



## NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

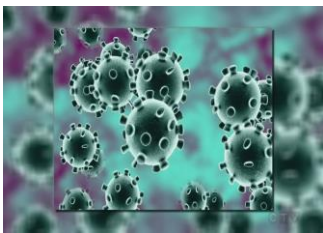
Inaugurated 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1977

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

**April 2020**

**Guaranteed virus-free  
(except for pages 1, 2, 3, 4 and  
5)**

## May Onwards



**Alas, who knows?**



**Quote of the year:**

**"We're all going to die  
anyway" – Michael  
Keene (10/03/20)**

**Special virus-free  
Newsletter  
edition  
(but wash your hands just  
in case)**

## April Diary

**All club meetings and other activities are on hold until  
further notice**

## Miscellany

During the club's enforced shutdown, the committee has not been inactive, thanks to modern communications technology. Every member should be contacted at least twice a month by a designated committee member to see if they and theirs are well, and whether help is needed in any way that can be practically provided.

As a separate issue, members will shortly receive by email an important questionnaire regarding the future of the club and its activities. This will be self-explanatory. It is self evident that membership is declining, and not only for the obvious reason, and feedback to the questionnaire will inform the committee's thinking on how to proceed once the health crisis is over. It really is important that every member returns this questionnaire, and expect a bit of polite nagging if at first you don't!

Chairman Tony has sent an important email to all regarding subscriptions, which will not be repeated here, but please can members respond as soon as possible even though the club is likely not to be functioning for anything up to six months.

## Fielding and Platt

Roger Beard gave us a very interesting talk and illustration on Fielding and Platt, where he worked as managing director until its closure in 2003.

**Fielding & Platt** (founded October 1866) was a firm of hydraulic engineers, an engineering icon that was an important part of the manufacturing sector in Gloucester until 2003. It had a global reputation exporting their products worldwide, with manufacturing in the USA and India. Two Lancashire men, Samuel Fielding and James Platt, started the Company.

In 1871 the engineer Ralph Tweddell approached the firm to manufacture his portable hydraulic riveter and it was the firm's exploitation of the *Tweddell System* that enabled them to become pre-eminent in the field of portable hydraulic riveting. The firm exploited the portable hydraulic riveting technology to build a business that exported hydraulic machinery. The first orders were for small engineering machines but the firm quickly expanded into bigger items.

In 1880 they built a bridge across the Severn at Gloucester Docks, adjacent to the North Warehouse near to Gloucester Prison, which was not replaced until 1962.

Hubert Cecil Booth was the inventor of the vacuum cleaner. The prototype of the machine was made by Fielding and Platt, one of the first buildings to be cleaned gaining the royal seal of approval, Booth's motorized vacuum cleaner was used to clean the carpets of [Westminster Abbey](#) prior to...Cont

Cont.....

[Edward VII's](#) Coronation in 1901. An internal combustion engine drove it.



**Factory layout prior to demolition**

In the heyday of the Company it employed several hundred people and had electrical and mechanical engineering departments, with a brass and iron foundry on site. There were 100 and 20-ton cranes in operation with radio control.

Apprentices made scale models that were sent to exhibitions. This was good training for the apprentices. If the models were out of tolerance they were put into a wagon / carriage next door, which was part of The Gloucester Railway and Wagon Works.

Many hydraulic presses were developed for different types of applications. Cold steel produced gas cylinders, fire extenuators and canons used by The Royal Artillery. They developed superplastic forming process and diffusion bonding of titanium blades used in Rolls Royce jet engines. Titanium used as a heat deflector on aircraft jet engines and on SPF canard wings on the Typhoon Eurofighter. A hydraulic press for producing paving slabs was developed and the products could be seen at the Gloucester Technical College, now demolished. A forging press went into production, to which the Company had many enquires from around the world to see if it could forge money!

The site where Fielding and Platt operated was demolished in 2003 and is now where the Gloucester Quays are situated.

Roger then took several questions about the Company and different processes used.

*Mike Townsend*

**Q**

A stockbroker is someone who invests all your money until it's gone. - Woody Allen

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

- \* Everyone knows more about our history than we do.
- \* Radio is still a big deal. The BBC is quite good.
- \* The newspapers can be awful.
- \* Everything costs the same but our money is worth less so you have to add 50% to the price to figure what you're paying.
- \* Beer comes in large, completely filled, actual pint glasses and the closer the brewery the better the beer.
- \* Butter and eggs aren't refrigerated.
- \* Cider (alcoholic) is quite good.
- \* Excess cider consumption can be very painful.
- \* The universal greeting is "Cheers" (pronounced "cheeahz" unless you are from Cornwall, then it's "chairz")
- \* Their cash makes ours look like Monopoly money.
- \* Cars don't have bumper stickers.
- \* Many doorknobs, buildings and tools are older than America.
- \* When the sign says something was built in 456, they didn't lose the "1".



**Beware super carriers**

*Rtd GDBBH?*

*Retired Guide Dogs Brood Bitch Holder (all drinks are off)*

**As we won't be able to wish our Birthday  
Boys our good wishes**

**Fraser thought we could do it this way**



**Tony Pearson 23 March**

**Jim Stewart 26 March**

(Jim is to be inducted into the ancient order of  
**Octogenarians**)

**Fred Passant 31 March**

### **Peter Attenborough Memorial Service**

The great and the good packed Ledbury Church on 4<sup>th</sup> March to celebrate and remember the life of Peter Attenborough. The many facets and associations of Peter's life were all represented somewhere in the 275 people who attended, among them a strong contingent from Newent Probus led by Chairman Tony.

No-one will be in the least surprised that Peter had prepared every aspect of the service, and had left instructions that the well-loved hymns he had chosen were to be sung with gusto – an injunction which the congregation obeyed to some purpose.

The warmth of the personal recollections of Peter's son James, and the breadth of the life of service laid out in his eulogy by Graham Jones, testified to the high regard in which Peter was held. Many who attended remarked afterwards that the service perfectly reflected the man as we knew him.

*Jonquil Dodd*

### **Grim fairy tale**

A married couple in their early 60s were out celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary in a quiet, romantic little restaurant.

Suddenly, a tiny yet beautiful fairy appeared on their table and said, "For being such an exemplary married couple and for being faithful to each other for all this time, I will grant you each a wish."

"Ooh, I want to travel around the world with my darling husband," said the wife.

The fairy moved her magic wand and – Abracadabra! – two tickets for the new QM2 luxury liner appeared in her hands.

Now it was the husband's turn. He thought for a moment and said: "Well, this is all very romantic, but an opportunity like this only occurs once in a lifetime, so, I'm sorry my love, but my wish is to have a wife 30 years younger than me".

The wife and the fairy were deeply disappointed, but a wish is a wish...

So the fairy made a circle with her magic wand and - Abracadabra!

The husband was now 92 years old.

*The moral of this story: Men are ungrateful idiots, Fairies are female!*

### **Retirement, a wife's view**

A frustrated wife told me the other day her definition of retirement:

"Twice as much husband on half as much pay."

### **Favourite colour**

A couple were sat on a park bench when the man said, "How are you feeling?"

She replied "I'm fine"

He then said "What's your favourite colour?"

She replied, "Oh, please stop asking stupid questions. Ask me something logical and mature.

He then said:" How many molecules of Sodium bicarbonate are needed to neutralise 0.8 ml of Sulphuric Acid at Standard Temperature and Pressure?"

There was a long pause and she replied "**My favourite colour is Pink.**"



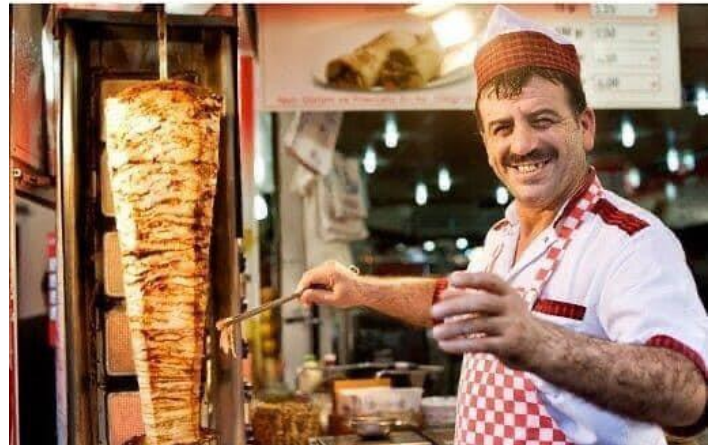
# Coronavirus Special Supplement

(not for those of a nervous  
disposition)

## R4 Weather Report

Morrison's 06.30 am cyclonic. Tesco's, good, occasionally busy later. Sainsburys, moderate to good, sale on Corn Flakes. Asda, slight to moderate, heavy crowds by evening. Marks and Spencer's and Co-Op, fair. Waitrose fair to moderate, spillage in aisle 7. Lidl, rough at first, moderate later. Poundland, lows from west  
Boots 4 to 5 veering north -lows  
Viking Ikea.  
Spec savers low visibility.  
And that's the end of the Shopping Forecast.

ВСЕМ, КТО ЖАЛУЕТСЯ НА ТО, ЧТО ВКУС ШАУРМЫ  
ИЗМЕНИЛСЯ: ЭТО ПОТОМУ, ЧТО РАБОТНИКИ ТЕПЕРЬ  
МОЮТ РУКИ. ПРОСЬБА ОТНЕСТИСЬ С ПОНИМАНИЕМ,  
СКОРО ВСЁ ВЕРНЕТСЯ НА СВОИ МЕСТА



*"We apologise to all those who have recently complained that the taste of the Shish Kebab has changed. This is because the staff are now washing their hands. Please show some understanding. We assure you that everything will soon return to its normal place."*



I have heard it on the TV news and watched  
the video  
That the Covid-19 virus will be beaten when  
we show  
Solidarity in washing hands while singing loudly,  
so  
Some soap will save us all.

We are queuing up for basins in a thousand  
public loos,  
Harmonising with the gushing taps in any song  
we choose  
In a measured twenty-seconds (some sing opera,  
some the blues)  
While soap will save us all.

No more handshakes, hugs or kisses now, a simple  
soapy-grope  
Is the only weapon left and so, from Dawkins to  
the Pope,  
We will wash and slosh while singing in the true  
and certain hope  
That soap will save us all.

Soap and scrub for twenty seconds,  
Sing aloud for twenty seconds,  
Save the world in twenty seconds,  
Our soap will save us all.

*(To be sung lustily to the tune of the Battle Hymn  
of the Republic)*

"Men marry women with the hope they will never change. Women marry men with the hope they will change. Invariably they are both disappointed."

A frustrated wife told me the other day her definition of retirement: "Twice as much husband on half as much pay."

## **Special Report: Corona Virus Worldwide**

The English are feeling the pinch in relation to the virus threat and have therefore raised their security level from “Miffed” to “Peeved.” Soon, though, security levels may be raised yet again to “Irritated” or even “A Bit Cross.” The English have not been “A Bit Cross” since the blitz in 1940 when tea supplies nearly ran out. Terrorists have been re-categorized from “Tiresome” to “A Bloody Nuisance.” The last time the British issued a “Bloody Nuisance” warning level was in 1588, when threatened by the Spanish Armada.

The Scots have raised their threat level from “Pissed Off” to “Let’s get the Bastards.” They don’t have any other levels. This is the reason they have been used on the front line of the British army for the last 300 years.

The French government announced yesterday that it has raised its terror alert level from “Run” to “Hide.” The only two higher levels in France are “Collaborate” and “Surrender.” The raise was precipitated by a recent fire that destroyed France’s white flag factory, effectively paralyzing the country’s military capability.

Italy has increased the alert level from “Shout Loudly and Excitedly” to “Elaborate Military Posturing.” Two more levels remain: “Ineffective Combat Operations” and “Change Sides.”

The Germans have increased their alert state from “Disdainful Arrogance” to “Dress in Uniform and Sing Marching Songs.” They also have two higher levels: “Invade a Neighbour” and “Lose.”

Belgians, on the other hand, are all on holiday as usual; the only threat they are worried about is NATO pulling out of Brussels .

The Spanish are all excited to see their new submarines ready to deploy. These beautifully designed subs have glass bottoms so the new Spanish navy can get a really good look at the old Spanish navy.

Australia, meanwhile, has raised its security level from “No worries” to “She’ll be alright, Mate.” Two more escalation levels remain: “Crikey! I think we’ll need to cancel the barbie this weekend!” and “The barbie is cancelled.” So far, no situation has ever warranted use of the last escalation level.

***A final thought – Greece is collapsing, the Iranians are getting aggressive, and Rome is in disarray. Welcome back to 430 B.C.***

*“Crikey. Normal times, remember them?”*

*If we try to find a positive, this virus has reminded us of the important things in life.*

*It has taught us how vulnerable we are.*

*How to not take anything for granted.*

*It has taught us how everybody and everything is connected to each other.*

*And how much we all need each other.*

*It is acting like one giant pause button, and getting us to reflect on our collective treadmills.*

*There will be good to come out of tough times.*

*It might not always feel like it, but we are hard-wired to help each other.*

*Communities will come together. Amazing people will work out how to help others.*

*The human spirit will shine through.*

*Stay safe.*

*Now go wash your hands.”*