

## NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

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

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2021

October

12<sup>th</sup>

What's in a Place  
Name – Lee Hines

26<sup>th</sup>

Are we alone in the  
universe?

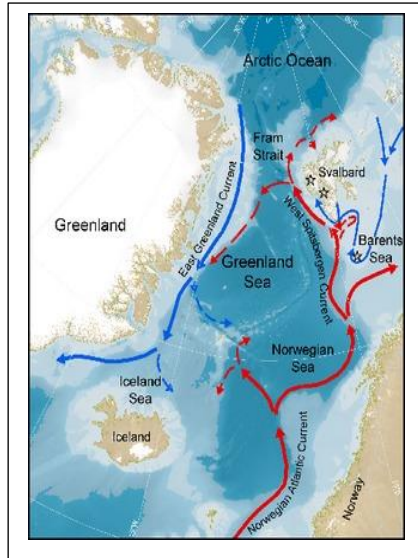
David Terry



When dog groomers go into  
lockdown, and customers are  
left to their own devices



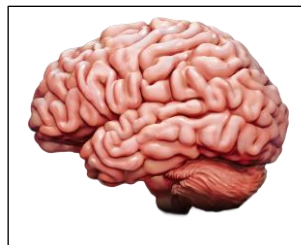
## September Diary



### 14<sup>th</sup> World Water Movement – How and Why Water Moves – Nick Humphris

Chris is a retired chartered engineer having had a varied career in industry, academia and the scientific civil service with the Admiralty. He has also sailed the coasts of Europe! In this talk he will show how the atmosphere works and its effect on ocean currents. In addition he shows where the sources of the water that flows at the bottom of the oceans in layers come from.

*This talk is over Zoom*



### 28<sup>th</sup> Busting Brain Myths – My 5 Top Peeves – Dr Katy Bellamy

Katy is a cognitive neuroscientist and gained her PhD from Edinburgh, having grown up playing with Meccano sets rather than dolls and wanting to be an astronaut. There are certain myths about the brain that still persist today. She explores the top five myths that annoy her most.

Katy welcomes audience participation and questions during her talks.

*At Gorsley Village Hall(yay!!!)*

## Miscellany

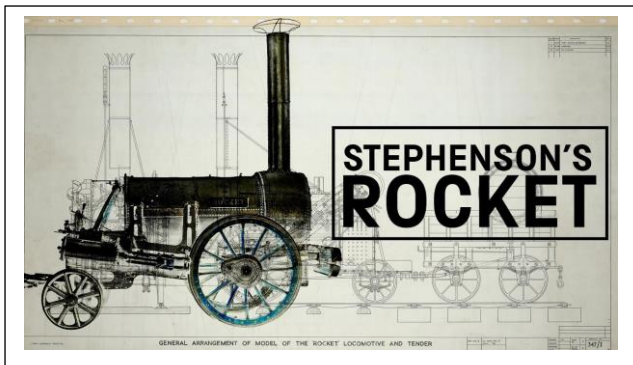
The first live meeting at Gorsley Village Hall is still scheduled for September 28<sup>th</sup>. Members not willing to attend in person should be able to join in via Zoom.

This year's Christmas Lunch is at Speech House in the Forest of Dean on December 14<sup>th</sup>. £32.50 per head for three courses, including gratuities, coffee and a reasonable amount of drink. See the separate advertisement and book as soon as possible.

Jim Stewart has retired as Treasurer after a number of years, and is passing on the baton to Mike Warburton once any possible glitches between MACS and PCs have been ironed out. The Chairman thanked Jim for the many hours of tireless and selfless work he has put in to manage the finances and retain a healthy balance.

### Zoom etiquette

This will hopefully not be an issue for much longer, but if the group has been muted, and you unmute yourself in order to say something, **please re-mute yourself!** That way we don't have extraneous barks, coughs, comments or general invective which may be coming from other parts of your home, not just from you! Ed has fallen foul of this himself, and was duly mortified.



Barry Dent navigated us through the complex history of the early days of the railways and the part played by George Stephenson.

George Stephenson (1781 - 1848) was born in Wylam, Northumberland. His father was the fireman for the Wylam Colliery pumping engine. At 17, he became an engineman at Water Row Pit, Newburn, and realizing the value of education went to night school to learn reading, writing and arithmetic. In 1801 he began work at Black Callerton colliery as a 'brakesman', controlling the winding gear of the pit.

In 1802, he married, in 1803 their son Robert was born, and in 1804 they moved to West Moor, where George worked as a brakesman at Killingworth pit. In 1811, he successfully repaired the pumping engine at High Pit, Killingworth and as a result, was soon promoted to enginewright for the neighbouring collieries, responsible for maintaining and repairing all of the colliery engines soon becoming an expert in steam-driven machinery.

In 1818, aware of the explosions often caused in mines by naked flames, Stephenson invented a successful lamp. At the same time, Sir Humphry Davy, was also working on the problem and was awarded £2,000, whilst Stephenson was accused of stealing the idea from Davy. A local committee of enquiry exonerated Stephenson, proved that he had been working separately and awarded him £1,000 but Davy and his supporters refused to accept this. They could not see how an uneducated man such as Stephenson could come up with the solution that he had. In 1833 a House of Commons committee found that Stephenson had equal claim to having invented the safety lamp but Davy went to his grave believing that Stephenson had stolen his idea. The Stephenson lamp was used exclusively in the North East, sometimes referred to as the "Geordie Lamp", whereas the Davy lamp was used everywhere else. The experience with Davy gave Stephenson a life-long distrust of London-based, experts.

Stephenson designed his first locomotive ten years later, a travelling engine designed for hauling coal at Killingworth named Blücher after the Prussian general. This locomotive could haul 30 tons of coal up a hill at 4 mph, and was the first successful flanged-wheel adhesion locomotive, its traction depending only on the contact between its flanged wheels and the rail. Altogether, Stephenson is said to have produced 16 locomotives at Killingworth, although it has never proved possible to produce a convincing list of all 16. He was hired to build an 8-mile railway from Hetton colliery to Sunderland in 1820. The finished result used a combination of gravity on downward inclines and locomotives for level and upward stretches. It was the first railway using no animal power.

In 1821, a parliamentary bill was passed to allow the building of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (S&DR). The 25-mile railway was intended to connect various collieries situated near Bishop Auckland to the River Tees at Stockton, passing through Darlington on the way. Stephenson established a company with Edward Pease, the County Architect in Newcastle to manufacture the locomotives. In September 1825 the works at Forth Street, Newcastle completed the first locomotive for the new railway: originally named Active, it was soon renamed Locomotion and was followed by "Hope", "Diligence" and "Black Diamond". The Stockton and Darlington Railway opened on 27th September 1825. Driven by Stephenson, Locomotion hauled an 80-ton load of coal and flour nine miles in two hours, reaching a speed of 24 miles per hour on one stretch. The first purpose-built passenger car, dubbed Experiment, was attached, and carried dignitaries on the opening journey. It was the first time passenger traffic had been run on a steam locomotive railway.

The rails used for the new line were made of wrought-iron which could be produced in much longer lengths than cast-iron one and were much less liable to crack under the weight of heavy locomotives. The gauge that Stephenson chose for the line was 4 feet 8½ inches and this subsequently came to be adopted as the standard gauge for railways, not only in Britain, but also throughout the world. Stephenson used his experience gained on the SD&R in planning and building the Bolton and Leigh Railway, and the Liverpool and Manchester Railway (L&MR). The route presented a considerable problem with the crossing of Chat Moss, an apparently bottomless peat bog, which Stephenson eventually overcame by effectively floating the line across it.

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As the L&MR approached completion in 1829, a competition was arranged to decide who would build its locomotives, and the Rainhill Trials were run in October 1829. Stephenson's entry was Rocket built by his son Robert, and its performance in winning the contest made it famous. Although Liverpool's MP was struck and killed by Rocket, the railway was a resounding success and as a result of his fame, Stephenson was offered the position of chief engineer for a wide variety of other railways.

The next ten years were the busiest of Stephenson's life, as he was besieged with requests from railway promoters. Many of the first American railroad builders came to Newcastle to learn from Stephenson, and the first dozen or so locomotives used in the U.S. were purchased from the Stephenson workshops. His conservative views on the capabilities of locomotives meant that he favoured circuitous routes and more expensive civil engineering than his successors thought necessary.

He was the first president of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers on its formation in 1847. He died on 12<sup>th</sup> August 1848, at Tapton House in Chesterfield after contracting pleurisy, and was buried in Holy Trinity Church, Chesterfield. His son Robert survived him by eleven years.

Among the myths are references to George Stephenson as "The Father of the Railways" – but was he really? A number of others were active in the field at the same time. Also, he is credited in some references with designing and building Skerne Bridge which is part of the Stockton and Darlington Railway – but did he?, as William Bonomi is also given this credit.

*John Martin*

## **A SHOT IN THE ARM**

Prompted by the current world Covid crisis, Dennis Harvey gave us a sobering but interesting talk on the history of pandemics throughout the ages – putting our present situation into perspective. Epidemics and pandemics can be the spread of a new disease, like the Plagues and Covid, or flare ups of endemic diseases (measles and smallpox). Diseases may be of bacterial (e.g. plague, typhoid) viral (measles, smallpox, HIV, MERS, Covid) or parasitic (malaria) origin.

The death toll is the usual indication of the severity of a pandemic, but in comparing mortality rates and severity, population density and life expectancy of the times need to be taken in to account.

Average male life expectancy today is 79 yrs; 1000 yrs ago it was 35, the number varying with status & wealth. The population of Europe in 2020 is 500 million; in 1750 it was 120million; North America today 600m, in 1750, 3.5m. It's estimated that the earliest recorded pandemics killed around 30-50 million, The Plagues accounted for 200m & smallpox overall, some 400m. These were not world-wide pandemics like Covid today, which is estimated to have killed between 5 & 10 million so far. This represents only 0.01% of the world population.

The earliest recorded pandemic was the Plague of Athens in 430BC It killed 25% of population and was possibly caused by typhus or typhoid. In 165-180 AD the Antonine "Plague of Galen" (possibly smallpox or measles) brought to the Mediterranean basin by troops campaigning in the Near East, resulted in 5 million deaths. The Justinian Plague of 541-2AD, again carried by soldiers from Turkey to the Mediterranean region, probably originated in China. This killed 30-50 million. In 755AD a Japanese plague of Smallpox killed 25% of the population of Japan.



In more recent times, the Black Death (Bubonic Plague 1347) now believed to be caused by viral haemorrhagic fever transmitted by rats carrying infected fleas, killed 200 million people worldwide & 30% of the population of Europe. The disease probably originated in Asia & was carried along the sea trade routes, The Great Plague of London in 1665-6 (pneumonic plague) now known to be caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis*, is believed to have caused 100,000 deaths. Again transmission was by fleas carried on rats. Descriptions of the symptoms, signs and effects of this epidemic have become part of our cultural heritage, giving rise to pictures & cartoons like the "danse macabre", the nursery rhyme "ring-a-ring of roses" etc.

1918-19 brought the Influenza (Spanish flu) pandemic, killing 50 million, more than died in World War 1. The cause was then unknown and there was no treatment. Management was by isolation, social distancing, travel restrictions, etc. Gatherings were banned, poster campaigns, like "Spit Spreads Death" things we have been all too familiar with today!

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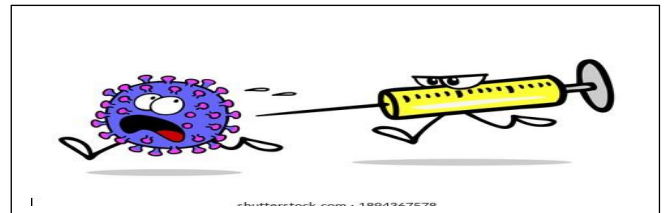
More recently, we've experienced Asian Flu in the 1950s (1.1m. dead), HIV in the 1980s (25-35m probable deaths), SARS, MERS, and in Africa, Ebola (approx. 2m. deaths in total). We live with "summer" flu which is still a factor in some 200,000 deaths annually.

Another killer, Smallpox, has a particularly significant place in the history of pandemics. Smallpox has been around probably for 12,000 years & has caused the deaths of 300-500m people over time. There is evidence that Rameses Vth probably died of smallpox in 1196BC: the lesions were found on his mummified body. In the 15<sup>th</sup>C Smallpox spread to the Americas by the early explorers and colonisers, was largely responsible (along with measles) for wiping out the indigenous Aztec, Incas & native North American Indians. Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup>. was afflicted aged 20 but recovered. She used white make-up, made from vinegar and lead to disguise her facial pock-marks and this became fashionable. Many died from lead poisoning as a result. In 18<sup>th</sup>C England, 20-60% of those who caught smallpox, died (and 80% of afflicted children).

There were two forms of the disease, variola major and the less severe variola minor. It had been noted very early on by the Chinese that those who survived a first Smallpox infection, or were infected artificially didn't get re-infected. In the 10<sup>th</sup>C the Chinese would grind up a preparation of tissue from the infected scabs of a victim with mild disease,(variola minor)and with a blowpipe, blow the powder up the noses of uninfected individuals. (echoes of Covid testing!) This deliberate infection or "variolation", conferred a degree of immunity on those who survived the process.

The practice reached England in the 18<sup>th</sup>C. A Lady Mary Wortley Montague, whose husband was an ambassador to Turkey and who herself had suffered & recovered from smallpox, had noted that variolation of a kind was being practiced in the Ottoman Court of the time and she persuaded an eminent English surgeon (Charles Maitland) to variolate her 5 year old son and later her 4year old daughter. Both survived. The practice was tested on prisoners at Newgate, and on orphan children., It required purging & blood-letting to reduce the recipients to a "weakened state" before exposing them. Around 2% died of the procedure and it did trigger off minor outbreaks of smallpox, but it worked. Despite all the drawbacks, variolation caught on and became widespread. There was opposition to the practice; some thought he practice "an affront to God", an "attempt to change the natural order".

Edward Jenner himself was variolated as a child. It had a lifelong ill effect on his health, but it's not known whether this influenced his subsequent success as the founder of immunisation. Jenner (1749-1823) born in Berkeley, Gloucestershire, trained as a doctor and became interested in cowpox. Incidentally, he also was the first to describe the parasitic behaviour of the cuckoo, so he was a serious natural scientist. It was already known that those who had caught cowpox, became immune from smallpox. Variolation had been successfully carried out by others using cowpox extract, but Jenner was the first to record and publish his results. In 1796 he used material from the cowpox lesions of a milkmaid, Sarah Nelmes, to "vaccinate" the 8 year old son of his gardener. He proved the child's immunity by injecting him on two occasions with the standard variola preparation. The child was unaffected. He then used his vaccination method and challenge on others, including his own son, thus demonstrating their immunity, before making his results known. Acceptance of the technique, though slow to begin with, soon spread nationally and subsequently across Europe.



By 1840, variolation had been banned in Britain in favour of vaccination. Fifteen years later, vaccination of children was made compulsory, a situation which was stopped in Gloucestershire only in 1947! With increasing knowledge, vaccination for other diseases took off In 1880. Louis Pasteur discovered the bacterial causes of anthrax and rabies and developed vaccination methods to prevent them. A vaccine for cholera was developed by Valdemar Harting, but unfortunately, accidental contamination of the vaccines caused a number of deaths in India. This influenced and reinforced the beliefs of the growing number (shades of today) of "anti-vaccers" who didn't agree with the process.

The first flu vaccines were introduced by American scientist Francis & Salk in the 1940s using chicken eggs as growth media. In 1954 Salk developed the polio vaccine. (Polio has been eradicated in Britain, but is still present in small pockets around the world. Smallpox was declared eradicated worldwide in 1980 by the WHO). Using very similar techniques, vaccines have subsequently been manufactured for measles, mumps, hepatitis A, and rubella etc, -more than 40 vaccines in all, bringing us up to today with Covid.

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The talk concluded with an interesting question & answer session before an extraordinary intervention by an audience member seriously claiming that electromagnetic waves were the cause of epidemics. This of course is not new: 30 years ago it was the National Grid power lines and leukaemia; then in 2000, mobile phones and brain tumours; recently, 5g and Covid. There is always a tiny grain of truth in such theories, but this is yet another example of confusion between coincidence, correlation, false assumptions and the establishment of cause and effect. {My phone battery is running down more quickly these days, something is using it up; they must have injected a microchip into my arm with the Covid jab!} There is and has never been any scientific evidence for this absurd nonsense. Conversely there is irrefutable evidence for the natural causes of disease and especially for the success of vaccines. The evidence for the success of Covid vaccine is growing daily. This outburst would be laughable were it not for the potentially dangerous impact of such conspiracy theories, promulgated particularly on social media, on the current global situation. Vaccination is likely to be the only way to solve this pandemic.

*Dr Gareth Williams*

## **POETRY CORNER: REFUGEES**

They have no need of our help  
So do not tell me  
These haggard faces could belong to you or me  
Should life have dealt a different hand  
We need to see them for who they really are  
Chancers and scroungers  
Layabouts and loungers  
With bombs up their sleeves  
Cut-throats and thieves  
They are not  
Welcome here  
We should make them  
Go back to where they came from  
They cannot  
Share our food  
Share our homes  
Share our countries  
Instead let us  
Build a wall to keep them out  
It is not okay to say  
These are people just like us  
A place should only belong to those born there  
Do not be so stupid to think that  
The world can be looked at another way

***NOW READ THE POEM BACKWARDS – i.e.  
FROM THE BOTTOM LINE TO THE TOP***

## ***Probus Christmas Lunch Tuesday December 14<sup>th</sup> Speech House Hotel 12:30 for 13:00***



*Christmas Supremo John Martin writes:*

Thank you all for your valuable and timely recommendations for suitable venues and after researching them all, the Committee decided that The Speech House at Cinderford would meet the criteria. The cost will be £32.50 per person which includes a small contribution to a tip for the staff in line with the Club's custom and practice. There will be more details in the next edition of the Newsletter, but in the meantime it would be helpful if you could look at the menu opposite and consider your choices.

### **Sprout and Chestnut Soup (v)**

Smoked Brioche Croutons

### **Honey Roast Ham Hock Terrine**

Ale Chutney · Sour Dough

### **Severn And Wye Smoked Salmon**

Spiced Pear and Fennel Salsa · Black Garlic Mayonnaise

### **Deep Fried Goats Cheese (v)**

Pickled Red Onion ·

Smoked Cranberry Compote

### **Traditional Roast Turkey**

Served with all the trimmings

### **Dry Cured Pork Chop**

Roast Garlic Mash · Root Vegetables · Baked Apple

### **Herb Crusted Cod Loin**

Leek · Potato · Chive

### **Stilton Glazed Celeriac (v)**

Roast Broccoli · Pickled Walnuts · Celery Shoots~

### **Traditional Christmas Pudding (v)**

Brandy Crème Anglaise

### **Mulled Berry Panna Cotta**

Liquorice Cream · Brown Butter Oat Clusters

### **Warm Chocolate Brownie (v)**

Salted Caramel Sauce · Clotted Cream Ice Cream

### **A Selection of Local Cheese (£2.50 supplement)**

Winter Chutney · Crackers · Grapes and Celery

**Tea, Coffee and Mince Pies**

## Michael Keene



Probus members will have been sorry to learn of the death of Michael Keene at the very end of July, just three weeks before his 88th birthday. I was especially saddened at the news, since Michael had been a good friend for many years.

I first met Michael when we both joined Newent Rotary Club, within a few months of each other, in about 1984.

Michael was brought up at Highnam Farm, and was educated first at Wycliffe College in Stroud and later at Cirencester Agricultural College, but all the time he was learning the essentials of farming at Highnam. In 1964 he married Ann, a young lady from Welshpool and they moved into Caerwents Farm, off Kent's Green Road. By the early 1950's Michael was effectively running a farm of 1,000 acres, which included land to the north and west of Kent's Green and around a house known as The Moat. When the opportunity arose, Michael purchased The Moat which later became his new family home.

By the early 80's, he and Ann had had four children; Jo, Edward, Hazel and Laura. By the early 90's, Edward was already participating in farming by way of working with Michael and attending Reading University. Although this may have relieved some of Michael's workload, he continued to be the "head of the farm" and 100% actively involved in every aspect of the family business. It can be said, without fear of contradiction, that farming and Moat Farm were his life.

Nevertheless, Michael had many interests outside his work, including being an active member of several farming and non-farming related associations, plus a very active involvement in Rotary. Somehow he found the time to encompass all of these interests. He was always very generous with his time and facilities, the Moat and its gardens being the venue for numerous functions, at which Michael always played the very genial host. There were garden parties, house parties, charity events, collection and accumulation of goods for Poland, Shakespeare Plays, and so much more.

The Moat farm facilities were always immaculate, it was one of the tidiest farms I have ever known; "a place for everything and everything in its place". I clearly remember when we were using one of the barns to store a vast mixture of goods in readiness

to transport to children's orphanages in Poland; as we were loading all of this onto a lorry, I needed a particular sized spanner to adjust the tail-gate; without prompting, Michael advised me to go into the No.2 barn, on the left there would be a bench above which was a rack of spanners which included the exact tool I needed. It was there, exactly as described. Also in this barn there was a row of farming implements of all kinds, tractors, combined harvesters, ploughs, etc., etc. All were precisely lined up, clean and ready for use, no wonder he was proud of his farm. I know of no other farmer who was so meticulously tidy.

After nearly 30 years, by coincidence, Michael and I both left Rotary within a few months of each other: the weekly evening meetings, including a meal, had become too much of an imposition. It wasn't long before we both joined Probus at near enough the same time. I know Michael thoroughly enjoyed his Probus membership, and all their activities. He was a very regular attendee and also joined in nearly all the other activities such as pub lunches, outings, Christmas and Spring lunches, etc. He always carried his pocket book to note down events and dates and questions for the speaker.

Michael certainly loved any social event. He and Ann were always happy to host a range of events in their house or garden. He was the perfect genial host, who was always busy ensuring every guest had all the food and drink they wished, making sure he spoke to literally everyone, to such an extent that he hardly sat down to partake any refreshment.

At whatever function he attended, Michael would always become involved in one conversation or other; he was genuinely interested in people, their wellbeing and their views on a whole range of topics and somewhat unusually for these days, he wanted to hear your views rather than expounding his own.

In summary it can be truly said that Michael was a gentleman in the true sense of the word; he was a "gentle man", a kind, caring and generous friend who will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

*Richard Crisp*



## Men

What do you expect from such simple creatures? Your last name stays put. The garage is all yours. Wedding plans take care of themselves. Chocolate is just another snack. You can never be pregnant. You can wear a white T-shirt to a water park. You can wear NO shirt to a water park. Car mechanics tell you the truth. The world is your urinal. You never have to drive to another gas station restroom because this one is just too icky. You don't have to stop and think of which way to turn a nut on a bolt. Wrinkles add character. Wedding dress - £5,000. Morning suit rental - £100. People never stare at your chest when you're talking to them. New shoes don't cut, blister, or mangle your feet. One mood all the time. Phone conversations are over in 30 seconds flat. You know stuff about tanks.

A five-day holiday requires only one suitcase. You can open all your own jars. You get extra credit for the slightest act of thoughtfulness. If someone forgets to invite you, he or she can still be your friend. Your underwear is £8.95 for a three-pack. Two pairs of shoes are more than enough. You almost never have strap problems in public. You are unable to see wrinkles in your clothes. Everything on your face stays its original colour. The same hairstyle lasts for years, maybe decades. You only have to shave your face and neck.

You can play with toys all your life. One wallet and one pair of shoes - one colour for all seasons. You can wear shorts no matter how your legs look. You can 'do' your nails with a pocket knife. You have freedom of choice concerning growing a moustache... You can do Christmas shopping for 25 relatives on December 24 in 25 minutes.

No wonder men are happier!

### **NICKNAMES**

- If Laura, Kate and Sarah go out for lunch, they will call each other Laura, Kate and Sarah.
- If Mike, Dave and John go out, they will affectionately refer to each other as Fat Boy, Bubba and Wildman.

### **EATING OUT**

When the bill arrives, Mike, Dave and John will each throw in £20, even though it's only for £32.50. None of them will have anything smaller and none will actually admit they want change back.

When the girls get their bill, outcome the pocket calculators.

### **MONEY**

- A man will pay £2 for a £1 item he needs.
- A woman will pay £1 for a £2 item that she doesn't need but it's on sale.

## **BATHROOMS**

- A man has six items in his bathroom: toothbrush and toothpaste, shaving cream, razor, a bar of soap, and a towel.
- The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 337. A man would not be able to identify more than 20 of these items.

### **ARGUMENTS**

- A woman has the last word in any argument.
- Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument.

### **FUTURE**

- A woman worries about the future until she gets a husband.
- A man never worries about the future until he gets a wife.

### **MARRIAGE**

- A woman marries a man expecting he will change, but he doesn't.
- A man marries a woman expecting that she won't change, but she does.

### **DRESSING UP**

- A woman will dress up to go shopping, water the plants, empty the trash, answer the phone, read a book, and get the mail.
- A man will dress up for weddings and funerals.

### **NATURAL**

- Men wake up as good-looking as they went to bed.
- Women somehow deteriorate during the night.

### **OFFSPRING**

- Ah, children. A woman knows all about her children. She knows about dentist appointments and romances, best friends, favourite foods, secret fears and hopes and dreams.
- A man is vaguely aware of some short people living in the house.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

A married man should forget his mistakes. There's no use in two people remembering the same thing!



One day a florist went to a barber for a haircut. After the cut, he asked about his bill, and the barber replied, 'I cannot accept money from you, I'm doing community service this week.' The florist was pleased and left the shop. When the barber went to open his shop the next morning, there was a 'thank you' card and a dozen roses waiting for him at his door. Later, a policeman comes in for a haircut, and when he tries to pay his bill, the barber again replied, 'I cannot accept money from you, I'm doing community service this week.' The policeman was happy and left the shop. The next morning when the barber went to open up, there was a 'thank you' card and a dozen doughnuts waiting for him at his door. Then a Member of Parliament came in for a haircut, and when he went to pay his bill, the barber again replied, 'I cannot accept money from you. I'm doing community service this week.' The Member of Parliament was very happy and left the shop.

The next morning, when the barber went to open up, there were a dozen Members of Parliament lined up waiting for a free haircut.

And that, my friends, illustrates the fundamental difference between the citizens of our country and the politicians who run it.

### **A new virus**

#### **The NILE Virus, type C**

We are still battling the COVID-19 and the next thing is here already. Virologists have identified a new Nile virus - type C. It appears to target those who were born between 1930 & 1970.



#### **Symptoms:** Causes you

1. To send the same message twice.
2. To send a blank message.
3. To send a message to the wrong person.
4. To send it back to the person who sent it to you.
5. To forget to attach the attachment.
6. To hit SEND before you've finished.
7. To hit DELETE instead of SEND.
8. To SEND when you should DELETE.

#### **It is called the C-NILE virus!**

And if you cannot admit to doing the above, you have obviously caught the mutated strain — **the D-NILE virus.**

## **Editorial**

Thanks to all members who have both sent amusing material during the pandemic, and/or expressed appreciation of the special Covid and Covid-Free Supplements that I have included in the Newsletter over the last few months. Unless I hear howls of disappointment from afar, now that Probus is beginning normal in-person meetings again I shall only use such material to fill up awkward spaces rather than to dominate the publication! I never intended the Newsletter to become a joke sheet, but realised early in the Pandemic that we might all need cheering up. Hopefully, meeting each other again at Gorsley will be sufficient to do that. If an item is small, short and funny or curious, then please go on submitting.

## **New Member**

Originally from Bournemouth, I spent thirty years in financial services working for mainstream banks, including Barclays & Lloyds/TSB, at numerous locations around the country. I relocated from Manchester to Brighton in the early 1980s where I developed and was responsible for the mortgage provisioning system for Lloyds. Following the decision to consolidate their mortgage portfolio with that of the newly acquired Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society, we moved from Sussex to Northwood Green in 1998. The migration to the C&G mainframe was completed by 2000 and I was fortunate to be given redundancy only two years into my five year plan.



Effectively, I have been 'retired' from paid employment for over twenty years now but am so busy that I often wonder how I ever found time to go out to work. Following a couple of heart attacks two years ago, I have had to start to pace myself but I do find that difficult.

My interests are many and varied including ancient history, the unexplained, such as Ufology, and have recently taken up woodturning. I am a member of our local skittles team and my wife Joy and I enjoy occasional theatre trips and garden visits.

*Chris Johnson*

### **Quote:**

"What's BBC 6 Music? I only listen to Radio 3".

- *Charlie Watts, Rolling Stones' drummer*