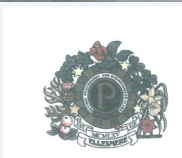




Probus Club Ellesmere



Covid-19 Lockdown 2020 Newsletter

Issue 19

Aug. 27, 2020

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From the Editor

Dear all,

I hope you are all keeping well. I now have a complete wardrobe of masks, all different colours and designs. I find the most comfortable ones are from Ismay's made by her sister I believe.

I am glad I am not playing the "race home" game that many of this years holiday makers seem to have signed up to play.

You first go on a foreign holiday to somewhere that has a highish number of Covid cases but just low enough to still be under Boris's radar to allow travel to the destination. The exciting part is you gamble that the Covid cases will rise enough for Boris to ban travel to and order quarantine when travelling from your destination. To make it more exciting Boris will give a deadline of 4am as the cut off time to get back to Blighty. The problem with 4am is that the majority of flights from European destinations don't fly over night, so to arrive at 3:58am will mean driving and getting the ferry. The prize is the opposite to normal winning this time it will cost you a years salary for the hire car and ferry fare.

I don't think I will try it I couldn't stand the suspense.

Many thanks to my regular contributors and especially the new ones

Keep safe

Paul

A view from the Headland

Dear friends, I hope that you, your families, friends and neighbours are all keeping safe and well as the weeks fly by. It is a shame to have to experience the changing rules on masks but my feeling is 'better safe than sorry'. Pandemics evolve and the need for adjusting social responses is understandable if frustrating for some. It is good to see the re-opening of schools and other small steps forward.

A sea-fishing expedition to a remote coast on the Llyn Peninsula this week was a delight, seeing the real-life horizon again and taking in the ozone, listening to the surf.

With luck you will have escaped the onslaught of the recent storms without any damage. It is encouraging to hear from some of you that you are able get to see members of you family and friends as lock-down softens.

As events unfold we will keep you in touch with our expectations on resuming our long-awaited Members meetings at Comrades Club but sadly it is not likely be for some time yet.

Incidentally if you hear of any of our members who are unwell or in need of special contact please let Fred Williams, our Almoner, or me know as soon as possible.

Meantime very best wishes to one and all, many thanks to Paul as usual for keeping us all informed and entertained with the excellent Newsletters and those members who are making, or are about to make, contributions.

Jeremy



Captions please to the
Editor

Caption

I had almost forgotten that there are still some dangerous jobs.

I think this must be up there with them.

Click on the link below to start.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YmFHAFYwmY>

An Austin 7 Experience *By Peter Sanderson*

Having just passed my driving test, a set of wheels was needed as my father, who ran a village garage on the A66 the Yorkshire side of Stainmore (not far from Barnard Castle 2020 DC) was somewhat reluctant to let me loose with his Mk1 Hillman Husky, but required my services to run the place when he and my mother had a day off.

A local farmer joined us one Pennine summer's day as we were ensconced around the workshop's red hot potbellied stove (fuelled by old sump oil and coal collected from the Aunt Sally put up by us to encourage loco crews, double heading their way on the adjacent line up Stainmore, to indulge in some coal throwing- global warming was in the future).

He eventually joined in the conversation, living up to the taciturn reputation of a Yorkshire fell farmer with " Ah's got a 1934 van, its int garth, battery's buggered, fower pund, nowt less ". Pump jockey tips tin raided and- sight unseen-Deal done!! He didn't ask for any luck, either!

It was decided to call in and see what I had bought on our way home so borrowing the 6 volt battery from our ex-Army Chevy wrecker and with a can of petrol, off we went.

The garth, a dry stone- walled enclosure, provided some respite for farm beasts from the prevailing Pennine horizontal aqueous sunshine, was at Spital Farm, at the summit of Stainmore, some 1400 feet above sea level. It made Wuthering Heights look like a beach chalet in Brighton and fully confirmed that it is really Grim Up North. "Spital" is derived from "Hospital" and the site was once a place of refuge and respite for unmechanised travellers of yore, if they didn't succumb to exposure first.

And there it was! VX 9446(I still have the license disc & holder!!) Just the top of the roof was visible above the walls. Going round to the gate, it was rapidly evident that the car's immediate mobility may be problematic.



The passenger window was at half-mast which had allowed the farm gander to take up "sheltered accommodation" on the back seat, which it was defending with as much belligerence as it could muster. Additionally, the ground was quite deep in what archaeologists term "organics" so it was not really possible to see if the tyres were inflated but they seemed to be tight on the wheel rims. Being shod in my school CCF "Boots, black, other ranks for the use of", I sloshed my way round to the driver's side and after a protracted argument with the gander, persuaded it to venture out of the window and into the prevailing gale.

The fuel tank and battery were mounted under the bonnet on the engine bulkhead; petrol was fed to the carburettor by gravity. The battery was correctly described- it

had swollen and was jammed in its compartment and the leads had rotted away. However, pre-flight checks revealed that the sump was filled to the prescribed level with a glutinous black substance, the radiator, which, luckily, had been drained was filled from an adjacent cattle trough and ancient petrol flowed freely once the underlying water had been drained from the tank so no further petrol was needed and systems were, potentially, Go!

Due to the organics, using the inbuilt starting handle was considered inadvisable.

The large wrecker battery was perched on the nearside running board

(remember them?) and connected with jump leads. Swift entry into the driver's seat, which had escaped the gander's attention, check gear in neutral, handbrake on (this was later found to be a waste of time) set the hand controls on the steering wheel - retard the ignition, give a bit of throttle, pull out the choke, ignition switch "on". The starter button was the size of a small saucer and was connected directly to the starter by a short length of welding cable, so no voltage drop there; the starter motor was a hefty lump, occupying the passenger's foot well. Interior Design ergonomics were an over- the- horizon concept and passengers were considered to be lucky to have motorised transport.

Pressing the button produced a satisfying clunk as the motor engaged, followed by much sparking from the unshielded commutator, cremating the resident arachnids and goose mites, as it rotated with much gusto. With only 6 volts, gusto was limited so happily the engine started firing occasionally until 3 of the 4 cylinders decided to co-operate. The ammeter showed some output from the dynamo and here was even good oil pressure, but this didn't mean much as the 2 bearing crankshaft ran in ball bearings and oil was fed to the big ends by the aptly named "spit and hope" system whereby oil was squirted from nozzles in the general direction of hopefully corresponding holes in the crank webs, these eventually leading to the big end bearings.

With a slightly unsteady beat, it was time vamoose. The clutch pedal was attached directly to the cross shaft carrying the clutch fork inside the bell housing and had an extremely short travel so that rapid double de-clutching gearchanges could be made (remember them, you automatic gearbox wusses?). Selecting first gear produced a heavy shudder and forward progress of about 6" to total wheelspin- this where the short travel clutch came in as it meant that one could rock the machine back and forth until sufficient momentum could be reached to escape the suction for take-off. Unfortunately, this was a slow process and a foul miasma soon began to permeate the cockpit as the exhaust pipe began to cook the underbelly organics. Opening the driver's door provided some respite, but splattering, gale driven organics required one to take caution.

Eventually, extraction was achieved to a hard standing in the farmyard, aided by grip provided by the now- visible exposed down-to-canvas tyre treads and the tyres were still inflated! As it was getting late, the job was shut down, the passenger window was wedged shut and the prevailing natural car wash was left to remove some of the fermented compost over the next few days.

Cont. page 3

A day or two later, we decided to tow the car back to base- 6 miles downhill all the way; a rope was looped round the Husky's back bumper, a decent piece of chromed steel, none of your delicate modern plastic tackle, with the other end tied round the front axle of the Austin. Towing with a rope requires the towee to maintain tension on the rope by gentle braking to avoid snatching and breaking the rope. Proceeding along the rutted farm track leading to the A66, it rapidly became evident that braking was not available and in spite of frantic stamping on the pedal and hauling back lustily on the handbrake, which was a small version of a railway signal box lever, the rear door of the Husky was rapidly approaching. Fortunately, a large water filled pothole abruptly arrested progress but Dad had seen what was happening in his mirror and had put his foot down to lessen the impending concatenation (thanks, Boris). Towee halted immovably, tower speeding off into the wide blue yonder-result – well, work it out!

Tow rope satisfactorily knotted, towee gently (well, not so gently really) was extricated from best Pennine limestone sink hole, with sundry imprecations as to my eyesight. A plan of retardation was formulated to counter the aforesaid 6 miles downhill along the A66 without brakes.

It was simply to engage top gear (3rd), keep the clutch hard down but release it gently to use the engine as a brake as the occasion demanded, the petrol tap was shut and ignition off. This worked quite well, producing considerable eructation (thanks, Boris) from the engine and dull thuds from somewhere under the back seat each time it was brought into play. Eventually, we reached our yard, with my left leg spasmodically twitching. Told to stop fussing. Get a brew on!

You may wonder why the Chevvy was not used for the recovery- it had a 6 cyl. petrol engine and a voracious thirst, so was only used where a profit could be returned, mainly for broken down wagons, which were routinely overlanded in those days.

Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, it is said.

Well, this beauty stood fairly lop-sided, with the customary list to starboard, which was usual with cart spring suspension, front wheels somewhat knock-kneed and the doors hanging down at their rear edges, similar to the way a randy pigeon holds its wings when on the prowl. Aft of the doors, the body panelling was leather on an ash frame. This was considerably ventilated due to rodent activity and a few decided to leave the "sinking ship" while we watched. As previously noted, braking was non-existent and the recent downhill slalom had shown the steering to be somewhat imprecise-zig-zagging like an Atlantic convoy would be a better description. Furthermore, the Sun had decided to put in a brief appearance, or it may have been a nuclear explosion, which were fashionable in those days and the previous occupant's malodorous left-overs were making their presence felt.

A Plan Of Action, the first of many I have made in my career, was drawn up and discarded- it was easier to "wing it" as the unknowns were obviously greater than the knowns.(Rumpsfeld?) Stench reduction was a high priority, so the doors were removed for ease of access, the seats taken out and hosed down and, as the wind driven horizontal aqueous sunshine had returned, were placed round the comforting radiance of the pot-bellied stove. A few minutes later, they were hurled out into the cool, refreshing rain; the stove's Regulo 20 output having concentrated and cooked the guano residues clinging to inside the seats rendering breathing a somewhat stoical exercise. After a while, there was another nuclear event and the upholstery air dried to an acceptable olfactory experience.

It was at this point that we found that seat squabs contained the remains of original fitting Lilo air cushions (secondary suspension). They crumbled to pieces on extraction, so were replaced by liberal quantities of wood wool. As this also eventually crumbled in service, it was periodically topped up until the seating became very hard. Investigation showed that the prevailing dampness and weight of the seat's occupant had consolidated the crumbs; thus was MDF and DIY was born.

Rodent holes in the leatherwork were covered with rubber patches cut from scrap lorry inner tubing, stuck on with rubber solution. Excess solution attracted assorted flying bugs hell bent on a solvent fix creating a grungy flock wallpaper effect, interspersed with slightly bulbous black areas where the original curvature of the inner tubes had not quite been flattened out. Think of scruffy Selfridges, Birmingham. The headlamps tended to flop about a bit and become cross-eyed due to fatigue failure of the area of the front wings supporting them. These areas were doubled with bits of 40 gallon drum, suitably beaten to an acceptable curve, and pop rivetted in place. It was almost a waste of time as the 6 volt headlamp bulbs with the semi-matt silvered reflectors could just about illuminate three cat's eyes ahead, if the road you were on afforded such a luxury-most didn't. They also lit up the eyes of sheep ruminating on the dry tarmac rather than on the soggy moorland; as one couldn't see which way the beasts were lying or if they were head-on or stern-on, avoiding action was problematical, especially for the sheep. But I digress.

Overhauling the door hinges gave the vehicle a less louche appearance and enabled the mortice type door latches to engage a bit more securely but they still tended to disengage if one cornered with vigour. This was cured by looping bicycle innertubes round the door handle and over the adjacent front seat back, effectively creating a two-seater.

Sundry water leakage around the glass work and the top hung, opening windscreen frame was sealed with black Bostic mastic, which came in foot-long strips about ¼" in. diameter and was the "dernier cri" or rather the only "cri" sealant available. This required kneading until soft and pliable enough to enable it to be pushed into the various gaps. Sadly, once it was in situ and had hardened again, seepage recurred. Luckily, the sunshine (!) roof had previously been sealed with an aluminium plate and putty. Oh, for the unknown joys of silicone and caulking guns! Doubling up the floorboards with pieces of tea chest completed the bodywork restoration.

The rotted running board brackets were replaced with suitably formed angle iron, this was necessary for various future operations. Surprisingly, the chassis was in good condition probably due to the lack of salt on the winter roads in ancient times, so that provided a morale booster. Spares were easily obtained; an enterprising chap by the name of Mr.Dalby had, many years previously, set up an emporium dedicated to breaking Austin 7s of all marques in the village of Kirkby Whiske, near Northallerton. You could tell when you were getting near his establishment as sundry bits of really, really time expired components were employed in filling hedge gaps all along the lanes. True Yorkshire thrift. He was also the possessor of the two "Special Maintenance Tools" supplied by Austin! (Haynes Manuals did not exist then).

To be continued next week

'The Gummows- who brought Venice to Wrexham'. By Paul

Gummow is first noted as a clerk of the works for the architect Samuel Pepys Cockerell for the alterations to St Margaret's Church, Westminster in 1799–1802.

Gummow was associated with the architect William Porden who had been a pupil of Cockerell and c.1785 Porden was appointed surveyor to the Grosvenor Estates. In 1802 Robert Grosvenor succeeded to the title of Earl Grosvenor, and shortly afterwards commissioned Porden to rebuild Eaton Hall near Chester.



Eaton Hall Cheshire

Gummow was appointed supervising architect for the project by Porden and at this time he moved to the Chester area. The project lasted between 1803 and 1814. Gummow and Porden did not get on too well and in 1807 Porden said to Earl Grosvenor that Gummow "speaks without thinking, and is the most inconsistent of men that I ever met". Gummow, apart from working at Eaton Hall also undertook the building of Littleton Hall, Christleton in Cheshire in 1806, additions to Nercwys Hall between 1813 and 1820 and the building of a portico and other alterations for the Ormsby-Gores at Brogyntyn, near Oswestry in Shropshire

By 1819 he started to be employed as the surveyor of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn of Wynnstay's estates at Ruabon near Wrexham. In 1821 Porden was forced to resign from the surveyorship of the Grosvenor Estates and Earl Grosvenor then appointed Gummow to add further Gothic wings to Eaton Hall. In doing this Gummow was working and modifying plans that had already been drawn up by Porden.

Gummow was now working for both Sir Watkin and Earl Grosvenor and in 1827 he told Cockerell that "he has always had £300 per ann. from Lord Grosvenor and Sir W.W. and is not allowed any other charge or profits – but has his lodgings and livings – out of this he has saved an easy independence". He, however, did supervise the building, probably to plans by drawn up by John



brogyntyn-hall Oswestry

Buckler of Halkyn Castle, Flintshire (1824–7) and Pool Park, Denbighshire (c1827–8), re-casing and altering the house at Wynnstay as well the building of a porch at Chirk Castle in 1831.

Sir Howard Colvin summed up Gummow's work as follows "Though not an architect of the first rank, his additions to Eaton Hall successfully maintained the elegant rococo Gothic of the main block designed by Porden and at Brogyntyn his Ionic portico is a handsome addition to an existing classical house".

Gummow was heavily influenced by Italian Vancian style Architecture although he had never been to Venice, also Palladium influenced his buildings which shows in most of his them.

Gummow had a son who also became an Architect, and between them over

a number of decades in the nineteenth century they designed and built most of the large buildings in Wrexham, especially the houses around Grosvenor Road which are now Solicitors or private clinics.

Architectural works by Gummow

Churches and chapels

Chirk: In 1828–9 he undertook the provision and new seating in the church.

Ruabon: The church was partly burnt in January 1819 and Gummow arranged the restoration for Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn Then in 1835–8 Gummow re-ordered and partly rebuilt the church to plans prepared by Edward Welch of Liverpool. The church was remodelled again by Benjamin Ferrey in 1870–72

Ruabon: Providence Wesh Presbyterian Chapel (*Rhagluniearth*), 1834. Chapel built on land provided by Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, who provided the services of the "competant architect", Benjamin Gummow.

St Asaph Cathedral: Hubbard notes that some work was untaken by Gummow at the Cathedral c.1810–11.

St Giles, Wrexham 1820–1: Gummow designed a gallery for the church.

Country Houses

Christleton, Littleton Hall. Built for Thomas Dixon in 1806 and now much altered.

Nerquis Hall, Nercwys, Flintshire. Gummow added castellated Gothic wings, stable archway, Gothic orangery and porch in 1813–20. These were largely removed in 1964, but the porch has been preserved at Portmeirion.

Brogyntyn, near Oswestry, Shropshire. Portico and other alterations for the Ormsby Gore's, 1814–15. Gummow used Coade stone ornamentation on the interior of the portico

Eaton Hall, Eccleston, near Chester. Wings added for 2nd Earl Grosvenor, 1823–6.



General Knowledge Quiz

1. Who made the first ever human voice recording in 1877 when he recited 'Mary had a little lamb'?
2. In the film and TV show, 'Blue Thunder', what was Blue Thunder?
3. Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart made up which band?
4. Which is the furthest North; Blackburn, Blackpool, Bradford or Burnley?
5. Which George Created 'Star Wars'?
6. Steve Tyler is lead singer with which American rock group?
7. In which English county is Lands End found?
8. A baby badger can be called a cub or what other name(s)?
9. What was Beethovens first name?
10. Who wrote the book, 'Swallows and Amazons'?
11. Gymnophobia is the fear of what?
12. Who was Englands first ever Million pound footballer?
13. What was the name of Bruce Lee's final film?
14. Where did King John sign the Magna Carta?
15. In what year did the miners strike end?
16. What kind of fruit is a greengage?
17. On which Beatles album do the tracks, Yellow Submarine and Eleanor Rigby appear?
18. Americans call it a wrench, by what is it commonly known as in the UK?
19. For which food flavouring is Dijon in France predominantly known for?
20. What word is given to an artists preliminary sketch?

Answers page 10

The fiasco of the grades row over all an alleged rogue algorithm *By Paul*

I have been reading about the fiasco of the grades row over an alleged rogue algorithm.

The following article helps some way to explain why it happened.

Algorithms do not work by magic – they are only ever as good as the information that is put into them, and government ministers simply never got their head around this mathematical certainty. The story of the row over grades for GCSE and BTec students' results starts with Easter. Unlike Christmas, Easter's date is not fixed – it is set by a simple algorithm: the first Sunday after the first full moon after the first day of spring: 21 March. Although the word "algorithm" suggests a great deal of complexity, and some algorithms are fiendishly complex, they can all be explained with reference to that very simple algorithm to find Easter. Take one fixed date, a lunar event, and a day of the week: congratulations, your algorithm has located Easter Sunday. That's all an algo is: a set of data fed through a series of assumptions and qualifying criteria to produce a particular result.

What makes the Easter algorithm work is that we have perfect information, both about when 21 March is, and when the full moon is. As far as algorithms are concerned, this is as easy as it gets. You can't devise an algorithm to work out when Easter Sunday should be using 21 March alone if you don't know when the next full moon is, and you can't work it out using the moon alone either. Only a complete set of figures gives you the right answer. Nor could you, if you had neither a clear idea when 21 March is or the first full moon after it, reliably work out when Easter Sunday should be by looking back at previous years, not least because averaging together recent Easter Sundays would suggest Easter next year should be held on 12 April: plausible enough, apart from the fact that 12 April 2021 is a Monday. That's one reason why the attempt to simulate GCSE, BTec and A-Level results via a computer has produced such eccentric outcomes and made people so cross. The exams watchdogs were asked to produce exam results when no one had taken any exams: as silly and as impossible a task as to work out when Easter happens, but without reference to a calendar or to the night sky. Of course, you can get results that look about right. If your average of the last five years tells you that Easter next year should be on 12 April, you might decide to declare Easter Sunday in 2021 is on 11 April. It's plausible enough: as it happens, Easter next year is on 4 April. The problem is, that comparatively minor error will make a lot of people very cross when you apply it to something as important as exam grades, which help decide where people go to university and get their first full-time job.

The political reaction to that has people railing against algorithms in general, and complaining about their use in politics and life. But the problem isn't in the algos: it's how our leaders react to them. When politicians – and indeed, the leaders of business, the heads of charities and people in general – hear the word "algorithm", they often think that the word is a synonym for "magic." But we don't work out what date Easter is by magic, but by looking at a calendar. Without the information provided by exams, no set of exam "results" will ever be accurate enough to command enduring consent – and no algorithm, however complicated you make it, can produce accurate results without having accurate information to put in it. Algorithms can be a very useful tool for policymakers, partly because they force you to write down your assumptions, making them easier to challenge, and because the process of making them exposes what you don't know. The trouble was that the process of putting together this algorithm was not transparent, and neither officials nor the politician in charge, were sufficiently humble about what they didn't know.

And that's the real problem with algorithms in policy and life: if people treat them as a magical way to invent and discover new things, as opposed to a way to synthesise information we already have, they end in disaster.

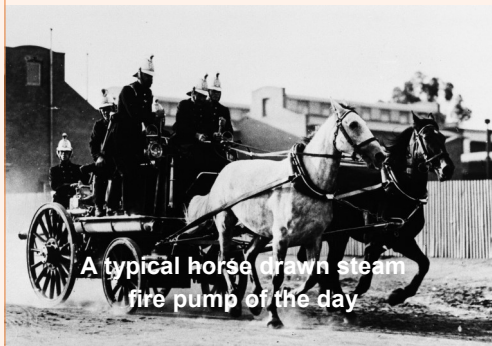
The biggest problem this month wasn't that the Government tried to hand out passing grades in English and science.

It's that so many at the top of the Government clearly wouldn't have managed to scrape a pass in statistics

Ellesmere Fire Service

As told to Peter Shepherd

In 1900, the Ellesmere Urban District Council Fire Brigade comprised one horse drawn pump and about eight volunteer firemen, captained by Mr. D. Robinson. The pump was originally bought around 1885 for the Oteley Estate. It was kept in premises at the head of the Wharf with the horses in the field opposite. By 1909, the pump was being kept in the building today occupied by T. G. Builders, in Cross Street. Also, the Ellesmere District Council's Joint Fire Committee had been formed and they would control the service until 1941.



A typical horse drawn steam fire pump of the day

Towards the end of the 1920's, the horse-pole was removed from the pump and a tow-bar fitted, so that the pump could be hitched to Tims Garage breakdown truck; the garage being next door to the Fire Station (then known simply as "the engine house"). Whilst the use of the truck to pull the pump was an improvement on the horses, problems could arise if the truck was attending a breakdown away from the town at the time of a fire. There would then be a frantic search to find a suitable vehicle capable of towing the pump.

Mr. N. Dawson has these memories-

"In the early 1920's, the fire engine was pulled by two horses. Horses were usually kept in the Wharf Meadow. Some horses were easy to catch and some not so easy. It was said that one particular pair of horses was so good that when the fire bell started ringing, the two horses would trot up to the gate and wait. The brigade was a voluntary one and each fireman, on hearing the bell, would rush to the fire station and collect a tally. Possession of a tally would entitle him to a fee for attending the fire. I believe the fee was based on so much for the first hour and so much for each hour after, plus a turning out fee.

A fire, particularly a farm fire, was a great occasion and crowds turned out to see the firemen dashing in on their bikes to collect the tallies. A great cheer would go up from the crowd as each fireman arrived, leaping off his bike in a great skid, letting the bike run on he cared not where, so long as he collected the coveted tally. An even greater cheer would go up as the horses arrived, but the greatest cheer would go up when the engine rolled away pulled by the two galloping snorting horses. It was a great sight, particularly if the farm was not far away because Harry 'Notchy' Beddow the stoker, would already be standing precariously at the rear of the engine busy stoking up; the lurid glare of the fire shining brightly from the open stokehole if it was night time. "

Mr. Beddow was the chief stoker and he would stand on a step at the rear of the engine and see to it that steam was 'up' when the brigade reached the fire.

He had this off to a fine art, and, depending on how far away the fire was, so would Mr. Beddow judge when it was time to light this fire. However, on one occasion he 'misfired' so to speak. The fire was at a farm Frankton way at night, and the fire engine roared up the Brow and eventually landed at the site of the fire. The firemen in front immediately jumped off the engine and prepared to pump water on the fire, but, alas, no steam and no Mr. Beddow. It later transpired that he had fallen off halfway up the Brow.

Mr. Robinson remained in charge for about twelve years and he was then succeeded by Mr. H. Pearce. When he came to retire there was a dispute over his successor and nearly all the firemen resigned. Eventually, all was resolved and Mr. S. Tims took command. About the same time, circa 1938, the old pump was replaced by a modern appliance based on a Leyland Cub chassis.

After the outbreak of the 1939-45 World War, the Service acquired a trailer pump, also shown in Photograph 'B'. When Mr. Tims joined the armed forces Mr. W. Higginson took command.

Photograph 'B' shows this engine.

His son, 'Paddy' Higginson has these memories:-

"At the outbreak of World War II, I volunteered for active service, but was declared medically unfit. I then took a job at the Dairy, on the Wharf and joined the Auxiliary Fire Service, coming under the command of my father. He had been in the Service since 1920. We continued together until 1945 when Dad retired and the 'A.F.S.' was disbanded, and I left the Service".

"By far the worst event of the war was the bombing of Liverpool, when the Ellesmere Brigade attended on at least three occasions, staying at the scene for up to three days or more. The Leyland fire engine was eventually taken away from us, for use elsewhere, in spite of strong protests from the Council who had purchased the engine.

From then on our Dennis trailer pump was towed by a Buick car. (Mr. Whitfield also seems to recall it being pulled by an army water tank lorry.)"

"People involved with the service that I can remember include Dave Evans, Charlie Peel, Arnold Hughes, Bill Rogers, Joe Phillips, Harry Humphries, Harry Rous, George Watkins, Bill Hearn and Harry Miles.

Telephonists included Hattie Morris and Ruby Higgins.

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Like most aspects of war-time life, women became a vital part of the Fire Service and, although not included in Paddy's memories, some eight to ten ladies were involved in the 'AF.S.' Since those days a female presence has been maintained.

Once life returned to normal after the war, the Service obtained another appliance around 1950. This was a Commer water tender. This was used until about 1968, when it was replaced by a Bedford water tender. This, in turn, was replaced by a Ford water tender (brand new) around 1976. Finally, in October 1993, the Ford was replaced by the present appliance, a 1989 Dodge water tender ladder.

Back in 1941, the Ellesmere Brigade lost its separate identity when the National Fire Service was created. Then in 1948, the Salop County Council Fire Brigade was formed and the Ellesmere Service has remained under County control for the rest of the century. Another feature to undergo change has been the method of calling out the fire fighters. The bell, mentioned by Mr. Dawson, continued to be the method until the 1939-45 War, then the siren took its place. After the war the siren only sounded during the day and after 11 pm. a bell in each home would ring. Then in 1973, each fire fighter was provided with a pager. This coincided with the opening of the present fire station.

The officers in charge of the Ellesmere Station have been-

1900 - 1913	D. Robinson
1913 - 1938	H. Pearce
1938 - 1940	T S. Tims
1940 - 1945	T Higginson
1945 - 1960	D. Evans
1960 - 1968	C. Peel
1968 - 1982	A Whitfield
1982 - 1991	S. Deakin
1991 - 1999	I. Colemere

This brief history has been kindly provided by Mr. Albert Whitfield, who served in the Ellesmere Fire Service from 1947 to 1982. He also has memories of the fires in 1981 and 1982 started by an arsonist. Eventually, an ex-Ellesmere fireman was found guilty of one of the fires. Whilst his association with the other fires was not proven, the fires ceased. Among Albert's memories of serious fires during his service with the Brigade are the 1948 fire at the Orthopaedic Hospital; the 1949 fire at Gannow Hill, Frankton; the 1966 fire at Ellesmere College and the thirteen fires in one day in 1976, caused by the excessive summer heat!

Memory No 4

R.A.F. ASSOCIATION

Remembered by the late Geoff Lockwood

The R.A.F. Association was formed in July 1947. At that time, the Railway Hotel was run by a Mr. George Thomas who was keen that the spirit he had enjoyed in the Air Force should continue, and he was one of the prime movers. A nucleus of interested men and some ladies, met for the inaugural meeting at the Railway Hotel, in a tiny room with a coal-fire, where ten people would have been a crowd. The meetings were held in this same room for a great many years. The room did not get any bigger, but the numbers did. The Association had to move to various hotels as it grew. It eventually ended up at the Bridgwater Arms. The Ellesmere Association was close to the Shrewsbury Branch in those days and there was a Branch in Oswestry too. After about 17-20 years, the Oswestry Branch closed, and under the rules of the R. A.F. Association, their Life Members become members of the nearest active branch, which in this case was Ellesmere; so to this day there are a number of members who were originally Oswestry members and who live in Oswestry. The main object, from the beginning, was to carry on the friendship which had been enjoyed formerly. The welfare and care of those in need was important, as were the social activities and the raising of cash to support the Wings Appeal, which is ongoing to this day. In the early days, because members were young, the need for welfare did not really exist. However, over the last 8-10 years the welfare work had become quite a difficult task because of the age factor. In 1998, out of 94 paid-up members, there were five or six under the age of sixty, and the Welfare Officer was 81 years old, an extremely active and fit person, but nevertheless it was getting difficult for him. The Association was almost overwhelmed with welfare cases, but this is something it had to try to master.

The Association had a very difficult time in the 1970's when interest had ebbed. The late Peter Stead called a 'do or die' meeting and thankfully it did not die. A new Committee was formed, and managed to get fresh blood into the Branch and fresh ideas. The Branch held more social events and started a newsletter, which is important because people are entitled to know what is going on in the Branch they are paying their subscription to.

1997 was a very busy year. The Association was 50 years old and had a 'Do' for about 100 people in July at the Comrades Club. The Lady Mayor presented six people with a badge for 50 years' service, not necessarily all those years in Ellesmere. In the last 10 years, the branch raised £3000 per annum.

2020—The next, and sadly final years the story is taken up by ex chairman Tim Potter.

The Branch continued to do very well under the guidance of Mike Williamson the Chairman, and Geoff Lockwood the President with Membership steady and incorporating Whitchurch as well as Oswestry and surrounding areas.

The annual dinners were attended by 60 plus members and their partners held at the Comrades Club Ellesmere but as the years went by our numbers dwindled.

In 2000 a new Welfare Officer was appointed and with an ageing membership his responsibilities increased considerably. A new Wings Appeal Officer, Alan Woodrow was also appointed, and over the years he was responsible for collecting in the region of £60000 for RAFA Welfare.

During the next 20 years the club continued to flourish with regular monthly meetings, maintaining contact with our widows and arranging social gatherings. We supported cadet branches at Shawbury, Whitchurch and Oswestry including them in outings and events, and their attendance at our Battle of Britain services at the RAF Chapel at Shawbury was an annual event.

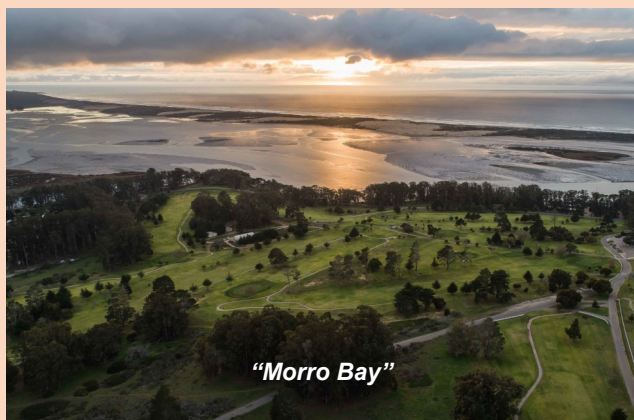
Unfortunately, our numbers have been reduced so much that it is impossible to continue and in February of 2020 we called it a day. However, all is not lost, and with the help of our liaison officer, Anita from RAF Shawbury we will continue to meet socially.

The Memories will continue next week

Memoirs of a Bad Golfer

by Mike Grundy

In Issue 17 of our Lockdown Newsletter Bill Ferries wrote about his golfing holidays. He seems to be the sort of expert golfer I always wanted to be. Oh! for the relaxed and confident swing with the ball travelling unerringly in the direction of the green and promised land. Oh! for that low handicap and for the silver cups on the sideboard.



My own golfing career was very different. At the age of 60 with retirement approaching I thought that golf would be a fine hobby. Silly me. I neglected the facts that (a) my eyes work independantly of each other, (b) my left ankle is fused solid, (c) my legs are weak and wobbly due to arthrits and (d) I should have started much, much younger. But I'm what the Scots call "thrawn" so I started my career with a lot of expensive lessons, doomed to be the paradigm of a golfing duffer.

But let me tell you what fun it was. I had a good friend John, who was only a little better than I. We joined a local 9 hole Club and tried (mostly successfully), not to get in the way of proper golfers. What better than to stroll down the fairway with the early morning sun casting long shadows over the fairway and the thought of fish and chips for

lunch. On one occasion I hit a beautiful long shot to the green and looked forward to tapping it in. Then came the chop-chop of a helicopter which descended slowly to the green, narrowly missing the flag. There had been an accident on the main road just over the wall.

I had other golfing friends and always allowed them to shine (i.e. I seldom won). We had trips to other courses in the UK, but never the expensive ones. Even the cheap courses all seemed to have magnetic ponds. There was the occasional perfect shot but, as I was once informed, even the blind squirrel sometimes finds a nut.

Unusually for a male golfer I enjoyed many games with my lovely wife, Kirsty. When we lived in Edinburgh we were able to play on the municipal coures such as Cramond for a very low fee but never aspired to Muirfield (if only!). Her most interesting golfing experience was when she hit uphill over a treacherous ditch to a perfect lie next to the green. As she walked up a crow hopped down, picked up the ball and flew off!

Our best days walking round golf courses were on our annual long stays in California. We owned a VW campervan with a Grateful Dead numberplate and we camped many nights along the Central Coast. We never played Pebble Beach (about £300 a round even then) but I was nearly hit by an errant ball walking on the beach below. One of our favourite spots to stop when cycling in Pacific Grove was a bench by the 17th of the Lighthouse Course ("the poor man's Pebble Beach"). We could watch the surfers just the other side of the road whilst in front of us successive groups played over the pond with varying degrees of success.



In Monterey we played the Naval Course many times. It was inexpensive, particularly the low fees for late starts in "Twilight time" though it could be very gloomy towards the end.

When we camped at Dairy Creek near San Luis Obispo the twilight time was magical: as we left the fairway the wild turkeys would emerge from the undergrowth and perform their "leck" or courtship dance on the hallowed greens.

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Then there was a little College Course near our son's home in Gilroy. A notice board at the entrance gave warning "Beware - Habitat of the Mountain Lion".

My photograph of the sign was published in a national British golfing magazine.



Our favourite course was Morro Bay. (see photo above). It was set among trees on the side of a hill with views toward the bay, Morro Rock and the wide Pacific. It was so beautiful that all the holes seemed to be downhill though I'm sure they were not. I was always a collector of lost golf balls - I felt sorry for them.

One regular cycle ride took us alongside the very high mesh fence of an exclusive course. There was one particular angle in the fence where bad strokes always went over. Kirsty became tired of me stopping and exploring among the poison ivy but I always cycled home with a good number. Once I brought some back to the UK in an old pair of boots and, unsurprisingly, my suitcase was opened by the customs.

All good things come to an end and when we reached the age of 70 other things were taking priority and we decided to call it a day. It was great while it lasted but it was, as they say about selling a yacht, "The second best day in your life is when you buy the boat, the best day is when you sell it".

Happy Days!

Origins of some local pub names

Red Lion

In 1986 there were at least 600 pubs bearing this name, the most popular of all pub names. Its early use was due to John of Gaunt, the most powerful man in England for much of the 14th century. A red lion is also a heraldic reference to Scotland. When James 1 of Scotland came to the throne he ordered that a red lion be displayed in all public places. The Old Red Lion in London WC2 is on the site of a well-known 16th century inn; it is said that prisoners on their way to execution were sometimes allowed to take a last drink there. At one time 'Red Lion Lane' was used as an expression to jokingly refer to the throat.

White Hart

The earliest instances of this common sign coincide with the beginning of the reign of Richard II in 1377 and it was the monarch's heraldic symbol. He insisted that all members of his household wore the device and it would have been a sound move for inn-keepers to display it to show their allegiance. The continued use of White Hart signs in later centuries is explained by its having become a generic term for a tavern. Dickens gives a fine description of The White Harte at Southwark where Sam Weller first met Mr Pickwick.

Black Lion

A heraldic symbol mainly related to Queen Phillipa of Hainault, wife of Edward III who was from Flanders. In Wales the reference is to Owain Glyndwr, the celebrated Welsh chieftain who was born about 1350 and died in 1415, or to his father Madoc ap Meredith both of whom had a black lion on their coat of arms.

White Lion

Again, this is of heraldic origin linked to Edward IV or the earls of March or the Duke of Norfolk.

The Sun Inn

The early uses of Sun as a tavern sign made use of its simple visual form. It was painted as a circle with a few rays around it and often filled with eyes, a nose and mouth. Others have, for example, the head of Edward IV with white and red roses. The Sun Inn at Yeovil shows the sun-god Apollo driving his chariot.

Ye Olde Boote Inn

Another reference to heraldry - riding boots were worn by knights and uncommonly appear on coats of arms sometimes with spurs.

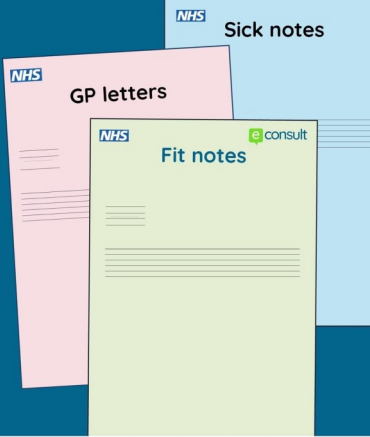
Local information

Did you know...

If you have an admin request?

There is no need to book an appointment:



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



NHS Sick notes

NHS GP letters

NHS Fit notes econsult





Take 1 minute each day and help fight the outbreak.

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

Urgent Care Centres

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

PLEASE CONTINUE TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR YOUR NEIGHBOURS

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

www.ellesmerecovidsupportgroups.org.uk

Shropshire Council Helpline: 0345 678 9028

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

Quiz Answers
1. Thomas Edison, 2. Helicopter, 3. Eurythmics, 4. Blackpool, 5. Lucas
6. Aerosmith, 7. Cornwall, 8. Kit or Cete, 9. Ludwig, 10. Arthur Ransome
11. Nudity or nakedness, 12. Trevor Francis, 13. Enter The Dragon, 14. Runnymede,
15. 1985, 16. Plum, 17. Revolver, 18. Spanner, 19. Mustard, 20. Study



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)

