



Probus Club Ellesmere



Covid-19 Lockdown 2020 Newsletter

Issue 18

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From the Editor

Dear all, At times it seems almost normal out in the wider world of Shropshire, however, the mask soon reminds us of the importance of wearing one to keep you and others safe.

In last weeks edition you will have read John's piece about V.J. Day and his report of Peter Roth's V.J day in 1945. Peter said he wasn't happy with the way it read and asked me to publish his original version of the story without any editorial changes.

The Editor apologies to Peter for any misunderstanding, and publishes Peter's original story here.

MY NAVY SERVICE IN THE FAR EAST *By Peter Roth*

After my training I was drafted to a minesweeper HMS Hare there were six minesweepers in the flotilla and then off to the Far East to join the British Pacific Fleet for what we thought was the invasion of Japan. We got as far as Suez and the atom bomb was dropped on Japan, Then while sailing through the Indian Ocean, Japan surrendered.

We thought we would be going home but no!. We went on to Sydney, then to Singapore, we swept mines around Singapore, and a lot around Hong kong and North Borneo We cleared about 200 mines in all, From Hongkong we sailed north to Kure in Japan and while in Kure we had chance to see the devastation of Hiroshima.

Then to Shanghai and back to Hongkong. After a few more sweeps around Hongkong we started our journey back to U.K. and demob.

The End

Keep safe Paul

A view from the Crow's Nest

I hope that you and yours, your friends and neighbours are still keeping safe and well on the shifting sands. This is our Newsletter's 18th edition, do you remember what you got up to on your 18th birthday! Maybe you wouldn't care to share them here..



way

What an interesting week where the concept of algorithms has developed a bad name over the exam results. Looking back at George Orwell's '1984' : "Every book has been destroyed or falsified, every book re-written, every picture repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day, minute by minute. History has stopped". Ho hum.

Four days last week with the grandchildren staying in our 'bubble' was a joy. They loved camping on the lawn and we all rowed on the Mere which they are very keen on doing.

Thanks again to our excellent Editor Paul and his much-appreciated and enjoyed skills/time in keeping our Newsletters packed with interest and entertainment. Not to mention the great range of articles that a number of our members have kindly put together to keep us sharing in each other's memories and interests.

Don't forget to let one of us know if you are stuck with anything that we can help you with.

Best wishes to one and all, "Keeeeeep Masking"!

Jeremy

The Two Ronnies: Mastermind https://youtu.be/y0C59pl_yoQ



More Holiday Memories *By Bill Ferries*

Our next holiday venue was in the south of France. We flew to Nice, collected our people carrier and drove to our house near Fayence a few miles inland from Cannes. It was a big farmhouse owned by a lovely couple who lived next door. We had gardens and an orchard where we used to eat delicious figs straight off the tree. It also had a swimming pool which we used a lot. The house overlooked the village about half a mile below. Fayence is a very quaint typically French village with the usual shops and cafes. We enjoyed their busy weekly open air market full of local produce and crafts. One feature was an olive mill close to the village and one day we had a very interesting visit there when the miller showed us around. It was very old and nothing had changed inside it for decades the machinery, olive presses and vats were original. It was crammed with baskets and tubs of olives each with the names of owners who had brought them in. Of course we bought a few bottles of his oil before we left.

One afternoon we visited a small airfield nearby to watch gliders taking off. We got chatting to some locals in the clubhouse and soon we agreed to have a trip in one of the club gliders. The conditions were perfect so it was on-wards and upwards ! This was a first for most of us but we all had a flight and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Another day we visited the famous perfume factory and shop at Grasse where we all came out smelling of various French perfumes!

Another memorable day out was when we drove along the coast to Monaco to "see how the other half live" in this popular tax haven. It was certainly worth a visit to explore the high end shops and stroll along the quays where many fantastic yachts were moored, you could almost smell the money!

We had a conducted tour of some parts of the Royal Palace but were unable to see inside the famous casino. It is such a relaxed and pleasant city and difficult to envisage how it could transform each year into a bustling racing venue for the famous Monaco Grand Prix. It is a privileged place for the local people to live - one of the world's most expensive and wealthiest countries.

We played three games of golf with Nice being the best, a high class course.

Our group really took to the idyllic climate of the area and the relaxed way of life the French have. Since our trip Jean and I have returned to enjoy family holidays there mainly to one of our favourite venues, Aix en Provence.

The next year was back in the Algarve then the following year we set our compass to the East and headed for India

We flew to Cochin on the south west coast where we were met by our driver, Selwyn, splendid in his immaculate white suit. He was an extremely pleasant, likeable and knowledgeable young man who was with us as driver and guide for the duration of our holiday. Once aboard his minibus we headed south into the state of Kerala . We found it to be a place of palm lined beaches and very extensive maze of waterways, canals, rivers and lakes opening into the sea.



Inland are the Western Ghat mountains with their slopes covered by tea, coffee and spice plantations.

As India is such a hugely diverse and interesting country we had decided it would be a sightseeing holiday rather than a golfing one and had left our clubs behind.

As we drove south on a very good highway we passed through lots of villages where the villagers had plenty of colourful noisy festivities usually involving elephants draped with garlands and bunting.

At Alleppy we boarded a small cruiser and spent the rest of the day on the waterways stopping occasionally at villages on the way where we would be mobbed by happy children who kept asking for pens and pencils - not money! We had been told to expect this and had taken plenty with us. Our boatman was a cheerful lad of about 17 who was in sole charge of the boat. Often we had to travel through weeds which jammed the propeller whereupon this boy would jump into the water and swim under the boat to haul off the weeds, it seemed to be a normal hazard which he accepted with good humour.

At the end of the day we arrived at our hotel in Kumarakom where Selwyn had already delivered our luggage.

We spent a few days relaxing there, and also used bikes from the hotel as they proved an ideal mode of transport to see the local sights.

Selwyn then took us up into the highlands of east Kerala to The Spice Village Hotel in Periyar National Park. We were allocated some of their thatched bungalows in the grounds and gardens all very well appointed and so comfortable. It was a sort of eco complex where most of the food was produced on site or from the sea and lovely food it was too.

We visited local tea and spice plantations where most of the workers were women. One afternoon during a forest walk we came across a wedding party near a village. It was a very colourful and lively and they insisted that we join in the dancing and share their food, such friendly happy people.



A local truck they are always highly decorated



A typical Hindu street scene

Then on to the very south of India to Poovar Island where the unique hotel could only be reached by boat. The main part was a very grand imposing building overlooking the shore where the hotel had several thatched floating bungalows each at the end of a raft walkway all very picturesque.

Another day Selwyn drove us to Kovalam which had a superb beach.

Whilst there he also took us to a dressmaker where most of us got measured up for silk shirts, tops or dresses, and returned a few hours later to collect our garments all beautifully finished.

One noticeable thing about the Indian people we met was how friendly they all were and also how slim and fit they appeared rarely did we see a fat person. Large numbers of people either walked or biked.

I have never been one for Indian takeaway food but the food we experienced was excellent throughout our travels. Admittedly we stayed in good hotels but even when we ate out the food was always very good. Kerala did not seem to have the poverty or slums seen in other parts of India and was a marvellous place for a holiday. We all voted unanimously for another one!

On our way back to UK we stopped at Dubai for a couple of days. Totally different, it was a complete change with a faster pace. We had an unusual and memorable trip out to the sand dunes where we were treated to "the desert experience" by a company which had a fleet of top range Toyota 4x4s. Once on the sand the tyres were deflated to get better grip and our drivers went racing flat out amongst the dunes - one minute we would be climbing up a dune so steep we could only see the bonnet and sky and then over the top and plunging down the other side before suddenly swerving to cross a different slope then revving up to climb another dune - a bit like being on the dodgems or waltzers at a fair-ground!



Dune bashing in Dubai

One vehicle almost turned over and some passengers had to get out before they were sick! It certainly was an experience - not for the faint hearted.

Bill Ferries

A NICE CUPPA ORIENTAL STYLE . By Alan Barker

Where would be without a cup of tea in these troubled times? Our national drink is a thing to cherish and is mainly based on what is called the black variety. Having worked in Taiwan I was indoctrinated to a to the custom of drinking green tea as like the UK it is their national drink ,a custom of great longevity much older than ours.

The brewing of tea derives from the buds and thin leaves of the bush *Camellia sinensis* and these are grown in plantations around the old world countries of China, India, Japan, Nepal, Vietnam and Taiwan. Africa countries also have large plantations namely in Kenya and Malawi. The type and flavour of teas is governed by the soil, altitude and the climate. To produce good flavours the bush needs good mineral drained soil and lots of rain and altitude. The bush



is tolerate to temperature and can exist in hot or cool climates .

The Indian bushes like the sun whilst the China types survive in much cooler conditions .At the desired time the leaf buds are plucked by hand and this can be several times a year. Hand picking preserves the delicate nature of the bud tips. The buds then undergo several mechanical processes which when adjusted give rise to the brew characteristics. They can be allowed to wither, age, rolled, sifted, machine chopped and fired.

Some tea types require fermentation or oxidation process to achieve the characteristics required and the more oxidation chosen ones result in the black variety of which we are all

familiar in our kitchens. With green tea the oxidation is not applied hence maintaining the healthy constituent. Oolong and white teas are gently steamed to oxidise.

Thus by application of all mechanical procedures the types can be classified basically into black, white and green. These are then processed into a bewildering array of drinkable types for the customer to chose, compare with the wine industry and it's global activity.

Teas are marketed with health benefits the lighter the colour the more healthy organic compounds are contained. Without too much detail a few of the main ingredients are phenolic acids, amines, amino acids, choline, carotenoids, steroles and tannins. These are but a few of the compounds which are reported as health benefits. Almost all diseases afflicting the human body appears to be treatable or preventable within the scope of tea drinking (excepting Corona Virus).I leave it to the individual to research and try these brews.

Anyway when I arrived in Taiwan they smiled at my tea bags(Typhoo) and suggested that I needed a lesson in tea drinking. I was issued with a mug sized stainless steel percolator and the basket was filled with a green tea, hot water about 85 degrees C was poured on and it was allowed to brew for 30 minutes and then drunk. This was repeated over the working day using the same loading of tea !

The experience was not good and it took weeks to get used to it but eventually I succumbed but I still secretly enjoyed a flavoursome cup of Typhoo even without milk.

My next treat was a visit to a Oolong tea plantation up a mountainside in the east region where I was allowed to pick some buds and watch the family go through the process of rolling ,sifting and chopping the harvest. I was shown the ovens and drying racks then the bagging and tins of the final tea for sale. I was shown the storage huts where some dried leaf granules matured for 3 years.

Enterprise was a small family unit and there were hundreds all over the mountain side .The final entertainment was a tea taste session out of terra cotta pot and small bowls .I became a object of amusement ,not getting any of the tests remotely correct in terms of basic through to more classical types. It was good fun.

Please try these green teas, my favourite is Oolong which has a really nice flavour.

It can be very expensive depending on the vintage (£200/100grms) but can be obtained at Whittards for more usual tea prices.

Good drinking !



General Knowledge Quiz

1. Which member of the Allen family stars in "Game of Thrones"?
2. How many minutes in five hours?
3. A car with the international registration letter E comes from where?
4. Who came first, King Edward VIII or George VI?
5. Who recorded the million-selling album "Life for Rent"?
6. Where were Norse gods said to live?
7. Fe is the symbol of which chemical element?
8. Which army commander was known as "The Desert Fox"?
9. In which early radio soap was Mary worried about Jim?
10. What is the first month of the year to have exactly 31 days?
11. Under the floor of which building did, Chrissie bury Dirty Den's body?
12. Which musical instrument has dampers, hammers and strings?
13. Who won the Olympic Gold for the Men's 5000m at the 2012 London Olympics?
14. Which fish is smoked and cured and called "finnan"?
15. The Spanish Riding School is in which country?
16. What was the original name of the line on a ship showing the level to which it could be loaded?
17. Bouillabaisse is what kind of fish dish?
18. In which city in 1916 was the Easter Rising?
19. Who had a horse called Bucephalus?
20. What name is given to the Japanese skill of growing miniature trees?

Answers page 10

Here is a Covid 19 flower pictured at Powis Castle last week. Can anyone identify it?

Mike Grundy.

Any answers P/*please email Paul



FOOTBALL in ELLESMERE

Remembered by Norman Dawson

In 1920-21, the only team in Ellesmere playing on a Saturday was the Ellesmere Town F.C. which contained such well known characters as Sid Jones (goalie and second youngest player in the team); Alan Blayney (Full Back); Joe Gregory (Centre Forward); Frank Basford (Half Back); Albert Simpson (Half Back); Ted Drury (inside Forward); Charlie Harry (Full Back) Charlie Edwards (Half Back); 'Nessie Sides (Forward); Albert Harris (Forward, and the youngest player in the team) and R.A. Mackenzie Watson, the character of them all. 'Twas said that he was the black sheep of a very 'blue blooded' Scottish family.

Well, whoever he was he was certainly very well educated and, when necessary, the perfect gentleman. However, suffice it is to say that he seemed to appear on the scene from nowhere, and the next thing we knew he had won the 100 yards, 300 yards, and half-mile at Ellesmere Whit Monday Sports, and believe me some excellent runners from all over the country turned out at this very widely known and popular sports meeting.

This seemed way above the hopes of a number of lads who had just left school, either the Boys' High School in Oswestry or the C. of E. Boys' School (better known as The Wharf School in Ellesmere) and who were anxious to play football on Saturday afternoons. The move in our efforts to do something about an outlet for Saturday afternoons came about in the Chip Shop up St. John's Hill. There were four of us - Jack Stocker Cartwright, Len Jones, Jack Rowlinson and yours truly.

It was then that we decided that we would try to form our own football club. However, after chatting away for some time we realised that in starting to form a football club we were very raw amateurs, so off we went to seek the advice of my father, who was an old footballer, a goalkeeper, having played for Ellesmere; the famous Welsh Club, 'The Druids', and Everton, but after only two games with the latter he got homesick and returned to Ellesmere. He told me how he used to go up to Duddleston Heath to practise with Bob Topham, who lived at Plas-yn-Grove, and who was centre forward for Wolverhampton Wanderers when they won the F.A. Cup. This was the advice he gave us - "If you wish to form a club, then it will cost money. To get money you will have to beg for it, and to do this you must have the backing of two or three well known and well respected people in the town". So, we purchased two notebooks; appointed Len Jones as Secretary (he thereafter became known as 'Seccy') because he was at that time with H.R. Giles, Solicitor, and was the "wizard of the pen". On the front page of each book was written our aims and hopes, and these were duly vouched for by Captain Charles Adam, Seven Sisters, and the Rev. Mildred. The latter was Curate of Ellesmere at this time, and although he didn't know a football from a pig's foot, he was a good sport and very keen that we should succeed. From then on we went from house to house with remarkable success, and in the meantime we had sent for sports catalogues and asked Mr. Jack Sleigh for a quotation for providing goal posts, etc. We also contacted Mr. Bill Hayward, who in those days supplied most of the town with milk, with a view to renting one of his fields.

Eventually the great day arrived when we counted all the money we had collected, and, on the other side, our estimate of costs. To our delight, we found that we had more on the 'IN' side than on the 'OUT'. Imagine how excited we felt when we realised that the 'kick off' was something definite. One important factor remained unsolved - the name of the Club. We consulted my father, and he, through sentiment, suggested 'Ellesmere Rangers'. When he played for Ellesmere the town team was so called. We told him, regretfully, that his suggestion could not be accepted, because we wanted a name that had never before been associated with Ellesmere. So, we tried the Rev. Mildred, who had all along maintained a keen interest in our activities. Away we went, the four of us, to see the reverend gentleman. We told him our problem, and I well remember him sitting at his table (he had rooms at Mrs. Pickering's, Victoria Street), idly turning over the pages of his bible, and then, quite casually, he said "Why not call your Club the Corinthians", and so the name was born; a name which for many years was to control the destinies of football in Ellesmere.

We were now all set to go. We placed the order for the goal posts with Mr. Sleigh (he let us have them very cheap); settled the rent and letting terms with Mr. Hayward. It was a field which, later became that part of the Lakelands School playing field which is nearest to the Newnes. The shirts we selected were black and amber stripes, and Stocker Cartwright's mother, who at that time kept an outfitters shop in Watergate Street, obtained these for us at cost price. They never did wear out they just faded away. We had a couple of practice matches to help us select the team, and all we wanted now was a club to play against, and we had a dickens of a job. The clubs who played friendlies only and were not in leagues were few and far between, and writing to them Len 'Seccy' Jones had, quite rightly, given our average age, and this, we concluded, must be the reason why we were failing to obtain fixtures. So, in our next invitations we omitted any mention of age, and our first fixture was duly arranged with Glyn Amateurs a team from the Chirk area. My father was appointed referee for all home matches. We were rather scared when Glyn Amateurs turned up. They were a right hefty bunch, ages ranging from 17 to 23. Our lads, of course changed at home, and made their own way to the field. The visiting team changed, I think, in the Congregational Schoolroom, in Victoria Street. The point I wish to stress is that I feel sure that had they seen us before they changed they would, judging from the expression on their faces when they did see us on the field, not have bothered to change. However, the game went on. We played our hearts out, and, much to the consternation of our visitors, we won 3 goals to nil.

This, our first match, was towards the end of the season, but we were fortunate enough to arrange a few more fixtures, about six in all. We cycled to away games. Those who had no bikes rode on the step (an extension of the hack axle, commonly fitted to bikes at that time), or the cross bar of the lucky bike owners. The main thing was that we got there. Later on, when we had all obtained jobs, we went by train and still later on a bus or converted truck.

The next season the team remained much the same, and we had a pretty full fixture list of friendlies. Jack 'Blackin' Powell, who because of the Rev. Mildred's involvement, was under the impression that it was a Church team, said he was quite prepared to change his religion if only he could play. We assured him that religion did not come into it, and 'Blackin' became a really first class goalkeeper.

He was at times rather inclined to let his quick temper get the better of him much to the detriment of the opposing charging forwards (Goalkeepers were not protected the same as they are today) and this would invariably occur when scouts from first and second division clubs had come to see him.

The following season, still playing friendlies, we moved to a field up the Elson Road - the old Racecourse field. Fred Roberts, of The Square, always started the season off with the gift of a couple of footballs, the ones with leather cases. The bladder inside blown up by the 'mammie' and then laced up. The art was to tuck in the 'mammie', and then lace up the case so that the laced part would be level with the rest of the case. How I hated the heavy muddy grounds. The mud caked to the ball, and taking a corner was like kicking a lump of lead. Players these days don't realise how lucky they are that science has provided them with a ball which does not collect the mud.

Then came our great chance. Ellesmere Town had not had a very good season, and at the end, with one match to play, could not raise a team. So, we, Ellesmere Corinthians, were asked if we would take over this fixture. We duly signed registration forms to make it all very legal and proper. The match was to be against Calverhall at Calverhall and in the Whitchurch & District League. The result: - Calverhall 1- Ellesmere Town (Corinthians) 3.

The next season, the Corinthians took over from Ellesmere Town, and became Ellesmere's premier team., and we played on the Wharf Meadow - what a grand pitch that was with its neat little stand and piped fencing with concrete posts all round I cannot remember the first league we entered, possibly the Whitchurch District or the Maelor League.

I think what made the Corinthians so special was the fact that right from the start it was a local team. Everyone who played came from Ellesmere and district. The club, however, attracted the attention of major clubs, which made offers to the players. These were almost always turned down. Stocker Cartwright rejected offers from Manchester City and Bolton Wanderers; Norman Dawson himself ejected offers from Manchester United and Sunderland; Percy Griffiths rejected offers from Liverpool and Cardiff. This period was probably the high-water mark of football in Ellesmere. The club was playing to big gates, and felt confident enough to change its colours to those worn by the Corinthians, formed annually from men who had played for Oxford and Cambridge, in order to compete in the F.A Cup - white shirts and navy blue shorts, The latter, by the way, were much as are worn today, and not the wide, long and floppy type usually associated with this period. This type was actually post war.

The Club won quite a few league championships, but, in spite of reaching some finals, never landed a cup. There was, however, a marvellous spirit in the Club throughout its existence.

In my opinion, and the opinion of those who played for the Corinthians, to do so was something special. It was started for local lads only and it remained so for as long as the name 'Corinthians' remained. The Club always prided itself on trying to play good, clean constructive football. We became a team considered by other clubs as being one very hard to beat. Over the years, of course, the personnel changed, and the demise of the Corinthians resulted from the departure to Wem White Stars of four principal players, and in the opinion of some it seemed necessary, to keep up the high playing standard of football in Ellesmere, players from outside must be drafted in. This was against the principles of the Corinthians, and so the 'Corinthians' as a name, disappeared. A new club named, I think, Ellesmere Rangers. was formed under a new Committee.

A number of the old Corinthians signed for the new club, and players from outside were drafted in and thus a new era of football began in Ellesmere.

Memory No 2

Ellesmere Creamery

As told to Peter Shepherd

Ellesmere Creamery was established in 1917 on the site originally occupied by an Iron Foundry. The closeness of the canal and railway played a big part for the Dairy.

Milk was collected by lorry and nearby farmers brought their milk in by horse drawn vehicles. The milk was pumped from the unloading deck after cooling to large storage tanks and then reloaded into tanks, to be conveyed to Ellesmere Station where large glass lined tanks were waiting to receive it and, via Whitchurch and Crewe, the train took the milk to London. It was unloaded and pasteurized there, then bottled mainly by United Dairies and Express Dairies for retail around the city.

A cheese plant was added and extended over the years. Before mechanisation, cheese making was known as being labour intensive with heavy manual tasks. The 17 gallon churns were very heavy and were hand tipped by the deck men into a bulk receiving tank. All equipment had to be hand washed and sterilized before being returned to the farmers, and also at the Plant, since hygiene was of the utmost importance. When the 10 gallon small squat like churns were introduced, so was the mechanical churn washer put into operation thus removing the tedious chore of hand washing.

About 1950, technical and scientific methods began to be introduced - a chain lift scheme which carried the individual cheese from the presses to the cheese store was installed. Just prior to this a new cheese store had been built containing revolving cheese shelves.

The Creamery worked closely with Fullwood's of Ellesmere who pioneered the installation of milking machines on the farms, thus introducing mechanisation. Under the direction of Unigate, 1973 saw the construction of the new boiler house and the installation of three oil fed automatic boilers. Also commissioned was the spray drier for the drying of skim milk, and whey into powder, for the adjacent new powder store. A new cheese complex was later built to include silo bulk storage of milk and the Tebel Crockett system of cheese manufacture, and by 1974 this expansion trebled the manufacturing capacity.

After seventy years of production, it was a very sad day indeed when in 1987 the Dairy was closed and which had severe economic and social effects on the whole community.

380 people were employed and this was increased to 500 during peak periods. Annual output reached 103,000,000 litres of milk and 10,600 tons of cheese.

WW1:

In 1915 the War Department took over Fenn's Moss as a Royal Artillery School of Gunnery and Cavalry Remount Station where horses were gathered to be trained before deployment. The War Office built a factory to mill the peat which was used as bedding for cavalry horses including the Remounting Unit at Bettisfield Park Camp and as a smokeless fuel in the trenches. The antiseptic sterile bog-moss was also used in wound dressings on the Front.

The extensive, flat unpopulated site well serviced by troop transport trains became an important site for training Kitcheners New Army. Four new rifle ranges were constructed being used by men from the local Camps (up to 24,000) including the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the Cheshire's and Highland Light Infantry. The Moss would have resounded with the noise of thousands of soldiers shooting Lee Enfield rifles, Vickers and Lewis machine guns. Many of these soldiers would subsequently serve in Gallipoli, the Somme and Passchendaele.

Still visible today is the track of the route of the two foot-wide narrow-gauge railway on which a 1919 munitions engine and a 1939 quarry engine hauled trams of peat to the Fenn's Old Work from 1927 until 1963, to be milled, bailed and sent to market on the Cambrian Railway.

WW2:

Before the construction of the more complex Strategic Starfish site, in 1940 portable fire baskets were set up at the Fenn's Wicket on 4 feet square 4 inch thick concrete slabs, one of which remains today. Filled with flammable materials they were to have been ignited by electrical incendiary devices. The Cambrian railway line was floated across the Moss by the Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway Company by sinking heather bales into the peat, topped by birch logs, then sand ballast and capped by flagstones.

The same year some aluminium production, vital for aircraft manufacture was relocated from Coventry to Fenn's Bank. In the early years of WW2 Britain was under heavy attack from the Luftwaffe. German navigators dropped incendiary bombs on their targets. The waves of aircraft following them dropped their bombs on the fires created by these pathfinders. To counteract this, Colonel John Turner's top-secret department came up with the idea of decoy fires. Titanium smoke flares from practice bombs were monitored by triangulation from 2 observation quadrant towers. When the incendiaries were dropped on a target, they were extinguished as soon as possible and, at the same time, all local Starfish sites were instructed to light their decoy basket fires. From 10,000 feet these would look like burning streets and factories to decoy German bombers. On this site the 65 Strategic Starfish fire baskets were lit remotely from a Nissen hut nearly a kilometre away. This is one of a chain of three such sites designed to protect Manchester, Merseyside and Crewe. The other two were at Llandegla and Llanasa. As a further decoy, drums of paraffin were lit on the cuttings trackways to simulate an airfield landing strip.

In WW2 the Mosses were close to 3 Service Flying Training Schools at Shawbury, Sealand and Tern Hill and to 3 fighter and bomber Operational Training Units at Tilstock, Rednall and Sleaf. In 1941 a 700-yard radius bombing range was set up on NE Fenn's Moss. Spitfires and Wellingtons tore over the Mosses. Titanium smoke flares from practice bombs were monitored by triangulation from 2 observation quadrant towers at either end of the Long Mile. It is not known how successful the Starfish decoys were. Archeological investigation of the areas in the Mendip Hills Starfish site where Bristol was intended to be protected have not yet revealed bomb craters.

In 2019 on the 74th anniversary of Armistice Day, conservationists working at Fenn's and Whixall Mosses National Nature Reserve found two World War II practice bombs. The bombs were uncovered while workers were excavating to build water-retaining "bunds" as part of the regeneration of the Mosses near the former bombing range. A specialist in UXBs was employed on site overseeing the works. The 8.5lb practice bombs found at Fenn's Moss are typical of the thousands dropped on the target area. Painted white with green bands on the tail, the bombs were made up of three sections within a moulded Bakelite body: a nose section for the striker, a central section filled with lead-antimony balls and the detonator, then the rear section that was filled with the chemicals that created white smoke when the bomb landed.

With thanks to 'Whixall History' and 'Fenns and Whixall Mosses History Trail'

Whixall Mosses History Trail is a fascinating walking day out and highly recommended, not just for WW1/WW2 history but also the social and natural histories of this exceptionally unusual National Nature Reserve.

Here is an interesting little story which adds to the rich history of Ellesmere *By Paul*

I was reminded about this story when I read that President Macron of France was coming to the UK to Ceremony to award the insignia of the Légion d'honneur to the city of London for granting asylum to Charles de Gaulle and his family they almost instinctively recognized as France's legitimate emissary, the ambassador of its values.

At the fall of France, General de Gaulle, eventually leader of the Free French was in Dakar. In the summer of 1940 his wife and daughter were invited to England by the British Government who rented Gladlas Hall in Dudleston Heath from Sir Francis Taylor . They were later joined from time to time by the General himself.



Gladlas Hall Dudleston

Why Ellesmere you may be asking, well the story goes that the General and Churchill didn't always see eye to eye both being very strong willed. And the general was constantly doing what I would call a "Nicola Sturgeon", by leaking to the "Free French resistance" operations that were planned for France, before they were officially for public knowledge. So, Churchill thought it better to put him and his family in a nice country house away from London.

A Mrs. Edwards, from Ellesmere was their chauffeur. She took the daughter, Elizabeth, to the Convent School at Acton Burnell and Madame de Gaulle on shopping and social trips.

The General and his family living at Gladas was quite well-known

around Ellesmere by the older people living in the town.

There was a local scout hut in the village which was converted into a Catholic church for him and his family. And another in the village hall in Welshampton.

Local historian Christopher Jobson said the couple were Roman Catholic and were regular worshippers at the two makeshift Catholic churches that were set up during the war, one in a local scout hut and the other in the village hall in Welshampton, people remember remembers seeing them at the church in Welshampton.

The fact that there were a lot of evacuees from Liverpool in the area during the war and with many of the children Catholic was the reason churches were set up in local community buildings.

A gentleman came to see me a few months ago. He said he was about 10 years old at the time of Charles De Gaulle's arrival; he said he remembers him arriving from the station in his car and walking around the town in his uniform.

He also said that a lady who had a shop in the village became very friendly with Madame de Gaulle and kept in touch well into the 1980s.

I did actually write to President Macron of France drawing his attention to part that Ellesmere and Dudleston Heath played in the life of the De Gaulle family. However, surprisingly I never received a reply, I put that down to the Covid pandemic interrupting the presidents train of thought.



General de Gaulle

Here is a Covid 19 flower pictured at Powis Castle last week. Can anyone identify it?

Mike Grundy



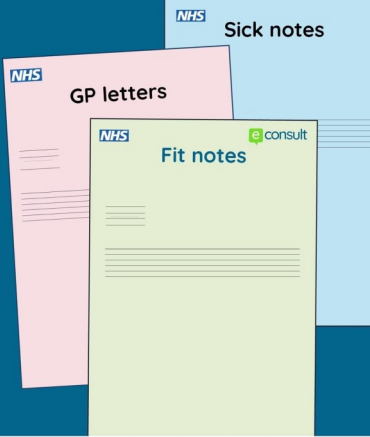
Local information

Did you know...


If you have an admin request?

There is no need to book an appointment:

Go to our practice website
Click on the eConsult banner
Click 'I want administrative help'



NHS **e consult**



Take 1 minute each day and help fight the outbreak.

Get the Covid 19 Symptom Tracker App from the App store or Google

Urgent Care Centres

Urgent Care Centres (UCCs) at Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) in Telford and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (RSH) will temporarily relocate to the Minor Injury Units (MIUs) in Whitchurch and Bridgnorth to form two Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs).

PLEASE CONTINUE TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR YOUR NEIGHBOURS

Key contact details: Ellesmere Covid-19 Community Support Group:
01691 596290 / 622689

www.ellesmerecovidsupportgroups.org.uk

Shropshire Council Helpline: 0345 678 9028

For people living in the Welshampton or Lyneal area - please contact the Parish Council on 01948 710672 or go on their website <https://www.welshamptonandlyneal-pc.gov.uk/> where you will find information about their local Community Support group

Quiz Answers
1. Alfie Allen, 2. 300, 3. Spain, 4. Edward VIII, 5. Dido, 6. Asgard, 7. Iron, 8. Rommel, 9. Mrs Dale's diary, 10. January, 11. Queen Victoria, 12. Piano, 13. Mo Farrah, 14. Haddock, 15. Austria, 16. Pilsnoll line, 17. Soup, 18. Dublin, 19. Alexander the Great, 20. Bonsai



Pastoral Support from the Churches in Ellesmere

Rev'd Pat Hawkins St Mary's Church

Tel [01691622571](tel:01691622571) email revpat.hawkins@gmail.com.

St Mary's Ellesmere:

Weekly services from 25th July:

Saturday 17:30 Said Holy Communion in the Nave
Sunday 08:00 Said Holy Communion in St Anne's
Sunday 10:15 Said Holy Communion in the Nave
Sunday 16:00 Said BCP Evening Prayer in Quire
Numbers are restricted.



Pastor Phil Wright 'The Cellar Church'.



[07711 986694](tel:07711986694) email: pastor.phil@me.com

The Cellar Church online every Sunday 10am and Wednesday 6pm

Follow the link Directly on our Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmxif6AT5w7IJH4Yxkbi6tQ>

On the cellar church website: <https://www.cellarchurch.co.uk/audio-video/>

Rev Julia Skitt Ellesmere Methodist Church

[01691 657349](tel:01691657349) email: rev.julia@mail.com

Ellesmere Methodist Church Services can be streamed from:

Wesley's Chapel in London - on Wednesdays 12.45, Thursdays 12.45 and
Sundays 9.45 and 11.00am

<https://www.wesleyschapel.org.uk/livestreaming/>

Methodist Central Hall, Westminster - Sundays at 11.00am

[https://www.youtube.com/user/MCHWevents?](https://www.youtube.com/user/MCHWevents?utm_source=Methodist+Church+House&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11417259_Update)

[utm_source=Methodist+Church+House&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11417259_Update](https://www.youtube.com/user/MCHWevents?utm_source=Methodist+Church+House&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=11417259_Update)



Ellesmere Catholic Convent Chapel

The Chapel is open, the building on the left as you drive in. 8:30am - 6pm.

If you have anything that you'd like to ask the sister to pray for you: Phone [01691 622 283](tel:01691622283)

