



## PROBUS CLUB ELLESMERE



## Covid-19 Lockdown 2020 Newsletter

Issue 11

July 02, 2020

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### From the editor

Dear all, I hope you are all keeping well & safe.

This week I got bored so I redecorated the living room, dinning room, and Mary's den which shows I am looking for things to do. I also tried the new eConsult system at the surgery, it is brilliant, I received an email from the Ellesmere doctor within 3 hours to tell me that medication was at the Pharmacy, all without getting out of my armchair.

On Saturday we had a **non virtual event** we celebrated Armed Forces Day and raised the flag at the town hall with the British Legion and a few local residents.

I hope you enjoy this week's edition of the newsletter I think it is quite varied, with an item on the history of Llangollen International Eisteddfod, to the tale of Fred & Penny's escapade during 'One Night in Bangkok'.

Keep safe

Paul

***PS many thanks to all the members who are submitting articles for the newsletter***

### From the Crow's nest

Dear Probus friends, I find it difficult to believe that we are at over 100 days of lockdown and on edition 11 of our Newsletter.

I hope that you and yours are still staying safe and well, it has been good to catch up with some of you on the phone.

It was strange to hear this week that in our United Kingdom there are two pubs in Llanymynech near Oswestry that are about to re-open and one isn't. The Welsh border runs down the middle of the Main Street and the rules differ between England and Wales. Hey ho, nothing is straightforward these days.. yet gardens seem to be thriving and there seems to be more kindness around, at least in sleepy and tranquil Ellesmere.

Many thanks again to Paul for his valiant efforts in producing our Newsletters which are being sent far and wide.

Best wishes to you all as we hopefully gently move into an easier time and are able to share time more openly with our friends and families.

Jeremy

**Buster Keaton stunts** <https://youtu.be/frYIj2FGmMA>



## National Memorial Arboretum *Submitted by Paul*

Last Saturday was Armed Forces Day, so I thought it appropriate to promote this amazing place.



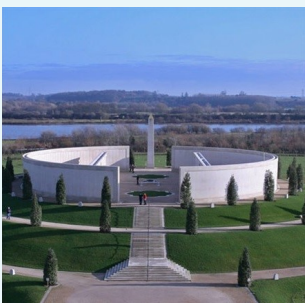
### The Memorials

The Arboretum is home to over 350 thought-provoking memorials, each with a story to be discovered. The memorials are diverse in nature, rich in symbolism and collectively represent a broad population of society from military associations, charitable organisations, emergency services, fraternity groups and individuals. Each year new memorials are added so there's always something new to see.

Here are details on just some of the 300 plus memorials in our grounds. Our comprehensive Guidebook, available from the Visitor Centre for £7.50, contains more detailed information about these memorials as well as many of the other interesting and unusual memorials on site.

### Armed Forces Memorial

**Dedicated: 12 October 2007 Commemorates:**



The men and women of our Armed and Merchant Services who have lost their lives in conflict, as a result of terrorist action or on training exercises since the end of WW2. Unlike the World War memorials in towns and villages across the Nation, there is nowhere else that records over 16,000 names of those who have been killed on duty in recent times.

Dedicated in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen on 12 October 2007, the Armed Forces Memorial is a nationally significant focus for Remembrance, providing recognition and thanks for

those who have given their lives in the service of the country.

The Memorial is a stunning piece of architecture designed by Liam O'Connor, inspired by the ancient landscapes of prehistoric Britain and the classical forms of ancient Rome.

Since the end of World War II the men and women of the Armed Forces, often supported by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy, have taken part in more than 50 operations and conflicts across the world, often as part of United Nations, NATO or other international coalitions.

It's not just Service Personnel who've made the sacrifice. Behind every name on the Memorial are the wives, husbands, partners, parents, children and colleagues who loved them and who live with the pain and consequences of their loss every day.

### Shot At Dawn Memorial

**Unveiled: 21 June 2001 Commemorates:**



309 British and Commonwealth soldiers who were shot for desertion or cowardice during World War I. Most were sentenced after a short trial at which no real opportunity for defence was allowed. Today it's recognised that many of them were underage and suffering from shell-shock. Andy Decomyn's statue is modelled on Private Herbert Burden, of the 1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, who was shot at Ypres in 1915 aged 17. In 2006 a posthumous pardon was granted.

### Stillbirth And Neonatal Death Charity Memorial

**Dedicated: June 2001**



SANDS was founded in 1978 by a small group of bereaved parents devastated by the death of their babies and by a complete lack of acknowledgement and understanding of the significance and impact of their loss. It aims to support anyone affected by the death of a baby; to work with health professionals to improve the quality of care and services provided to bereaved parents and families and to promote changes that could help to reduce the loss of babies' lives.

**The Far East Prisoner Of War Memorial Building**

**Dedicated: 15 August 2005 Commemorates:**

The 55,000 Far East Prisoners of War from World War II. It not only remembers those who died, but also encompasses the whole story of events during this unprecedented chapter in British history. The memorial roll contains the name and rank of all British Servicemen taken prisoner during the South East Asia conflict and embraces the story of their treatment and the thousands who died as well. The building houses an exhibition which reveals clearly the life and experiences of these prisoners, aided by archive video footage and interviews. It was opened on the 60th Anniversary of VJ Day, the end of World War II in the Pacific. Find out more about COFEPOW; the children, family and friends of The Far East Prisoners of War on [www.cofepow.org.uk](http://www.cofepow.org.uk). Close by is the original lychgate from the cemetery at Changi Jail in Singapore, built by prisoners as a memorial to their comrades who died.



**Basra Memorial Wall Dedicated: 11 March 2010**

**Commemorates:**

The 178 UK Service personnel and one MOD civilian who lost their lives on combat operations in Iraq. It also lists members of Coalition Forces who were killed while under UK command during six years of conflict. The original memorial was built in Basra in 2006 and stood outside the front of the Headquarters of the Multi-National Division (South East). Following the end of operations, the Basra Memorial Wall was brought back to the UK and rebuilt. The original wall was built, dismantled, and reconstructed at the Arboretum by British soldiers from 37th Armoured Engineer Squadron in a personal gesture to commemorate their fallen comrades.

The brass plaques on this memorial are the originals placed on the wall when it was in situ in Basra, Iraq. To find out more please check out their website—<http://www.thenma.org.uk/>

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*While in the area to visit the National Memorial Arboretum it is well worth a visit to a less well known just down the road at Cannock Chase. The German Military cemetery.*

**CANNOCK CHASE GERMAN MILITARY CEMETERY**

**History Information**

On 16 October 1959, an agreement was concluded by the governments of the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the future care of the graves of German nationals who lost their lives in the United Kingdom during the two World Wars.



The agreement provided for the transfer to a central cemetery in the United Kingdom of all graves which were not situated in cemeteries and plots of Commonwealth war graves maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in situ. Following this agreement, the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge) made arrangements to transfer the graves of German servicemen and civilian internees of both wars from scattered burial grounds to the new cemetery established at Cannock Chase. The inauguration and dedication of this cemetery, which contains almost 5,000





## Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod — *By Ivan jasper*

The Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod is a music festival which takes place every year\* during the second week of July in Llangollen, North Wales. It is one of several large annual Eisteddfodau in Wales. Singers and dancers from around the world are invited to take part in over 20 competitions followed each evening by concerts on the main stage. Over five thousand singers, dancers and instrumentalists from around 50 countries perform to audiences of more than 50,000 over the 6 days of the event.

Famous performers at Llangollen have included Luciano Pavarotti (who first competed in Llangollen in 1955 with his father and a choir from their home town Modena, and for whom the Eisteddfod's principal trophy – the Choir of the World Pavarotti Trophy – is named, Red Army Ensemble, Julian Lloyd Webber and Ladysmith Black Mambazo. The final Sunday Evening Gala Concert has featured Katherine Jenkins, Bryn Terfel, Kiri Te Kanawa, James Galway and Montserrat Caballe.

The origins of the International Eisteddfod go back to 1943 when Harold Tudor, an officer of the British Council, arranged a visit for members of governments-in-exile to the Welsh National Eisteddfod in Bangor. The excursion was well received especially by the noted writer and poet Juraj Slavik, the Minister for the Interior in the Czechoslovakia Government in Exile. Following the visit he wrote to Tudor praising the value of music as a way of healing the effects of War. The following year an international concert was held as part of the Llandybie National Eisteddfod.

Towards the end of 1945 Tudor proposed that an international choral festival be added to the 1947 Welsh National Eisteddfod, however the Council of the National Eisteddfod felt that as all their effort were involved in rebuilding their own organisation they could not take on such a scheme. Tudor modified his proposal into an independent music festival and found support for this idea from W. S. Gwynn Williams, Welsh composer and music publisher and George Northing, a teacher from Dinas Brân County School and chairman of Llangollen town council. Gwynn Williams and Northing both pressed for the Eisteddfod to be in their home town of Llangollen.

The public gave support to this idea at two public meetings in May 1946 but concerns were also raised about who would come, where the event would be held and how the event would be financed. The British Council offered to help find choirs from Europe and to give financial support however the town decided to raise the money through a public subscription and quickly gathered over £1100. George Northing was made director of the executive board; Gwynn Williams became music director; Harold Tudor was Director of Publicity and W. Clayton Russon, a local businessman and High Sheriff of Merionethshire became President. Plans to hold the event on the school field of Dinas Bran County School progressed throughout 1946-47. Accommodation for the overseas competitors would be in houses in the town and surrounding area and domestic participants would be given beds in church and school halls. As rationing was still in place ration coupons had to be found for all the visitors and the Minister of Food was eventually persuaded to supply these.

When in June 1947 it was time for competitors to travel to Llangollen a railway strike had started in France and there were serious doubt as to whether any overseas competitors would be able to arrive. Considerable relief was felt by the organisers when the first coach of competitors arrived bringing the ladies' choir Grupo Musical Feminino from Oporto. They were the eventual winners of the Ladies Competition whilst the Men's competition was won by the Hungarian workers' choir, who had completed their journey to Wales by hitch-hiking when their train had been cancelled at Basle because of the French strike.

The Esperanto Society played a significant part in the first year when it was felt that there could be a shortage of participants. Reto Rossetti, a well-known figure and author in the Esperanto movement, was asked to help and through publicity in Esperanto magazines and to the surprise of the organisers, several groups contacted the Eisteddfod committee. Two troupes of Spanish dancers, on a tour of Britain sponsored by the British Council and the Esperanto Society, arrived and despite there not being a dance competition in the first year, performed to delighted audiences. Folk dance competitions have featured in every subsequent Llangollen Eisteddfod.

The eisteddfod was brought to close by what has now become the traditional Sunday concert featuring Sir John Barbirolli and the Hallé Orchestra. The 1947 International Eisteddfod was hailed as an unqualified success with praise for the organisers, the founders, and all the competitors. There was even a surplus of £1,432 to be used for the next year's event.

A major test mission to promote reconciliation occurred in 1949, just four years after the end of the war, when a choir from Lübeck came to compete at the Eisteddfod. There had been Austrian and Italian choirs, but they hardly counted; neither did Spaniards. As the choir tell it in a letter now in the Clwyd archive in Ruthin, there was a tearful welcome with tea and sandwiches when the choir arrived at the Llangollen station from the eisteddfod helpers and the townspeople. Later, the festival's compère Mr Hywel Roberts introduced the choir with the words: "Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome our friends from Germany." The town organised a concert to help the choir raise funds, and (in 2015) members of the choir still correspond with Llangollen friends.

The 2007 Eisteddfod included performances by José Carreras, Joan Baez, and Hayley Westenra. In 2008, there were performances by Elaine Paige, All Angels, and Alfie Boe; in 2009, performances by Barbara Dickson, Sir Willard White, Blake, and Natasha Marsh, with a James Bond 007 spectacular, featuring the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, as the Sunday finale; 2010 saw performances by Katherine Jenkins and Nigel Kennedy. In 2011 there were concerts featuring Lulu, Russell Watson, Faryl Smith, Ruthie Henshaw and McFly. In 2012 the Eisteddfod played host to Lesley Garrett, Alison Balsom, Nicola Benedetti and Sian Edwards in a celebration concert for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. There were also appearances by Alfie Boe, Steffan Morris, and Valentina Nafornta, and a performance of Karl Jenkins's new work "The Peacemakers" by a specially formed massed choir accompanied by the Llangollen International Eisteddfod Orchestra. The week was rounded off by the Grand Finale Concert, featuring Fflur Wyn, Wynne Evans, Mark Llewelyn Evans, John Owen-Jones and Richard Balcombe.

In recent years the Sunday evening concert has been given over to more "popular" music. Starting with McFly in 2011, subsequent concerts have included UB40, Status Quo (band), and Manic Street Preachers.

A parade is usually held on the Tuesday of the Eisteddfod week, in which both the locals and visitors, take part dancing, singing, and playing musical instruments, whilst marching the streets of Llangollen. However, in 2016 the parade was moved to the Friday to enable more competitors to take part.

Pupils from Dinas Bran County School (known as Llangollen Grammar School when I attended during the late 1940s early 1950s) were invited to volunteer for various duties, which depending on age amounted to programme selling, ushers or door stewards. I carried out all of these duties, at various times during my time at the school.

**\* In March, the International Eisteddfod announced the postponement of 2020's festival due to the global pandemic of COVID-19.**

## A great no gnashing of teeth

*John Shone retells a favourite family story...*

Uncle Jack was my grandad's younger brother, so he was actually a great uncle. Great in many ways: he was a keen cricketer and taught us a lot about the game before he went off to New Zealand for several years to help train umpires. He also he helped me to find my first job – working as a tea-boy and newsroom messenger in the editorial offices of The Daily Herald and The Sporting Life close to London's Covent Garden. (The Life, founded in 1859, was renowned for its horse-racing coverage, was reputed to be the Queen's favourite newspaper, but it expired more than 20 years ago while the Herald went through several transformations and is now a ghastly down-market tabloid called The Sun. )

At times, Uncle Jack could be very grumpy, a bit of a Victor Meldrew. One of my best memories is of one summer in the early 1950s when he came to stay for a couple of weeks at our home near Wrexham. At that time he was managing a smart suite of offices in London's Pall Mall where he lived on the top floor with his wife, Auntie Bessie. When I was small, I loved going there and riding in the lift. During his trip to North Wales, we went to the seaside at Rhyl. It was a warm, sunny day and Uncle Jack decided to give my younger brother, Geoff, and I a swimming lesson.

Jack took the plunge and encouraged us to follow. But we'd been in the water only a few minutes when the cry went up: "I've lost my teeth!"

Sure enough as we splashed about in the briny, trying to improve our breast stroke skills, uncle's dentures had decided to make a break for it through the waves.

To put it mildly, there was great consternation as we scoured the shoreline, trying in vain to find them – even waiting several hours for the tide to go out in the hope that they'd become beached on the sand.

Deeply despondent, we set off for home, with Uncle Jack clearly wishing that he hadn't embarked on his aquatic adventure with us. In fact, he was downright crotchety – and remained so for days afterwards, though I don't recall any wailing...and there was certainly no great gnashing of teeth!

As the weather stayed fine, my parents thought it would be a good idea to have another day out at Sunny Rhyl. Jack still wasn't in the sunniest of moods, but agreed go. Once there, my Mum suggested calling in at the town's police station on



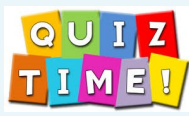
the off-chance that uncle's teeth had been found and handed in. He looked her with scepticism, but then followed her from the car.

A few minutes later, they emerged from the police station with Jack wearing the broadest of smiles... like one of those people you used to see in the old TV adverts for Colgate toothpaste.

Miraculously, his teeth had been found – several miles along the coast at Kinmel Bay. My mother described how once inside the police station, she'd explained what had happened to the desk sergeant. Without further ado, he put his hand under the counter and produced a cardboard box containing several sets of dentures in various shapes and sizes, waiting to be reunited with their owners "Blimey, these are mine", said uncle, snatching the top pair from the box and popping them straight into his mouth.

In an instant, Grumpy Jack became Happy Jack.

Who says the Tooth Fairy doesn't exist?



## General Knowledge Quiz

1. What is the highest number used in a Sudoku puzzle?
2. What is the term for a positive electrode?
3. Which swimming stroke is named after an insect?
4. Which English queen has the same name as a type of plum?
5. How many dots are used in each letter in the Braille system?
6. Which movie won the Oscar for best actor, director and cinematography in 2016?
7. What is a female deer called?
8. What unit is used to measure horses?
9. Who is Reg Dwight better known as?
10. Who provided Nick Wilde's voice in the 2016 movie of "Zootopia"?
11. How many tenpin bowling skittles need knocking down for a strike?
12. How is 77 represented in Roman numerals?
13. Who is the patron saint of music?
14. What are birds of a feather said to do?
15. "Kiss Me Kate" is a musical version of which play by Shakespeare?
16. The single "Papa Don't Preach" came from which Madonna album?
17. Betz cells are found in which part of the body?
18. What is the only bird that can hover in the air and also fly backwards?
19. Who earned the nickname "Slowhand"?
20. Which country does opera singer Pavarotti come from?

*Answers on Page 14*

### Ellesmere Old Town Hall

Prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the present centre would have been a marshy area not much built on. The Old Town Hall was given to Ellesmere in the early 1830's by the Countess of Bridgewater and is reputed to be built on piles driven thirty feet into peat of the former mere bed.



The ground floor was originally open and housed the town's general market, later moved up Scotland Street to the Victorian Market Hall. The Town Hall has a fine assembly room on the first floor during its life, it has housed the Mechanics Institute, the Town Museum, and the cinema, also it was the Reading Room around the 19320's.

A Cinema was open at The Town Hall around about 1931 co-existing with the Lending Library. At first silent films were shown and occasionally a travelling repertory company would hire the hall for a week so giving the townspeople a chance to see live theatre.

In the early 1930s the Town Hall Cinema was run by cousins Tom Jarvis and Sanm Goodwin. Picture going was probably at its most popular during the 1940s when queues for admission extended for quite a distance up Scotland Street.

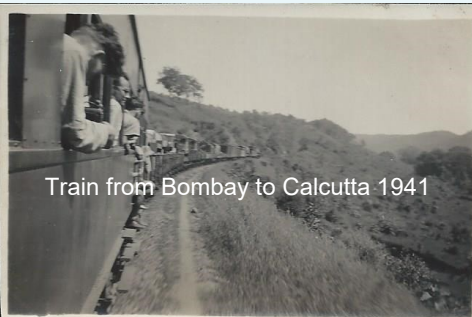
In The 1920's and for some years previous, the ground floor was used a Reading Room and Museum, provided by Lord Brownlow for the benefit of the people of Ellesmere. A small subscription was made payable to become a member. The far end of the room housed a Museum. It contained the ancient canoe some Roman coins, various tools of stone and iron.

It was abandoned by local government in the reorganisation of 1966. And after housing a number of businesses from Greengrocer to Bistro It is now an Estate Agents.

### Doing our bit Part 3

The new Ship was called the "Duchess of York" and was a much larger Ship and we were sailing with a large Scottish Regiment as companions. We sailed the next day and witnessed a marvellous event. A young woman was standing on the quayside all dressed in white and singing to all the men on the Ship the latest songs, it was really moving and there were tears in the eyes of a lot of the men. She carried on singing until we were out of hearing. The Ship's Crew had to make sure that there were not too many men on one side of the Ship at the one time because of the balance. The Duchess of York was a much larger vessel than the HMS Ormand and had closed in decks but the water ration was much stricter because they had an armed guard all the time on the water Tap. We sailed for a week or so then one evening we had a security call, calling everyone on deck, then they issued everyone with Life Jackets and we were told to put out Cigarettes and not to smoke anymore and not even to talk, in fact there was complete silence even the Ship's engines had stopped. They moved all the men to certain positions to balance the weight of the men on the Ship. There we stood all night long until well after dawn, what a terrible ordeal. Talk about the longest night it felt like a thousand nights. At about 7 or 8 am the Ship's engines started up and we felt the Ship moving, everyone was puzzled because the Ship seemed to be turning around, in fact some of the lads were arguing and placing bets on what was happening. There were a lot of false rumours about, but at last there was a fairly reliable report and apparently the reason we had to change Ships in Durban was because we were originally from the first Ship the Ormond and proceeding on land to North Africa to join the 8<sup>th</sup> Army. But Singapore had been invaded by the Japanese from the Jungle and we had been rushed out to Singapore as reinforcements but apparently the Japanese had taken such a hold on the island that it would be impossible for us to land, so the skipper had to turn back and everyone assumed that we would be going back to South Africa. How wrong they were because after another week or so of sailing we sighted land, but no one could recognise anything as South Africa. However the Ship sailed into the harbour and we were told to get our gear ashore then we discovered we were in Bombay, India. We were put into a large building with a lot of rooms and overjoyed to find a swimming pool at our disposal. This was great because it allowed us not only to find our land legs but allowed us to exercise also. After 3 months on the sea it was a wonderful feeling being able to walk around and not be restricted to one piece of deck, but tragically one of the lads drowned in the swimming pool no one seemed to know how it happened, but it shocked everyone, one minute he was there and the next minute we were looking for him, never even thinking that he was still at the bottom of the pool because he could swim and the water was warm, very strange indeed.

All good things come to an end so after 3-4 days of relaxing we were loaded up onto the back of Lorries and transported to the Railway Station and loaded on to a Train with hard timber slatted seats. After a couple of hours the train started moving. So we started our first train journey in India but we had no idea where we were going. The countryside



Train from Bombay to Calcutta 1941

was wonderful which made it interesting. But night times were different because the carriages were full of Cockroaches which only came out at night and there were also other bugs on the train, which made our journey unpleasant. The train didn't stop at any stations, instead it stopped on a siding well before we reached a station. When it did stop we complained about the Bugs biting and the same at the infestation of Cockroaches, but nothing was done about it. The cookhouse

staff made tea at these stops which also helped to fortify us. We spent 6 days on this train and we were glad to get off in the end. The station we finally arrived at was in Calcutta, Bengal. We spent the night there sleeping anywhere we could but in the morning we had a good breakfast. After breakfast we were told to climb onto the backs of some Lorries and we travelled for most of that day to a Village called Asansol and about 2 miles further on was the end of our journey so we got off the Lorries and were issued with Tents. By this time it was getting dark and there was a discussion about where to pitch the Tents, it was agreed that we pitch them under a wooded area so this is what we did. What a complete disaster because everyone was bitten to death by Red Ants which lived in the Trees. So as soon as it was light enough we got out. The first day we learnt that this large flat field was called Pandivesta our Airstrip. In one corner was a lot of activity by native contractors. There was no sign of any Aircraft but the man in charge of the Squadron was "Squadron Leader O'Conner" from South Africa, he was a good chap too. We spent the first day looking around and exploring we even walked into Asansol looking for something to eat, but all we found was dry bread rolls, which had to do. It was very, very warm at the Airfield but that didn't seem to worry anyone, in fact I was enjoying it.



Living under Canvass, the first base in India for 215 Squadron 1941

*Cont. page 8*



To think that a week ago we were in Bombay on the other side of this vast country, Bombay on the West side and were on the East side. There was a continuous strong breeze blowing across the field which made it very difficult to erect our Mosquito nets over the beds that we were issued with.

The beds consisted of a timber frame and about 4 strands of rope about 6 inches apart both on the side frame and on the top and bottom frame, we thought they were quite good until we found out later that the ropes\were a good place for bed bugs to live and breed. However the second day we discovered when we lifted our Kitbags up , that Termite Ants had started to eat into the bottom of the Kitbags and in some cases into the contents so we had to lift them up off the ground and make sure they were always resting on a piece of timber or something like that, it also applied to boots as well. We were learning something about India all the time, which was good. After about a week we were getting bored and our curiosity took over, so we walked to the far end of the field to see what the contractors were doing, we discovered they were laying a Railway line and fencing off an area of ground quite a distance from the Railway Line. This looked a complete mystery to us but the truth would be revealed later. We had to wait another week before we spotted any Aircraft.

Then one afternoon we saw 3 Wellington Bombers circling the field and everyone cheered and when they landed we were looking all over them at last we had something to do. Three

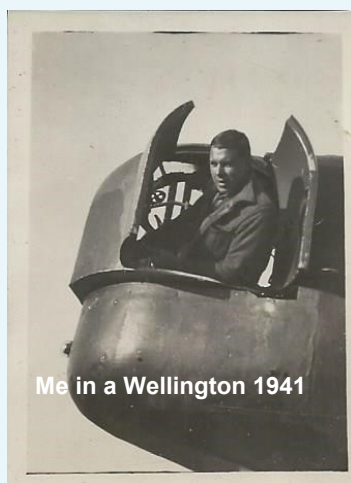


A Wellington Bomber 1941

more came later in the afternoon and by the following night we had no less than 13 Aircraft. Then the Warrant Officer Armourer distributed the work on each Aircraft allocating 2 per Armourer. The Aircraft (Kites was the nickname) were painted on the side alphabetically A to N inclusive. I can't remember which were my 2 Aircraft but I and the rest of the lads spent a lot of time getting to know our way around the Kites both inside and out. The front and rear turrets were operated by oil pressure, which

was controlled by an Oil reservoir in the centre of the Kite. This had to be checked every day and pumped up accordingly. Let me tell the reader straight away that as long as the Kite was serviceable it had to be inspected every day by each tradesman and a form 700 signed by each tradesman and also signed by the Sergeant in charge before it was allowed to fly.

The Vickers Armstrong Wellington Bomber was constructed of Aluminium rings designed geometrically with the larger rings in the centre and decreasing in size as they go to the tail and to the front they are set about 12 to 18 inches apart and joined together. Over the whole area of the fuselage was covered on the external surface with canvas. To stretch the canvas they applied a thick Dope material which was brushed on and it became as tight as a drum. There were 2 gun turrets one at the front and one at the rear each one had 4 303 calibre Browning machine guns which could be lifted up and down and the turret could rotate 110' so they covered a large field of fire. There were also 2 Browning machine guns in the centre of the Aircraft fixed on a tripod these were operated by the Wireless operator/Air gunner, so that 12 machine guns per Aircraft plus the Bomb Bay which was situated in the belly. The Bomb load was up to 2,000lbs using 250lb, 500lb Bombs and boxes of incendiary Bombs we were always given Bomb loads in the morning by the Sergeant in charge.



Me in a Wellington 1941

Indecently, the Wellington Bomber was easily recognised by its very high tail plane. We Armourers now discovered what was going on with the contractors at the far end of the Airfield. They had been bringing a branch Railway line in and forming a Bomb dump and at 12 noon on most days a Truck load of Bombs would come in and we would have to unload them right away because the Truck was only allowed to stay for one hour. This was quite a daunting task as 12 noon was the hottest part of the day and it was also Tiffin time (lunch time). The Bombs were loaded on to the Bomb trolleys mounted on 4 wheels; the front 2 wheels were for steering with a tow bar to connect to a tractor. On top of the trolleys were cradles shaped to hold the Bombs safe. We had our own tractor which was very handy



Typical Bomb Trolley

We used to get snippets of news about what was happening regarding the troops that were evacuating Singapore though the Jungle of Thailand and Burma with the Japanese not far behind them. We had the Bombs we had the Aircraft but the powers\that be didn't seem to know where to drop them, so it was a matter of the Armourers loading the Bombs in the morning and unloading them in the afternoon, and of course they all had to be taken back to the Bomb dump. The trouble as far as we were concerned was if the Aircraft took off with Fused Bombs aboard they could not return until the Bombs had been dropped somewhere . It was too dangerous to land with Bombs still aboard. For the first couple of weeks it was a matter of "Bomb de- Bomb" not very moral busting. Since we had been in India we had heard of a dominant Indian named Ghandi who was against the War and having Troops in India. He had a very large following who were going round causing trouble. We had all been told to be on the alert. One of the things I used to really enjoy was going in an Aircraft to check the gun turrets etc while the Aircraft was flying.

**To be continued next week.**



## One Night in Bangkok—*Or the great escape, by Fred Williams*

It was mid March, Penny and I were coming to the end of our long stay in Perth, Western Australia, visiting our daughter and her family. We were becoming increasingly aware of a dangerous virus somewhere in China and it was spreading. People started panic buying. Perth's supermarkets were soon out of toilet paper, rice, pasta and other staples. Then it was hand sanitizer which became the world's most valuable 'must have'. Cruise ships soon brought the first cases of Covid 19 to Australia and the dangers of international travel were being discussed.

We usually enjoy a stopover when we travel back from Australia and on this occasion we were looking forward to spending a week in Mandalay, Myanmar and seeing a friend who teaches there. This was now not a good idea. 'Phone calls to our agent were made to get tickets to fly straight home. So were lots of other Brits abroad. Our journey to Mandalay would have been via Bangkok and this had of course already been booked and paid for. So we needed a new flight from there back to the UK. After several more calls and the exchange of even more money a flight was arranged via Frankfurt.

We could now enjoy the last few days with our daughter, safe in the knowledge that we would get home before the world entered 'lockdown'. However there was a downside to our new travel plans. We would have 25 hours in Bangkok airport and 10 hours in Frankfurt. We were flying with Lufthansa. A long trawl of the internet showed that all local accommodation at Bangkok airport was fully booked. We would just have to find a bench in a quiet part of the airport.

Perth airport was very quiet. We had heard on the news of the various problems for travelers and the airlines. We were soon checked in and through security because we were the only ones there. Walking through Duty Free to our gate, it was clear that many outlets had shut up shop. I overheard a very smartly dressed assistant on the perfume counter saying to her colleague that they would perhaps both be out of a job soon. We were soon up and away for the 7 hour flight, noting that there were a number of empty seats.

Bangkok was a real contrast. It was very busy even at 10pm. Most people wore masks and we



had our temperature checked by thermal cameras. There were notices and signs everywhere giving instructions and advice related to Covid 19. Passport control was very thorough with more warnings about the virus and our health. We were then expected to press our hands on a fingerprint reader. I refused until the border guard reluctantly left his desk and cleaned it with his own sanitizer. We then had the inconvenience of collecting our luggage because Lufthansa had no reciprocal arrangements with the airport for luggage transfer.

Penny and I had a little wander around with our awkward trolley, looking for somewhere to settle and then I saw the Information Kiosk. A large illuminated sign read

'Impressive Bangkok Travel Co. Ltd.' I asked if we could stay somewhere and was surprised to be told he could take us by taxi to a hotel just 10 minutes away. The price was 1450 Thai Baht a little over £40, including breakfast. Off we went in a minibus into the hot steamy night. After ten minutes we were still travelling with no end in sight. We were getting a bit apprehensive by this time when the bus turned off the carriageway and onto a service road and eventually stopped outside our hotel. They were prepared for us and after offering us a wakeup call for breakfast in the morning we were shown to our room. It was very sparse with three single beds, tiled floor and en suite facilities, but it was clean and we both slept like logs. The following morning we joined three other couples in the dining room. Again everywhere was tiled and the chairs were noisy and there was harsh fluorescent lighting. A young girl took our breakfast order, there was no choice. She showed us a picture of two slices of toast, two cold luncheon meat slices, a strange looking sausage, a fried egg and a small helping of coleslaw. Nearly half an hour later it had arrived. The girl did have two eggs to fry. Meanwhile we helped ourselves to instant coffee and non dairy whitener.

We waited outside the hotel for our taxi. An Austrian man was on his 'phone desperately trying to get a flight to China and to his wife and family before his city was quarantined. After spending sometime in Bangkok traffic we arrived back at the airport. More fingerprints, temperature checks and the place was heaving, full of people like ourselves. We still had a ten hour wait. The Asians are well practised at pandemics and they know how to dress at such times. They all wore masks and gloves and many covered themselves with all sorts of plastic bags and sheeting. The westerners were conspicuous by their lack of protective gear. A concerned Chinese girl insisted that Penny and I each accepted a face mask. Getting rather hungry and with our breakfast still an unpleasant memory, we were tempted into a Burger King. A beefburger, fries and a bottle of beer each, came to 1300 Baht. Yes, nearly £35 and they didn't even throw in a taxi or a bed!

*Cont. page 10*

The flight from Bangkok to Frankfurt is over eleven hours, time for dinner, a good sleep and a proper German breakfast. As one of the last flights out, the aircraft was full but we were well looked after by the Lufthansa flight attendants. We arrived in Germany early the next morning. The airport was almost deserted. Dozens of aircraft were parked up around the airfield. The usual retail outlets were closed apart from a few coffee shops. It was here that we learned about social distancing, whilst we queued for passport checks and so forth. The floor was marked with tape at two metre intervals, a whole new experience. Toilets also had a quota as to how many people could enter at a time. Whilst there were so few travellers there were many cleaners wiping door handles and hand rails.



Our flight back to Manchester was delayed by two hours, and as we fastened our seat belts, a possible reason for the delay was clear. There were just thirty passengers on the aircraft. I looked out of the window as we were taxiing and as far as I could see we were the only movement on the airfield. Thankfully we were on the last leg of our journey, what could possibly go wrong now. A minor problem was that our taxi which we had rearranged to meet us at Manchester would not be coming. The driver was unwell. We hired a taxi at the airport and arrived home early Friday evening having left Perth at lunchtime on Wednesday. The following Monday the UK went into Lockdown.



**Memories of watching TV with our young families.**

Sorting through some old collections of Royal Mint Stamp issues my memories were stirred when I came across a 1996 issue of children's TV favourites. These brought back memories of my childhood and my children's infancy through the 50's to the 70's. I am sure a lot of members had the same experience.

These postage stamp packs are high quality and I used to collect frequently being good friends with our village post shop owner. The subjects and art work are first class and worthy of recognition.

Here are a few notes taken from the sleeve.

- 1) Muffin the Mule with Annette Mills (sister of Sir John). Muffin was bought by puppeteer Ann Hogarth in 1934 and was copyrighted in 1948. He was licensed by the BBC for worldwide use.
- 2) Sooty was discovered within a Blackpool North Pier toyshop in 1948 by Harry Corbett. Sweep appeared in 1957 and both are now the property of son Matthew Corbett.
- 3) With the rise of advanced marionettes in the 60's Stingray appeared as a under sea adventure, featuring Troy Tempest. He battled with arch enemy Lord Titan allegedly based on Laurence Olivier!
- 4) A firm favourite with the very young was the Clangers created by Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin. These two created a host of favourites, Bagpuss, Noggin and Basil Brush. I am sure the Clangers started a lot of interest in space travel for the tiny ones.
- 5) The world's greatest agent Dangermouse owned by Cosgrove Hall Films (1996). He became extremely popular with over 200 episodes being produced, each 30 minute episode requiring over 30,000 different paintings in cartoon form.

These productions and many others set the standard for the multitude of following children based puppets and cartoons seen today. It is acknowledged that the UK is a world leader in this form of art.

It also helped keep our children entertained throughout the years, what would we have done without them?

**Alan Barker.**



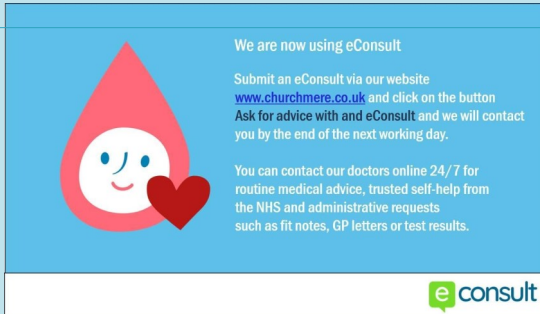
## Local information

### Message from Churchmere Medical Centre Ellesmere.

From Friday 12th June it is expected that if requesting an appointment or advice for a new problem or concern that a patient will fill in an ECONSULT online if they have internet access.

The aim is that patients will get a response from a clinician by the end of the next working day either by a telephone consultation, email, prescription or from a member of the team offering an appointment.

People who do not have internet access can still speak to one of our patient services advisors and arrange appointment but will be asked more detailed questions, in the strictest confidence, about their problem so it can be dealt with most appropriately by the right person.



Take 1 minute each day and help fight the outbreak.

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

## Coronavirus (COVID 19) Guidance & Support

Click on this link—

[https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus?utm\\_source=Members&utm\\_campaign=fdd441f999-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_06\\_08\\_03\\_15\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_206970988f-fdd441f999-348581597&mc\\_cid=fdd441f999&mc\\_eid=d02ed78b4c](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus?utm_source=Members&utm_campaign=fdd441f999-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_06_08_03_15_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_206970988f-fdd441f999-348581597&mc_cid=fdd441f999&mc_eid=d02ed78b4c)

## 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](http://www.ellesmerecovidsupportgroups.org.uk)

**Shropshire Council Helpline:** 0345 678 9028

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





## ***Pastoral Support from the Churches in Ellesmere***

### **Rev'd Pat Hawkins St Mary's Church**

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

St Mary's Ellesmere: follow Church of England

Services are streamed online [https://](https://www.churchofengland.org/)

[www.churchofengland.org/](https://www.churchofengland.org/)



### **Pastor Phil Wright 'The Cellar Church'.**

[07711 986694](tel:07711986694) email: [pastor.phil@me.com](mailto: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](mailto: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)



# Local Businesses providing Services - updated 02nd July, these services can change anytime.

Many thanks must go to Ismay and Nicki Stokes members of Ellesmere Chamber of trade for compiling this list each week.



Ellesmere Takeaways	Opening Hours	Home Delivery
<i>(in alphabetical order)</i> Updated 22 June 2020 (Subject to change)		
<b>Asian Spices</b> Tel 01691 623689 Delivery 6.00pm - 9.00pm every day (except Monday). After 9.00pm collection only.	Friday & Saturday 5.00pm- 10.30pm Tues, Wed, Thurs & Sunday 5.00pm - 10.00pm. Closed Monday.	YES
<b>Black Lion Hotel</b> Tel 01691 623999	Real Ales and Lager Takeaways Wed & Thurs 4.30pm - 6.30pm Fri, Sat & Sun 4.00pm - 6.30pm	YES
<b>Cherry Tree Cafe</b> Tel 01691 624400	Thursday, Friday & Saturday 9.00am - 2.00pm Sunday 10.00am - 2.00pm. Takeaway only. Telephone orders recommended. Updates on Facebook	NO
<b>Coco Coffee Bar</b> Tel 01691 623000	Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri & Sat 9.00am - 2.30pm	
<b>Comrades Club</b> Tel 01691 622419 & 07871 733375	Order Sunday Lunch by Friday. Ring any day between 9.00am & 5.00pm	YES
<b>Carol</b> Chinese and English Food to Take Away Tel 01691 622853	Sunday & Monday 9.00pm - 9.00pm Thursday 4.00pm - 9.00pm Friday & Saturday 4.00pm - 10.00pm	
<b>Ellesmere Kebab House</b> Tel 01691 624638	Tuesday - Sunday 4.30pm - 9.30pm Closed Monday	YES
<b>Meze Greek Restaurant</b> Tel 01691 622660 & Facebook	Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday Order by phone 9.00am - 8.30pm. Collect 4.30pm - 8.30pm	YES
<b>More than a Sundae</b> Tel 07711 986694	Takeaway Ice Cream and Waffle Shop Friday and Saturday, 11.00am - 3.00pm	
<b>New Wan Loy</b> Tel 01691 623479	Tuesday - Sunday 4.45pm - 10.45pm Ring to check times.	
<b>Pete's Sandwich Bar</b> Tel 01691 623414	Monday - Saturday 8.00am - 2.00pm Takeaway only. Details on Facebook. Please telephone to place an order.	
<b>Shropshire Fish Bar</b> Tel 01691 624287	Open every day 11.30am - 10.00pm	
<b>Thai Gate Restaurant</b> Tel 01691 239478 5 High Street, Ellesmere www.thaigate.co.uk/order-online	Tuesday - Saturday 12 noon - 9.00pm Sunday 12 noon - 8.00pm Closed Monday. Takeaway available. Collection only.	Delivery coming soon

Ellesmere Takeaways	Opening Hours	Home Delivery
<i>(in alphabetical order)</i> Updated 22 June 2020 (Subject to change)		
<b>The Red Lion Coaching Inn</b> Tel 01691 623632 & 07854 191238	Friday and Saturday. Order by phone 9.00pm - 8.30pm. Closed Sunday.	YES
<b>Pete's Meals on Wheels on Temporary loan to The Red Lion</b> Tel 01691 622632 Ring with any queries regarding meals and to place your order.	Order: Mon - Fri 10.00am - 12 noon Orders delivered to your door 11.30 - 12.30 Monday to Friday.	YES

Ellesmere Businesses CONTACT by telephone, email or Facebook ONLY.	
<i>(in alphabetical order)</i> Updated 22 June 2020 (Subject to change)	
<b>A Mere Cycle Hire and Sales</b> Tel 07988 842038 Email amercycle@gmail.com	Working mobile until NEW shop opens in August. More details on Facebook. Monday - Saturday 9.30am - 5.00pm
<b>Concept Town Planning</b> Tel 07890 428918 mail@concepttownplanning.com	Office hours Tues & Thurs 10.00am - 4.00pm Available all other times Monday - Friday 8.30am - 6.00pm via email or mobile.
<b>Gough-Thomas &amp; Scott, Solicitors</b> Tel 01691 622413 Email ellesmere@tgsolicitors.co.uk	GTS are still open for business however to protect both staff and clients they are not allowing visitors to the office. GTS can still be contacted by telephone or email.
<b>J A Milton Upholstery Supplies</b> www.jamilton.com	Online and telephone orders Open Monday - Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm
<b>Lily the Pink, Florist</b> Contact via Facebook	Contact to place an order. Delivery only.
<b>Morris Cook, Chartered Accountant</b> Tel 01691 622098 Email megan@morriscook.co.uk	Open most weekdays Email or telephone if you need to bring anything into the office. Letter box on Watergate Street.
<b>Ortho-Bionomy UK</b> Tel 07377 315865 Email dr.anna.hayes@outlook.com www.ortho-bionomy-uk.com or via Facebook	Open Monday - Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm Self-care packages tailored to cover your individual pain requirements. Contact Anna by email or telephone.
<b>Princes LHS Ltd</b> <b>The Rennet Works, Market Street</b> Tel 01691 624336	Still operating during the lockdown and providing essential plumbing, heating, electrical and renewable energy services.
<b>Pure Beauty</b> www.tropicskincare.com/helenhole	Shop online for Tropic products.
<b>Sanchi Jewellers</b> Tel 01691 622282 or via Facebook	For any purchases, leave a message by phone or Facebook. Payment made via card over the phone. We will be post free of charge any item chosen.
<b>Susan Haskey, Chiroprapist</b> Tel 07974 091984	Open as usual, Mondays and Fridays

Ellesmere Businesses - Food Shops.	Opening Hours	Home Delivery
<i>(in alphabetical order)</i> Updated 22 June 2020 (Subject to change)		
<b>Co-op</b> Vulnerable workers, NHS & key workers	Open every day, 6.00am - 10.00pm 8.00am - 9.00am (Sunday 10.00am - 11.00am)	
<b>Ellesmere Newsagents</b> Tel 01691 622498 Delivery of newspapers and provisions inc bread, alcohol, tinned, frozen & chilled food, pet food, tea, coffee, biscuits, toiletries and cleaning products	Monday - Friday 5.00am - 5.30pm Saturday 5.00am - 5.00pm Sunday 6.00am - 11.00am	YES
<b>Hawkins Butchers</b> Tel 01691 622329 Welcome to ring ahead to place your order or for any enquiries.	Monday - Saturday 8.00am - 3.30pm. Local delivery services to those self-isolating.	YES
<b>Moolah - Local Food</b> Tel 01691 623532 Homemade ready meals - mains & puddings (inc freezer-ready). Savoury and sweet delights. Fresh veg, meat and dairy. Pizzas. Teas & coffees.	Open every day, 9.00am - 6.00pm Deliveries undertaken within Ellesmere and to outlying villages during the Covid-19 lockdown.	YES
<b>Stokes of Ellesmere Sausages &amp; Pork Pies</b> Tel 07814 889421	Local delivery service. Ring to place order. Ellesmere Market on Tuesday 16 June 2020.	YES
<b>Sweetmere Sweet Shop</b> Tel 07896 881242 or Facebook	Tuesday, Friday & Saturday 10.00am - 3.00pm Contact to place an order for delivery.	YES
<b>Tesco</b>	Monday - Saturday 7.00am - 10.00pm, Sunday 10.00am - 4.00pm	ONLINE ORDERS
<b>Elderly and Vulnerable Priority time:</b> <b>NHS Workers Priority Time</b>	Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9.00am - 10.00am Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday 9.00am - 10.00am	
<b>Vermeulens</b> Tel 01691 622521 Bakery (bread, baps, rolls etc), cakes, hampers, cold meats and speciality pies. Delicatessen. Sandwiches.	Monday - Saturday 7.00am - 4.00pm. Orders delivered 10.00am - 12 noon to those self-isolating. Order anytime.	YES
<b>Pet Shop including pet/animal feed</b>		
<b>Pets Pantry</b> Tel 01691 624492	Monday - Saturday 9.00am - 3.00pm.	YES

Ellesmere Businesses	Opening Hours
<b>Rightways</b>	Monday - Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm
<b>Shampoochies Dog Spa</b> Tel 01691 238288	Monday - Friday 9.00am - 4.00pm Saturday 9.00am - 1.00pm
<b>The Ellesmere Pharmacy</b> Tel 01691 623118	Monday - Friday 9.00am - 6.00pm Saturday 9.00am - 5.00pm
<b>The Washing Well Launderette</b>	Open every day, 7.00am - 9.00pm
<b>TG Builders Merchants</b> Tel 01691 622540	Monday to Friday 7.00am - 4.30pm & Saturday 8.00am - 12 noon
<b>TSB Bank</b>	Monday - Friday 10.00am - 12.30pm. 1.30pm - 4.00pm  <b>TSB Customers:</b> If you have no mobile phone or internet banking please call the branch on 01691 594999 and the TSB will make a one-off payment for you.  <b>TSB Customers</b> can be issued with a cheque book if required. Also: any TSB customer who is self isolating and needs to withdraw money please contact the TSB on 01691 594999.

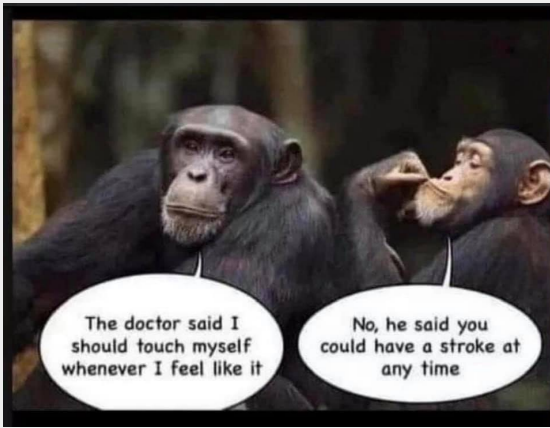
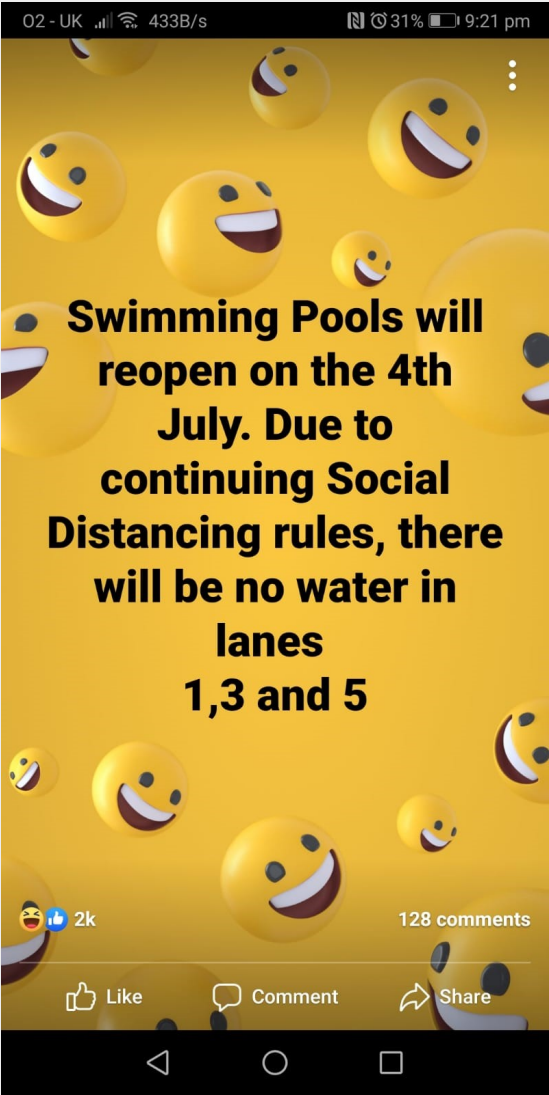
Gas and Electricity Cards
<b>The Ellesmere Newsagents</b> (01691 622498) can top-up cards - they will take a cheque or, if you have an account with them, they will add the amount to your account.
<b>Mandy @ the Co-op</b> (07971 250311) sell top-up cards.
<b>The Ellesmere Post Office</b> sell Gas & Electricity cards over the counter.
<b>Mere Motors</b> 01691 622343 Offers all Paypoint facilities - Gas, Electric, Bill Payments, Phone Top Ups, Parcel Point (NB not British Gas)

For up to date information please check the Ellesmere Covid 19 website

[www.ellesmerecovid19supportgroups.org.uk](http://www.ellesmerecovid19supportgroups.org.uk)



*A few funnies to entertain you*



Quiz answers.

1. Nine, 2. Anode, 3. Butterfly, 4. Victoria, 5. Six, 6. "The Revenant", 7. Doe, 8. Hands, 9. Elton John, 10. Jason Bateman, 11. Ten, 12. LXXVII, 13. Cecilia, 14. Flock together, 15. The Taming of the Shrew, 16. True Blue, 17. The brain, 18. Hummingbird, 19. Eric Clapton, 20. Italy