

# The Pickwick Magazine

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

Founded in 1870



Sam lends a hand

Editor: Mr Winkle Snr

Volume 16 No.2 October 2019



## Editorial chit chat.....

Another autumn is upon us, where did the summer go? Very pleasing to hear both Sir Chris Hoy, and Dame Sarah Storey commenting on the pointless waste of money spent on cycle lanes across the country, which serve little purpose and offer very limited safe use for cyclists. We've all seen them; where they suddenly stop without warning; with no where to go; or where they are blocked by parked vehicles; plus when, (when!) the roads are swept, all the debris ends up in the cycle lanes! No doubt everyone has their own pet location, but mine is south of London where the westbound A23 splits at the start of the M23. The cycle lane stops, and cyclists are advised to dismount and cross the motorway feeder road to re-join the A23. Hardly a safe option.

On the active cycling side we've seen more Pickwickians on the road this year, which is great news, with the indefatigable Mr Watty doing more amazing rides in aid of his fundraising charity, such as his imminent Paris to Rouen ride; Wilkins Flasher & Price (the debtor) in the Ride London; and Smiggers targeting 10000 miles in the year, to name just some of them. If you've done a special ride, then let me know so we can include it in the magazine. We also saw the Ineos (revamped Sky) team in action, albeit without Chris Froome, but what a star Geraint Thomas is - a real professional ensuring that with a well oiled team effort, Egan Bernal was able to win the Tour. An amazing Tour all round this year for its 100th anniversary of 'Le Maillot Jaune'

Apart from the President's chosen charity during his year of office, we do get requests to support fundraising by various members, and whilst this is not a primary function of the Club, I am always happy to give a mention of such efforts in this magazine, if you let me know in time.

This is the last editorial before we reach our 150th anniversary year in 2020. A lot of effort has gone into making it hopefully as memorable as possible as you will see further on in this issue, so please spare a thought to those club members responsible for its organisation. Hope to see you all at the December Garden Party .....Editor

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Closing Date for the March 2020 issue is **31st January 2020**.

All contributions are welcome and should be sent to the Editor, by email to:

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



## *A Secretarial Report from Sgt Buzfuz*

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

Another summer over. Your officers and committee are all working hard in respect of the celebrations for next year, more of which appears elsewhere in this magazine. The President's luncheon in May had only a modest turnout. It is hoped that the Garden Party will be better supported especially by those members who have failed to attend the last two functions. Members are reminded that a minimum of one attendance to a major annual lunch out of three is expected, failure of which, without good excuse, could be deemed as a resignation of the club. The dates are now nearly always the same; second Thursday in May and first Thursday in December and dates are confirmed for the next few years. So it is hoped that members can reserve the dates if at all possible, to avoid missing these events.

The previous waiting list is nearly exhausted and with new members to be introduced in December and May we should be introducing new members from the new list by next December. Members introduced in December and May will all be eligible to attend the summer celebrations of our 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They will be sent details. The new waiting list, now closed, has some 46 proposals. All names have been randomly listed and will be invited as soubriquets become available, it is clear that it will take several years for the list to empty. Could I please ask all members who have proposed prospective members to keep me advised of any change in circumstances especially contact details.

We have been advised that some of our, thought lost, archive records have been unearthed by the Dickens Museum and it is hoped that club officers will attend the museum shortly to ascertain exactly what there is. It is hoped some of these might be available for next year's activities. The club has recently acquired historic items including some early photographs and a medal presented to Joseph Atto in the late 1890's. The club is always interested in any archive material that members become aware of.

I look forward in seeing as many of you as possible in December but remember to book early as we have an upper limit of seats available. Application forms will be sent out towards the end of September.

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

## Captain's Comments...Pickwickian greetings to you all

I hope you are all well and have enjoyed the summer months of 2019? And as it draws to an end, please could I ask all members to make sure that they have booked to attend the December luncheon. This will be the start of the club's 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations and is also the club's AGM.

Please do not forget to order your wine in advance and be seated with your guests, appropriately attired in jacket and tie for a prompt 1 pm start.

I would just like to mention the May 2020 luncheon in the context of which the Club, has historically celebrated significant milestones by inviting ladies as well as guests to join us. This action is supported by our President, current officers of the Club and all Past Presidents. Details will follow in due course.

To conclude, I wish members a great 150th Anniversary Year and I look forward to seeing you at as many events as possible over the next 12 months.

Your Captain /Dr Payne of the 43rd



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## Dickens was ripped off by a copycat

Charles Dickens was "outraged" by cheap parodies of his novels that made a Victorian publisher a fortune, a book reveals in a new collection of essays about Edward Lloyd and His World Popular Fiction, Politics and the Press in Victorian Britain, co-edited by Prof Rohan McWilliam and Sarah Louise Lill

With titles such as *Oliver Twiss*, *Nickelas Nickelbery* and *The Penny Pickwick*, the books were produced by Edward Lloyd to cash in on Dickens's popularity, as part of his *Penny Dreadful* book range.

He was sued by Dickens for "fraudulent imitation", but the case failed and there were no laws to stop him selling the knock-offs until the Copyright Act of 1842.





## The Pickwickians visit the Charles Dickens's Museum in London

In early April, a gathering of 12 club members plus guests entered 48 Doughty St., the Victorian home of Charles Dickens, for whom we have to thank for our existence. Apart from writing *Oliver Twist* & *Nicholas Nickleby* there, he completed *Pickwick Papers* in this house.

We were welcomed by Cindy Sughrue - curator & director of the museum and her team, and she gave us an initial overview of the Dickens's life there before we made our tour. The current theme was *Food, Glorious Food (Oliver Twist)* since the family hosted dinners & parties for many leading figures of the period. It seemed quite appropriate for those of the Pickwick Bicycle Club.

Charles & Catherine (nee Hogarth) moved into the Georgian Doughty St residence in early 1837 & raised their three eldest of ten children there. The house is actually two linked properties, so quite spacious and befitting of an increasingly established writer of that period. Charles younger brother Frederick, and Catherine's young sister Mary came to live with them at their home and help with caring for the children.

The museum covers his whole life rather than just at Doughty St., and so the house holds a cornucopia of family furniture, clothing, paintings and personal possessions. His study, located in the centre of the house, includes the desk where he wrote a great number of newspaper articles, essays, short stories and of course his novels, often written by candle light and always with a quill pen.



Cindy gave us an excellent understanding of the life of Dickens, both as a family man and of his working life, and she highlighted several links to our Club with memorabilia in the museum. Of course one quite significant point of interest for us all, was that we were able to see the 'missing' portrait of Dickens which had recently been acquired by the museum with help of a donation from the Pickwick BC.

There is so much to see in the museum, and it's difficult to pick on any specific item, but of interest to many were the two clocks, and the lectern that Dickens had built to use on his travels when lecturing both at home and in the USA. The first clock in the hallway actually came from Dickens later house in Gad's Hill, and is a mahogany 8-day chiming clock made by John Bennett of Cheapside in 1860. In 1863 Dickens wrote to Bennett:

“ My Dear Sir, Since my hall clock was sent to your establishment to be cleaned it has gone (as indeed it always had) perfectly well, but has struck the hours with great reluctance, and after enduring internal agonies of a most distressing nature, it has now ceased striking altogether. Though a happy release for the clock, this is not convenient to the household. If you can send down any confident person with whom the clock can confer, I think it may have something on its works that it would be glad to make a clean breast of.

Faithfully yours,  
Charles Dickens “

The clock in the dining room was made by William Towney of Bristol in c1724, and was the inspiration for the central character of Pickwick Papers, as it belonged to Moses Pickwick (is there a club soubriquet for him? Ed), the proprietor of a line of stage-coaches that ran between London & Bath. The clock was left to Mr Pickwick's landlady, one Mrs Mary Hancock, and was bought by the Dickens Fellowship in 1926 and given to the museum.



After the visit almost the whole contingent adjourned to the very crowded Ciao Bella Italian restaurant for a great and very lively conclusion to the evening.

I hope that everyone who participated in the visit found it to be of great interest, some were saying they will return for a further visit with friends/family. We owe a great vote of thanks to Cindy and her team - including Jaanuja who helped me make the arrangements.

My message to all Pickwickians - if you get the opportunity, go and visit this incredible Museum..... *Samuel Pickwick Esq*

## President's Spring Luncheon May 2019



For those of you observing your President arriving at the Connaught Rooms by taxi, please don't think the high position in the club has gone to my head - I do usually walk. My excuse was that I was delivering the newly made box for the protection of the Joseph Atto Bowl, which has been leading a somewhat vicarious life since being consigned to a plastic carrier bag in the cellar of the Connaught Rooms following the disappearance of its proper box.

Numbers for the luncheon were slow to reach the minimum level of 300, and required urgent appeals by Buzfuz to reach at least a reasonable attendance of around 350 members & guests, once those last minute applications were received. For yours truly it was a quite different event, finding myself 'behind the scenes' at the President's pre-lunch gathering in a private room and missing the hubbub of the bar and rush of members & guests from the Hercules Pillars when the Household Cavalry trumpeters sounded the final call to lunch. I was even given a copy of the scheduled timings and told to 'be brief if I spoke'. And then I was kept outside the main hall with the guest speaker, and Sgt Buzfuz (in the role of the Black Rod) before making our way to the top table.

In the meantime it had been possible to hear the stringent voice of Captain Payne exalting those present to sing the Pickwickian refrains with more vigour if not more tunefully. It all worked though as always with the Pickwick Bicycle Club. A short introduction thanking the Club for electing me as President, followed by grace and we were ready to start proceedings. Control of the room was then handed over to the Captain -as if it was ever in the control of anybody else! The pianist chipped in to support the singing and then a trumpeter sounded the Post Horn, which heralded the arrival of the Original Member with his Ordinary. This time it was Mr Gunter(a relatively newcomer to our ranks-Michael Gruetzner) arriving to take wine with the President.



Continuing in my role as a pop-up toaster, wine was taken with those members of the club committee, then those that had actually ridden a bike recently and those that had joined me on the Charles Dickens Museum visit. Returning to my lunch - once again the Connaught Rooms produced an excellent menu of Chef's Salad, Potted Crayfish & Chilli, Duck Leg Confit, Apricot Bakewell Tart, with coffee and Sweetmeats - I had hardly taken a mouthful and Buzfuz was on his feet to induct the new members -see listed separately on pp12 - and we were on our feet again to raise our glasses to said new members.



The trumpeter's fanfare heralded the President's toast to 'The Queen', followed by the National Anthem.

The principle guest meanwhile was chatting away happily to my guest Bill Houghton -he of the Holdsworth Orange Ford Cortina mentioned in the last issue of the magazine - who was enjoying a rare visit to one of our lunches. Quickly looking at the time schedule, I noted that the Captain was about to announce the Joseph Atto Punchbowl ceremony, whereupon Mr Dumkins marched the Chelsea Pensioners to the top table to the resounding wails of "Boys of the Old Brigade". Taking wine with both gentlemen once they had announced their name, rank, regiment and age, I couldn't fail but notice that they were younger than me - again!



There followed a slight pause in normal proceedings, as everybody sang Happy Birthday to Peter Magnus, better known as Keith Robins, to celebrate his recent 90th Birthday.

Seated once more, our dining continued as the Late Lord Chancellor rose to welcome our special guests including our principle guest.

(See pp 11 for list)



Another fanfare and John Virgo -that household name of snooker - stood to regale us with tales from his life in the world of professional snooker. His time with other well known names, such as Ray Reardon, Dennis Taylor, Willie Thorne & Jimmy White, before going on to co-host the TV show Big Break with Jim Davidson for over 10 years. The pair brought the game to the family home and in colour.



He was famous for his trick shots and impressions-although he didn't do any for us. He became 'the' commentator for all of the championship events, with his well known 'where's the cue ball going now' observation, and had just returned from 17 days at the UK championships. He concluded with the toast to "The Immortal Memory and The Pickwick Bicycle Club".

Vocal refrains ensued once more and then it was my turn to say a few words.



Even though it was exactly 47 years since I became a member of this amazing club, I was still required to keep it brief, apart from thanking John for his entertainment and toast to the club'. I wanted to reiterate an earlier message of mine, that we are first & foremost a cycling club and we have 3 regular rides in our calendar to prove it, with many other opportunities available, so we are in good fettle for our upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.



At this point I was able to inform the gathering that the incorrect attire fines had totalled some £2800 for my Rockinghorse Charity, which provides help for newborn babies suffering from jaundice. I will report more on this in December.

Mr Dumkins was keen to ensure that the necessary members photos were taken, before photo opportunities were taken with the Boys in Scarlet & the Household Cavalry. It was good to see that our guest didn't run away at the end of his stint, staying around to take a glass of wine or three with everyone that wanted to chat with him. And proceedings concluded with the requisite rendering of Auld Lang Syne.



Auld Lang Syne



Collecting Fines



Stiggins celebrates 75 years young



The Trumpeters



Dumkins in his counting house

## The Late Lord Chancellor Welcomes the Guests

First of all , we have a couple of birthdays to sing about, so please get your singing boots on. The Red Nosed Mister Stiggins is celebrating 75 years tomorrow Peter Magnus (soubriquet) Keith Robins - honorary member, celebrated his 90th birthday yesterday!

**Table 15** as guest of Bill Stumps we have Glen Mitchell - 8 times British track champion and competed in the team pursuit event at the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow. Geoff Roberts of Geoff Roberts bicycle frames.

As guest of Bullman we have Neill Keen, chairman of Foskia cycling jerseys.

**Table 36** as guest of Martin the Long Gamekeeper we have Rod Alexander, founder and Chairman of the London Triathlon.

As guest of Whiffers we have Andrew Deaner who has not only ridden 6 Etape du Tour and Paris-Brest-Paris twice, but is the cardiologist who saved Bolton Wanderers' Fabrice Muamba's life at White Hart Lane.

**Table 18** as guests of The Honourable Mister Crushton we have Don Langan, CEO of Madison Cycles and Team Principle for Madison Genesis Pro Pike Team Bill Baxter, Sales Director for Madison Cycles.

Madison agents Stu Gwynn, Mark Tallack and Martin Clark, and Adrian Walsh, Ridley Bikes sales agent.

Gary Beckett, 6 day soigneur and promoter.

As guest of Young Cripps we have His Honour RH Naqvi OBE TD, former resident judge of British bases in Cyprus.

**Table 20** as guest of Joseph Smiggers we have Jeremy White who is Secretary of the Pedal Club.

**Table 23** as guest of Old Lobbs we have Bruce, MD Rouleur cycling publication.

**Table 26** As guest of new member David Barry we have Stewart Smith who is National Secretary of Cycling Time Trials.

And finally **Table 30** as guest of The Chaplain we have Phil Taylor, MD Schwalbe Tyres UK.

I now have particular pleasure in introducing our Guest speaker Mr John Virgo, absolute legend of the snooker world.

Gentlemen, please stand and raise your glasses to our Guests, Thank you!

## New Members

We welcome the new members announced by Buzfuz, and trust that they will help to maintain and continue its traditions in typical Pickwickian style.

Paul Hill - Jinkins

Peter Ruffhead - The Late Mr Clarke

Keith Smith - Tom Wildspark

David Berry - Gabriel Grubb

Graham Temple - Mr Prosee

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## The Original Members

As all of you know, our illustrious Club was founded by the six original members below:

J A Johnson

Jno (Jack) Bryant

W E Maverly

K M Yeoman

L C B Yeoman

D S Medcalf

As part of the various plans for the 2020 celebrations of our 150th Anniversary we are trying to find out as much as possible about these important cyclists, and if possible trace their current descendants. Historical information has already been found about some of them, but do any members have any details or photographic memorabilia about them that would be extremely valuable to the Club? If so please contact the Editor asap.

Thank you



## Smithers Golf / Cycle Day brings out the Best - or Not!

Samuel Pickwick recalls on an early start for many to reach Harpenden Common Golf Course in time for.....yes Bacon Rolls to help wake everyone up. This was the start of another day of mixed fortunes for golfers and cyclists. The cyclists, keen to be on the road early and back for lunch were ready, whilst the golfers were still contemplating which balls to use. Justice Stareleigh rounded up his gang of 6 and here is his report:

**"D-Day seventy-five years ago, 6th June 1944**, men were piling ashore in Normandy, to fight for the right of freedom of members of this club and any free thinking person, to carry out the way of life, which we consider normal today. Such sacrifices which we should be eternally grateful." Meanwhile the Pickwick Bicycle Club had been in existence for seventy-four years before this and has survived up and including the present, and is in extremely rude health.

June 6th 2019 Harpenden Common Golf Club, 9.30 am, - weather conditions dry, light southwesterly winds. Perfect cycling and golfing conditions, where are they? The golfers on a late start, (10.30am.) the cyclists munching into bacon butties and slurping coffee awaiting one rider, one of our newer member's Gabriel Grubb's none appearance, we grouped up in the car park for media interviews and photo shots, still no Gabriel!

Eventually the executive decision was taken. To keep up with the TV schedules we would depart, Gabriel had our phone numbers but we didn't have his! This elite group consisted of Mike Dobson, John Graves, Ray Jarvis, of the infamous G.S.Lanterne Rouge, Steve Bullen, (Joseph Smiggers), Stuart Mason-Elliot (Mr Watty), and yours truly.

Off through the suburbs of Harpenden (Outer suburbia) pitting their bike handling skills against the 4x4 yummy mummies and the sherry queens! Through the lanes, and over the hills toward Peter's Green (The Bright Star nice Pub) Down to Lilley Bottom, over to Great Offley (The Red Lion), down towards Hitchin (many good pubs)! but a left turn before, and on towards Pirton, negotiating some closed roads (local knowledge) Holwell and Ickleford Lavender fields for elevenses. Large portions of cake and coffee were consumed, and much banter with Mr Watty, whose £8000. carbon fibre steed, was in complete contrast to his usual modes of transport which includes various vintage models! After topping up the energy levels, the elite group of riders set forth into the heart of the Bedfordshire badlands, on to Letchworth then Willian, a short section of pave (off metalled road) which due to misrouting ended up crossing on a farm track, luckily with no problems, due in no mean feat of the bike handling of this elite group!



Passing Little Wymondley, and Titmore Green the group sped on to the Codicote Road, and on to the spiritual home of the GS Lanterne Rouge. The Goat! A public house par excellence. Where again, pints of Doombar and IPA were consumed, in company with various "Rougers" and the worlds number one barmaid Ayleen.

Suitably sated the group split with Mike and Ray going to St Albans and Hemel Hempstead and the now reduced group retracing the homebound route via Kimpton Bottom, Kimpton, Batford and Harpenden. A total of 45 miles were traversed with no mechanicals or puncture's, a very enjoyable ride out through the highways and byways of Hertfordshire and with a slight foray into the Bedfordshire badlands! We arrived back at the club house where showered and changed and suitably refreshed we awaited the "scuffers and hoofers" with their tales of the fairways, missed pins, tee shots etc, etc, yawn, yawn, yawn.

We all then sat down to a wonderful meal, which as usual was to the highest, Harpenden Common standards. Many Thanks again to our honourable golf secretary Dave (Smithers) Lincoln for a great day. Both Dave and myself would like more of the membership to either turn up and play or ride, or just dine. It's good fun and a great day out and with good company.

I would just like to make the following observations:

**Note 1.** Gabriel Grubb, had misread the joining instructions, and started at the elevenses and rode the complete route in reverse! That man must take the "Ride of the day" award!

**Note 2.** How can we attract more rider's and Golfer's? Answers please, on the back of a second class stamp to the organiser.....Mr Justice Stareleigh.

In the meantime, the golfers set off on their journey. Your President chose unwisely this year and opted to play golf, when it became obvious quite early on that he should have heeded the cry "on yer bike". That said, I was in the excellent company of Past Presidents Tom Martin and Samkin, whose patience was pushed to the limit, for which I thank them.



Tom Martin & Samkin

We were the pathfinders and led the way around the course, ahead of organiser Smithers and his group. All the teams completed this very interesting course, arriving back at the Club House to find the cyclists already enjoying the amber liquid and sunshine. As highlighted by Justice Stareleigh, the club kitchen did us proud once again with an excellent lunch.

Smithers then thanked everyone for attending including those that just came to lunch, and imposed the usual Pickwickian fines for incorrect attire. I was asked to say a few words, which I began by asking everyone to stand and give a moments thought, and raise a glass to those gallant men & boys on the Normandy Beaches 75 years ago. I then explained briefly about my Rockinghorse Charity to which the gathering graciously donated a grand total of £196. Then it was time for the prize presentations.

Unfortunately the Jinkins Balls trophy had gone missing, but it was won by Fogg, who narrowly beat me by one shot for the worst performance! The outright winner of the Crandyke Cup for best guest stableford winner was Russell Bamford (guest of Smithers), and another of the Smithers clan, Robert Basden won the Boz Cup for nearest the pin by a guest. Samkin in site of my nuisance value, won the Namby Cup for best stableford score by a Pickwickian, and Smithers again picked up a trophy — the Winkle Cup for nearest the pin by a member. Well done to all winners, and thank you Smithers for another great Pickwick outing.....Samuel Pickwick.



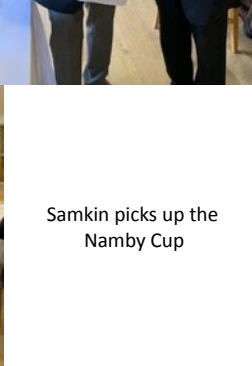
Russell Bamford and the Crandyke Cup



Smithers wins the Winkle Cup



Robert Basden collecting the Boz Cup



Samkin picks up the Namby Cup



## Memories of an Old-Timer

Those of us of a certain age may remember with great affection the racing in the 1950's. The private and confidential RTTC, The National Cyclist Union and the newly formed BLRC the rebels. I first joined the Barnet Cycling Club in 1952 aged 12 years old. It was a mix of road men and time-trialists. The clubroom was at the Green Man Pub in Barnet and there was always a ferocious tear up going home from the clubroom with the finish under suicide bridge at Archway. In the 50's everyone idolised the Italians. I called myself Engers Elle because at the back of my mind I thought that this would help to make me like my idol Fausto Coppi. At the clubroom one night I arranged to enter a 25 on what was then called the N4 course, which now runs parallel to the A14. My club mate Eric Sim, who we called Bartali, I have no idea how he got that name, maybe it was because he was so unlike Gino it just stuck.

We met at 12 noon on Saturday to ride the 40 plus miles. We both had our sprints on carriers at the front of our bikes which was normal then, and not many people had cars at that time. Our digs for the night were in a village called Lowick which is near Thrapston. When we arrived we introduced ourselves to our host an elderly spinster and inquired where our beds for the night were. She indicated a vertical ladder against the wall and we climbed to find a double bed with a bolster which felt as if it was filled with sand. There was a jug and basin - who needs hot water! Remember we were kids on an adventure so this was all part of it.

Later we had dinner which was egg and bacon followed by treacle tart - all this for 10 shillings per night. Our host then relayed to our eager ears all the local village gossip which centred on the Vicar who it was alleged had misappropriated the overdue library book funds (more on this later). I also inquired about the location of the toilet, which was at the end of the garden but was told to be careful of the bees as they don't like any type of perfume or cologne.

Oh dear, I had the then fashionable Brylcreem on my head. I waited until it was dark hoping that the bees were asleep and crept down the garden with my flickering ever-ready torch. I went in, yes there were newspaper squares to use which would be familiar to us war time babies. Strange, as I could hear running water. I shone the torch down the pan



Tom Roker



and I realised that the thunder box was actually perched over a running stream. And so to bed, was it cold or was the bed damp? I am not sure.

Following a breakfast in the morning of cornflakes, we went to the start of the race. The only sound was the familiar 54321 punctuated by the tinier of shoe plates on the road and the distant mewing of cattle. In those days a poor performance was often attributed to being held up by a herd of cows. The actual race for us this day was unspectacular but as my companion Bartali said something to talk about when the glasses are full on the table.

As Bartali and I started to ride back home, there, riding in the opposite direction towards us was the Vicar. We booed and whistled loudly, the poor man must have been confused by such a reaction and proceeded to go head first into the hedgerow. As we rode further along towards home, club riders riding in the other direction shouted encouragement and inquired about the result of the race.

This would not happen today - where has the spirit gone?

Tom Roker (aka Alf Engers)

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Many Thanks Tom for this excellent trip back in time.

For those of you who may not know (hardly likely), this baker's boy from Whitechapel became the fastest man on the road in the 60's & 70's, known as The King of 25's. Having won the National Championship 25mTT in 1959, he won it again 10years later, before winning it for 5 consecutive years between 1972 & 76. The scourge of the RTTC - they consistently tried to challenge his riding style, be it position on the road or allegedly using vehicles for pace, including suspending him.



The King at Speed

They couldn't accept that he was simply ultra-fit and extremely fast. I know from experience that if I was ever in the same event, he always went past me as if I was stationary - which I guess I probably was by comparison! In August 1978, on his even more ultra lightweight all-chrome bike, he became the first person to break the 50minute barrier for 25miles with an extraordinary ride of 49m.24s on the A12 in Essex. Another Pickwickian living legend.



## 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.

### Dismal Man – Mr Pickwick awoken on banks of Medway by Dismal Man

"To be before the footlights,' continued the dismal man, 'is like sitting at a grand court show, and admiring the silken dresses of the gaudy throng; to be behind them is to be the people who make that finery, uncared for and unknown, and left to sink or swim, to starve or live, as fortune wills it.' 'Certainly,' said Mr. Snodgrass: for the sunken eye of the dismal man rested on him, and he felt it necessary to say something. 'Go on, Jemmy,' said the Spanish traveller, 'like black-eyed Susan--all in the Downs--no croaking--speak out--look lively.' 'Will you make another glass before you begin, Sir ?' said Mr. Pickwick. The dismal man took the hint, and having mixed a glass of brandy-and-water, and slowly swallowed half of it, opened the roll of paper and proceeded, partly to read, and partly to relate, the following incident, which we find recorded on the Transactions of the Club as 'The Stroller's Tale.'"

Ramon Hutton	1993 to 1999
Richard Annis	2002 to 2014

### Brown of Muggleton – a shoemaker

"Stop a bit,' replied Sam, suddenly recollecting himself. 'Yes; there's a pair of Vellingtons a good deal worn, and a pair o' lady's shoes, in number five.' 'What sort of shoes?' hastily inquired Wardle, who, together with Mr. Pickwick, had been lost in bewilderment at the singular catalogue of visitors. 'Country make,' replied Sam. 'Any maker's name?' 'Brown.' 'Where of?' 'Muggleton. 'It is them,' exclaimed Wardle. 'By heavens, we've found them.'"

Joseph Bane	1942 to 1944
Paul T Traxton	1990 to 2018

## Tom - Mr Wardle's Groom / Coachman

"'You have got the address?' 'Manor Farm, Dingley Dell,' said Mr. Pickwick, consulting his pocket-book. 'That's it,' said the old gentleman. 'I don't let you off, mind, under a week; and undertake that you shall see everything worth seeing. If you've come down for a country life, come to me, and I'll give you plenty of it. Joe--damn that boy, he's gone to sleep again--Joe, help Tom put in the horses.' The horses were put in--the driver mounted--the fat boy clambered up by his side--farewells were exchanged-- and the carriage rattled off. As the Pickwickians turned round to take a last glimpse of it, the setting sun cast a rich glow on the faces of their entertainers, and fell upon the form of the fat boy. His head was sunk upon his bosom; and he slumbered again."

R W Carter	1912 to 1918
R H Samuels	1966 to 1977
T W Mencarini	1977 to 1990
J Howard-Smith	1990 to 1993
F Arnold	1995 to 2005

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## Prince Bladud - son of Ludhudibras, King of Britain - legend of the sources of waters of Bath.

"'This good king had a queen, who eighteen years before, had had a son, who was called Bladud. He was sent to a preparatory seminary in his father's dominions until he was ten years old, and was then despatched, in charge of a trusty messenger, to a finishing school at Athens; and as there was no extra charge for remaining during the holidays, and no notice required previous to the removal of a pupil, there he remained for eight long years, at the expiration of which time, the king his father sent the lord chamberlain over, to settle the bill, and to bring him home; which, the lord chamberlain doing, was received with shouts, and pensioned immediately."

E Hearle	pre 1881	
J A Hawkins	1881 to 1917	
G B Hemming	1920 to 1923	
Charles Reginald Willis	1925 to 1927	
H J Brueton	1941 to 1952	
Walter Flory	1955 to 1983	Captain
Chris C Tyler	1973 to present	President 1980. Soubriquet changed to "Staple" by mistake
James Tyler	2014 to present	

## The Front Cover -Ch XXIV - Sam lends a Hand...

Mr Grummer and the sedan passed, and the bodyguard passed, in front of the enthusiastic cheers of the mob, when suddenly Sam was stopped by the unexpected appearance of Mr Winkle & Mr Snodgrass. "What's the row, gen'l'm'n?" cried Sam "Who have they got in this here watch-box in mournin'?"

Both gentlemen replied together but their words were lost in the tumult. "Who?" cried Sam again. Once more, a joint reply returned: and though inaudible, Sam saw by the motion of the two pairs of lips that they uttered the magic word "Pickwick." This was enough. In another minute Mr Weller had made his way through the crowd, stopped the chairmen and confronted the portly Grummer. "Hallo, old gen'l'm'n!" said Sam. "Who have you got in this here conveyance?" "Stand back," said Mr Grummer, whose dignity of a great many other men, had been wondrously augmented by a little popularity.

"Knock him down, if he don't," said Mr Dubbley.

"I'm wery much obliged to you, old gen'l'm'n," replied Sam, for consulting my conwenience, and I'm still more obliged to the other gen'l'm'n, who looks as if he'd just escaped from a giant's carrywan, for his his wery 'ansome suggestion; but I should prefer your givin' me a answer to my question, if it's all the same to you - How are you, sir?" This last observation was addressed with a patronising air to Mr Pickwick, who was peeping through the front window.

Mr Grummer, perfectly speechless with indignation, dragged the truncheon with the brass crown from its particular pocket, and flourished it before Sam's eyes. "Ah," said Sam, "it's wery pretty, 'specially the crown, which is uncommon like the real one."

"Stand back!" said the outraged Mr Grummer. By way of adding force to the command, he thrust the brass emblem of royalty into Sam's neckcloth with one hand, and seized Sam's collar with the other: a compliment which Mr Weller returned by knocking him down out of hand: having previously with the utmost consideration knocked down a chairman for him to lie upon.

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Charity Support -

Via Joseph Smiggers, we received a request to support the Winstons Wish UK bereavement charity, from Co-ordinator Nick Cross. If anybody wishes to know more about this charity or support it, please go their website - [www.winstonswish.org](http://www.winstonswish.org)



**2020 Black Tie Dinner**  
**Skinner's Hall, 8 Dowgate Hill, Cannon Street.**  
**Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020 from 6.15pm onwards**

Dear Members

As your Captain I have been working with Peter Legg/Samkin, Past President, to bring you this exciting event. This will be the highlight of our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and I would encourage you all to make every effort to be there so that you do not miss out on this memorable Club evening. We had a good initial response with over 100 members committing to attend, but there are still spaces available.

In order for you to decide please see the proposed details below:-

**Venue:** The prestigious Skinner's Hall near Cannon St Station, in the heart of the City of London.

**Reception:** 6.15pm until 7.15pm, to include Pickwick Beer, soft drinks and Victorian styled seafood stall.

**Dinner:** 7.15pm for 7.30pm. A delightful 4 course dinner to include wine, port and madeira .

**Approx 10.30pm:** At the conclusion of dinner Members will be able to finish off the Pickwick beers!

**Post Dinner:** By kind permission of Skinner's Hall, lighting of the Pickwick shag in the pipe on the Terrace will be allowed.

**Guest Speaker:** Ian Irving, A comedian with a unique style of humour and charismatic charm. You may have seen him before at one of our previous events. Entertainment: Gerald Dickens and his one man show, & Ian Dickens entertaining us with some Dickensian readings.

**Proceedings:** Chelsea Pensioners, The Punch bowl Ceremony and Trumpeters.

**Display:** Pickwick Memorabilia Exhibition

The cost for this wonderful evening will be £125.00 with the Club funding the balance. There are 3 ways of paying:-

1. In full in advance
2. A £50.00 deposit and final payment nearer the time
3. By monthly standing order to the club

Please do book your place as early as you can so that we can ensure that we get the required numbers and I very much look forward to seeing you all there.

With Pickwickian Greetings

Dr Payne

Club Captain - Working Party 2020 Dinner Chairman

## Tom Martin (-aka Cedric Chicken) has sent me a short history of the family business - Chicken Co since it's beginnings 100years ago

Bob Chicken's father John imported tubing from Carl Coppel in Germany, taking over from his grandfather William in the early 1900s. The principal dealings were on behalf of rim maker Kronprinz. The 1927 William Chicken balance sheet showed a profit on agency sales commissions of £346.18.10 1/2.

The Goswell Road, London EC address - Tel: Terminus 1721 - contained from memory - bells, carriers, steam-roller toys and Reynold chains. The 1957 wholesale sales ledger included Leo Rotger's General Fittings Company. He was a Pikeman at the HAC and Bob's brother Harry was another HAC territorial. In 1951 Bob started to import Yellorex chains from the Sedis factory in Isere - where Cedric aged 14 was sent to work in his school holidays - Bob selling them to Raleigh and other OEMs. He became owner of Baycliff a Halifax based company known for its Roughrider saddle bag production. Sales agreements followed with Vredestein Dutch-made tyres, with whom Chicken was to have a joint-stock company.

Son Robert helped organise a small warehouse next to the King's Head pub. In the mid 70s Weinmann and Maillard appointed the Industrial Chain Supply Co, Chicken's trading name, as their distributors and the company moved to Watford. Cedric, a member of the Lantern Rouge CC, along with Phil Liggett, resigned his job as General Manager of Cycles Peugeot (UK) Ltd, extending contacts with several Italian manufacturers and, under the company name of Chicken & Sons, took over the sponsorship of three race classifications in the Milk Race. Robert's hobby at the time was Robson's Transport which formed part of the MMB cavalcade. Bob meanwhile, involved Carlton Cycles as a co-sponsor in a very successful pro-racing team ably supported by Gerald O'Donovan.

The decision was taken to buy Bisley Works near Dunstable, an ex-armaments factory owned by IMI. Improvements to the building were underway when international commissaires arrived on route for Goodwood for the 1982 World Cycling Championships. The in-house Penguin and Goldfish Bowl pub provided the necessary refreshments, including vodka. The hanging pub sign was courtesy of commentator and Halford's buyer David Duffield, a lifelong friend. Membership cards ensured its future notability among the directorate at Raleigh and other companies.

Some 60 wholesalers formed the basis of the sales distribution network, soon to be replaced with the Lightweight List for more specialist trade customers. Business had swung in favour of ATBs and the market for road components was much reduced.

With family membership of the Centenary Bicycle Club and weekend runs, and the various shenanigans of the Pickwick Bicycle Club, an atmosphere of conviviality continued to exist within the company until large-scale bike production in the UK virtually stopped. This affected the Chicken business in no small way. However, in 2000 the Tifosi brand-name bicycle was launched with an EU patent, and the increasingly well-known range of today is still fitted with primarily EU manufactured parts. The fire in 2007, instigated by a disgruntled warehouse boy, was devastating with virtually everything destroyed - stock, computers, files and so much memorabilia. True to form, Chicken's many Continental suppliers helped with exemplary service to get the company back on its feet.

The purchase of newer premises in Leighton Buzzard provided the basis for on-going development, taking Chicken CycleKit to new levels of operation and turnover. Sponsorship was resumed in 2017, albeit at an amateur level, with what was to prove a highly successful Spirit racing team. Its replacement is the even more successful Brother UK Tifosi OnForm Elite women's team. The MBO in 2018 and the ever growing number of retail outlets helps ensure the future of well-known brands which have been trading with the company since the 1970s. This year marks the 100th Anniversary of the company founding. Director Mike Catlin, who joined Chickens from school, will inherit Bob's Pickwick Bicycle Club's soubriquet of Angelo Cyrus Bantam this year, thereby maintaining a strong family company connection and Bob's name remembered.

Cedric.....



## Baillie Mac Something's 31st Charity Ride – June 30<sup>th</sup>



A somewhat depleted gathering this year with only 20 participants, although good in quality, as it included Pickwickians, namely Justice Stareleigh, Mr Mallard, Horatio Fizkin & Whiffers plus daughter Katie.

With weather set fair, and not too hot, riders assembled for the usual start from the Plough at Winchmore Hill. An eclectic assortment of riders & machines set off, following the carefully planted white arrow markers toward the lunch stop at the now familiar Huntswood Golf Club, near Burnham. Intake of food and alcohol (?) completed, the riders set off again in a Le Mans style scatter, heading back to cross the M40 by footbridge - difficult for the tandem (!) - and onto The Greyhound in Old Beaconsfield for an early afternoon tea break. Onto the final leg, via New Beaconsfield and Penn and the last climb up to The Plough to finish, and grab some well earned refreshment.

Mrs Baillie Mac counted them out from the control centre at The Plough, but had difficulty counting them back as they drifted back, in one's and two's. Not sure whether that was the red wine, or the fact that the tandem pair of Mr Mallard and Jenny, decided to stop at Wildhatch and not do the last 100yds to The Plough. So with almost everyone signed in, HQ was moved to Wildhatch for the annual BBQ. As always, a grand table of fare was available for all to indulge with appropriate beverages to cater for all. Even though he had his apron at the ready, Justice Stareleigh was usurped as head chef by Diana's neighbour Judy,. Total amount raised was £3627, which this year will go to the Thames Hospice in Windsor.

Tim West, more experienced riding a horse rather than a bicycle, thanked everyone on behalf of Huntswood Golf Club for their support, along with a general well done vote of thanks to Mrs Baillie Mac Something for her organisation, and letting a mixed assortment of vagabond cyclists into their garden.

## Mr Pickwick Goes to France - well Belgium really

July 2019 saw the 106th edition of Le Tour de France having the first two stages starting and finishing in Brussels. This was seen as an opportunity to continue this now traditional Pickwickian event with less arduous travel arrangements than in the previous years.

Four couples: Bailie Mac Something and Diana; Mr. Brooks and Rosemary; Jackson and Jackie; and friends of the club, Brian and Pam Tadman travelled together to Brussels on Eurostar, whilst King of the Goblins and Celia flew in from Newcastle via Heathrow. The Dansaert Hotel, chosen and booked for everyone by Diana turned out to be in a great location. In a quiet street on the edge of the tourist centre it gave walking access to numerous bars and restaurants including, immediately opposite, the origin of the 'Le Pain Quotidien' chain; a café/bakery with its signature community table at which our party gathered for breakfast each morning.

Day 1 was a take it easy day. After arrival and check-in at the hotel, our party assembled at outdoor tables at a local hostelry, to ensure that nobody would suffer from dehydration whilst acclimatising to the warm weather. Some continued in this vein while others took the opportunity to explore the local area, before meeting up again to enjoy an evening meal.

Day 2 was a day to do the tourist thing. Four of our group decided to explore Brussels while the rest took a rail trip to beautiful Bruges where a canal tour was the highlight of the day. The evening brought the group together again for another round of wining and dining.



At Leisure in Bruges





Day 3 was the day of Le Gand Depart and it was then that rumours of Diana's involvement in witchcraft were strengthened. Without previous warning we awoke to find barriers lining the street and were fortunate to have the caravan and race viewable from the hotel front step. Then we discovered that another bar only 20 metres away was screening the race on a giant screen. Spooky! More sociable wining and dining in the evening.



We even saw some of the cycling!



Day 4 was devoted to the Team Time Trial. By dint of following the route using Google Street View we discovered the one place where the riders past directly in front of a bar-brasserie with outdoor tables, on the steep hill up to the finish at Ploubenec. Le Brasserie St. Paul in Auderghem was accessed by taxis in the morning with two getting stuck in traffic jams and taking one and a half hours while the third made it in twenty minutes thanks to a driver who knew all the rat runs and was happy to go the wrong way down a one way street. Beer, wine, and gourmet burgers calmed irritation and the day passed quickly. Return to the hotel was made easier by using the 'free for the day' metro service although travel home afterwards include delays for everyone regardless of destination.

All in all a fine event. ....*King of the Goblins*

150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the first long distance  
bicycle race in the World,  
from Paris to Rouen 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019.



To celebrate the most important event in the history of cycle racing, 20 velocipede riders will pedal their original bone-shakers on the same 123km (77 mile) course that was ridden in 1869, including Pickwick Bicycle Club member and Vice President, Mr Watty!

This historical race took place on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November 1869 and was organised by the Compagnie Parisienne which was run by the Olivier brothers who had helped Pierre Michaux to develop the Velocipede in Paris. There were around 100 starters, men and women with 35 finishing within the allotted 24 hours. The race was won by a young English man James Moore, in 10 hours 25 minutes at an average speed of 8mph, while the first woman, with a soubriquet of 'Miss America' finished 12 hours later.

Thousands of spectators lined the route and articles in the press helped spread the news of this new sport, enabling riders to travel long distances without becoming tired or risking danger. The event helped launch sporting publications, such as The Velocipède Illustré and to launch the world of cycle racing.

So, in Paris on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 07:00 from the Place de l'Etoile on the side of the avenue de la Grande Armée the race to Rouen will start. Mr Watty has been in training for months, and riding his original 1870 velocipede, he has every intention of following in the footsteps of James Moore with a victory for England!

Allez! Allez! Watty

## Remaining Events for 2019

**10th October** - Hampton Court Bike Ride - at Imber Court Surrey. Leisurly riding on 'old' bikes through the Royal Parks and along the Thames footpaths. Or the now famous lycra clad enthusiasts speeding through the Surrey Lanes.

**5th December** - 149th Annual Garden Party - apply Hon Sec Buzfuz

**May 4th 2020** 'Hunt' has just advised that he is planning another ride in Bushy Park on 'Chestnut Sunday' as part of the 2020 celebrations. More details will appear in the March issue of this publication, but put the date in your diary **NOW!**

2020 is the start of our 150th Anniversary year, and the first official event will be the President's Spring Luncheon to be held on 14th May at the usual venue. As mentioned by the Captain, it will follow the style of our 100th Anniversary when ladies were invited as well as guests. The Club officers hope that there will be good support for this event which it is planned to include the BrickLane Music Hall ensemble for your entertainment.

More details will follow in due course.

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## Rockinghorse Charity Donation.....



Following on from the wonderful donations by members & guests at the Spring Luncheon, your President accompanied by his two granddaughters, was able to make a formal presentation to the Sussex community mid-wives at the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath. This money has enabled them to purchase two bilirubin jaundice detection monitors.

## BOATERS

It has been brought to my attention that acquiring a boater for new members, or replacement for those that have seen better days (hats that is, not members!) a reminder of where to find said article of Club uniform might be of help. Several members have sent me details of suppliers so here they are.



**Samuel Windsor** -mail order [@samuel-windsor.co.uk](mailto:@samuel-windsor.co.uk) - offer a competitively priced soft hat option

**Billings & Edmonds of Eton** [@billings&Edmonds.co.uk](mailto:@billings&Edmonds.co.uk) - if you want to be one of the crème de la crème, and not feel out of place on Harrow High Street or the Connaught Rooms, this has to be your choice.

**de Toujours** [@detoujours.com](http://@detoujours.com) - a French option but suppliers to Eton, Harrow & Windsor. If you want to emulate Buster Keaton or Audrey Hepburn, this is the one for you.

**Buzfuz**, your eminent Secretary also has several second-hand boaters in his care, if you wish to contact him.

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**Passing of more friends.....**sadly this item is becoming a regular feature as once again we salute club members who have joined the cycle club in the sky,

**Mr Warren - Stuart Benstead in June**  
He had been a member since 1987

Buzfuz informs me that he has passed on the Club's condolences to the family

## Peter Magnus reaches a milestone Birthday and eats his hat!



Dear Samuel Pickwick

I had a fabulous 90th Birthday celebration, it lasted five days, plus two to get over it.

Wednesday the actual day passed quietly, ready for my trip to London on Thursday to celebrate with 10 guests at the Pickwick B.C. President's lunch where 400 diners sang happy birthday to me, for which I thank them; then a large number of members came over and congratulated me. Friday saw my cousin from Yorkshire

and son from London and their partners arrive for a dinner party. Saturday, I took my family out for a special meal, finishing up on Sunday with my family and many of my nephews and nieces and their children, who came to a party organised by Nicola my daughter, where the weather changed and the sun shone. I am sorry my two remaining brothers could not attend - one in Australia, who landed an excellent job as the Manager and Coach to the Australian Women's National football team; and my youngest one for health reasons. Nicola made a beautiful Birthday cake in the shape of my Pickwick Boater Hat. I was gobsmacked. I will not be able to say in future, I'll eat my hat because I have already done so!



Peter Magnus/aka Keith Robins.

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Advance Notice that the National Cycle Museum Cycle jumble/auction  
will take place on Saturday April 4th 2020.

More details will follow in the March 2020 magazine  
in the meantime you can always contact Steve Griffith at  
[griffith531@hotmail.com](mailto:griffith531@hotmail.com)



## And now for something different.....continues

We resume Willie Tonkin's story of - The Bike Game, which began in the March magazine and was left at a critical stage of frame construction:

Now the assembled tubes on the set up board are beginning to look like a bike frame, the joints are fluxed and pinned. The chainstays are now cut to length, mitred and assembled into the bottom bracket shell, and the ends located on a spindle on the board. At this stage you take the measurement from the spindle to the seat lug bolt hole. The frame can now be un-clamped from the set up board, the joints fluxed and pinned and the back stretcher bar added.

The stretcher bar is a telescopic jig with the top part locating in the seat lug ears. The bottom part consists of a rear hub spindle complete with cones and wing nuts, set at right angles to the telescopic tube and the spindle is fitted into the centre of the rear end slots. This is set to the measurement taken while the frame was on the set up board. The purpose of this is to support the chain stays while the bottom bracket is being brazed, otherwise as the bottom bracket gets red hot the unsupported chainstays would droop and you would lose the bottom bracket height, and could also distort the bottom bracket shell.

The builder would first hold the frame up to eye level and make sure the seat tube is in line with the head tube, as while the frame is only pinned it can easily be adjusted by twisting before brazing. The forge is basically a metal tray measuring about four by two feet and perhaps four inches deep. This tray is filled with coke or asbestos cubes and odd bits of fire brick and a nest is made to surround the back of the bottom bracket which is the next joint to be brazed.

When I first started building, the forge was heated by a pair of foot bellows and air was mixed with coal gas in the torch. With your foot on the bellows you had wonderful control of the amount of heat you applied to the joint. Soon it became red hot and you would apply the brass rod, keeping the joint wet with flux. Suddenly you would see the whole joint momentarily go black as the molten brass flows between the bottom bracket tube outlets and the tubes. You would probably have to apply the brass strip in two or three places to ensure complete sealing of all the joints. The bottom bracket soon heats up again and that's the job done. The frame is then moved round in the forge and the top head lug brazed and then the seat lug, and that is the main joints brazed.

While the frame is cooling down the builder will turn his attention to the forks. By now he knows the length of the head tube and by allowing an extra one and three eighths of an inch for the head bearings he can cut the fork column to length. A front hub spindle with cones and wing nuts is fitted in the fork ends to hold the fork blades to the right width

and the forks are ready for brazing. Some builders prefer to braze the forks laying down in the forge, but I brazed the forks standing up with the column poking through a hole in the bottom of the forge.

We now return to the frame and the next job is to fit the seat stays. First the tops have to be fashioned, either flat plates brazed to the chamfered tube or solid top eyes brazed into the end of the stays. These can either be a short, medium or long taper, or perhaps with the tips slightly curved round to clasp over the top of the seat lug. The seat stays and bridges and all the small parts, brake and gear stops lamp bracket boss and pump pegs are not brazed in the forge but with an oxy-acetylene torch with a small jet, although before my time the forge was used for every joint. The piece work price for building a special frame and forks complete in 1956 was £1/10/0 while a Ladies twin tube was £1/15/0.

This was the procedure when I first started at Holdsworth when there was just Arthur as foreman and six builders, Peter Cobb, Dick Clements, Sid Bishop, Bill Hurlow, Charlie Roberts and Jeff Howe. The only tools used by the builders was a hacksaw and files. There was an electric pillar drill and this was used by the lug cutter while a small hand drill was used for drilling the pin holes in the lugs. As the demand increased Arthur devised a system for the mass production of cycle frames using oxy-coal gas torches which produced a very clean joint.

The frame was broken down into each component and priced in batches of 25, one man would be taught how to assemble flux, pin and braze the bottom head lug, the piece work price for this operation in 1957 was  $11\frac{1}{2}d$  or £1/3/11½d for 25. The second operation would be to assemble the main diamond again at £1/3/11½d for 25. The third operation was to braze the bottom bracket on a large jig at £1/9/2 for 25, this to include brazing tunnels on the bracket for gear cables. Brazing the top head and seat lugs and brake stops and cutting the slot in the seat lug was next, priced at £1/16/5½d for 25, while fitting the seat stays, bridges and gear stop to the chain stay was priced at 2/2d or £2/14/2d for 25.

The forks were not split up and one man was paid 4/0½d for each pair of forks he built. This included setting the rake, brazing the front ends in, cutting to length and assembling the fork blades and column into the crown, drilling and pinning, and fluxing and brazing. They were not of course done one at a time but also in batches of 25.

This system had two great advantages, a worker soon became very proficient and fast learning just one simple operation, and a whole pile of items to be brazed could be laid out in the forge, close to each other and by the time the first joint was red hot and ready for brazing, the next one in the row was nearly ready to be brazed, so after the first joint no time was wasted heating joints up individually. This system reduced the cost of building a frame by nearly two thirds, from £1/10s to 10/11d. By now frame tubes were being mitred on a fly press, cutting fork blades to length was being done on an electric saw and machinery had come to stay.

Later when coal gas was replaced by North sea gas which was a much hotter gas. This required special torches as it would not work with the old coal gas brazing torches. This introduced an era of brazing machines with multiple adjustable heads for brazing each individual joint.

My part in the work shop by now included making the tools and jigs as needed and tracking and inspecting the finished frames after they were shot blasted and filed, and was soon in charge of four filers. I successfully argued that inspection should not be done on a piece work basis as it was important that the job be done properly and not skimmed to earn more money, This was accepted by the management and I became the only member of the building shop staff on a flat rate. This led eventually to my promotion to assistant foreman.

I remember when this happened I eagerly awaited my next wage packet and when there was no increase I tackled Arthur about more money. He looked aghast "Isn't the prestige enough Willie ?" he asked. I think I eventually got an extra 7/6 a week. When Arthur moved on to become works manager and office bound, I was promoted to the position of foreman and one of the staff Keith Hardwick took my place as assistant foreman.

The next part of my story was an incident that was to have a far-reaching effect on the lives of both Keith and myself and may even have sowed the seed for the eventual demise of the Holdsworth empire. By then the Holdsworth company was not only the leading lightweight builder in the country but also one of the leading continental equipment wholesalers in the country, and one of their most cherished assets was the sole agency for Campagnolo gears and other products in this country. So it came about one day that Sandy and Mrs H were to entertain Campagnolo himself who was visiting this country, to an evening at the Savoy or the Ritz, I forget which. There was one fly in the ointment, he was bringing a young lady with him.

Now Mr and Mrs H were strict churchgoers and were well aware of the common belief at that time that morals on the continent were not up to English standards. The lady might not even be a lady, but something worse. But they were committed to meeting her and so they decided that the best thing to do was to provide an escort for the young person and perhaps dance with her if she so desired. As it would not do to expose a married man to this temptation, they went through the hierarchy of eligible single men in the firm and Keith was called up into the office where it was explained to him that to keep Campagnolo happy it was desirable to provide some company for the young person, the firm to pay for the hire of a dress suit to make him presentable for the evening.

Fortunately their worst fears were not realised and the young lady turned out to be his personal secretary and possibly the 2 IC of his business. She was a *rara avis* not often come across in this country at that time. Fluent in five languages Odilla was a brilliant business woman, and as an example when Campagnolo decided to have a stand at a cycle show in Japan, Odilla went out there by herself to organise it and arrange for all the printing of catalogues etc. to be done in Japanese.

For Odilla and Keith it was a case of love at first sight, she gave up her job with Campagnolo moved over here and they were married soon after. As I have said Odilla was a business woman and it was not long before she tried a first venture in this country, she took a stand at the Brighton Toy Fair and displayed a range of children's stuffed animals, but it was not a success. Her next venture was a plan to import ladies luxury leather handbags. Unfortunately the Italian factory was sited on the bank of the river Almo which flooded and washed the factory out of existence, so that never got off the ground. While waiting for the next idea she started teaching languages at night school, and while she was doing this fate took a hand.

Her old boss Campagnolo was at a meeting with a fellow business man who happened to be the largest manufacturer of bicycle tyres in Europe when the chap mentioned that he had some sort of a problem in England with his tyres. Campagnolo suggested to him "let Odilla handle it" which he did, and was so pleased with the outcome that he offered Odilla the sole agency for his tyres in Britain. Thank you said Odilla and promptly formed Elsmar Distributors specialising in cycling equipment. This was a wonderful combination, Keith knew the bike trade and with Odilla's expertise and having known many of the leading European equipment manufacturers personally, Elsmar became an instant success. Keith once told me that they received a commission on every foreign bicycle saddle sold in this country. An unfortunate comment by a director, John De Fritas at Holdsworth got back to Keith and Odilla and she had no compunction about relieving Holdsworth of their Campagnolo sole agency and taking it on board herself.

It has to be said that Holdsworth was not a good payer, which meant there was a constant turnover of building staff and most of the racing men gradually left. As the years went by more and more non-cyclists were employed until the character of the building shop completely changed. Never the less it was still a good firm to work for and as foreman I was one of the few in the firms pension scheme and also received two bonuses a year based on the profits the firm made. The first bonus was paid out in the spring of about £15, and the second one in November which could be as much as £55 in a good year, just in time for Christmas.

Soon I was doing evening and weekend work again and every Friday Fred the van driver would deliver a load of components and I was building and truing wheels for them. I forget how many I built each week, it could have been ten or even twenty pairs of wheels. Again I forget how much they paid me, probably about two shillings a pair. I was never able to get down to the time Wally Carr the foreman of the assembly shop took, who could build and true a pair of wheels in twenty minutes, but I did get near it.

The character of the firm really took a downward turn when in one year Arthur Eves retired, Mr and Mrs Holdsworth and her brother Austen Bryas who had been the proprietor of the firm since the 1930's all died and the remaining Director John De Fritas managed the business. From that day no more managers were promoted into directors, an era was over.

Soon after this happened I was called up into the office of the new works manager and told that the policy of the firm was changing and the bonuses were to be discontinued and all the staff would be given an increase to compensate for the loss; mine was to be an extra £2 per week. This meant I should be worse off, which I pointed out but to no avail, and was asked to send up Keith my assistant foreman.

When Keith came down from his interview his long face told its own story. As we discussed it I said to Keith "I've a good mind to do a flyer" (start my own business) his immediate reaction was to say "I would like to come in with you" and we shook hands and the die was cast. After this "adjustment" my annual income dropped from £1043 to £749, and I started teaching at night school to make ends meet, eventually teaching four nights a week. We planned that Keith would go first because although he was married he had no family while I was married with four children and a mortgage, so we had to get something up and going before I could leave and join him. With our joint savings of £80 we formed Tonard Brazing Co., Ltd. a combination of both our surnames. Within a year Keith had left Holdsworth and was working in a shed at the bottom of my garden where I would join him in the evenings and week ends. A year later in 1967, I too had left and by now we were renting a small work shop in Croydon.

Tonard brazing prospered and after a few years Keith left to work full time with Odilla in Elsmar Distributors. By then the writing was on the wall for the Holdsworth firm and after making a move to new premises in Oakfield Road Penge they eventually sold up and were no more. In 1987 the Holdsworth business was purchased by Falcon Cycles for £954,000; their assets valued at 1.8 million. It was a case of history repeating itself just as it was with the Claud Butler & Holdsworth marques that were the prize Condor pursued and secured.

Willie Tonkin (Whiffers Retired)

And so this incredible historical story of the famous Holdsworth marque comes to an end. I know that Willie was very keen for it to be seen & read, and hopefully not forgotten, so many thanks to him for making a huge effort to record the facts in such detail. Ed.

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On the back cover, there is an advert for Raleigh bicycles, featuring the great Charlie Holland. But how many people remember that he was the first English rider to participate in the Tour de France? Having ridden in the 1932 & 1936 Olympic Games for the British Empire team, he won the BBAR in 1936. He turned pro' in 1937, took to 6-Day racing but broke his collar bone in a crash at Liege. He entered & rode as part of another British Empire team in the 1937 Tour de France, but having run out of tyres after multiple punctures sadly did not finish. Do any of our current members remember him? .....Ed



II.

*Scottish Youth Hostel & CYCLING NEWS—21/6/38.*

*Just think what this means!*

**210½ MILES IN 10 HOURS**

On June 9 Charles Holland broke the Liverpool-Edinburgh Record in 10 hrs., thus beating the previous record by 12 mins. For 210½ miles he averaged the incredible speed of 21 m.p.h.—much of it over difficult, hilly Scottish country.

**CHARLES HOLLAND RIDING A**

**RALEIGH**

fitted with Sturmey-Archer 3-speed gear

**SMASHES**

**LIVERPOOL- EDINBURGH**

**RECORD!**

*(Subject to Official Confirmation)*

This brilliant performance follows hard on the heels of Bert. James' recent successes—The '100 Mile' Record, the '12 Hour' Record and the London-York Record—all achieved with the help of a Raleigh fitted with a Sturmey-Archer gear!

**YOU'RE MISSING SOMETHING  
IF YOU DON'T BUY A**

**RALEIGH**

THE ALL-STEEL BICYCLE

**Fit the Sturmey-Archer 3-speed gear—the gear that "makes cycling easy"**

THE RALEIGH CYCLE COMPANY LIMITED, NOTTINGHAM