

# The Pickwick Magazine

**The World's Oldest Cycling Club  
and Oldest Dickensian Society Extant  
founded in 1870**



**Celebrating our 150th Anniversary**

**Editor: Mr Winkle Snr**

**Volume 17 No.2 October 2020**

## Editorial mumblings .....



After what has, without doubt been a difficult year so far for everyone, I hope that you have all managed to stay in good health. Sadly of course our mega anniversary plans have all been shelved and the uncertainty of when or if, they can be re-instigated continues to be unclear. As you will be able to read further on in the magazine a few brave-heart members re-enacted the 1870 ride by our original members on the appropriate June day-with social distancing observed of course. Chapeau to them!

There have of course been no regular events to report on so far this year, so this issue of the magazine has a somewhat different content structure. It is hoped that the Hampton Court Ride may be achieved due to special efforts by Hunt & Pruffle. Hopefully too, with the excellent weather during the early summer, and time on your hands, many of you will have been out riding and enjoying the safety of the new pop-up cycle lanes. Or not! Some things don't change and several of the safety lanes have already been suspended .....because it slows down the traffic. Really?

Also this year, we sadly lost 4 members who are mentioned further on in the magazine, including an obituary for Peter Magnus/Keith Robins, who for many years, put so much into the world of cycling, and our Club. We will of course miss them all.

Although many international cycling events have been possible, the Club officers have been looking at all possible options to get our Club activities going again, but with the many restrictions still in place we are struggling. Your President and Secretary will have their own comments on this in their reports.

We welcome the contribution in this magazine from Director of the Dickens' Museum - Dr. Cindy Sughrue, for which we thank her kindly.

I will conclude at this point with perhaps a note of optimism that hopefully, within the not too distance future, we can once again convene in true Pickwickian style & fellowship, which we all enjoy so much. Stay safe, stay well.....Editor.

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Closing Date for the March 2021 issue is **31st January 2021**.

All contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Editor, by email to: [pickwick2610@hotmail.com](mailto:pickwick2610@hotmail.com)

or to: Taverners, Warringlid Lane, Plummers Plain, West Sussex RH13 6NY



## ***A Secretarial Report for Autumn 2020 from Sgt Buzfuz***

[email:sdownham@vailwilliams.com](mailto:sdownham@vailwilliams.com)

I trust you have all survived lockdown. What a way to celebrate the club's 150<sup>th</sup> year with virtually everything cancelled/postponed. Members not being able to meet and officers wondering what might be possible in the future and when.

You will have had details of the Hampton Court ride arranged by Hunt and Pruffle and I hope that some of you were able to meet on that day. With Covid case numbers rising again in some areas, this was very much a "watch this space" event and hopefully was able to take place.

What of the future? We have a booking at the Connaught Rooms for December 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Garden Party and AGM. Whether either can take place we do not know at this stage. Your officers are meeting at the beginning of October when hopefully we will know more. If we cannot meet, the AGM could be run electronically. As already announced the postponed celebration dinner is now arranged for 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021, still at the Skinners Hall, and we have the usual booking in May for the President's luncheon (13<sup>th</sup>) when, as suggested for this year, ladies will be welcome. In my opinion, for these events to take place with our usual numbers it will need a vaccine to have been found.

In the meantime, in our sport we can at least go out for a ride unlike some hobbies that need several other people. Football, cricket, and other team sports are starting up but with strict rule changes.

Your officers will always hope to keep you advised and in the meantime please keep safe.

Best Wishes.....Buzfuz / Hon. Sec.

## Your President has some words to say.....

*How* very unfortunate it is that, after all our preparations to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Pickwick Bicycle Club, that in this very year, we should be laid low by the effects of some foreign illness! Our Club suffered the Spanish Flu of 1918-1920, and we will survive this Asian Flu of 2019-20, and we **will meet again** soon, to celebrate even more heartily this *centēsimus quīnquāgēsīmus* anniversary of our Club, even if we have to wait until 2021! Our thanks to Samkin and his team for the excellent beer, badge, glass and tie to mark our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and I trust that you have enjoyed reading through our Membership Book 2020? Thank you for your contributions, and apologies for some inevitable errors and omissions – it will be better next time!

The big positive from lockdown for our members has been that so many have taken to cycling, fuelling a boom for the cycling industry although sourcing product has been an inevitable challenge. Riding on quiet roads was an unexpected pleasure, but it did not last long enough!

Importantly, we did celebrate the day of our 150<sup>th</sup> with a splendid, socially distanced meet at the Downs Hotel on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, followed by a ride in the tracks of the Club Founders, kindly organised by our new member, Phil Saunders. You can read Mr Grundy's report on the event in this magazine on pages 6,7 & 8.

With continuing restrictions on large meetings, it is possible that we will be unable to hold our planned AGM and Garden Party on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020. The Club Officers will discuss this at a virtual meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October and advise you soonest.

The one Club event that is still hopefully running is the Club Hampton Court ride on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October and our thanks to Hunt and Pruffle for their tenacity in making this happen – I look forward to riding my 1870 Velocipede, made in the same year as the Club was formed!

It has been an honour to represent you as Mr Pickwick during this special year, even if I have been furloughed! I have been touched by the suggestion of a number of members that The Club should consider extending my position as your President for a further year, and I believe this proposal will be tabled at our AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020. My very best wishes to all our Members as we learn to adjust to a new way of living - keep safe, stay alert and keep cycling

Your humble servant,

*Samuel Pickwick (Mr Watty)*



## Captains Words.....

Dear Fellow Pickwickians

I hope that you are staying safe and well during these difficult times with the Coronavirus about us. This was supposed to be our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year Celebrations, but unfortunately so far, we have not been able to celebrate this momentous occasion due to the pandemic we are experiencing. Indeed this has certainly been a difficult year for us all and it has been strange not turning up at the Connaught Rooms for our May luncheon, which was the start of our celebrations. Also, it was odd not attending the Golf Day or the Past President's Annual Lunch.

However it was great that some of us were able to attend the Downs Hotel courtesy of our president Samuel Pickwick. This was a brilliant event, with all the necessary social distancing, to celebrate our Club's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday on the actual date of June 22<sup>nd</sup>. I would especially like to thank our fellow Pickwickian who travelled from Newcastle to join us and drink a toast of champagne to the Club's historic birthday, and then join in the bike ride afterwards.

I hope that I like you, will be able social distancing and government guidelines permitting, to attend the Hampton Court Bike Ride. If it goes ahead, it will be the only regular event so far this year! However we await confirmation from Hunt for that. I do hope the December President's luncheon will also go ahead in some form - we wait to see.

Following that I would like to remind fellow Pickwickians that we have re-arranged the 150<sup>th</sup> Dinner at Skinners Hall for Friday March 5<sup>th</sup> 2021. Please do come and support the Club and remember to reserve your ticket when they go on sale, in the near future. It really will be a quite unique evening and well worth the wait!

Please keep safe and well and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Your humble servant  
Dr Payne of the 43<sup>rd</sup>  
Club Captain





## The Pickwick Bicycle Club 2020 Anniversary Ride

On Wednesday, June 22nd, 1870, six friends "full of the freshness of youth" took to the new sport and pastime of cycling "for their mutual enjoyment and good fellowship," remembered a 1905 account of their exploits. Convening at the Downs Hotel, a then seven-year-old pub facing the recently conserved parkland of Hackney Downs in north London, the six velocipedists — J.A. Johnson, Jack Bryant, W.E. Maverly, K.M. Yeoman, L.C.B. Yeoman, and D.S. Medcalf — were minded to form a club. No name was floated at this first meeting,



but it was nevertheless decided that the club's uniform would be "simply a white straw hat with a black and amber ribbon."



At the same venue a month later it was suggested that the newly minted club should take the name of a book written by Charles Dickens, who, in June, "had but

recently quitted for ever the sphere of his immortal labours," said that 1905 history. The young men could have alighted on any of the recently deceased author's novels, but they settled on his first: the Pickwick Bicycle Club was born. Taking place on the morning of a gloriously sunny Monday June 22nd 2020, the celebration — complete with club banners, hand sanitiser, and champagne in plastic flutes — attracted a small crowd. The curious well-wishers included three young women who live in the downstairs rooms of the former Downs Hotel, which, in 2007, had been converted to residential flats.

"This is the most exciting thing that's happened to us in lockdown," one of the young women told us, as she unlocked her bicycle from railings so we could place some very much older ones in its place, including Mr. Pickwick's 1870-vintage Boneshaker and several newfangled Penny Farthings.



Mr Pickwick on his 1870's Boneshaker

These period bicycles were not for decoration; they were pressed into action for a ten-miles-out, ten-miles-back ride that was reminiscent of a typical outing for our original members astride their 60lb. speed machines. (7mph would have been a good lick for such iron-tyred beasts on the macadamised roads of the day – gravel riding is nothing new.)

New member Phil Saunders was the instigator of the meet-up. Our gallant organiser couldn't be with us for the rendezvous at the club's first headquarters, but he gamely caught up as we followed his suggested scenic amble along the towpath beside the Lee navigation. Members on Penny Farthings had to dismount for low bridges and I had a short wobble on the 1870 Boneshaker, causing me to admire both the dexterity of our original members and the bike handling prowess of our very own Mr Pickwick.

Refreshed and refuelled at the Narrow Boat Café at Ramme Marsh Lock, the riders headed back, thanking some lucky stars that we had been able to gather, albeit in artificially small numbers, on such an important landmark in our club's history. Phil has proposed that the club ought to make this one-off event into an annual Founder's Ride, to be staged on the third Sunday each June, with the 20-mile route to change each year but always on lanes once ridden, slowly but surely, by our original members.

A splendid idea!

**Mr Grundy -Carlton Reid**

Present:

**Mr Pickwick**/Mr Watty - Stuart Mason-Elliott; **Hunt** - Roger Hitchman  
**Brother Mordlin** - Chris Saltrick; **Charles Fitz-Marshall**/Andrew Donald  
**Mr Dumkins**/ Paddy Green; **Mr Gunter**/ Michael Grutzner  
**Mr Grundy**/Carlton Reid; **Old Porkenham**/ Allan Hilder;  
**Charley the Pot-Boy**/Adrian Stevens; **Dr Payne of the 43rd**/Tim Stevens; **Sir Geoffrey Manning**/Peter Benmax. And yet to acquire a soubriquet - Phil Saunders.

It should of course be noted that there were 6 committee members within the gathering, replicating the 6 original members of 1870.



Ready to Go



Adoring Crowds

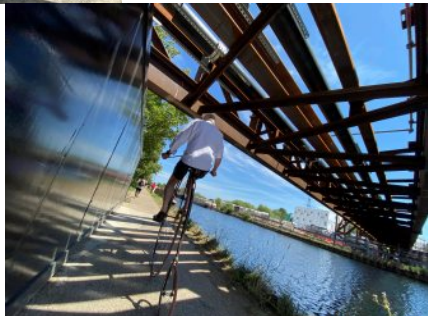


On the Towpath

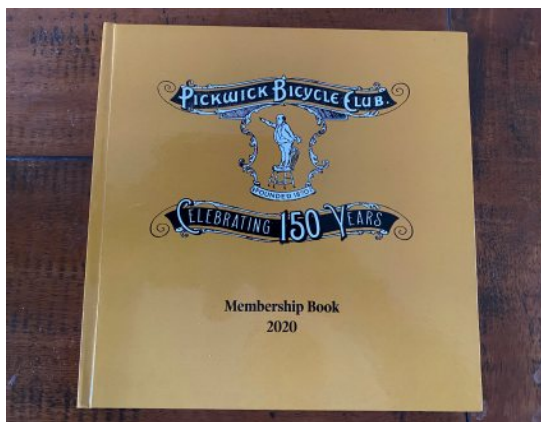
No room for a Boater



2020 Famous Six







## Your New Club Membership Book

I think we were all pleased to receive the excellent new membership Book this summer, amidst all the chaos and concerns of the Corona-virus lockdown, it was a high moment of pleasure to break the doldrums that many of us were in. Our President had suggested the idea of a special handbook back in 2018, and with his usual organisational skills managed to get the vast majority of the Club membership to submit to portrait photo-shots at the luncheons, and to contribute a few words of their background, and produce this excellent record of Club Membership. The various stories behind each member, be it their working or a cycling background, made interesting reading. Some members failed to get their mugshots done in time, but they are forgiven of course. One in particular came up with a laudable excuse - he said. And that was no less a person than Mr Smithie/Gino Goddard. He claimed he had his photo taken with the Guards at the luncheon, and believed that in such company he was guaranteed of looking respectable for once! Hoping to avert further banter at his expense from Mr Noddy & Pedal Club friends - along the lines of "typical, invisible in the bunch, until the last 200yds of a race", he expressed his apologies and submitted this passport photo (who would allow him into the country?) to show his real identity.



We sincerely thank you Mr President for an excellent keepsake of what will surely become an important piece of Club memorabilia.....Winkle Snr.

See page 16 for an E&O update

## Buzfuz tells his story - What a difference a move made!

Back in 1985 my wife and family moved into our current house. Shortly after moving in our neighbours introduced themselves and asked if they could borrow our daughters for a photograph. My neighbour had recently restored a Victorian child's fairy cycle with post office side car. The girls were dressed in pinafore dresses and straw boaters and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

We were then asked if we could ride bicycles as neighbours supported the local village parade, riding Victorian and Edwardian cycles. We said yes, and dressed in appropriate costume road in the parade. I remember I rode a Walls ice cream tricycle; a very heavy machine, the ice box being metal lined.

After this experience we were offered a ride in the Benson Veteran cycle club rally and were again lent cycles to ride, again in costume. It was clear that the family enjoyed the experiences.



Buzfuz on High

That autumn I really got the bug and bought my first Edwardian cycle a Premier helical tube bike of about 1908 for the princely sum of £75. We joined the Desford Lane Pedlars cycle club, there being no local club in our area at that time. This was soon put right and I was invited to join the committee of the Solent Veteran Bicycle and Tricycle club and two years later became club Captain, a post a still hold.

A member of that club was none other than Mr Brooks who kindly invited me as a guest to a Pickwick Bicycle Club luncheon and soon was proposed and elected a member and in 1999 became secretary. With my neighbour and local club members I have attended many fairs and gatherings displaying vintage and veteran cycles and ridden in and organised many National Rallies of the National Association of Veteran Cycle clubs an organisation I have been a Vice President of for many years and President for 6 years.



An off shoot of the local club is a group called the Dandy Chargers a number of somewhat eccentric individuals who own and ride replica Hobby Horses dressed in appropriate period (1818) costumes appearing at National Trust Houses and historic events throughout the summer months

In my younger days I would have played cricket in the summer and hockey in the winter. I am still heavily involved with hockey, but the historic cycling now takes up substantial parts of the year.

What a difference a move made! Buzfuz

On the Road- Change of Machine

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Buzfuz also sent me an interesting news item about Dickens's family history:

Dear Mr Editor,

I have received a letter addressed to the Club from Thomas Keneally- an Australian author who has written a book that was due to be published during the first week of September. (It's believed he is the author of Schindler's List). He has been researching the destiny of two of Dickens's sons, sent to Australia in the 1860's. The novel is about the two brother's experience up to the time of the death of Dickens. Both settled in a remote part of the country occupied by aboriginal tribes and the children of convicts. It is hoped that readers will get a sense of what Dickens, his wife Catherine and the far spread Dickens children were engaged in.

The publishers are Sceptre Imprint of Hachette in London.

Cost is around £14.75 but it's also available in paperback & on Kindle.

Regards  
Buzfuz



## 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](mailto:steve@stephenbullen.com) and you will receive the information by return.

### Blunderbore (did not exist) - A Cornish giant (Jack the Giant killer)

*"Most extraordinary female this," thought Mr. Pickwick, popping in again. 'Ha-hum!' These last sounds, so like those in which, as legends inform us, the ferocious giant Blunderbore was in the habit of expressing his opinion that it was time to lay the cloth, were too distinctly audible to be again mistaken for the workings of fancy. 'Gracious Heaven!' said the middle-aged lady, 'what's that?' 'It's-- it's--only a gentleman, ma'am,' said Mr. Pickwick, from behind the curtains. 'A gentleman!' said the lady, with a terrific scream. 'It's all over!' thought Mr. Pickwick."*

Paul R Grose	1988 to 2003
Richard Stanforth	2003 to present

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### Crookey - attendant in the coffee room at Namby's house

*"Give me a sheet of paper, Crookey," said Mr. Price to the attendant, who in dress and general appearance looked something between a bankrupt glazier, and a drover in a state of insolvency; 'and a glass of brandy-and-water, Crookey, d'ye hear? I'm going to write to my father, and I must have a stimulant, or I shan't be able to pitch it strong enough into the old boy.' At this facetious speech, the young boy, it is almost needless to say, was fairly convulsed."*

H A Bishop	1900 to 1921
Sir Lacey E Vincent	1941 to 1947
H A Davis	1948 to 1962
C White	1963 to 1977
David R Thorpe	1982 to 2004
Grahame Lovett	2006 to present



## Mr Charles Fitz-Marshall - one of Jingle's aliases at Mrs Leo Hunter's party

*"Nothing seemed wanting to render the select circle complete, when Mr. Leo Hunter--whose department on these occasions, was to stand about in doorways, and talk to the less important people--suddenly called out-- 'My dear; here's Mr. Charles Fitz-Marshall.' 'Oh dear,' said Mrs. Leo Hunter, 'how anxiously I have been expecting him. Pray make room, to let Mr. Fitz-Marshall pass. Tell Mr. Fitz-Marshall, my dear, to come up to me directly, to be scolded for coming so late.' 'Coming, my dear ma'am,' cried a voice, 'as quick as I can-- crowds of people--full room--hard work--very.' Mr. Pickwick's knife and fork fell from his hand. He stared across the table at Mr. Tupman, who had dropped his knife and fork, and was looking as if he were about to sink into the ground without further notice. 'Ah!' cried the voice, as its owner pushed his way among the last five-and-twenty Turks, officers, cavaliers, and Charles the Seconds, that remained between him and the table, 'regular mangle--Baker's patent--not a crease in my coat, after all this squeezing--might have "got up my linen" as I came along-- ha! ha! not a bad idea, that--queer thing to have it mangled when it's upon one, though--trying process--very.' With these broken words, a young man dressed as a naval officer made his way up to the table, and presented to the astonished Pickwickians the identical form and features of Mr. Alfred Jingle. The offender had barely time to take Mrs. Leo Hunter's proffered hand, when his eyes encountered the indignant orbs of Mr. Pickwick. 'Hollo!' said Jingle. 'Quite forgot--no directions to postillion --give 'em at once--back in a minute.'*

*'The servant, or Mr. Hunter will do it in a moment, Mr. Fitz-Marshall,' said Mrs. Leo Hunter. 'No, no--I'll do it--shan't be long--back in no time,' replied Jingle. With these words he disappeared among the crowd. "*

Derrick Campion	1937 to 1954
B A Marshall	1960 to 1994
Jon Edwards	1996 to 2014
Andrew Donald	2016 to present

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## Mr Gunter - medical student: friend of Ben Allen and Bob Sawyer

*"'Well, Noddy,' replied Mr. Bob Sawyer. 'I should be very sorry, Sawyer,' said Mr. Noddy, 'to create any unpleasantness at any friend's table, and much less at yours, Sawyer--very; but I must take this opportunity of informing Mr. Gunter that he is no gentleman.' 'And I should be very sorry, Sawyer, to create any disturbance*

*in the street in which you reside,' said Mr. Gunter, 'but I'm afraid I shall be under the necessity of alarming the neighbours by throwing the person who has just spoken, out o' window.' 'What do you mean by that, sir?' inquired Mr. Noddy. 'What I say, Sir,' replied Mr. Gunter."*

P H Beveridge	1926 to 1934
E F Mitchell	1938 to 1952
Lt.Col. N Brocklebank	1963 to 1965
A T Hobbs	1966 to 1969
W J Wilson	1968 to 1972
David Goodall	1980 to 2017
Michael Gruetzner	2018 to present

Soubriquets Continued.....

### Mr Dumkins - Muggleton cricketer at Dingley Dell match

*“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. Several players were stationed, to 'look out,' in different parts of the field, and each fixed himself into the proper attitude by placing one hand on each knee, and stooping very much as if he were 'making a back' for some beginner at leap-frog. All the regular players do this sort of thing;--indeed it is generally supposed that it is quite impossible to look out properly in any other position.”*

H V Smith	1882 to 1901	
A A Deakin	1937 to 1948	Ass. Hon. Sec. 1938
J F Williams	1959 to 1968	
C Tony Green	1973 to 2004	
Patrick Greene	2006 to present	

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### 3-In-One Oil.....did you know?

We've all used the 3-in-One oil for many different lubrication needs, but did you ever wonder why it was called that?

Originally formulated in the USA in 1894 for use on..... yes, bicycles!

And why 3-in-One? Simple - "clean, lubricate and protect" from one tin.

So now you know how important that little tin(or plastic as it is now) container with a red spout has always been so much part of a cyclist's toolkit



## Around the World in 150years

The President has received an amazing gift to the Club from Sir Geoffrey Manning (Peter Benmax) to mark the occasion of our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It depicts Samuel Pickwick standing 'on top of the World' holding an 1870 silver thru'penny piece while cyclists on various machines ride around the globe! Members need to see this remarkable creation, from our own Club inventor, and it is proposed that it will be held by successive Presidents who will bring it to future events to enable Members to marvel at.

Our sincere thanks to Sir Geoffrey Manning – Tally HO!

## Membership Handbook E&O.....

Sometimes errors do occur during planning such printed matter, and the Editor wishes to apologise for the following unfortunate errors that did occur in the new handbook. Please see below:

Jeremy Burgess/**Mr Luffey**- actually joined in 1980, not 2008 as stated.

David Evans /**Lieutenant Tappleton(Retired)** - the incorrect photo was used and unfortunately we still do not have the correct one.

Stewart Fairburn /**New Member** - the incorrect photo was used, but here is the correct one.



Adrian Stevens /**Charley the Pot-boy** - his soubriquet was omitted from the headline banner.



Bill Farrow /**The Late Mr Bardell** - the incorrect photo was used, but here is the correct one.



Peter Turner /**Sam Weller (Retired)** - your photo was omitted, but here it is now.

Please advise of any other errors, omissions or changes to your information to:  
[stuart.elliott@elliotts.uk](mailto:stuart.elliott@elliotts.uk)



*Celebrations on Hold!*

Remembering all of the hard work done by your organising committee

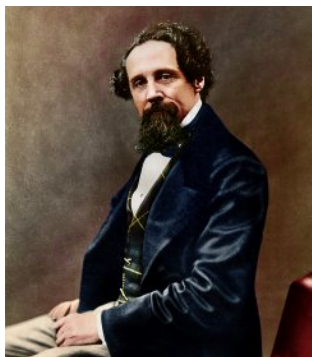
We will enjoy their efforts in 2021 (hopefully!)



## A message from the Charles Dickens Museum

*Don't leave off hoping, or it's of no use doing anything. Hope, hope, to the last!*

Like everybody else, we were stopped in our tracks in March 2020 when the Charles Dickens Museum was forced to close due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, unlike many other cultural organisations that receive ongoing funding from the government, the Charles Dickens Museum is an independent charity, conceived as self-funding from the start, 95 years ago. This means we must earn every penny we need to look after Dickens's house, and the world-class collection that brings Dickens and his work to life. We rely on people coming through the Doughty Street front door to ensure that the Museum continues to exist.



Tarten - a new colourised image  
by Oliver Clyde

When we were forced to close, it's fair to say that we were in the middle of something of a purple patch; we had just kicked off the anniversary year with the announcement of the acquisition of a major private collection from America; we had installed the eagle-eyed 'lost portrait' of Dickens in his study following its disappearance for 170 years; and we were on the verge of opening a new exhibition, Technicolour Dickens: The Living Image of Charles Dickens, revealing the character of the man more vividly than has ever been possible. And public interest in Dickens is as strong as ever, perhaps even more so now, as we seek solace in literature and the distraction of a great storyteller.

*We must meet reverses boldly, and not suffer them to frighten us... We must live misfortune down.*

We have been deeply touched by the many words of encouragement that have accompanied donations to our COVID-19 appeal from all over the world; such generosity lifted our spirits when the future seemed very bleak.

Like Dickens, we were unable to stay still during lockdown. We enhanced our virtual presence significantly through our social media channels, including a series of short videos called 'Dickens Reads Dickens' featuring descendants of Dickens reciting favourite passages. We were also determined not to let the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dickens's death on 9<sup>th</sup> June go unmarked despite the cancellation of the annual wreath-laying at his grave in Westminster Abbey - we joined forces with Luxmuralis to create a light installation that was projected on to the Abbey and captured on film. <https://youtu.be/6YtNvyz3NdA>

We have also achieved a long-standing aspiration by launching our [Collections Online](#), featuring popular items from the collection, each with a description, photographs and information about the item's history. We will continue to add to this on a monthly basis and hope to have reached the end of the 100,000+ items by the time we celebrate the Museum's centenary in 2025.



A sample of some items on show

We reached another important milestone when we were able to reopen the Museum on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020 after 18 weeks of closure. A steady stream of enthusiastic visitors have followed and our new special exhibition, Technicolour Dickens: the Living Image of Charles Dickens, featuring new colour photographs, undoubtedly has a 'wow' factor. With social distancing measures in place, the Museum's capacity is severely reduced; this is wonderful for visitors who have the space to really enjoy being in Dickens's house, but does present some obvious difficulties for the Museum's revenue targets. Fortunately, a Heritage Emergency Grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund is helping with our reopening costs for the first three months; we're far from out of danger but it's a start.

2020 is proving to be a memorable year - not quite the one we envisaged or planned, but one that is reminding us of what really matters in life.

*Cindy Sughrue*  
*Director*

## Passing of friends.....

Once again we have had to say goodbye to a few more Club members during the past months. Your Secretary has passed on condolences on behalf of the Club to their respective families.

**Ron Webb/ Mr Griggs** - in March - [message here from Justice Stareleigh](#),

“Sorry to say that Ron passed away this morning (March 1st); whilst being in a nursing home for the last few months and in declining health, he was recovering from pneumonia and he passed away in his sleep. He was an internationally famous track designer and builder, and his claim to fame was that every indoor world record was held on one of his tracks. He came over from Australia in the 1950's as a racer and with quite a lot of success, then progressed to organising teams and bringing over Aussie teams. In later years he helped formulate and organise "The Tour Down Under", Australia's leading and internationally recognised cycle race. Whilst being a genuine Pickwickian, he was a giant of the cycling world, and if he befriended you, you had a friend for life.”

Ron Gray ,Mr Justice Stareleigh.

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**Tony Blyth/ Young Edmunds** also passed away in March.

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**David Taylor/ Welps** passed away in August

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**Keith Robins/ Peter Magnus** passed away in May -Thomas Groffin remembers his life

Keith Geoffrey Robins died peacefully at his home in Spalding, Lincolnshire on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2020 aged 91, surrounded by his family. He is survived by Brenda, his wife, and two of their three children, Nichola, and Kevin with Adrian passing away in 1991. It was always clear from talking to Keith that his marriage was a very strong and happy one, from the day he met Brenda, a few days after he turned 21, until their 65<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year. But whilst his family was his greatest love, he was also devoted to cycling and was generous in dedicating himself to its success as a sport. He got his start by accident. His father had intended Keith to become an architect and secured a grant for him to travel by bus to art school every day.



But Keith had other ideas, and decided to save the money and buy a bike instead. It was the start of a lifelong enthusiasm.



Keith started with local cycling clubs in Kettering, where he was born, and through them learned many aspects of the sport and recreation. As a result he had a very busy life covering all facets of cycling and reached high office in a great many British cycling organisations. He was a long term member joining in 1980 and a former President (2010) of the Pickwick Bicycle Club, as well as the Pedal Club, and the Road Records Association. When he was posted to Palestine and Egypt during his national service, he joined the Forces club, The Buckshee Wheelers. He was also a Trustee of the Bidlake Memorial Trust, a life Vice President of the Veteran Time Trials Association and received the Gold badge of Honour presented by Cycling Time Trials.

He assisted on many Road Records Association record attempts including the Land's End to John O'Groats challenge for Roy Cromack, Paul Carbutt and twice, John Woodburn. He was also a life member of the Cyclist's Touring Club, British Cycling and Veterans Cycle Club.

In addition, Keith was a Freemason of long standing belonging to The Lodge of the Open Road, Chapter of the Open Road, the Pickwick Bicycle Lodge and Welland Lodge.

Keith and Brenda together established Beekay Products in 1962, offering screen-printing services, which they taught themselves from books. Beekay became a major supplier of screen printed signs, numbers and memorabilia for cycling events all over Britain as well as The Skol 6 Day race at Wembley, The Grand National, the FA Cup, World Athletics Championships and, for 27 years, the London Marathon.

He also managed the Herne Hill Stadium for a period and in 1958 he co-organised the famous "Coppi Meeting" which was the only appearance in Britain of the major Italian cycling superstar, Fausto Coppi. Some 12,000 people packed Herne Hill track that day and the event has been talked about for years since. It was also the first example of what might just be possible for the popularity of cycling in the UK. He proved it so.

Rest in peace Keith

*Alan Rushton/Thomas Groffin* (retired)



THE SIX FOUNDERS OF THE PICKWICK BICYCLE CLUB ON A CLUB RUN 1870

## What would they have thought.....?!

*Left to right in picture:*

*DS Medcalf; Jno Bryant(with boater); then either JA Johnson or WE Maverly we don't know which is which; Lamartine Yeoman; and younger brother Kossuth Yeoman seated at the front.*

It just seemed appropriate that we should remember these pioneers today, as we (sort of) celebrate our 150th year anniversary. Hopefully they would be proud to know that the Club continues to prosper from their imaginative idea to form a Club all those years ago. Also that we have stayed with the uniform of white straw hat (boater) with a black & amber ribbon. And that's not the only rule that the current Club fulfil, since they had an etiquette for riding with the 'Captain' demanding strict obedience when on the road, controlling those who may stray by whistle command. Fortunately Pruffle doesn't have a whistle, but he controls the start of the Hampton Court Ride simply by raising his voice a few decibels! We can wonder if current bearers of the soubriquets from 1870 compare with their predecessors, such as Lt Tapleton (Kossuth Yeoman), who was renowned for his skill at billiards, 'defeating many of the younger members in a benign & fatherly manner'. One hopes that the current Tracy Tupman affords good health unlike 'poor Jack Bryant who's health broke down and went abroad'.

Hopefully future members of our Club will remember us with such kind consideration.

## More Pickwick history...following the trail of the two Lodges .....

For some time now, with the skills of Mrs Winkle, I have been exploring the history of some of our early members, looking at connections of how and where they met. We know much from Walter Blake's early history written in 1905, but we have also found there was a link through the Freemason's fraternity. The Covid-19 restrictions thwarted our efforts but the curators at the Metropolitan Grand Lodge have been very helpful albeit at arms length.

The Pickwick Lodge (2467) was issued with a warrant of constitution in early 1898 and amongst its members were Kossuth Yeoman, Joseph Atto and Walter Blake - all 'known' names in the Pickwick Bicycle Club. Other names came to the fore as well, such as Edward Hollands, Thomas Boulter, John Benningfield, Herbert Hill, Charles Scrivener, Frank Mess and Stephen Rhodes. All of whom can be found in our history of Club Officers -check out the Club website. It can only be assumed that the Lodge was formed by these Club members hence the Pickwick Lodge. There were a further 26 names in the lodge register, but were they members of the Bicycle Club, and if so what do we know of them? Clearly more work to do on this link.



We then jump to 2018 when Pruffle acquired a Pickwick Lodge enamel badge - but it had a Lodge number of 5448. Investigation reveals that this was issued its warrant in 1933, with its HQ at the Leather Bottle Hotel in Cobham, Kent, and remained there until 1971 when it moved to Wilmington, Kent. Many of us know Ye Olde Leather Bottle in Cobham as it is now called, having had several summer gatherings there. It has a plethora of Dickens & Pickwick related artefacts and memorabilia - well worth a visit (when permissible).

So far regrettably, we have been unable to access any information on the members names of this second Lodge, but as soon as it's possible to visit the Grand Lodge Museum & archives - just a few steps from the Connaught Rooms, then the Winkles will pursue this alternative Club connection.

If any members are able to shed some light on either Lodge - perhaps you are members, then it would be of historical interest for aiding us in the continuance of our Club history for future. Please contact the editor if you can help.



*Pickwick Bicycle Club's Hampton Court Cycle Ride 2019*

*Courtesy of the late Keith Robins/ Peter Magnus*

Keith was always thinking about the Pickwick Bicycle Club and every year he would produce a picture, such as the one above, for everyone who took part in the annual Hampton Court Ride after it was re-introduced in 2007. Previous examples have appeared in this magazine. He also prepared special menu cards - well more like folders, for the Past President's luncheon. He seemed to have the happy knack of knowing what suited the occasion and delivered. He provided the Editor with a book of Pickwick Papers images of various characters, from those used on the coasters that all guests receive at the luncheons, to an eclectic collection of cigarette cards depicting more characters. We will miss those thoughtful contributions.