

The Pickwick Magazine

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

founded in 1870



"An admonitory gesture from Perker restrained him, and he listened to the learned gentleman's continuation with a look of indignation"



Thoughts from the Editor.....

And so here we are well into Autumn following a not so bad summer with plenty of opportunity to spin those wheels, and time to reflect on all aspects of our sport (and social activities). The Tour de France saw another Tour de Force by Sky and Chris Froome, who we must congratulate on yet another victory. Many other UK riders were also seen to put in sterling performances, although Mark Cavendish's tour once again came to an abrupt end after a 'tangle' with Peter Sagan. And late news of course is Chris Froome achieving the 'double' and winning the Vuelta.

I would like to thank all those members who have sent in copy for this issue of the magazine; such was their contribution that you will notice there are some extra pages for your enjoyment. The Club activities have continued under the direction of our President, although numbers were down for the Golf Day this year. The Dickens London Walk and the Hampton Court Ride will have taken place by the time you read this - so reports as usual in the next issue.

There has been much written about cyclists in the news recently, over do's & don'ts and conflict about interpretation of the rules. The very sad, and unfortunate incident of a young lady being killed by a fixed wheel cyclist with no front brake, highlighted the lack of understanding of the law. There was the incident of police ill-advisedly stopping two cyclists for riding on an 'A' road. And then the decision by another police force to monitor cyclists riding two abreast, and to create a 'nominal' 1-1.5m space between cyclists and other road users. This reminded me of this sign (right) I saw quite frequently when in New Zealand a few years ago. Very simple and requiring no explanation. The age old problem of cyclists living alongside other road users has never really been resolved, and with the increased volume of both parties on the road, we just have to be extra vigilant when out riding, and try to avoid any conflict whatever the temptation.



Finally, have any members been able to visit the Charles Dickens Museum in Doughty St.? There has been a new exhibition -Restless Shadow that highlights his social campaigning and investigative journalism. It's still open until the end of October.

See you all at the December luncheon.....Winkle Snr

A Secretarial Report from Sgt Buzfuz

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



The summer, if we ever had one, is coming to an end and thoughts go towards the autumn and the December Garden Party. Regrettably on this occasion, I will be unable to join you as I am travelling to Australia for all of December and January. I trust everything progresses satisfactorily and I am certain Mr Watty will take good care of everybody.

In respect of December, you should all by now have received either electronically or by post, an application form for tickets. Due to considerable overcrowding last year, your committee have made the decision that we will only sell 550 tickets. On that basis in the first instance, members will only be allowed 5 tickets i.e. 4 guests - and no others will be available until after the closing date for ticket application. If you wish more tickets, then I will hold names on a first come first served basis for any extra tickets if there are any available under the 550. There will be no exceptions.

The speaker for December is Gary Marshall who comes well recommended as an after dinner comedian.

Despite previous requests, there are still a large number of members and guests who do not take their seats promptly before 13.00 hours. Not only is this discourteous to the President who might be delayed on his entrance but, it delays the prompt start of lunch. **Start time is well known and has not changed for many years; I can therefore see no reason why members and guests cannot be seated before the due time.** Similarly, the process is now known for pre-lunch wine ordering, the ordering table will close promptly at 12.50pm and anyone wanting to order wine after that time will have to wait until they are seated to order it from wine waiters in the main hall. It is hoped on this occasion that a pre-order system will be available and may be circulated in due course.

I wish you all an enjoyable Garden Party and Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year and look forward to seeing you all again in 2018..... Buzfuz



The Captain wishes to say a few words.....

Dear fellow Pickwickians, this is my first message as your new Captain. As you are aware I became your Captain at last year's AGM and I consider it a great privilege to follow in the footsteps of such a distinguished person as our previous captain Dismal Jemmy /Bob Upton. I would like to thank and pay tribute to him in equal measure since it was a privilege to work alongside Dismal Jemmy for a number of years , which gave me a tremendous insight into the important role of Captain. I know how hard Bob worked in the role of our Captain and wish him well in his retirement from this position, I am delighted to say that after a health scare it seems that Dismal Jemmy is now fine, and I look forward to welcoming him to many more club occasions. Bob thank you for all the help and guidance you afforded me when I was your deputy.

Now to the Captains usual reminder; please can I remind all members to make sure that you and your guests turn up on time and that means not only be **in the hall by 12.50 pm, but are also properly dressed**. I must remind you all, that Jackets and Ties must be worn at all times; it is essential to be on time because lateness delays lunch and this is not acceptable, and means that the President and Distinguished Guest are held up in their grand entrance.

All bars close at 12.50 pm, so again please **do not** try to order drinks and wine after that time. Wine waiters are available in the hall. Thank you to all those members who are now ordering their wine in advance this seems to be working well.

Pickwickian greetings to you all.

Dr Payne

Captain

A reminder.....

The 147th Annual Garden Party will be held on Thursday 7th December

The President Says.....another Presidential year is slipping away very fast and having got over the initial shock and absolute surprise of getting the job, I have felt extremely proud and honoured to be your President.

The May meeting went off very well; the speaker was a great success, different but very amusing—great. A few turned up for the Sunday lunch at the Leather Bottle. We were a bit squashed but I think everyone enjoyed it, I certainly did and would like to see it as an annual event. Again, not as many as usual at the Golf day but the meal was superb and the competitive spirit for the cups was as fierce as ever!

I hope to see some of you on the Dickens walk. Do come, as I'M sure you will enjoy it. Also still to come is the Hampton Court ride, another great day out. Thank you all for your support and of course a great big thank you to Mrs Bardell; where-ever would we be without her?? All the best to you Pickwickians and look after yourselves. Cheers!! Samuel Pickwick Esq



Past President's Luncheon

Buzfuz sent me the following report plus some photos.....



Please find a few photos taken at yesterday's Past President's luncheon held at the George Inn in Borough High Street, London. Some 15 Past Presidents plus Samuel Pickwick (the current President) attended the now annual luncheon, held this year in the splendid surrounds of this famous galleried ale house. The building, owned by the National Trust is the only remaining galleried Inn in the country, with connections to both Dickens and Shakespeare, the property is well worth a visit.

Only 5 Past Presidents, still members of the club could not attend, mainly due to some health problems but with Bailie Mac Something, celebrating his birthday and others being otherwise committed.Buzfuz

The President's Spring Luncheon.....

The Connaught Rooms glowed in subdued blue lighting as the Captain and Watty organised the seating at the round tables. At the top of the staircase stood the immaculate Draisine that Watty would be riding in Germany, but more about that later. The trumpeters of the Household Cavalry numbered four this time including a lady no less. The gathering was slow to assemble in the bar area, but by the allotted time of 1250hours, it appeared that not quite everybody was at their tables ready for song practice overseen by our new(ish) Captain, Dr Payne but he still put us through our paces. Then the trumpeter's fanfare had us welcoming our President (Alfred Jingle) and special guest Josh Daniels.



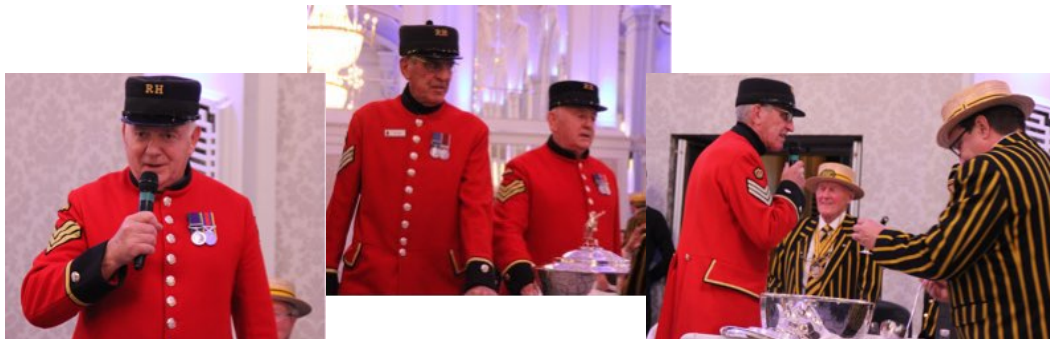
The continuing Connaught good fare was then served, with wild mushroom & hock terrine, followed by smoked salmon parcels filled with crayfish and lemon cream. The main course was chicken breast filled with sun-dried tomatoes and assortment of sundries, with apricot frangipani tart for dessert. All very enjoyable.



Between courses, the Original Member (aka Mr Watty) floated through the room on the aforementioned Draisine. Having taken wine with the President, he then explained that 2017 was the 200th anniversary of the said machine (see March issue) and that he was shortly to participate in a challenging ride of 230km in 5 days, between Nancy and Karlsruhe in Germany. He was given a rousing send off.

Bob Sawyer then took the microphone to welcome the various guests (see page9), before Mr Dumkins and the Boys of the Old Brigade marched to the President's table with the Joseph Atto punchbowl. A glass of wine with the President, announcement of their name, rank and serial number followed before they departed to the melodious accompaniment of all diners singing 'Shoulder to Shoulder'.





Hardly another morsel had crossed diner's lips, than the Captain was calling the assembly to order once more for Serjeant Buzfuz to announce the new members. Tom Ash (son of Slum) - **Lieutenant Tappleton**; Paul Judd (son of Past President Peter Judd - Nathaniel Winkle retired) takes over the name of **Nathaniel Winkle**; John Barnes - **Mr Mivens**; Russell Mogrige - **Angelo Cyrus Bantam**; Dale Vanderplank - **Tiggin**. All new members were welcomed into the Club by the diners.



Our guest speaker was Josh Daniels, a larger than life character from the 'north country' - Durham. Josh's ambition was to be a musician and songwriter but three years ago, realised that he was better as a comedian - and how true that proved. Full of 'true' stories, everyday observations, risqué at times, tales of mischief accompanied by his sawn-off guitar(!) made him an absolute delight, and kept us rocking in our seats much longer than usual at the Spring Luncheon. He was able to judge the audience extremely well, and received a rousing ovation when he

concluded his act and asked the guests to charge their glasses to the "Immortal Memory....." During lunch, the usual 'charity fines' for improper dress (Pickwickians that is) were collected from each table, with guests also digging deep into their pockets and raising a princely sum in excess of £3000 -including a few foreign coins and odd pence.



Our President Mr Samuel Pickwick/Alfred Jingle responding on behalf of the members was able to tell us to whom the charity money would go - Macs Charity for sightless babies, and Breaks for Kids run by the YHA for disadvantaged children. He thanked Josh for his tear evoking entertainment, and told everyone how much of an honour it was to be President of the Club.

He said he hoped to arrange some additional events during the year, such as lunch at the Leather Bottle (as per last year), plus a London Walk of the Dickensian pubs -sounds good. He then asked Club Members to be upstanding for the toast to our guests, followed by an inimitable rendering of Auld Lang Syne.



There followed some photographic high jinx in the foyer bar with Frank Simmery trying the Drasine, and Mr Dumkins encouraging members to 'try their hand' at mounting the Ordinary/Penny Farthing. Getting slightly out of hand, the lady member of the Household Calvary was duly coerced into participation, which she achieved with aplomb, in spite of her spurs! The two lady members of the Connaught Rooms staff did likewise, including the one with the very tight skirt. Thereafter members and guests attempts failed to catch the imagination! And so another spring lunch drifted into the history books, and participants in the wide blue yonder (Hercules Pillars?).....until the December Garden Party.

Bob Sawyer's Luncheon Guest List....

"First let me welcome our Guest Speaker - a charming comedy natural, Josh Daniels. His career all started by making friends & family laugh after changing the lyrics to songs (he's been doing it since he was given his first guitar when he was a 12 year old), and is what led Josh on the road to what is now a very successful comedy career. He is guaranteed to make you laugh from the moment he steps in front of the microphone, to long after the lights go out.... I will leave you to be the judge of that.

We welcome, **Steve Poulter**, former GB international and professional rider. He rode in the 1983 World Championships in Switzerland, the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, and was a National Team Member from 1979 -1984, riding multiple stage races, the Milk Race, Peace race, Sealink International and Coors Classic to name but a few. And rode the KelloggKellogg'ss Tour of Britain in 1987. He has lived in the USA for the past 32 years, and has been a driver for UPS for many years. Steve has just been given the UPS Circle of Honor award for 25 years of faultless driving. Companies in the U.S. love to give out awards to encourage loyalty...needs to speed up in my book, get a few more packages delivered to get my award!

On Table 33 we have **Chalky White**, Hon Sec of the Pedal Club and guest of Joseph Smiggers. Stanley Harris on Table 38 is the uncle of Tom Cummins, and he is training for an "End to End" ride at the end of May. He has ridden it 6 times already in both directions, ... Oh I nearly forgot, he celebrated his 80th birthday in March!

Geoff Thompson is the guest of The Red Nosed Mr Stiggins and he has kindly donated a complete set of Dicken's novels in recognition of the charity work done by the club. We have a former professional footballer on Table 13 - Peter Kitchen, who played for Doncaster Rovers, Fulham, The Orient and Cardiff and is the guest of Mr Crawley. A day short of his XX birthday, Past President Justice Stareleigh has guest Ernest Morris -Augustus Snodgrass and secretary of the Dicken's Pickwick Club.

Our President Samuel Pickwick has Dominic from Canada as his guest.

Gentlemen, your are most welcome to join us for today's luncheon and to enjoy Pickwickian hospitality. Can I now ask members of the Pickwick Bicycle Club to be upstanding and toast our guests....."

'History of the Pickwick Bicycle Club'

Dr Slammer sent me the following missive of intrigue:

Dear Mr Winkle,

Several years ago, I was given a copy of the '*History of the Pickwick Bicycle Club*' compiled by the Hon. Mr Crushton, 1905 first edition. On the front free endpaper is the name of the one time owner, W. Webb and confirming that he was a member of the PBC. Further sandwiched between the pages was the enclosed monochrome photograph of a group of cyclists with an inscription on the reverse saying " Pickwick BC - Bob Willis in centre".

I wonder if any member recognises anyone in the picture, and if so, perhaps we could arrive at a date and /or the venue that the photograph was taken? Also do we know if W.Webb was a Pickwick member?

Yours

Dr Slammer (Peter MacDonald-Card)



In response to this request, our master of the soubriquet histories Joseph Smiggers was able to enlighten us with the following information:

" W.Webb **was** a member of the Club. His soubriquet was Serjeant Snubbins, and he joined the Club sometime between 1878 and 1881.

Robert 'Bob' Willis was also a member of the Club. His soubriquet Joseph Smiggers (that's me!) and he joined the Club in 1919, and became President in 1925. His son Charles Reginald Willis became a member in 1925.

Hope this helps?..... Joseph Smiggers "

If anybody else has any additional information about this picture please let me know..Editor

Mr Watty rides 150 miles on a Draisine

As members of the oldest extant bicycle club in the World, it is interesting to reflect on the evolution of the machines we ride, the bicycles. When we consider that the wheel was invented in the 4th Century BC, and the first wheeled vehicle in the 3rd Century BC, we must ask why it took 50 Centuries before two wheels were placed in line held together by a frame with a steering mechanism and a seat between the wheels?

The answer is that the World did not understand the concept of dynamic stability which enables a man on a moving bicycle to obtain balance. Neither Galileo (1564 - 1642) nor Isaac Newton (1642 - 1726), the great physicists of the scientific revolution, failed to understand this concept. We had to wait until 1817 when **Karl von Drais**, an inventor from Karlsruhe in Germany, found that a rider could balance his machine by steering the front wheel, and his machine, the Draisine, Laufmaschine or hobby horse, was the first bicycle, exactly 200 years ago.



*The Draisine ridden 150 miles from
Nancy – Karlsruhe by Mr Watty*

So to mark this historic anniversary 14 Draisine riders arrived in Nancy, France on 19th May 2017 coming from Belgium, Canada, Czech, France, Germany, Japan, USA and of course the UK. We set off from the Place Stanislas after words of support from a descendent of the Baron von Drais.

Our route had been carefully planned by Alain Cuvier to mainly follow canal tow-paths to minimise hills and it was a gentle departure as we followed the Moselle river followed by some gently rolling country roads and the end of our first day after 30 miles. Certain body parts were feeling the strain as riders are permanently seated with no ability to relieve pressure by standing on our missing pedals!

Our battle cry of 'en marche' meaning 'we walk' had been stolen a few weeks before by the new French President Macron as the name for his party - we should have patented it!

The second day started with 5 miles of a succession of steep hills which tested the riders. Some were able to walk astride their machines while others were forced to dismount. On the flat sections we rolled along comfortably at 10mph, on a clear downhill I recorded a speed of 24mph.our average daily speed was 8mph on our wooden machines.



Draisine riders at Place Stanislas

Nancy, France.

As so often on long rides, we had great support from a team of volunteers who organised drinks and lunch breaks and carried our luggage to the next overnight stop. We rode through some wonderful countryside and were fortunate to have good weather throughout the 5 days of riding.

We had remarkably few mechanical issues with the bikes and the bodies held together well although were pleased to arrive after 5 days on the seat and 150 miles achieved. On the way to the finish we paid our respects at the statue of Baron Karl von Drais, before joining the 37th International Veteran Cycling Association Rally in the town of his birth, Karlsruhe, where I was pleased to find Mr Brooks!



20 - 24 mai 2017

Nancy - Karlsruhe en Draisiennes

280 km

Tally HO! Mr Watty

My thanks to those generous members who supported my efforts to raise sponsorship for Cancer Research UK which currently stand at £954.57. It's not too late if you would like to support by donating at: www.justgiving.com/Stuart-Mason-Elliott7

What do You Know about Britain's Forgotten 1930's Cycleways?

by Mr Grundy (Carlton Reid)

I have not seen any records of what contemporary PBC members thought about the protected cycleways installed throughout the land in the 1930s, but the view from "organised" cycling in general was that the roadside "cycle tracks" were a menace. "It is evident already that this innovation is strongly resented by a section of cyclists who see in it a formidable conspiracy to deprive them of their right of access to the roads," wrote an editorialist in *The Western Morning News* in 1935.

Despite this opposition, the Ministry of Transport went ahead and built 300+ miles of them anyway. It's reasonably well known - in certain cycle advocacy circles at least - that there was a two-mile protected cycleway on Western Avenue in London, opened by transport minister Leslie Hore-Belisha in 1934. What's very much lesser well known is that this was just the first of ninety or so schemes. Today, it's almost wholly forgotten that this putative network ever existed, and I launched an online crowdfunded project in order to research them. I want to preserve a number of them, but also bring a significant number back into use. Via Kickstarter, I raised an astounding £25,000 to take this project forward.

The greatest number of these cycleways were placed on the new-build radial roads leading out of London and other British cities and constructed apace in the 1930s. They were built to a regulation width of 9-ft on both sides of the road and delineated with kerbs. While most were built beside the new "bypasses" some were built on "trunk roads" through residential areas, such as in Sunderland, Manchester, Nottingham and Oxford.



Lostock Road, Davyhulme,
Manchester in 1936

Between 1934 and 1940, the Ministry of Transport would only give fat grants to road-building schemes if they included wide, protected cycleways on each side of the road. The MoT was aided in its cycle-friendliness by plans and guidance supplied by the Rijkwaterstaat, the ministry's Dutch equivalent. Five hundred miles of such cycleways were planned. Some of the cycleways were long. For instance, postwar Ordnance Survey maps show that the 22-mile Southend Arterial Road from Gallows Corner in Romford to Southend once had cycleways along its full length, and this cycleway linked to others in the area.

A few of the 1930s-era cycleways are today wholly or partially buried. Others are hidden in plain sight, not listed by officialdom as cycleways. Many are used as linear car parks when, in fact, they were originally meant as dedicated routes for people on bikes.

1950's OS map of cycle tracks
in London



One of the reasons these cycleways were commandeered by motorists was lack of use by cyclists. Despite the provision of Dutch-style cycleways in the 1930s cycling in the UK would soon go into steep decline, with a precipitous drop from 25 percent of daily journeys being cycled in 1949 to under 2 percent just twenty years later.

Part of my research will include collecting recollections from cyclists who rode - or rejected - these cycleways. A great many of them were still in use in the 1950s and 1960s, and if you remember them I'd be glad if you got in touch at carltonreid@mac.com

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Carlton Reid, "Mr Grundy", is the executive editor of BikeBiz magazine. He discovered the extent of the 1930s cycleways during his research for the 1930s chapter of his history book, *Bike Boom* (Island Press, Washington DC, 2017).

Remembering Tom Simpson 50 year's on.....

Our soubriquet historian Joseph Smiggers P.V.P.M.P.C. to give him his full title, recently sent me several picture of historical value to the Club. He informed me that in his role as President of the Pedal Club, he was talking with Tom Simpson's daughter Joanne at a recent lunch. She reminded him that her father had attended our December Garden Party in 1965, and she subsequently provided some pictures of the event. To add to this story, Smiggers advised me that he had ridden Mont Ventoux (3 times he proudly informed me) as part of the 50th Anniversary ride to commemorate Tom's death.



(Note the formal attire of his fellow diners...Ed)



Smiggers at the Summit of Ventoux after one of his intrepid rides

Thank you Smiggers for this historical report, and well done!....Ed

The 2017 Golf & Cycle Ride Day.....

Smithers was somewhat distraught at the lack of entries this year for both the golf and the bike ride. Some 60plus members and friends participated in one form or another last year, but sad to say, only 14 played golf, 4 rode their bikes and a few came to lunch. A number of reasons/excuses contributed to this sudden downturn in numbers, but hopefully next year things will return to the normal number of participants.



The Golfers tale is continued by Dumkins "Another bright and sunny day at the Harpenden Common Golf Club awaited our annual visit, and the usual welcome round of bacon rolls and strong coffee set us up for the day! A slightly smaller turnout of golfers than the previous year meant we teed off promptly at 10.07 'ish in 3 x 3 Balls and 1x 4 ball with myself acting as driver to Bally Mac Something - due to an achilles tendon strain.

The day went really well with a cooling breeze, which got stronger and darker until the heavens opened for a series of sharp showers before the sun returned, lucky for us the course has many trees to shelter under. Tim West (former trumpeter at our luncheons) produced the best score for a guest but as he won it last year it went to the next best score (you cannot win it 2 years in a row)

We then adjourned to the bar, along with those that had been cycling, for some light alcoholic beverages (in keeping with Pickwickian tradition!) and thoroughly enjoyed the 4 course luncheon which was as usual of the highest standard. The prize presentation then took place before we parted for home".Dumkins



Crandyke Cup



Winkle Cup



Namby Cup



Jinkin's Balls

The 2017 winners were:

The Namby Cup was won by Martin the Long Gamekeeper (T. Field); Winkle Cup went to Sgt Buzfuz (Stephen Downham); the Crandyke Cup was won by Allen Townsend (guest of Buzfuz); The Jinkin's Balls award was won by Dr Payne /The Captain. The Boz Cup which is a miniature, also went to Allen Townsend;



Boz Cup (minature picture!)

As for the cyclists.....your editor suffered the indignity of having left the most important part of his attire at home - his shorts! Mike, his erstwhile cycling colleague of over 50 years came to the rescue with an ordinary pair of shorts, albeit considerably smaller than would fit around said editor's waistline. Not to worry, a belt was found and with my Pickwick jersey pulled firmly down, we were ready for the off. That said, it wasn't possible to get out of the saddle on any climb. Justice Stareleigh takes up the story.....

The day dawned bright and clear, as the elite (all four of us) of British and Pickwickian cycling, exchanged banter, coffee and bacon butties with the mere hackers of the golfing world. This day's tour would consist of passing, not stopping, at various public houses, which yours truly had frequented over many, many years. We started along side the golf course opposite the third hole, this was The Three Horse Shoes, in yours truly's family for over two hundred and fifty years, now sadly a private house. Over Nomans Land common, to The Elephant and Castle. Swiftly on to Wheathampstead, passing The Swan, The Bell (closed, nice house), The Bull and The Railway (demolished).

On past the renovated Wheathampstead railway station; no railway but worth a visit, a fantastic wood carving of George Bernard Shaw. sits waiting for the train, as being a local resident, he often caught the trains to London from here. On sped the group to Codicote garden centre, where coffee and cake were consumed and with lots of banter with the G.S. Lanterne Rouge, cycling club, which for my sins, I am a member. Suitably refreshed, past The Goat (current club pub) and on to Whitwell, past The Bull (open, former club pub), The Maidens Head, and The Eagle and Child, both now closed. Onwards and upwards towards Bendish, a small Hertfordshire hamlet which used to have three pubs which have since, all become homes.

Through the traffic free lanes to Peters Green and The Bright Star (good), a fast descent to East Hyde and The Leather Bottle (now a house). Here we joined The Lea Valley cycle pathway. We returned to Harpenden via The Red Cow (excellent) and The Marquis of Granby (still open), up and around the back doubles, across the common golf course, past The White Horse, into Rothamstead Park, given to Harpenden by the lord of the manor pre second world war. The final climb of the day as we sped past The Silver Cup, (still serving excellent beer) Then bingo!



The Elite Cyclists Return

The clubhouse, a hot shower, a large drink, and a great meal. Thirty excellent sunny and mainly traffic free miles. Bullman being awarded the Blink cycling trophy. was the icing on the cake. A great day was had by all, cyclist's and golfer's and diners, whilst numbers were down we hope this is just a small blip and next year back to normal. Have a good summer, Mr Pickwick goes to France, the Tour de France, Wimbledon tennis, Henley Regatta and Hampton Court in October to mention just a few.....(Ron) Mr Justice Stareleigh.

Bamboo Bikes - have you heard of the Bamboo Bicycle Club? Did you know that a bamboo framed bike isn't a new innovation? In 1894 an English patent was filed for a bike made out of grass, but it failed to progress due to the development of steel & aluminium. James Marr and his team produce bamboo kit bikes in a workshop near the Olympic Stadium, plus they run courses at a cost for DIY enthusiasts who when finished can leave with a ready to ride bike. Want to know more? Then go to: bamboobicycleclub.org



George - The Embarrassed Gentleman goes travelling... and finds the Grand Fondo del Po

Friday 3rd March saw Mrs Phiz (Lesley) and I up early and heading to Bristol along the M5 to meet Lesley's friend Karen, my daughters' godmother, who was visiting from New Zealand. We were then flying to Venice, and catching a train to Ferrara to see our daughter Gina for a long weekend. Our journey was uneventful, and we arrived in Ferrara some eleven hours after leaving Shropshire. The journey was well worth it, just to see this beautiful city! Our reasons for being there were simple. Karen was here, her god-daughter was in Ferrara. Gina was there on a six-month placement from Cardiff University, studying Spanish and Italian. Gina had enjoyed the previous six months in Mexico City where she turned a hesitant Spanish into an almost fluent ability.



GeorgeTEG, Mrs Phiz,& Gina

The 'normal' George the Embarrassed Gentleman came out Friday night as we enjoyed the local cuisine with more than a little local wine, excellent food & drink for an extremely reasonable price. The next day we escalated the event to the 'walking and looking' phase. As we wandered towards the very impressive castle in the centre of the walled city, I could hear the voices yelling through the PA, and my limited skill in Italian recognised "bicicletta", "corso della gara" and "Gran Fondo del Po". I was off and moving towards the source of the blast of words. It transpired that our trip to Ferrara had (neatly!) dove-tailed into a weekend of bicycle racing of the grandest type - all amateur and typically full-on Italian!



Vintage Bikes and spares for sale
including a 1934 Ganna 5-speed

The Saturday was a veteran's (bikes and/or riders) event. The 'arrival' was a fairly quiet affair, with at most around fifty or sixty people applauding the riders home. There followed a very grand ceremony with lots of comments over the (VERY) loud PA, and some well thought out prizes, although none-of us could work out what they were! We wandered away and took a look around the town, and did the tourist thing and walked all the way to the bottom dungeon, and the top tower (see picture) of the castle.

On our return to the square, we were greeted with the wonderful sight of the 'mini-depart'. Scores of kids and (some) parents were lined up waiting to get away for their 'race' around the city. The announcers were still giving their all to help these 'mini-Jan Ullrich would-be's' to get away on their fun-ride. The whole thing was a beautiful example of how much more community appreciation for two wheels there is on the 'mainland', than here on our little island



I introduced myself to the officials, and explained that I was a member of 'probably the most esteemed bicycle club in the world' and 'certainly the oldest'. This had little effect, mainly because my Italian is really poor, and they must have thought me a little crazy! They managed to do the right thing and take my email address for sending me the results - nothing in the inbox yet!

Sunday was the full blown (amateur) race, with an early (for me) start and many kilometres. We missed the start, although my daughter caught the peloton whizzing past her window as she took breakfast. Unfortunately, we had already decided to hire our own bikes to cycle the city walls and finding the places we wouldn't normally see on foot. This meant that we missed the racing, but enjoyed the history and sights of a beautiful city.



Cobbled Streets as well



50km riders on Antique Bikes C1900-1950



Best Dressed Award



Parc-ferme with lots of expensive items waiting for the presentation ceremony



Is this Baillie Mac Something in disguise?



Antique 50km riders 'racing' for the finish line



I will certainly be checking the local event calendars before we leave from now on, however we will be careful to choose the right time to visit. The levels to which the River Po has risen are shown on this column (left) in the city centre. The most recent level of the River Po marked here is from 1951. This would put me at least ten feet under the water while taking the picture!

George, The Embarrassed Gentleman



Tales of Yesteryear by Mr Brooks.....

Following several abortive telephone calls, Mr Brooks accosted me at the Spring Luncheon, clutching two articles of an historic nature. Having discussed them as potential copy for the magazine, I was then reprimanded for randomly folding said items (photo copies!), and had to re-fold them to preserve their condition.

One article item was from the July 1919 Cycling magazine, The World of Wheels page. This raised the question once more about which was the first cycling club. (Remember the ABC Club from the March issue of our magazine). Unfortunately the quality of the copy (nothing to do with the folding) precludes copying it so I have carefully reproduced it herewith.

“An Early Cycling Club”

The question of which was the first cycling club to be formed in the United Kingdom has never been definitely decided, although it is agreed that the Pickwick BC is the senior club of those still existing. It is certain, however, that the Pickwick was not the first, as documentary evidence, in the form of a membership card of the Hanley Velocipede Club has recently come into the hands of Mr J.Hughes, of Cobridge, which shows that the organisation named came into existence on July 12th 1869. The subscription is stated to be £1.1s, and if further confirmation of the club's birthday is required, it may be found in the columns of the Staffordshire Sentinel of June 12th 1869, wherein appears the following advertisement:

‘ Hanley Velocipede Club – persons desirous of becoming members are requested to enrol themselves forthwith, as the number for which arrangements have been made is limited. Attend personally at Saunders' Commercial Hotel, Hanley, where the bicycle can be seen.’

There is a “matter-of-fact” tone about this announcement, which suggests that a velocipede club was by no means unique in those days, so it has yet to proved which was the first to be founded. The Pickwick dates from June 22nd 1870.

So, we are left with a dilemma that based on this information, there **was** a cycling club in existence almost a year prior to the formation of the PBC. However we can comfort ourselves with the reference in the first sentence of this article - “The Pickwick BC is the senior club of those still existing”

The second item - a page from the April 1887 copy of *The Cyclist*, included on page 656 (how big was this publication?) a comment by the Hon. Mr Crushton, P.B.C., about the increase in the price of beer. The item is reproduced here, and one would like to think that the same concerns would be raised by members under similar circumstances today.

Up Goes the Price of Beer!

[763.]—The Pickwick Club, on returning from their annual tour on Easter Monday stayed at the White Lion at Guildford for lunch. The previous ten miles, with the exception of half a mile or so into the town, was a very trying ride, being up a gentle incline over the Hog's Back, and against a strong wind fully felt on the summit of the hill. You may therefore imagine that, on arriving at Guildford, our members were generally the victims of what one described as a "parch," and bitter ale was consumed. On the bill being presented, the price against the thirteen quarts of ale was thirteen shillings, which by due calculation will be found to represent one shilling a quart. Now, sir, I believe that you or anyone else who knows the Pickwicks never would, or could, accuse them of meanness. We like to do the thing well, and pay freely for what we have; but there is a limit to all things, and when it comes to a shilling a quart for bitter ale, and that in considerable quantity, too, I hold that it is no meanness to protest against such a charge. Further comment, I presume, is unnecessary; the story should carry its own moral.

THE HON. MR. CRUSHTON, P.B.C.

[We know full well that the Pickwickians are not mean, having dined sumptuously with them for years past, and we think that cyclists should know where beer is 1/- a quart. It is right, however, to say that in many hotels in country places from Penrith to Guildford the charge is 3d. a glass.—Ed.]

Thank you Mr Brooks for your continual ability to find items of historic importance where our Club is concerned.....Ed





Who Were Your Early Namesakes? Researching Your Ancestors

The PickwickBicycle Club has been in continuous existence since its formation in 1870, and the soubriquets of its members have been faithfully passed down from generation to generation. If you would like to receive the available history of your soubriquet, please contact Joseph Smiggers at: steve@stephenbullen.com and you will have the information by return

Henry Beller – toast-master temperance convert.

"Henry Beller was for many years toast-master at various corporation dinners, during which time he drank a great deal of foreign wine; may sometimes have carried a bottle or two home with him; is not quite certain of that, but is sure if he did, that he drank the contents. Feels very low and melancholy, is very feverish, and has a constant thirst upon him; thinks it must be the wine he used to drink (cheers). Is out of employ now; and never touches a drop of foreign wine by any chance (tremendous plaudits)."

J. Bonnick	pre 1881	
Thomas Grant Scarfe	1924 to 1953	President (1930) and sub-Captain for many years. Hon. Sec. Fellowship of Old-Time Cyclists
E. Archer	1958 to 1961	
G H Fleming	1963 to 1983	
F Joe Summerlin	1983 to 2015	

Young Edmunds - the son who is buried in the Dingley Dell churchyard.

" A robbery of a daring and aggravated nature occasioned a vigilance of pursuit, and a strictness of search, they had not calculated on. Young Edmunds was suspected, with three companions. He was apprehended--committed--tried--condemned--to die. 'The wild and piercing shriek from a woman's voice, which resounded through the court when the solemn sentence was pronounced, rings in my ears at this moment. That cry struck a terror to the culprit's heart, which trial, condemnation—the approach of death itself, had failed to awaken. The lips which had been compressed in dogged sullenness throughout, quivered and parted involuntarily; the face turned ashy pale as the cold perspiration broke forth from every pore; the sturdy limbs of the felon trembled, and he staggered in the dock."

J E Grose	1942 to 1958
C R Mitchell	1958 to 1980
Jeffrey W Hurst	1981 to 2002
Anthony Blyth	2004 to present

Thomas Groffin - chemist, juryman.

"Answer to your names, gentlemen, that you may be sworn,' said the gentleman in black. 'Richard Upwitch.' 'Here,' said the greengrocer. 'Thomas Groffin.' 'Here,' said the chemist. 'Take the book, gentlemen. You shall well and truly try--' 'I beg this court's pardon,' said the chemist, who was a tall, thin, yellow-visaged man, 'but I hope this court will excuse my attendance.' 'On what grounds, Sir?' said Mr. Justice Stareleigh. 'I have no assistant, my Lord,' said the chemist. 'I can't help that, Sir,' replied Mr. Justice Stareleigh. 'You should hire one.' 'I can't afford it, my Lord,' rejoined the chemist. 'Then you ought to be able to afford it, Sir,' said the judge, reddening; for Mr. Justice Stareleigh's temper bordered on the irritable, and brooked not contradiction. 'I know I OUGHT to do, if I got on as well as I deserved; but I don't, my Lord,' answered the chemist. 'Swear the gentleman,' said the judge peremptorily. The officer had got no further than the 'You shall well and truly try,' when he was again interrupted by the chemist. 'I am to be sworn, my Lord, am I?' said the chemist. 'Certainly, sir,' replied the testy little judge."

L E Morgan	pre 1881	
Arthur A Pike	1896 to 1932	Committee 1924
J Hammond	1950 to 1981	
Alan Rushton	1983 to 2011	President (1995) Organiser of Tour of Britain
Richard Walker	2013 to present	

Captain Dowler - formerly in army; traveller by coach to Bath.

"Of course, an interchange of friendly salutations followed this gracious speech; and the fierce gentleman immediately proceeded to inform the friends, in the same short, abrupt, jerking sentences, that his name was Dowler; that he was going to Bath on pleasure; that he was formerly in the army; that he had now set up in business as a gentleman; that he lived upon the profits; and that the individual for whom the second place was taken, was a personage no less illustrious than Mrs. Dowler, his lady wife. 'She's a fine woman,' said Mr. Dowler. 'I am proud of her. I have reason.' 'I hope I shall have the pleasure of judging,' said Mr. Pickwick, with a smile. 'You shall,' replied Dowler."

J Long	pre 1881	
Walter Percy	1900 to 1914	
John Roderick Hopper	1928 to 1940	President (1935), Winkle Cup 1930
E Owen	1959 to 1986	
Guy A Turnell	1989 to 1995	
C E Lobley	1999 to 2001	
Seth Ennis	2003 to present	

Baillie Mac Something reports on his Charity Cycle Ride held on 25th June

We had another good turnout this year and the weather was kind to us once again. Amongst others, Sergeant Snubbins came from St Albans to ride. The ride followed the usual route from "The Plough" at Winchmore Hill via Burnham Beeches before halting at Huntswood Golf club for some refreshments. It was then time to head back through the Chilterns to The Greyhound Beaconsfield for a pit stop and finally back to The Plough to finish after 30miles. A BBQ at Wildhatch, courtesy of Mrs Baillie Mac Something finished off the day ,which everyone enjoyed. The monies raised so far are £1,860.

Mr Pickwick Goes to France 2017..

Another select group of 10 members and guests assembled in Marseille on the 20th July. We were based in the Hotel Ibis near the Old Port. The King of the Goblins (Robin Simpson) had booked us all in for dinner on Thursday evening at ' The Entrecote' in the Old Port, where the Time Trial was due to pass on the following Saturday. We had such a splendid dinner and the Patron looked after us very well, that we all agreed that it would be the perfect place for us to be on the Saturday. He promised us a table reservation for the day with an excellent view of the course.

On the Friday we took a bus to Aix-en-Provence and after some refreshments we opted for the Mini-Train around the city, to view the sights and learn a little about Aix. After a light lunch on the square we returned to Marseille. Meeting that evening for dinner at another venue in the Old Port.



Early on Saturday we took our places at the 'Entrecote Restaurant' on the course to watch the Time Trial and the TdF Caravan



The 'Caravan' passes by.

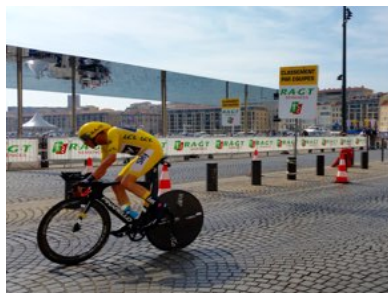


Chris Froome was in charge and gobbled up Bardet to retain the Yellow Jersey. The riders passed us on the way out then back after their loop round the port side. It was a super day, great food, company and atmosphere.



Chris Froome on the anti-clockwise TT lap

Froome on the return loop of the TT
(photo by Jackie Norman)



On Sunday we took a 3 hour boat trip from the port, along the Calanques National Park. The temperature was in the 30's so a wise choice and the scenery was magnificent. We even passed a Plage Naturiste, but were to polite to stare - so just took a few photographs!



We returned in time to see the finish of the next day's Le Tour on television in our hotel then dinner in another super local restaurant. On Monday we went our separate ways having had a great trip with good company and food plus a super Tour de France win for Chris Froome 4 wins what a record! We await Octobers' route launching to plan next years' Mr Pickwick's Trip.

On the trip this year were: Ballie Mac Something and Diana
Mr. Brooks and Rosemary
King of the Goblins and Celia
Jackson and Jackie
Brian and Pam Tadman (Guests)

(A big thank you to the King of the Goblins for the pictorial contribution)

Lunch at The Leather Bottle ...June 18th



President Samuel Pickwick (Jingle) followed on in last year's president Bulman's footsteps by arranging a Pickwickian lunch at this old hostelry in Cobham Kent. Extracted from their own website, the following explains the connection with Dickens:

"The Leather Bottle is known to many as Charles Dickens' Favourite Ale House in Cobham, Kent. The great man himself not only used the inn and often stayed in Rooms 2 & 6, but he also featured it in The Pickwick Papers, for it was here that the lovelorn Mr Tracy Tupman fled after being jilted by his sweetheart Rachel Wardle, where he drowned his sorrows in Mr Pickwick's company."

Members and family totalled 15 as they met up for pre-lunch drinks in the sunshine before settling down to lunch. Apart from our President, there was Bulman, Jack Martin, Peter Magnus, Winkle Snr, and newly appointed member Mr Mivens. Once it was established who had chosen what from the menu, and the food served, conversation flowed. It had been noticed that next to Bulman there was one empty seat, and on the list two members were missing. Hardly had Bulman consumed his starter than.....in walked (the very late) Mr Brooks and (real) son, Mr Pott, Editor Eatanswill Gazette, complaining about the amount of traffic encountered on their journey. It might have been quicker by horse & coach to Rochester was heard to be muttered somewhere.



The premises were extremely busy due to the excellent weather, but Bulman gentlemanly adjourned to another table allowing them to be seated with the main group. Our President stood to say a few words about the gathering, and to make a presentation to Bulman of the Blink Cup awarded him by Justice Stareleigh at the Golf day the previous week for his stalwart efforts on the bike after so long off it. (Bulman had to leave said event early so had missed the prize presentation in Harpenden).



Another day of good food and companionship and once concluded, many of the group then took the opportunity to wander around the premises observing much of the extensive display of Dicken's characters & in particular those from Pickwick Papers. The Leather Bottle is certainly a place for members to visit if you're in the vicinity. This now seems to be established as another annual event in the PBC calendar - so we look forward to next year.

Once more it is with regret that we report the loss of Club Members

In March we heard that Tiggin -(retired) Brian Emly who had been a member since 1993 had passed away on Christmas Day 2016.

Then in April it was Mr Gunter - David Goodall, a member since 1980.

Buzfuz duly wrote to both families to offer condolences from the Club



Benson Veteran Cycle Day

We do not have a report for this year's event, but, courtesy of Mr Mivens, who attended for the first time, we do know that our President, and somewhat later (!) Mr Brooks both participated.

Thank you Mr Mivens for the pictorial evidence



The front Cover Story

The background to our front cover illustration can be found in Ch XXXIV, which is focussed on the Trial of Bardell v Pickwick.

Serjeant Buzfuz proceeded, "Of this man Pickwick I will say little; the subject presents but few attractions; and I, gentlemen, am not that man, nor are you, gentlemen, the men, to delight in the contemplation of revolting heartlessness, and systematic villainy,"

Here Mr Pickwick, who had been writhing in silence for some time, gave a violent start, as if some idea of assaulting Serjeant Buzfuz, in the august presence of justice and law, suggested itself to his mind. An admonitory gesture from Perker restrained him, and he listened to the learned gentlemen's continuation with a look of indignation, which contrasted forcibly with the admiring faces of Mrs. Cluppings and Mrs. Sanders.

"I say systematic villainy, gentlemen," said Serjeant Buzfuz, looking through Mr Pickwick, and talking **at** him; "and when I say systematic villainy, let me tell the defendant Pickwick if he be in court, as I am informed he is, that it would have been more decent in him, more becoming, in better judgement, and in better taste, if he had stopped away."

Bicycles Built Based on Memory.....

Back in 2009 Italian designer Gianluca Gimini decided to ask friends and others to draw a men's bicycle from memory. It was a form of psychological testing to show how little we know compared to what we think we know. Gianluca ended up with over 350 drawings from a wide age group, and he created models from the drawings. Amazingly there were many that had basic parts of the whole mechanism missing. A selection of the bizarre results are shown here both as drawings and models:



Pedals and a chain would make life easier



So that's where they went



Looks uncomfortable even with long arms



Steering might be a problem with this one



So, drawing a bike isn't as easy as it would seem to be. How good are you?

(article courtesy of the Daily Telegraph)

A Thank You from Slurk.....in a message to Buzfuz

Subject: Prudential Bike Ride

Dear Stephen, would you kindly pass on my very grateful thanks to the members of the Pickwick for their very generous response to my charity " Action on Hearing Loss" - formerly RNID I had hoped to raise £500 thanks to our members I reached £836, thank you to everyone. Yours sincerely Phil Chapman (Slurk).

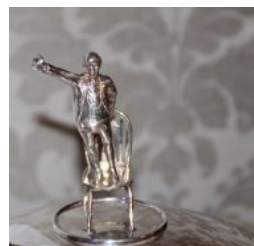
So, the now for something different quiz seems to have been too tough for most of you!

Well firstly, here are the answers....

- 1) What was Joseph Atto's Soubriquet? **Nathaniel Pipkin**
- 2) Joseph Smiggers has the letters P.V.P.M.P.C after his name. What do they mean? **Perpetual Vice-President - Member Pickwick Club**
- 3) The Club was formed in 1870 at the Downs Hotel. Where was the Hotel?
Hackney Downs
- 4) Where was the cricket match in Ch.VII held? **Muggleton**
- 5) With which famous author has the Club always been associated?
Charles Dickens
- 6) What legendary activity always took place at Club luncheons?
The smoking of old shag
- 7) In Ch.XXXIV, who was Mr Pickwick up against in the trial? **Mrs. Bardell**
- 8) Who organises Mr Pickwick goes to France each year?
Bailie Mac Something (aka John Morris)

We do however have a winner....**King of the Goblins/Robin Simpson.**

Congratulations kind sir, we salute your knowledge of Pickwick Papers and a suitable reward for your efforts will follow shortly.



A frequent contributor to our magazine is Frank Simmery (Helmut Stibal) and he has kindly forwarded a message & pictures from a friend...the story follows:

Hello to you

A colleague of mine was so kind sending me the enclosed. Is this of any interest for the Pickwick magazine?

Kind regards
Helmut

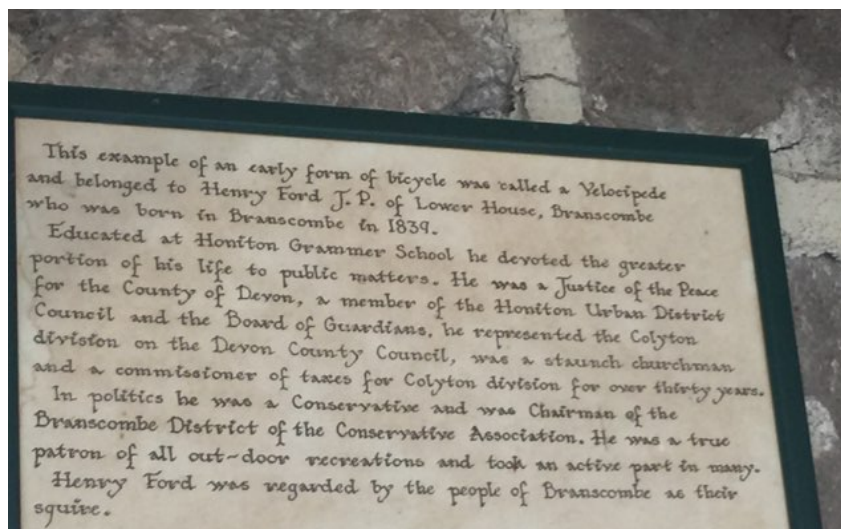
Hi Helmut,

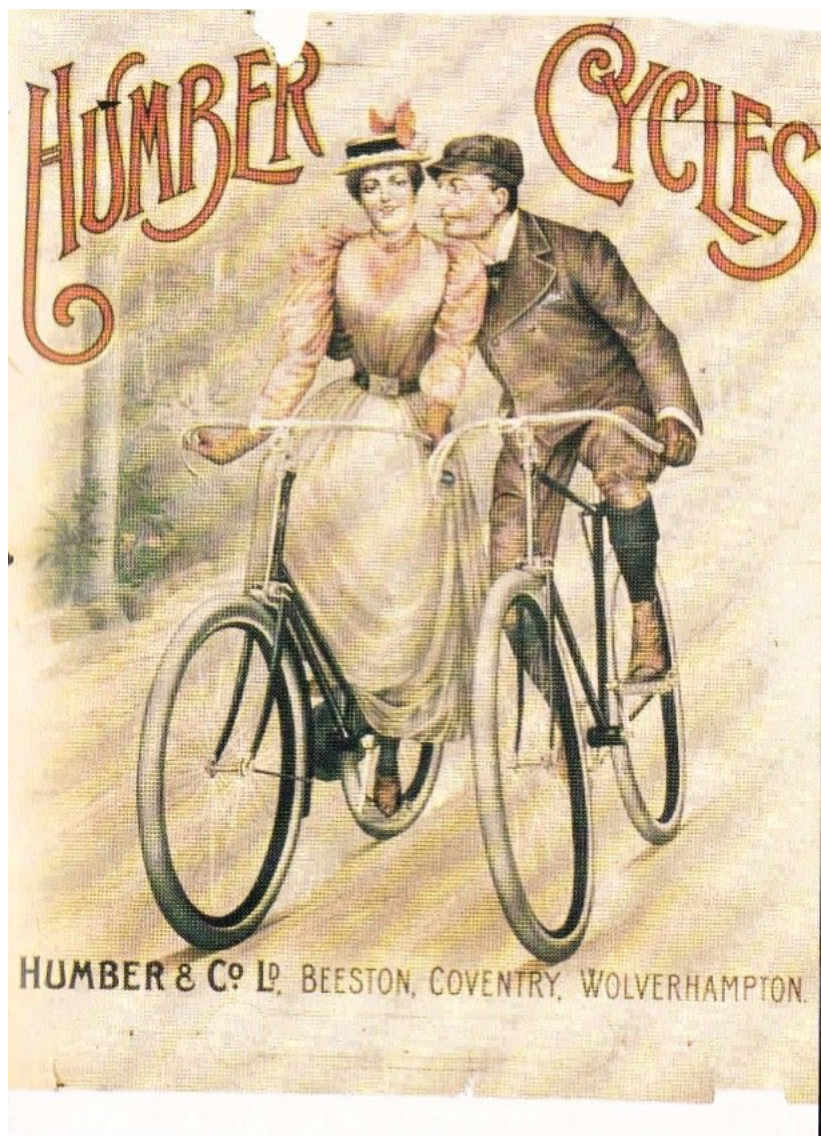
As you know we spend much time at our static caravan in Beer, South East Devon. The next village west is called Branscombe and it has a nice little beach cafe. We often go there walking our dog and grab a coffee!

This bicycle hangs on the wall over the entrance and we thought it would be of interest to you.

Trusting you are well

Mike





In the late 19th century the bicycle's popularity was enhanced by the opportunity it provided for flirtation. Allegedly, since cycling was accepted as a social form of recreation, it was acceptable for a lady to ride away with a boyfriend. In 1896 the Chaperon Cyclists Association was formed in London to fight back, with the idea that the chaperon would have to supply her own bicycle!!