



Probus
Club Ellesmere



Covid-19 Lockdown
2020 Newsletter

Issue 29

Dec. 31, 2020



H A P P Y N E W Y E A R

Homemade
GIFTS MADE EASY

The Committee wish all our Members a healthy & peaceful new year

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From the Editor

Dear all, Best wishes
Paul

From the Crow's Nest

My not so early years of motoring: Part 3 *by Brian Rodgers*

When I returned to East Africa, initially to Kenya, a friend decided that he would like to come with me, and since he had a new Frogeye Austin Healey Sprite, we decided to drive the 1570 miles from the Copper Belt instead of flying. Our route was via the Great North Road, on the old Cape to Cairo Route. An interesting journey is an understatement. Only 280 miles were black topped and the remainder was either gravel or unsurfaced. We drove during the tail end of the rains, a week before the start of the East African Safari, and since the road skirted Lake Manyara in northern Tanganyika, several miles were under water. (The Safari would also be negotiating this same road) We managed to get through by driving with the offside wheels on the central ridge between the parallel wheel ruts and I only had to get out to push on a few occasions. We stopped in Kenya to watch the Safari, and while we were there I managed to damage the Sprite quite badly one night. I had forgotten that a long road curve had just been resurfaced and was covered in loose chippings, and I took that bend quite fast. Talk about driving on marbles! The tail came out and I corrected, but I could not catch the slide. There were 9" diameter wooden marker posts on the outside of the curve and I ran the back end of the car along those with a sound rather like running one's finger along the teeth of a comb. By the time we came to a standstill the back end had six deep dents in it, which took a considerable amount of panel beating, and despite my major error, the owner and I remained friends.

The car was repaired quickly and my friend sold it and then he departed from Kenya, before he was deported by Immigration. I went on to Uganda to work and my first posting was to a small town near the Kenya border. Shortly after my arrival I told one of our drivers to take a load of material to that town in the late afternoon. He refused very politely, telling me that I could dismiss him if I wished but he would not drive there late in the day. Puzzled by this, I spoke to our site foreman and he explained the situation to me. There had been a case of murder on the road that we used and that was why our drivers were afraid and were not prepared to drive on it late in the day.

My company car was a Ford Escort, not the later Escort, well known to rally fans, but an Ford Anglia with an estate body. It was the base model, without the wooden side strips of the up-market Esquire, but it had the same 1172 side valve engine, producing about 30 bhp on a good day. Mated to a 3 speed box with far from sporting ratios, it would reach 25 - 30 mph in 2nd and might go on to reach a heady 55 in top. Its electrics provided minimal lighting. The windscreen wipers were vacuum operated, with the vacuum tapped from the inlet manifold. Open the throttle wide and the wipers slowed to a standstill. When I visited my parents in Kenya at month end, I had to travel over a road which reached an altitude of 9000 ft. At night in a tropical downpour, that was a nightmare. To achieve any speed above 30, full throttle was needed, hence no wipers. Add the water streaming freely over the windscreen to lack of light from the flickering candles of headlights, and very little in front could be seen, particularly, wandering animals. However, I was young and fit and, since I had to be back on duty by 6.30 on Monday mornings, so I took it all in my stride.

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I stayed in town for only about three months and then I had several weeks out in the bush, to carry out a survey of a proposed mountain road from altitude 3700 up to 6300 ft. For this I was given a Series II Land Rover soft top.

That car really earned its keep, doing enormous mileages up and down the mountain. I was well away from any towns and my contact with civilisation was by messages sent over the Police Post radio each evening. When I needed any item urgently, I would send my daily message and then have a response on the following evening. Normally, that would be a message to be at the nearby airstrip at a certain time on the next day. After the rains the strip was overgrown with elephant grass and, because of ant bear holes and other hidden hazards, aircraft could not land on it, hence I would park the Land Rover, with the hood up, at one end of the strip. The Piper Cub aircraft, flown by my area manager (an ex WWII Lancaster pilot) would arrive at the arranged time, flying slow and low. Just as he reached the strip, Peter's hand would appear out of the cabin window and down would come a package aimed at the Land Rover hood. His aim was always good and the packages would hit the hood and then bounce into the grass, but their falls had been broken and no damage had been sustained. I had a lot of other excitement while I was there and including having our measuring steel tape walked through by a giraffe. Rather more exciting, was late one afternoon when the Police corporal in charge of the Police Post came to see me and asked me to assist by transporting him and his men to a point on the side of a major local river, some miles away. Apparently a group of Karamajong cattle thieves had come down from the north, crossed the river, fatally speared the two herdsmen who were looking after their tribe's communally-owned cattle, and then rustled the herd, crossing the river on their way back north. The corporal wanted to intercept the raiders before they went too far and needed to cross the river before dark.

I obliged without delay and admired these men enormously. They were armed with only the corporal's 12 bore pump-action shotgun and each constable had only a wooden club. However, they were not in the slightest afraid of the spear armed raiders. I cannot remember how we achieved it, but we managed to fit myself and driver plus the corporal and six constables into my short wheelbase Land Rover. We passed the scene of the rustling and both herdsmen's bodies were lying with the spears still in place, having entered their chests from the front and then protruded through their backs under the shoulder blades. I took the Police as close to the river as I was able. From there we could see the cattle a few miles away, beyond the river. The corporal thanked me for my help and then he and his men departed at a trot. I heard later that they had fired a shot at the raiders, who departed at high speed, and all the cattle were recovered. Sadly I had no further excitement there and I duly completed the survey, but then I went down with a very bad bout of malaria and after that, when I had recovered, I was transferred to a new road construction site. Initially, I had no transport there and had to rely on lifts.

However, the site accountant told me that I should follow the example of other staff and buy a suitable private car, use it for work and then claim mileage. I followed his example and I bought a very good used Austin A90 Westminster, fitted with Laycock overdrive. With its 2.6 litre 6 cylinder engine, it was very fast for those days and was reasonably economical. I was doing large mileages and the car paid itself off in a few months.

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While the work was very interesting and challenging, being in the bush permanently and working a 6½ day week was not what I really wanted and I jumped at the opportunity to take up a position in a town on the Tanganyika coast, on the side of the Indian Ocean.

I duly piled my belongings into the A90, left the bush, and off I went for the 900 mile journey. Luxury, only about 400 miles of the route was on gravel. The only mishap occurred when I was approaching a town and still going at about 50 at the start of the 30 limit. Looking in the rear view mirror, I saw a Police Land Rover coming up fast. Not wanting to show my brake lights as I braked, I turned off the ignition and braked hard, until my speed had dropped below 30. Then, when I switched on again, there was an almighty bang as the unburnt fuel in the exhaust system exploded and I blew the baffles out of the silencer. Other than that I had a trouble free journey and I arrived in Tanga to enjoy civilisation, female company and interesting motoring once more.

Next time; sprints, hill climbs, Go Karts and rallying in East Africa.

Pam Ayres "To Coronavirus"

I'm normally a social girl and love to meet me
mates
But lately with the virus here I can't go out the
gates
You see, we are the 'oldies' now and need to
stay inside
If they haven seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died.
They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.
We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the '60s -
If you only knew the truth!
There was sex and drugs and rock and roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank,
And partied and were quite outrageous flirts.
Then we settled down, got married,
Turned into someone's Mum
Somebody's wife and Nana
Who on earth did we become?
We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside
For four weeks maybe more.
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door.
It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour,
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no flaming flour!
Now Netflix is just wonderful I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris or some random sexy
killer
At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle,
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal.
So let's all drink to lockdown,
To recovery and health
And hope this awful virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth.
We'll all get through this crisis
And be back to meet our mates,
Just hoping I am not too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

The history of New Year Celebrations

Apparently, civilizations around the world have been celebrating the start of each new year for at least four millennia.

Today, most New Year's festivities begin on December 31 (New Year's Eve), the last day of the Gregorian calendar, and continue into the early hours of January 1 (New Year's Day). Common traditions include attending parties, eating special New Year's foods, making resolutions for the new year and watching fireworks displays.

Early New Year's Celebrations

The earliest recorded festivities in honour of a new year's arrival date back some 4,000 years to ancient Babylon.

For the Babylonians, the first new moon following the vernal equinox—the day in late March with an equal amount of sunlight and darkness—heralded the start of a new year. They marked the occasion with a massive religious festival called Akitu (derived from the Sumerian word for barley, which was cut in the spring) that involved a different ritual on each of its 11 days. In addition to the new year, Akitu celebrated the mythical victory of the Babylonian sky god Marduk over the evil sea goddess Tiamat and served an important political purpose: It was during this time that a new king was crowned or that the current ruler's divine mandate was symbolically renewed.

Did you know? In order to realign the Roman calendar with the sun, Julius Caesar had to add 90 extra days to the year 46 B.C. when he introduced his new Julian calendar.

Throughout antiquity, civilizations around the world developed increasingly sophisticated calendars, typically pinning the first day of the year to an agricultural or astronomical event. In Egypt, for instance, the year began with the annual flooding of the Nile, which coincided with the rising of the star Sirius.

The first day of the Chinese New Year, meanwhile, occurred with the second new moon after the winter solstice.

January 1 Becomes New Year's Day

The early Roman calendar consisted of 10 months and 304 days, with each new year beginning at the vernal equinox; according to tradition, it was created by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in the eighth century B.C. A later king, Numa Pompilius, is credited with adding the months of Januarius and Februarius. Over the centuries, the calendar fell out of sync with the sun, and in 46 B.C. the emperor Julius Caesar decided to solve the problem by consulting with the most prominent astronomers and mathematicians of his time. He introduced the Julian calendar, which closely resembles the more modern Gregorian calendar that most countries around the world use today.

As part of his reform, Caesar instituted January 1 as the first day of the year, partly to honour the month's namesake: Janus, the Roman god of beginnings, whose two faces allowed him to look back into the past and forward into the future. Romans celebrated by offering sacrifices to Janus, exchanging gifts with one another, decorating their homes with laurel branches and attending raucous parties.

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In medieval Europe, Christian leaders temporarily replaced January 1 as the first of the year with days carrying more religious significance, such as December 25 (the anniversary of Jesus' birth) and March 25 (the Feast of the Annunciation); Pope Gregory XIII re-established January 1 as New Year's Day in 1582.

New Year's Traditions

In many countries, New Year's celebrations begin on the evening of December 31—New Year's Eve—and continue into the early hours of January 1.

Revellers often enjoy meals and snacks thought to bestow good luck for the coming year. In Spain and several other Spanish-speaking countries, people bolt down a dozen grapes—symbolizing their hopes for the months ahead—right before midnight. In many parts of the world, traditional New Year's dishes feature legumes, which are thought to resemble coins and herald future financial success; examples include lentils in Italy and black-eyed peas in the southern United States. Because pigs represent progress and prosperity in some cultures, pork appears on the New Year's Eve table in Cuba, Austria, Hungary, Portugal and other countries. Ring-shaped cakes and pastries, a sign that the year has come full circle, round out the feast in the Netherlands, Mexico, Greece and elsewhere.

In Sweden and Norway, meanwhile, rice pudding with an almond hidden inside is served on New Year's Eve; it is said that whoever finds the nut can expect 12 months of good fortune.

Other customs that are common worldwide include watching fireworks and singing songs to welcome the new year, including the ever-popular "Auld Lang Syne" in many English-speaking countries.

The practice of making resolutions for the new year is thought to have first caught on among the ancient Babylonians, who made promises in order to earn the favour of the gods and start the year off on the right foot. (They would reportedly vow to pay off debts and return borrowed farm equipment.)

In the United States, the most iconic New Year's tradition is the dropping of a giant ball in New York City's Times Square at the stroke of midnight. Millions of people around the world watch the event, which has taken place almost every year since 1907. Over time, the ball itself has ballooned from a 700-pound iron-and-wood orb to a brightly patterned sphere 12 feet in diameter and weighing in at nearly 12,000 pounds. Various towns and cities across America have developed their own versions of the Times Square ritual, organizing public drops of items ranging from pickles (Dillsburg, Pennsylvania) to possums (Tallapoosa, Georgia) at midnight on New Year's Eve.

Silent Monks Sing the Hallelujah Chorus



Click here.. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRhjWdr-LAA&authuser=1>

The Series of Memories of Ellesmere Residents
Extracts from book 5 of the "Memories" Booklets Published in early 2000 by the Ellesmere Society

Memory No 25

Dancing in the '20s and 30s
Remembered by Norman Dawson & Peter Giles

In the 1920's, Miss Nellie Adams ran the only dance orchestra in the town. Also entering the arena at this time was the 'Jazz' Age, but Nellie refused to budge from her tuneful style. I think the orchestra consisted of Nellie on the piano, Albert Price on the cornet, George Godwin on the drums, Albert Peever on the double bass, and Jack Peever on the violin. It was a good orchestra, but the quick waltz, lancers, valeta etc., were on the way out and the slow waltz, modern foxtrot and one step were coming in. Nellie refused to accept the change and graciously disappeared from the scene, so Conway Johnson, who assisted his father in a furnishing and upholstering business in Watergate Street, started a dance band and took over. It was called the 'Savana' Band and consisted of Con on the piano, Dawson on the fiddle, George Godwin on the drums and Tommy Lewis on the banjo, which was the main rhythm instrument in modern dance bands. We had an alto sax, but I cannot for the life of me remember his name; I don't think he came from Ellesmere.

During this period, Con, in his spare time, practised like the dickens on the sax, and eventually Molly Thomas took over on the piano and Con played the sax, and we had quite a successful season or two.

Meanwhile, Stanley W. Hooson had arrived in Ellesmere as a teacher at the Wharf school, and it did not take Ellesmere people very long to realise that we had in our midst a brilliant pianist. He was soon playing the organ in Church, and as we were both Rover Scouts we soon got to know each other very well, and it was not long before he was my accompanist when I played violin solos at various concerts throughout the district. We also gave organ and violin recitals in Church. I must say how much I owed to Stan Hooson. On many occasions if I had a solo to play concert somewhere, I would go to Miss Drayton's to practise with Stan, who always accompanied me, and he would stick a piece of music in front of me and say 'I think we will play this'. I would look at it and say 'Crikey, I can't play this'; he would say 'You can and you will', and I did.

I eventually persuaded Stan Hooson to form a new dance band. We went off to Liverpool and bought a set of drums, and Harry Chetta was duly appointed drummer boy'. Harry played a kettle drum in the scout band, and it was soon apparent that he had the essential - an excellent sense of rhythm. Everything was kept secret. Stan lodged with Miss Drayton, who lived in Scotland Street, and the three of us met about twice a week practising like mad. Arthur Barnett, bookmaker from Oswestry, became our alto sax player, and Tommy Lewis left the Savana band and joined our outfit. We named the band 'The Arcadians', and in due course we placed our first tender for our first dance. It was the Scouts' Annual Ball, which is always held on Boxing Day night, and was considered to be one of the big social events of the year. In those days there was no Performing Rights Society - bands played what they liked, how they liked and when they liked. We went to Wrexham Indoor Market where there was an excellent music stall, and bought a good supply of tunes at 6d a time. From these piano copies I orchestrated the parts for violin and sax. Harry Chetta had developed into an excellent drummer, and although not flashy, his rhythm was spot on, never varying in either waltz time, 6/8 or four in the bar. Tommy Lewis was experienced and was the perfect 'play by ear' merchant. As the four locals in the band were Rover Scouts our tender was accepted and we duly opened our venture on the Boxing Day night.

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We were a little nervous but 'not a lot', because I must say this about Stan. In everything he did it had to be perfect. From a playing point of view we prided ourselves on being correct. We had to be. Any mistake brought a fierce frown and a word of rebuke from Stan. Our first dance was a great success, and from then on bookings flowed in and we were kept quite busy. Strangely enough none of the players who played for us in the dance band at different times liked 'Jazz'. Some of the big American bands, mostly those who were coloured, like Duke Ellington, Count Bassey, Louis Armstrong, etc., played 'Jazz'. But the other bands, and certainly the big bands in England, played what I call 'Swing' music, and we tried to model ourselves on some of these bands, our favourites being Roy Fox and his band, Jack: Payne's band and The Savoy Havana band. We were, I suppose, what one would call a rhythm band - playing tunefully, and yet at the same time keeping a strong beat going.

The kind of evening which became very popular between the wars, particularly in the villages, Penley, Cockshutt, Overton, Criftings, Frankton, Welshampton, etc., was a Whist Drive and Dance. The Whist Drive would commence at 7.30 p.m. and finish about 9.30 p.m. when refreshments would be made available, and the room cleared for dancing, which would start at about 10 p.m. and carry on until midnight or 2 a.m. Incidentally, most of the big dances carried on until 2 or 3 a.m. and if the dance was going well a 'whip round' would be taken for the band and we would play for an extra half-hour or hour, depending on the generosity of the dancers.

The main dances in a big dance programme would be the waltz, foxtrot and one-step with a sprinkling of other dances popular at any particular time; e.g. The Charleston, tango, Lambeth walk, etc. A dance always started off with a waltz and finished with a waltz. Each year we, The Arcadians, always had a particular last waltz. Always a very dreamy and romantic one - guaranteed to set the 'going home' mood. Yes, there was plenty of romance in the air in those days. I well remember some of our finishing waltz melodies. 'Parlez vous d'amour', 'It's time to say goodnight', 'Who's taking you home tonight', 'Babette' (What a beautiful melody), and the real tearjerker of them all, 'Love, here is my heart'.

Dancing was also popular in the summer, and Flannel Dances were the thing. Everyone turned up in white - girls in tennis dresses and men in white flannels and cricket shirts. This was, of course, the era of song writers, mostly from America. New numbers came pouring in, and in addition there were the numbers from the many Musical comedies and Shows, 'The Desert Song', 'Mr. Cinders', 'Showboat', 'The Girl friend' etc., and of course, those beautiful melodies by our own Ivor Novello, 'The dancing Years' etc. As time went on dance tempos changed slightly.

The waltz became a little quicker, the one step disappeared, the foxtrot became a little quicker, and the slow foxtrot became popular. Also one or two old time dances made a comeback, such as the valera, military two step, bam dance etc., and we would include at least one of these in a programme. The most popular dances continued to be the foxtrot, and slow waltz. But this was the dancing revolution, and in addition to these stock dances the following all came, rumba, Charleston, blues, tango, black bottom, Lambeth walk, Paul Jones, samba etc. Some lasted - some didn't. Looking through some papers the other day, I came across an old book entitled 'Popular Music'. This issue was dated 8th January, 1935. The book was published weekly, Price 3d. Remembering that there was at this time no Performing Rights Society, you can imagine how easy it was to obtain music, and plenty of it, and very cheap, when I tell you that in this book there was fully scored music and words to six tunes, and these were: -

'I bought myself a bottle of ink', 'That's what life is made of', 'In the Cumberland mountains',
'My treasure', 'Will the angels play their harps for me'.

further six tunes were advertised for the following week's issue, and these included 'Isle of Capri' and 'You oughta be in pictures'. Also in this issue was an article of instruction, with pictorial examples, on how to dance the 'Carlo'. Also sessions by Victor Sylvester on 'How to dance the Slow Foxtrot'.

And all this for three old pence!

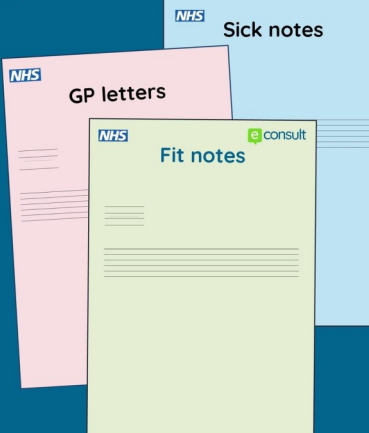
Local information

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 **econsult**



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



Pastoral Support from the Churches in Ellesmere

Rev'd Pat Hawkins St Mary's Church

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

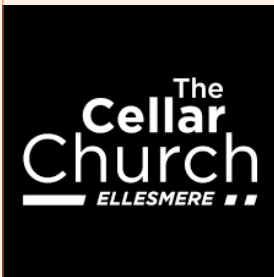
St Mary's Ellesmere:

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)

