

# NEWSLETTER



## NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



**PUB LUNCH - TUESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER**



**The Bunch of Carrots at Hampton Bishop, HR1 4JR.**



## FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

My goodness, what a month of events since I last put a note together. A change of Prime Minister followed by a change of Monarch is enough to deal with in any one year let alone a week. However, as we continue onwards in Probus I am very pleased to welcome our new member Kelvin Ashby. I am sure we will all make him welcome to the club. No doubt Fraser will soon lean on him for a short resume of his background for the newsletter. Hopefully numbers will continue to increase over the year and we will reach an equilibrium of membership which may be lower than in past years but will at least keep membership stable.

On the social side the club continues to enjoy the pub lunches although I know that Peter is having some difficulty in finding venues that can cope with the numbers and are open on a Tuesday. Unfortunately, I was unable to raise the necessary numbers to make a theatre visit viable but I will look at this again in the new year. I am aware and do understand that meeting with a crowd of strangers in a theatre or cinema feels very different from meeting with people you know such as at the pub lunches.

**A WORD OF WARNING** to members and wives. As money gets tight there are several new scams coming to light some of which involve making appointments for home visits. Having got your address a burglary soon follows. Perhaps more likely is opportunist bag snatching in and around Newent. Jenny had her bag snatched at 4.30pm while walking home from WI. The lesson is not to carry more than you need and keep to busier paths and roads.

On a lighter note, the answer to last month's photo quiz was the Iron Works at Blaenavon World Heritage Site. This is where the process of producing basic consistent quality steel was discovered. Big Pit is close by and without going down the mine a visit to the galleries will give you an experience of mining through the ages. Well worth a visit.

Keep safe,

*Andrew*

## Where am I?



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

Iron Works at Blaenavon  
Nr Abergavenny  
(Gwaith Haearn Blaenafon  
Y Fenni)



**Tuesday 11 OCTOBER**

**The Mappa Mundi**

**By Peter Petrie**

### **Mappa Mundi**

Hereford Cathedral is home to the Hereford Mappa Mundi, one of the world's unique medieval treasures. Measuring 1.59 x 1.34 metres (5'2" by 4'4"), the map is constructed on a single sheet of vellum (calf skin). Scholars believe it was made around the year 1300 and shows the history, geography and destiny of humanity as it was understood in Christian Europe in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The inhabited part of the world as it was known then, roughly equivalent to Europe, Asia and North Africa, is mapped within a Christian framework. Jerusalem is in the centre, and east is at the top. East, where the sun rises, was where medieval Christians looked for the second coming of Christ.



**25 OCTOBER 2022**

**“How to bring the rich and powerful down to size”**

**Mike Warburton**

Mike will be talking about some political scandals we have known and loved, ways to eject a government minister from his home and how he helped extract an apology from the head of HMRC.  
All good clean fun!



## PROTECTING YOUR COMPUTER

### How common is it for your email to be hacked?

It's actually extremely uncommon. People tend to think that this kind of thing happens all the time, but it's actually pretty rare. These days, the main way you're going to get in trouble with emails is if you open a phishing scam.

### Things You Should Know

- 1. Create a strong password.** A good password is hard for other people to guess, difficult for software to crack, but easy for you to remember. It can be difficult to come up with a password that meets all of your email service's criteria that's actually easy to remember, but here are a few tips:
  - **Your password should be long:** The golden rule now is that a password should be 12 characters and contain a mix of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols.
  - **Don't forget to password-protect your phone or tablet:** Even if it makes it take a little longer to access your home screen, always password-protect your mobile devices. If someone else gains access to your unlocked phone or tablet, they'll have access to all of your apps, including your email.
- 2. Use a unique password for your email account.** Avoid the temptation of reusing passwords on multiple accounts. If you use the same password to log in to your favourite website as you do your  your email at risk—if someone cracks your password on that site, they'll also have your email password.
  - Since there are so many passwords to remember nowadays, you may want to try using a password manager.
  - Avoid choosing the option to save your passwords on the web. If you save your password to make it easier to log in, anyone using your computer may access your email. This is especially important when you're using a public computer.
- 3. Turn on two-step verification.** Most of the popular email services, such as Gmail and Outlook, allow you to enable two-step verification, which adds a second layer of protection to your account. When two-step verification is turned on, you'll also have to enter a special security code that is sent to you via SMS or in an authentication app when logging in from an unknown source (a computer in a different area than you usually log in from). This means that if someone manages to crack your email password, they'd also need access to your phone to actually sign in.

**4. Make sure your computer is up-to-date and protected.** To stay safe, make sure your anti-virus/anti malware software is up to date and running the latest version of your operating system and email application. Out of date security suites often don't have the coding necessary to deal with newer viruses or hacks.

- Also, be careful when installing free software—sometimes software comes with sketchy malware. Research apps before you install them.
- If you're using Gmail, you should frequently check which apps you've allowed access to your account or perform a Security Check. If you're using Outlook, you can check your account history to make sure nothing you haven't approved has happened.

**5. Avoid opening attachments unless you already know what it is.** Unless you know exactly who the sender is and what the attachment is for, resist the urge to click anything in the email. Attachments can install malware on your computer, which makes it easy for hackers to access your email and your personal information.

**6. Don't click any login links or buttons in an email message.** Scam emails might also include fake login links or buttons that redirect you to a different website that captures your password. These emails are often **very** convincing and look like they come from a legitimate company or service you do business with. Even clicking the link can bring you to a site that looks like one you use often.

- If an email asks you to log in to update information or correct a billing error, open a

- Does the message contain an offer that's too good to be true, or a claim that you've won a contest you never actually entered? Are you being asked to wire money to someone you don't know? These are all signs of scams.
- When in doubt, if a scammer claims to be affiliated with a company, contact the company or service directly by phone or on their website. If there's a phone number in the email, don't call it—instead, go directly to the company's official website and locate the phone number there. Sometimes scammers include fake contact information.

**8. Make your security question answers difficult to guess.** If your email provider allows you to set up security questions in the event that you lose your password, don't enter answers that someone else can figure out, such as your mother's maiden name or your first pet's name.

If the questions provided are pretty simple, you may want to enter something that isn't the actual answer to the question—such as "Flamingo" as your mother's maiden name. Just make sure not to forget what you enter!

**BE ALERT !**

**Being a little older, I am very fortunate to have someone call and check on me everyday. He is from India and is very concerned about my car warranty.**

**Never confuse education with intelligence.**



**Why you shouldn't wait until retirement to travel**



**NEVER MAKE A WOMAN MAD.  
THEY CAN REMEMBER STUFF  
THAT HASN'T EVEN  
HAPPENED YET.**



### Carl Sagan (1934- 1996)

When one is first introduced to the works and achievements of Carl Sagan it is akin to being overawed by the sheer size of the solar system- seemingly impossible to comprehend. How can one human brain know so much, as Shakespeare almost said “ *tis wonder that one small head can hold so much knowledge*”.

Fellow member **Chris Johnson**, in his talk to members, attempted the seemingly impossible task of encapsulating the lifetime achievements of Sagan into a talk of modest proportions. That he succeeded is a measure of his grasp of his subject.

Carl was, in his time, an astronomer, astrophysicist, prolific author and founder of the modern discipline of planetary science and exobiology [for the uninitiated that is the branch of science that deals with the possibility and likely nature of life on other planets or in space.]

He was that rare form of child prodigy – one who did not burn himself out in adult life nor descend into a world of drug fuelled debauchery; indeed, it was a life spent in questioning everything and, if not satisfied with the answers he received, to provide his own solution. His teachers recommended that he should attend a school for the gifted but finance prevented this.

From an early age, the stars and planets fascinated him and, already a voracious reader, he devoured books on astronomy and by scientists such as Huxley, Eddington and Jeans. Carl's curiosity made him soak up everything he could about science in general and astronomy in particular.

At university, he majored in physics and, over the space of nine years he, obtained a further three degrees. While there, in his late teens he also assisted Henry Muller a Nobel prize winner. Soon afterwards he was headhunted by Gerard Kuiper, considered by many to be the father of modern planetary science to work on a top-secret project – that which had the now farcical intention to drop an atomic bomb on the Moon which, thankfully, never came to fruition.

In the late 1960s he became the Director of the Laboratory for Planetary Studies at Cornell University and it was there he worked on the Pioneer 1 and 2 space rockets followed by the Viking mission to Mars. Research into possible Alien civilisations followed soon afterwards which eventually led to the development of the Arecibo Telescope which made possible the scanning of hundreds of billions of stars; in spite of this no communication with other civilisations ever happened

Much more inter-planetary exploration followed, principally to Saturn and Jupiter where many discoveries were made.

Over an all too short lifetime. Carl had myelodysplasia for two years and receiving three bone marrow transplants from his sister, Sagan died from pneumonia at the age of 62 at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle, Washington, on December 20, 1996

Sagan received many awards, including The Public Welfare medal, Konstantin medal of the Soviet Cosmonauts Federation and having a satellite named after him; he has also received 22 honorary degrees for his contributions to science, literature, education and the environment. He also found time to write over 20 books, many of which were best sellers.

Perhaps his only disappointment was never finding a signal that intelligent life existed elsewhere other than Earth but surely those achievements listed, plus many many more, made up for this.

Chris's talk opened many eyes to not only a polymath who was one of the first to popularise science and to bring it to the masses. Perhaps at first bemused by the sheer breadth of both Sagan's achievements and scholarship, questions were slow to come by but a trickle soon turned into a flood and the chairman had to bring proceedings to a halt, when Chris was roundly thanked for his talk.



Sad news from the Nestle factory today when a member of staff was seriously injured when a pallet of chocolate fell more than 20 feet and crushed him underneath.

He tried in vain to attract attention, but every time he shouted “The Milky Bars are on me”

Everyone cheered!

Courtesy of Tim Vine



"You put a round thing on a spinning plate with a needle and then you play with buttons and knobs ... only old people know how to do it!"

A Yorkshireman and his wife walked past a swanky new restaurant.

"Did you smell that food?" she asked. "It smells lovely"

So being the kind hearted Yorkshireman...

He thought, "What the heck, I'll treat her"

So they walked past it again!





## Perestroika: from Rebuilding to Collapse

Back in the 1980's your average man or woman in the street might have known a solitary word of Russian "Nyet" (No) almost certainly; they would most likely have got that from that well known democrat Nikita Khrushchev's habit of saying that to every overture the West had made in negotiations at the height of the Cold War, accompanied, if he was in a particularly bad mood by taking off his shoe and repeatedly thumping, if no unfortunate lackey was within reach, then his podium.

40 odd years ago, all that changed with that man on the Clapham omnibus's vocabulary tripling in size to three or even four. Those additional words were, of course, *Perestroika*, *Glasnost* and *Oligarch* and they originated from an equally unlikely source, that of a personage no less than President Mikal Gorbachev. Or "Gorby", as he became popularly known in the West.

Our speaker Marsha Lees, herself a Russian citizen, began her thought provoking and often scary talk that commenced with those words but rapidly came to embrace what has gone wrong with what, in itself, was an admirable concept, but was not based on altruism. Instead, it arose from necessity because the Russian economy was in a perilous state and their leaders sought to emulate the West with a degree of free and private enterprise.

Like so many good intentions, it led to a form of Hell in that corruption, for so long a feature of Russian politics, crept in.

Perestroika ("restructuring" in Russian) refers to a series of political and economic reforms meant to kick-start the stagnant 1980s economy of the Soviet Union. Its architect, President Mikhail Gorbachev, oversaw the most fundamental changes to his nation's economic engine and political structure since the Russian Revolution. But the suddenness of these reforms, coupled with growing instability both inside and out of the Soviet Union, would contribute to the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in 1991.

In May 1985, two months after coming to power, Mikhail Gorbachev delivered a speech in St. Petersburg, in which he publicly criticized the inefficient economic system of the Soviet Union, making him the first Communist leader to do so. This was followed by a February 1986 speech to the Communist Party Congress, in which he expanded upon the need for political and economic restructuring, or perestroika, and called for a new era of transparency and openness, or glasnost.

Hand in hand with this came the word Oligarch 'rule by few'; a form of power structure in which power rests with a small number of people. These people may or may not be distinguished by one or several characteristics, such as nobility, fame, wealth, education, or corporate, religious, political, or military control. This was truly reflected in what became a ruling hierarchy in late 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia.

Throughout history, oligarchies have often been tyrannical, relying on public obedience or oppression to exist. Aristotle pioneered the use of the term as meaning rule by the rich, for which another term commonly used today is plutocracy. In the early 20th century Robert Michels developed the theory that democracies, like all large organizations, tend to turn into oligarchies. In his "Iron law of oligarchy" he suggests that the necessary division of labour in large organizations leads to the establishment of a ruling class mostly concerned with protecting their own power.

Russia is a huge country, awash with natural assets which, in pure Communist times were owned and managed by the State. When the heavy hand of state control was lifted from the primary industries e.g., extractive ones like mining and gas, ownership passed to individuals who were already active in Party circles at knockdown prices. This enabled those well-connected ones to become literally fabulously wealthy and who, in turn exercised great influence not only in their own country but, and in particular the UK

This “privatisation” did not bring the economic benefits that were planned and led to the breakup of the Russian Federation for which the President and architect behind perestroika was blamed, leading to a coup against him in 1991. He was probably mourned more in the West than in his own country, principally for his efforts in ending the Cold War. His legacy lives on though with the wealthy becoming even wealthier and the Russian poor getting poorer.

A worrying talk, but well delivered was the reaction of the club, who gave Marsha well deserved applause.

## Товарищ Питер Хейс

Tovarishch Piter Kheys

***A western journalist was speaking to a Russian journalist and asked;***

***“Do you think Putin will ever relinquish the presidency?”***

***“Of course!”***

***“When?”***

***“Immediately after his coronation!”***



***Vladimir Putin called the White House,***

***“Hello, Donald? I would like to discuss Ukraine with you.”***

***Trump: “What’s Ukraine?”***

***Putin: “Thanks, Donald!”***



## PROBUS Christmas Lunch – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2022



**Hatherley Manor Hotel, Down Hatherley Lane,  
Gloucester, GL2 9QA**

| <b>Menu</b>  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Roasted Carrot and Tomato Soup</b> (V, VE, GF,DF,NF)  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Smooth Chicken Liver Pate</b><br>Ale Chutney, Baby Salad Leaves, Toasted Brioche (DF,GF)  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Potted Prawn Cocktail</b><br>Buttered Brown Bread (DF, GF)  | <b>3</b> |
| ***  |          |
| <b>Roasted Turkey Breast</b><br>Roast Potatoes, Selection of Vegetables, Pigs in Blankets,<br>Sausage Meat Stuffing, Red Wine Gravy<br>(NF, DF, GF without stuffing) | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Baked Fillet of Haddock</b><br>Spinach Potato Cake, Saffron Cream Sauce (GF, NF)  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Slow Roast Shin of Beef</b><br>Root Vegetables, Mashed Potato, Red Wine Sauce   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Sweet Potato Wellington</b><br>Spinach Cajan Spice, Roast Potatoes & Vegetables (VE, DF, NF)  | <b>4</b> |
| ***  |          |
| <b>Traditional Warm Figgy Plum Pudding</b><br>Brandy Sauce (V, VE, GF)   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Individual White Chocolate, Raspberry Cheesecake</b><br>Raspberry Coulis, Chocolate Shavings  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Chocolate Orange Torte</b><br>Fruit Compote (VE, GF, NF)  | <b>3</b> |
| ***  |          |
| <b>Tea/Coffee Mini mince pies</b>  |          |
| ***  |          |
| (V) = Vegetarian, (VE) = Vegan, (DF) = Dairy Free, (GF) = Gluten Free,   |          |

you please let me have names and menu choices, by email if possible, by Monday 14th November, to [johnandjillmartin@btinternet.com](mailto:johnandjillmartin@btinternet.com). As last year, I have annotated the menu with a simple code so that all I need are the relevant codes to identify your choices. If you are unable to let me know by email, a phone call or answerphone message to 01452 760109 will suffice, but email will be preferred. I'm looking forward to receiving your replies and a good turnout. **The cost of the Lunch will be £33.00 per person**, and Treasurer Mike will be in contact in due course.

**That's  
all folks**

