



**NEWENT &
DISTRICT
PROBUS CLUB**

Inaugurated 23rd March 1977

**MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER**

December 2021

***A Merry and
Healthy
Christmas and
New Year to all
Newsletter
readers***



Looking Ahead

January 11th

Phil Bevan – F/O

Robert David Ackers

Phil traces the family and service history of 152010 F/O Robert David Ackers RAFVR, who was Killed in Action flying a Hawker Typhoon during the battle of Normandy. He lived at Huntley Manor.

January 25th

Mike Bottomly –

“Jack in the Green”

The revival of an old Gloucester custom

December Diary



December 14th

**Christmas Lunch
Speech House Hotel**

1230 for 1300



From the Chairman

Dear Members,

Thank you all for your forbearance during this extraordinary year.

Fingers crossed that no new South African variants ruin our plans for the Christmas luncheon on 14 December at Speech House. We have over 50 seats booked and it promises to be a great occasion. You will recall that your committee are in generous mood and have agreed that club funds should pay for drinks at the lunch. We shall have a cash bar as well in the same room, but essentially you will be served free red or white wine with the meal, and on arrival everyone is entitled to a free beer/cider/glass of wine or soft drink from the bar. Any spirits or further drinks will have to be paid for – we're not that bountiful!

Dress is smart casual and I look forward to seeing you there. And please don't forget your lateral flow test before you go!

Finally, as we have no meeting in December, can I take the opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

John

500 YEARS OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

The Romans came to Gloucester in AD47, and the Abbey of St. Peter was built across the old Roman wall. There was an abbey founded as early as 679 by Osric, Prince of Mercia and King of the Hwicce. His sister Kyneburga became the first superior of what was a mixed community, quite common in those days. There are six pillars in the crypt, which could be the remains of the Anglo-Saxon abbey.

In 1066 William the Conqueror appointed Lanfranc as Archbishop of Canterbury. Serlo, Chaplain to William, was appointed as Abbot. He came from Mont St. Michel, and by 1104 one hundred monks were in residence. A new abbey church was dedicated in 1100. Of the church that Serlo built only the crypt remains, but in the 12th century Gloucester became one of the greatest of Benedictine houses. It is from this period that much of the nave dates, with its huge pillars and round arches, typical of Norman architecture.

The vault is early English. The original roof burnt down in 1122. The Norman architecture includes a crypt under the east end, the ambulatory and the choir gallery, which has a whispering gallery. There used to be west end towers and a central tower with spire, but these collapsed. The west end was rebuilt in decorated Gothic style in 1350.

One of the points of interest in the Cathedral is the effigy of Robert Curthose, eldest son of William the Conqueror, who was prevented from becoming King and spent many years as a prisoner, dying in Cardiff Castle in 1134. He is buried near the high altar.

In 1216 Henry III was crowned king in the Cathedral at the age of nine, following the sudden death of King John. The story is that he was crowned with his mother's bracelet, and there is a Victorian window in the south aisle to commemorate the event.

In 1327 Edward II, an unpopular king, was murdered at Berkeley Castle, and was buried in the Abbey in a fine tomb. Although people did not like him they were against the murder of a king, as he was regarded as anointed by God, so his tomb became a place of pilgrimage, bringing much wealth to the Abbey. This was used to rebuild the Abbey in perpendicular style, the first example anywhere in the world.

In the 1350s the great east window, the Crécy window, was erected. It was then the largest in the world and commemorated the battle of Crécy

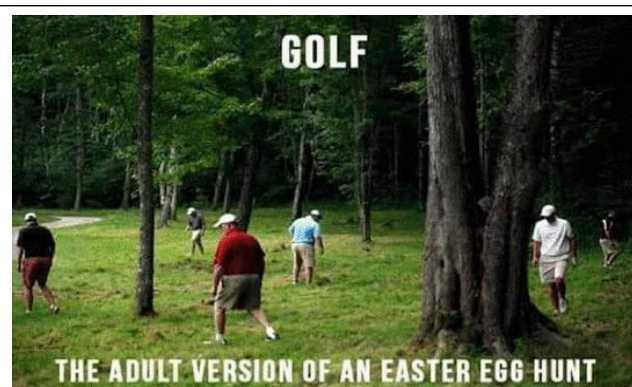
The cloisters, with their fan vaulting, were built and the monks' washing place can still be seen. St. Benedict was keen that monks should wash, in an era when most people didn't. The main gate and the Parliament building date from this time, and are still there to this day. The Lady Chapel was added in the 1400s and is noted for its lightness.



After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1541 the Abbey church, on the orders of Henry VIII, became a cathedral, and its diocese was carved out of the diocese of Worcester. Some of the monastic buildings survived as the King's School. During the reign of Mary, 1553-1558, Bishop Hooper was burnt at the stake outside the main gate for his protestant beliefs. The Cathedral suffered from both reformers and Cromwell's puritans. Statues were taken down and the reredos in the Lady Chapel still shows signs of damage. In the 19th century restoration was carried out under Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. A stone pulpit was placed in the choir in 1849 and the choir floor was laid.

An ongoing development is Project Pilgrim, which features the development of the Cathedral Close into a piazza and has made the Cathedral more accessible to disabled visitors. Other projects are planned. The Cathedral hosts the Three Choirs Festival, other concerts, dramas, film productions, children's workshops, art exhibitions and many other events, but primarily it is, as it has been for 800 years, a place of worship.

Michael Bennett



Miscellany

Pub lunches are back! November 16th at the White Hart was well attended, and there will be another in January at a different venue. A volunteer is required to run these popular monthly social events. Also in January will be the return of the regular raffle held every meeting (another volunteer required, please, to run this!), which raises useful extra funds for the club, and on January 31st another Quiz Evening at the King's Arms in Newent. Details idc. Skittles evenings may return in the Spring, and outings next summer. Theatre trips, because they involve coaches etc, are on hold for at least three months.

The "Covid Requirements" for attending physical meetings will continue into 2022, but with added biscuits. The planned "Welcome Back" event is on hold for the moment.

Several members have still not paid for the Christmas Lunch event, although the Treasurer has so far declined to name them. Your intrepid reporter is investigating.....

The Zoom professional subscription has been renewed for a further year to permit the continuing streaming of meetings for those unwilling or unable to attend in person.

A "Tales of the Unexpected" meeting is planned, where volunteer members will talk for ten minutes about something unusual that has happened to them at some point in their lives. Could be a long one.....

PROBUS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Just a final reminder that the 2021 Christmas Lunch will be in the **Edwin Talbot Suite on Tuesday 14th December at the Speech House Hotel, 12.30 pm for 1.00 pm.**

As the car park can sometimes fill up quickly, it might be a good idea to share transport where possible. However, subject to the weather and ground conditions the adjacent field may be made available for our use. Finally, can I please have any last minute changes, additions, cancellations, changes of menu etc by **Thursday 6th December** at the latest.

In case of any problems on the day, the telephone number for the Speech House is: 01594 822607
Looking forward to seeing you there.

John Martin

Wise Words

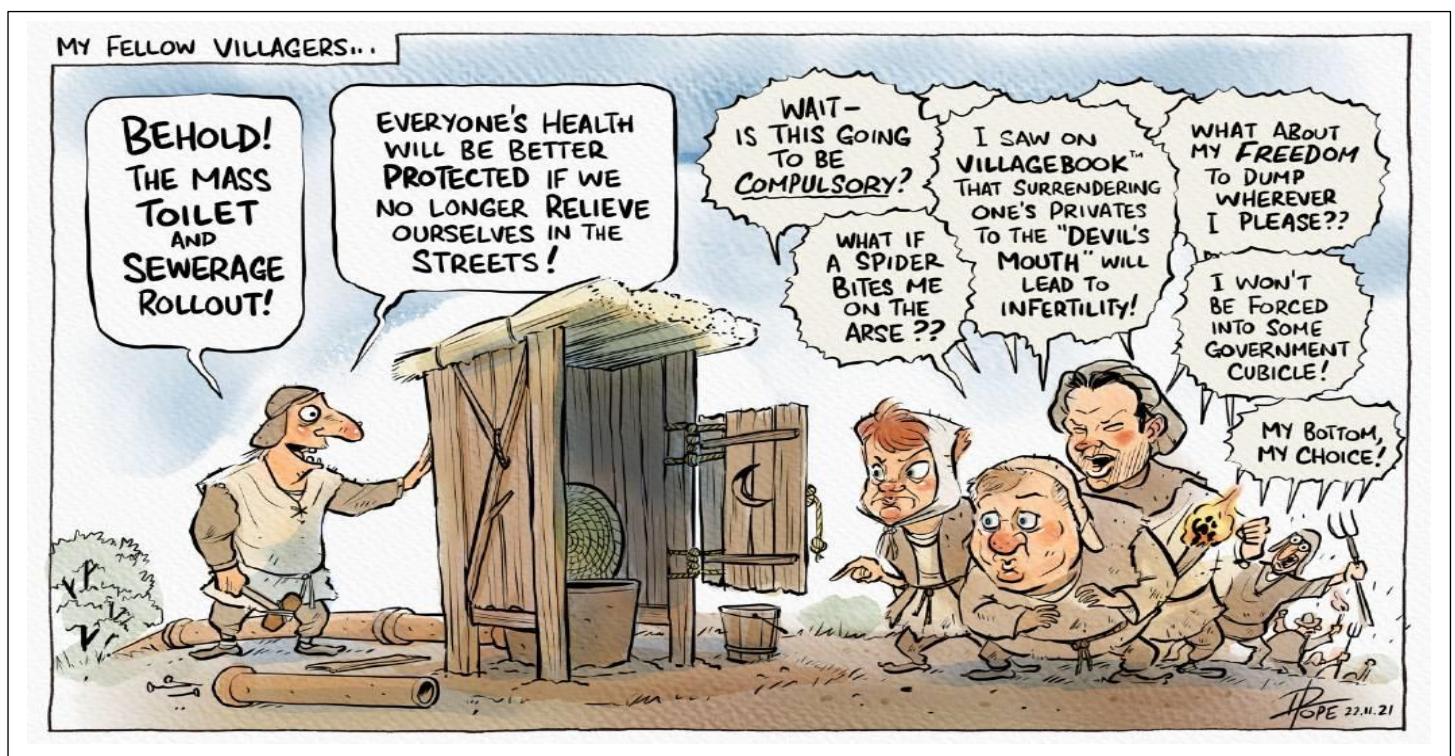
Man who stands on toilet is high on pot.

Wise man does not keep sledgehammer and slow computer in the same room.

Man who lives in glass house should change clothes in basement.

And, Confucius Did Not Say. . .*

**"A lion will not cheat on his wife, but a Tiger Wood!"



Causes of the First World War

The causes of the first, so called, World War (1914 - 1918) were legion, according to our latest speaker, John Gove, and one can almost take one's choice. However, they were to be as unlikely as that of Basil Fawlty's who had a simplistic answer for the origins of World War 2 when he told one of his hapless German guests "..... it was your fault – you invaded Poland" Even if that were true, the origins of the cause or causes of the Great War were much more complex, as John Gove so amply illustrated in his talk. He did not try to apportion blame; instead, he slowly dissected the interests of the five (at the time!) Great Powers involved - a sixth, the USA was conspicuous by its absence-; he left it to members to consider who their choice or choices would be.

For a start, the answer so loved by quiz devotees that the assassination by a hitherto unknown student of an obscure Balkan dignitary somehow unleashed the carnage that was to come was soon put in its place by John; the events leading up to this killing had long been on a slow fuse for years and, if anything, were the effects of the tensions in Europe rather than the cause of them.

As it transpired, rather like the *denouement* of an Agatha Christie mystery any of the leading characters, or indeed all of them in the unfolding drama could have played a part. But, unlike the aforementioned *oeuvre*, there is no single holder of a "smoking gun". All of the usual suspects are represented and in many of the sub plots. As in so many wars, territorial ambitions were one of the causes with Russia ever keen to expand its frontiers, Germany, type cast as ever as militaristic and not wishing to be left behind in any perceived "arms race", Austria-Hungary perhaps needing to shore up its rapidly diminishing Empire, with the hawks of the British war cabinet, principally Churchill, ever willing to wage on the most obscure reasons.

In this late Edwardian period the classes or divisions of society was much more apparent than today. The Upper Class, from whom the leaders of nations were drawn, thought little or anything, of consigning millions of the so called working class to fight a war in which

the latter not only had no interest but were unlikely to of heard of the belligerents, much less having visited it. There were few, if any, of today's checks and balances to influence a decision. However, if John could not apportion blame between countries, he had no hesitation in naming names. High up on his list were Britain's Foreign Secretary Edward Grey, an otherwise mild and kindly nature lover, who had an unexpected belligerent streak and, almost inevitably Churchill who was to be at the centre of many conflicts to come. The remaining participants were hardly household names, in spite of being, for example France's president and the Russian foreign minister. Gavarilo Princip, the assassin of Archduke Ferdinand did get a mention however, as one of the causes. A thought provoking talk then, but it was interesting that the causes of that great conflict are still being debated over a century from its inception.

Peter Hayes

