



# REFLECT...

## THE MINUTE BOOKS

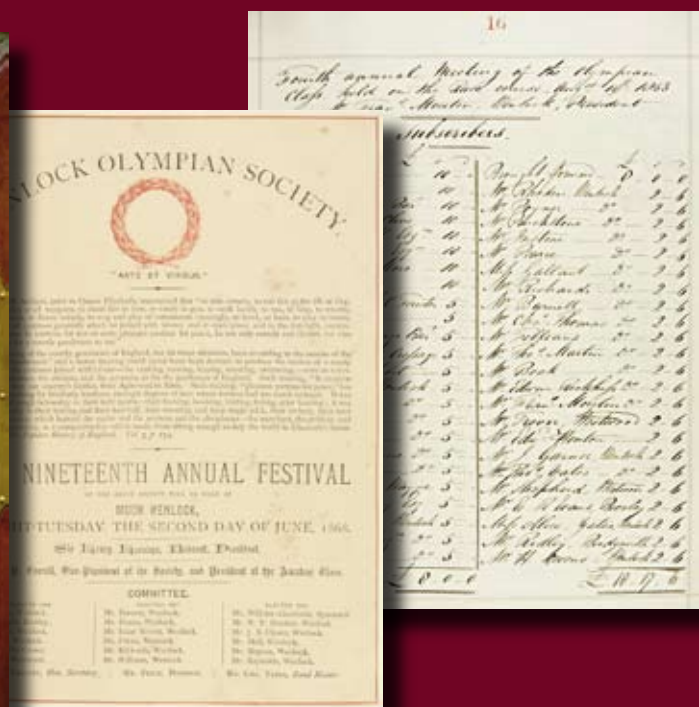
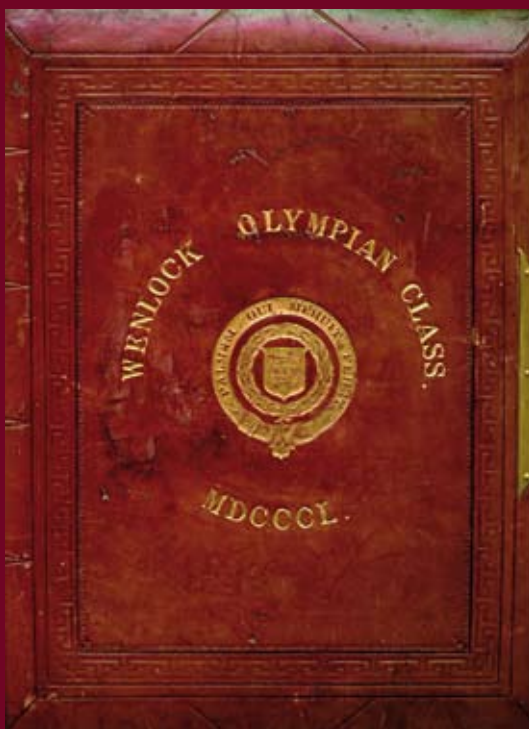
The Wenlock Olympian Society Minute Books were used to record the meetings, letters, accounts and notes of the Society.

Brookes himself kept the Minute Books. They show how the Games were organised, how they were paid for, competitors names and a record of the results.

The minutes of meetings were all handwritten and sometimes newspaper clippings were included. Any important letters that had been written or received

were also kept. Copies of programmes from each Games were kept in the Minute Books along with any other printed information that had been produced.

The Minute Books provide a detailed historical account of the history of the Games and accurate details of how Brookes realised his dreams.



Why was it important to keep accurate records of meetings?

What financial information needs to be recorded for any group or society?

Would you expect a book like this to be handwritten today?

What are the disadvantages of a single written book as a record?



# NOW ACT!

## THE MINUTE BOOKS

Every group or organisation needs to keep records of the decisions they make, their financial transactions, their future plans and copies of any letters or literature they produce.

*How could you record the organisational information for your Games?*

Who would be responsible for keeping the records?

How can you be sure the records are accurate?

In what format should it be kept: printed paper, handwritten or electronic?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods?

Who might be interested in looking at your records in the future?

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# REFLECT...

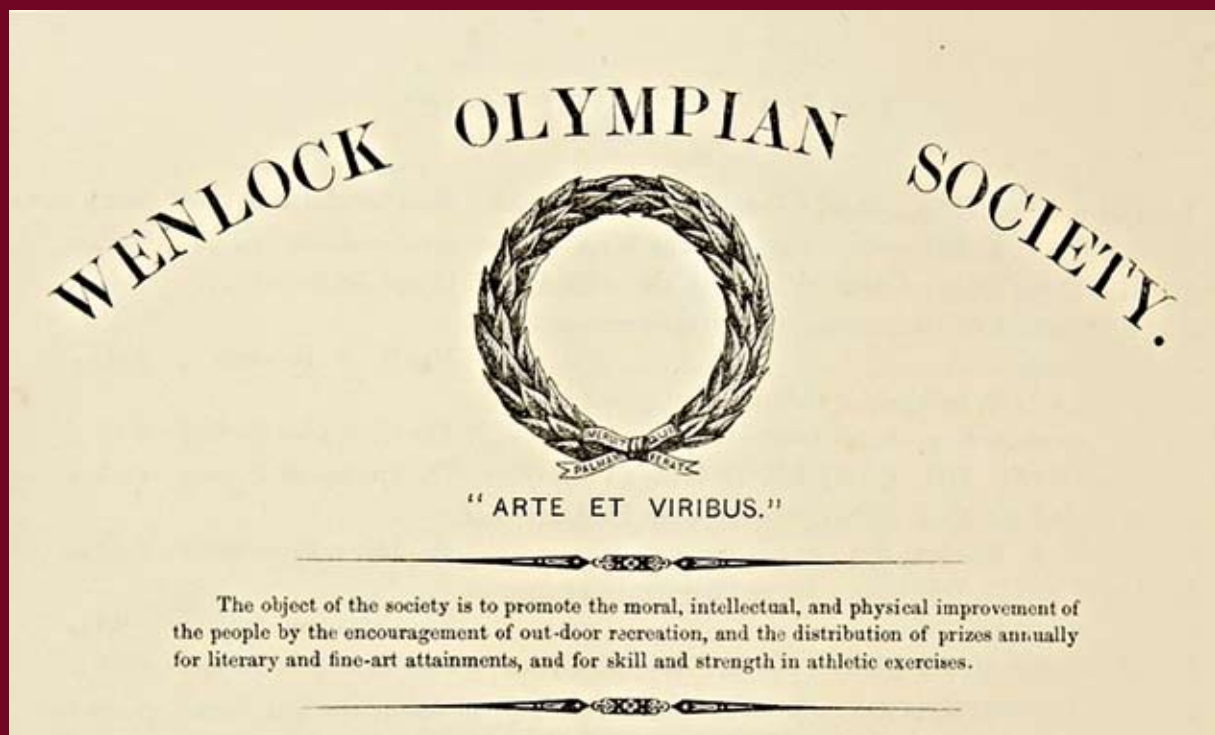
## THE THINKING BEHIND THE GAMES

Here is a document outlining the main aims of the Wenlock Olympian Society.

In 1850 the Wenlock Olympian Class, or as it became known, Society, was formed by William Penny Brookes to try to achieve the objective it outlined in this document. Brookes wanted the Games to 'promote the moral, physical and intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Wenlock, and especially the working classes, by the

encouragement of out-door recreation and by the awarding of prizes annually at public meetings for skills in athletic exercises, and proficiency in intellectual and industrial attainments'.

The motto seen below the laurel wreath is Ancient Greek and can be translated as 'for Art and Strength'.



What is meant by 'moral, intellectual and physical improvement'?

Can you translate the aims into language that is easily understood by a modern audience?

Why do you think the distribution of prizes was so important?

Why do you think Brookes wanted to especially provide for the 'working classes'?



# NOW ACT!

## THE THINKING BEHIND THE GAMES

William Penny Brookes was very clear in what he hoped the Wenlock Olympian Society would do to improve life for the people of Much Wenlock and the surrounding areas. If you were planning your own Games in your area, what positive outcomes do you hope local people would gain from taking part?

*Write a statement that explains what you hope the local community would gain from taking part in your Games.*

*What special lessons can we learn from competition?*

*Who do you want to benefit from taking part in your Games?*

*Would you encourage any groups of people to participate for a particular reason?*

*How can you make sure everyone understands your thinking?*

*Why would it be good to include events to test artistic and intellectual skills as well as physical ones?*

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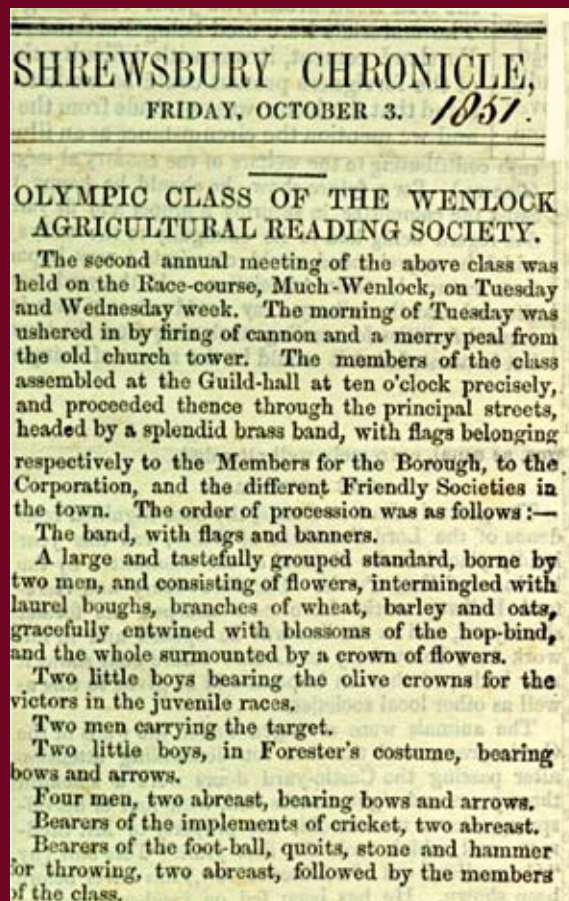
# REFLECT...

## THE REPORTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Local newspapers and journals reported the Games as an exciting occasion. The reports described the procession and the ceremony of the opening through to details of the competitors and reports of the most exciting competitions.

By reporting the Wenlock Olympian Games with enthusiasm the newspapers helped to encourage people to compete or to come and see the Games.

This was beneficial for the reputation of the Games and brought large crowds of people to the town of Much Wenlock.



Why is the newspaper coverage important to the success of the Games?

Was the writer of these articles impressed by the spectacle?

How do you think the winning athletes felt when reading these reports?

Why do you think all of these reports were kept in the Minute Books?





# NOW ACT!

## THE REPORTS AND CELEBRATIONS

The reports of the Wenlock Olympian Games were helpful in a number of ways. More people became aware of the event and so wanted to come and participate or watch the next Olympian Games. The winners were celebrated in newspaper reports so winning the events became more prestigious.

*How will you report on your event and celebrate the achievements of the participants?*

*Will you ask a local newspaper to provide coverage or will you produce your own report?*

*Are there any other reporting mediums you could use other than newspapers?*

*Will the report you issue be partial or impartial?*

*How can you make sure the news of your event reaches the widest possible audience?*

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# REFLECT...

## THE MEDALS

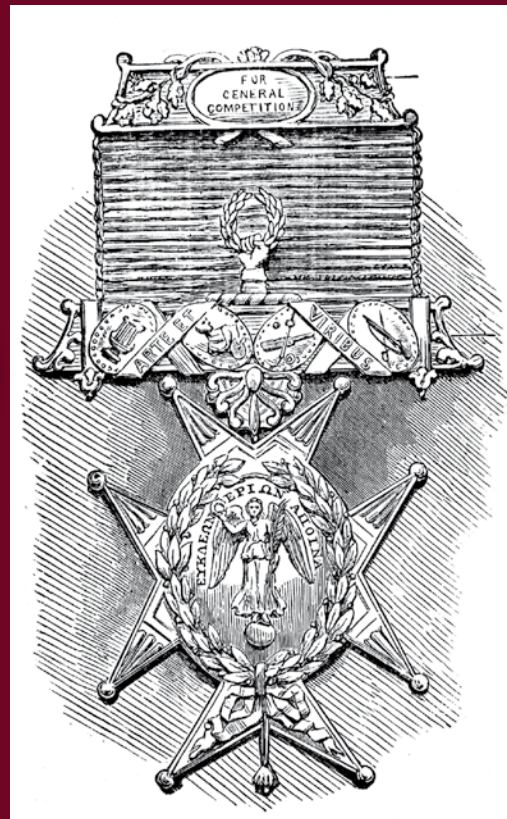
Medals are a very important part of every Wenlock Olympian Games.

The winner of an event at the Wenlock Olympian Games was often presented with a medal. Each medal is impressively decorated on both sides and sometimes had a ribbon or pin. Many medals had a design that reflected the events of the Games. Most had an Olympian motto or text in Latin.

The prize everybody wanted to win was the medal given to the winner of the five events competition, called the Pentathlon.

The medal below was made in London by Queen Victoria's jeweller. First of all it was made in silver and then in gold.

Look carefully at the medal. Can you see a hand holding a crown of leaves?  
A cricket bat?  
What else can you see?



Can you see any signs or symbols on these medals?

How are they connected with the Olympian tradition?

What features of the design make each medal special?

How do you think a medal winner would feel receiving one of these?

Have you or anyone in your family won a medal? Would you like to?



# NOW ACT!

## THE MEDALS

Medals recognise how hard the competitor has worked and marks the significant achievement of being the best in an event. They were designed to be grand and impressive and were highly prized by the winners.

*Design both sides of an impressive medal to be awarded at your local event.*

*What images would you use to make your medal special?*

*What shape will it be?  
What materials will your medal be made from?*

*Will your medal have a ribbon or a pin? How will the winner wear it?*

*How will you incorporate the date into your design?*

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# REFLECT...

## THE PROCESSION - AN OPENING CEREMONY

Pageantry was always a very important part of the Wenlock Olympian Games. If you wanted to compete in the Games you had to take part in the procession.

A band led the procession of flag bearers, competitors and officials as they marched through the decorated streets of the town to where the Games were to be held.

The procession featured a 'Herald'. A young boy was chosen to dress in an elaborate Tudor style costume and ride a white pony at the front of the procession.



Can you identify the Herald in the group photograph? Which one is William Penny Brookes?

Who do you think the other characters at the front might be?

What preparations must have been made before the procession could go through the town?

Why do you think the procession was such an important part of the Games?

How would you feel if you were the Herald?



# NOW ACT!

## THE PROCESSION - AN OPENING CEREMONY

Pageantry was always a very important part of the Wenlock Olympian Games. If you were planning to hold a local games for your community what event would you plan to signal the opening of the competition? Would it be a procession or a ceremony, or something else?

*Plan the event that would signal the opening of your Games*

*Where would the event take place?*

*What special permissions might you need?*

*How would you make the event special?*

*How would you involve local people, groups or businesses?*

*What facilities would you need to arrange to ensure the people taking part were safe and comfortable?*

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# REFLECT...

## THE PROGRAMME - PLANNING YOUR EVENTS

Here is a programme from the Wenlock Olympian Games.

PROGRAMME		First Prize	Second Prize	Third Prize	Retained
Order of	COMPETITIONS.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1.	FOOT RACE, 100 yards, heats, for boys under 14 years of age, resident in the Parish of Wenlock	0 5 0	0 2 0	0 1 0	
2.	FOOT RACE, 60 yards, heats, for boys under 10 years of age, resident in the Parish of Wenlock	0 3 0	0 2 0	0 1 0	
3.	FOOT RACE, 1 mile. Prizes presented by R. Jasper More, Esq., M.P.	2 0 0	0 10 0		0 1 0
4.	RUNNING HIGH LEAP. Prizes presented by the Lilleshall Company	0 7 6	0 2 6		0 1 0
5.	RUNNING LONG LEAP ditto	0 7 6	0 2 6		0 1 0
6.	STANDING LONG LEAP ditto	0 7 6	0 2 6		0 1 0
7.	THROWING THE CRICKET BALL ditto	0 7 6	0 2 6		0 1 0
8.	FOOT-HURDLE RACE, half a mile, over 10 flights, hurdles 4 feet high. Prizes presented by J. M. Gaskell, Esq., M.P., value	2 0 0	0 10 0		0 1 0
9.	FOOT RACE, 200 yards. Prizes presented by R. Jasper More, Esq., M.P., value	2 0 0	0 10 0		0 1 0
10.	TILTING AT THE RING on horses. First prize, the Olive Crown and a Silver Goblet value 7 0 0				0 5 0
	Second prize, a Silver-mounted Hunting Whip, with richly chased handle value 2 10 0				
11.	FOOT HURDLE RACE, 1 mile, over 15 flights, hurdles 4 feet high. First prize presented by Lord Forester	5 0 0	1 0 0		4 2 0
	Previous winners of Lord Forester's prize to be excluded from this contest.				
12.	FOOT RACE, half a mile, for Farm Labourers, resident in the County of Salop. Prizes presented by J. M. Gaskell, Esq., M.P. N.B.—Competitors must satisfy the Judges, either by certificates from their masters or by other evidence, that they are Farm Labourers.	1 15 0	0 10 0	0 5 0	0 1 0
13.	FOOT STEEPLE-CHASE, half a mile, with water leap. Prizes presented by Colonel The Hon. Percy Herbert, M.P.	2 0 0	0 15 0	0 5 0	0 1 0
14.	GENERAL COMPETITION IN GYMNASTIC FEATS, on parallel bars, horizontal bars, and trapeze. Open only to Members and Associates of the Wenlock Olympian Society	1 0 0	0 10 0	0 5 0	
15.	THROWING THE HAMMER. Prizes presented by the Cannock Chase Company. Open only to lime-stone quarry-men and lime-burners, in the Parish of Wenlock	0 10 6	0 2 6	0 1 0	0 1 0
16.	PUTTING THE STONE, 28 lbs. Prizes presented by the Cannock Chase Company. Open as above	0 10 6	0 2 6	0 1 0	0 1 0
17.	FOOT RACE, 400 yards. Prizes presented by the Cannock Chase Company. Open as above	0 10 6	0 2 6	0 1 0	0 1 0
18.	POLE LEAPING	0 10 6	0 2 6		0 1 0
19.	THREE-LEGGED RACE, 50 yards	0 7 6	0 2 6		0 1 0
20.	SACK RACE, 50 yards	0 7 6	0 2 6		0 1 0

A programme was printed for every Games:

- to show the events being held
- who could take part
- any rules for the competition
- the prizes to be awarded
- and sometimes who presented or donated the prizes

Do you recognise any events that are held today?

Which events have the greatest prizes?

Why do you think having prizes was so important?

Can you find any events that are not open to everyone?

Why do you think some events are only open to particular groups of people?



# NOW ACT!

## THE PROGRAMME - PLANNING YOUR EVENTS

The programme of events was important to competitors and also to spectators. It held a lot of very important information.

*Develop a programme for your Games. Include details of who can enter each event, what the prize should be and who in your local community you might ask to donate or sponsor it?*

How many events will you have?

Who can enter each race?

Would you include any special events to encourage one particular social group to take part for a particular reason?

How can you make sure the events you choose will encourage local people to take part?

Why would it be good to include events to test artistic and learning skills as well as physical ones?

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# REFLECT...

## THE ARTS EVENTS

As well as sporting excellence, the Wenlock Olympian Society rewarded talented learners, writers, artists, singers and musicians.

A wide range of arts events have been included throughout the history of the Games. As well as writing poems and essays, competitors could enter singing, handwriting, sewing and knitting, painting and drawing events. Prizes were awarded for many educational activities like history and spelling prizes and the '3Rs' of school: reading, writing and arithmetic.

The medal below was awarded to Brookes' daughter Adeline for 'A Crayon Drawing' in 1864.

The Arts events were very popular and a Live Arts Festival is still held by the Wenlock Olympian Society today. It includes competitions for bands, musicians, singers, poets and writers.



Why are artistic activities encouraged by the Wenlock Olympian Society?

Which Art event would you choose to compete in?

How do the poetry and singing events add to the 'occasion' of the games?

Can you make any connection between the Art events and the subjects you study at school?





# NOW ACT!

## THE ARTS EVENTS

The Arts events were an important part of the Wenlock Olympian Society. William Penny Brookes encouraged intellectual and creative development as well as physical activity.

*Which Art events would you include in your programme?  
What would you ask competitors to perform or create?*

*What type of modern poetry  
or writing could you include?*

*What title would you give to  
writers or poets?*

*Which musical activities  
would you encourage?*

*What would you ask artists  
to draw or paint?*

*Is there a subject from your school curriculum you could  
reflect in an event?*

*Would you include any  
electronic or ICT based  
mediums?*

*Could you include any other  
school curriculum subjects?*

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# REFLECT...

## THE PRIZES

The prizes were an important aspect of the Wenlock Olympian Games. As well as the medals, a range of interesting prizes were offered to the victors.

This picture below shows Charles Ainsworth, Champion of Tilting at the Ring Over Hurdles, with his medals, trophies and an Olive Crown. This reflects the Ancient Greek Olympic tradition of crowning the victor with a circular wreath of olive leaves.

The prizes awarded to Wenlock Olympian Champions were often extremely valuable. Sometimes the prizes were considerable

sums of money, or silver objects like cups, inkstands or cutlery.

On other occasions the prizes were more practical like tea in the 'Pound of Tea Race'. The competitor who managed to catch the pig in the 'Pig Race' was lucky enough to keep it. The prizes were sponsored by local businessmen or paid for from the donations made to the Wenlock Olympian Society.



Resolved that the following prizes be given at the ending annual Meeting.		
1 <sup>st</sup> For football; winning side		15-0
2 <sup>nd</sup> Quits	winner	5-0
3 <sup>rd</sup> Leaping in height		5-0
4 <sup>th</sup> Leaping in distance		5-0

Why were the prizes so special?

What would a money prize mean to an 'ordinary' man in the 19th century?

Which prize would you like to win the most?

Why do you think businessmen and wealthy local people chose to donate prizes or money?



# NOW ACT!

## THE PRIZES

The prizes awarded to Wenlock Olympian Champions were valuable and impressive. They were funded by wealthy businessmen and residents of Wenlock. The prizes meant that certain events were very fiercely contested.

*What could you present to competitors for taking part?*

*Are there any local shops or businesses you could approach to donate a prize?*

*Which local organisations or charitable groups might contribute to your prizes?*

*Apart from medals and prizes, what could you present to competitors to remind them of taking part?*

*What sort of prizes should you offer to encourage people to compete?*

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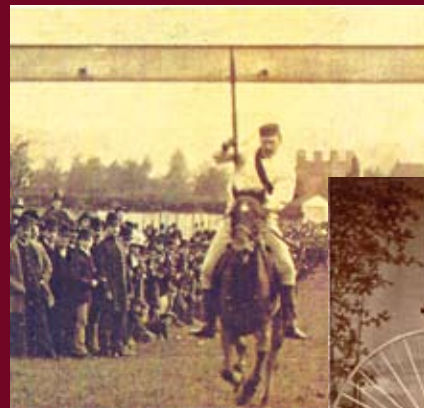
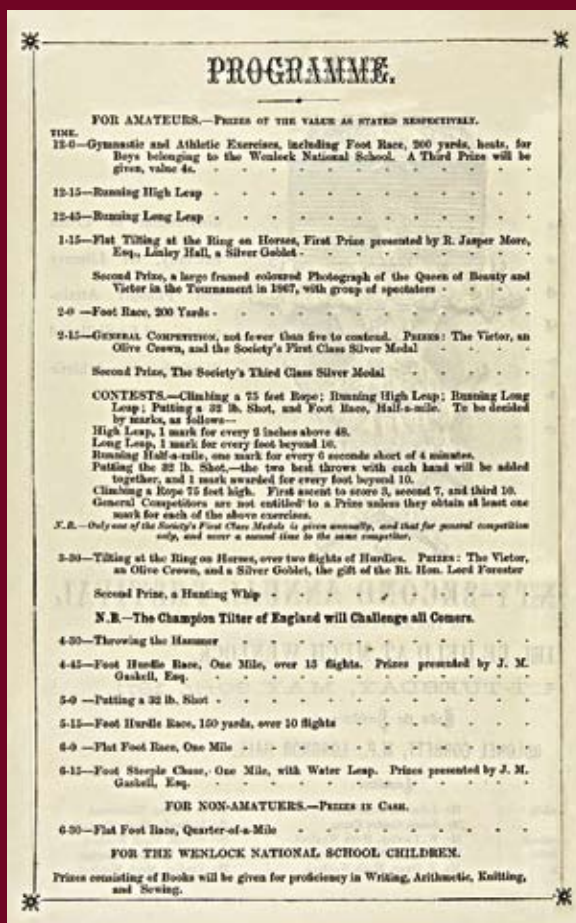
## THE SPORTING EVENTS

At the Wenlock Olympian Games there was always a mix of sporting events that allowed competitors to display a wide range of talents and skills including riding, running, jumping and throwing.

Some were on horseback or on bicycles, some required special equipment and some involved more than one activity.

Many events tested the skill, strength or stamina people had developed as part of their job. One event for men who worked in quarries digging stone out of the ground involved throwing a large rock as far as possible. It was called 'Putting the Stone'.

Many unusual events like this could be seen only at the Wenlock Olympian Games.



Why did the programme include such a wide range of sporting events?

Why was it good to encourage people to participate in sport?

How would entering sporting competitions improve someone's life?

How would the boss of a company feel if his worker was a prize winner?



# NOW ACT!

## THE SPORTING EVENTS

The sporting events that were part of the Wenlock Games were designed to test a range of skills and talents. Many events were invented for the games so local workers could demonstrate skills they used in their work.

*Design a sporting event for your games that would test a useful skill or talent.*

Will your event include running, jumping, throwing or riding or a combination of these?

Will your event be short or long?

Will it test speed, endurance, accuracy, balance or power?

What will the rules be for your event?

Will your event require a starter, officials to measure or judges to score?

How will your event be judged?  
Who will the winner be?

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