NEWSLETTER

NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

OCTOBER 2024

Message from our Chairman

As we enter another new month it seems the others have flown by. I am sure as we get older the months get shorter. Perhaps it's because we keep so busy.
Having just spent a lovely week in the Peak District, based in Matlock, we were blessed with unusually warm weather the whole time. Didn't have to put a jumper on at all, and managed to sit outside for coffee and lunch.
However, normally October sees a change, as leaves begin to fall and the temperature begins to cool. I remember when the children were young how they used to delight at walking through knee deep waves of leaves. It's normally a time for cozy sweaters, pumpkins and of course Halloween, an American import which seems to be more of a commercial event than anything else.
Our weather seems to have gone in a different direction, torrential rain, floods and even forest fire in some regions of the world. We have plants beginning to flower when they shouldn't. Crazy!
On a more positive note we were pleased to wish our eldest member, Geoff Thomas, very best wishes on reaching his 100th Birthday. Such a momentous occasion. He showed us with pride the card he had received from the King and Queen. We look forward to hearing his presentation on the 8th talking about his life being a centenarian.
You will be pleased to know I have planned another of our popular quizzes in November, details to follow. So start brushing up on your general knowledge and all sorts of trivia.

Fraser

PUB LUNCH

TUESDAY 1ST OCTOBER

Duke of York
Tewkesbury Road,
Berrow,
Malvern
WR13 6JQ

Mine Host – Andrew Graham

TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2024

Geoff Thomas

"Memoirs of a Centenarian"

TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2024

Chris O'Grady

FAKES and FORTUNES,
ART and ANTIQUES,
DEALERS and FORGERS.

Nursery Rhymes we grew up with and loved

Most, if not all, of those reading this will have been brought up knowing the traditional nursery rhyme. Alas, modern day legislation will mean that the characters in them that we love will become a thing of the past.
No more will the Old Lady who lived in a shoe wonder what to do. No, the two child rule that means no Family Allowance after the second child will surely rule our large families.
Similarly, should Jack and Jill venture up that hill, then Social Services will be down on the parents like a ton of bricks and the kids will be whisked off to care, due to parental neglect exposing their children to risk . Little Jack Horner too, as he is at risk of child cruelty
and as for the not quite so grand Duke of York, who had 10,000 men [*Editor interjects here*: *"Have you got the correct gender?"].* Georgie Porgie also – "Me Too" will be after him
Poor Humpty didn't fall of the wall by accident. No it was because he was riddled with salmonella, at least according to a certain ex Conservative politician. While Old Mother Hubbard would be certain to run foul of the RSPCA on the grounds of animal cruelty, while Jack Spratt's lack of a balanced diet would surely lead to all sorts of medical problems.
Old King Cole may well have been a merry old soul but just what was that substance that he smoked in his pipe? A visit from the drugs squad is surely on the cards. And Jack would have been in trouble with the Planning authorities for erecting such a lofty edifice without the necessary planning permissions..
NO, best to stick to TV commercial jingles- they are the modern day nursery rhymes. How did it go? …… "Murray Mints, Murray Mints, the too good to hurry Mints" !

Peter Hayes

Part of life's natural selection

Edith Cavell 1865 – 1915
A Forgotten Hero?

On 10th September Mike Bottomley gave a talk to the Newent & District PROBUS Club on the life of Edith Louisa Cavell, a British nurse, famous for working in German-occupied Belgium during the First World War and helping hundreds of soldiers to escape from the Germans. Her death by firing squad in 1915 caused international outrage.

Mike described her early life in the village of Swardeston, Norfolk, where her father was a Rector and she was the eldest of four children. Although she considered her early years as rather dull (especially her father's Sunday sermons) her strict religious upbringing helped her to develop a strong sense of duty and a desire to help others. She observed rural poverty in the countryside around her home and helped to raise funds for good causes.

In her late teens she attended various boarding schools which led to her becoming a governess and in 1890 this led to a position with a family in Brussels where she became a firm favourite with all the family and became fluent in French.

However, in 1895 her father became ill and Edith returned home to help nurse him through his short illness. This triggered an interest in nursing and in April 1896, at the age of 30, she was accepted for training at The London Hospital, under Matron Eva Luckes, who had worked with Florence Nightingale. It was a strict regime with very long hours.

In the following years she worked in fever hospitals in London, during which she received an award for her work and eventually she progressed to the position of Matron. In 1907 she returned to Belgium to work with a Doctor who was promoting the training of nurses in Belgium and who recognised the high standards that the profession was achieving in Britain. Until then Nuns had been responsible for nursing in Belgium and they lacked formal training.

Now in her early forties, Edith Cavell was put in charge of a pioneering school for nurses on the outskirts of Brussels, which was formed out of four adjoining houses. With the help of a Welsh assistant, Sister Wilkins, the school became a success and by 1912 it provided nurses for 3 hospitals, 24 schools, and 13 kindergartens.

The outbreak of war in 1914 soon brought home to people the misery in the aftermath of battles, and Edith Cavell's nurses treated both Belgian and German wounded. Strict martial law was imposed and severe reprisals were taken against any opposition. When Brussels was taken most non Belgian nurses were sent home, but Edith Cavell and Sister Wilkins remained. During the German advance many soldiers found themselves cut off from their regiments (referred to as 'Les Enfants Perdus'). In the Autumn of 1914 two British soldiers found their way to the nursing school and were sheltered for two weeks before being smuggled away to neutral Holland. More followed and an underground lifeline was established, helping over 200 allied soldiers, British, Canadian and Belgian, to escape.


LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

The escape route was organised by the Prince and Princess de Croy and it was named The Yorc lifeline' (Croy backwards was perhaps not the most secure password!) and guides were organised by Philippe Baucq, an architect referred to as 'Monsieur Fromage', who, with others in the resistance, also organised a Belgian propaganda newspaper – La Libre Belgique.

Inevitably, the Germans became aware of the escape route and surveillance was increased, which included the nursing school. Edith Cavell was warned of this and advised to stop although her sense of duty prevented this. However, on July 31st 1915 two members of the escape route were arrested and soon afterwards so were Edith Cavell, Sister Wilkins and others from the 'Yorc lifeline'. Edith admitted her involvement, confirming at her trial that she had "successfully conducted allied soldiers to the enemy of the German people" and following a trial, 26 members of the Yorc Lifeline were imprisoned and 5, including Edith and 'Monsieur Fromage' were sentenced to death.

The death sentence caused an international outcry, but despite the intervention of the neutral American and Spanish embassies, Edith Cavell and Philippe Baucq were ordered to be shot by firing squad on October 12th, while the three other death sentences were reprieved.

On the night before her execution she was visited by the English Chaplain, Stirling Gahan. They prayed together and recited the 23rd Psalm and she is reported to have said **"I have no fear nor shrinking; I have seen death so often that it is not strange or fearful to me."** And also, **"Standing as I do in view of God and Eternity, I realise that patriotism is not enough, I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone"**. These words became her epitaph.

The execution was used as propaganda by the allies. It was used to sway neutral opinion against Germany and eventually to bring the USA into the war.

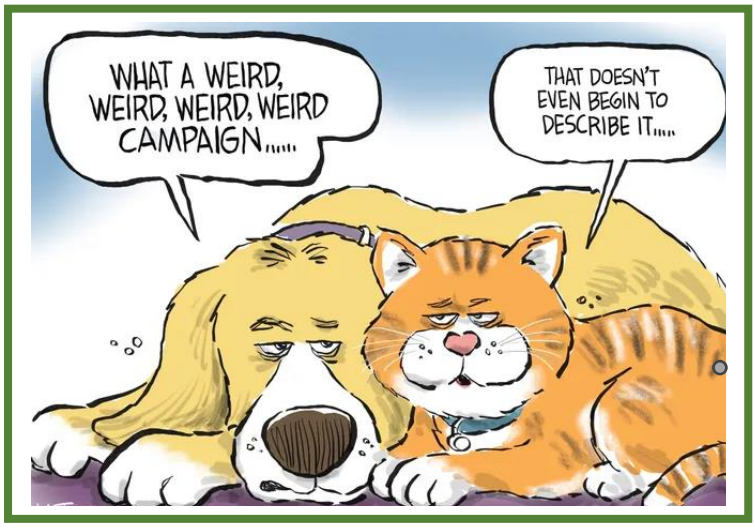
Propaganda about her death apparently caused recruitment to double for several weeks after her death.

The outcry following her execution was a shock to the Germans and made them realise they had committed a serious blunder, so much so that the Kaiser ordered that no more women should be shot.

She was initially buried at the rifle range where she was executed but after the war, arrangements were made for Edith's reburial. At first, Westminster Abbey was considered, but the family preferred Norfolk. Her remains were escorted with much ceremony to Dover and from there to Westminster Abbey for the first part of the burial service on May 15th, 1919 and then on to her final resting place in Norwich Cathedral.

Graham Mawdsley

PS:
A statue of Queen Elizabeth II unveiled at Antrim Castle recently has been heavily criticised for bearing no resemblance to the late Queen, though the bronze corgis that accompany her could at least pass for dogs. Perhaps it's meant to be another woman in a headscarf? It can be hard to capture the likeness of someone who has died.
George Frampton's marble sculpture of Edith Cavell, the English nurse executed by the Germans in WWI, got a similar reception at its unveiling outside the National Portrait Gallery in 1920. As the drapes fell, the artist James Pryde was heard to shout from the crowd *"My God, they have shot the wrong person"*



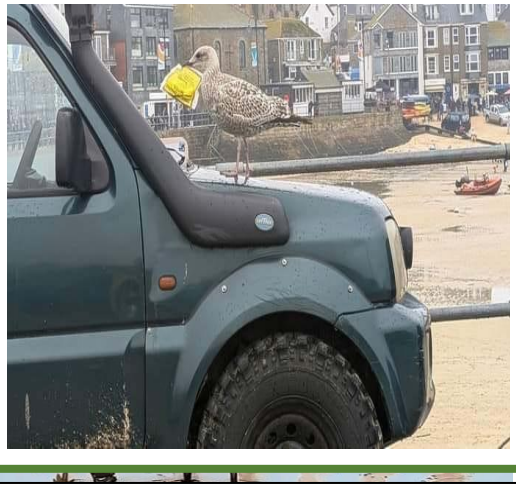
How interesting .... I never thought Money has different names!!!*

In church, it's called ***donation.***
In school, it's ***fee**.*
In marriage, it's called ***dowry**.*
In divorce, ***alimony**.*
When you owe someone, it's ***debt.***
When you pay the government, it's ***tax**.*
In court, it's ***fines**.*
Employer to workers, it's ***salary.***
When you retire it's ***pension.***
To children, it's ***allowance.***
When you borrow from bank, it's ***loan.***
What you offer after good service. it's ***tips.***
To kidnappers, it's ***ransom.***
Illegally received in the name of service, it's ***bribe.***

Singers of the 60's are revising their hits with new lyrics to accommodate baby-boomers

New Releases Include:

Herman's Hermits
Mrs Brown, You've Got A Lovely Walker
Ringo Starr
I Get By With A Little Help From Depends
The BeeGees
How Can You Mend A Broken Hip?
Roberta Flack
The First Time Ever I Forgot Your Face
Johnny Nash
I CAN'T See Clearly Now.
Paul Simon
Fifty Ways To Lose Your Liver
The Commodores
Once, Twice, Three Times To The Bathroom
Procol Harum
A Whiter Shade Of Hair
Leo Sayer
You Make Me Feel Like Napping
The Temptations
Papa's Got A Kidney Stone
Abba
Denture Queen
Helen Reddy
I Am Woman, Hear Me Snore
Lesley Gore
It's My Hormones & I'll Cry If I Want To
Willie Nelson
On the Commode Again



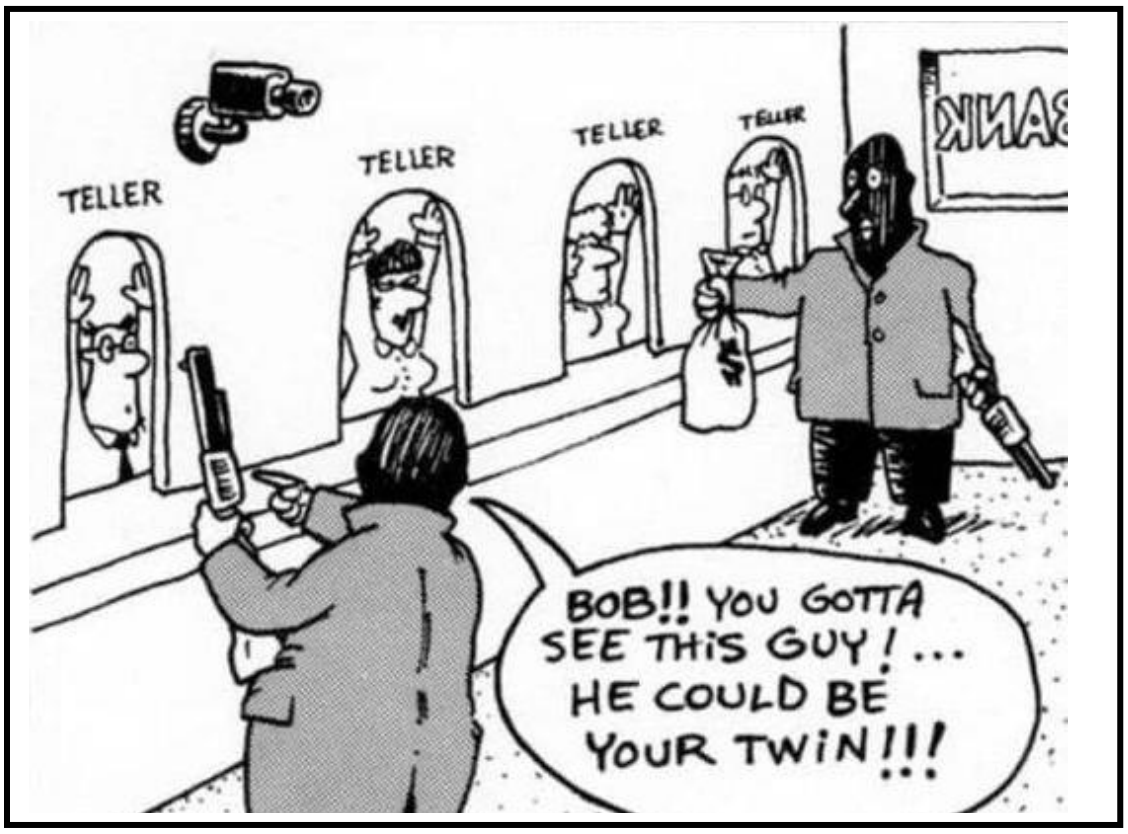
Council having to make cuts on parking attendants

I was about to go for a run but it looks like it's about to rain so I'm gonna sit this one out

THEY THINK ITS ALLOVER

"They think it's all over". These were Ken Wolstenholme's memorable words, which have since passed into English folk lore, spoken at nearly the end of the 1966 World Cup Final against Germany, which, should anyone need reminding, we won 4:2. I always think of these words at the conclusion of our more formal Probus meetings. But, like the crowd at that match, we would be mistaken .
No, if not quite the beginning at least it is the start of the mid-point. After we have thanked the speaker, made that important and vital visit to the handily placed Gents and put our chairs away, several of us have another meeting to attend to, one without an agenda and one where everyone is a speaker.
I am, of course, talking about our post meeting get togethers at that friendly pub, the King's Arms, at the edge of Newent, where the ever welcoming Wayne & Chrissie are always pleased to see us. There is no set agenda and the attendance varies from time to time. Over a glass or even a "cuppa", the world's problems are given the benefit of our combined several centuries of experience and soon righted. All in a convivial atmosphere with a laugh or three. And then, our stomachs tell us it is time to leave, whether homeward bound or to partake of one of the K A's dishes of the day.
If, for some inexplicable reason, you have never joined or, even more inexplicably, are unaware of this informal adjunct to our meetings, why not join us next time at the K A; you will be made most welcome.
PS: It's also the location of our legendary Quiz and Skittles evenings.

Peter Hayes



When alcohol performs miracles

A LIBRARY TREASURE

There are several phrases that fill me with dread; among them being told "I found the most amusing place off the beaten track in Mongolia and I have brought my holiday snaps to show you", "You will love what my four year old grandchild came out with the other day" or "" See these; my cat is almost human the things he gets up to".

It was for this reason that, when attending an otherwise convivial lunch the other day an old friend told me that he had found an App that was just made for me that I looked around in desperation for the exit sign. I need not have worried: once installed (the operative word is "once" but more of that later) I realise that the developer could have had me in mind when he designed it. I will therefore break my golden rule and bring it to our readers' attention.

It is called Press Reader and it gives the user access to what seems like an endless supply of newspapers and magazines from all over the world. From the Wall Street Journal to the Tokyo Times (*sic*), The Spectator to the Top Gear magazine, The Guardian to the Daily Mail to mention just a few.

No such thing as a free lunch? Well, so far I have gorged on it without damage to my wallet. There must be a catch you say? Well, unless you want to lash out £30 a month for the privilege of using it, you have to belong to Gloucestershire libraries which is surely no hardship. I won't go into the mechanics of downloading the app here, partly because the instructions do take up a lot of space but principally because I have forgotten them..

Suffice to say that one must download the library App and then follow the instructions. This I admit is a bit of a cop-out; being near computer illiterate, I did what any right thinking male would do, that is ask an ever helpful librarian to install it for me. Two or more words of warning; it is addictive and should carry a Government health warning and you have to renew it every month if you want to avoid the charge. Happy reading

PH - An avid Library supporter

Jerusalem – Who's City

As our speaker, David Lees, remarked in his opening comments, many peoples and states would claim at least an interest ownership of Jerusalem, one of the world's best known, but most fought over, cities in its long history.

Jerusalem is one of the most important cities for three major religions, Islam, Christianity and Jewish in addition to being claimed a capital city by the states of Isreal and Palestine. The city has a history of at least 5000 years, and it is likely that its origins were the building of a settlement around the Gihon Spring. The city is in mountains west of the Jordan river and east of the Mediterranean Sea. It lies in a fertile crescent of land to the north of Egypt, south of modern-day Lebanon, and west of Syria, Iraq and Iran. To this day the Gihon Spring provides water to the city.

The history of the city begins with Abraham and his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, born some 14 years after. Abraham lived in this fertile land and his two sons were to become the fathers of two races, Ishmael of the Arab nations and Isaac of the Jewish nation. The Jewish scriptures claim that Abraham was called upon to show his faith in God by sacrificing his son on a Rock which today is within the Dome on the rock of the Temple Mount. In the event God prevented Abraham from carrying out this sacrifice by providing a lamb for the sacrifice. The early Jewish Nation was conquered by the strong Egyptian nation and many centuries later Moses was to lead the nation out of Egypt, north across the Red Sea and to the desert to the east of the Jordan River. Moses was shown the land for the Jewish nation in which to settle, to the west of the Jordan from a site, traditionally on Mount Nebo, at around 1500 BC. Later King David chose the site of Jerusalem as his capital city and laid plans for a Temple to be built on the Temple Mount Rock. The Temple was completed by his son Solomon, who became famous around the world with his wisdom. After his death the kingdom was divided into two nations, Judea to the South and Ephram to the North with both countries claiming Jerusalem, in the middle, as their capital. Sometime later, the 1st Temple was destroyed, and the Jews were exiled to Babylon. Later they returned to Jerusalem and built a 2nd Temple on the same site during the 5th Century BC. Soon after 100 BC the Romans were to enter the city, and Jesus was to live and die in this same city. Soon after a sect known as Christians were to found a new church out of the Jewish religion, and in 70 AD, as predicted by Jesus, the Temple was destroyed by the Roman occupiers. Christianity would become the state religion of the Roman empire in 326 AD.

Al-Aqsa Mosque

Between 570 and 630, Muhammad was to form the Islamic religion and in 621 he made a night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem from where he ascended to Heaven. Thus, the city now had three main religions, Jewish, Christianity and Islam, all claiming that the Temple on the Mount was central to their history.
This led to the city being held by all three religions over the next millennium. Later foreign powers including Britain, Russia and the Ottoman empire would all rule the country.
In the 20th Century the British held a mandate for Isreal with Jerusalem as its capital from 1917 to 1948, when the modern state of Isreal was formed.
With such a history and so many different factions all claiming an interest in Jerusalem, it is perhaps not surprising that the City remains the centre of much division and war.
David was careful not to suggest any solutions to these challenges, but did give us a fascinating insight into the historical reasons for the situation we find in Jerusalem today.
And it all began with a small spring of water running off a mountain close to the Jordan valley.

The Temple on the rock

The Garden of Gethsemane

The Knesset – The Israeli Parliament

David Clowes

This month's picture quiz.

All suggestions on a £5 note to Andrew Graham

Probus Quiz Night

Kings Arms

Newent

MONDAY 18 November 2024

7pm

Teams of FOUR

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

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