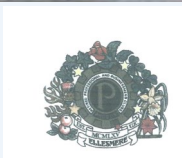




Probus Club Ellesmere



Covid-19 Lockdown 2020 Newsletter

Issue 21

Sept. 10, 2020

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From the Editor

Dear all,

I hope you are all keeping well. This week has produced a huge change, just as we thought we may be able to meet in person at some stage it is two paces back. All for the right reasons no doubt.

I don't know why we just bite the bullet and introduce ID cards. Every country I have worked in has had ID cards for everyone. We carry them already if you drive and if you travel abroad.

I just hope all these restrictions which are slowly becoming law will revert once the dreaded Covid-19 has gone.

Due to pressure of no work we have decided to publish these newsletters on a fortnightly basis starting after this one. It will help to spread the items out a bit.

Keep safe

Paul

View from the Crow's Nest

Dear friends,

I hope that you and yours are keeping well and safe in the face of these evolving times. We certainly seem to be in some choppy waters this week. It will be interesting to see what the full list of exemptions on gatherings over six people to be published will read. Your Committee is having a Zoom meeting tomorrow (10th September) to talk through the impact of the current rules on any potential for the AGM, social get-togethers and our meetings. On a positive note although there will no doubt be further disruption following the 'Safe Six' announcement, at least everyone should be somewhat clearer. I wonder what the history books will read when the door closes on 2020?



Autumn seems to be well underway with the trees starting to turn and the drunken wasp population exploding on fallen fruit. Each time I cut the lawn I hope it will be the last time for this year.

Those of you with relatives at school or in further education must have some concerns. Following feedback from a number of our members Paul and I have agreed that we should start issuing these Newsletters on a fortnightly basis from now on. Some Probus Clubs issue monthly and Paul has committed a huge amount of work (as have the contributors) to the weekly editions and I know we are all extremely grateful for that. I send my thanks again to everyone who is continuing to keep in touch with members by phone and very best wishes to one and all, Jeremy.



Mount Elgon Uganda —1960 *By Brian Rodgers*

Good day to you all. Since I shall be mentioning a number of places that most of you have never heard of, I have produced a little sketch map of the area in Uganda that I shall be talking about. The map is not accurate in any way but is purely a representation of the area as best I can remember it, from over 60 years ago.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Brian Rodgers. My wife and I settled in Maesbrook in 1982 and, until I retired in 2003, I was rarely here because I spent most of my time at work in other parts of the world. I was born in Scotland. However, my family moved to the then Tanganyika Territory when I was 10 years old and after that, various parts of Africa became home to me. In the late 1950s I was working in the then Northern Rhodesia and eventually I was conscripted into the Royal Rhodesia Regiment for my military training. I would emphasize that it was the Royal, because that was some 5 years before UDI and our regiment, a rifle regiment, was affiliated to the Rifle Brigade in this country. For the benefit of those who are not familiar with such matters, in a rifle regiment, a private soldier such as I was, was not known as a Private, but was a Rifleman, and whereas infantry regiments marched at 100 paces per minute, and light infantry at 120, we rifle regiments marched at 140. Sadly, after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence, our contact with Britain ceased and the regiment became the Rhodesia Light Infantry. At the end of my military training, I decided to go back to East Africa, not because I had anything against the Rhodesian Federation, but purely because I wanted to see something more of the world. With a friend, we drove the 1600 miles in his little Frogeye Austin Healey Sprite. That was an interesting drive because the rains had not yet finished and a lot of my time, as the passenger in the car, was spent pushing the car through muddy sections of the Capetown to Cairo, Great North Road. On arriving back in East Africa I went to Nairobi, the Kenya capital, where I still had a few school friends and where all large organisations had their head offices. I applied to various companies for a position and I was very fortunate in being called for interview very promptly by one of the largest construction companies there. That company was a local subsidiary of a British group and was very well established in East Africa. The little I remember of my interview was that I had a hard 30 minute meeting with the Technical Director followed by a short meeting with the Managing Director. To say that I was nervous when interviewed by the latter is an understatement, but he quickly put me at my ease by asking me to sit down and offering me a cigarette! How times have changed!

Shortly after the interview I received a good offer of employment as an assistant engineer with the company, and I accepted the offer without delay. The terms of my employment were that I could be stationed anywhere in East Africa where my services might be needed. Initially I was sent to work in the Eastern Province of Uganda. Uganda in those days was a British protectorate and was a most attractive country. It did not have the problems of neighbouring Kenya, where Mau Mau terrorism was still taking place. I was stationed at Tororo on the trunk road that goes from the Kenya Coast to Lake Victoria.

At Tororo, there was a rocky outcrop known as the Tororo Rock, of approx 1000 ft high, and that was where the local cement company had its quarry.

My work there started with the running of a substantial road reconstruction contract for the government, and also looking after a building contract for the cement company. While I was stationed in Tororo, I reported to the companies' area manager, an excellent individual. Peter was based in Mbale, the Provincial Capital of the Eastern Province, some 30 miles north of Tororo. He never talked about his war time service but I was told that he had been a Lancaster pilot and had ended the war as an RAF instructor. He still flew regularly, mainly in a rented Piper Cub; a little tandem two seat trainer, somewhat smaller than a Lancaster, and he had done a number of aerial surveys for the company. I quickly settled down and all the work went very well until one late afternoon when we had an urgent requirement for some materials from Mbale. I asked the road foreman to send a truck over immediately, but he was very apologetic and said that none of the drivers would go at that time of day. Somewhat annoyed, I asked him why and he seemed very reluctant to tell me why but eventually he did. Apparently, our drivers claimed that there had been incidents of cannibalism on that road and, therefore, they were not prepared to drive on it after 4.00 pm. Their reason for that was that they feared that if the vehicle broke down after sunset they might be killed during the hours of darkness. After being told that, I listened earnestly to what the foreman had to say and never again did I attempt to send drivers out in the late afternoon.

At the end of my first month at work I had my first break when our site was shut down for a long weekend after pay day and I was able to go down to the town in Kenya where my parents lived, in my little company Ford 100E Escort. In Kenya the main road from Uganda passes through the Equator at an altitude of approximately 9,000 feet. In a large powerful car the altitude did not have a great effect on the performance but in the Escort, with its little 1172 cc side valve engine, that altitude most certainly did have an effect and on some gradients we struggled to keep going in second gear of the 3 speed gear box. The worst situation was rain. The wipers on those little Fords were operated by vacuum from the inlet manifold of the engine. Unfortunately, at 9 000 feet there was virtually no vacuum and depressing the throttle pedal had the effect of stopping the wipers completely. Trying to see ahead through the rain, particularly in the dark, could be extremely difficult, and one night I hit a large civet cat, fortunately, without damaging the car radiator. However, regardless of these difficulties, I was young and little problems were part of life, and I had to be back to start our work by 6.30 on the Monday morning, and so it was just a case of press on regardless.

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I had been in Tororo for only a short time when Belgium gave independence to the Congo and to Ruanda Urundi. That had no effect on our daily lives except that each night a train carrying Belgian refugees would pass through Tororo, on its way to Nairobi, and most of us expatriates would go down to the railway station to see if we could give any help. The majority of the refugees were women with children, and they had come out with only the clothes that they were wearing, having lost virtually everything. The Tororo British Ladies, organised by the wife of the District Commissioner, set up a soup kitchen on the station platform for the refugees and they were most grateful for that. Many of them told harrowing tales of rape and murder, which were all rather frightening. Basically the Belgians had done very little to prepare their local population for independence. Fortunately, Britain had done a lot of work in preparing the local population of its East African territories for independence, as I was to learn 18 months later.

I stayed in Tororo for only about four months and when work there was almost finished Peter called me over to Mbale to discuss the next job that I was to undertake. In East Africa, apart from the Ruwenzori Range to the extreme west of Uganda, there are three major mountains. They are Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya and lastly Mount Elgon. Elgon is situated on the border between Kenya and Uganda. The mountain has several peaks each of which rises to over fourteen thousand feet, although there was virtually no habitation above seven thousand feet.

Our company had been awarded a design and build construction contract for a mountain road on Elgon, to be built on the north-west side of the mountain. The reason for this was that the community living at altitudes of over 6300 feet wanted a direct route down to the plain, which was at an altitude of only 3700 feet. Because of the difference in altitude, completely different crops were grown on the mountain and on the plain, and the local farmers wanted to be able to exchange crops by a more direct route. Their reason for this was that, between the two levels at that time, the only road route was to drive southward towards a road junction close to Mbale and then, after doing an about turn, to follow a route northward, to the settled area of the villages on the plain, an overall distance of about 50 miles. In my meeting with Peter he explained that he had already carried out an aerial survey, with a note pad strapped to his thigh while he was flying around the mountain, and had come up with an approximate alignment, not more than ten miles in length. He showed me on paper what he thought could be that alignment and told me that my job would be to confirm it on the ground, and then carry out a survey of it. Fortunately I was still very fit after only a few months from coming out of the army because that job was to involve considerable walking and climbing up and down the mountain.

Peter explained to me that for accommodation, at the village at the lower end of the job, the local chief had kindly offered his guest house. That was not a particularly comfortable solution, but it did provide me with somewhere to sleep at night. However, at the upper village there was a very good government rest house, with all mod cons and after I had finished work at the lower village, I arranged to move there. For communication, Peter had arranged with the Provincial Police Commander for me to send my messages through the police radio. Close to the lower village there was a police post with a corporal in charge, and he had been alerted to my use of the radio. For any urgent items that I might need, if arranged over the radio, Peter would fly those up in the Piper Cub. Finally, for transport I was to have a short wheelbase Land Rover with driver, instead of my Ford Escort.

I was taken to the upper village by Peter and he laid out the various criteria that were to be followed. To me, in my mid twenties, the whole thing was a tremendous challenge and I fully intended to make a success of it. Starting my work at the lower end of the job, I was up each morning at five and would work until dark each day. There was no electricity in the village and I tried working by the light of a pressure lamp each night but that attracted swarms of mosquitoes and since I could not work inside a mosquito net, I had to give that up. Even with a good net, I was still being bitten each night, and that continued until such time as I finished work at the lower level and then moved up to the rest house, at the upper village. Once I had done so, life became a lot easier for me. In those days, before poaching had become a major problem for the government game departments, there was considerable wild game in most rural areas. That was very much the situation on Mount Elgon and I was fortunate in that I did not have to contend with any carnivores nor with my greatest fear, the Cape Buffalo. One evening I collected a message from the Police post to say that Peter would be flying up next day, bringing mail and some small personal items and he said that I should be at the south end of the airstrip at 1100 hrs. He added that, because this was just after the rains, the strip was overgrown with very long grass, and he would not be able to land but would throw out my various items from the aircraft. I duly stationed my Land Rover at the strip about 15 minutes early. Peter's timing was perfect and he flew the aircraft down the strip, did an about turn and came back up the strip. As he approached my Land Rover, his arm came out of a side screen and, with a very accurate throw, he launched a package which landed on the hood of my Land Rover and then bounced into the long grass. The contents were completely undamaged. Peter then made a turn, waggled his wings and headed away. That was the first of my airmail deliveries.

I continued to use the Police radio regularly, even when I moved to the upper village and one afternoon, just as I was about to leave site, the corporal in charge of the post came over to ask for help. A raiding party of Karamoja tribesmen (a tribe similar to Masai) had come from the north and attacked the herdsman of the local Bugisu tribe, killing the two young herdsman and then rustling the herd of cattle. The corporal wanted to head off these rustlers before they reached the river that marked a tribal boundary, and he asked if I could transport him and his team in my Land Rover. I agreed and loaded up the corporal, armed with his Greener shotgun, and his four constables, armed with batons only, and my driver and myself, and we headed up several miles along the river bank.

We passed the scene of the murders: very long stabbing spears had been used. By then the young men had been dead for several hours and there was nothing that could be done for them. Unfortunately the water became too deep for me to travel farther and the police team disembarked at waters edge. In the distance we could see the cattle herd. Since I could go no farther I waited and watched the team set off at a trot until I thought that they had managed to head off the herd. Later the corporal told me that one shot from his shotgun was enough to frighten the raiders away and the cattle were brought back next day.

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I continued with establishing a precise alignment and recording it by my survey. After the rustling incident there were no further events except that on one very hot afternoon my water bag was empty and I was gagging for a drink. There was a stream close by but my chainman told me that there was a dead goat in it farther up the mountain. We passed a village quite high up on the mountain side and I asked a villager for a drink. He produced a gourd and, thinking it was milk, I took a very deep swig. Horror of horrors, it was not milk but was the normal Masai type of drink, of cow's blood mixed with curdled milk, and I promptly vomited all that I had drunk. My chainman had known what was in the gourd and he had a very good laugh. Never again did I ask for a drink at any of the mountain villages.

When I had finished the field work I went back to Tororo, where I still had an office and I plotted the survey. My spell living down on the malarious plain while on the survey resulted in my going down with the worst bout of malaria that I ever suffered. I should have realised that I would be working in a bad malarious area but foolishly I had not taken any prophylactics. I was very ill with temperature reaching 105° and severe headaches, or so I was told afterwards. There was no suitable hospital nearby and I stayed in the local hotel and was visited daily by a government doctor, who gave me medications and aspirin, I believe.

The extremely high temperatures caused very bad delirium and members of our staff did not like to visit me because sometimes I spoke complete nonsense to any visitor. I had a Seychelles foreman and he came to see me one afternoon and I clearly remember telling him to beware of the cobra climbing up the bedroom wall behind him. He looked around, up and down the wall and then gave me a strange look, said goodbye and departed. I took a long time to recover from that bout and for several months afterwards I had very bad headaches.

Not long afterwards all our work in Tororo came to an end and I assumed that I would be working in Mbale, but that was not to be. Peter called me to tell me that I was to be transferred to work in an engineering position, on the construction of the 30 mile Class 1 Kumi to Soroti Road. Apparently, the Site Engineer on the road had already resigned, and was about to depart, and I was to take his place. I was very sad about that because I thought of Peter as my boss and I had had a very good relationship with him. I was most upset to learn then that I would have nothing more to do with him.

I duly took myself to the site office at the small town of Kumi and reported to the Agent. I often wondered afterwards whether he had written the book, "How to make friends and influence people" because, when I introduced myself to him, the first thing he did was to tell me that there was no vehicle allocated to me and my Ford Escort would be sent back to the Mbale Office. That did not please me one little bit and I asked him what I was to do for transport, to which he replied that I would have to rely on lifts.

That was a very strange situation. For several weeks I did rely on lifts, but really, that was the beginning of the end for me, which was a great pity.

Then, when I saw an advertisement in the East African Standard for an engineering position in the town of Tanga, in Tanganyika, and I applied for that. I had to attend an interview in Tanga, some eight hundred miles away. I had my own car by then and I drove down to Nairobi in it and from there I flew by East African Airways DC3 Dakota to Tanga. I was duly offered the position and I accepted it. My leaving the Uganda job was a great pity because the work which I had been doing was extremely interesting but I still had differences with the site management and I was quite happy to depart.

The sad part was that Peter came up from Mbale to try to talk me out of leaving. I'm sure that he knew that I was not happy working in the road team, but I was very naïve and could not very well tell him (Some years later I learned that my predecessor had resigned from that team for similar reasons) Whatever, had the company been able to offer me another position, I would have stayed gladly, but that was not to be and I departed from Uganda and never did go back to that most attractive country. My new job, however, was based on the Indian Ocean coast and that was a bonus in itself.

And that, is a very brief outline of my time in Uganda.

Covid-19

1. So let me get this right, there's no cure for a virus that can be killed by hand sanitiser and hand soap?
2. Is it too early to put the Christmas tree up yet? I am running out of things to do.
3. Just wait a second, so what you're telling me is that my chances of surviving this is directly linked to the common sense of others? You're kidding.
4. People are scared of getting fined or arrested for congregating in crowds as if catching a deadly virus wasn't enough of a deterrent.
5. If you believe that all this will end and we will get back to normal just because we re-open everything, raise your hand. Now slap yourself with it.



General Knowledge Quiz

1. How many standard wine bottles are there in a flagon?
2. What do polled cattle not have?
3. The Pet Shop Boys had a hit in 1987 with 'Always on my mind', who sang it originally in 1972?
4. Which UK city has its main railway station at New Street?
5. Lynard Skynard sang 'Sweet Home Alabama', spell Lynard Skynard.
6. Which actor played the role of Norman Bates in Hitchcocks Psycho?
7. Who replaced Winston Churchill as Prime Minister in 1945?
8. Which TV show of physical and mental challenges was hosted by Gordon Burns?
9. Which Lord disappeared in 1974?
10. Who was the first player to score 100 goals in the English Premier League?
11. What is the name of the Romanian leader who was executed by firing squad on 25 Dec 1989?
12. What is the collective name for a group of baboons?
13. What is the name of the cow in 'The Magic Roundabout'?
14. Who composed the opera, The Barber Of Seville?
15. The England footballing brothers, Phil & Gary, shared what surname?
16. What are dried plums called?
17. The American cooking term, BROILING, means what to an English cook?
18. Feta cheese comes from which animal?
19. Claret wines come from which region of France?
20. What is the traditional filling inside a carpetbag steak?

Answers page 10

“Does anyone recognise where this scene is specifically? My late father painted it and our family would like to visit the location at some stage. Jeremy”



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 7

My Years as Warden of the Cremorne Gardens & Cemetary
Remembered by Ted Vaughan

In 1960, the Cremorne Gardens and mere were supervised by the Mere Joint Committee. This consisted of Captain Mainwaring, Chairman, Mr. F. Horton, Secretary, and Messrs. A. Roberts, L. Jones, I. Stokes, Mr. Skeet, and B. Jones. It was Bill Jones who asked me to apply for the job of Cremorne Warden. Aided by a reference from Mr. Roberts, Vicar of Welshampton, I was appointed in June 1960 the second Warden since the formation of the Mere Joint Committee.

My duties were to look after the gardens right round to the first stile. When I started I worked on my own, keeping the woodland area tidy and cutting the grass. The mower was borrowed by the committee; a push mower, it had been buckled and was beyond repair. Eventually, I was given a ride-on mower. I used to cut all the grass throughout the gardens.

Where the bungalow stands today was a wilderness, all briars and raspberry canes. I spent many hours clearing the area and creating lawn. The path through the trees had been started by the first warden, so I completed the task and then had to keep the shrubs and undergrowth under control. Because of the amount of work, I was eventually allowed some assistance. A Mr. Basford was allowed to come on three mornings each week. Later they decided to make the top a lot tidier and put a path up there and clear the briars. I got further help from another retired man, Mr. Sid Jones.

Around the mid-1960's, I made the putting green (no longer there). There were nine holes to start with, then eighteen holes. Previously, that area was just lawn. About the same time I made the pathway from the 'green' to Church Street. The old path used to be from the tennis court to the lane by the black and white house, crossing land belonging to Mr. F. Horton. He thus had me build the new path, so that he could close the old one, but still retain a way in and out.

I also made many flower beds. Some, near the main entrance, have been altered. I put seven round beds there with a standard rose in the centre and about a dozen floribunda roses all round. By the bandstand, I made a dahlia bed. I also planted the daffodils in the bank running from the bandstand down the garden fence. Mr. Levi Jones was thinking of having a sort of brook going down to the mere with a bridge over it, but I think the County Council stopped it.

The bandstand was the same as today; just a base with no canopy. There are holes around it which may have been for some form of canopy previously. I can recall bands playing at carnival time and also when dancing took place on the lawn around the bandstand. The short wooden 'stump' with a circle of bricks around it, by the path in front of the bandstand was part of a circular seat. Whilst there were no parades through the gardens, old-fashioned style parades did take place at the vicarage garden parties whilst Mr. Fenn was there. The children's playground was there when I came, having been created by the first warden. It was paid for by Major Needham, of The Grange, in memory of his daughter, Patricia, who died whilst still a child. The Major also provided the tennis court in memory of his son, Keith, who was killed whilst in the R.A.F. During my time the court and pavilion were in perfect condition. I painted the hut every year.

There was a proper tennis club, run by Tony Davis our bell ringer. The club had a couple of nights a week; the Young Farmers had one night and the public could book the court at other times. During Wimbledon Fortnight, my wife and I were rushed off our feet. Everybody wanted to play and they queued to book. When we first came to Ellesmere we lived in the small cottage between the present day visitor Centre and The Boathouse Cafe. All bookings were done from our cottage. Later on we moved to the bungalow and carried on with the bookings in there.

We also had three fishing punts to hire out. These belonged to the Mere committee and a licence was not required. The Angling Club also had two punts which a licence was required. Tom Bentley at the Red Lion issued them. Our three punts were kept in a boathouse by the cafe. The Angling Club punts were originally kept in a lovely boathouse up by the putting green. Unfortunately the timbers rotted and it was pulled down. I had to fill in the water recess and make a new bank to the mere. The two punts were then put into the second boathouse alongside the committee's punts.

There were poles around the mere for tying the punts to whilst fishing. It was not unusual for me to be up at 3am to get the punts out for the fishermen. The punts were booked solid during the summer fishing season. There was fish in abundance but in the '60's Liverpool University carried out supposed research and their nets caught far too many fish (and wildfowl) which was unnecessary. Although I complained they continued catching, and fishing in the mere has been ruined ever since.

About 1968, a third boathouse was built, by the existing ones, to house the Mere committee's motor launch. The launch had been on the mere since 1959 and provided trips for visitors. It came from New Brighton and had been used at sea. If I remember correctly it was then owned by a Mr. Tommy Mann, I once had some people come on the boat who were related to him and they recognised it. The boat would take sixteen at a time and I used to get about three trips round the mere in one hour. Fares were one shilling and sixpence for adults and one shilling for children. If anything went wrong with it, Eric Peaver would come and see to the engine. It had a lovely Stewart Turner engine. The boat was still going when I left and it was taken over by the next warden. For some reason he did not get on with Eric, and after two years the boat was gone.

I took people for trips on the mere mostly in the evenings and Saturday and Sunday afternoons. After I had been there a few years the committee gave me permission to take a party out if it was a nice week-day afternoon. I was, of course, meant to be working in the gardens all week, so if a party turned up, then my wife had to find me and then I would return to the cottage, change my clothes and take the people out. Some parties came regularly every year. They came to the convent. The Father used to be there; I forget his name, and after he left he would bring lads for a trip on the mere and then tea at the convent. A schoolmaster always came and when he was on the boat, the lads were well behaved, but if the Father was on board they used to play up.

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The heronry was not on the island in those days, they did not arrive until the early 1970's. The only herons to be seen on boat trips were the odd pair on the island or a pair in the Oteley corner. The old hall was still there when I first started, and I would take the boat round for visitors to view the hall.

When they started knocking down the old hall in the 1960's, they put the rubble by the roadside. The older Ellesmerians told the workers they were doing wrong as it was all marsh there and they would have trouble. They were ignored and, of course, trouble came. One night it just disappeared and left a very big hole! Before that it was planned to build the new warden's bungalow where the Visitors' Centre is now. At the time I had an old army hut there, that I think had been there since the 1914-1918 war. It contained my workshop. Because of the landslip they carried out a lot of boring and decided it wasn't safe to put the new bungalow there, but afterwards they built an extension to the Boathouse Restaurant, which was even closer to where the landslip occurred. The restaurant was well used in those days. Mr. Wilson ran the business. The National buses running from London and North Wales and other regions all stopped there. On Saturday mornings the car park was always overflowing. Schools from Nottingham would come on Sundays, together with many other visitors. 'Tug' Wilson would run the restaurant all summer then close for winter and get a job as a ship's Steward. Takings were over £1,000 with the rowing boats. For them the charge was 3 shillings for two persons, 4 shillings for three and 5 shillings for four, per hour. Once people requested half an hour hires, the charges were split. There were once three islands in the mere. One was just off-shore along the tree walk. There were plans to link it with a bridge, but it did not happen. Now the water has been filled in and it is no longer an island. The second island was by the main entrance to the Cremorne, by the railings. Mr. Levi Jones said that a lot of soil and bones from the church yard had been dumped there, but the island appeared. When out with the boat one day I went nearer the mereside than usual to avoid a swan. The boat went up in the air and came down again, giving the passengers and myself a shock. When I looked back there was a great big branch coming out of the water. It must have been a tree years ago on the island. At that point the mere goes down about fourteen feet near the bank and then rises again where the island stood once.

The third island was originally called Moscow Island. It was created by earth from Ellesmere House, It is like two islands with a wall all around. Through the middle of it is brickwork. I was always going on to the island, to check the nesting birds. In 1963 the mere started freezing in December and stayed like it well into March. This was the last winter when the ice was thick enough to skate and walk upon without danger. However, I lost very few birds that winter, feeding them mainly on bread, but nowadays there is a sign warning people not to use bread. We always used it and there were many more birds than today.

Eventually the new warden's bungalow was built on the present site and we moved during October 1966. We were there until 1969 when I then took over the job of warden to the cemetery and moving into the cemetery house. They had been without a warden for six months and the cemetery was in a terrible condition.

After clearing all the overgrown graves my main tasks were cutting all the grass, clearing the surplus soil, checking records before funerals, and general cleaning. After a burial, I would move some nine barrow loads of surplus soil for each ☐we. I also had lorry loads of surplus delivered which needed disposal. It was taken to the mere and used to fill in where the bank had collapsed. This has now ceased, I believe, as there is more stone around the mere edges.

The cemetery chapel was built in Welsh stone back in 1863. There are separate ☐Chapels for Church people and Chapel people. There were also separate burial grounds. The main chapel holds forty people. We had the occasional service, no music, just prayers, and no charge in my day. I remained there for twenty three year until retiring.

Memory No 8

THE MERE AT ELLESMERE

Remembered by Stan Horton & Tony Hamlin

The beginning of the century, the Mere was largely in private hands, the northern side belonging to Earl Brownlow and the southern side to the Mainwaring's of Oteley. The only public access was the common ground known The Moors alongside the Ellesmere - Whitchurch road. The Brownlow side had been laid out by the 3rd Earl Brownlow (1844-1921) as private pleasure gardens, christened Cremorne, probably after the family estates in Cremona in Italy. The public was admitted to these gardens only on very special occasions, such as the coronation of Edward VII, although the landlord of the Red Lion is reported to have had the privilege of holding occasional private parties there, provided the guests were of suitable quality. The 3rd Earl died in 1921 and was succeeded by his cousin, the 5th Baron Brownlow who was followed on his death in 1927 by his son, the 6th Baron Brownlow, commonly known in Ellesmere as Lord Brownlow. Lord Brownlow was keen to support and develop tourism in Ellesmere, and he opened the Cremorne Gardens to the public from dawn to dusk, on condition that they behaved responsibly and did not leave litter. Management was ceded to Ellesmere Urban District Council, but the enforcement of good behaviour was largely left to Brownlow estate workers tending the gardens. Rowing boats, fishing punts and motor boats were made available for hire, and a bathing place was established on the Moors.

Finally Lord Brownlow opened the Boat House Restaurant. It was intended to be, the terminology of the 1930's, a Road House; that is a public house offering high quality facilities including a restaurant.

To complement this, the Boat House laid to its rear a sheltered lawn stretching down to the lake shore on which tea may be taken, and there was a small dock for the hire boats.

The kitchen was very modern for its day, being "all-electric". Unfortunately, as it turned out, the bar was somewhat restricted in order to counter allegations that the Boat House would draw drinking trade away from the town.

Subsequent difficulties over the licensing arrangements are reputed to have been one of the reasons why Lord Brownlow ultimately severed his connection with Ellesmere.

Cont. page 8

The 1939 war brought hard times for the Cremorne and Boat House. Estate labour was no longer available to maintain the gardens, and the Boat House was requisitioned to house soldiers returning from Dunkirk.

After the war, the Cremorne Gardens were very overgrown, and there appeared to be continual difficulties in reinstating the Boat House. In 1953 Lord Brownlow decided to sell his properties in Ellesmere, and disposed of his interest in the 100 acre mere and 25 acres of shore to local councils for a fairly nominal sum of £3500, on condition that the property was to be maintained as far as possible in its natural state, and to be available for open air recreation by the public,

A plaque set in the open air stage near the present entry to the gardens commemorates this transfer.

Initially Lord Brownlow offered the area to the Urban District Council, but this council felt that as the area would be used increasingly by visitors from outside Ellesmere, the cost of upkeep would not be compatible with their resources and would require support from the County Council. Accordingly, the Meres Joint Committee was set up with representation from both councils; two County Councillors, four Urban District Councillors, and four co-opted members, not necessarily councillors.

The year 1953 was the coronation year of Queen Elizabeth II, and the people of Ellesmere decided that the renovation of the Cremorne Gardens and the provision of amenities would constitute a suitable commemoration. An Appeal Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. G.A. Roberts, and about £1,500 was raised - a considerable sum for the time - which was made available to the Meres Committee with a request for facilities for swimming, boating, fishing, tennis, and a playground for children.

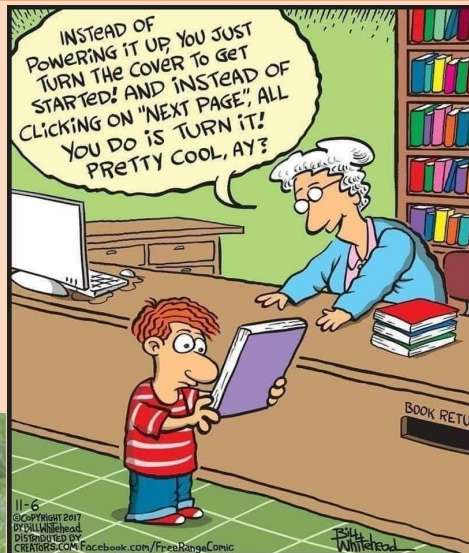
Tricia's playground was eventually provided by the Barnyard Club. Fishing punts and pleasure boats were provided, and two tennis courts with a pavilion, but the swimming bath never materialised.

Facilities in the Cremorne and on the Mere have ebbed and flowed since the 1950's. Lord Brownlow, the first person to use a power boat on the Mere said that he was glad that in future it would be a bird sanctuary. Nevertheless, power boats for public trips both steam and internal combustion have operated from time to time. A putting green existed for a while. More recently Triathlon competitions and regattas have been staged, and occasional sailing meets.

The two relaxations that seem to have permanently disappeared from the Mere are swimming, which is now positively discouraged, and skating. Since the 1940's, hard winters have presumably been too infrequent for people to retain the skill required for skating. One of the most enduring facilities, highly popular with visitors, has been the Meres Centre. Opened in a 1914-1918 army hut, and eventually rehoused in a permanent building, this has endeavoured to present the natural history of the Shropshire meres.

There is considerable wild life on the Mere although much has become semi- domesticated through being fed by visitors, inter-breeding and the introduction of domestic water fowl, which have produced some curious mixtures, The main natural features remaining are the great rafts of gulls that spend their nights on the Mere in winter, and the herons that breed on Moscow Island. These birds started to nest in 1971 and the number of nests had increased by the end of the century to twenty four. Heronwatch was created for visitors to study the birds through telescopes and binoculars, and in 1997 high technology added closed circuit television.

More Memories next week



Offa's Dyke (Clawdd Offa)

Offa's Dyke (Clawdd Offa in Welsh) is a large linear earthwork that roughly follows the border between England and Wales running from Liverpool Bay to the Severn Estuary., approximately 150 miles. It is named after Anglo-Saxon King Offa who ruled



from AD757 to 796 and is claimed to have ordered its construction. The Dyke was up to 65 feet (20m) wide including its associated ditch and 8 feet (2.4m) wide. The ditch is on the Welsh side with the displaced soil piled into a bank on the English side. This suggests that the Mercians constructed it as a defensive earthwork or to demonstrate power and intent of their kingdom. Although it has conventionally been dated from the Early Middle Ages, recent research using radioactive carbon dating has challenged the theories about the earthwork and show that construction began in the early fifth century during the sub-Roman period. Where the earthwork encounters hills or high ground it passes to the west of them. It is thought by some recent historians that the construction was made to embrace natural features/barriers and the existence of some gaps in the Dyke may have been due to incorporating occasional palisades that left no archaeological trace.



There are many conflicting views from researchers and historians on the origins of the Dyke. 'Ofer' is a word meaning 'border' or 'edge' in Old English giving rise to some alternative proposals of the naming. Nowadays most of the line of Offa's Dyke is designated as a public right

of way. Nevertheless in 2013 a landowner removed a 148 feet (45m) section between Chirk and Llangollen to build a stable - the perpetrator escaped punishment. There is an Offa's Dyke visitor centre in the centre of Knighton, Powys where some of the best remains of the earthworks can be found very close by. George Borrow in his renowned book 'Wild Wales' (1862), drawn from folklore, claimed that "It was customary for the English to cut off the ears of every Welshman who was found to the east of the dyke and for the Welsh to hang every Englishman who they found to the west of it".

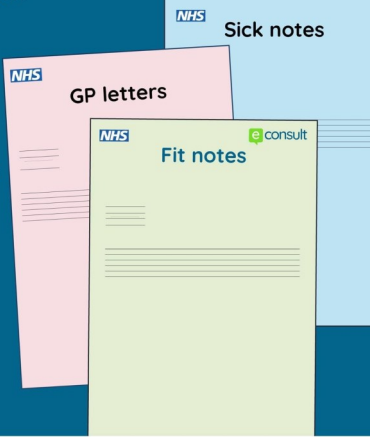
Local information

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





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. Three, 2. Horns, 3. Elvis, 4. Birmingham, 5. LYNARD SKYNARD, 6. Anthony Perkins
7. Clement Allée, 8. Krypton Factor, 9. Lucan, 10. Alan Shearer, 11. Nicolae Ceaucescu
12. Troop, 13. Ermintrude, 14. Rossini, 15. Neville, 16. Prunes, 17. Gilling, 18. Goat
19. Bordeaux, 20. Oysters



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)

