



NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

Inaugurated 23rd March 1977

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

March 2022

Looking Ahead: April

5th

Spring Lunch at the
Walwyn Arms
Much Marcle

12th

Mike Bottomly – Jack in
the Green

26th

AGM and members'
personal stories

If you can't look back at your
younger self and realize that
you were an idiot, you are
probably still an idiot.

March Diary

March 1st

Pub Lunch at the Weston Cross
1230 for 1300

March 8th

Charlotte Goodworth – Writing an Autobiography



Charlotte is a trained journalist, editor and designer, with more than 20 years' experience in publishing; she runs a small business based in Stroud, "My Life Story", which helps to turn people's memories into professional-looking, dust-jacketed hardbacks to share with their families. Her talk will be a combination of practical tips and advice about how to take the rather intimidating plunge into writing an autobiography and the reasons why it is such a rewarding thing to do for you and your family.

March 22nd

Nigel Thompson - Gloucestershire's Blue
Plaque Holders



The "Blue Plaque Holders" talk centres on eminent and interesting men from the Cheltenham/Gloucester area who were awarded a Blue Plaque.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

At last there are signs that we can start to return to normal after 2 years of the pandemic disrupting our lives, including our Probus meetings. A thank you to all of you for staying with us during this period and thereby keeping our Club running.

Obviously the use of Zoom alone in the early days, and then the Zoom broadcasts from Gorsley Village Hall later on has helped us to continue to meet and receive presentations, almost all of which have been interesting and entertaining. We won't be continuing the Zoom broadcasts from now on, so we hope that all members will feel able to join us at Gorsley for future meetings.

In that connection, at our last meeting soundings were taken from the 24 members present as to the extent that we should remove the precautions of a Lateral Flow Test and mask wearing. After some discussion, and of course subject to any unforeseen covid developments, it was decisively agreed that although those precautions would remain for our next meeting on 8 March, they would no longer be compulsory for the following meeting on 22 March and thereafter. Of course, it remains open to every Member to take whatever precautions he wishes from 22 March, but there is no need to take tests or wear masks from the Club's viewpoint. This will make socialising a little easier and more enjoyable and allow our newer members to get to know us all.

On the immediate horizon, on Tuesday March 1st, is our first pub lunch since December and I and Marjanne look forward to seeing many of you there.

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As for our Spring Lunch John M has received the menu from Speech House at last but we consider it is overpriced and too restrictive in choice, so it has been discounted as our venue. In the circumstances we have decided to treat our pub lunch at the Walwyn Arms as a rather more informal Spring Lunch than usual and **to move the date from April 12th to April 5th**. John M, who will be the organiser, gives more details elsewhere in the Newsletter. We shall have a normal club meeting on the 12th. Peter Hines will be running the pub lunches from May onwards in the usual way. With best regards,

John

From the Minutes: Tuesday 8th February

(apologies – no independent talk report available – Ed)

Robert Arley, a former BBC producer, entertained members with his tale of a different sort of guide book, one of which had its origins in what was many long and boring trips along the M5. He explained how he searched for offbeat landmarks along its route and then proceeded to research their history. This was produced in the former of a linear guide. He spoke of the pitfalls of publishing and the battle to get the project off the ground. Ultimately however it was a success and further editions covering the M6 and M4 followed.

SS GREAT BRITAIN: AN EPIC VOYAGE – AND RESCUE

The story of how Brunel's historic ship the SS Great Britain, at one time both the world's fastest and biggest, lay rusting and abandoned in the Falkland Islands and its subsequent restoration formed the basis of Ian Caskie's absorbing talk to members.

An enlightened Government department [*surely not a phrase that is often written*] however decided that it should be saved both for the Nation and posterity. The sting was in the tail though; no funds were available for this project and it all had to be raised from public subscription. Finance, as always, was a great hurdle to its transportation back to the UK, even greater than how to accomplish the hazardous 10000 mile journey and what to do with it once it was successfully landed. However, thanks to generous donations from such well known philanthropists as Sir Jack Hayward and Sir Paul Getty coupled with a public appeal, its return journey commenced in 1970 and took some four months to complete .

A task almost as difficult as the fund raising was how to transport this huge iron unseaworthy vessel across an unpredictable North Atlantic. At its simplest, the ship was placed on a submersible pontoon and towed back to the UK with a couple of stops en route for essential repairs as during the voyage several splits had developed in her iron hull causing her to be at danger of sinking should she take on too much water. Some four months later she reached her home port, Bristol where crowds of many thousands turned out to welcome her back.



She had had a chequered career during her relatively short life, variously as a cruise ship to the USA then carrying emigrants to Australia, following the discovery of gold there Then, somewhat ignominiously as a coal carrier to the South Americas and finally as a floating warehouse prior to her abandonment in the Falklands. In a well-earned retirement it was hoped that she would have a more tranquil life, even if her new custodians weren't to have one.

It would be an over statement to state that, once the vessel was safely docked and a detailed marine inspection was undertaken the problems of keeping this great ship alive became apparent. Did this dedicated team of volunteers ever wonder if it would have been preferable to have left her to rot, such were the myriad problems that were revealed. An extensive survey discovered that the hull was continuing to corrode in the humid atmosphere of the dock and estimates gave her 25 years before she corroded away. Extensive conservation work began which culminated in the installation of a glass plate across the dry dock at the level of her water line, with two dehumidifiers, keeping the space beneath at 20% relative humidity, sufficiently dry to preserve the surviving material.

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This being completed, the ship was "re-launched" in July 2005, and visitor access to the dry dock was restored. The site, now an award-winning museum is regularly visited by over 150,000 visitors a year with a peak in numbers in 2006 when 200,000 people visited.

Ian's talk generated so many questions, evidence of both its quality and interest; It looks like proving to be a worthy pre-cursor to a planned visit there when Covid restrictions permit.

Peter Hayes



In her time the SS Great Britain carried many illustrious passengers. Among them George Everest, the surveyor of that great mountain, Anthony Trollope the Victorian novelist, Augustus Arkwright, grandson of Richard of "spinning Jenny fame" plus of course many thousands of ordinary folk maybe looking to find a new and better life.

Modern Nursery Rhyme

The grand old Duke of York, he had 12 million quid.

He gave it to someone he'd never met,
for something he never did.

Petition

Probus is a strictly apolitical organisation, but given the current international situation you may like to be aware of one of many petitions being set up:

"UK citizens: Ban twinning ties with Russia."

You can read more and sign the petition here:

<https://chnng.it/2wVMKVcKrg>

Ed

A Winter's Tale

It snowed last night...

8:00 am: I made a snowman.

8:10 - A feminist passed by and asked me why I didn't make a snow woman.

8:15 - So, I made a snow woman.

8:17 - My feminist neighbour complained about the snow woman's voluptuous chest saying it objectified snow women everywhere, and moaned it could have been two snow men instead.

8:22 - The transgender man.. women...person asked why I didn't just make one snow person with detachable parts.

8:25 - The vegans at the end of the lane complained about the carrot nose, as veggies are food and not to decorate snow figures with.

8:28 - I was being called a racist because the snow couple is white.

8:31 - The middle eastern gent across the road demanded the snow woman be covered up .

8:40 - The Police arrived saying someone had been offended.

8:42 - The feminist neighbour complained again that the broomstick of the snow woman needed to be removed because it depicted women in a domestic role.

8:43 - The council equality officer arrived and threatened me with eviction.

8:45 - TV news crew from BBC showed up. I was asked if I know the difference between snowmen and snow-women? I replied "Snowballs" and am now called a sexist.

9:00 - I was on the News as a suspected terrorist, racist, homophobe sensibility offender, bent on stirring up trouble during difficult weather.

9:10 - I was asked if I have any accomplices. My children were taken by social services.

9:29 - Far left protesters offended by everything marched down the street demanding for me to be arrested. By noon it all melted.

Moral: There is no moral to this story. It is what this country has become and all because of snowflakes. Where has common sense and proportion gone?

Breaking News

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has just announced that due to a NEW Covid variant, VINDAFLU, people will now be offered the Punjab.

Please take this new variant seriously.

My neighbour caught it and has been in a Korma for a week and he has only just buried his Naan, who had a dodgy Tikka.

As only 5 people were allowed to attend the funeral, it led to a right Argi Bhaaji.

Spring Lunch

April 5th

Walwyn Arms



Our Chairman has explained the situation regarding the change of venue for the Spring Lunch which will now be at the Walwyn Arms, Much Marcle. In a nutshell, I anticipated a similar arrangement to our Christmas Lunch at the Speech House in terms of price and menu choice. However, they were very late in letting us have a menu which for reasons I fail to understand, was so restricted in terms of choice as to be unworkable.

I'm expecting the menu from the Walwyn Arms sometime soon and will get it to you as soon as possible. However, I would be grateful if you could please let me have the names of those who wish to attend as soon as you can (in the anticipation of a good menu!) so that I can let the pub know the numbers. In this latter regard, the numbers may need to be restricted so the sooner you can let me have your names the better.

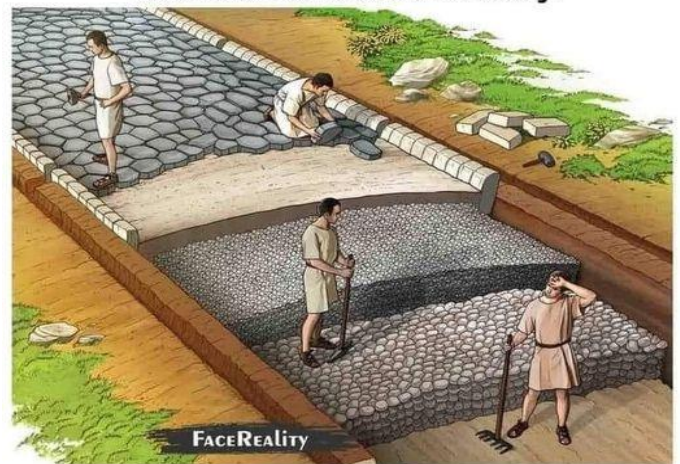
johnandjillmartin@btinternet.com

Just to remind you, The Spring Lunch will be on the 5th April at the Walwyn Arms, and the April Pub Lunch which was going to be on the 12th April will now not take place and the 12th April will be a normal PROBUS meeting day.

John Martin

**By replacing
your morning
coffee with green
tea, you can lose
up to 87% of
what little joy
you still have
left in your life.**

**Without a single degree, they built us roads
that have lasted an eternity.**



and then, the engineers arrived!

