

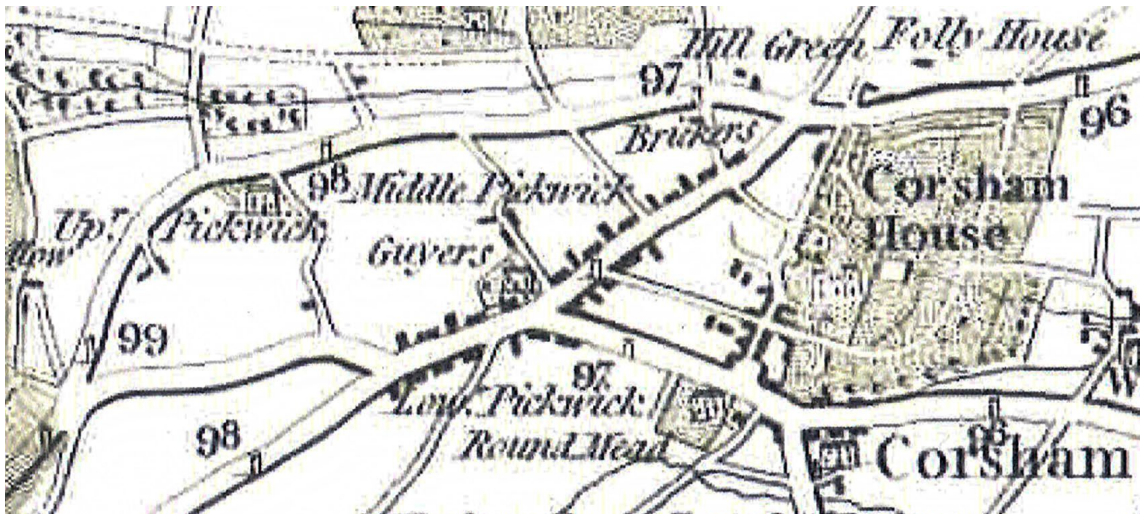
# PANEL 1

## Pickwick, some aspects of life and times ~ an exhibition at Corsham Library

### Where and what it is



Pickwick is in Wiltshire [above, left] and includes Upper, Middle [now known as Middlewick] and Lower Pickwick ~ can you spot them on the map below of 1792? There are a number of other historic settlements in the Corsham area including Neston, Gastard, Easton and Westrop [above, right]. Bath city is some ten miles away.



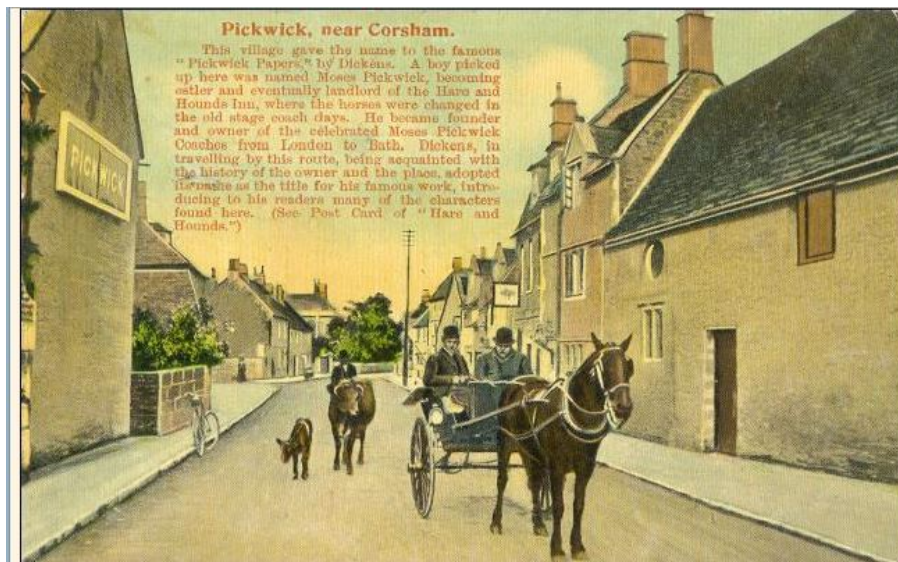
Pickwick is one of a number of small villages on the edge of Corsham. It was originally a separate settlement from Corsham although both have their origins in the Anglo-Saxon period, perhaps as early as 800-900. The name 'Pickwick' comes from the Anglo-Saxon words 'pic' meaning a peak or pointed hill and 'wic' meaning a village. In 1273, a man called *William de Pickwicke* is recorded on an official Wiltshire document.

# PANEL 2

## An Introduction



Pickwick has many distinctive buildings including one known as The Roundhouse [above] which lies just west of the Hare and Hounds pub and projects out into the A4 Bath Road. It is shown on a Corsham map of 1839 as a turnpike house, also known as a toll house [see panel 6]. Later, it was a sweetshop - The Pepperpot - used by children who attended the nearby Pickwick School [1858-1922].



**Pickwick and Charles Dickens 1911**

**Description:**

Delightful animated view of the heart of Pickwick. This is a colour version (hand painted) of Ref: PW022). The history of Pickwick with Dicken's Pickwick Papers is provided on this postcard from 1911. The Ostler's house is the building on the right where Moses Pickwick changed the coach horses. The hooks for the PICKWICK sign (left) are still there!

**Ref:** PW021

**Location:** Pickwick

**Date:** 23-09-1911

Much is known about Pickwick from historical documents, maps, its buildings and even items such as postcards [see above].

## PANEL 3

### The oldest building?



**Above:** the front of Pickwick Manor as seen from the A4 Bath Road. Parts of the structure date from 1300-1400, making it the oldest known building in Pickwick. However, it was originally called Pickwick Farm and included large barns and extensive lands but it was never a formal manor.

**Below:** an aerial view of Pickwick Manor taken by a drone [A4 Bath Road is bottom left]: the main house is in the centre and two barns can be seen to the right



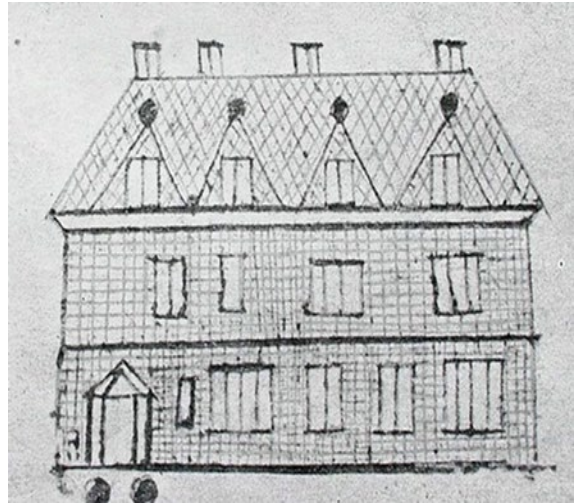
## PANEL 4

### Some more Pickwick buildings

**Opposite:** a sketch of Guyers House as it was about 1700.

**Below, left:** No. 23 Pickwick [Pickwick End], a stylish early 1800s gentleman's town house in the country.

**Below, right:** No. 37 Middlewick Lane with datestone inscribed L H 1745; the other datestones in Pickwick are dated 1707 (No. 45 Pickwick), 1730 (No. 24), 1739 (Nos. 8-10).

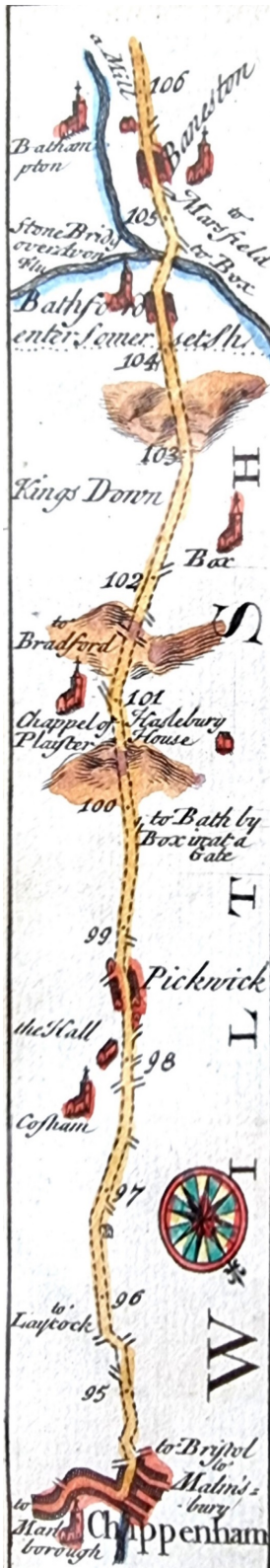


A terrace of 1700s buildings, from right to left, Nos. 25-31. Note the variety of doorhoods which were sometimes added as a status symbol in this period. The house on the far right hand side has been painted. In living memory, Pickwick was called the ochre village, most of the buildings being painted with ochre-coloured limewash to protect them.



# PANEL 5

## London to Bath road coaches and turnpikes



**Above:** a print of the London to Bath coach with paying passengers having arrived in Bath.

**Opposite, left:** part of a map of the road from London to Bath and Wells showing Pickwick on both sides of the road [now the A4] and Cosham off to the south. By J Owen & E Bowen, after J Ogilby, 1670s.

**Below, left:** the Pickwick toll house facing the A4 Bath Road.

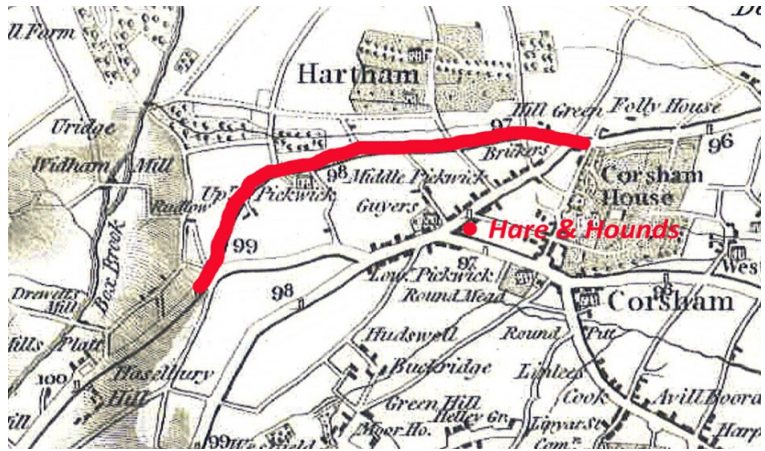
**Below, right:** an image of a toll house with a coach passing through the left-hand gate and sheep being driven through the right-hand gate. Turnpike acts were passed by governments in the 1700-1800s in order to provide better roads. Turnpike trusts were set up and tolls [fees] were collected at the gates to pay for buying land and road improvements. Toll collectors sometimes lived in the toll houses or extensions, usually at the back. Generally, toll houses were sold off in the 1880s when the turnpikes were closed: many were demolished but several hundred have survived being kept as homes or for other uses.



# PANEL 6

## The new Bath road

In 1657 the first stagecoach travelled the turnpike road from London to Bath, bypassing Pickwick on its route behind the Cross Keys, Hartham Church and Hills Green to the top of Box Hill and out to Bath via Chapel Plaister and Kingsdown.



In 1756 a new direct route (bypassing Kingsdown) was established by the Corsham Brickers Barn Trust diverting at the top of Box Hill (along the current A4 route) and down Box Hill). In the early 1800s the route from Cross Keys towards Bath was diverted through the village of Pickwick [coloured blue]. In 1870 the Corsham Trust, an amalgamation of the Brickers Barn Trust (i.e. Cross Keys and the Blue Vein Trust i.e. Kingsdown turnpike roads) was wound up. The Toll Houses at Pickwick and Kingsdown were sold for £50.

Travellers on the road were in danger of encountering a highwayman such as Thomas Boulter, known as the Flying Highwayman of Wiltshire, who preyed on roads in the Corsham area. His description is memorable:

*His very appearance was said to be terrifying: he was described as a tall, swarthy man, with a thick scar on his cheek, the result of a bullet wound which had also torn skin off his forehead and burned his left eye!*

### Opposite right:

A depiction of Boulter the highwayman on his horse, Black Bess, escaping from pursuers by jumping over a turnpike gate with a toll collector looking on from his tollhouse.



# PANEL 7

## Pubs and breweries

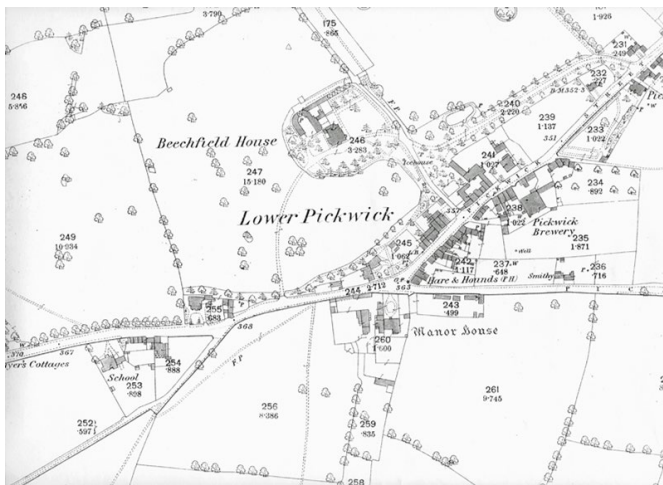
There were a number of pubs in Pickwick by the 1800s including the Hare and Hounds [below, top] and The Spread Eagle [which used to serve as a temporary mortuary and much later was renamed The Two Pigs ~ bottom right] and at least two breweries of which the best known was the Pickwick Brewery [middle photo - part of the distinctive arcaded wall facing Bath Road].

In his novel *Death and Mr Pickwick* (2015), Stephen Jarvis writes ~

*One learns next that the folk of Pickwick lived by the larger town of Corsham, but were not of Corsham. Some distinguished their background by whether they were of Upper Pickwick, Middle Pickwick or Lower Pickwick. Amongst the village's population in the early nineteenth century were quarrymen and labourers. There was also a Jacobean manor, as well as two public houses, a few feet apart. From estimated figures of alcohol consumed, the Pickwickians – whether Upper, Middle or Lower – drank the produce of the local Pickwick Brewery as if St. Boniface himself had blessed it.*



**Below:** a map of Pickwick about 1880 ~ note the Hare & hounds [bottom left] and the Smithy to the right of it; Pickwick Brewery above and the stretch of the A4 Bath Road which was then called Pickwick Street.



## PANEL 8

### Thomas Bullock, clockmaker

Thomas Bullock was a clockmaker who, in 1848, opened a shop in Pickwick Road, near Corsham High Street. Bullock made the fine, large clock that is still on the outside wall of the Masonic Hall [see below] and also a grandfather clock that is now in a house in Pickwick ~ the clock face is inscribed, *Thos. Bullock Corsham.*



**Right:** Thos. Bullock, Corsham, grandfather clock in No. 12 Pickwick.

**Above, left:** a wherry at sea.

**Above, right:** a pastoral scene.

The grandfather clock is beautifully painted ~ opposite, is a 'Moon' face which featured on many clocks of the period. As the clock goes through its monthly cycle and the 'Moon' moves out of view in its place there is a lovely pastoral scene featuring two figures in the foreground, a church and settlement in the distance; which is followed by a sea scene showing a wherry, a type of sailing barge with large sails.



**Above:** the Thos. Bullock, Corsham, clock in the frontage wall of what is now the Masonic Hall.





# PANEL 9

## Thriving Pickwick



Traditionally, the main occupations of Pickwick people were farming and quarrying. But from the 1930s, Pickwick was thriving, with a range of new facilities and businesses: church, shop, motel, dairy and motor garage.

**Opposite, left:** it even had a shop, Pickwick Stores, No. 34.

**Opposite, right:** Pickwick District School was built in 1848 and closed in 1922. It was used as a glove factory during the 1930s, and later a gas mask factory during WWII. It was purchased and converted into St. Patrick's Catholic Church, opening in 1945.



**Opposite:** In the 1960s, *The Park Lane Motel* was built next to the Catholic Church! It was later renamed *The Stagecoach Motel* and not only did it have a bar and restaurant, it also organised discos and had a reputation as a lively place.

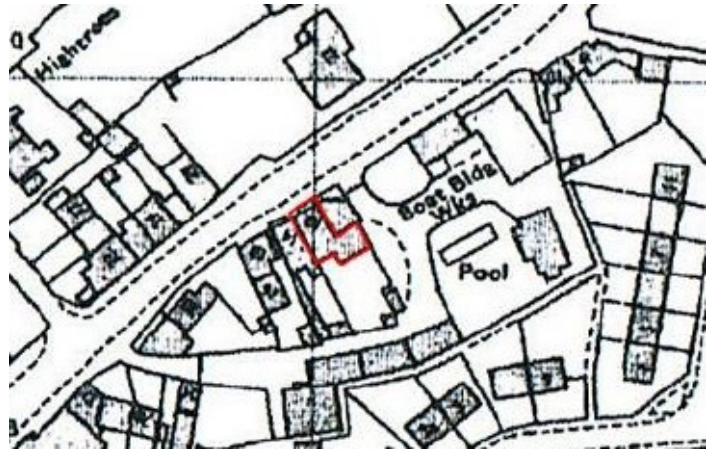
**Opposite:** Joan Webb leading a milk dray in Pickwick dairy yard. She took over *The Corsham Dairy* on the death of her brother, James Batley, in 1948. He had moved the dairy to the Priory Farmhouse site in on the corner of Priory Street and Bath Road. By the mid-1990s the dairy site was closed and later re-developed into Dairy Mews.



# PANEL 10

## Canoes and motors

It's little known that in the 1960s there was an internationally successful small boats building-works in what is now Lancefield Place, next to No.12 Pickwick. It was called *Moonraker Canoes*: 'moonraker' after the famous Wiltshire folk story about smuggling. The works were established by William Jenkins and Robert Lancefield who converted parts of the former Pickwick Brewery into workshops and created a new one and an artificial pool for testing the boats.



**Above:** 1970s map noting the site of the Moonraker Canoes boat building works and the testing pool



**Above, left:** the new *Moonraker Canoes* boat building workshop.



**Above, right:** the testing pool which locals were allowed to swim in.

**Opposite:** A motor garage has been providing a service on the Bath Road, Pickwick, since the 1920s. Originally, it was operated by Mr. W. Sperring [on the right] and is now Pickwick Motor Works.



# PANEL 11

## Expansion and the impact of World War II

In 1942, Pickwick Quarry in the Copenacre area [on the western edge of Pickwick] was opened up underground as the Royal Naval Stores Department. By the 1960s [opposite right] it was one of the largest government establishments in the country, employing some

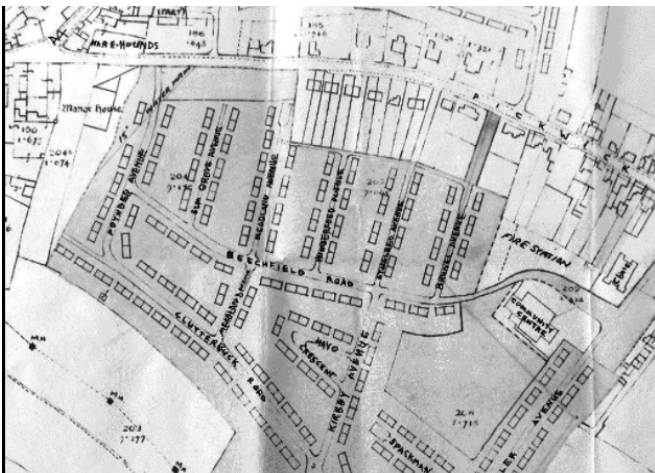


1700 people both above and below ground. In July 1991, the underground facilities were sealed and the land above ground put up for sale. Today the site is occupied by a new housing estate, Pickwick Court.

On the night of the 26th August 1942 the 90-year-old Bath Academy of Art [BAA] at Green Park was destroyed by German bombing. Some time later it was re-established in various temporary premises including Beechfield Estate [see Panel 13] where numerous huts and facilities were erected [opposite right].



1986 saw a merger between the BAA and Bath College of Higher Education and a move back into premises in Bath, the two eventually becoming Bath Spa University. Beechfield Estate site fell into disrepair and was sold for development in the early 1990s. The original house and stables were restored and housing in Academy Drive was constructed.



In the 1940s, Corsham had several prefab and bungalow estates where thousands of people lived. Prefabs [short for pre-fabricated structures] came in ready made sections, walls etc. and so were quickly and cheaply erected. Some were put up pre-war for immigrant war workers.

### Opposite, left:'

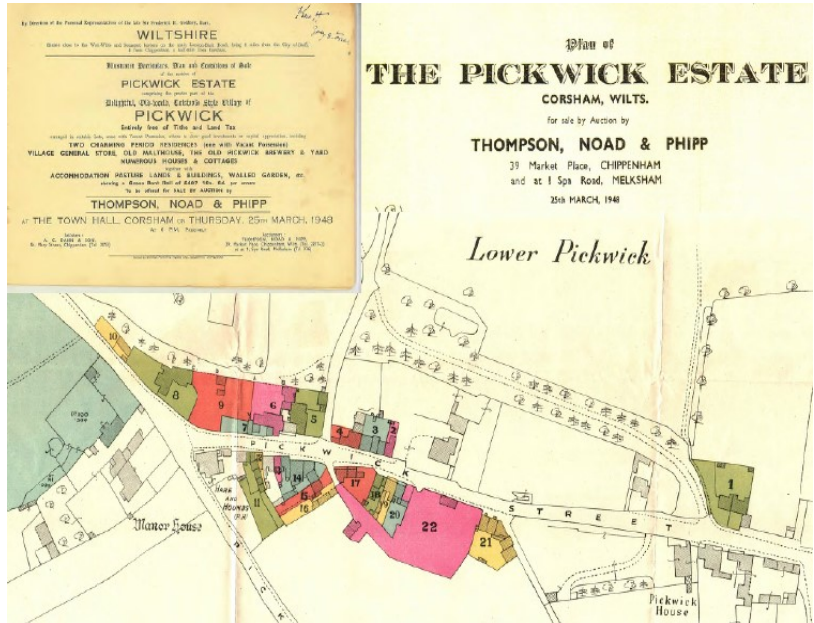
A plan of the Married Quarters 1 bungalow site south of Pickwick Road. In these various ways, the war radically changed Corsham.

# PANEL 12

## The Pickwick Estate

Until 1948 many of the houses in Pickwick were part of the Pickwick Estate that had been owned by Sir Frederick Hastings Goldney formerly of Beechfield Estate. The 26 properties – believed to have been owned by the family since 1857 - were auctioned in 1948 and many were bought by the tenants.

Sir Frederick Hastings Goldney (1845–1940.) who was the 3rd Baronet was a landowner, Freemason and author of *The History of Freemasonry in Wiltshire* (1880). He later became Mayor of Chippenham, High Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1908, and Justice of the Peace for Wiltshire and Surrey. He lived at both Beechfield House and in Camberley, Surrey.



**Above:** the auction notice and plan of the estate buildings.



**Opposite, left:** aerial view of Beechfield House, the u-shaped stables block and other ancillary buildings.

Originally, the official formal entrance was a tree-lined avenue which stood opposite the junction with Priory Street, while the tradesman's entrance was off Middlewick Lane.

# PANEL 13

## Pickwick, changing but timeless



**Opposite left:** A stretch of the A4 Bath Road in 1938 that used to be known as Pickwick Street [marked on map below]: on the left is Pickwick Stores, the Spreadeagle PH and, at the top, the Hare and Hounds pub. All the buildings still exist although some have had changes.

**Opposite right:** The same view as above in 2019



By 1955, building 'infill' had brought Corsham right up to Pickwick on the east side. New housing had been built to replace the prefabs. After 1955 and until now there was massive redevelopment to the south and south-west.

**Opposite right:** Corsham Regis Academy Primary built in 1943 and rebuilt in 1963 [marked on map above]. Corsham has long had connections with royalty and has been known as Corsham Regis and Regina meaning, respectively, Royal and Queen.



*With thanks to Catherine Maloney, Tony Clark and Julian Carosi*

# PANEL 14

## Some Pickwick People

Dr Sydney **Alford** OBE [1935 - 2021] ~ started his own company in 1985, Alford Technologies Limited, a world-leading provider of explosive engineering and explosive charge technology. In 2015 he was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to explosive ordnance and countering the threat from Improvised Explosive Devices [IEDs].

Sir Harold **Brakspear** [1870 - 1934] ~ an English restoration architect and archaeologist. He lived in Corsham and Pickwick and restored a number of historic and notable buildings in the area, including Bath Abbey, St. Cyric's Church, Lacock, Hazelbury Manor and Great Chalfield Manor.

Camilla **Parker-Bowles**, now Duchess of Cornwall and married to Prince Charles, once lived in Middlewick House.

Thomas **Bullock** [1795 – 1851] ~ a clockmaker who, in 1848, opened a shop in Pickwick Road, near the High Street. Bullock made the fine, large clock that is still on the outside wall of the Masonic Hall and also a grandfather clock that is now in No. 12 Pickwick ~ the clock face is inscribed, *Thos. Bullock Corsham*.

William and Robert **Hulbert** ~ owners of Pickwick Brewery [1804-43]. A local family, the Hulberts' were based in Corsham from the time of Richard Hulbert's baptism in 1584. The family's most successful role in the life of the local community was establishing a brewery next to No. 12 Pickwick.

John **Fowler** [1826 - 1864] ~ attended a Quaker school in Pickwick and became world famous for his 'agricultural' steam engines.

Moses **Pickwick** [1694 - 1762] ~ a new born baby found abandoned in Pickwick about 1694 was given this name. He became a coach proprietor in Bath and **Charles Dickens** used the name for his famous book *Pickwick Papers*.

Reverend James **Pycroft** [1813 – 1895] ~ lived in Guyers House and famous for 'coining' the phrase "that's not cricket!"

Septimus **Kinneir** [1871 - 1928] ~ England international cricket player in 1911 lived at No.12 Pickwick. Inevitably, given his Christian name, he was seventh of the children in a family of thirteen. Henry Kinneir, his father, and the family lived in Pickwick between 1869 and 1880. Henry worked for Pickwick Brewery [adjoining 12 Pickwick] as a commercial traveller.

Nick **Mason** [1944 – present] ~ musician and drummer with the rock band Pink Floyd, lives in Middlewick House. Awarded a CBE in 2019 for a career in music spanning five decades.

# PANEL 15

## A selection of Pickwick knockers



**Please take a print of this collage and a trail leaflet to enter a competition and win a prize!**