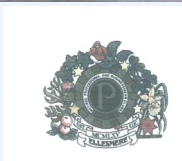




Probus Club Ellesmere



Covid-19 Lockdown 2020 Newsletter

Issue 20

Sept. 03, 2020

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From the Editor

Dear all,

I hope you are all keeping well, another quiet week in Ellesmere, schools have been ordered back this week by Boris, with the usual last minute changes. Also all the people working from home who usually work in the cities have been ordered back, I think most have now realised how much it is costing them in time and money to work in an office and buy a lunch at subways etc, why not take your own packed lunch I ask, but perhaps carrying food across the country is now banned.

Another topic of conversation in the local bazaars is to do with home deliveries. The general question is to do with the items deemed as not available. What are they being replaced with? Will the substituted items bear any resemblance to what was ordered? This has helped to keep the old grey matter active during the full lockdown. The guessing game starts the day before the expected delivery, it has replaced sudoku and crosswords in some households. Most stores just send a substitute item, then if you don't want it you need to phone to tell the store, so you are reimbursed the cost, I have heard of people setting their alarm for 4am to try to beat the rush and the message you are 50th in the que and your custom is very important to us, only to get the message our opening hours are 7am to 10pm.

I wonder what other entertainment they can give us in the weeks to come.

The winner to last weeks caption competition—"The English Channel is much narrower than I thought" by Peter Sanderson.

Keep safe

View from the Crow's Nest

As ever I hope that you and yours are keeping safe and well as the elastic band of lockdown stretches and rebounds. Back to work, back to school, back overseas, back to Westminster, back to abnormal but at least a few steps forward. We will be having a Zoom meeting fairly soon to

A crow's nest is a structure in the upper part of a ship. It is used as a lookout point & positioned high above to increase visibility over the curvature of the Earth.



On the ship's deck 4 m (13 ft) above the surface, an observer can only spot a 20 m (66 ft) high ship from at most ±25 km (16 mi). On the other hand, from a 35 m (115 ft) high crow's nest, an observer will be able to spot the same ship from ±40 km (25 mi) away.

FlatEarth.ws/crows-nest
Debunking Flat Earth Misconceptions

mainly talk about the potential for arranging a face-to-face meeting with a speaker and when we feel that would be safe to happen. No doubt there will be a range of opinions (remember Brexit 48%/52%!) And we will report the views back to you. Some members have asked if it would be possible for those who want to to meet for a coffee at the Boathouse in Ellesmere. It would be good to have an idea of the numbers of our members who would be willing to do that so, subject of course to a suitable date, do drop me or Paul a quick email or phone call to let us know as soon as you can and we will take it from there. Personally I think it is a good idea but fully understand that some of us are still shielding and others are anxious to see a bit of progress, albeit in safety and socially distanced. My email address is jeremy.stretton@icloud.com and phone

number 01691 624772.

Thanks again to everyone sharing a fascinating range of articles for the Newsletters and to Paul for his superb compilations for us. Just 112 shopping days to Christmas! Stay safe a trouble-free,
best wishes, Jeremy



This is a plea for help to raise funds, not something we do very often but I think this is a worthy cause.

First Responder Effie Cadwallader is trying to raise money to purchase a responder car plus equipment, it may surprise you to know that First Responders who are volunteers have to buy their own car and equipment.

Many of you will know Effie Cadwallader as one of the few first responders in the area.

She has given a number of talks to the Ellesmere Probus Club, and she may well have saved the life of a member of your family or a friend. She also gives free Defibrillator training in the community.

The following is from this week's Advertiser :

A LONG-SERVING Community First Responder (CFR) has launched a crowd-funding appeal for a replacement car so that she can react rapidly to life-threatening emergencies along the Wrexham-Shropshire border.

Effie Cadwallader, who is now responding for the Welsh Ambulance Service, is still covering some of the same area, but is without a scheme car.

And with first responders not receiving officially-sourced funding, she says they must raise sufficient money to pay for uniform and equipment, and is hoping people may be able to help her



"Previously, when I volunteered with a neighbouring ambulance service, I managed to raise enough to finance a car, and with the help of local businesses and private donations, the running costs were covered," said Effie, who used to volunteer for Wes Midlands Ambulance Service.

"Now that I am with Wales, I miss the former car I was using and I'm hoping the communities I serve will give me their support."

As a member of the Wrexham Rural First Responders team, all volunteers responding for the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust, she still attends calls in her home village of St Martins and the surrounding communities, while her "patch" now ex-

tends to include Chirk and Llangollen, the Ceiriog Valley, Overton, Penley, Bettisfield and the outskirts of Ellesmere.

"Having a dedicated car with high-viz markings is an absolute boon," she said.

"Without blue lights, the striking livery can help with ease of passage, and eccentric parking at an emergency is forgiven. It keeps the CFR much safer, and seeing the car's arrival is a huge relief to the patients

Effie has set a target of £10,000 with the help of the on-line GoFundMe page and the group is also looking into sources of match-funding.

In addition to the purchase price, an extra £1,000 must be found to cover the cost of livery and insurance, plus another £1,000 a year for running costs, including the road fund licence, servicing and MOT.

"The car would not belong to me personally, but to the Wrexham Rural CFR group, which is strong, growing, well organised and well managed," she added.

"I anticipate that a car would be booked on with us for several hours a day, seven days a week, as has always been the case.

"Having a dedicated car means a faster and more efficient response to calls. It can be loaded up and ready to go, with all the equipment required on a daily basis so no need to transfer equipment from car to car and risk leaving behind something essential.

"A dedicated car would also make it easier to transport the manikins and training defibrillators used by CFRs when delivering Defibrillator Awareness courses across the Wrexham and North Shropshire regions."

Effie would be immensely grateful for contributions to the CFR Car Appeal.

To make a donation via Go Fund Me please go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/effies-community-first-responder-car>.

For information about donating by cheque or BACs, please contact Effie by email at

alovevera13@outlook.com

An Austin 7 Experience *By Peter Sanderson*

Obviously, the braking system needed a good dose of looking at. It was entirely cable operated, using three cables; one being a single loop passing through an adjustable shackle attached to the brake pedal arm with the ends of the cable attached to the brake shoe levers on the front axle while the rear brakes had one cable each; fine adjustment was provided by cable tensioners. These consisted of V-shaped sheet metal fabrications; the open ends of which were bent in a U shape and hooked over the cable, while the apex of the V had a threaded boss holding a jacking screw, one end of which held a U shaped piece which went up between the legs and bore on the cable; tightening the screw pushed the length of cable between the arms of the V outwards and so shortened and tensioned the cable. All the well rusted cables had stretched so much that multitudinous tensioners hanging from the cables resembled a roost of bats, applying the brakes only raised the catenaries without making any impression at the wheel hub brake levers which were a rattling good fit in their bearings.

Further investigation of the system showed the shoes to be OK with the rivets well down in the Ferodo, the return springs also in good shape and the brake levers in reasonable nick, only requiring their Oilite bushes to be renewed. So a set of new cables and bushes was put on the docking list.

The dull thuds under the rear seat, first noted during our downhill descent, were traced to the universal coupling between the gearbox and back axle torque tube. This was accessible via a small hatch in the shaft tunnel. The coupling medium between the forks consisted of a leather disc about $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick with steel tube reinforcement in way of the coupling bolt holes. Again, rodents had taken a liking to this tasty snack and only two very slack bolts were performing coupling duties. Had this failed during the downhill venture, the Husky would have had to be wound up to anti-collision speed until a suitable uphill gradient provided arrest. The thoughtfully provided hatch was there to allow the leather to receive a regular libation of Mars Oil or Dubbin (remember them from your school sporting activities?) as part of the Service Schedule. A coupling disc was duly added to the list!

Moving to the knock-kneed appearance of the front wheels, it was obvious that this was due to the steering swivel king-pins and bushes being time-expired. The king -pins were only $\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter and were held in place by a cotter, which tended to work loose so it was essential that tapping the pins back into place and tightening the cotter was done as part of the pre-flight checks. Weirdly, the pins tended to work their way upwards. Renewing the bushes required one of the "Special Maintenance Tools", to wit a parallel reamer, as the bottom bush was in a blind hole (to stop the king pin from falling out? No, the axle was not upside down). Naturally, this bit of kit was long out of production and there was no E-Bay. "Exchange & Mart" was perused but to no avail. The other "Special Tool" was a rear hub puller, which my history master, another Austin 7 aficionado, gave me as he had a spare!! Investigation of the vague steering showed that the steering box was in good condition and the problems lay with the track rod and steering arm joints. These were of an intriguing configuration, consisting of opposing spring loaded plungers in the tubular linkage with the opposing faces of the plungers being concave, allowing them to accept the ball ends of the track rod arms. The springs allowed the plungers to move slightly and provided a shock absorbing capabilities. A clamping sleeve held everything in place. When in good condition, the plunger movement produced steering "shimmy" which occurred every time one hit a declivity (Boris again) aka a pothole, or cat's eye and resulted in a delicate zig zag rather like a Covid Avoidance Two Step. The "jammed at their extremities" situation has already been covered. They were mud magnets!

Eventually, a list of bits and pieces was compiled and an expensive telephonic communication was made via the village gossip/telephone operator to Mr. Dalby, listing my needs and piteously enquiring as to the availability of a reamer "Tell tha' what, lad, As got yan, fetch t' axle here and I'll fit t' bushes while thaas 'ere. Thou can hav trest off' tackle as weel, all in for three pund". Costs were rising! Pleading looks at Dad, who agreed to sub me and let me borrow the Husky!! Agreed the deal, the sun was shining, brightly!!

Returning to base with the booty, restoration to a running chassis was fairly rapidly achieved and attention was turned to the Motive Power Unit!

The easiest way to deal with the engine overhaul was to remove it, with the gearbox from the car. After disconnecting all the engine connections and the gear box cover with gear lever, this only required 6 bolts to be removed, 2 holding the radiator and 4 rudimentary engine anti-vibration mounts.

Now, this is where strong running boards were needed. Standing on the boards/front mudguards, astride the engine & gearbox, a "not very bright but can lift heavy weights youth (me)" could then easily pick up the MPU and put it on the bench for major surgery. It only took about half an hour! No need to grovel about on the deck under said vehicle or put it on the lift. Simples. Igor.

Overhaul completed with Cord Oil Control piston rings fitted to accommodate the worn cylinder bores, flushed out oil passages, ensuring the "spit & hope nozzles were aligned, big ends checked-there was surprisingly little wear on the crankpins, valves ground in, the 18 mm plugs dismantled and cleaned, new plug leads and distributor cap, and crash gearchange filings removed from the gearbox, the above procedure was reversed and, lo and behold, using the Chevvy battery, combustion was achieved in all 4 cylinders. In celebration, a correct size 6 v battery was fitted in the battery box and charged using our fearsome, death-ray emanating mercury arc charger. (Originally used for charging various radio batteries in the village!)

This enabled the radiator and thermo-siphon cooling passages (no water pump fitted) to be dosed with Radflush and the resulting brown soup drained through the thoughtfully provided drain tap. Frequently repeating this process finally produced satisfactory, reasonably clear cooling water. Naturally, this created a weeping radiator due to the displacement of the crud blocking the pre-existing pinholes. Dim problem, as they say in Wales, "no worries" in Strine, a slack handful of porridge oats in the cooling system soon bunged up the weeps. One piece of sage advice was ignored- do not put eggs into a leaking radiator as the omelette is next to impossible to get out through the radiator cap, although it will stop the leaks.

New, "used but ok" tyres and tubes were fitted and after heavy scrutiny by Dad-MOTs were just being mooted- insurance cover "on the firm" and £ 3-8s-9d for the license and we were on the road at last.

Driving Experience Assessment

Cockpit ambience:

Surprisingly comfortable, if firm, seats, in the front, anyway, with good forward and lateral visibility which enabled the driver to watch as the starboard headlight slowly turned to face 30 to port when underway; the port light being invisible. Judicious "spannering" at suitable service intervals solved the problem. All controls were easily accessed and instruments visible, not hidden down gloomy tunnels considered vital by today's demented "designers".

Air conditioning was in line with the bracing nature of motoring at the date of manufacture. Heating was provided by hot air blowing back through various holes in the scuttle bulkhead while cooling was achieved by way of other assorted gaps such as where the pedals went through the floorboards, around the doors and hinged windscreen and by two forward-facing hinged flaps by the occupant's knees. This mixed airflow occurred simultaneously whether need or not. Humidity control was dependant on the weather and depth of water on the road, damp trouser legs were the norm in the rain. Driving in wellies was inadvisable, as they eventually filled up from the windscreen leaks. The windscreen wiper was vacuum operated via the inlet manifold, went like the clappers on slowing down, but stopped on accelerating; perhaps that exhilarating experience was too much for it. A small handle was provided to switch on and to help boost the system to overcome the resistance of barely-squashed flies. (Ford were still fitting these wipers into the 1960s). There was no screen washer, but the windscreen could be opened to aid visibility until the protein could be removed from the glass.

Starting up:

Of the various ways of starting-up, the initial moves were the same- Fuel tap open, tickle the carburettor until petrol came out of the float vent hole, (remember those days??) select neutral, full choke, hand brake on, retard ignition and give a bit of hand throttle. The options then were:

Press the starter button; if the car hadn't been standing idle for more than a day this fired it up and hand controls were rapidly manoeuvred to get smooth running. Usually, though it flattened the battery. Re-connect to the death ray apparatus.

Second option was reverting to hand start which was good for one's aerobic ability as it generally fired just as one was collapsing earthwards.

The final option was to release the hand brake, open the driver's door and secure it to the starboard headlamp with the bicycle inner tube. Then with the left foot on the running board, left hand on the steering wheel while pushing on the doorpost with right hand and using the right foot to scoot the vehicle along the road(are you still with me?) until sufficient velocity was reached where-upon one leapt into the driver's seat ,clutch down, crash into 1 st. gear, foot up and maybe it would fire. Naturally, this was only to be attempted if it was facing downhill. Prolonged use of this method overdeveloped one's right leg so that one tended to walk in large left hand circles.

Performance:

45 mph could be reached in about 25 secs. once double declutching using the hand throttle had been mastered; the foot throttle made life a bit easier. One's survival instinct suggested that this was fast enough, but 50 mph could be achieved downhill, with much clacking from the speedo, for which the drive cable ascended directly from the back of the gearbox, in parallel with the starter cable. If you were carrying a first-time passenger, this performance was often aborted after about 15 secs. as their frantic, panic induced, foot stamping invariably shut the fuel tap situated next to the starter motor.

Road holding was slightly precarious and could be improved by tightening up the friction type shocks although this gave a hard ride and the vibration caused "things to loosen". (No Loctite in those days) With the quarter elliptic rear springs, oversteer was considerable and a bit hair raising (I had lots of hair then), especially when combined with the steering shimmy, but one got used to it.

Oversteer was considerably enhanced when a rear spring broke, the axle then only being held to the car by the shock absorber arm, the other spring and the torque tube mount, this resulting in the axle moving backwards in an arc until the tyre contacted the wheel arch with considerable graunching. The change in geometry usually resulted in a visit to the dyke, which was useful as it enabled progress to be halted as well as providing repair material in the shape of broken fence posts, wire and binder twine; the first was used to wedge the axle into reasonable alignment and the other two to secure it to the chassis, enabling one to get back to base, albeit with considerable drift correction.

Braking was an entertaining pastime. The drums were made of steel, not cast iron, and, in time, became oval; trying to machine them true was like trying to machine putty. This meant that as the shoe in a particular drum came in contact with the minor axis of the drum, braking force was applied but, a quarter of a turn later, was relaxed as the major axis came into play. Thus, braking was performed in a series of random, zig-zagging stutters which caused further chagrin to the sheep dozing on the road. However, when the major and minor axes on all four wheels synchronised, the stuttering also became uniform and one braked in a straight line.

Cont. page 5



General Knowledge Quiz

1. What is a sad anagram of GYRATED?
2. If you are in the capital city of Port au Prince, in which country are you?
3. Which train service connects London to Paris?
4. What colour is the Northern Line on the London Underground?
5. In which city is 101 Dalmations set?
6. What is the most common metal found in the Earth's crust?
7. Who was the first man to fly solo across the Atlantic?
8. Which 1984 film tells the story of Cambodian journalist, Dith Pran?
9. Who played Spock in the original Star Trek TV shows?
10. Where would you be if you were walking along latitude 66 degrees 32 minutes North?
11. What is the medical term for the study of the brain and nervous system?
12. Which battle took place on October 21st 1805?
13. What is the name of the website where you can buy and sell ONLY handmade or vintage craft items?
14. Which of the Kray brothers died in prison?
15. In what year was Nelson Mandela released from prison after 27 years of incarceration?
16. What is the 6th planet in our Solar System?
17. Where in the body would you find 'The Bowmans Capsule'?
18. In which park would you find London zoo?
19. Linseed oil comes from which plant?
20. Red Iron Oxide is more commonly known as what?

Answers page 11

From page 3

Eureka! Lord Austin had invented ABS, complete with pedal shake in the 1930s!

Sadly, the ash body frame gradually rotted beyond repair and it was decided to fit the chassis with a brand new, two seater open top ash frame/aluminium panelled sports body for the huge price of about £25 complete! The chassis was duly prepared for this by raking the steering column with a purpose made steel wedge, which was the only mod needed and a beer crate installed as a driving seat so rides round the yard could be made to get a flavour of things to come.

However, like all good things, all this fun had to come to an end; I up graded to a fully functioning 1935 Ruby for £ 8-0-0; much the same but with 17" wheels, slightly longer wheelbase and inflated Lilos! Shortly afterwards, I left school and home to take up an excellent apprenticeship (an activity now miraculously re-discovered by the Clueless Ones) in marine engineering which led to a sea-going career and the opportunity to play with Really Big Engines! (The steam turbine propelled vessels all had a very interesting, familiar piece of kit. A Sawdust Injector! This was used to inject sawdust/porridge/corn flakes to very effectively bung up pin-holes in the condenser tubes while under way). Dad sold up and took on another garage and, regrettably, the little Austin chassis was also sold on. It was a good start to motoring, there wasn't much traffic on the country roads which I used, the little Austins never failed to get me home and their vicissitudes were easily and cheaply fixed.

The same engine and gearbox was also used in the early Reliant Robin. Other developments enabled the engine to be super-charged for racing purposes, which must have been a terrifying experience.

In conclusion, a modern car is infinitely preferable in all respects but you cannot hope to ever understand its myriad black boxes and occasional expensive, complex failures.

Terminal damage to its brains occurs if you try push starting it!!

By PIG IRON POLISHER

A short verse submitted by Ken White

WHERE IS THE LIFE THAT ONCE I LED?
WHERE IS IT NOW? TOTALLY DEAD.
WHERE IS THE FUN I USED TO FIND?
WHERE HAS IT GONE? GONE WITH THE WIND!
SO I REPEAT WHAT I FIRST SAID
WHERE IS THE LIFE THAT LATE I LED?

Viruses: a heady mix of threat and incredible opportunity— *Editor this was published in the Economist.*

Parasites of the purest kind are also responsible for the richness of life.

Humans think of themselves as the world's apex predators. Hence the silence of sabre tooth tigers, the absence of moas from New Zealand and the long list of endangered megafaunas. But SARS-CoV-2 shows how people can also end up as prey. Viruses have caused a litany of modern pandemics, from COVID-19, to HIV/AIDS to the influenza outbreak in 1915-20, which killed many more people than the First World War. Before that, the colonisation of the Americas by Europeans was abetted - and perhaps made possible - by epidemics of smallpox, measles and influenza brought unwittingly by the invaders, which annihilated many of the original inhabitants.

The influence of viruses on life on Earth, though, goes far beyond the past and present tragedies of a single species, however pressing they seem. Though the study of viruses began as an investigation into what appeared to be a strange subset of pathogens, recent research puts them at the heart of an explanation of the strategies of genes, both selfish and otherwise.

Viruses are unimaginably varied and ubiquitous. And it is becoming clear just how much they have shaped the evolution of all organisms since the very beginnings of life. In this they demonstrate the blind pitiless power of natural selection at its most dramatic. And for one group of brainy bipedal mammals that viruses helped create they also present a heady mix of threat and opportunity.

Viruses are best thought of as packages of genetic material that exploit another organism's metabolism in order to reproduce. They are parasites of the purest kind: they borrow everything from the host except the genetic code that makes them what they are. They strip down life itself to the bare essentials of information and its replication. If the abundance of viruses is anything to go by, that is a very successful strategy indeed.

The world is teeming with them. One analysis of seawater found 200,000 different viral species, and it was not setting out to be comprehensive. Other research suggests that a single litre of seawater may contain more than 100 billion virus particles, and a kilo of dried soil ten times that number. Altogether, according to calculations on the back of a very big envelope, the world might contain 10^{31} of the things - that is one followed by 31 zeros, far outnumbering all other forms of life on the planet. As far as anyone can tell, viruses - often of many different, sorts - have adapted to attack every organism that exists.

One reason they are powerhouses of evolution is that they oversee a relentless and prodigious slaughter; mutating as they do so. This is particularly clear in the oceans, where a fifth of single-celled plankton are killed by viruses every day. Ecologically, this promotes diversity by scything down abundant species, thus making room for rarer ones. The more common an organism, the more likely it is that a local plague of viruses specialised to attack it, will develop, and so keep it in check. This propensity to cause plagues is also a powerful evolutionary stimulus for prey to develop defenses, and these defenses sometimes have wider consequences. For example, one explanation for why a cell may deliberately destroy itself is if its sacrifice lowers the viral load on closely refuted cells nearby. That way, its genes, copied in neighbouring cells, are more likely to survive. It so happens that such altruistic suicide is a prerequisite for cells to come together and form complex organisms, such as pea plants, mushrooms and human beings.

Engines of Evolution

The other reason viruses are engines of evolution is that they are transport mechanisms for genetic information. Some viral genomes end up integrated into the cells or their hosts, where they can be passed down to those organisms' descendants. Between 8 and 25 percent of the human genome seems to have such viral origins.

But the viruses themselves can in turn be hijacked, and their genes turned to new uses. For example, the ability of mammals to bear live young is in consequence of viral gene being modified to permit the formation of placentas.

And even human brains may owe their development, in part to the movement within them of virus-like elements that create genetic differences between neurons within a single organism. Evolution's most enthralling insight is that breathtaking complexity can emerge from the sustained, implacable and nihilistic competition within and between organisms. The fact that the blind watchmaker has equipped you with the capacity to read and understand these words is in part a response to the actions of swarms of tiny attacking replicators that have been going on, probably, since life first emerged on Earth around 4 billion years ago. It is a startling example of that principle in action - and viruses have not finished yet.

Humanity's unique, virus-chiselled consciousness opens up new avenues to deal with the viral threat and to exploit it. This starts with the miracle of vaccination, which defends against a pathogenic attack before it is launched.

Thanks to vaccines, smallpox is no more, having taken some 300m lives in the 20th century. Polio will one day surely follow. New research prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic will enhance the power to examine the viral realm and the best responses to it that bodies can muster - taking the defence against viruses to a new level. Another avenue for progress lies in the tools for manipulating organisms that will come from an understanding of viruses and the defences against them. Early versions of genetic engineering relied on restriction enzymes - molecular scissors with which bacteria cut up viral genes and which biotechnologists employ to move genes around. The latest iteration of biotechnology, gene editing letter by letter, which is known as CRISPR, makes use of a more precise antiviral mechanism.

The natural world is not kind. A virus-free existence is an impossibility so deeply unachievable that its desirability is meaningless. In any case, the marvellous diversity of life rests on viruses which, as much as they are a source of death, are also a source of richness and of change. Marvellous too, is the prospect of a world where viruses become a source of new understanding for humans - and kill fewer of them than ever before.

The Series of Memories of Ellesmere Residents
Extracts from book 2 of the "Memories" Booklets Published in early 2000 by the Ellesmere Society

Memory No 5

The Railways in Ellesmere

Remembered by Tony Hamlin & Kath Jones

At the beginning of the century, Ellesmere was a minor junction on the main line Cambrian Railways from Whitchurch to the Welsh coast, with a short branch to Wrexham.

between Whitchurch and Oswestry, there were stations at Fenn's Bank, Whittington High Level, and Tinkers' Green. Between Ellesmere and Wrexham were stations at Bangor on Dee, Overton on Dee, and Marchwiell, with halts Sesswick and Trench. The railway in itself, was not a large employer although the staff at Ellesmere in 1900 was substantial - nine people. Ellesmere was a busy station; a timetable from the first decade of the century showing nine trains a day to London Whitchurch, and six back, the journey taking about four and a half hours. There was no train on a Sunday except the 2.53 am mail train from Whitchurch the 10.00 pm mail from Oswestry. There were a further six trains a day to London via Buttington and five back, but this journey took 5 - 6 hours. The service to Shrewsbury via Whitchurch was not impressive, eight trains a day taking anything between 1 1/2 - 4 hours. In the other direction, seven trains ran through to Aberystwyth, taking about 3 1/2 hours and offering connections to most parts of Wales. There were seven trains a day each way from Ellesmere to Wrexham, taking 30 minutes and offering connections to Manchester, Chester and Liverpool. There were no trains on Sunday.

Special return fares were offered to Ellesmere for the Tuesday market from Whitchurch (1/8d), Fenn's Bank (1/1d), Bettisfield (7d), Welshampton (4d), Frankton (3d), Oswestry (1/0d), Wrexham (1/9d), Marchwiell (1/6d), Bangor on Dee (1/0d) and Overton on Dee (6d); and from Ellesmere to Oswestry Wednesday ☐ret (1/8d). These were available by specified trains only.

Besides the carriage of passengers the railway also handled most of the carriage of goods for the town. There was an extensive goods yard including special sidings for the adjacent Smithfield market, and regular freights of milk and cheese were dealt with. Special freight rates were offered from Ellesmere to London, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Wednesbury, West Bromwich, Liverpool Manchester, for minimum quantities of 1 cwt of butter, cream and eggs; and 1/2 cwt of dead game, poultry and rabbits, and 1/2 cwt of meat.

At this time, Aberdovey was being developed by Cambrian Railways as a deep water harbour. This project was unsuccessful but had it succeeded, Ellesmere would have been on a busy main line from this port to the Midlands.

Cambrian Railway's livery was fairly restrained Locomotives were black with lining in grey flanked by red, labelled "Cambrian" in grey, and with red buffer beams and wheel bosses. Coaches had green and white upper panels, bronze green lower panels, black underframes, white tyres. They were lined in red edged with gold and black and labelled "Cambrian" in gold shaded with blue. From 1909, carriages were bronze green all over, and from 1955, the white tyres were abandoned. Freight vans were green all over, but fully lined out and trucks were light grey with black strapping and grey solebars.

Locomotives were mainly 0-4-4 tanks of 1890's origin plus a few 0-6-0.

By 1914, motor traffic was beginning to challenge the railways for local journeys. The Great War brought a surge of traffic to the railways generally, but traffic was diverted from the Wrexham branch and much of it never returned. In 1923, Cambrian Railways was merged into the Great Western grouping, and, in effect, became a branch line to that system. Locomotives became green with red and black lining, and carriages had brown lower and cream upper panels. Cambrian passenger stock had been fairly primitive, well over half being 6 wheeled and only a quarter being bogie coaches in 1923, but as Great Western branch-line stock was moved in, a substantial amount of four wheeled stock was introduced. Not until the 1930's did reasonably modern compartment stock appear. However, the variety and size of locomotives increased, 2-6-0 and 4-6-0 types arriving by the 50's and 60's. In 1923, the frequency of service was much as it had been in the first decade of the century, but traffic had increased and the staff at Ellesmere Station had increased to nineteen.

Motor competition continued to increase. Further halts were opened on the Wrexham branch at Cloy, Elson, Pickhill, and Highton, but failed to stem the move to the roads. A further respite from road competition was provided by the second World War, and the Wrexham branch was closed to passenger traffic from 1940 to 1946 to give priority to munitions traffic to the Munitions Depot at Elson and the Royal Ordnance Factory at Marchwiell.

A final surge in activity occurred after the severe weather of the early months of 1947. Householders began to look for a supply of unrationed fuel for the winter 1947-48. This proved to be peat, which had been used as an aromatic fuel from time immemorial. In the summer of 1947, the Great Western Railway dispatched around 2,000 tons of peat for fuel from the small railway station of Fenn's Bank which is adjacent to the peat cutting areas of Whixall Moss. The end, however, was inevitable. The Wrexham branch closed in 1962, and the Whitchurch Oswestry line in 1965 as a result of the Beeching cuts.

During the first half of the century, the station was one of the busiest places in Ellesmere. The following account is provided by Mrs. K. Jones, daughter of the station Master, who lived at the station from 1932 to 1962. The "Station House" situated over the station building. It was a large flat high-ceilinged room that was difficult to keep warm.

basic staff consisted of; stationmaster, six porters, three clerks in the booking office, the lamp-boy, three clerks in the goods office, and two porters in the goods shed plus three signalmen. Prior to the arrival of electricity, the lamp-boy had to gather all the lamps from Ellesmere to Wrexham and light them all at around 5 so that they were ready to be taken on the 5.30 pm train for delivery to each station on the route to Wrexham. The booking office staff and porters worked shifts; 8 am-2 pm. and 2 pm-10 pm. The other staff excluding signalmen, worked from 8 am until 5 pm. Signalmen worked three shifts; 6 am-2 pm, 2 pm- 10pm. and 10 pm-6 am. They were the only station staff to work a night shift.

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There were six or seven trains a day to Oswestry and Whitchurch, with a couple extra trains on Saturdays. In addition, there were about six trains per day to Wrexham. Although Wrexham was only 11 miles away, there were nine stops in all on this journey. The Wrexham trains connected with the Oswestry and Whitchurch trains. The early morning mail train arrived at 3'30 am. It was met by a postman who took the mail to Ellesmere Post Office for sorting. The mail train had connections with York and Leeds and brought fresh fish from Grimsby. This was left on the station platform until about 6 am when the fishmonger (Mr. Aycliffe) would collect it. Another feature regarding the mail concerned the last train to Whitchurch. It connected with other trains to York, Leeds and other main line stations. This train had a post box on it, and by posting a letter in this box, with extra half-penny stamp (1/2d) on it, you could guarantee the letter would be delivered by the first post next morning anywhere in the country.

Station staff were kept busy in the mornings as many school children travelled to Oswestry to attend the various schools and a number of children travelled to Whitchurch. Most people used the trains to travel to work and there were often long queues of commuters waiting to purchase tickets. No-one was left behind as the station master would delay the train's departure until everyone had purchased their ticket. This was all part of the service at that time. Whit Monday was a very busy day with the Ellesmere sports being held on the Wharf meadow. Cyclists would come from far and wide, many arriving on the 3'30 am mail train. They would sleep in the station waiting room until morning light. The crowds of spectators would then start arriving. On one occasion there were so many people attending that crowds were left behind on the intermediate stations from Wrexham. Special permission was given for the train to return and collect them. In spite of such large numbers, there was never any trouble with vandalism or rowdy behaviour. Another busy time at the station was the end of school term, when boys from Ellesmere College would return home. Tickets were purchased in advance, via the house-masters. Each boy who had a ticket was allowed one trunk and one tuck box free. All other luggage had to be paid for separately. It was the job of the booking clerk and the porters to check each one and make sure nobody exceeded their free allowance without paying the excess charge. With around two hundred boys travelling, this was a mammoth task. Apart from the passenger traffic, there was also a large amount of freight transported through the station. Virtually everything was carried by the railways. Cheese from the dairies and cattle from the Friday market were the two largest commodities. The dairies also sent three tanks containing about 3,000 gallons of milk to Uttoxeter and London. The milk was loaded from the dairy lorries into the tanks in the sidings and this would take almost a whole day. The tanks would be ready to leave Ellesmere on the 4.45 pm train.

As the Second World War progressed, a more disturbing form of traffic was brought to the station by the presence of American Army hospitals at Oteley and Penley. About two or three times a week, special hospital trains would arrive late at night, bringing wounded Americans from the front line. The train would be met by a large number of ambulances which conveyed the injured men to the hospitals. Besides being a commercial centre of Ellesmere, the station in the inter-war years was also a social centre. One large room in the Station House, known as the lumber room was used as a playroom and general purpose room. Mr. Hood, the station master, used to produce plays for the St. Mary's Sunday School, and the lumber room was often used for rehearsals. Often, it would see some thirty or forty children at a rehearsal. The plays were then staged in the Town Hall; all proceeds going towards the summer outing for the Sunday School, by train, of course. During the war six soldiers were billeted with the station master's family.

Memory No 6

ELLESMERE in WORLD WAR II

Remembered by the late Tony Hamlin

Evacuees:

At the start of the war, heavy bombing of industrial centres was expected and many children from these areas were evacuated to rural areas believed to be safer. These children were known as evacuees, and in 1939 Ellesmere received a contingent from Liverpool. These were billeted in the town's houses according to the number of rooms available in each house, and they would have attended the local schools. This was the period of the "phoney war" and, with nothing much happening, many of the evacuees, finding rural life little to their liking, drifted back to their home towns.

The most remarkable evacuation to Ellesmere came from Lancing College, the first of the Woodard foundations, on the south coast. This coast was originally considered "safe", and Westminster School from London had been evacuated to Lancing, but with the fall of France in 1940, this area became the immediate invasion area. Lancing College was requisitioned by the military, and the school given one week, until June 27th, to get out. Westminster School went to Exeter, and Lancing was divided between Denstone and Ellesmere, two other Woodard foundations. The snag was that Ellesmere was full, and the Lancing boys would have to sleep in tents! Each boy and bachelor master was allowed to take one suitcase.

The advance party, consisting of the master in charge of scouts and two scouts, with all their available camping equipment in a trailer behind their car, made the journey with some difficulty - all road signs had been obliterated, and people refused to tell them the way lest they were fifth columnists or spies. They arrived Ellesmere at midnight.

By the time that the rest of the school, 150-200 boys and masters, arrived by coach the next day, their tents and those of the Ellesmere Cadet Force were up on Lower Field, and the boys were settled in, only to be flooded out within a few days a heavy downpour of rain. This apart, conditions at Ellesmere were difficult. Lancing boys had to do their prep in the morning and be taught in the classrooms vacated by the Ellesmere boys in the evening. Ellesmere catering could not cope, and Lancing had to supplement its provisions with a special delivery of buns from the town to the tents at 9pm each evening.

School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations were taken under some difficulty at the end of the summer term as the examination hall was Big School, which was also the main highway between classrooms for those not taking examinations. A special plea was sent to the examiners for leniency.

Does anyone know how or when this strange evacuation ended?

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Home Guard:

Like every other town or village, Ellesmere had its own detachments of the Local Defence Volunteers, which eventually became the Home Guard.

Although now characterised as Dads' Army, the L.D.Vs attracted a large proportion of young men who were retained in civil work essential to the war effort. the so-called "reserved occupations". Up to the fall of France, the various branches of Civil Defence had attracted sufficient recruits for their needs during the "phoney war", but the prospect of immediate invasion caused large numbers of those in reserved occupations to volunteer for service in the L.D.V.

Ellesmere, being largely concerned with the essential process of food production supplied a high proportion of younger volunteers.

In the early days there were few weapons other than members' shot guns and, in the hope of making these more effective shot was removed from the cartridges and replaced by ball bearings. This somewhat hazardous make-shift was fortunately never tried in anger. As time went on, the Home Guard became more of an effective force. Unarmed combat was taught at Welshampton by a regular army sergeant, who could floor a novice in a matter of seconds. Rifles replaced shot guns and the countryman's skill in shooting produced some very impressive performances on the rifle range at Wood Lane near Spun Hill.

Oteley:

American troops were housed in a camp at Oteley, and towards the end of the war were a common sight in the town, attending the cinema in the Old Town Hall on the ground floor and dances on the first floor. These dances, usually accompanied by records played on a radiogram, were known as 6d hops. Billy Gribbon's band was used for special occasions.

When the Americans left in 1944, the military hospital that had been established in Oteley House, took over the camp. At that time hospitalised soldiers were issued with a plain blue uniform, known as hospital blue, and consequently they became known as "the boys in blue".

The 315th American Field Hospital was moved from Oteley to France in mid August 1944, and was replaced by the 137th General Hospital (U.S.Army). Initially, before airfields had been captured in Normandy, American casualties came to Ellesmere by train, but later they were flown to Rednal and then distributed by ambulance, not only to Oteley but to Penley and Halston.

After the war, the camp at Oteley was occupied by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. No 11 (Basic Trade) Training Battalion RE.M.E. was in residence at the time of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953, and helped Ellesmere considerably with the coronation celebrations. This effort was recognised by the presentation of a silver bugle to the Battalion by the Chairman of Ellesmere Urban District Council on 1st October 1953. As RE.M.E. has no colours, this bugle is trooped instead.

Military occupation of Oteley ended on June 30th 1955.

Civil Defence:

At the beginning of World War II, chemical warfare was expected and the whole population was issued with gas masks. Most people soon tired of carrying them, but some facilities for testing and for demonstrating their effectiveness to doubters needed to be maintained. The only building that could be adequately sealed for his purpose was the town prison, which stood alongside the old Police Station, (No 43 Cross Street). This was apparently rather primitive, having an earth floor and only a slatted bench as furniture.

More stories of Ellesmere in the last century next week

SNIPPETS

Did you know:

- The katzenklavier (act piano) was a musical instrument made out of cats! Yes, cats. Designed in the 17th century by the German scholar Athanasius Kircher, it consisted of a row of caged cats with different voice pitches. They could be 'played by the keyboardist driving nails into their tails'.
- The name Coca-Cola in China was first listed as Ke-kou-ke-la. Unfortunately the Coke company did not discover until after thousands of signs had been produced that the phrase means 'bite the wax tadpole' or 'female horse stuffed with wax' depending on the dialect. Coke then researched 40,000 Chinese characters and found a close phonetic equivalent, 'ko-kou-ko-le' which can be loosely translated as 'happiness of the mouth'.
- The average lead pencil will draw a line 56 miles long or write approximately 50,000 English words. More than 2 billion pencils are manufactured in the US alone. If these were laid end to end they would circle the Earth nine times.
- Some years ago in Holland's embassy in Moscow, two Siamese cats kept meowing and clawing at the walls inside the building. Their owners finally investigated thinking they would find mice. Instead they found microphones hidden by Russian spies.
- It has been calculated that Americans eat 18 acres of pizza every day.
- Women blink nearly twice as much as men.
- Polar bears are left-handed.
- It is possible to lead a cow upstairs but not down stairs.
- Your heart beats over 100,000 times a day.
- A woman in Sweden lost her wedding ring while cooking for Christmas in 1995. 12 years later she found it around a carrot that was sprouting in the middle of it. The only explanation was that the ring had been lost in the vegetable peelings that were composted.
- Sunglasses were originally invented for Chinese judges to hide their facial expressions in court.

Holy Well or folly Bath house – Woolston's St. Winifred's Well By Paul

I first came across this place a few years ago on a walk from Queens Head West Felton, some said it was on a medieval pilgrimage route from Holywell in Wales, but who knows!

Hidden down a little lane in the quite Shropshire village of Woolston is a picture-postcard holy well or is it? A site cited in every major countrywide review of the topic but is it a genuine site?

A holy well?

Thompson and Thompson (2001) in their *Wells of Mainland Britain* are pretty equivocal stating that the well was used in the medieval period as a source of healing. A fact perhaps taken for the association with Saint Winifred. However, although this is a common theme amongst modern well researchers the earliest reference referring to the site by name is Phillips and Hulbert's 1837 *History of Salop*:

"In the township of Woolston is a remarkable well, dedicated to St Winefred, but whether of healing virtues I am not able to give information."



However, Charlotte S. Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore* reveal some interesting local evidence: This delightful black and white building is a difficult edifice to evaluate. Some accounts suggest it is 14th century and built by

Margaret Tudor the same endower as St. Winifred's Well in Holy Well Clywd. This is the view of Lawson Tait (1884–5) in a piece called *The holy well at Woolston, Salop* in *Bye-Gones Relating to Wales & the Border Counties*:

"is an original remain of the fourteenth century, untouched by the hand of the restorer... duly oriented for midsummer day, so that it is clearly a mediaeval dedication to S. John Baptist."

Indeed early OS maps do mark the site as 'Old Chapel' but the question is if it was orientated such why is the well dedicated to St. Winifred. Adolphus Dovaston (1886) in a piece for the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological & Natural History Society* called 'Woolston Well, Shropshire' may have provided the answer stating that West Felton church may have been the source for its fourteenth-century. It was rebuilt in 1600s, a stone to the right of the entrance of the bath states 1635, which is a suitable date for the development of something else – a plunge pool.

These start appearing around the mid to late 1600s and it is worth noting that many of those which remain from that period often have a unifying theme – they are dedicated to saints. However, many are spurious – St Chad's Bath near Lichfield and St Catherine's Well and Bath, Southwell, are particularly significant examples especially the former which adopts a local popular saint. However, the site does not appear to have been big enough to attract any significant trade, but it is perfectly arranged for a private plunge. The cold bath below and the warming room above as a single cell typical of later cold baths. However did the local legend appear to explain the well's dedication by the lord of the manor? This is suggested by Dovaston (1884-5) who quoting a local historian who was writing in 1800 recalls:

"a court house being built in Woolston, over a well made for a bath for the Jones's of Sandford family, when they left Sandford, it became the rendezvous of the country who from the middle of May to the end of Harvest resorted from all parts hither, some (at nights) to bathe and dance and riot most of the night at the alehouses...till... about the year 1755".



If the site was a cold bath, why do we have no record of this usage? This might be because the land owner converted the site for use as a manorial court and there is record of its said usage until 1824. This however is at variance perhaps to another account which states it was derelict around 1800 and restored by the rector.

So summing up what is likely? There are two possible scenarios:

The well is medieval, the upper section being a mediaeval and in situ. In the post reformation it was converted to secular use

The well is 17th century only, a cold bath, using fabric from a local church. Once the cold bath had passed the upper section was utilised as a court.

There is perhaps a third possibility.

The spring was dedicated by recusants in the county, although Catholic densities were low in the county and mainly centred in the north around modern day Telford such as the Giffards.

Whatever the truth unlike other sites....which languish unloved...after a time when its future was uncertain the Landmark Trust took it on and now it's a delightful and unique holiday home, with an extra outside bath.

Local information

Did you know...

If you have an admin request?

There is no need to book an appointment:

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


Sick notes

GP letters

Fit notes

NHS

e consult



Take 1 minute each day and help fight the outbreak.

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

Urgent Care Centres

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

PLEASE CONTINUE TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR YOUR NEIGHBOURS

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

www.ellesmerecovidsupportgroups.org.uk

Shropshire Council Helpline: 0345 678 9028

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

Quiz Answers
1. FRAGILE, 2. Haiti, 3. Eurostar, 4. Black, 5. London, 6. Aluminium (It's the Earth's crust, Iron is the most abundant ON the Earth), 7. Charles Lindbergh, 8. The Killing Fields, 9. Leonard Nimoy, 10. The Arctic Circle, 11. Neurology, 12. Trafalgar, 13. ETSY, 14. Ronnie, 15. 1990, 16. Saturn, 17. Kidney, 18. Regents Park, 19. Flax, 20. Rust



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)

