

William Penny Brookes

The Games Doctor

The story of a special person





A book for younger children
by Chris and Margaret Cannon, Wenlock Olympian Society.

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Physical Education (PE)

What do you like to do in PE?

Why do you think we do PE in school?



This man was Dr. William Penny Brookes.

He was a doctor over 100 years ago in Victorian times.

In the school he opened he found out that exercise was good for the health of children.



Sports Day



These children are enjoying a race on Sports Day.
Which race do you like best on Sports Day at your school?



Dr. Brookes started a special Sports Day a long time ago in 1850.

He called his Sports Day the Wenlock Olympian Games. The Games started with a procession through the town led by a boy riding on a white horse.

Wenlock Olympic Games



The races at the Wenlock Olympic Games were given different names from the races we have at our Sports Days today.

The foot race we now call a sprint.

The running high leap we now call the high jump.

The running long leap we now call the long jump.

There was also a three legged race, sack race and throwing a stone!

These races were for men and boys only.

Do you think that was fair?

Competitors' clothes

Look at the clothes worn by the Wenlock Olympic Games winners.



How are they different from the modern athlete's clothes?



Fun races

Dr. Brookes wanted all the people to enjoy his Olympian Games so he had lots of fun races!

Here are some of them.

Climbing a greasy pole.



An old ladies race for a pound of tea.



Blindfolded wheelbarrow race.

Chasing a piglet.



Cycle races

This was one of the first bicycles. It was called a Penny Farthing. The tyres were made of rope. The seat was high up.

This man, Thomas Sabin, fell off a lot but still won the Wenlock bicycle race.

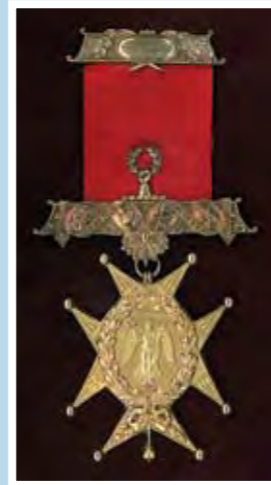
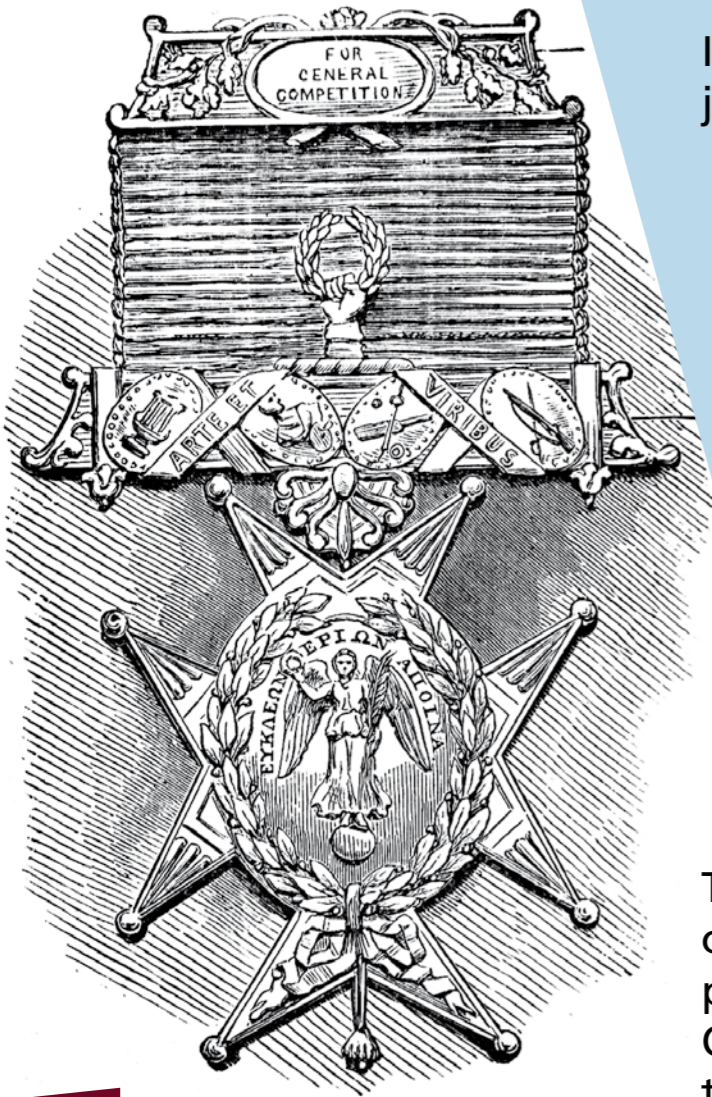
What is different about the bikes we have now?



Prizes

The winners of the Wenlock Olympian Games won money, books or medals as a prize. This is the medal given to the winner of five running and jumping races, called a pentathlon.

It was made by Queen Victoria's jeweller in silver and then later in gold.

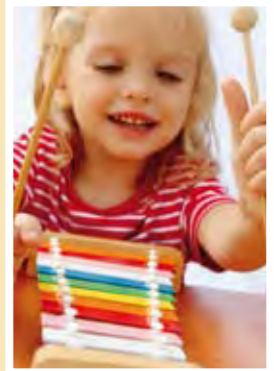


This is the medal you could win if you took part in the Wenlock Olympian Games today.



Other competitions

Do you like drawing, painting or making music?



In his Olympic Games Dr. Brookes had competitions for drawing, painting, sewing, making music, spelling, maths, handwriting and the best poem.

These competitions were for boys, girls and adults.



This was the medal won by a child for a crayon drawing at the Olympic Games.



Much Wenlock Brass Band.

Why was Dr Brookes so special?

Dr. William Penny Brookes was special because he helped to start Olympic Games in other places.

A modern Olympic Games was held in Athens, Greece in 1859. Dr. Brookes sent £10 as a prize, this was a lot of money then. The winner of the race won the Wenlock Prize.



Dr. Brookes helped start an Olympic Games at the Crystal Palace, London in 1866.



The King and Queen of Greece sent a silver cup as a prize for Dr. Brookes' Olympic Games in 1877.

Start of the Olympic Games



Dr. Brookes invited a man from Paris, France called Baron Pierre de Coubertin to see the Wenlock Olympian Games in 1890.



He enjoyed the Games so much that he sent a special medal to be given at the next Games.



The man from France liked Dr. Brookes' idea of a Games and used it to start the Olympic Games we have today. The first Modern Olympic Games were held in Athens, Greece in 1896.

The Olympian Games

William Penny Brookes died in 1895. The Wenlock Olympian Games that he started a long time ago carried on and are still held today.



What do you think made Dr. Brookes a special person?



Timeline

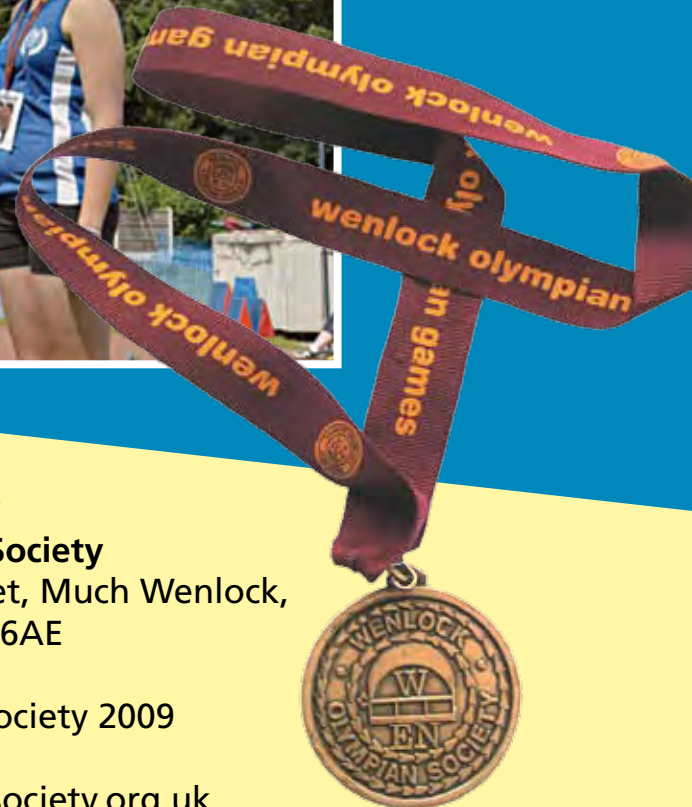
- 1809** William Penny Brookes born.
- 1850** First Wenlock Olympian Games held.
- 1859** Wenlock Prize at Athens Olympic Games.
- 1866** National Olympian Games, Crystal Palace London.
- 1890** Baron Pierre de Coubertin visited Much Wenlock Olympian Games.
- 1895** William Penny Brookes died.
- 1896** First Olympic Games held in Athens, Greece.
- 1908** London Olympic Games held.
- 1948** London Olympic Games held.
- 1986** 100th Wenlock Olympian Games held.
- 2009** 200 years since William Penny Brookes was born.
- 2012** London Olympic Games will be held.



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