



Probus Club Ellesmere



Covid-19 Lockdown 2021 Newsletter

Issue 33

Feb. 25, 2021

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From the Editor

Dear all,

I hope you are all keeping well. The Government have now revealed their road map on the way out to freedom. Let's hope it is not too bumpy.

The good news is how effective the vaccines are against Covid over 85% which is very reassuring.

Our speaker next week is from RAF Shawbury if you know anyone who would be interested in joining as a guest to hear any of our speakers just send me their email address and I can send them an invitation to the meeting.

Best wishes

Paul

Speaker's Corner

At our next Probus Zoom meeting on Thursday 04th March at 10.30am will have a speaker from RAF Shawbury.

THE STATION. *RAF Shawbury* in Shropshire trains around 1,000 students a year from across the UK Armed Services and international partners to be robust.

If you have not yet been able to join us at a Zoom meeting (a relatively simple type of on-line video conferencing) and need any help or advice do let me know and I will talk you through the process.

Well what another dramatic week, I think I will need a satnav to interpret the implications of the Roadmap but how refreshing to feel that there is a positive change of the tide. We should all be utterly



amazed at the speed and efficiency of the vaccination roll-out. It really would be helpful though for some synchronisation of the UK countries' plans for lock-down release programming though understandably they each have different data to work from.

Spring is showing signs, the grass is growing again and our fish-pond, just six feet by four, currently has 27 frogs in it. Cavorting around and picking their mates before spawning.

It amazes me that the first one appeared this year on 17th February.

Last year it was 16th February and the year before 17th February. Nature has some astonishing tricks.

"A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor"

Some Probus Clubs are saying that they expect to keep meeting via Zoom for some months yet. We have booked speakers for each fortnightly 'meeting' up to and including June 2021. Your Committee will of course keep matters under close review and as and when we are safely able to resume face-to-face meetings we will let you know. Thank you to everyone who has paid their Probus subscriptions for 2021 and the Comrades Club membership. Thanks also to everyone who is providing interesting and entertaining articles for our Newsletters, contributions are always very welcome. Very best wishes to everyone, hoping that you are staying safe and as well as possible.

Jeremy

"Life isn't bout waiting fir the storm to pass, it is about learning to dance in the rain"

Ellesmere Probus Club Zoom meeting 18/02/21

Speaker: Katrina MacNamara, 'The Humanimal Trust'.

25 of our members joined the Zoom event. Jeremy welcomed everyone including Katrina and guests Trish Pritchard, Andrew Thomson and Bryn Howell. Following apologies Wilfred Maddocks kindly offered a book to anyone who would like it - 'Timkins Bearings for Railway Use', a specialist book for railway buffs. Anyone interested should contact Wilfred direct.

Katrina introduced herself as being previously a medical nurse having worked with end-of-life children with rare conditions, joining the Trust in 2015. The Trust was set up in 2014 by Prof Noel Fitzpatrick (of 'Supervet' fame) - it is designed to be a collaboration between vets, doctors and researchers principally with the aim of creating the concept of 'One Medicine' minimising the use of live animals for medical/veterinary research. It also aims to optimise opportunities for re-working medical practices where appropriate between humans and animals. This is not a new concept, Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902) wrote "There is no dividing line between human and animal medicine nor should there be". Healthcare can and should advance hand-in-hand to mutual advantage through collaborative learning and practices. This should result in fewer animal laboratory testing and eventually, hopefully, that should become obsolete, resulting in less wasted time and money. The Trustees include a surgeon, physician, orthopaedic vet, digital funding specialist, microbiologist/pathologist and finance/business expert. Numerous diseases are transmissible between/across animals and humans, eg Rabies, MRSA, Swine Flu, Salmonella, Lyme disease, Leptospirosis, E Coli and Ringworm for instance. Recently Covid-19, whose origin is not yet defined but thought to involve bats, is known to be transmissible to gorillas and big cats. Covid-19 has highlighted the pressing need for swift and effective research into future variant and mutations. At least 60% of all known diseases are shared between humans and animals, 75% of emerging infectious diseases can be cross-transmitted. NHS advice on protecting brain function in humans such as regular exercise, diet, learning new things and being socially active is equally important for companion animals. Similarly with arthritis recommendations for taking Omega 3, light exercise and Glucosamine for instance applies equally to other mammals. Katrina showed two microscope-slides of osteosarcoma bone cancer in a dog and a human which were remarkably similar. One in four dogs get cancer, half over ten years of age may die from it. In humans the condition can appear in children when undergoing growth-spurts and long-legged dogs are more prone to it than others. As it is rare in humans, sharing the research into dogs will be helpful and should reduce research duplication. Prof Fitzpatrick's innovative work on promoting bone-growth on implants should be transferrable to humans.

What does the Trust do?

- A) Increase the awareness of 'One Medicine' and 'One Health' (prevention of ill-health) through talks, community groups, stands at events such as National Pet Show and Conferences (face to face when Covid-19 restrictions permit),
- B) Collaboration between human and animal health issues, practices and research through the online forum 'Humanimal Hub'.
- C) Promote via Outreach Officer through education at Universities, Sixth Form colleges and schools aiming to include the principles into the curricula. Children tend to be open-minded and support the 'why-not?' principles of embracing change.
- D) Fund, facilitate and share research into, eg, cancer, regenerative medicine, brain/spine disease, bone/muscle/joint diseases and infection control through antibiotic resistance. Research should be carried out only with patients living with naturally occurring diseases, ie no laboratory or experimental animal testing/Influence
- E) legislative and policy-making. The UK has the highest legal standards in this sector in the world. Live animal research into tobacco and cosmetics was banned here in the 1990's. In 2019 3.4 million procedures involving animals were carried out (Home Office figures).

Fundraising through sponsorships, donations, challenge events and legacies for instance. Details can be found on the website www.humanimaltrust.org.uk The 'Three R's': Replace with other methods, Reduce the number of trials, Refine the findings.

Following a good number of questions and answers, Jeremy thanked Katrina on behalf of all members present for her fascinating talk and insight into the work of the Humanimal Trust.

Shirley's and my years of motoring: Part 7 by Brian Rodgers

My friend, who had been the Peugeot manager, took over the Alfa Romeo dealership in 1967 and he invited me to drive Alfas in whatever events there might be. I jumped at the opportunity but perhaps I should have considered the situation more closely. The main motoring activity in Libya was rallying, under very rough conditions and, while the Alfa Romeo Giulias were beautiful, very fast saloons, they were not nearly as robust as Peugeots. However, we fitted various protective devices including under-shields to protect the finned alloy sumps and gearboxes. The cars went beautifully on tarmac but came apart on the rough and we achieved nothing on the 1967 rallies, other than damaging the cars. Although our rallying was not successful, while we were preparing the cars in the Alfa workshop, I met the owners of several exotic models and one owner invited me to drive his Bertone SS Giulietta. That was a brilliant car with an engine that would easily reach 7500 rpm, which in the mid 60s, was a very high engine speed for a road car. The roadholding was superb and I wished that I could have afforded one.

All this time, I had been supported by wife, Shirley who, first as my girlfriend and then as my wife, had always been at the start and finish and also at some of the intermediate controls of the various events, bringing fresh sandwiches and cool drinks. She had also navigated in smaller rallies and felt that now she would like to enter the big events, in the ladies class. Our main team for 1967 was three Giulia saloons, two 1600 and one 1300. To this my friend added a Giulietta 1300 saloon for the girls. Special stages were introduced on the 24 hour event that year and, much to the consternation of many male drivers, Shirley's driver, Jill, was fastest on the first stage. Sadly, the girls' rally did not go much farther because a radiator hose burst on the following road section and that was almost the end of the lovely twin cam engine.

In the middle of that year the **Six Day Arab Israeli War** took place and Libya was very badly affected by anti American, anti British and anti Jewish riots. A near coup took place and the lovely, relaxed atmosphere that had existed from before the war evaporated, and numerous expatriates left the country. Also, my very good Jewish friend, who had been with Peugeot and then had taken over Alfa Romeo, left permanently. Eventually, things settled down but were never as peaceful as they had been and motor sport was forgotten for many months.

With the departure of many expats, there were numerous cars for sale for next to nothing. I saw a Triumph TR3A in a friend's yard and jokingly offered £10 for it. Amazingly, that was accepted. The car had a 4 speed plus overdrive transmission but it had a major problem with the engine. The timing chain had stretched and the tensioner could not keep it tight but normally, by driving gently, this was not a problem. Occasionally the chain would jump a tooth on the sprocket and handicap the performance, but I had a method for putting it right, albeit only a temporary solution. In those days, Triumphs were banned in the Arab world and parts were not available locally, and so the chain remained as was. I had a Libyan engineering student working with me and I let him have the car for a weekend. He was not a very sympathetic driver and he came to me after the weekend to say that the engine was making a funny noise. Not really surprising. The chain had jumped two or three teeth and the engine, when it could be turned over, was definitely making a funny noise. I had the car towed back to the yard from where it had come and I received my £10 back!

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Early in 1968 we learned that the rallies would be taking place again that year but, whom to drive for? No Alfás and I could not go back to Peugeot. I approached VW but the German service manager and I had clashed previously and he did not want me and my crew in the team. However he was overruled by the owner of the company and my long term crew and I drove for VW. At the start of the season we were easily leading in a smaller rally but there was a police speed check close to the finish. I was doing about 70 km/h in a 50 limit and the 300 second penalty that I suffered ensured that we did not achieve a place.

Because there had been extremely heavy rain early that year, the organisers sent out a recce team some days before the start of the main event. The team was far into the pre desert when they encountered deep mud and became hopelessly bogged. Fortunately the committee realised that there was a problem and the USAF came to the rescue by sending out a C130 Hercules which, on finding that it could not land in the vicinity, dropped supplies to the stranded team and radioed for a recovery vehicle. That was a foretaste of the conditions for the coming event.

The 24 Hour rally took place and, despite the earlier political upheavals, there was a good entry. The VW team comprised three 1500 Beetles with a 1300 for Shirley and the ladies. We started reasonably well but, had someone from the service department scuppered our car? Perhaps filled it with dirty fuel, or dropped some sand in the tank? We never did find out. Whatever, after a few kilometres the engine would not run properly and I assumed that there was a carburettor blockage. By pumping the throttle pedal, to activate the throttle pump, we were able to travel at a reasonable speeds but acceleration was very poor and we were never in the running for a good position, particularly after I bogged the car in deep sand and we had to spend over an hour in digging it out.

Shirley and the girls, on the other hand, did very well indeed. They completed all sections on time although they had a very close shave overnight. They were crossing a flat sandy plain at perhaps 90 km/h but, with the notoriously poor headlights of 6V Beetles, the driver was unable to see a deep sand drift ahead until almost on top of it. The car had a near disastrous collision when the nose dug deep into the drift and the car nearly did a head over tail. The driver had been resting in the back seat, eating paprika potato crisps, while Shirley and the co-driver were up front. When the car hit the drift, despite wearing seat belts, all three girls were thrown up and the driver, in the back seat hit the roof and was slightly concussed. After the car had settled the girls looked back to see an inert shape with red all over her head. Thinking that the red was blood, they screamed. The screaming woke the inert driver who was most upset to find that her hair was full of the red paprika crisps!

They reversed the car out of the drift and inspected it as best they could. All seemed well and they drove on but found that the steering was very, very heavy. What had happened was that the front suspension sub-frame had been pushed back by several degrees and there was an almost impossible castor angle on the front wheels. They drove on without too much delay and reached the early morning control stop. There, Günter, a very jovial German VW mechanic roared with laughter at their situation and said "Ach, zis is no problem." He tied a heavy manila rope around the upper tube of the front suspension sub-frame and tied the other end around a date palm and then shot off at high speed in reverse.

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There was an almighty clang as the car came to a sudden stop and the suspension was back almost as original! The girls carried on for the rest of the event and easily won the ladies prize and were well placed overall, despite their earlier problem.

That was the last of our motor sport in Libya. By then we had two children and I had changed my Peugeot 403 for a Fiat 2300. A good comfortable and reasonably fast car, it suffered badly from corrosion, particularly in the alloy cylinder head. My contract was coming to a close and we decided to leave. Realising that the Fiat would not get me far I changed it for a Mk 1 Ford Cortina Estate. This car had been my co-driver's company car but, after the ban on Fords in the Arab world, his company replaced it with a VW. They were unable to find a buyer for the Cortina and I offered £100. That was accepted and I had a 12 month old car for a fraction of the new price.

We left Tripoli on the car ferry to Naples and our journey took us to Rome where we stayed for a few days with our Alfa Romeo friend. Then northwards on the Autostrada del Sol. I had hoped to attend the October Fest in Munich and had told Shirley at which junction we should leave the Autostrada. Somehow, her navigating skills must have been left behind in Tripoli because, instead of heading for Bavaria, we ended going along the Rhine. The few nights in Munich were replaced with a few in Heidelberg. Our final night in Europe was in Brussels, and then, next day, under a grey sky all the way, we caught the ferry at Calais and had a most uncomfortable Channel crossing. We had reached the UK where I was to start working in a very different environment to that that I had known. Little did I realise, I was going to have very little contact with any form of sporting motoring for a very long time.

More next week

A Bad Parrot

A young man named John received a parrot as a gift. The parrot had a bad attitude and an even worse vocabulary. Every word out of the bird's mouth was rude, obnoxious and laced with profanity. John tried and tried to change the bird's attitude by consistently saying only polite words, playing soft music and anything else he could think of to 'clean up' the bird's vocabulary.

Finally, John was fed up and he yelled at the parrot. The parrot yelled back. John shook the parrot and the parrot got angrier and even more rude. John, in desperation, threw up his hand, grabbed the bird and put him in the freezer.

For a few minutes the parrot squawked and kicked and screamed. Then suddenly there was total quiet. Not a peep was heard for over a minute. Fearing that he'd hurt the parrot, John quickly opened the door to the freezer. The parrot calmly stepped out onto John's outstretched arms and said "I believe I may have offended you with my rude language and actions. I'm sincerely remorseful for my inappropriate transgressions and I fully intend to do everything I can to correct my rude and unforgivable behavior."

John was stunned at the change in the bird's attitude.

As he was about to ask the parrot what had made such a dramatic change in his behavior, the bird spoke-up, very softly, "May I ask what the turkey did?"

And you thought there were no clean jokes left!

Some of the ten worst jobs in history

Outside the inherent dangers faced by coal and slate miners, tanneries and metal-foundry workers for instance there are a few more obscure jobs which although they may not have been as dangerous, had challenging reputations:

Leech collector

Until the late 19th Century leeches were in high demand for medicinal use blood-letting, removing small amounts of blood as a therapy. Despite the demand blood-letters were poorly paid. They often collected the leeches by letting them attach to their own bodies which could result in loss of dangerously large amounts of blood. Leeches are still in use medicinally and for research today but are largely farmed in South Wales in environmentally controlled conditions.

2. Snake milker

Antidotes to venomous snake bites tend to be by medical administration of a small amount of the venom which has been converted into 'antivenom'. Collecting the venom was a hazardous occupation as the snake's head had to be held by hand as it was encouraged to eject the venom into a vial which was sometimes covered with a soft material. One famous snake milker, Bill Haast, survived 172 venomous snake bites during his life and lived to be a centenarian. The African Black Mamba is considered by many to be the deadliest snake in the world. It can move at 20mph and is very aggressive. 10-15 mg of venom can kill a human and the average bite delivers 120mg.

3. Fuller

'Fulling' was a manufacturing process to cleanse, whiten the fibres and enable an increased thickness and compactness of woolen cloth. In Roman times it was left to slaves to perform as it involved wading in large amounts of human urine which acted as the cleaning agent, due to the high level of ammonia. The important thing was to get as much movement as possible into the cloth so dancing in the vats was a common practice. It was then pressed. In the Middle Ages the urine was replaced by 'Fuller's Earth', a much more socially acceptable alternative.

4. Tosher

Toshers were people in Victorian times who earned a living from wading through the sewers in search of treasures which had become mixed up in the sewage. The name 'Tosher' derives from the articles that they collected which they referred to as 'tosh', the word still being in use as a substitute for 'trash' and 'rubbish'. Some toshers were renowned for stealing the copper outer-linings from the hulls of boats moored up.

5. Resurrectionist

Resurrectionists were people who in reality were 'body-snatchers', digging up bodies from graveyards or stealing them from elsewhere to provide a supply to anatomists at medical schools. On occasion when 'supplies' were difficult to acquire they may turn to murder to keep their funds coming in. The first recorded case of grave-robbery for medical purposes was in 1319. The rich began to protect the bodies of their loved ones in coffins and protected them with heavy slabs on top of the grave. In the 1830's a Bill was passed in Parliament authorising anatomists to recover cadavers from workhouses so the practice of body-snatching became obsolete in a short time.

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

Memory 29

The Tuesday Market

Remembered by Stan Horton

The right to hold a Tuesday market goes back to the 13th century, the present hall being built in 1879. Thus the 20th century started with a modern home for its market.

Eight market traders were listed in Kelly's directory of 1900. Three were T.W. Adams, greengrocer and fishmonger, Mrs E. Davies, grocer and provision dealer, and Henry Pierce and Sons, butchers. All these were also trading from other premises in the town.

The other five were Mrs Elizabeth Dickin (of Cockshutt), butcher; RS. Parry grocer, William Parry, egg dealer, Thomas Tanner, grocer, and Edward Venables, butcher. All the above traders supplied or bought food products. The term "dealer" probably means that they bought as well as sold such items as eggs, butter, fruit, vegetables, rabbits etc.

A market report in a local newspaper of February 1901 states that at Ellesmere, Meat was being sold for a little more than 12 shillings for 225 lbs., butter for just over one shilling per pound (weight), and eggs were ten or twelve for a shilling.

In the early 1900s, sales of cheese promoted by the Ellesmere Dairy Farmers association were held in the Market Hall at about monthly intervals. At the August sale of 1911, 21 tons of cheese was sold in half an hour at prices of between fifty and sixty shillings per cwt. The summer of 1911 was noted as being very hot and dry. These cheese fairs, which were held on non-market days were commenced by a bell being rung at 11am.

On one occasion in August 1913 farmers with horses and carts were seriously congesting Scotland Street for, although the Market Hall had been opened at 7 a.m., no cheese had been delivered by 9 a.m. Farmers were told quite firmly by the secretary of the Association that they should start from their farms earlier. At the cheese Fair of August 1914, 18 tons of cheese was sold to a top price of seventy- six shillings per cwt, an increase, no doubt, due to the outbreak of war earlier in the month.

Throughout the 1920 and 1930s, Ellesmere Market Hall was well used for the purpose for which it was built - the buying and selling of farm and garden produce. In a sales report of April 1934, a local newspaper reported that the wholesale price hen eggs was nine pence per dozen while the retail price was just a penny or two more. Duck eggs were the same price. "Spring" chickens were selling for eleven pence to a shilling per lb and "winter" chickens about three pence per lb less. Ducks were eight pence per lb. Wild rabbits, though not at their best in April, were a shilling to one and three pence per couple. Herbs, such as parsley, sage and mint, were sold at a penny or two a bunch depending on size and quality. Lettuces were threepence or four pence each and carrots about two pence per lb.

Older residents of Ellesmere will well remember the selling of live poultry in the Market Hall and the attendant squawks, quacks and screeches of the unfortunate birds as they had legs (and sometimes wings) secured to minimize movement.

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Other traders, of course, did business in the Market Hall and a list of stallholders in 1940 may be of interest - Earnest Bound, sewing-machine dealer; J.E. Davies, china dealer; John Dickin (of Cockshutt), butcher; Charles Fandoe, butcher; M. Freeman, draper; G.A. Roberts, poultry dealer; Mrs Hardman, clothier; William Martin, draper; Mrs Sedgwick, cheese factor; Mrs Taylor, confectioner; Miss Woolams, wool dealer; and Mrs Wright, draper.

However, all came to an end in 1941 when due to wartime conditions the market was discontinued and the building used (until about 1950) for the storage of rationed foods (mainly tea). After a period as an engineering workshop, (manufacturing Fullwoods milking machines) the Market Hall at last reverted to its original and proper use.

Apart from the current thriving Tuesday market (which seems to have about the same number of stallholders as in 1940), the Hall is used for various other purposes such as the Gardening Club's Annual Flower and Vegetable Show, Ellesmere Festival activities, art and photographic displays, and local government presentations.

Memory 30

WATERGATE Street c1920-35

Remembered by George Cleverly & Stan Horton

For many people, this street is as important to the history of Ellesmere as S1. John's Hill. Dr. David Lloyd of Ludlow, for example, considers it to be one of the most fascinating streets in any of Shropshire's market towns.

The contours in its length did not happen by chance. They follow the outline of the mere that once spread throughout all the area on which our town now stands. Research would undoubtedly tell us much about its past, but these booklets are concerned with only the 20th Century.

George Cleveley, interviewed by Stan Horton in 1995, provided the following memories of the street during the 1920's and early 1930's.

There were then fourteen business premises in the street, providing virtually every household requirement. Fish, milk, meat, fruit, vegetables, clothing, furniture, paint and decorating materials could all be purchased in this one street. In addition, there was a newsagent's, hairdresser, shoe repairer and a saddler. You could even find a chimney sweep and a window cleaner, as well as a garage and a cycle dealer. For Sunday worship. There was the Wesleyan Chapel. Like all the rest of the town centre there was plenty of activity throughout the year.

A prime example of shop keeping in the 1920's is provided by Miss Emily Elizabeth Urion Shown in Kelly's Directory as simply a "shopkeeper", her premises at Number 36 held a vast & stock ranging from bootlaces and candles to patent medicines. Although the shop was closed on Sundays, Miss Urion was always willing to sell through her back door on Sunday mornings. (These premises eventually became Watergate Guesthouse).

Miss Urion was the sister of Mrs. Llewelyn Evans, who with her husband ran a boot and clothing shop at Number 24, the double fronted, three-storey house. They were also agents for Whitchurch Laundry. Another sister of Miss Urion was a seamstress who also worked in Watergate street. Typical of the period, she had an attic workroom, which had many nails Knocked into the walls for hanging dresses.

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The butcher, of long standing, was Maurice Jeffreys. His premises at Number 27 had an open fronted shop, and meat would be displayed irrespective of the weather. During hot conditions his wife would, from time to time throughout the day, pour water on the sides of the street to keep down the dust that was created by the passing traffic!

Next door, at Number 29 was Birch Brothers, saddlers. They sold all types of leather goods and carried out boot and shoe repairs. Another boot repairers could be found at Number 19, where Mr. Humphries traded. Alongside at Number 21, Joseph Samuel Johnson sold furniture that he mostly made himself with the help of his son.

Philip Hale, dairyman, had his creamery at Number 37. He and his wife sold milk, cheese, eggs, home- baked, bread and sweets. By 1934, the creamery was being run by Mrs. Chetwood. This family's other business was next door at Number 39. Here Chetwood and Sons had their garage, where in addition to motoring requisites they also sold paraffin and Raleigh cycles. (Lakeside Coaches occupy the site today).

The premises at Number 2 started the Twentieth Century as the home of Mr. H. Aams, a plumber. Between 1913 and 1917 they became a newsagent's and confectioner's, and have remained as such to this day. In the 1920's Mrs. Lottie Adams ran the shop and on one occasion declined to take a farthing (can you remember this small coin?) from a child customer in payment for sweets. By 1934 a Mr. Albert Jackson had acquired the business.

Moving along the street to Number 4, a mystery unfolds. In 1900 Mrs. M. Madeley had coffee rooms, but by 1909, the premises had changed hands.

According to Kelly's Directory, Mr. John Wilkes had a business of fruiterer and continued as such into the 1930's, his wife Harriot taking over in the 1940's. But George Cleveley remembered them as fishmongers. Does anyone know whether they traded in both commodities? In her younger days, Harriot displayed the unusual accomplishment of riding a motor cycle and sidecar. She was frequently seen riding the outfit around the town on Thursday half-day closings.

Mrs Violet Cartwright lived at Number 15, and sold ladies' and children's clothing. Herself a seamstress, she later moved her business to 16, High Street, and was succeeded in Watergate Street by Moira Smith who continued as a ladies' outfitters. Other traders to be found in the street were Thomas Haynes, painter and decorator, Harry Ralphs, window cleaner, John Roe, Hairdresser, and Nicolas Curtis, of Italian descent, chimney sweep. He also grew a considerable quantity of vegetables on land in Birch Road. No doubt all the soot was used to good purpose!

Gradually, this way of life changed and virtually all the businesses disappeared. Some sixteen houses and the chapel were demolished for redevelopment The hustle and bustle of the early part of the century lost forever, replaced by the noise and fumes of traffic in the one-way system.

MOTERING MEMOIRS OF CHRIS STRETTON, b1950

Part 2

Now fully licenced 122ccs was not enough and, in any event, the Tandon needed to be returned. Dad had planned for this when one of his patients had offered him a 350cc KTS Velocette of late 1930s vintage. These were my next wheels and an interesting initiation to sporty biking with girder forks and a solid back end. It went well enough and sounded great with its fish-tail silencer but its roadholding left much to be desired. I never fell off this but came very close one day travelling towards Bridgnorth from Broseley. Heading down the sweeping right-hand corner just before the Stanley Lane junction, the front wheel must have hit a stone as, without warning, I was on the wrong end of a massive tank-slapper. The handlebars went from full left to full right several times, each time the tyre screeching and trying to detach from the rim before energising the next hop. These often end badly but I seemed to have time to think and steeled myself to try and stop the handlebars at straight ahead....all muscles tensed...I succeeded and continued on my way, thinking only of what might have been.

Needing something a bit more modern but with not a lot of money, I bought a single cylinder 500cc ES2 Norton from the local scrapyards which I rebuilt from the big-end up.

A highlight of 1966 was when a few of us bikers went to Oulton Park to watch the motorbike racing. This was the first year that Mike Hailwood was signed with Honda and I recall, particularly, the 250cc race. Mike the Bike was on the six cylinder, 250cc machine that made a fantastic sound, revving to 18,000 rpm! He was tagging along in third place for a few laps, looking as though he was waiting his moment, when he fell off at the hairpin and lost a whole lap before getting up and running again. Three laps later he was in the lead! That was a measure of how much better the Honda was than any of its competition. I snapped him in his Lamborghini Miura in the paddock later. When I attended the 1999 TT the same bike was present and fired up in the square at Castletown. Mechanics handed out ear-plugs first!



Motorbiking days provided some memorable moments. The sixth form at school used to put on a play each year after which we would all have a celebratory party somewhere local. One year we headed off to the Wrekin on our bikes for the al-fresco celebrations, My friend Pete for some reason being late away. It was dark, he didn't know the roads very well and the 6 volt headlight on his Triumph Cub was barely as good as a candle, providing little warning of upcoming corners. You know what it's like when you're lost...you tend to go faster so you can get un-lost quicker! It was bad enough that the bike landing in the ditch when he didn't make a 90 degree bend, worse still was that he was catapulted over the hedge, thankfully making a soft landing, but in the farmyard dung heap! There were two parties on the Wrekin that night: one for Pete and the other for everyone else!



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Unlike my brother, I thankfully never suffered any bad accidents, largely just minor 'offs', as previously mentioned usually when I was wearing a new pair of trousers. I do recall two of these occasions, the first when taking a friend home to Dawley. I was following a lady in a large car when she made a sudden stop. The road was slippery and I was too close so, when the front wheel locked, we fell over and slid under the back of her car in slow motion, luckily without making any contact. She jumped out and was most apologetic! Hardly her fault and no harm done. I'm not sure if it was this that put my friend off bikes but his wheels were soon to be a Thames van, complete with mattress in the back!

The second occasion took place heading down towards Dale End from Coalbrookdale, again on a greasy road. A sweeping left hand bend by the Upper Forge proved no problem... I held the two-wheel drift across the road perfectly and there was no traffic coming towards me. Things were looking good...then the wheels hit the kerb...no more drifting possible so I was flipped onto the pavement.

Many times I travelled the road from home to Garmston to see my girlfriend. This route followed the river Severn much of the way. In 1967 this passed pyres of carcasses from the Foot & Mouth outbreak, the smell from which was awful. One hot evening I returned home at the time of a heavy insect hatch from the river. Wearing just an open-necked shirt I had to scrape off the dead flies from my chest with a knife!

In the summer of 1968 I had another great motoring experience. A friend of Dad's was looking for a Targa Florio Frazer Nash. Dad bought XMC2, the 1953 Motor Show car intending to pass it on but liked it so much he kept it for the rest of his life, using it on many competitive events, including this in the 1984 Mille Miglia when he was accompanied by my cousin Martin. He collected it from AFN in London and I was there for the ride home!

In 1968, with two friends, Dad bought the Ford garage in Cleobury Mortimer was bought and set up Cleobury Garages, providing services for owners of racing, classic and vintage cars. I used to go over quite regularly to soak in the atmosphere, on one occasion having the thrill of accompanying Dad on a post-service test drive of a Ferrari 250 up the Clee Hills. I recall being pinned to the seat under acceleration and deafened by the engine, amplified by the bare metal shell!



In 1969 I went on holiday with friends John and Pete to Yugoslavia in John's Hillman Imp. Having given it a good service on the ramps at Cleobury Garage, we were away for five weeks, originally aiming to get to Greece but only making it just beyond Dubrovnik when we realised it was going to be difficult to get through Albania. Our route down took us through Luxembourg, Germany, Austria and back via Venice. We had a fantastic time, albeit mechanically challenging on four occasions.



More next week

Local information

Age UK Befriending Service

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services/sign-up-for-telephone-befriending/>

Good news the Vaccine is here. **Please don't phone the surgery to book a vaccine.** You will be phoned from the surgery and be offered an appointment at the RJAH hospital, or Prees surgery. The invitation could be from either Ellesmere or Whitchurch surgeries. If you receive a letter from the NHS offering you an appointment at one of the large vaccination hubs in Birmingham or Manchester etc there is no need to accept it, if you don't take up the invitation you will still be on the local practice's list.



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 have once again had to stop during this 3rd Lockdown.

However, some services are streamed and are on You Tube



The
**Cellar
Church**
ELLESMERE

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)

