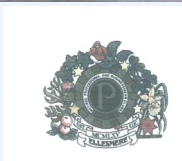




Probus Club Ellesmere



Covid-19 Lockdown 2020 Newsletter

Issue 23

Oct. 08, 2020

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From the Editor

Dear all,

Well another 2 week have gone by and it looks as if we stray into the locked down parts of Wales we may be forced to quarantine for two weeks.

And today Boris has taken another leaf out of the Donalds book and shown us the green grass the other side of Covid, again quoting the second world war. Where we will have clean air, no pollution and a house for all, fantastic health care and social service.

I was good to see so many of you on the zoom coffee meeting last week, and I hope it will be the same this week.

Just a note about Armistice Sunday—There will be NO parade or Church service this year, and only the wreath layers have been invited to the Cenotaph, as numbers are restricted to 30.

Keep safe

Paul

View from the Crow's Nest

Dear Probus friends, I hope that you, your families friends and neighbours are keeping safe and well wherever possible. Some of our members are in the throes of medical help for various reasons and we send our very best wishes for a comfortable and speedy recovery. In the wider world 84 days remain until the end of the year, October 8th was the date on which in 1939 Germany annexed western Po-



land. In these difficult days under Covid-19 we look forward to brighter times. There is a huge amount of work going on in the background across the world to research effective vaccines that most of us are unaware of. It is difficult to know what media messages can be trusted to reflect the truth, yet as the pandemic landscape is evolving so rapidly what may be seemingly true today may be different tomorrow. For me the important thing is that we all keep an eye out for each other when we can, especially the vulnerable, the isolated and those in need. It was good to hear this week of a new 'super-enzyme' that has been developed at Portsmouth University that can consume plastic pollution six times faster than any previously known one. Not much can beat the colours of autumn as a thing of beauty and for those of us fortunate enough to have Acer plants in our garden many are stunning in their leaf colours now.

Hedgehogs are starting to think about hibernating and I know how they feel!

Your Committee will be meeting by Zoom in the next few days to talk through how we will be organising our AGM and we will let you know the outcome. Many Probus and other Clubs across the country and wider are managing AGMs on-line in various ways and it is important that we 'keep the ball rolling'.

Meantime, very best wishes to you, thank you for your continued support of our valued Club.

I am sure that you will join me as usual to give our sincere thanks to Paul for putting together these excellent, entertaining and informative Lockdown Newsletters, all contributions from members are very welcome. Stay safe, well, dry and warm.

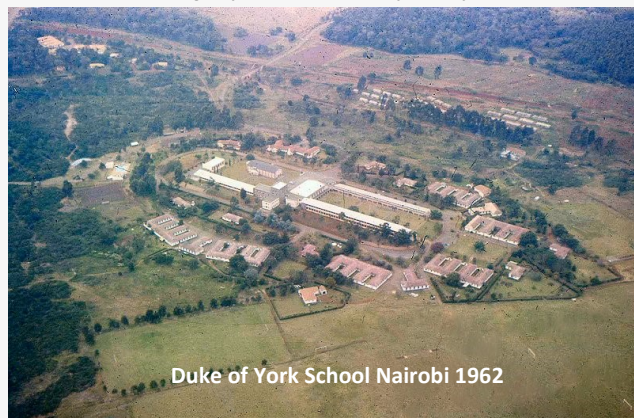
Jeremy

Steptoe And Son <https://youtu.be/sFuxKIK8Bus>



Urambo to Nairobi

There were no senior schools in Tanganyika and on leaving our prep schools there, we had to go to schools in Kenya. In Nairobi there were two very colonial style schools – The Prince of Wales School which had been founded in the late 1920s and The Duke of York School which was the new, post World War 2 school. I had applied to go to the former, where there was a good number of older boys whom I knew but, for reasons best known to itself, the Department of Education allocated me and two of my friends to Duke of York, known as “Duko”, where we knew almost no-one, because we had come from Tanganyika and virtually everyone else there was from Kenya with one or two from Uganda.



The journey from Urambo to Nairobi was a multi stage one. Again, the first part of the journey was by train on the central line, which I had gone along as far as Itigi when I was going to Mbeya, but this time we travelled farther east, to the town of Dodoma (now the capital of Tanzania) on the Cape Town to Cairo, Great North Road. From Dodoma we travelled once more by bus, this time northwards on the GNR to Arusha. In many ways this was a very interesting journey. Initially, we went along the edge of the Masai Steppe of central Tanganyika and passed the town of Kondoa Irangi. This Swahili name means “extract colour” and referred to the Masai tribesmen digging up the naturally occurring red ochre with which to paint themselves. From Kondoa the road followed the Rift Valley and crossed a mountain ridge called Pienaar’s Heights. This ridge had featured prominently during the First World War, when the

German General, Von Lettow Vorbeck had given the British and Colonial troops under South African General Dan Pienaar, a real run for their money.

Then we would stop for lunch at Babati, where the government rest house served up the inevitable tough chicken. The remainder of the route was along the floor of the Great Rift Valley and then it skirted the eastern shore of Lake Manyara. In most years, during the heavy rains, the level of the lake would rise considerably and the road could be under as much as six inches of water for many miles. Finally, we would reach Arusha in the evening and there, luxury, we were put into a hotel for the night.

However, on my first journey to Nairobi, there had been a derailment on the main rail line, close to the town of Manyoni, midway between Itigi and Dodoma, and our train ground to a halt. We waited stationary, close to the derailment for most of the day, until a fleet of buses arrived to transfer us to Dodoma, which we did not reach until long after our onward bus had departed. After a very late meal in the Railway Hotel, we started on the next stage of the journey. It had to be taken that night by a relief bus and we reached Arusha in the early hours next morning. There, after a few hours sleep in the hotel, we met up with the other boys from our school and then we had to board a Mirali, privately owned bus, to continue to Nairobi.

This part of the journey was interesting in that we travelled over open bush country with considerable game only short distances from our road. We had to cross the territorial border between Tanganyika and Kenya at Namanga River but, in those colonial days, that was a straitforward matter. We stopped then at the town of Kajiado for very late lunch (chicken once again) but my main memory of the place is of the enormous stack of cattle bones, perhaps 6 or 7 metres high, alongside the road. These bones were from one of the larger abattoirs in that part of the country and no one seemed to be in any hurry to remove them.

My other memory of Kajiado was the large number of dark red Fiat trucks operating from a garage there. This was in the days only a few years after World War 2 and all of these Fiats had been captured from the Italians during the Abyssinia Campaign and had been brought down to Kenya. An enterprising transport contractor had bought a great many of them from the MOD and they were kept in the garage at Kajiado. (From memory, those trucks had 5 cylinder diesel engines, quite unusual in those days) They were not particularly easy to start during cold weather. In the winter, and yes, there is winter there, particularly at altitudes of 4000 ft and above, the starting procedure was very interesting. An oil soaked rag would be wrapped round the inlet manifold and set on fire. While the manifold was heating up a rope was attached to the starting handle and then, when the manifold was judged to be warm enough, one man would stand on the crank handle and jump while another man would give the rope a heavy tug, and the engine would fire immediately, and then burble away gently. Primitive perhaps, but very effective.

The journey from Kajiado was over the Athi Plains, one of the biggest game reserves in Kenya. There we would see numerous giraffe and many species of antelope, and occasionally, lion or cheetah. Finally we would reach Nairobi in the early evening. There at the bus station, the School Bus would be waiting for us. It was another wooden bodied Bedford, not unlike an army 4x2 truck, and with only canvas side curtains to try to keep out the rain.

I made that northward journey and the return trip only twice because, after a UK leave, my family moved to Dar es Salaam, the then capital of the country. Dar es Salaam was located on the Indian Ocean Coast, and my journeys from there were changed considerably.

Did you ever have a John Bull printing outfit?

I enjoyed making rubber stamps with mine, carefully assembling the letters and trying to get them straight as I made my mark on many items around the house – and it wasn't always welcomed! Little did I know that this would be the start of an interest that has stayed with me through the years.

At the age of 11 I found myself at a new school, with all kinds of facilities and equipment that were not to be found in my primary – sports (which never really did appeal to me), science labs, workshops for wood and metal working, music and art rooms. Although I can't draw or paint, somehow the practicality of the art room captured my imagination. And in the far corner was a large, silver painted machine with a huge flywheel and which was operated by a treadle. I soon discovered that this was a printing machine, though I have no recollection of its make. Then I saw older boys working with it – setting type, inking the machine and then printing their work. Magic! The time came for our group to learn something of this, and I had found something creative that I really enjoyed and I was hooked.



Over the months I learned how to do the various tasks associated with letterpress. I became familiar with the apparently random (but strangely practical) layout of the typecases for upper and lower case letters – they were stored in a cabinet with the capitals above the small letters, hence the terms. I could almost do it blindfolded. In my lunch breaks and after school I began to print whatever I could. I did invitations for my parents' silver wedding (and thought that being married that long was amazing!), using a fine silver powder on the wet ink to produce the final effect. I still have a programme for a Church Fete that I produced, each side in a different colour.

Then came a breakthrough in my dealings with the PE department. I simply did not enjoy sport generally – though some were better than others – and always looked for reasons for not being at lessons. It seems my teachers took a similar view of me (my PE report once said 'Useless, but tries hard'), and they also became aware of my growing printing abilities. When they wanted any work doing I was given the job – and also the time in PE and Games lessons to do it. Bliss! No wet, muddy fields, running through local lanes and all the rest. They used postcards (remember them?) to offer, accept or confirm sporting fixtures, and these were printed so they could just tick boxes. All this was long before the days of e-mail.

Leaving school I had to leave all this behind as well. I bought the occasional copy of *Exchange and Mart* and saw adverts for printing equipment, not least from a company called Adana. They offered table-top machines that could do a reasonable range of smaller jobs, and I longed to have one – but the cost ruled it out, so I could only dream.

Roll on six years or so, and I was in St Helens as a curate. We used local printers for some work, mainly the parish magazine, but wanted something we could use for short runs to produce programme cards, tickets, handouts etc. My colleague, who had no knowledge of my printing experience at school, suddenly asked me if I knew anything about it. He knew someone who was selling a press and equipment in Southport, and they were asking £30. When I said that I did know a little, we decided to go for it, and bought it between us.

It was a Peerless No 1 treadle machine, smaller than the school one, but very similar.



This was collected, and quickly assembled. Soon I was busy producing all kinds of work – letter-heads, visiting cards, information leaflets. There was a lot of type, but not much of any particular font, so I decided to concentrate on Gill Sans, Palace Script (which came with the machine) and Klang for headings. All the rest went into a small sack and I went to a type foundry (sadly long gone) in Preston. They bought the scrap, and I used the proceeds to get the decent type I needed. I was back in business!

I bought my colleague out when I moved to my second curacy near Altrincham, and the press was again set up. The same kind of jobs were done as well as my own wedding invitations, using the silver powder again.

Time to move on to my own parish, and the machine came with me – for the same range of work. Set up in the garage it was to be a daylight occupation and not pursued in winter. In all of this it was an enjoyable activity, but essentially a tool for the job and rather time-consuming. The arrival of photocopying meant that most of the projects once done by letterpress were now done quickly, cleanly and in a warm place, and it fell out of use. Eventually I decided to sell, and the whole lot went for £50! I was quite satisfied with that price at the time, but boy do I regret selling it now! I even got rid of the guardbooks – samples of everything I printed – when we moved. What use would I have for those now? Oh dear!

Little further thought was given to all of this until I retired. My wife was looking into bookbinding, and came across the British Printing Society. This has a Shropshire branch, so we made enquiries and went to a branch meeting in Oswestry. Suffice it to say that we came away with a small Adana press on loan, and set about acquiring some type and other necessary items. Before long I was printing again – so much came back to me. We began to look for a machine of our own, and found an Adana 8 x 5 at a printers' fair – known as a wayzgoose – along with some other bits and pieces.

But now it is different – this is not a schoolboy interest or a working tool but a hobby, and therefore a chance to be creative. Gradually ideas formed, and invitations, cards, bookmarks, coasters and letterheads have begun to emerge. After printing my parents' silver wedding invitations all those years ago the plan was to print some for our ruby wedding – but Covid-19 put paid to that. Never mind – there's still plenty to enjoy! Where can you see letterpress printing? Some suggestions:



Adana 8 x 5

The Grange has a printshop with several presses which can be visited when they have open days, and they also offer courses. (Sadly due to Covid 19 all courses are cancelled until 2021)

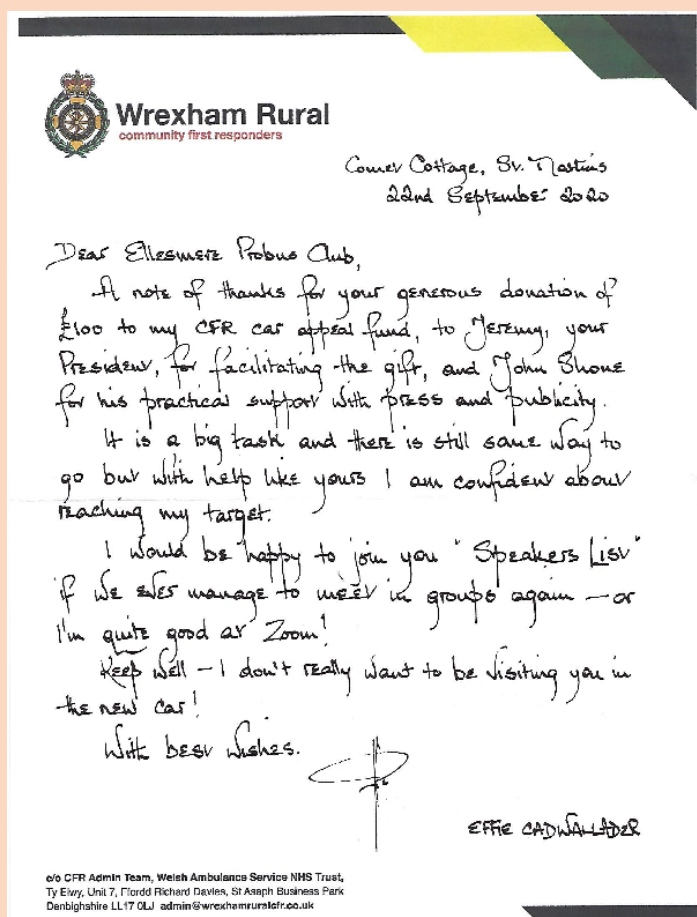
Blists Hill near Ironbridge has a printshop in the re-created town, and this is sometimes working if volunteers are available. They print for the other

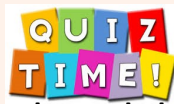
'businesses' in the town, including many of their brown paper bags.

Best is Robert Smail's Printing Works at Innerleithen, in the Scottish borders. This is a National Trust for Scotland property, and members of the NT can visit free! You see the office, the guardbooks, the presses (often doing local jobs) and the composing room.

You can even typeset your name and have a bookmark printed to take home. An amazing place for anyone who is interested in things mechanical, not just the printing aspect.

For further information click on this link <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/robert-smails>





General Knowledge Quiz

1. Name the profession - Someone who designs dance moves.
2. Name the profession- He makes and fits shoes for horses.
3. Name the profession - A medical professional who collects and tests blood.
4. Name the profession - A dealer of cards at a casino.
5. Name the profession - A personal, private driver.
6. Name the profession - A professional wine waiter.
7. Name the profession - Front of house at a restaurant.
8. Name the profession - A head chefs second in command.
9. Name the profession - A brain surgeon.
10. Name the profession - An x-ray technician.
11. How many legs did 'The Famous Five' have between them?
12. Which black bearded captain is Tintin's friend?
13. Which actress played Cleopatra when Rex Harrison played Julius Caesar?
14. What is the surname of the Welsh footballer who was sold to Real Madrid in the summer of 2013 for a record €100 million?
15. Who sits on The Wool Sack in the UK's House of Lords?
16. Which Richard played Chris Kringle in the 1994 remake of 'A miracle on 34th St'?
17. The nuclear reactor at Sellafield is in which UK county?
18. What is the highest mountain in Africa?
19. Who painted the 'Mona Lisa'?
20. Which US city has a baseball team called 'The Braves'?

Answers page 9

Some facts about autumn

- The autumn equinox starts around 22/23rd September in the Northern Hemisphere and ends with the winter solstice around 21 December. The autumn equinox is also known as Harvest Home, Mabon and Alban-Elfed. Sometimes it is referred to as the 'aurora season' because clear evening skies make for good stargazing.
- The full moon nearest to the autumn equinox is known as the 'Harvest Moon', it was believed to be vital for an abundant harvest. The autumn equinox is when there are the same number of hours of daylight as darkness.
- The term 'autumn' can be traced back to the Etruscan word 'autu' which means passing of the year. Before the 16th Century autumn was commonly used to refer to the season of harvest.
- In ancient times autumn was one of the most important periods of the year as daylight faded and darkness grew. Many societies practiced rituals and offerings to their gods and goddesses for a bountiful harvest to see them through the winter. Aztecs in ancient Mexico used to practice human sacrifice to honour their goddess of sustenance and fertility.
- In ancient Japan farmers practiced fire offerings in honour of Huichi in exchange for energy to finish the harvest.
- The origin of the Christian celebration of the 'Day of Assumption' was from the ancient celebration of the 'Feast of Our Lady of Harvest'.
- During autumn many birds prepare for their winter migration while other animals practice their mating instincts and some prepare for hibernation.
- In Munich, Germany Oktoberfest is celebrated during autumn. Over 5 million litres of beer are consumed. It all began in 1810 during the wedding of the crown prince. Social distancing and lock-down rules may have a substantial impact in 2020!
- According to superstition, when a person catches a falling leaf during autumn good luck will come to them.
- Chlorophyll is the chemical which makes tree leaves green. As it declines over summer other chemicals become more prominent in the leaves. These are responsible for the vibrant ambers, reds and yellows of autumn. The chemicals involved are types of flavonoids, carotenoids and anthocyanin.
- A study in 'Journal of Ageing Research' found that babies born during the autumn months are more likely to live to 100 than those born during the rest of the year. The study showed that 30% of centenarians born during 1880-1895 were born in autumn months.
- Generally the autumn equinox always falls on 22 or 23 September in the Northern hemisphere. Because the Gregorian calendar is not quite in perfect symmetry with the Earth's orbit, the autumn equinox will very occasionally fall on 24th September. This last happened in 1931 and will next happen in 2303.
- In Greek mythology autumn began when Persephone was abducted by Hades to be the Queen of the Underworld. In distress Persephone's mother, Demeter (the goddess of the harvest) caused all the crops to fail until her daughter was allowed to return, marking spring.
- We typically think of 'fall' as the North American version of the word 'autumn' but in fact it was in widespread use in English until relatively recently. Originally a shortening of the phrase 'fall of the leaf' was in common use in England in the 17th century. The word 'autumn' entered English from the French 'automne' and didn't become common usage until the 18th century.
- The best known migrating butterfly is the monarch from North America. In autumn as the weather gets colder monarchs migrate south. Some travel more than 3,000 km (1,800 miles) at an average speed of up to 30mph. They spend winter in Mexico and California where hundreds of millions cluster on tree trunks in a few special forests. In spring they mate before flying north again to lay their eggs.

The Series of Memories of Ellesmere Residents
Extracts from book 3 of the "Memories" Booklets Published in early 2000 by the Ellesmere Society

Memory No 12

The Telephone and Post Office

Remembered by Tony Hamlin

In the early years of the century, many telephone exchanges were privately run. (Hull was the only survivor at the end of 1999). Calling procedure was somewhat haphazard. First one had to gain the operator's attention and then, if more than a local call was involved, the operator had to gain the attention of the next operator, the call being passed from hand to hand until it reached its destination. If any link in the chain was not available, the caller had to start again from the beginning.

By the time that the telephone reached Ellesmere, the system had become a virtual monopoly of the General Post Office. This eventually enabled automatic exchanges to be brought in, but they were a long time coming to places such as Ellesmere. The first switchboard in Ellesmere was installed in the present Post Office in the room to the right of the present counter. At that time, the counter was in front of this room, being re-sited in the 1980's to its present position.

Telephones then were few and far between, and the telegraph was the main means of rapid communication. Telegrams were sent and received between Post Offices in Morse code, and the decoded message was written out, and delivered by uniformed Telegraph boys. In the case of Ellesmere, it was delivered by a Telegraph lady, Miss Cartwright, known as Auntie Jess, who lived in the black and white house just across the road. A crank operated signal in the switchboard room summoned her when she was needed. (She also had a postal delivery round).

Telegraph and telephone duties appear to have operated together. Telephone numbers were simple - the public call box in the Post Office was Ellesmere 1, and the first "Hello Girl", a Miss Nellie Adams, was also able to serve on the Post Office Counter. There appears to have been no night service.

At some time the switchboard was moved to the first floor, and a Mr. Sellars and his daughter became caretaker] operators, living in a 4 bedroomed flat. When Mr. Sellars died, his daughter continued as day-time supervisor with additional staff and a Mr. and Mrs. Humphries took over night duties - 8pm to 8am Monday to Friday, and 8pm Saturday to 8am Monday. They were allowed to go to bed, but in the war years, (1939-1945) Mr. Humphries had to do full night duty to inform □ police, fire brigade, A.R.P. and the surrounding military camps of air raid warnings. The fire alarm siren on the old Fire Station, now Ellesmere A.G., was operated from the telephone exchange until the Ripplay system carried the signal, the electricity mains, into the homes of the required personnel. Mr Humphries died, but Mrs. Humphries carried on, assisted by a Mrs. Jean Roberts until she retired at seventy. Mrs. Jean Roberts bore the brunt of the serious "Foot and Mouth" disease outbreak of the 1960's - another period of heavy 24 hour telephone activity. The telephone service continued to expand, and the exchange had to be moved to larger room over the public office, the ceiling of which had to be reinforced with steel girder to take the weight of more switchboards. A first floor window had to be taken out, and traffic in Scotland Street halted while these were winched in.

Eventually, in 1969, automation took over and the new exchange in Swan Hill is built. It was the end of the road for the "Hello Girls". On the day of the change -over, the very first "Hello Girl" in Ellesmere, by that time a very elderly Miss Adams, attended a ceremony in the New Town Hall, and pressed the button to bring the new exchange into operation. Thirty odd years later, it was becoming difficult to remember the labour intensive me of the early telephone service, when a trunk call was an adventure, being audibly handed on from operator to operator until it reached its destination - or became lost - and when an international call was an event requiring hours - or at busy times, days - of notice to make the connection.

Joy Scott-Hamilton kindly provided some of the information in this article, and also has memories of other Post Office characters and events'-

During the early 1940's, a Miss Kate Powell worked on the counter. Unfortunately, she had problems with her feet which necessitated her always wearing carpet slippers whilst working. Being a staunch Methodist, Kate liked to sing hymns, her "signature tune" being "Art thou weary, art thou languid, art thou sore distressed". She was a delightful character.

The 1939-1945 War saw the introduction of airgraph letters. These comprised single sheets handed in flat, without envelopes. They were not folded because they were later photographed and the photostats were sent to the recipient.

Another aspect during the war was the handing in to the Post Office of boxes of books for onward dispatch to the forces, free of charge.

Memory No 13

Life as a Local Newspaper Correspondent

Remembered by Joan Connah

How did it all start? I was born in Cheshire into a farming family and came to Shropshire when my parents returned to their native county. When I left school my mother was already terminally ill, so I was destined to keep house for Father, and work on the farm. This continued until a year after my marriage, when Father □ re-married and I was about to become a mother. When my daughter was about three months old, my husband returned from work one evening and announced that he had found me a little job! He had heard that the Oswestry and Border Counties Advertizer was looking for a correspondent in Ellesmere. So, he had volunteered my services and the editor was coming to see me.

I began work on February 1st 1967. I went out, complete with daughter in her pram, during the day to gather in local news. My husband then typed it out in the evenings. Typewriter and me were complete strangers in those days. You do not have much use for typing, working in a potato field or mopping up a kitchen floor! All went well for just over four months and then my husband died suddenly. My small amount of pocket money became a much-needed supplement to a widow's pension. time and met some wonderful people.

Cont. page 8

Out came the typewriter and instruction book, and I soon progressed to two fingers, one on each hand. I did my best to obtain as much news as possible, thus giving me the chance of a decent income. But when I was only being paid 1d (old pence) per printed line, not for what I sent in but for what they decided to print, it did not exactly amount to a fortune.

Ellesmere in those days was a small country market town, dependent mainly on farming and its allied industries. Local organizations were few and much of the social life revolved around the churches, their meetings and fund raising functions. Whist was very popular, but Bingo had not arrived in those early years. There was a strong choral society, the Ellesmere Development Association organized a flower show and the occasional charity event took place. Football, played on Wharf Meadow at the rear of the dairy, and cricket were both very alive and there was keen cycling club. Each of these differing activities produced interesting features for publication. The schools had their sports days and Ellesmere boasted what was probably one of the best carnivals in the county. Weddings, which are now covered by the family photographer, and funerals, were all part of the job and went into the papers as news items.

During my early years of reporting, the town council was strongly opposed to change. In particular they opposed the development of private housing, which could have stopped the exit of young people who were moving to neighbouring towns in order to buy their first homes. The advent of the North Shropshire District Council changed those attitudes. Ellesmere found itself with a large new council estate and private development increased steadily. This support groups, which started up in the town over those years. I witnessed the birth of most of them. Other changes during the latter part of the century include the move by the Commrades' Club to its present site, the building of the swimming pool and the erection of the Eglantyne Jebb Centre. I worked through the death of Ellesmere's cottage Hospital and the birth of the Community Care Centre, the loss of the Ellesmere Dairy, the fight to save Lake-land's School and the death and re-birth of the Ellesmere Carnival, in addition the Ellesmere Festival Ellesmere Regatta, Ellesmere Triathlon and 10 kilometre Run all came into being. All of these created extra workload.

By the end Of. the century, I worked for three weekly papers; the Oswestry and Boarder Counties Advertizer, which is in the North Wales Group; the North Shropshire Chronicle, which is part of Shropshire Newspapers, and the Whitchurch Herald, which is in the Chester Chronicle Group. My little part-time job has grown something more like an eight-day week. Like all jobs it has had disadvantages, But I have enjoyed It most of the time and met some wonderful people.

Memory No 14

The Early Years

Remembered by Mary Thomas

Trish Jones of Ellesmere Primary School has kindly allowed us to print this letter, written by Mrs. Mary Ethel Thomas of The Flat, Trimpley, on December 3rd 1986.

I was six years old (in 1895) when I came to live in Ellesmere and my sister Queenie was four. I am now ninety eight. My father had died and we came to live with an auntie. We had previously lived in Worksop. There were not many motors about then; more horses and traps were around the streets.

The Methodist Church was where Mr. Scott now has a garage. The Cottage Hospital, Doctors' Surgery and Methodist Church (in Trimpley) have all been built since I came to live in Ellesmere. I went to a school, a wooden structure painted green, up St John's Hill. In the schoolroom we had a Band of Hope two nights a week, and all the children used to sing 'My drink is water bright'. Trimpley Hall has been taken down many years ago. Dances used to be held there quite frequently. The saleroom in Wharf Road used to be the Boys' School. The Headmaster was Mr. W .E. Griffiths, whom the boys nicknamed 'Weg'.

We used to have a Town Crier who would ring a bell then shout 'Oh yeah' 'Oh yeah' 'Oh yeah', and tell us what was going on in town each day. The Workhouse was up Swan Hill and we would see tramps making their way up the hill to seek a night's lodging there. It was the end of the Boer War (about 1901) and a number of us small children went to Ellesmere Railway Station to meet some of the soldiers who were returning. Mr. Alfred Bate, the vet was one. We all carried long sticks decked with flowers and on top a tin can, and as we marched up Trimpley, we rattled our cans.

The mere would be frozen over in winter and folk would be playing hockey on the ice, and at night, skating whilst carrying lanterns - a wonderful sight in the darkness. In some of the very cold winters, horses and carts would go across the mere to deliver goods to Oteley.

In Cross Street, there was a fountain and horses stopped to drink as they passed through Ellesmere. Sometimes on a Saturday, a Punch and Judy show would come and stay on the Moor by the mere. Crowds of children would be there enjoying the fun. Schooldays were very happy for us little children. I never remember the cane being used. We used to have children's sports on the Wharf Meadow on some Saturdays, and one girl asked the teacher, 'Is Ethel Sides going in? If she is I'm not because she's a very fast runner.' Afterwards we would go home on a (canal) boat shouting and cheering all the way. "Happy Days!"

NOTE: Also returned from the Boer War in 1901 were Trooper Bert Jones and Sapper Earle (son of Sgt. Maj. Earle), as well as Lieut. W.R.K. Mainwaring, who had been seriously wounded. Alf Bate held the rank of 'Veterinary Lieutenant'.

The months are rolling by and Christmas, New Year and Burns' Night are just around the corner.

After the resounding praise of haggis from a number of our Probus members on the recent Zoom virtual-coffee-morning I thought I should do a bit of research. I would say though that I have been a frequent visitor to Glasgow and Edinburgh with work in my time and once I had tasted haggis, often for breakfast, I became an instant convert. There was no whisky sauce with it I hasten to say. So I thought I as a Sassenach (Latin origin 'Saxones' being Saxons) should learn more about the haggis than just the pleasure of eating it! Forgive me Bob, Mike, Bill and others for this article, I look forward to some feedback!

What is Haggis?

Haggis is a savoury 'pudding', made generally from the heart, liver and lungs of the sheep along with oatmeal, onion, suet, salt, a dash of whisky and spices. The ingredients are stuffed into a sheep's stomach and gently boiled. They were used because the offal went off first originally when out hunting and was at risk of wastage. Known as "taigeis" in Gaelic originally the offal from any animal would be used including pig, beef, venison or occasionally rabbit/hare. Nowadays synthetic coverings are increasingly used instead of the stomach with allegedly no change to the taste. It is also possible to buy gluten-free and/or vegan haggis! How times move on..

Origins

Although now recognised as a classic Scottish dish, historians have mixed views about its origins. In 2009 the world of haggis was rocked by controversy when a Glasgow-born food historian claimed to have discovered a cookery book from 1615 'proving' that haggis was actually an English invention. Imagine the outrage! Some believe that it was introduced by the Romans and others by the Vikings at some point between the 8th and 13th centuries, its name derived from Old Norse 'haggr'. Others still claim it as a French invention. As Walter Scott noted 'hag' is also surprisingly similar to the French verb 'hacher' meaning to chop or mince. George IV made a grand visit to Scotland in 1822. At the banquet thrown in the king's honour everyone was decked out in tartan (previously the preserve of the Highlands and Islands) and care was taken to select foods with strong Scottish identity including the haggis. This visit sparked a craze for all things Scottish. Tartan became the height of fashion, a memorial to William Wallace was erected in Stirling, Robert Burns honoured at a national festival in Ayr for instance. Haggis became hugely popular as a symbol of Scottish-ness. By the late 19th Century haggis was widely recognised as the 'national' dish, underpinned by

Robert Burns' famous ode.

What is a wild haggis and where would I find one?

Wild haggis is a fictional beastie in Scottish folklore, a shy creature found in the Highlands. Round and fur-covered the foot-long animal's legs are longer on one side than the other. This helps it stand on the steep slopes of the Highlands but can only run around in circles in one direction. During the mating season they make a sound similar to the bagpipe. To find one, experts suggest that you douse yourself with liberal amounts of whisky, adopt a stumbling gait and stagger from side to side so the wild haggis cannot see you approaching. If the wild haggis hunt is (as normal) unsuccessful, a large glass of Alba-Seltzer is recommended to recover from the hunt.

Eating haggis?

Haggis is traditionally eaten with neeps and tatties. Neeps are swedes (occasionally turnips) and tatties potatoes. Traditionally they can be served mashed separately or mashed together. A whisky cream sauce is a common accompaniment. Recipes are very personal and often secret within butchers and families. A basic haggis though can be cooked at home if you can find the ingredients from a friendly local butcher in North Shropshire. It might have to be through the back door though.

Other essential facts about haggis:

Haggis is banned in the US. In 1971 it became illegal to import haggis from the UK due to a ban on food containing sheep lung which constitutes 10-15% of the traditional recipe. The ban encompasses all lungs as fluid such as stomach acid and phlegm may enter the lung during slaughter. Strangely both stomach acid and phlegm are constituent parts of natural human coughing and reflux and don't seem to damage too much. Wild Beluga caviar is also banned in the US, an equivalent luxury to haggis.

Haggis is strongly associated with Burns' night (25th January). In 1801 on the fifth anniversary of the death of Robert Burns his friends got together to celebrate his life. Burns immortalised the haggis in his poem 'Address to a Haggis' so it was the obvious food to serve. Events are held across the world where people recite his poetry, sing, drink whisky and -of course- eat haggis.

Haggis is packed with many essential minerals such as iron, magnesium, selenium, calcium, zinc and copper, contributing to a healthy immune system. Also essential vitamins such as A, C, B6, B12, Niacin and D.

It would be a delight for us all at one of our forthcoming Zoom Probus meetings for one or more of our fine members with origins North of the Border to recite the full 'Address to the Haggis' and share the presentation with we sassenachs. **Bob/Bill please would you take a lead on that?**

Verse 1, address to a Haggis Robert ("Rabbie") Burns:

"Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face
Great chieftain o' the pudding-race
Aboon them a' ye take your place
Painch, tripe or theorem
Weel are ye wordy o' a grace
As lang's my arm"

Jeremy



Could this be one of the very rare photos of a Haggis in the wild

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'


Sick notes

GP letters

Fit notes

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. Choreographer, 2. Farrier (A Blacksmith only makes shoes, does NOT fit them)
3. Phlebotomist, 4. Croupier, 5. Chauffeur, 6. Sommelier, 7. Maître D', 8. Sous chef
9. Neurologist, 10. Radiographer, 11. 12, 12. Haddock, 13. Elizabeth Taylor, 14. Gareth Bale
15. Lord Chancellor, 16. Attenborough, 17. Cumbria, 18. Kilimanjaro, 19. Leonardo Da Vinci, 20. Atlanta



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)

