



## NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

Inaugurated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1977

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March 2020

## April Onwards

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April**  
Spring Lunch (see panel)

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April AGM**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May**  
Day trip to the National  
Arboretum

Since Youngsters of Today have their Texting Codes (LOL, OMG, TTYL, etc.) the Oldies decided not to be outdone by these kids, and now have developed our own codes too :

ATD - At the Doctor's  
BFF - Best Friend's Funeral  
BTW - Bring the Wheelchair  
BYOT - Bring your own teeth  
FWIW - Forgot Where I Was  
GGPBL - Gotta Go, Pacemaker  
Battery Low  
GHA - Got Heartburn Again  
TFT - Texting From Toilet.

Never Underestimate us,  
we still rock

## March Diary

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March** *Pub Lunch at Weston Cross, Weston Under Penyard, 1230*

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March** *An Engineering Icon in Gloucester* – Roger Beard



Roger will give an illustrated talk on Fielding and Platt Ltd. 1866 to 2003. Fielding & Platt was a firm of hydraulic engineers who were an important part of the manufacturing sector in Gloucester until the 1990s. The firm exploited the portable hydraulic riveting technology of Ralph Hart Tweddell to build a business that exported hydraulic machinery worldwide.

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March** *The Cuban Crisis* – David Head



This presentation, with Video, covers the roles, experiences and functions of the RAF "V" force (Vulcan, Victor & Valiant aircraft) during the Cold War period.

**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March** "The Habit of Art" at the Everyman Theatre

## **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April**

### **Spring Lunch at the Penyard House Hotel, Ross on Wye £27pp**

Potted Scottish Smoked salmon, cream cheese dill & lemon, sesame & rye bread

Slow roasted tomato, basil & mozzarella soup, with warm bread roll  
Goats cheese, beetroot salad with caramelized walnuts & fig balsamic dressing

.....  
Lamb rump marinated in garlic & thyme, grain mustard mashed potatoes, seasonal greens, pearl onion & redcurrant jus

Grilled fillet of sea bass, tarragon cream sauce with kale & gnocchi  
Chargrilled Persian spiced peppers & aubergine, date and almond cous cous, chickpea & pomegranate dressing

.....  
Vanilla panacotta, forest fruit berries  
Chocolate & pistachio brownie, sea salted caramel ice cream  
Local & continental cheeses, biscuits, chutney & grapes

### **Bookings to Mike: payments to Jim**



**Member of the Month:**  
**David Clowes**

(an occasional feature for newer members)

Trips Organiser David has already arranged several interesting and successful outings, including one to his other workplace the Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway. He has a keen eye for detail, costs and practicability, ensuring that even members with potential access problems need not be put off joining the group. We also benefit from his understandably obsessive interest in traffic lights and other road management schemes in distant parts of the country.



The mysteries of motorway rebuilding around Birmingham should hold endless fascination for him on the way to Staffordshire, and an opportunity for occasional naps for the rest of us.

**National Memorial Arboretum**  
**Thursday 21 May**

**Estimated Cost £25.00 to include**

- Coach Trip from Newent, leave at 9.00/9.30 return by 17.00
- 50 min Trip on Land Train to see the whole site on arrival
- Exhibitions which change regularly

The entrance to the Arboretum is free and covers a large site (over 150 acres) with lots to see including memorials to many service and emergency personnel. Check for yourself on [www.thenma.org.uk](http://www.thenma.org.uk)

Daily Activities include talks and short memorial services in the chapel

***Restaurants available on site***  
***No need to book***  
***(or take your own picnic)***

**Wise Words**

It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffee maker.

These days about half the stuff in my shopping trolley says, 'For fast relief.'

**Blind Introspective**

Paul Holiman came to Probus to talk about himself. Educated at Worcester Grammar School and Imperial College London where he obtained a degree in Maths, he now works full time for GCHQ in Cheltenham doing "something relevant to his skills in IT", which occasionally takes him abroad to technology conferences. In his spare time he plays the piano and sings with two Gloucestershire choirs.

So far, so impressive. But Paul has been blind since birth, and in his closing remarks Chairman Tony called this talk both an inspiration and a revelation – because it quite simply was. Paul had supportive parents who encouraged him to make the most of his potential, although typically for the time he was sent to a Sunshine Home with similar children at the age of three. This wasn't ideal because the institutions mixed potentially talented youngsters with those who might have other disabilities and learning difficulties – "mixed ability".

The talk was informal and at Paul's request there were frequent questions and interruptions. Nothing was off limits and there was a lot of laughter. He spent a lot of time demonstrating the way he can now use computer software like Excel with the addition of voice control – a result of Steve Jobs' early insistence that Apple products should be accessible to all, and that includes the blind. He uses a standard keyboard, although uses braille as well as voice apps that can convert web text into speech. Technology, he insisted, has changed the lives and futures of people like him, whether it is devices like Alexa, talking microwaves, modified oven controls or a new app called "Be My Eyes" which allows him, if he is alone and drops something, to link up with someone, anywhere in the world, who can tell him where it is over their smartphones. This is all to say nothing of voiced mapping and GPS, ordering from supermarkets online, reading menus in restaurants and so on. Some of us struggle with this stuff without being blind at the same time.

Over his lifetime Paul has had four Guide Dogs; his last one died of a cancer while still working for him. He now manages without because he has found with his busy lifestyle he could not any longer give a dog the care and attention it needs. He expressed huge sympathy for those people – the majority in fact – who lose their sight rather than being blind from birth, and suggested that in a weird way he has it easier.

*Cont.....*

.....cont

He was once asked (not at this genteel gathering!) what it was like making love when you're blind. His reply? "If you have to look, you've got a problem." Paul is clearly someone who enjoys a very full life – and sees problems as opportunities. The conversations with him carried on in the King's Arms over some decent beers. He's an inspiration to us all, that none the less made us glad of our own eyesight.

*Ed* (rtd GD BBH)

(If any member can identify what those letters mean – they're not academic qualifications! – I'll buy him a drink)

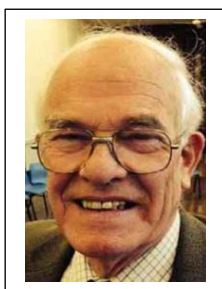
## **Peter Attenborough 1938-2020**

Former headmaster at  
Charterhouse Public School

Peter joined Newent Probus in 2008

Chairman of Newent Probus 2013 – 2014

*(Peter "downsized" and moved to Ledbury 2018)*



I first met Peter about 25 years ago when Ursula and I moved to Linton. At that time, Peter was a member of the Linton Village Hall Management Committee, an active member of St Mary's Church Linton, School Governor Haberdashers Monmouth and advisor to the Rank Foundation.

Peter's interests were many and varied but what came through, whilst getting to know him, was his ability as a teacher. His classical education and progression through the profession to headmaster at Charterhouse School was evidence of that. He had lasting friendships with past colleagues and students that endured.

We were to work together on several committees in varying roles and Peter's capacity for detail and willingness to find solutions and harmony in times of stress was invaluable and would lead to successful outcomes.

Peter joined Newent Probus Club in April 2008 and was Chairman in the year 2013/14. Peter and Sandy relocated home to Ledbury in 2018 and Peter moved to the Ledbury Probus Club that year.

The great strength and tireless supporter in Peter's life, who was able to offer him open and frank advice when needed, was his dear and loving wife Sandy.

*Jim Stewart*

Peter Attenborough was educated at Christ's Hospital and read Classics at Cambridge. He spent his career in education teaching at Uppingham, where he became Head of Classics and a Housemaster before becoming Headmaster of Sedbergh, from where he went to become Headmaster of Charterhouse. He took early retirement at the age of 55 and then worked for the Rank Foundation for 14 years in retirement, which he gave up at the age of 69.

He was a man of considerable academic ability who had also a great deal of common sense as well as a natural sense of empathy for other human beings. His genuine concern for others meant he took excellent pastoral care of those in his charge. Linton, the village in which he spent almost his entire retirement, benefitted from these qualities in the unending generosity with which he devoted himself to almost aspects of village life be it as Church Warden, as Archivist of the History Society or by joining in mundane tasks such as washing up the breakfast dishes at the Linton Festival. He was a great human being who will be much missed.

*Ernst Zillikens (Churchwarden, Linton Parish Church)*

A Celebration of Life" for Peter will be on **Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30pm at St Michael's Church Ledbury** followed by light refreshments at Verzon House.

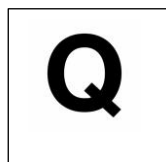
The family have requested no flowers, but if you would like to make a donation, Peter chose Christ's Hospital Horsham where he went to school.

### **Miscellany**

At the meeting on February 25<sup>th</sup> a minute's silence was held in memory of Peter Attenborough.

The Treasurer gave a detailed heads-up on the Club's financial situation and urged members to look in detail at the figures on the website. If agreed at the next AGM, subs in the coming year will remain the same, but there are difficult decisions to be made because of the potential shortfall of around £600.

The Social Secretary (AKA posh lunch planner Mike) urged rapid sign-up to the Spring Lunch, and explained the success of the "difficult treasurer routine" in securing the club's booking.



"Google can bring you back 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one."

*Neil Gaiman*

## Chartists of Snig's End

Alex Bailey, a long-term resident of Snig's End, unfolded the history of this Chartist settlement, the fourth of five to be built in England between 1845 and 1851 to provide self-sufficient smallholdings. Alex explained the background to this short-lived development that remains today as a conservation area including listed buildings. He also exposed the dreams and delusions of the founder, Irish Royalty and champion of the English working class.

Fergus O'Connor, Lawyer, ex. MP for Cork claimed to be a descendant of an Irish King. He moved to London and met leading Chartist William Lovett. O'Connor founded the Northern Star Newspaper in 1836 (circulation 10,000) promoting the Chartist cause for electoral reform., the same year the London Working Men's Association was founded, later to submit to parliament 3 petitions supporting THE CHARTER of Electoral Reform. O'Connor founded The National Land Co. offering shares at 26 shillings each [2017 value £100]. The Company had no legal standing so with the backing of Wm. Prowting Roberts, attorney General of the Chartists, the company became viable if unsustainable, promising land with a dwelling for a "trifling amount". The price, two shares, akin to buying Premium Bonds to become a millionaire.



Fergus O'Connor

The ownership of land and buildings was not defined. Occupiers not paying the £5 per annum charge could be evicted. By 1852 only 16 of original plots remained

occupied by the original tenants. A Parliamentary Select committee was established resulting in a Winding Up Act being passed, declaring the National Land Company illegal. O'Connor was jailed for 18 months for seditious libel: his dream became a nightmare.

Snig's End is situated between Staunton and Corse. It comprises 82 single storey cottages and a school house, laid out in formal grids and crescents set back from the road, each with a large plot of land of either 2 or 4 acres to encourage self-sufficiency. However, the land was poor heavy clay, not horticultural quality. The cottages are uniform in layout, 3 rooms each 12 feet square: the central kitchen with a living room one side and bedroom the other each with a fireplace; outbuildings to the rear with an enclosed courtyard for livestock. The main elevation to the road is symmetrical, slate pitched roof gables both ends with chimneys plus central stack. The projecting central gabled bay has a trefoil vent above entrance door,

flanked both sides by bays with casement windows Alex concluded his talk illustrating the styles and layout of original cottages preserved for posterity, others sympathetically restored, many extended at the rear, to bizarre two storey glazed abominations.

The talk left us thankful that Planning Law now protects this unique example of Chartist Settlement and that the movement never succeeded in its demand for annual elections.

Our thanks to Alex Bailey for his well informed and most entertaining talk.

Ray McCairn

## Transatlantic View (an American's view of Britain)

- \* The water controls in showers need detailed instructions.
- \* They can boil anything.
- \* Folks don't always lock their bikes.
- \* It's not unusual to see people dressed differently and speaking different languages.
- \* Nearly everyone is better educated than we are.
- \* If someone buys you a drink you must do the same.
- \* Look right, walk left. Again; look right, walk left. You're welcome.
- \* Avoid British wine and French beer.
- \* It's not that hard to eat with the fork in your left hand with a little practice. If you don't, everyone knows you're an American.
- \* Many of the roads are the size of our sidewalks.
- \* There's no AC.
- \* Instead of turning the heat up, you put on a jumper.
- \* You don't have to tip, really!
- \* There are no guns.
- \* Scotland, Wales, Ireland and Cornwall really are different countries.
- \* Walking is the national pastime.
- \* Their TV looks and sounds much better than ours.
- \* They took the street signs down during WWII, but haven't put them all back up yet.
- \* Everyone enjoys a good joke.

