

BENETFINK AND Co. CHALLENGE TROPHY

First raced for: 1893

Last raced for: Current trophy

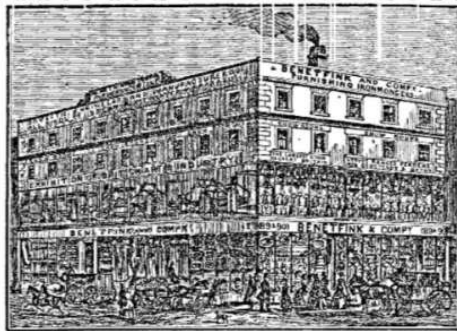
1893	Men's One Mile Team Time Trial Championship
1894	Men's One Mile Time Trial Championship (not held 1895-1905)
1906-1908	Men's One and Half Mile Championship
1909-1970	Men's One Mile Championship (not held 1915-1920, 1940-1945)
1971-1976	Men's 1500m Championship (not held 1972)
1977-1987	Men's 5000m Championship
1988-2003	Men's 1500m Championship
2004-Current	Men's 1000m Championship (not held 2020 – Covid 19)

Before we get to the trophy itself, it is worth noting a bit of history surrounding the name Benetfink and how it came about as the two are inexorably linked.

The St. Benet Fink church on Old Broad Street in Broadgate derived its name from St. Benedict (the original name of the church) and Robert Finke (Finch) who rebuilt the church some time in the 1200's. This church was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666 and was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren in 1675. It was on the steps of this later church that an abandoned baby was found by a local citizen. The baby was given the first name of Samuel (probably from the person who found him) and the surname Benetfink, after the church.

Samuel Benetfink went on to create the business Benetfink and Jones in 1844, a furnishings and ironmongers on Cheapside in London. The business quickly expanded and in 1855 became known as Benetfink & Co. occupying no's 89 and 90 on the Cheapside site.

FURNISHING IRONMONGERY.



BEFORE YOU FURNISH YOUR HOUSE YOU WOULD DO WELL
TO INSPECT THE UNRIVALLED STOCK OF

FURNISHING IRONMONGERY

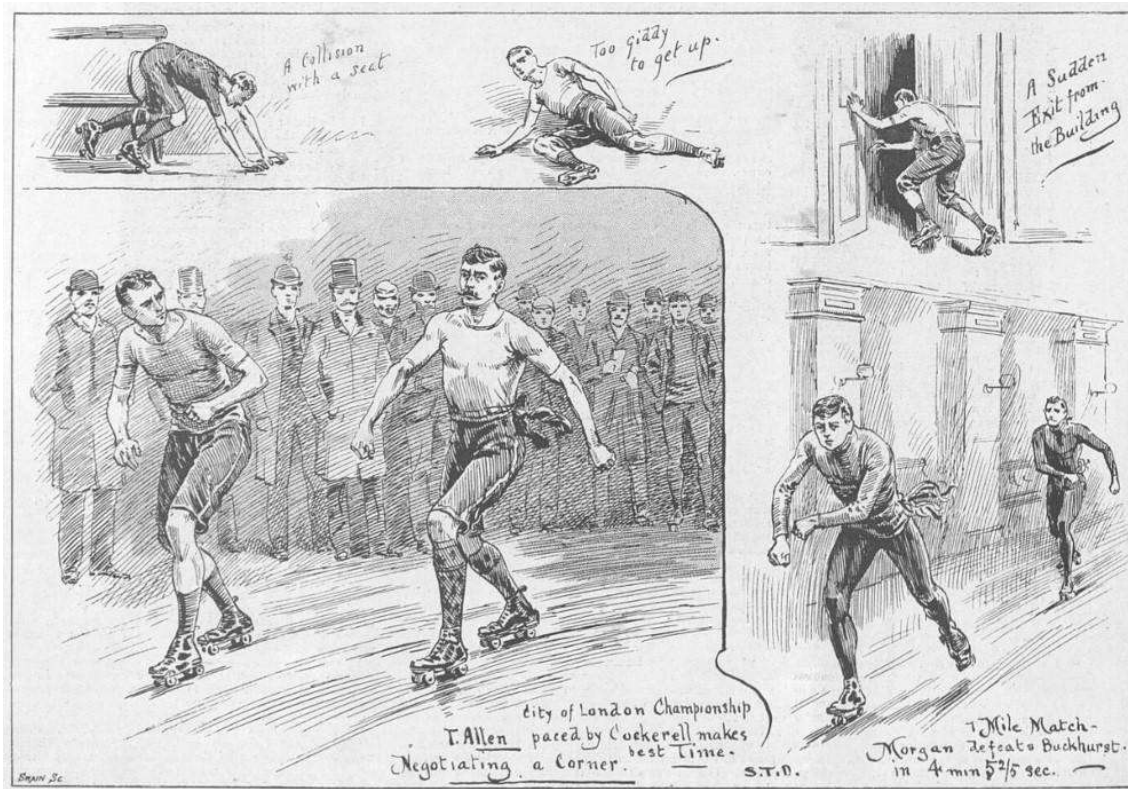
AT THE WAREHOUSES OF

BENETFINK AND COMPANY,

89 & 90, CHEAPSIDE, AND 1, IRONMONGER LANE, LONDON.

On March 24th 1869 Samuel Benetfink died. For the next 25 years the business was run by George Evans who in turn was succeeded by Albert Evans who went into partnership with Ebenezer Skelt. Evans and Skelt instigated departments within Benetfink & Co. devoted to sports, athletics, outfitting, cycle and motor accessories, etc. It was during their tenure in December 1893 that the company was approached to donate a trophy to the newly formed roller speed arm of the National Skating Association (NSA).

The City of London Amateur Athletic Association affiliated to the Metropolitan Branch of the NSA established the competition and asked the Metropolitan Branch to carry out the race. The race was held at the West Brompton Rink and was run as a team event. Each club was represented by five members and raced in pairs over a distance of one mile. Times were taken for each skater and the fastest three times of that team were added together to obtain the aggregate time. The team with the fastest aggregate time was declared the winner. On 29th December 1893 the Ravensbourne club became the first ever recipients of the Benetfink & Co. Challenge Trophy.



THE FIRST AWARDING OF THE BENETFINK CHALLENGE TROPHY – 29TH DECEMBER 1893

This first event was billed as a City of London Championship and invitations were soon sent out to run a second event, but no teams put their names forward so it was decided to hold an individual event instead.

The NSA published times for one mile that they believed were required to achieve gold, silver and bronze standards and invited skaters to conduct speed trials and set up definitive

records. The fastest time was set by Charles J. Wilson of the Wandsworth St. George club at the Wandsworth Rink on 6th February 1894. Wilson's time was only fast enough to achieve the bronze standard set by the NSA but being the fastest skater he was awarded a gold medal and the Benetfink & Co. Challenge Trophy, thus becoming the first individual holder and the first recognised bona fide British Champion.



FIRST INDIVIDUAL BRITISH CHAMPION CHARLES J. WILSON - 6TH FEBRUARY 1894

There would not be another Championship until 1906, some twelve years later. This time the event was a one and half mile race and astonishingly Wilson was once again victorious, retaining the trophy he won back in 1894. He would also win the event in 1907 and 1908 before turning professional.

The distance reverted to one mile in 1910 and remained as such until 1971 when the distance was changed to metric.

Barring breaks for the two world wars (1915-1920 and 1940-1945), 1972 and 2020 (due to Covid 19) the trophy has been awarded every year over varying distances and won by many legends of the sport.

The Benetfink & Co. Challenge Trophy has even been awarded to victors by future kings and is the oldest and probably most prestigious challenge trophy that is currently presented for roller speed skating activities in Great Britain.



THE BENETFINK & Co. CHALLENGE TROPHY

SOME PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS



HARRY O'HAGAN
1910



TOM WILSON
1923
(Presented by Duke of York)



BENNY LEE
1924



JIMMY REED
1930



DENIS HILL
1949



DENIS HILL
1952



LEO EASON
1956



LES WOODLEY
1958



JIM LIPEAT
1959



LES WOODLEY
1961



JOHN FOLLEY
1969



JOHN E. FRY
1970



JOHN E. FRY
1980



ASHLEY HARLOW
1987



CHRIS STAFFORD
2000



DOON YUEN
2004



DOON YUEN
2007



SUTTON ATKINS
2013



BEN COOLE-PROBERT
2016



VINCENT HENRY
2019

SOME INTERESTING FACTS

- The trophy was awarded to the winners of the very first race under the auspices of the National Skating Association – thus being as old as the sport itself as governed nationally.
- Vincent Henry has won the trophy a record TWELVE times
- Sutton Atkins has won the trophy a record SIX times in successive years.
- He has also won the trophy a total of EIGHT times with FOUR different clubs over record period of 21 years – First: 20th June 1992 – Last: 11th August 2013
- Les Woodley would have won it seven times in succession had Jim Lipyeat not beaten him to the title in 1959 on his home track of Herne Bay. The race was extremely close and Woodley continued to believe that it was he who crossed the line first.
- T.Allen from the Ravensbourne club posted the fastest time in 1893 of the team time trial and was awarded a gold medal for his feat.
- The highest number of recorded entries was 78 in 1953.
- Charles J. Wilson was unbeaten from 1894 to 1909 in the competition – i.e. every year he competed - although the competition was not held between 1895 and 1905.
- For the first 80 years of competition the event was held indoors. Not until 1974 did the competition move outdoors. It was held just once more indoors in 1977 at the Granby Halls, Leicester, but has since been held outdoors every year since.
- The youngest winner of the trophy is Ashley Harlow when he won the Senior Men's 5000m Championship at Birmingham Wheels aged 15 years and 194 days on 13th July 1985.
- Alexandra Palace skaters have won the trophy a record SIXTEEN times.
- John Folley and John E. Fry are the only two skaters to have won the trophy at both imperial and metric distances.

CHARACTERISTICS

- Height – 450mm (with base)