

NEWSLETTER



NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



SEPTEMBER 2022

Upcoming Events

PUB LUNCH - TUESDAY 6 SEPTEMBER



Duke of York Inn at Berrow. WR13 6JQ



FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

Thankfully the recent longer period of high temperatures has passed and I have found the energy to think of writing this note. There were even a few drops of rain this morning but they soon evaporated. There was a time when I enjoyed this kind of weather, but not anymore.

The last time I put pencil to paper for the newsletter was during the very hot weekend following the successful Summer Party. The temperatures were in the mid 30's and consequently I was rather slow in sending the copy to Fraser and so I missed the deadline. Therefore, thanks again to all those who attended and those who so generously contributed to the success of the afternoon.

Also, I take this rather belated opportunity to welcome our newest member Reg Nuttall to the club and I hope we will see Reg and his wife Brenda at the lunches and other events.

I had a look back at previous Chair John's entry in last August's newsletter and at that time the foremost topic was still Covid and when we would be able to meet again in the hall. Now we are meeting again and a number of us have contracted Covid (not because we are meeting) but seemingly with few lasting effects and it is now pretty much off the agenda.

We look forward to more of the enjoyable monthly lunches so ably arranged by Peter and no doubt with assistance from Lee. There looks to be more interesting theatre productions in view and I hope that we will be visiting the theatres over the winter months.

However, summer is not yet over and with the prospect of "normal" weather I hope that you are all able to take advantage of more fine days to come. Keep cool and keep well.

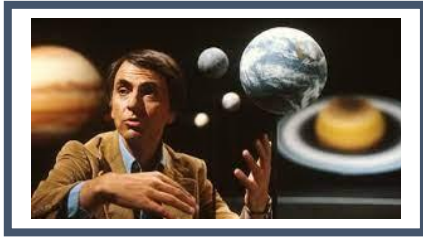
Andrew

Where am I?



**Answer to last
month's picture quiz
was:**

Newent Memorial Hall.



Tuesday 13 September 2022

Carl Sagan – Astronomer

By Chris Johnson

American astronomer, planetary scientist, cosmologist, astrophysicist, astrobiologist, author, and science communicator. His best known scientific contribution is research on extra-terrestrial life, including experimental demonstration of the production of amino acids from basic chemicals by radiation. Sagan assembled the first physical messages sent into space, the Pioneer plaque and the Voyager Golden Record, universal messages that could potentially be understood by any extra-terrestrial intelligence that might find them.



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Perestroika – from building to collapse

Marsha Lees

Perestroika was a political movement for reform within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) during the late 1980s widely associated with CPSU general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev and his glasnost (meaning "openness") policy reform. The literal meaning of perestroika is "reconstruction", referring to the restructuring of the Soviet political and economic system, in an attempt to end the Era of Stagnation. When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he inherited a political and economic mess. The Novosibirsk report prepared by Soviet sociologist Tatyana Zaslavskaya, published in the West in the spring of 1984, already had revealed the deep structural problems confronting the Soviet leadership. The years of Communist rule had choked the economy—stifling innovation and destroying initiative—and produced political cynicism born of overt corruption of the ruling elite. Gorbachev knew full well the extent of the situation he inherited. But after six years in power and despite much talk about renewal and restructuring, the economy is worse off and the Soviet Union no longer exists as a political entity. As a program of economic restructuring, perestroika must be judged as an utter failure. Glasnost to be sure produced a political and cultural awakening of sorts unknown during the 74 years of Communist rule, but perestroika failed to deliver the economic goods.

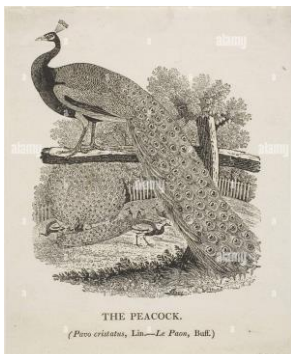
The Art of Travel Persuasion

Or the History of travel posters

By Jim Cooper

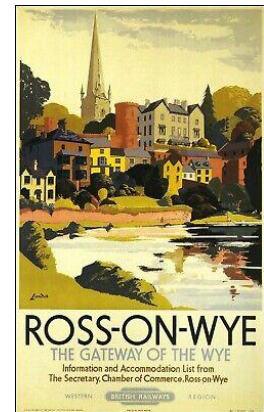
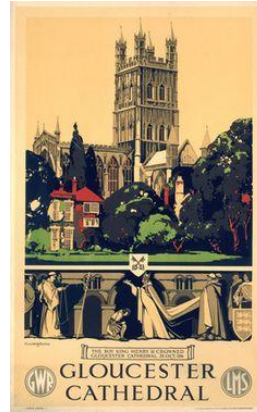
We did not know there was so much of interest in poster art until we heard the excellent illustrated talk by Jim Cooper at our recent PROBUS meeting.

The very first posters were no doubt produced by our cave ancestors drawing on cave walls, but Jim started his talk in the mid-18th Century with the very earliest attempts to make reproduceable illustrations for the printed books of that period. These images were made using a woodcut carving that could, by inking the raised picture and pressing paper onto the woodcut, produce a small black and white image that could be printed alongside written text to illustrate a printed book. A peacock by Thomas Berwick was a popular picture produced in in this fashion in 1797. Early in the 19th Century, it was realised that colour could be added by producing two complementary woodcuts with the colour inserts on a matching plate which needed to be very carefully aligned to overprint the black and white picture.



This technique was used by artists such as Hokusai of Japan in the 1830's. The big advance came with the invention of lithograph printing later in the 19th Century which used carved flat stones to produce a wax negative image that can be inked and reused many times to produce multiple images suitable for mass production of books or posters. By the 20th Century this had developed into the use of etched plates and was the usual method of producing posters is still in use today. Colours could be introduced by using a number of plates with each colour inked on every sheet in order to create a coloured picture.

By the end of the 19th Century this method was being used to mass produce posters which were used by hotels to publicise their services and rapidly recognised by the railways as an excellent way to promote travel by train. After the first world war there was a boom in the production of travel posters extolling the beauty of holiday areas and promoting the use of rail for tourism worldwide.



We were shown many examples, including those made for London Underground to encourage the use of their systems. We were shown posters of Cheltenham, Ross on Wye and Gloucester which were produced by the Great Western Railway, often in cooperation with the other railway companies and local authorities wishing to promote tourism in their areas.

Many very well-known artists were employed by these companies to produce posters and artists such as Fred Taylor and Norman Wilkinson became famous. Such were the quality of these posters that they have now become collector's items and sell at auction for many thousands of Pounds.

Not surprisingly, the first airlines, such as Imperial Airways, and the motor car industry also joined in the production of some popular series of paintings. Shell, in particular, was noted for its posters and Jim showed numerous examples of their work.

Jim commented that our parents should have kept the posters they may have had. One collector, Malcolm Guest who died in 2009, had a collection which sold at that time for over £1Million. But sadly, BR in the 1960's, saw such items as old fashioned and burnt about 30,000 posters. What would they have been worth today?

The talk concluded with many questions and a fascinating morning was much appreciated by those who were present.

David Clowes



The Story of Triumph

The Triumph Motorcycle Company



I am an ex-biker, one who still deludes himself that he is capable of riding and yes controlling, those power mad monsters of yesteryear. So, it was with mounting excitement when I saw that a forthcoming talk by our speaker Ray Sturdy, was on my favourite marque, the Triumph motor cycle.

Triumphs, you see, were my first love and, like all such romances, one that will always occupy a place in my heart. In fact, if truth be told, it was my first proper bike. I had flirted outrageously with puny two strokes but tired, of metaphorically Charles Atlas like having that sand kicked in my face by beach bullies, I, to the concern of a worried mother, resolved to go for big and, accordingly, became the proud if somewhat apprehensive owner of a Triumph Speed Twin – 500cc of unrestrained muscle, a veritable boulevard cruiser and babe magnet.

However, if the truth be known, it wasn't just the unrestrained power and looks that were behind my purchase. Hitherto all bikes had a separate saddle and pillion seat with a respectable gap between the two but the new Speed Twin had a dual seat which meant that with judicious braking and fast cornering, gravity, would force the (hoped for) female passenger into close proximity to me, the rider. I will stop there in the interests of modesty.

Ray Sturdy's talk did not disappoint, coming as it did from a fellow biker who to this day still owns and rides, if somewhat rarely a 1000 cc Triumph Bonneville.

For something so fundamentally English it was a surprise to many that the firm was started in the 1870s by a pair of Germans as pedal cycle manufacturers and they did not start until the turn of the century to put small engines into basic cycle frames.

Aided by clever design and good marketing, the firm flourished to such an extent that, despite being German owned they were awarded a contract to supply motor bikes to the British Army in WW1.

In the interwar years, the company entered the field of competitive racing, scoring many successes including the prestigious Isle of Man TT races on several occasions.

Their speed, allied to that of reliability saw them awarded a further contract, this time for 40000 bikes for the Army in WW2. The reflected glory of a streamlined Triumph setting the land speed record of 214 mph at Bonneville, at Utah in 1956 further consolidated their position as one of the world's leading brands as did Marlon Brando's insistence that his mount for his Oscar winning performance in the anti-establishment film *The Wild One* should be a Triumph

But storm clouds were on the horizon; Triumph, in common with the rest of the UK's motor industry ignored the threat of the rebuilt Japanese motorcycle industry and within a short time would find itself bankrupt, outclassed by a resurgent Japanese manufacturer.

All seemed lost until a property developer, John Bloor, eyeing the Triumph works in the Midlands, decided instead to breathe new life in the brand and today it is a world-class brand with its future seemingly assured for many years to come.

Peter Hayes

Where would you be if?

- 1 The parliament is the longest continuously running in the world.
- 2 You are standing beside Lady Isabella.
- 3 On the roads, some of the kerbstones are painted alternately black and white
- 4 The cat's eyes on some of the roads are at the sides of the road instead of in the centre.
- 5 You are looking out to sea and can see the Tower of Refuge.

When your tattoo artist is deaf..



"May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but, laying aside all private interests and prejudices, keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all mankind."

From the Daily Prayer of the House of Commons

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"
Lukę 23:34

Why English is so hard to learn

We'll begin with **box**; the plural is **boxes**,
But the plural of **ox** is **oxen**, not **oxes**.
One fowl is a **goose** and two are called **geese**.
Yet the plural of **moose** is never called **meese**.
You may find a lone **mouse** or a house full of **mice**;
But the plural of **house** is **houses** not **hice**.
But the plural of **man** is always **men**,
But the plural of **pan** is never **pen**.
If I speak of a **foot** and you show me two **feet**,
And I give you a **book**, would a pair be a **beek**?
If one is a **tooth** and a whole set are **teeth**
Why shouldn't two **booths** be called **beeth**?
If the singular's **this** and the plural is **these**,
Should the plural of **kiss** be ever called **keese**?
We speak of a **brother** and also of **brethren**,
But though we say **mother**, we never say **methren**.
Then the masculine pronouns are **he**, **his**, and **him**;
But imagine the feminine...**she**, **shis** and **shim**

Anonymous

Geoff and Mary, an elderly couple, are driving through Norfolk, when they come to the village of Happisburgh. Neither of them had ever been there before and started arguing on how it was pronounced. Needless to say, both of them thought they knew best and kept on bickering until eventually they decided to stop for something to eat. Geoff went up to the counter and smiled at the pretty waitress and said, "Miss, before we order, could you please help to settle an argument" The waitress said "Of course how can I help you" Geoff said "Could you please pronounce where we are right now, very slowly" he said.

The young waitress lent over the counter and said,
"Yes Sir! Its Burr-gerrr Kiiing"

**WHY DON'T THE 99% OF US
WHO AREN'T OFFENDED BY
EVERYTHING STOP
CATERING FOR THE 1% WHO
ARE?**

**We are living in a
generation that would
unplug your life
support, just to charge
their cell phone.**

One for the ladies

**Three blonde men are stranded on an island
Suddenly a fairy appears and offers to grant each one of them a wish.
The first blonde asks to be intelligent. Instantly, he is turned into a brown-haired man and swims off the island.
The next one asks to be even more intelligent than the previous one, so he is turned into a black-haired man. He then builds a boat and sails off the island.
The third blonde asks to become even more intelligent than the previous two. The fairy turns him into a woman, and she walks off the island across the bridge.**

PP

A defendant isn't happy with how things are going in court, so he decides to give the judge a hard time.
The Judge says: "Where do you work?"
Defendant replies: "Here and there."
Judge says: "What do you do for a living?"
Defendant replies: "This and that."
Judge says: "Take him away."
Defendant calls out: "Wait; when will I get out?"
The Judge says: "Sooner or later."

I think I have got old!

I've had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees, fought prostate cancer and diabetes. I can't see very well, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 20 different medicines, that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to blackouts. I have poor circulation; hardly feel my hands and feet anymore. I have bouts of dementia; I can't remember if I'm 85 or 92. I have lost all my friends.
Thank God, I still have my driver's license.

What's in a Name?



When I joined Probus - oh those many long and pre-Covid years ago when the world was a more innocent place and the thought of entering a bank wearing a mask belonged to our childhood fantasies, its name used to intrigue me. Bearing in mind that mother had always instructed me to look up to my elders, and hence betters, I naturally assumed that it had some esoteric roots or at worst it had its origins in some dead language that only those who had studied at some fusty ancient university could possibly know. Naturally, I drew a blank with my first thoughts, Greek or Latin and in desperation I drew on Sumerian, the dialects of the Incas and even, in desperation American and the more obscure languages and civilisations that had long since, to quote Monty Python “*ceased to be*”.

And then I had my lightbulb moment. Of course, it was an acronym, that is a name formed by the initial letters of words and pronounced as a word. A lifelong devotee of crosswords, trivia and a fount of useless information, I eschewed looking it up or even googling it. No, hair shirt firmly donned and securely fastened to my overly sensitive skin, I resolved to do it the hard way by trial and error.

People **R**etiring **O**r **B**ecoming **U**nemployed **S**olely was an early attempt and **P**art-time **R**eaching **O**ut **B**efore **U**sed **S**incerely and **P**re **O**bscurity **B**landness **U**ntil **S**unset followed closely behind. Obviously, a resounding NO. Many were the other examples that crossed my fevered mind, too scurrilous or obscene to mention in such an organ as this.

At last, wearied and broken down by a fruitless search, I capitulated. **P**ROfessional, **B**USINESS I ask you! If I had known, I would probably have disqualified myself from becoming a member. I know Groucho Marx was right. “*Never join a club that would have you as a member*”

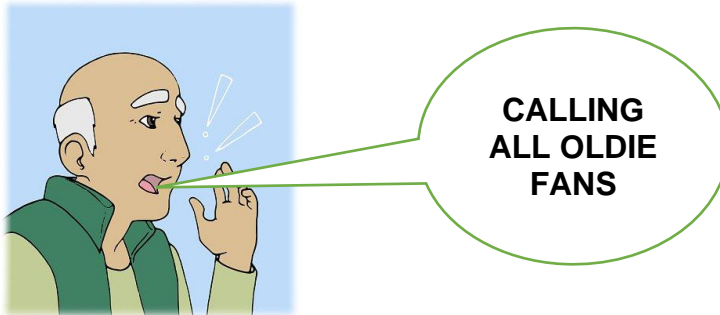
STOP PRESS

Your illustrious editor has reminded me of his favourite:

“Prostate Removed Other Bits Under Suspicion

PH

The **Oldie**



Are there any would be readers, or even lapsed readers of the “Oldie” out there? If so, would anyone like my monthly copy of it after I have finished with it? Please contact by whatever means suits you.

I always used to dispose of mine to the doctors’ waiting room, to sit there alongside the yellowing copies of National Geographic Magazine or perhaps even Punch; alas, as yet another by product of Covid, the surgery no longer accepts them, citing hygiene reasons and I feel it a shame to waste so much good reading and consign them to recycling.

Inexplicably, if there is anyone out there who had never heard of it, I should explain that, as its title implies, it is aimed at a particular demographic and contains a wealth of talented writers, including Roger Lewis, Valerie Grove and Gyles Brandreth. One regular feature that I am sure will resonate among a certain few of us is “*The Grumpy Old Man*”

I hope to hear from lots of you

PETER HAYES



PROBUS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Its only 104 days to the Christmas Lunch

John Martin has asked if anyone has personal experience of a venue which they think might be suitable for our Christmas Lunch. It’s quite a way off, but these venues get booked up very quickly. So, if you could email him as soon as possible he would be grateful.

The Isle of Man



Jill and I spent a few very pleasant days on The Isle of Man in April. The island has a long and fascinating history going back to early population around 6500 BC. It is an island nation and its parliament, The Tynwald has been self-governing continuously for over one thousand years.



It is a British Crown Dependency, for which Queen Elizabeth II is Head of State, holding the title Lord of Mann, being represented by a Lieutenant Governor. The United Kingdom is responsible for the island's military defence.

Among the things we enjoyed were travelling on the electric railways to visit various parts of the island including the village of Laxey where we were able to visit the world's **largest working water** wheel built in 1854 to pump water away from the great Laxey Mines industrial complex.



The Laxey Wheel, also known as Lady Isabella, it is built into the hillside above the village of Laxey. Designed by Robert Casement, the wheel is 72-feet-6-inches (22.1 m) in diameter, is 6 feet (1.8 m) wide revolving at approximately three revolutions per minute, and is an example of a backshot (also known as pitchback) wheel where the water enters the wheel at or near the top giving it a much higher efficiency than the more commonly encountered undershot wheel. It was named "Lady Isabella" after the wife of Lieutenant Governor Charles Hope, who was the island's governor at that time.

Whilst we weren't there during the Isle of Man TT Races, we saw a lot of the preparatory work and permanent indications that some of the roads were used for more than the usual type of road traffic.



Amongst these indications were alternately painted **black and white kerb stones** on the outside curve of bends in the road as well as **cat's eyes at the sides of the road** instead of along the centre line. One can imagine the risks associated with cat's eyes in the centre of the road and a motorbike going over one at high speed, leaning over on a wet road!

The Isle of Man TT is run in a time-trial format on public roads closed to the public by an Act of Tynwald. The event consists of one week of practice sessions followed by one week of racing and it has been a tradition, started by racing competitors in the early 1920s, for spectators to tour the Snaefell Mountain Course on motorcycles during the Isle of Man TT on Mad Sunday, an informal and unofficial sanctioned event held on the Sunday between Practice Week and Race Week.

The first Isle of Man TT race was held on Tuesday 28 May 1907 and was called the International Auto-Cycle Tourist Trophy. The event was organised by the Auto-Cycle Club over 10 laps of the Isle of Man St John's Short Course of 15 miles 1,470 yards for road-legal 'touring' motorcycles with exhaust silencers, saddles, pedals and mudguards.

From 1911, the Isle of Man TT transferred to the much longer Snaefell Mountain Course of 37.40 miles (60.19 km) (current length 37.73 miles (60.72 km)). Its elevation goes from sea-level to 1,300 feet. The race programme developed from a single race with two classes for the 1907 Isle of Man TT gradually expanding to eight races in the 2022 schedule, varying in length from 3 to 6 laps (37.73 miles per lap!)

The current lap record was established in 2018 at an average speed of 135.5 mph over 6 laps (226.38 miles) and is considered to be the most dangerous motorsport event in the world. **265 people have been killed taking part since 1911.**

Although races have been cancelled on occasion, due to poor visibility, this has been mainly done so that rescue helicopters are able to operate safely.



Fairy Bridge, is a small bridge over the Santon Burn in the Isle of Man, located on the primary A5 Port Erin to Douglas road, on the parish boundary A superstition associated with the Fairy Bridge is that passers-by must greet the fairies as they cross it; it is considered bad luck not to greet them.

The **Tower of Refuge** is a stone-built castellated structure which was erected on St Mary's Isle (also known as the Conister Rock) in Douglas Bay, Isle of Man, in order to afford shelter to mariners wrecked on the rock.



The tower was constructed through the endeavours of Sir William Hillary, who had been instrumental in several rescues of sailors stranded on the rock, and which culminated in the heroic rescue of the crew of the Saint George Steam Packet Company steamer RMS St George, when it foundered on the rock in the early hours of November 20, 1830. Sir William personally contributed a high proportion of the costs and secured a substantial number of public contributions for funding the structure.

Sir William who moved to the island in 1808, and after witnessing many disasters was instrumental in setting up the RNLi which was eventually founded in 1824

We felt the island has the feeling of England fifty years ago which adds to its charm, and amongst other things, the electric rail journey to the top of Snaefell and a visit to the Motor Museum are not to be missed.

John Martin

Thanks to Peter Hayes, John Martin and David Clowes who submitted articles. I would like to hear from other members as well.

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Ed (temp)



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