguished club, walked, bat in hand, to their respective wickets. Mr. Luffey, the highest ornament of Dingley Dell, was pitched to bowl against the redoubtable Dumkins, and Mr. Struggles was selected to do the same kind office for the hitherto unconquered Podder.”

Jesse Hill	pre 1894
Thomas H Palmer	1913 to 1928
R H Gullett	1946 to 1960
Gary S Smith	1967 to 2009
Michael Maddin	2009 to present

The 2024 Events Calendar

For those of you who were at the December Garden Party, you will recall finding a post-card at your table place, with an 'Invitation to Members & Friends to note some exciting event dates in 2024'. That was provided by the Marquis of Filletoville as an 'aide-memoir' to keep at hand, but for everyone's benefit, here is the proposed list of events. As always, members are encouraged to participate in as many of them as possible, and not just the luncheons. All of the events take a lot of organisation, so please make the effort to support them. Notifications will be sent out nearer the date of each event.

Sunday 21st April - The 104th anniversary of Thomas Stevens starting his Circle of Globe on a Penny Farthing in Ealing (London), plus a visit to Blondin's Memorial.

Thursday 9th May - President's Spring Luncheon -apply Hon Sec: Mr Watty

Thursday 13th June - Golf Day (& Cycle Ride TBC) see pp35 for full details

Sunday 23rd June - Founders Day Ride in London - details will be advised

Wednesday 3rd July - Mr Pickwick goes to Le Tour de France - see pp21

Sunday 7th July - Benson VCC Rally - contact sauanders.phil@yahoo.co.uk

Sunday 11th August -World Penny Farthing Hill Climb Championships @ Beachy Head

Sunday 22nd September - Grand Old Ordinary Championships at Hillingdon Track

Thursday 10th October - Hampton Court Ride from the Thames Yacht Club- a mix of a road ride for the energetic, and a leisurely historic ride for the more sedate members, organised by Hunt.
contact: roger@burtscycles.co.uk

Thursday 5th December - 154th Annual Garden Party - apply Hon Sec: Mr Watty

Please remember the Club rule about attending the requisite number of luncheons to maintain your membership.

Mr Pickwick Goes to France Revival

The King of the Goblins (Robin Simmons) has arranged a trip for 23 Club members to go to France on the 3rd July for several days, to watch two stages of the 2024 Tour de France. The visit will be based in the wine capital of Burgundy in the city of Beaune, so plenty of opportunities to sight-see, and visit some of the vineyards, when not watching the racing! Stage 6 is the 163km road stage from Macon to Dijon, and the 25km Individual Time Trial, Stage 7 is from Nuits St Georges to Gevry-Chambertin. So those of you watching it on TV at home pay special attention to these two stages, to see if you can spot a boater or three in the crowd(s).



The trip is being well supported by Club members, who will be on their best behaviour at all times - because their wives/partners will be with them! **Allez Allez!!**

A Reminder of the Grand Cycle Jumble - 13th April 2024

The National Cycle Museum's next jumble will be at Cefnyllis School in Llandrindod Wells, 200metres from the Museum.

Inside stalls £10 - Outside stalls £7

Sellers entry @ 0830am

Buyers entry before 0930am - £4, after 0930am - £1

Contact: Steve Griffith for more details
griffith531@hotmail.com



We continue with the series of looking back at the history of chosen Club members, and this time it's Hunt/Roger Hitchman, who many of you will know as the organiser of the Club's largest cycling event. A great story because his life is not about riding a bike.....so enjoy:

Hunt the Bike!

How old were you when you got your first bike Roger?

Well, I was 5 years old when I sold my first bike! And learnt to mend punctures around the same time. Because I grew up in my Dad's bicycle shop, I would sit on all kind of bikes in the shop after it had closed, and was riding tricycles and various two wheelers up and down the shop when I was 3, and around the shop all of the time growing up.

When did you become involved in the cycle shop?

I suppose I've sort of answered that one because I'd been working there already on Saturday mornings or after school, but when I left school at 15, I started full time in the shop the next day. I became involved in all aspects of the trade within the shop, selling bikes and repairing them in our workshop. And not just bikes, but lawn mowers, and sharpening shears! The workshop dated back to the original blacksmith's shop around the 1890s, when it was called Stockwell & Sons, it was mainly a farrier, but horses began to go out of favour with the advent of the bicycle, and by the turn of the century they were building bikes. The blacksmith's name was Burt, hence the name of the cycle shop in Hampton Hill ever since.

An unscripted addition!

I have an anecdotal story that occurred when I was growing up, and at the shop one day -related to a trade rep' who wasn't very popular, and what happened. There was another shop in nearby Twickenham, and when this particular rep' was around, we used to warn each other. On this occasion, we got the call, and my Dad went and hid in the cupboard under the stairs. When the rep' arrived, I said I would go and find my father. Back and forth through the shop and workshop, I kept saying 'he can't be far away', and then disappearing up the street, coming back to say 'I'm still looking!' This carried on for about an hour, until eventually with a final apology from me, the rep' left. By this time though, Dad had been cramped up in the cupboard where we kept our shoes and when he came out, he could hardly stand for about 10mins. It took a while for him to forgive me, having assumed I would just tell the rep' that he was out!

Has your interest in bikes & cycling developed since then?

It hasn't!! I always had a mechanical mind about how things worked, and the opportunity to 'work' in the shop meant I learnt on the job. At 16, I bought a Lambretta, and it didn't really interest me; I graduated to cars but still preferred bicycles.

When did you get involved in hiring out bikes for film, TV and other media events?

The first bike hire of note was in 1974 for the Benny Hill show, when I sent a window cleaner's bike, plus 6, ladies racing bikes with the saddles as high as possible, and the handlebars as low as possible. I recall that it was at Teddington Studios, so not too far away. After that it seems to have been ongoing, and we now have over 400 bikes available to hire.



Did you have other cycling connections & did you join a competitive cycling club?

No, I never had club connections, but as well as skiing for 20 years, I also played a high level of team squash for over 25 years. The rest of my time was always spent involved in my cycle business, particularly on Saturdays when most riders were out on the road. I missed out on road riding with club mates, and my interest outside of the shop as mentioned, was skiing & squash, which took me out of the bike environment, and gave me something other than 'work' to enjoy. I started several cycling holiday companies, including one that came as a result of skiing. Skiing at Merribel in the French Alps, a mate and I saw the opportunity to utilise the chalets and ski-lifts out of season, so I got 30 Dawes Mountain bikes built with Reynolds 531 tubing, shipped them out to Merribel, and we called them Merribikes! The riders were able to take the bikes up the mountains hooked on the back of the chairlifts, and ride back down to the valley, before hooking them on the chairlifts and taking them back up to the chalets. This worked for a couple of years, but like most people the skiers had limited holiday time, so interest dropped away, as they focussed on the skiing. I was also involved in the London-Brighton Heart ride for some 20 years, when we would take a workshop van along to offer mechanical support & bikes, plus a coffee stall. It was manic with so many riders. The cycle business has been my life, so I didn't really see bikes as relaxation.

You have been organising the Hampton Court Ride for a number of years now - what prompted you and Pruffle to revive this historic Club event?

Pruffle had retired and he revived this historic Club event in 2007 as a road ride on the first occasion, and as I only lived 2 miles away, I felt I ought to get involved and support it. Turning up with my mate on our then, conventional bikes, we set off on our Surrey Hills ride. The following year I introduced the vintage bike ride as a separate section, keeping to the Thames towpath, and the Royal Park before returning to our then starting point of Imber Court. I heard a long serving member comment "Good heavens, they're on pneumatics!" This has now got a lot of support and grown considerably to the 46 riders that took part last year. The Road Ride still continues, but the numbers have reduced over the years, perhaps because some riders have got older and prefer the amble through Bushy Park, watching the deer, and the snack stop at The Star before lunch at the Yacht Club.

When did you join the Pickwick BC, and who proposed you & what are your early memories?

I was on the waiting list for 8 years but became a member in 2000. I was proposed by my good friend John Moore of Moore Large & Co, who I knew from the cycle trade. I had travelled extensively with him to Trade events including Austria, France, Thailand, Hong Kong & China, meeting other traders, dealers and suppliers, and of course attending the Pickwick luncheons. John's soubriquet was Mr Blotton (of Aldgate). Among my memories are mainly those of the camaraderie among the members; laughter, jokes, drinks, learning more about the cycle business from those people I met with John and at the Pickwick lunches.

You became President of the Club in 2021, what was the best part of that year?

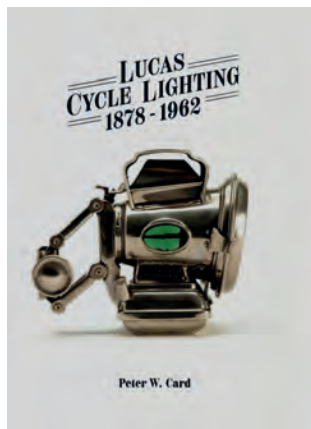
As a result of the pandemic deferring the Club 150th year Anniversary events, I was very lucky to be able to enjoy all of the special events that had been organised. The Black-Tie Dinner was incredible, where I got to meet & shake hands with all of those members who attended. It was one of the best events I can recall. There was also the President's Spring Luncheon when ladies were invited for the first time – another excellent luncheon. I attended many of the other Club events and am really proud of my year.

And finally, Roger, as we have more cycling events now, do you think this is important and what message would you give to new members?

Come and find me at the bar, and I'll tell you! Absolutely! Apart from the Hampton Court ride, we now have the Founders Day Ride, and the Penny Farthing Racing at Hillingdon. It's very important to have these events because we are a Cycling Club and not a Dining Club, which unfortunately some members treat it as such. It's a fantastic Club, get involved and use it!

Thank you, Roger, for providing us with a wonderful insight into the life of a cycle business owner.....Editor





Dr Slammer talks about his new book

Lucas Cycle Lighting 1878 - 1962

The book covers the bicycle and tricycle lamps designed and manufactured by Joseph Lucas & Son, later, Lucas Industries Ltd. from their first oil-powered lamp in 1878 to the dynamo-powered lamps of the 1950s. The book finishes its coverage in 1962 when confronted with significant competition from foreign markets, Lucas ceased production of cycling accessories.

They were particularly well-known for their 'King of the Road' Hub Lamps which they manufactured between 1880 and 1894. These were a unique design of oil-powered lighting devised to be mounted on the spinning-hub of an Ordinary bicycle. The book carefully guides the reader through the trials and trauma of Victorian business, patent infringements, post-Great War austerity to the ever-changing world of the battery and dynamo-powered lamps of the 1930s and 1950s.

Due to be privately published in a numbered limited edition of only 400 copies in January 2024. The book features 140,000 words, 400 pages, 750 illustrations and comes in two editions; a sensible hardbound 'Popular' edition and a 'Collectors' edition with a professionally designed presentation case. Due to fluctuating paper and ink costs, a final cover price has yet to be set.

Interested parties should register Dr Slammer at peter@tc-auction.com



Circa 1882
Joseph Lucas & Son
'King of the Road' hub
lamp as used with an
Ordinary Bicycle

The Hot Pieman talks about having a famous Dad..

Thinking back to growing up in the late 60s and early 70s, I remember listening out for the papers to be delivered on a Saturday morning from under the covers, as I eagerly awaited the latest edition of the Beano. Cycling magazine came through the letterbox at the same time, quite often with a picture of my Dad (aka Tom Roker / Alf Engers) on the front page and it never really registered why my Dad should be on the front page of a magazine. The flat we lived in at the time had a beautiful mosaic floor in the hallway, and even now I can still hear the clickety-clack of the cleats on Dad's cycling shoes on the hard floor, when he came home.



The Hot Pieman & Tom Roker

With Dad's focus on cycling endeavours, he used to train both on his rollers in the living room and out on the roads in all weathers. With all the modern clothing and nutrition these days, it makes me smile when I think back to Dad using newspapers in his cycling top to keep warm and a fixed diet of bananas and Mars bars 😊. Many friends of the family were involved in cycling, and my brother and I used to go to circuit training sessions run by cyclists and go on bike rides from quite a young age. When I was 10 or 11, I remember Dad getting me a yellow racing bike with a fixed wheel setup, and I went to do my first '10' on the old F4 I think it was called.

I have attended a number of Pickwick Lunches as Dad's guest and have enjoyed the camaraderie and friendship that is so much part of the Club's identity. I had been on the membership waiting list for what seemed like ages, so it was a **very** pleasant surprise to be introduced as a New Member at the December Garden Party in 2022, and in future to be known as The Hot Pieman. I must thank the committee for accepting me into the Club and am honoured to become a member.

.....Richard Engers

Tom Roker's Bike.....

Following on from The Hot Pieman's story, there has been an interesting development with his Dad's (Alf Engers) bike, on which he broke the 30mph barrier for a 25mile Time Trial back in 1978 when riding for the Unity Cycling Club.

The Alan Shorter machine had been in pieces in various locations over the past few years, but during 2023, the original builder, Barry Chick put it all back together again and it now resides in the National Cycle museum in Llandrindod Wells. It was hoped that it would be possible to show it at a Pickwick luncheon, but timing didn't make it possible, but we do have some pics of it.



The Bike & The Man

For my part, it's great to see the bike again from these angles, since my only recollections of it were the rear end, as it went past me on the Southend Road, or the F4, which The Hot Pieman has kindly reminded me of! It is such a marked contrast to the road bikes we see being ridden these days, so it's great that it is now on view in the Cycle Museum.

Thank you Richard, we're pleased to have you both in the Club..... Editor

In the October issue, you will recall the 'Blast from the Past' article about former Club Presidents, Don Lyford and Roland Dangerfield. I have received a particularly detailed background of how, and why the latter was a member of the Pickwick BC, from Mr Grundy....

In the October 2023 magazine, there's interesting emailed information about Roland E. Dangerfield of Temple Press, but the correspondence didn't state why Mr. Dangerfield might be a member of the club - and then a president - or what Temple Press published. I can furnish a few more details thanks to research back in 2016 for my motoring/cycling history book, Roads Were Not Built For Cars. Temple Press- so named because their premises at Bouverie Street, once London's publishing hub, were close to the Temple Church- was, for many years, the publisher of Cycling Weekly and Commercial Motor; both titles are still extant, of course.

Roland E. Dangerfield was Roland Edmund Dangerfield, 1897-1964. He was a 2nd Lieutenant in 16 Squadron of the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War. I don't know whether he was an active cyclist when he was a member of the club, or ever really, but his father certainly was. His father was Edmund Dangerfield, 1864-1938, founder of the titles above as well as many other trade magazines. Dangerfield Snr was the son of Frederick Dangerfield, the owner of the Dangerfield Printing Company of the Strand a specialist poster printer. Many period cycle company posters were printed by this firm, including posters drawn by the famous cycling artist George Moore. (Later the firm printed famous First World War propaganda posters and train tourism posters, too.) Edmund worked for this firm; he spent his wages on cycling. He was one of the leading Safety riders of the day, winning club time trials, including London's Bath Road Century in 1890. Moore drew Edmund racing in 1890.

Sensing a gap for a weekly racing paper, Dangerfield launched Cycling in 1891 (the "Weekly" was added later). After a dispute with his brothers, who were happy to remain under the thumb of an oppressive Victorian father, Dangerfield left the family firm and, in 1891, created Temple Press with Cycling as its first imprint. This was "bright, it was readable, it bubbled with enthusiasm and nothing like it had been seen before," enthused a former editor. As well as Cycling, Edmund's fledgling company published Cycle Manufacturer and Dealers Review, and MotorCycling, and Motoring. Edmund opened a motor museum in Oxford Street, London in 1912, Britain's first.



Roland E Dangerfield
President PBC 1956

Nevertheless Edmund remained a cyclist his whole life and saw no conflict with his interest in motoring. Temple Press was profiled in a 1946 book published by Hodder and Stoughton. The cover of *Bouverie Street to Bowling Green Lane: Fifty-five Years of Specialized Publishing* by Arthur Armstrong (who was editor of *Cycling* from 1905 to 1910) featured motifs from Edmund Dangerfield's publishing career although, had he been alive, the cyclist might have been offended by the illustration of a long-legged Penny rider standing beside his machine; Edmund only excelled at cycling when he shifted from the Penny to the Safety bicycle.

Ernest Perman, business manager of Temple Press and a founder member of Catford Cycling Club of which Edmund was also a member, later wrote: "It was the advent of the Safety bicycle in 1885 that enabled Edmund Dangerfield to reach the front rank of road riders. "He was a good-looking young man, very dark with remarkably fine eyes and an ivory skin. He was strong and sturdy, but his legs were a little shorter than normal, and when he changed from a small direct-drive Ordinary to a geared-up Safety there was a big difference in his speed."

After Edmund's retirement in 1933 his son, Roland, took over as managing director of Temple Press. "It was no easy task to be the son of such as father and founder as Edmund Dangerfield," wrote Roland at the time. "[Edmund] was a cyclist, a clubman, a classic 100-mile winner who, as a workaday printer, decided in 1891, when the greatest revolution in bicycle development was taking place, to enter the field of cycling journalism against a covey of established wheel journals. Edmund Dangerfield succeeded because he looked ahead to the possibilities of the pneumatic-tyred Safety bicycle."

The Original Member should avert his eyes now because Roland continued: [My father's] older rivals died because they still had their heads in the clouds, perched high on the seats of their Ordinary bicycles."

Roland was a successful trade magazine publisher and a long-time chairman of the Council of the Trade and Technical Press. Publishing also made him wealthy, and he and his family lived in some comfort at the 16th century Hoe Farm, near Guildford in Surrey. This house was still owned by the Dangerfield family in at least 2016 because one of Roland's sons - Richard John Edmund Dangerfield-had a registered business located there.

Coincidentally, Hoe Farm was Sir Winston Churchill's Surrey summer retreat and where he first learned to paint. Churchill spent the summer of 1915 with his wife, Clementine, and brother Jack, at the farm, after suffering from depression following the defeat at Gallipoli.

Roland died on June 19th 1967, at the age of 67, two years after his retirement. The cause of death was a heart attack while travelling on the tube in London for a cricket test match at Lords. Bizarrely, his son-Michael Dangerfield- died on the same June date 34 years later "from the same cause and in the same circumstances," reported the Dorset Echo in 2001.

.....Carlton Reid

Thank you Mr Grundy, for a very informative bio' of one of the Club's significant Past Presidents. The picture of Roland Dangerfield though, came from some memorabilia sent to Joseph Smiggers by Yvonne Buffman Cheney, who featured in the last magazine, recalling her friend the other Past President, Don Lyford. Also amongst the collection of items was this quite grainy photo below, taken at the 1960 December Garden Party. Looks very formal, and of course, members are smoking their clay pipes, which was such an intrinsic part of Pickwick lunches until the smoking ban came into being.....Editor.

Based on the origin of this photo, it looks as if the gentleman to the extreme right, with the long pipe, is Don Lyford, Club President in 1974



A collection of the clay pipes through the years, from the long ones to the short ones, and there were many more that didn't make it home, or perished on the snowman in the garden!

A recent missive was received from past Secretary, Steve Downham (Sgt Buzfuz-Retired) telling the story of his move to Australia, so read on.....

We've Moved Just Down the Road - Expectation, Frustration & Satisfaction

It's 4.30 in the morning and the Kookaburras on the golf course across the road have just announced they are awake. The other creatures will join in shortly; the tree frogs and the geckos, both with their loud chorus. The temperature is in the low 20's and we are set for another day with 30 degrees plus by midday and more tropical rain by the end of the day. This summer weather is hot, but has thunderstorms with rain and has already added 2 inches to the depth of the swimming pool water level.

As announced at the President's luncheon in 2022 I have retired and my wife and I have finally moved to our new home in Hervey Bay in Queensland, about 3 hours drive north of Brisbane; a move full of expectations and frustrations and faced with trepidation. The move we had talked about for some time, since our surviving daughter met and married an Australian sailor and moved to the country some 12 years ago. After several holiday visits we decided to seriously think about migrating. I was still working, and my mother-in-law was still alive so things were on hold. Five years ago, things looked like we might be able to move shortly, but work and family commitments again put the move on hold.

Finally, just before the Luncheon it looked like we could make the move. But there were a lot of deep thoughts about making such a move at our ages. In August we placed our property on the market and made enquiries as to the types of visa we could apply for and would need. With an agent in Scotland, (the same one our daughter had used for her visa) we were told we needed a tourist visa to enter the country and then once in Australia we could apply for the residency visa. This second visa is for aged parents with family in the country already. Full residency would be deferred for a number of years, but would allow us to buy property and reside in the country, although with no health cover nor could we vote.

We quickly found a buyer for our house, part of a short chain with an expected exchange and completion before Christmas. We thought we might fly during the Christmas weekend and had our agent apply for the tourist visa, that was granted towards the end of November allowing us to spend up to 3 months in Australia at any one time, during the next 12-month period. We needed to make arrangements for the packing, removal and shipping of our furniture and belongings, we were wanting to take with us. Those in the property chain were discussing an exchange and quick completion to allow a move date before Christmas. Our removers required at least 2-week's notice, so we set a date and paid a deposit. I heard late on the Friday afternoon of the week before the planned furniture packing that the chain had collapsed lower down, and the sale would not proceed.



Stephen Downham

Luckily, I could contact the removers to cancel the date, so we only lost the deposit. If we had not heard until Monday, it would have cost us several thousand. With the sale off, everything was back to stage one and we spent Christmas in England. Into the New Year we again placed the property on the market, but despite several viewings there was no firm interest. After several weeks, a couple who had seen the house at the end of January came back with an acceptable offer, and with nothing to sell, so solicitors were instructed and fingers crossed. Thankfully things went more or less to plan but being mindful of the notice period required by the removal firm, and having to book flights etc as instructed solicitors to agree some 3-4 weeks between exchange and completion. We had to arrange house clearance between the

removal of shipping items, the sale completion and our flights. The packing took place on Thursday and Friday; we lived in the house with the few remaining items over the weekend, then moved to a local hotel, whilst the rest of the house was cleared. We had to arrange the sale of our two cars, but managed to keep one until the last day in Hampshire, when the buyer collected it and a taxi took us and our luggage to an hotel near Heathrow, for our last night in the UK, before our flight out early on Easter Saturday.

We had always promised ourselves that we would fly business class if and when we ever made it down under. We would recommend Qatar business to anyone. After an enjoyable flight we landed in Sydney airport, where daughter and son in law met us for the two-hour drive to their house in Canberra, where they both work. We spent several weeks with them before booking a flight to Brisbane, hiring a car and taking 10 days for a look up and down the east coast to see where we might want to live. We had a desire for something on one level, within walking distance of the beach, warm weather, and an area where house prices would be within our budget. We stayed in small self-catering motels of which there are many and travelled south into coastal north New South Wales and into southeast Queensland. We had already seen some of northern Queensland when our son in law had been posted by the navy in Cairns, but knew this would be too hot and humid for us. The Gold Coast south of Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast to the north, were too busy and not what we wanted, so we short listed the Fraser coast area, where we have eventually settled. Hervey Bay has the beach, climate and accommodation we sought.

We flew back to Canberra and made arrangements to travel back to Queensland and start house hunting. We took 2 days to drive up to our destination, a distance of some 1500 kilometres. Although we now had our visa to remain in the country, we still needed consent from the State to buy a house. For a fee you could apply for permission in a stated area at or below a stated price. We booked into an hotel for the first week and then found a furnished house to rent on a weekly basis, whilst we looked around. The local norm is for agents to announce a date and time when viewing of available property can take place and everybody turns up at the same time, and usually the viewing period is for 30 minutes only.

We finally found one we liked and made an offer, but the vendor was not happy with a condition we made in our offer recommended by our solicitor, that we could cancel the contract if faults were found in the title searches. The sale process is very quick; you make an offer, the vendor, accepts and the agent draws up a contract for your solicitor to check, and save only for any defects discovered during the building survey, the contract is binding and a deposit is paid. This is not the usual 10% that applies in England but can be quite low. The agent involved was very good and contacted us a few days later indicating he had another property coming to the market that he felt would meet our requirements and did we want to inspect it. We jumped at the offer, liked what we saw and made an acceptable offer. We had to wait a few nervous days for the states consent to come through and it was all systems go. Some 30 days later the property would be ours.

Meanwhile, our furniture and effects were in a storage container in Croydon, but once consent to buy was granted, we gave instructions to ship the container. Our agent had advised to wait for that consent to prevent any sort of problems of goods on the high seas but with nowhere to go if consent was refused for any reason. The house sale completed at the end of August, but the container did not arrive in Brisbane until early October, then spent two weeks with customs and quarantine inspections. Finally, it arrived and 225 boxes and other items were unloaded into the house, ready to start unpacking. During the intervening months we had lived in the property, which had the oven and hob already fitted; we bought a fridge/freezer, washing machine, mattress, and a divan/put you up bed. We acquired a second-hand lawn mower and lived relatively well with 2 knives, 2 forks and spoons, 2 plates and bowls and three saucepans. We have solar heating and an in-ground swimming pool.



Buzfuz a'Wheel

One downside was the amount of money the state required, to enable us to live in Queensland, and a big frustration were the difficulties in transferring funds from the UK. The time difference (10 hours) meant phone calls were held during early evenings. The biggest issue was that banks wanted to send confirmation codes to a mobile phone, and whilst both my wife and I had new phones with local numbers, and could advise the banks of them, they would not action their use until 30 days after the change. One bank, even after closing all our accounts, then sent out a notice of an unauthorised overdrafts of £4.00(!) being their monthly service charge. Even after calls they still added charges for further months, but eventually did write the amounts off. We had found a good agent in London, who helped us with money transfers at a time when the exchange rates were to our benefit.

There are still many things we need to do. The car we bought in Canberra now has to have Queensland plates and be registered in the state; we will be able to get a refund from Canberra for the unexpired registration period of the car there. We have applied for and obtained Australian driving licences but await the photographic cards. We need to complete the details of our house purchase with the Australian tax office but they want to do everything online and nobody is available to talk to and help.

We are finally settling in but agree the hassle, frustration and sometimes anger, has been worth it, and we look forward to our 50th wedding anniversary in a day or so and many more happy years in our new home. When we started it all I thought "what am I doing?" but would advise anyone with a goal however daunting, to give it a go. You only live once!

Best wishes to the club and all its members,
I miss you all.
Sergeant Buzfuz(Retired)

A Reminder to everyone, that Club Cycling Shirts are available
...a **must** for those of you participating in the many Club events.

Bulman still has a supply of these attractive Club shirts, ready for you to purchase! Ideal for all those Club events you will hopefully participate in this year.

Available in a range of sizes, -
M/L/XL/XXL/XXXL, and at a price **YOU** can afford. Just £50 each + postage.



Contact:

Bulman at bdvcorinthians@hotmail.com

Smithers once again presents The Annual Golf Day on Thursday June 13th, so make it a date for your diary



Golf or Cycle



The annual golf day is an important event in the Club calendar, at a superb course at the Harpenden Golf course, with a number of grand trophies to be won, after an excellent lunch. There are a number of new members out there, so sign up for a great day at this glorious course, and give Smithers plenty of support for his efforts. If you're not a golfer, just go along for lunch and enjoy the fellowship of other members. There hasn't been the accompanying cycle ride for several years now, but Smithers is trying get someone to organise this, so watch out for notifications before the event.

Entries with details to be sent to Smithers Esq - davlinc2000@aol.com
or by post to: Keepers Cottage, Church Road, Sutton, Sandy, Beds SG19 2NB.

Please provide your name & soubriquet, plus golf handicap, and contact details.
Plus guest's name(s) & Golf Handicap if applicable.

Please reserve ...places for bacon roll, coffee, golf & 4-course lunch @ £71 each

... places for lunch only @ £28 each

... places for bacon roll, coffee, cycle ride & lunch @ £35 each

Since the pandemic years, this event is gradually regaining its justifiable position in the Club calendar, so please help make Smithers (David Lincoln) efforts worthwhile.

Yet another old skill that has been lost over the years.



Woman practicing cutting off a head while riding a bicycle.

Not sure what Hunt had in mind when he sent this to me, but probably not a skill we need to encourage! Anybody recognise what the bike is?