NEWSLETTER

NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

SEPTEMBER 2024

Message from our Chairman

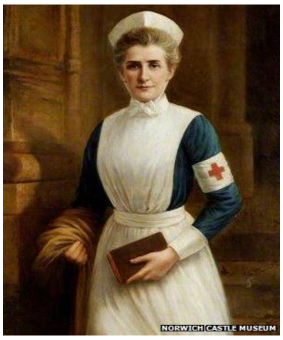
As we say goodbye to another month, I wonder where our summer had gone. What there was of it was very disappointing. September is one of my favourite months, it arrives with a breath of crisp air carrying with it the signs of change. The days grow shorter, but each sunset seems to linger a little longer in the sky, painting the horizon with wonderful autumn colours. I love the sound of the rustling of leaves as they prepare to turn, unfortunately creating a new job for the gardener.
September is the bridge between the golden days of summer and the cozy embrace of autumn. It's a month of transitions, where the warmth of the sun still lingers in the afternoons, but the mornings tell of the coolness to come. The anticipation of donning a favourite sweater or sipping on a warm drink makes each day feel like an invitation to savour the simple pleasures of life.
There's something about September that feels like a fresh start, even more so than January.

Fraser

PUB LUNCH 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

WALWYN ARMS

Much Marcle, HR8 2LY



TUESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

Mike Bottomly

Edith Cavell – Celebrated WWI Nurse

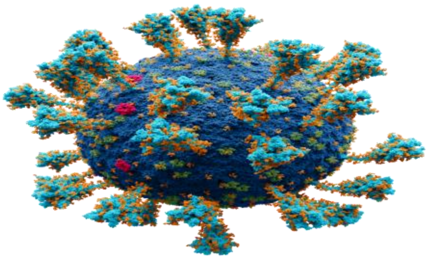
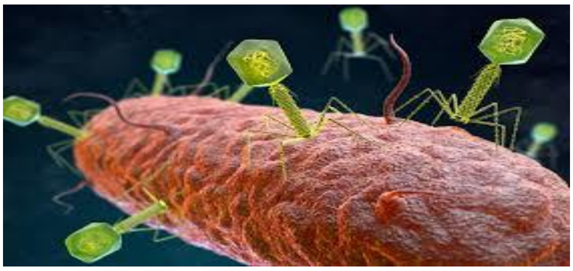
Edith Louisa Cavell (4 December 1865 – 12 October 1915) was a British nurse. She is celebrated for treating wounded soldiers from both sides without discrimination during the First World War and for helping some 200 Allied soldiers escape from German-occupied Belgium. Cavell was arrested, court-martialled under German military law and sentenced to death by firing squad. Despite international pressure for mercy, the German Government refused to commute her sentence and she was shot. The execution received worldwide condemnation and extensive press coverage.

TUESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

DAVID LEES

"JERUSALEM – WHO'S CITY?"

Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine claim Jerusalem as their capital city. Israel maintains its primary governmental institutions there, and the State of Palestine ultimately foresees it as its seat of power. Neither claim is widely recognized internationally.

HOW CAN VIRUSES JUMP BETWEEN SPECIES?

Since COVID -19 in 2020, this question carries an urgency that many people may not have felt before. Just how often do viruses jump between species and how do they do it?

IT'S COMPLICATED!

Given how many unknown viruses are believed to exist (an estimated 1.7 million across mammals and birds alone),they cause problems relatively rarely. A virus that successfully moves from one species to another has made what's called a “Zoonotic Jump”. It's likely that the majority aren't ever identified – either because the attempted jump was ultimately unsuccessful or because the effects of the jump aren't very significant and so the fact that they're due to new (cross-species) viruses isn't ever noticed. Something about the extraordinary “success” rate of COVID-19, both readily transmitted and causing serious illness in a high number of subjects, makes it a very rare virus indeed.

HOW IS IT DONE?

The virus needs to clear several hurdles to get from its existing host species into humans. First, the host species needs to encounter humans and when it does, that host needs to be carrying enough of the virus to “shed” it into the new potential host. Next, the virus needs to get into a human cell and if it doesn't have the right protein to enable it to latch onto the receptor of a human cell, it will find the door locked. Once it's inside the cell, it need to replicate itself, then the replicated virus must, in turn, make its way to other cells and infect them. A virus must do all this without alerting its new host immune system and when it has established in its first human, it needs to meet and greet other humans, stealth-enter their system and go through the same process all over again.

GOOD VIRUS, BAD VIRUS

It's easy, looking at COVID, Rabies, Hepatitis and Influenza, to name a few, to decide that viruses aren't good for humans. But they have an essential role to play in natural balance. Epidemiologist's put it bluntly. “If all viruses suddenly disappeared, the world would be a wonderful place for about a day and a half, then we would all die”!! Why? Because viruses exist at many different levels of life and are an essential component in controlling and balancing the environment. Viruses of bacteria, called “Phage's” for example , kill over-competitive bacteria benefitting other populations. Kill off all the viruses and biodiversity would likely reduce very fast, probably with catastrophic results.

Ed

ENJOY IT WHILE YOU CAN

If you earn it they tax it
If you spend it they tax it
If you save it they tax it
If you invest it they tax it
If you build it, they tax it
If you sell it, they tax it
If you live in it, they tax it
If you drive it, they tax it
If you eat it they tax it
If you give it away , they tax it
When you die , they tax it

USELESS SIGNAGE

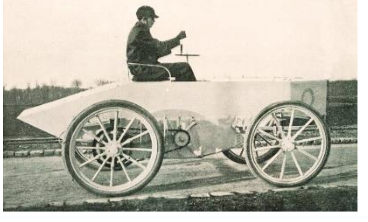
Take that criminals

Land Speed Records – a British obsession

SPEED MERCHANTS

I suppose that it is in the heart of Mankind to yearn to go faster, fly higher or dive deeper than their fellows, although perhaps Icarus should have taught the high fliers a lesson or two. Those who attempted to emulate him on level, dry land have, with a few exceptions fared better as club secretary Kelvin told us in his fascinating talk on the World Land Speed records.

The first holder of the record was the Frenchman Gaston de Chasseloup-Laubat. In 1898, he hit a speed of 39.24 mph in the electric powered Jeantaud Duc.



Just one month later the record was taken by the Belgian Camille Jenatzy at a speed of 41 mph. The record would pass back and forth between these two throughout 1899, with Jenatzy getting the better of the duel. This came with the introduction of the first purpose-built speed car, breaking the 100 kph milestone in the process.

This 65 mph record would stand for almost 3 years, when a steam-powered car driven by another Frenchman, Léon Serpollet took on the challenge.

However this record wouldn't stand for nearly as long. American, William K. Vanderbilt, in the first internal combustion engine powered car, beat it by just 1 mph only 4 months later.

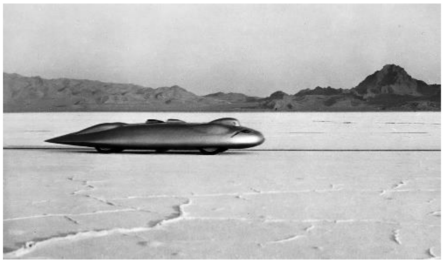
The period between 1902 and 1906 saw the record change many times. Louis Rigolly, then Pierre de Caters took back the record for France and then Belgium. The important milestone of 100 mph was crossed by Louis Rigolly on his second successful record attempt with a speed of 103.56 mph.

Two more Frenchmen, Paul Baras and Victor Hémery, would claim the record before American Fred Marriot in his steam-powered Stanley Rocket, set a speed of 127.66 mph at Daytona Beach. This record would stand for over 3 years before Hémery reclaimed the title at Brooklands towards the end of 1909.

The early records were set under different standards with world records not always being recognised by everyone. As the Association Internationale des Automobile Clubs Reconnus began to be recognised as the authority on the records, their standard began to become used.

Their regulations required two passes to be made in opposite directions. This meant that they could rule out any wind assistance. These runs initially had to be completed within 30 minutes, although later being changed to 1 hour.
The first time the record was set under these new rules, was also the first time a Brit had claimed the title. Lydston Hornsted achieved 124 mph in his Benz No.3 in 1914 at Brooklands.

Following the first world war, Kenelm Lee Guinness took the record in a Sunbeam 350HP. This was the first of many successful attempts in the 1920s. His other claim to fame was as the inventor of that spark plug which bears his name to this day – KLG .
Most notable were Malcolm Campbell's 4 claims within the decade. He initially drove the Sunbeam 350HP, followed by the aero engine powered Blue Bird.
The 1930s saw the record change hands frequently, not to mention the change in location attempts from Daytona Beach to the Bonneville Salt Flats. The '30s was a time when the British enjoyed total dominance of the record. Claimed five times in total by Campbell, George Eyston (three times in Thunderbolt)



and by John Cobb (twice in Railton).The '30s had seen the record climb to 369.74 mph. Cobb returned in 1947 to increase this to 394 mph.
There were two further wheel driven successes in the 1960s by Americans Mickey Thompson and Bob Summers with speeds just above 400 mph.
The introduction of jet engines initially led to some confusion over the rules and what was allowed. Malcolm Campbell's son Donald set the record in the wheel-driven Bluebird CN7 in that period. Eventually, the association in charge (which had since changed its name to the FIA) decided to change the rules to allow any vehicle running on wheels to be eligible for the record.
The first jet-powered car to claim the record was Spirit of America driven by American Craig Breedlove. He would go on to set the record a further 4 times in the 1960s with his final success in 1965 reaching 594 mph. Record times were set by another American with Gary Gabelich in the rocket-powered Blue Flame with a speed of 630 mph.

The record stood for 13 years before Britain's Richard Noble in Thrust 2 went 4 miles per hour faster in 1983. The current record was set in 1997 by Andy Green driving Thrust SSC. The twin Rolls-Royce Spey powered car went supersonic reaching an average of 760.343 mph over the two passes.
Attempts are still being made to surpass the 1997 record involving both Richard Noble and Andy Green with the Bloodhound LSR project. The project plans to hit the 1,000 mph mark, which would break the record by the largest ever margin if achieved. However Bloodhound languishes in Coventry motor museum, awaiting a rich backer.
The warm applause at the end of Kelvin's talk showed what the club was feeling when they gave him an enthusiastic vote of thanks at the conclusion.

Pater Hayes

POLICE RAID GUN SHOP...

LARGE NUMBER OF WEAPONS FOUND !!!

Special announcement

Total Lunar Eclipse will be broadcast live on radio KAXE tonight ?

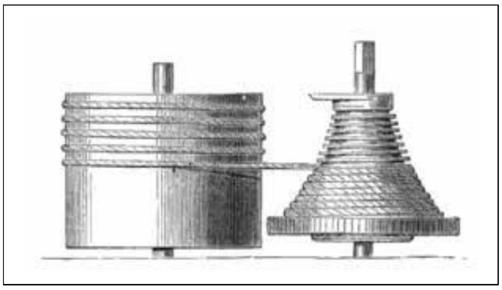
Horology revealed

On 27 August our long-time member John Martin. MBHI (Member of the British Horological Institute) gave us an illuminating talk on the subject of Horology, which has been described as the study of Time and the art of measuring it. John has been fascinated by it for over 50 years, probably triggered by getting Jill's grandmother's ladies fob watch from 1880 repaired.
John explained how once the sun alone was used as a clock, in so far as people went to bed at sundown and got up at sunrise. In 1500 BC shadow clocks, such as Cleopatra's needle were made, and the oldest sundial is from the same period. Candle clocks and water clocks were also used, calibrated against a scale.

By the 12th century striking bells told citizens the time. Following the invention in 1500 of the mainspring, clocks could at last be made portable. Inevitably the strength of the spring varied as it unwound, so the Fusee was designed to counterract the changes. In the 17th century further progress was reflected in the balance-wheel, the pendulum, the balance spring. All these features improved accuracy and portability. In 1709 George III offered £10,000 for a means of determining longitude at sea. The marine chronometer was then invented by John Harrison, who, far from being a horologist, was a carpenter, but he determined that the way to determine longitude at sea was to invent an accurate timepiece which could be carried on board ship without being affected by the ship's movement; the King somewhat reluctantly paid up. The story is told in the book "Longitude" by Dava Sobel and is highly recommended.

Marine Chronometer
As used on HMS Beagle

Fusee



In 1715 the dead-beat escapement was introduced to minimise the variation in energy transferred to the pendulum and therefore improve the timekeeping compared with the recoil escapement – it is the escapement which creates the characteristic 'tick' in a mechanical clock or watch. John's talk was illustrated with slides as well as several clocks and wristwatches that he had brought with him from his own collection. From these he showed us an English 30hr wall clock from 1715 which normally graces his living room, a tavern clock from 1750 (which would have been in the local tavern where people would have gone to check the time).

longcase (grandfather) clock with painted dial and a 400 day clock. We all handled a fusee which was passed round with the type of chains that drove them. The chains were extremely intricate and were often made by children, in the form of a bicycle chain. We were also shown a good quality french marble clock, although John let slip that Belgian slate was used rather than marble! A German ostentatious clock from 1698 was crafted in a way that made it difficult to work out where the actual time-telling part was. A working gravity clock, where the weight of the clock itself provides the power as it slowly makes its way down, was also demonstrated. Finally John reminded us of Thomas Tompion, from the late 17th century, who is regarded as the father of all English watchmaking and whose clocks are now very highly prized.
As for watches, John showed us a picture of the Nuremburg Egg watch from 1630 attributed to Peter Henlein, a locksmith credited with making the first watch,

and then a more recognisable pair case verge pocket watch from 1750, which came in 2 parts. We then saw a triple case verge pocket watch from 1803 and a marine chronometer mounted in gimbals. A Hunter cased pocket watch where the dial was covered, from 1887, came next with a Half Hunter where there was only a small opening to show the centre area of the dial. One of the most impressive more modern pocket watches was the Hamilton Railroad watch made in the USA in 1942. This was such an accurate watch that it was not easily adjustable! We saw a Zenith Chronometer watch which showed its state of wind on the front and a Jaeger le Coultre watch with a (different) face on each side – originally invented for a rich polo player
John reminded us that over the centuries clock and watch makers have strived for accuracy, portability, duration, complication and decoration. Although he has never made a watch or clock from scratch John has expertly repaired and refurbished numerous different models over the years, some of them for Probus members! He then showed us some of the tools he uses and which he had brought along, including lathe, pillar drill, magnifying glasses, vernier calipers and a variety of other strangely shaped instruments. John showed how modern watches have developed, and explained to us how the semiconductor materials used in modern electronic devices including watches, are grown under laboratory conditions from a single seed crystal, and being mindful of our environment John showed (with tongue in cheek) the very latest Organic Apple watch grown from a single seed, received with much amusement from the audience.
John's talk was comprehensive and very knowledgeable, reflecting his skills and deep knowledge of his subject. It was a fascinating hour for the audience, and being able to see and handle the various clocks and watches he had brought with him made it even more interesting.

Modern
Apple Watch

Organic
Apple Watch

John Weeden

CASH or CARD ?

This is why I keep telling the younger generation to stop avoiding cash!!! ……

Why should we pay cash everywhere with banknotes instead of a card ?

- I have a £50 banknote in my pocket. Going to a restaurant and paying for dinner with it.

The restaurant owner then uses the note to pay for the laundry.

The laundry owner then uses the note to pay the barber.

The barber will then use the note to pay for shopping.

After an unlimited number of payments, it will still remain a £50 value, which has fulfilled its purpose to everyone who used it for payment and the bank has jumped dry from every cash payment transaction made.

HOWEVER…….

If I go to a restaurant and pay digitally via Card

- the bank fees for my payment transaction charged to the seller are 3%, so around £1.50 (and so will be the fee of £1.50 for each further payment transaction)
- for the owner re laundry or
- payments of the owner of the laundry shop,
- or payments of the barber etc.....

Therefore, after 30 transactions, the initial £50 will exist at only £5, and the remaining £45 has become the property of the bank … thanks to all of the digital transactions and fees!

Use it or lose it folks………   Once it's gone we won't get it back!

A **mathematician**, an **accountant** and an **economist** apply for the same job.
The interviewer calls in the **mathematician** and asks "What do two plus two equal?" The **mathematician** replies "Four." The interviewer asks "Four, exactly?" The **mathematician** looks at the interviewer incredulously and says "Yes, four, exactly."
Then the interviewer calls in the **accountant** and asks the same question "What do two plus two equal?" The **accountant** says "On average, four – give or take ten percent, but on average, four."
Then the interviewer calls in the **economist** and poses the same question "What do two plus two equal?" The **economist** gets up, locks the door, closes the shade, sits down next to the interviewer and says, **"What do you want it to equal"?**

SERVICE INDEED

Mention the word “Parsons” to any Gloucestrian, probably male, of a certain age and they will go all misty eyed and possibly even weak kneed. Parsons was an almost mythical shop in the city from right back in 1856 until 1981, situated in Eastgate Street on the corner of the now defunct Queen’s Street, roughly where Boots now stands. It was an ironmongers where one could literally buy anything. Racks and racks of ceiling high boxes containing just about every conceivable odd nut and bolt, wick or tool that had ever been invented. Long before Health & Safety, it had agile and knowledgeable shop assistants seemingly performing an aerial ballet in leaping from rickety ladder to rickety ladder to track down the elusive spare part. Alas, lack of succession in the family and a local council who thought they knew best plus the ever greedy developer whose forte was anonymous shopping malls doomed it and now it is now more. However, the spirit of Parsons lives on in an unlikely place, namely Newent's main street in the shape of it’s almost namesake and a name that lots of you will be familiar with - G.D. Parker & Co.

When I wrote recently about the dire state of Newent’s town centre, it seems to have touched many a chord. But a beacon of light, an oasis in an otherwise barren street, (or choose your favourite metaphor) loomed large in all of your comments. It is indeed a worthy successor to its near namesake.

Of course I refer to G.D. Parker & Co. It was first established in Newent in 1973 and is still in the same family ownership. If it has been invented, then G.D. Parker & Co will likely have it or, if not, will obtain it for you. The shop has been providing quality hardware products and expert customer service to our local community for over 50 years, a real novelty in today’s retail world.
As a family-owned hardware store it offers expert advice, a wide variety of tools and hardware, and exceptional service, where you will find a warm, welcoming environment and personalised assistance by Richard and Jane Parker for your DIY projects, repairs, and renovations.

Whenever we have visitors to stay, one port of call that is always on their sightseeing list is G.D. Parker & Co and it is a rare occasion when they don’t return clutching that elusive spare part that they have been searching for ages or indeed something that they didn’t know they wanted until they saw it in G.D. Parker & Co.

Long may they prosper and continue to set an example of just what a small town centre shop should be like.   REMEMBER: SUPPORT IT OR LOSE IT?

Peter Hayes

Calling in sick

Gary calls his office and says that he won't be able to come to work today as he is feeling really sick, he said he has a stomach ache, a headache and his legs hurt.
His boss says, Gary I really need you in today. When I feel sick like you do, I go to my wife and ask her for sex. That makes everything better and I go into work. You try it.
Two hours later Gary calls again and says I did what you said and I feel great I will be into work shortly.
By the way.. You have a nice house!

A man comes home early in the morning. His wife asks him:
"And where did you sleep last night?"
The husband replies:
"Oh, at a friend's place."
So the wife calls 10 of his friends.
6 of them say that he spent the night there - and 4 of them say he's still sleeping.

BEFORE WE WORK ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, WHY DON'T WE DO SOMETHING ABOUT NATURAL STUPIDITY

Where am I ?

Solve the Puzzle

These represent common phrases/sayings

DETSATANAILS	IINNJSUURLYT	EVIL → EVIL

Thanks to all those who submitted articles and assisted with production.
Ed