

**An Example for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics: A Day in the
Life of William Penny Brookes, A 19th Century Pioneer
British Educator and Inspiration for the First Modern
Olympic Games in 1850***

An original presentation showcasing the life of Dr. William Penny Brookes, a 19th century pioneer British educator and, as the Organizing Committee of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games is very much aware, held the first modern revival of the Olympic Games at Much Wenlock, Shropshire, England, in 1850. Developing pioneering reforms in physical education that led to curriculum change in English schools, Brookes also held local Olympian Games; encouraged the first Greek National Olympics in Athens in 1859; and, ultimately, helped inspire Baron Pierre de Coubertin to organize the First International Olympic Games at Athens in 1896. The study presents a visual reconstruction of Brookes' routine through still extant buildings and grounds, where he lived, worked, and taught in the small town of Much Wenlock.

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The rapidly approaching 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan, offers an ideal occasion to remind readers about the nineteenth century British physician and educator, Dr. William Penny Brookes, who is now accepted as the first to hold a modern version of the Olympic Games at his hometown of Much Wenlock, Shropshire, in the West Midlands of England. That was in 1850. According to Chris Cannon, the Wenlock Olympian Society Archivist and Vice-President, the 2020 Tokyo Organizing Committee, fully aware of Brookes' Olympic legacy, has been sending delegations and individuals to Much Wenlock to gather information and borrow relevant material about Brookes from the town's own Olympic Museum to use in their proposed 2020 Olympic Museum at Tokyo. Cannon, who is working frantically to get the entire WOS Archive fully on line for the use to scholars and other interested parties and individuals in the coming months, says it is not only Japan that is planning on celebrating Brookes: The Qatar Olympic Museum, not usually an area of the world that first comes to mind when the Olympics are being mentioned, are also "taking loan items and commissioning a bust of WPB!" to help celebrate William Penny Brookes' pioneering Olympic efforts.

It is, indeed, a rare occasion when the career of so significant an individual to the rise of modern sport as Dr. Brookes was-- in his case a physician and an

educator from the mid-nineteenth century whose pioneering physical education reforms are still impacting the revised curriculum for A Level Physical Education (16-18-year olds) in Great Britain-- remain so well known. It is an even rarer occasion when his same reforms in athletics helped lead directly to the revival of the Olympic Games after a 1500-year dormancy. Brookes' shadow continues to loom large after more than a century and a half, not only over his small town of Much Wenlock, but also on the now accepted International Olympic Committee's belief that Brookes "really was the founder of the Modern Olympic Games"-- a concession made in 1994 by Juan Antonio Samaranch, then President of the International Olympic Committee, and acknowledged publicly at the 2012 London Olympics Opening Ceremony.

Brooke's contributions have been the subject of other studies, especially the groundbreaking volume by David Young, *The Modern Olympics: The Struggle for Revival* (1996), my own papers at the 2015 Annual Hawaii International Conference on Arts & Humanities and the 2012 International Conference on Learning in London following the close of the London Olympic Games-- and a number of Much Wenlock Olympian Society publications (all listed in the accompanying bibliography). It is the focus of this presentation, however, to visually reconstruct the good doctor's routine as educator, physician, magistrate, and campaigner to include physical education in England's national school curriculum, as he went about his business in Much Wenlock and became a driving force behind the Olympic revival. Not only does his residence still remain, but also the building in which he began his educational reforms, particularly in regard to the infant study of physical culture-- or physical education as it is known today-- and the grounds, the Linden Field, on which he put his first "Olympian Games" into practice. It is not difficult to do this since the town has essentially been transformed into a modern tribute to Dr.

Figure 1. Dr. William Penny Brookes (1809-1895), Pioneer Educator, Physician, Magistrate, Botanist, and Organizer of the First Modern Version of the Olympic Games in 1850 at Much Wenlock, Shropshire, England. By permission, Much Wenlock Olympian Society.



1 **Figure 2.** *William Penny Brookes' residence as it stands today in Much Wenlock*
2 *on Wilmore Street.*



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5 **Figure 3.** *The author standing at the Brookes' Commemorative Plaque on Linden*
6 *Field, where his Olympian Games were first put into practice in 1850 and*
7 *continue to this day.*



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Figure 4. *Wenlock Olympian Society Archivist and Vice President, Chris Cannon, at the Corn Exchange Building, the original center for Dr. Brookes' educational reforms and his Olympian Society.*



Figure 5. *Inside the Much Wenlock Archives on the second floor of Brookes' Corn Exchange Building, where the documents confirming Dr. William Penny Brookes as the first to reestablish the Olympic Games may be viewed. Cannon hopes to have the entire Archives on line in the near future.*



1 Brookes.

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3 In the times I have visited Much Wenlock since 2012 and used the Archives
4 there for my own studies, I have taken photos of the major places Brookes
5 frequented during his long and productive life (1809-1895), with the object of
6 transporting interested persons to the small town where the move toward
7 establishing the modern Olympics began. It is a presentation designed to provide
8 the best experience short of visiting the place. I have been escorted around the
9 picturesque town by Chris Cannon, and we will follow in the footsteps of Queen
10 Elizabeth II, former I.O.C. President Samaranch, and other dignitaries and
11 Olympic and world record holders, who have made Much Wenlock the must-see
12 place for every contemporary Olympic enthusiast to visit. The Wenlock
13 Olympian Society continues to hold athletic games each July; Much Wenlock
14 attracted the attention of the world media in 2012 when Dr. Brookes was given
15 due credit for the first time in the Opening Ceremonies of the London Olympics;
16 and, in the summer of 2015, a Japanese delegation showed up unannounced in
17 preparation for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. According to Chris Cannon, since that
18 visit, the Tokyo Olympics Organizing Committee has stated that their vision of
19 Tokyo 2020 involves sport, education and culture, and recognizes the importance
20 of that legacy of Brookes and the Wenlock Olympian Society— an indication that
21 their Games will fully appreciate the inspiring individual and township which are
22 at the heart of the modern Olympics. Brookes’ original intent to include “every
23 grade of man” in athletics has long become Olympic reality.

24 Born in 1809, Brookes’ father was a physician, and the family’s interests
25 certainly extended well beyond those of what might be expected in a small English
26 township. Young Brookes’ studied in London, later traveling to Padua, Italy, to
27 continue his education at the University’s prestigious medical school, while also
28 indulging his interest in botany at the famous botanical gardens there. In 1830, he
29 furthered his studies in Paris, another center for prosperous young men coming
30 from Great Britain and the Continent to advance their education— also
31 demonstrated, ironically, by Brookes’ contemporary and fellow early Olympic
32 enthusiast, Panagiotis Soutsos, from Greece.¹ Both studied at Padua and Paris
33 within a few years of one another, although Soutsos was not a physician and there
34 is no indication the two ever met or knew one another. Soutsos, Brookes, and,
35 lastly, the younger Baron Pierre de Coubertin of France, are the nineteenth century
36 triumvirs of the modern Olympic movement.

¹ The most complete contemporary study of Panagiotis Soutsos and his Olympic contributions remains David’s Young’s groundbreaking work, *The Modern Olympics: A Struggle for Survival* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press), 1996, particularly Chapters 1-2 (see, also, additional Index entries for Soutsos in Young’s book).

1 Brookes returned to England upon learning of the death of his father. After
2 qualifying, he took over the family medical practice at Much Wenlock. As a
3 concerned Christian and physician, who later became a Fellow of the Royal
4 College of Surgeons, Brookes wanted to improve the situation of the working class
5 at Much Wenlock and environs. He was also the local Justice of the Peace, a
6 minor magistracy that frequently involved him with petty criminals, drunks, and in
7 other types of disorderly conduct— so he was familiar with all aspects of working
8 class problems. However, it was mostly the poor physical condition and lack of
9 education of local limestone quarry workers and those who labored nearby in
10 Ironbridge Gorge, also in the Borough of Wenlock, Shropshire (Much Wenlock
11 was the administrative center), that prompted Brookes' efforts. The heaviest labor
12 took place at the iron-smelting centers around Coalbrookdale and Ironbridge,
13 where the world's first iron cast bridge was built in 1779. Ironbridge is listed as a
14 World Heritage Site for being the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, a long-
15 standing tradition that was connected directly with Brookes as part of the 2012
16 London Olympics Opening Ceremonies.

17 Brookes also wanted to improve the skills of the average working man for
18 better employment and offered "Still Life" art classes at his school to help prepare
19 many for work at the famous Coalport China works, also in Ironbridge Gorge
20 (through which the Severn River passes). In this, however, Dr. Brookes was the
21 proverbial voice in the wilderness and not a very popular man in his own rural
22 community because of his outspoken advocacy of physical fitness, changes in the
23 local and national education, and other non-traditional Victorian attitudes.
24 Pursuant to such interests, Brookes started the Agricultural Reading Society in
25 1841, "for the promotion and diffusion of useful information," from which a
26 number of classes in the arts and sciences would develop. He also established a
27 lending library, and requested contributions from some of England's finest,
28 including the Duke of Wellington and Alfred Lord Tennyson. In 1850, an
29 independent "Wenlock Olympian Class" was formed to promote "structure
30 physical exercise and education." Brookes also believed that physical education
31 would help defend the nation with a prepared youth to protect it, and he would
32 later campaign for compulsory classes in the national schools. Previously, he had
33 opened the Much Wenlock National School to encourage the benefits of physical
34 education for children.

Figure 6. *In front of the Brookes' house looking up Wilmore Street toward the town center, Corn Exchange Building, and local Olympic Museum. On the left is the Guild House, where Brookes' magistrate chair (see Figure 1) can still be viewed in its impressive Council Chamber. Brookes was a Justice of the Peace, and Commissioner for Roads and Taxes. He was also heavily involved in the renovation of the Council Chamber.*



Figure 7. *“The Corn Exchange was built in 1852 as a Public Reading Room and Library with a Librarian’s residence and a small museum. Provision was made in the open space beneath for a free Corn Market. It was in this building that William Penny Brookes established the Wenlock Olympian Society. From here he spread the message of the benefits of physical exercise and promoted the revival of the Olympic Games far and wide.” The WOS Archive is located on the second floor of the building.*



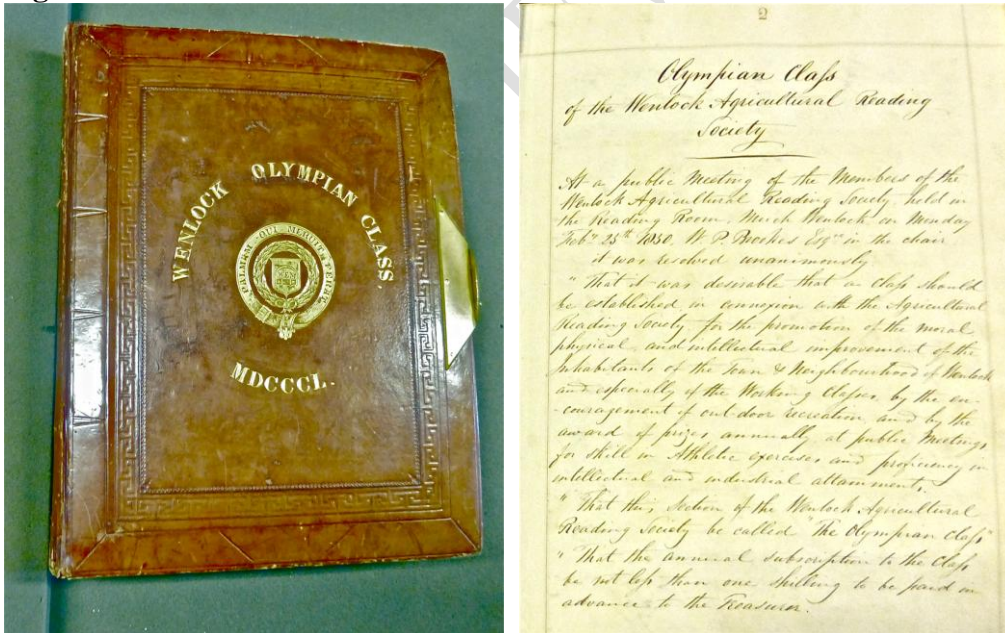
Brookes' intention to promote education through his proposed “Olympian Games” does not require much inquiry because it is clearly stated in the first few lines of the charter that lead to the creation of the Wenlock Olympian Society. It states, quite simply, “That it was desirable that a class should be established in connection with the Agricultural Reading Society for...” the promotion of the

moral, physical and intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of the town & neighborhood of Wenlock and especially the working classes, by the encouragement of out-door recreation, and by the award of prizes annually at public meetings for skill in athletic exercise and proficiency in intellectual and industrial attainments.

Both the finely bound leather Volumes I (1850-1876) and II (1877-1895) of the *Minute Books of the Wenlock Olympian Society* (WOS), and the original handwritten page containing the passage above may be viewed in the Society Archives at Much Wenlock. Images of Volume I, and Brookes' handwritten passage (Figures 8 and 9) quoted above are included below.

The contents of these two historic volumes not only demonstrate Dr. Brookes' pioneering educational philosophy and show him to be among the first to recognize the principles underlying the modern discipline of Physical Education to promote health and sport 150 years ago in England, but they also have had a profound impact in recent years on the actual story of the development of the modern Olympic Games. They clearly demonstrate that Brookes' educational ideas spread from England to inspire the eventual success of the modern Olympic movement, usually attributed to Baron Pierre de Coubertin of France.

Figures 8 and 9.



If one is to start his or her journey at Much Wenlock and view the very places Dr. William Penny Brookes frequented to inspire his educational reforms and help set the foundation for the revival of the Modern Olympic Games, the best place to begin is the center of town at the clock. Several places of interest have already

been mentioned, including his home, the Corn Exchange, and the Guildhall (seen in the background in Figure 10) below. The modern museum contains the most pertinent exhibits and displays, including original medals from the early Wenlock Olympian Games. (I have contributed materials from the 1948 London Olympics to the Museum.) Also, inside is the famous Much Wenlock Pentathlon Medal, first awarded in 1868, with the major image of the winged figure of Nike, Greek Goddess of Victory, that would inspire the Goddess' appearance on the medals of the first Modern Olympic Games at Athens in 1896 and grace the medals of all Olympic Games since.

Figure 10.



Figure 11. *The Much Wenlock Museum*



1 **Figure 12.** *The Much Wenlock Pentathlon Medal as displayed at the British*
 2 *Museum In London during the 2012 London Olympic Games.*



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 5 During the preliminaries to the 2012 Olympic Games in London, Dr. Brookes
 6 and Much Wenlock attracted worldwide attention, and, as seen below, the
 7 Olympic Torch Run was routed through the town and passed in front of Brookes'
 8 house-- with Chris Cannon as the venerable Doctor, symbolically giving a nod of
 9 recognition to the London torch in celebration of the Modern Olympic Games he
 10 helped to begin. Much of the pomp and celebration created by Brookes for his
 11 Olympian Games found its way into the Modern Olympics, and the grandest of the
 12 celebrations took place at Linden Field, shown below in both modern and early
 13 guise, some 1300 meters from the center of town. Here most of the athletic
 14 competitions once took place, and on the way to the Field today, it is almost
 15 inevitable that even when the Annual Modern Wenlock Games are not being held,
 16 one will encounter local dignitaries of the WOS, Wenlock Town Officials crossing
 17 the streets or getting out of their vehicle-- and sometimes well-known athletes. It
 18 seems that almost everyone is involved in the celebration of Much Wenlock, the
 19 roots of their Olympic tradition, and Dr. William Penny Brookes.

1 **Figure 13.** *The 2012 London Olympic torch passing through Much Wenlock in*
2 *front of the home of William Penny Brookes on May 30, 2012. Chris Cannon,*
3 *Wenlock Olympian Society Archivist (and now also Vice-President), portraying*
4 *Dr. Brookes, salutes it in top hat from the house's doorway. By permission. Much*
5 *Wenlock Olympian Society.*



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8 **Figure 14.** *Linden Field as it appears today. It was here that Dr. Brookes'*
9 *Olympian Games took place.*

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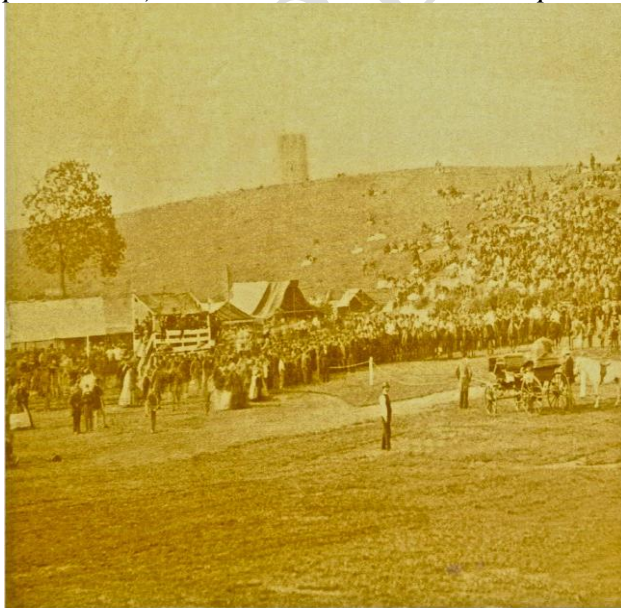


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Figure 15. Celebration of the Wenlock Olympian Games at Linden Field in June, 1867. This is reputedly the oldest photo of a sports gathering. The tower on the hill in the background is still visible at the far back of the previous modern view of the Field in Figure 14. By permission. Much Wenlock Olympian Society.



Figures 16 and 17. Above: *The 1887 Procession of the Wenlock Olympian Games of that year. Dr. Brookes appears center right in the top hat and medals. The Herald, in Tudor costume, is on the white horse in the center. Such pomp and circumstance would influence Ceremonies at later Modern Olympic Games (By permission).* **Below:** *The now tree-lined processional lane, as it appears today.*





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By October 1890, Dr. Brookes' Wenlock Olympian Games had attracted the attention of a young Frenchman named Baron Pierre de Coubertin, generally acknowledged as the founder of the Modern Olympic Games. It is now known, however, that without Brookes' influence upon Coubertin, it is very likely that the same Olympic Games would not have been revived at all— or at least in the form they did. Much of what eventually went into resurrecting the Ancient Olympic Games and turning them into a modern sports phenomenon was the result of William Penny's Brookes' earlier educational and athletic efforts, which, at age 81, he gladly and unselfishly passed on to the twenty-seven year old Coubertin, who initially gave due credit to his older mentor in England when he wrote in tribute to Brookes just after his death in December, 1895 death, "If the Olympic Games that Modern Greece has not yet been able to revive still survives today, it is due, not to a Greek, but to Dr. William Penny Brookes."

Unfortunately, the more the success of the revived Olympic Games, first celebrated at Athens in April, 1896, grew and flourished, the more Coubertin relegated his debt to Brookes to the background— until it was virtually forgotten. It was fully revived in the 1990s, chiefly by the work of David Young, confirmed by the IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch on a visit to Much Wenlock in 1994, and celebrated during the 2012 London Olympic Games.

In 1890, however, Coubertin traveled to England and fully immersed himself in the local glory of Brookes' Much Wenlock Games. The two shared their ideas at the Raven Hotel (Figures 18 and 19). Much that took place in their discussions became a part of the modern Olympic Games.

1 **Figures 18 and 19.** *The exterior and interior of the Raven Hotel, the Much*
2 *Wenlock center for Coubertin's and Brookes' discussions about the Olympics'*
3 *future.*

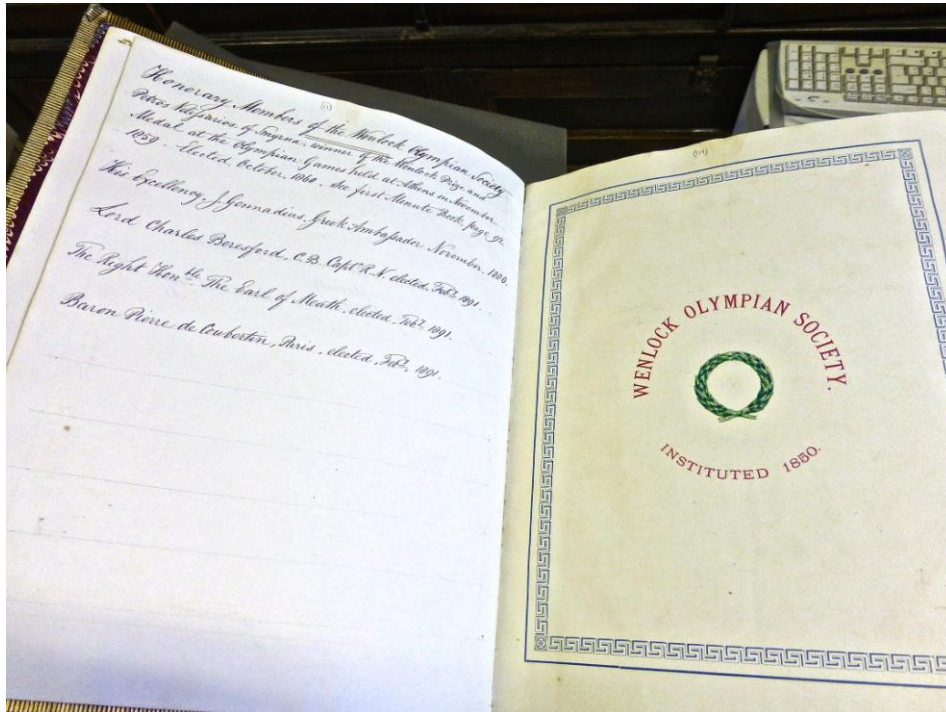


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6 **Figure 20.** *The tree, as it now stands, adjoining Linden Field that was planted by*
7 *Pierre de Coubertin in commemoration of his visit to Much Wenlock and*
8 *observation of the the Olympian Games in 1890.*
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Figure 21. The notation in the second Minute Book of the Wenlock Olympian Society that “Baron Pierre de Coubertin, Paris,” had been elected an “Honorary Member of the Wenlock Olympian Society, in February, 1891. The entry is the last one on the page. It was original documentation like this and other dated correspondence between Brookes and Coubertin that finally convinced the International Olympic Committee that Brookes had, indeed, preceded Coubertin as, in former IOC President’s Samarach’s own words, “the founder of the Modern Olympic Games.”



The Baron was so impressed that he offered a medal, probably the only personal award ever given in his name, as a prize at the following year’s Wenlock Games.²

²The medal is from Coubertin’s Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques, and it is engraved, “Presented by Baron Pierre de Coubertin Paris.” When IOC President, Juan Antonio Samaranch, visited Much Wenlock in 1994, the original medal won by Edward Marston Farmer at the 1891 Much Wenlock Games was presented to the Wenlock Olympian Society by his ninety-two-year-old daughter, Miss Joyce Farmer. The medal (Figure 22) is shown below.

1 Long before Coubertin's visit, however, Dr. Brookes was already having to
2 deal with the large crowds coming to his Wenlock Olympian Games. As was
3 typical, Brookes led the way in trying to convince the major British railway
4 companies to extend a line to the small community. He finally ended up forming
5 his own Wenlock and Severn Junction Railway Company, and completed a line in
6 time for the 1861 Wenlock Games. There had been no time for an official
7 inspection, but "Brookes was permitted to run special trains to carry the many
8 competitors and spectators to the Games— at their own risk. It was reported that,
9 'a great concourse' of spectators arrived in the town." It was on this line (which
10 no longer exists) and at the station that was built later, that Baron Peierre de
11 Coubertin first arrived at Much Wenlock to see firsthand a modern Olympian
12 experience. The pouring rain at the time apparently did not dampen the Baron's
13 spirits— or Brookes', either. The visit was a complete success.
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1 **Figure 23.** *The rail station in its heyday, a backdrop for a football team that had come to*
2 *compete at the Wenlock Olympian Games in the 1860s. By permission.*
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6 While the station building still stands today (see below), the railway line has long
7 since disappeared. The closest rail service is now some miles away at Telford, England,
8 requiring visitors to arrange other transportation to reach Much Wenlock.
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11 Photo by Howard Horsley © 2004.
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1 By the time of Coubertin's visit in 1890, Brookes was the foremost advocate
 2 of the revival of the Olympic Games— at least outside of Greece. Internationally,
 3 no one was more adamant, and Coubertin, born in 1863, was not a serious player
 4 at the time. Brookes' interests had turned more national, putting his initially local
 5 educational and athletic ideas into action to form the British Olympic Committee
 6 and place physical education in the national school curriculum. In 1860, he
 7 reproduced an interesting old passage taken from Roger Ascham, tutor to Queen
 8 Elizabeth I, that squared nicely with his own modernist views about education in
 9 sport as the great equalizer among classes, promoter of companionship, unifier of
 10 country—and guarantor of its strength-- on his public announcement for the
 11 Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Wenlock Olympian Games in 1860. Ascham had
 12 become known as "The Schoolmaster," because in 1570 he had written a work by
 13 that name on teaching and learning, starting with children. It was so well known
 14 that Ascham and the title of the work became synonymous.

15 The one particular passage in "The Schoolmaster" that attracted Brookes'
 16 attention was "to vault lustily, to run, to leap, to wrestle, to swim," are "very
 17 *necessary* for a courtly gentleman to use." To discover such a statement at so
 18 early a date is probably as surprising to us as it was to Brookes in his day, because
 19 all these physical activities presage modern Olympic events— and were
 20 sanctioned by gentlemen, no less. Had not contemporary Christian society come
 21 to frown on such pagan Greek rites? Brookes liked the passage so much that he
 22 incorporated it into the philosophy of his Olympian Class. Also, from the start,
 23 pageantry was an integral part of Brookes' Olympian celebrations, and,
 24 considering his admiration for Ascham's pedagogical comments about sport in
 25 Elizabethan times, it should come as no surprise that Brookes included a Herald
 26 dressed in Tudor costume (Figure 16) at his Games.

27 In the meantime, Brookes had heard about plans for the newly revived Greek
 28 Olympics to be held at Athens in 1859, and he endeavored to connect them with
 29 his own efforts in England by offering a Wenlock Prize of £10— ultimately
 30 awarded to the winner of the distance race (*dolichos*) at those Games. This
 31 apparently was Brookes' initial contact with the Greeks, and these 1859 Games
 32 were pivotal in Olympic history because they were where the ideas, educational
 33 and otherwise, of both he and Greece's strongest advocate for the revival of the
 34 Olympics, Panagiotis Soutsos, first came together.

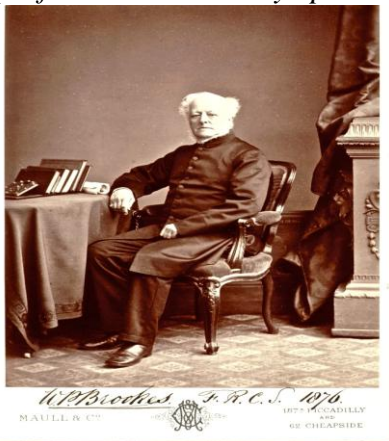
35 The Greek Games had a profound effect on Brookes, who afterwards held an
 36 enlarged, countywide, "Shropshire Olympian Games" in 1860 (which would
 37 subsequently rotate among the larger towns). They became more Greek— both
 38 ancient and modern— in concept; more international; and more elevated
 39 intellectually with poetry, essay, and literary contests featured. To concentrate on
 40 his now recharged Olympic interests and develop them further, Brookes divorced
 41 the Wenlock Olympian Class completely from its parent Agricultural Reading
 42 Society and renamed it the "Wenlock Olympian Society" (WOS). His
 43 involvement from England with the nascent Athenian Olympics, even though open

only to Greeks, also first colored the latter with an unanticipated international flavor.

Brookes' tireless efforts to widen the influence of his Shropshire Olympian Games ultimately helped form the National Olympian Association (NOA) at Liverpool in 1865. At key passage in its charter about education and the Olympics reads that besides athletics, the Association "will also pay homage to Mental Excellence, by electing from time to time as honorary members, persons who have distinguished themselves in Literature, Art or Science, or have proved themselves benefactors to mankind." The NOA, the parent of today's British National Olympic Committee, held its first successful "Olympics" at the Crystal Palace at London 1866, and Dr. Brookes was president of the organizing committee.

After a promising beginning, however, the NOA quickly met resistance. There remained opposition about associating the revived Games with ancient Greek ritual and, for Christians, a "false god," Zeus— a criticism that had also been raised by those who objected to the name "Olympian Class" or "Olympics" at Brookes' First Shropshire Olympics. This was probably the major reason why he decided to separate the Wenlock Olympian Society from the Agricultural Reading Society since such criticism did not abate. However, most of the opposition was secular in form and now came from rival athletic clubs in the more urban southern part of Britain, including London, where the NOA, viewed as an interloper, shockingly held its first Olympics. The main issue used to undermine the NOA's growing influence was "class-exclusive amateurism." The Amateur Athletic Club (AAC), later the Amateur Athletic Association, had been quickly formed to counter the NOA, and used its elitist ideas about amateurism versus professional as an opposition platform. It pre-empted the NOA's Olympics with an athletic meet of its own, specifically stressing the amateur-elitist view point and directing its "gentlemen athletes" to boycott the NOA Olympics (perhaps qualifying as the first "Olympic boycott").

Figure 24. *Brookes at the time of the raging controversy of amateurism vs. professional in the Olympic movement. By permission.*



1 Consequently, although National Olympics had taken place in England, the
2 once promising Olympic movement now became embroiled in a class controversy
3 over who should be allowed to compete— and this same controversy had moved
4 to Greece in 1870 and similarly undermined Olympic progress there after the
5 successful Greek Olympic Games of that same year. Ironically, the traditional
6 educated elite in both Great Britain and Greece was doing all it could to derail a
7 movement that Brookes had helped to create to promote education.

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9 **Figure 25.** *Dr. William Penny Brookes late in life. By permission.*



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12 Nonetheless, Brookes continued his Olympic efforts in England and became
13 more involved with the Greeks, urging an international Olympic festival to be held
14 in Athens in the near future. Unfortunately, he did not live to see it happen
15 although he knew before his death in December, 1895, that the first International
16 Modern Olympic Games would indeed be held at Athens, as he wished, in 1896,
17 and that the influence he and his Much Wenlock Olympian Games had on Pierre
18 de Coubertin had helped bring those first international Modern Olympic Games to
19 fruition.

Figure 26. *Dr. Brookes' (family) gravesite, as it appears today near Holy Trinity Church—and not far from the house where Brookes grew up and lived at Much Wenlock.*



Aside from his Olympics contribution, which would eventually bear rewards he could not possibly have imagined, William Penny Brookes' most enduring and beneficial legacy purely for the advancement of education was his effort to introduce physical education into the curriculum of British national schools as a "regular branch of education."

Figure 27. *Dr. William Penny Brookes commemorative plaque inside Holy Trinity Church at Much Wenlock.*



We may succinctly sum up our own special tour by stating : Dr. Brookes and Much Wenlock transcend the bounds of anything ordinary-- both for modern educators and the Olympic Games.

Figure 28. *The tradition continued: A Wenlock Olympian Games program from 1913, during the 63rd Annual Festival—Games which are still held yearly in July. By permission.*



All photos, unless otherwise indicated, are by the author.

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- See, also, for a variety of information, www.wenlock-olympian-society.org.uk. I am informed by Chris Cannon, Archivist and Vice President, that a new website placing the Wenlock Olympian Society (WOS) archive on-line is just being completed.