

NEWSLETTER



NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



U P C O M I N G
E V E N T S

PUB LUNCH - TUESDAY 1st NOVEMBER



The White Hart, Broadoak, GL14 1JB.



FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

A few days ago, Fraser asked me if I have a few words of wisdom for the newsletter. A few words I can manage, but I'm not sure about the wisdom, as I forgot about it and am now writing this shortly after arriving at an hotel in Carlisle, as we travel home again after visiting the grandchildren in Aberdeenshire.

A long journey (950+ miles) broken up with stays at Dumfries and Dundee on the way up. The weather was cool and blowy but not cold so on balance pretty good. The sight of skeins of hundreds of geese flying over is amazing to see.

Enough of me and something about Probus. The Pub lunches continue to be a success and with lunches in mind, can I remind you all to book your place for the Christmas lunch if you are intending to join us. Contact John Martin as soon as possible.

We are also hoping to restart some of our other social evenings, such as the quiz and bowls, but more on that later as it will be January before anything is finally arranged.

In the meantime, if you have any plans for a family evening on Halloween or Guy Fawkes night then enjoy yourselves and I hope to see a good number of you this Tuesday at the White Hart, Broadoak, for the pub lunch.

Andrew

Where am I?



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

**Raglan Castle,
Monmouthshire
(Castell Rhaglan,
Sir Fynwy)**



PROBUS Christmas Lunch – 13th December 2022 - 12.30 for 13.00



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

Menu	
Roasted Carrot and Tomato Soup (V, VE, GF,DF,NF)	S1
Smooth Chicken Liver Pate Ale Chutney, Baby Salad Leaves, Toasted Brioche (DF,GF)	S2
Potted Prawn Cocktail Buttered Brown Bread (DF, GF)	S3

Roasted Turkey Breast Roast Potatoes, Selection of Vegetables, Pigs in Blankets, Sausage Meat Stuffing, Red Wine Gravy (NF, DF, GF without stuffing)	M1
Baked Fillet of Haddock Spinach Potato Cake, Saffron Cream Sauce (GF, NF)	M2
Slow Roast Shin of Beef Root Vegetables, Mashed Potato, Red Wine Sauce	M3
Sweet Potato Wellington Spinach Cajan Spice, Roast Potatoes & Vegetables (VE, DF, NF)	M4

Traditional Warm Figgy Plum Pudding Brandy Sauce (V, VE, GF)	D1
Individual White Chocolate, Raspberry Cheesecake Raspberry Coulis, Chocolate Shavings	D2
Chocolate Orange Torte Fruit Compote (VE, GF, NF)	D3

Tea/Coffee Mini mince pies	

(V) = Vegetarian, (VE) = Vegan, (DF) = Dairy Free, (GF) = Gluten Free, (NF) Nut Free	
<p>Please let John Martin have names and menu choices, by email if possible, by Monday 14th November, to 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.</p>	



8 NOVEMBER

**The Great Fire of
London**

Fraser Gunn

The **Great Fire of London** was a major conflagration that swept through central London from Sunday, 2 September to Thursday, 6 September 1666, gutting the medieval City of London inside the old Roman city wall, while also extending past the wall to the west. The fire spread over nearly the whole City, destroying St Paul's Cathedral. The death toll is generally thought to have been relatively small, although some historians have challenged this belief.



22 NOVEMBER

**The Gloucestershire Regiment
At the Imjin River – Korea 1951**

Dr Tim Brain

The **Battle of the Imjin River** took place 22–25 April 1951 during the Korean War. Troops from the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) attacked United Nations Command positions on the lower Imjin River in an attempt to achieve a breakthrough and recapture the South Korean capital Seoul.

"Though minor in scale, the battle's ferocity caught the imagination of the world", especially the fate of the 1st Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment, which was outnumbered and eventually surrounded by Chinese forces on Hill 235, a feature that became known as Gloster Hill. The stand of the Gloucestershire battalion, together with other actions of the 29th Brigade in the Battle of the Imjin River, has become an important part of British military history and tradition

I was down in the Forest chatting to a former Coleford Town Councillor earlier this week, a good and animated conversation.

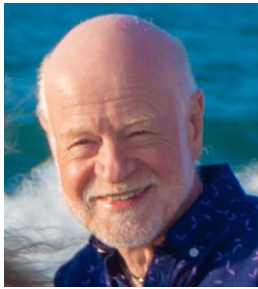
He stunned me by his great depth of language knowledge and classic literature references.

"Good grief" I said, "Have you swallowed a Thesaurus?"

"No boy" he replied "I thought they woz all hextinct"

Apparently not all his lights were switched on!

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER



KELVIN ASHBY

I was born and educated near High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire and moved to Gloucestershire in 1982 to live in Highnam with my wife Jane and our 3 young children.

I trained as a mechanical engineer, originally in pneumatics and hydraulics. When we moved to Gloucestershire, I took on a wider role encompassing product design and general management.

I retired in 2016 but for the preceding 20 years I was working locally as Managing Director of two companies involved in the design and supply of aluminium extrusions to the construction industry.

I was also involved in a number of the industries trade bodies, particularly The Council for Aluminium in Building where I was a Board Director and Vice President.

My wife Jane and I enjoy helping out with our 5 grandchildren, gardening, theatre / live entertainment, eating out and taking short breaks away, mainly in the UK these days.

I enjoy motorsport, particularly anything involving motorcycles, and have a passion for tinkering with classic cars. I also started to make some stained glass during the lockdowns.

I decided to join Newent & District Probus as two of the things I have missed most since retiring are the interaction with a wide group of likeminded people and making a meaningful contribution to a team. I feel confident from what I have experienced already that the Probus group will help me find what I have missed.

**Just bought a log cabin
from Ikea**

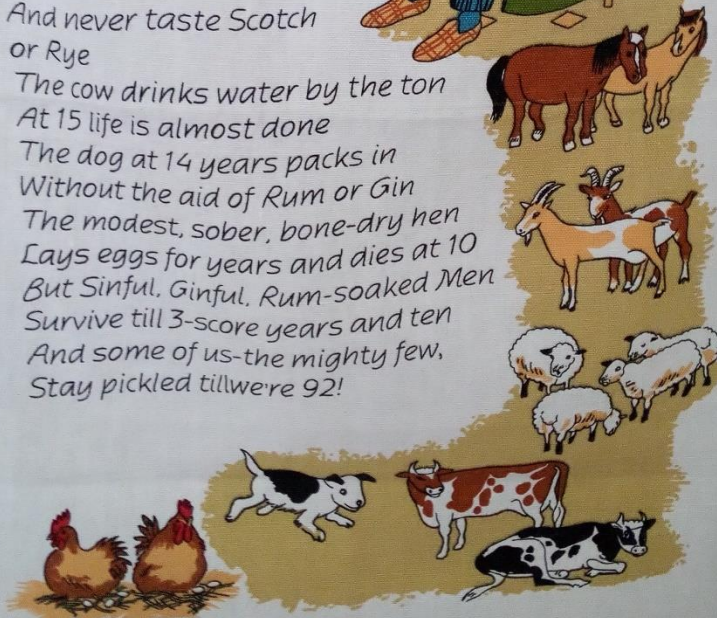
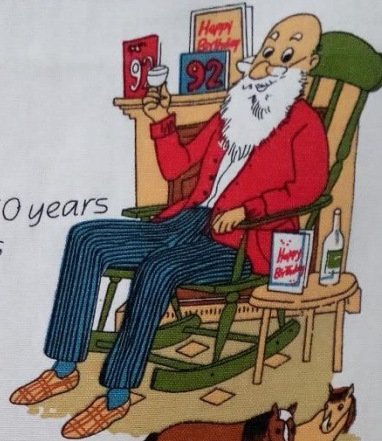


**Wouldn't it be nice
to go to the pub
with The Beach Boys:**



The Drinker's Prayer

The horse and mare live 30 years
And do not know of Wines
and Beers
The goats and sheep
at 20 die
And never taste Scotch
or Rye
The cow drinks water by the ton
At 15 life is almost done
The dog at 14 years packs in
Without the aid of Rum or Gin
The modest, sober, bone-dry hen
Lays eggs for years and dies at 10
But Sinful, Ginful, Rum-soaked Men
Survive till 3-score years and ten
And some of us-the mighty few,
Stay pickled till we're 92!



An English businessman was on a trip to Amsterdam. After a busy day of talks he decided with some colleagues, to have a walk around the old town. Inevitably, they ended up in the "Red Light" district and decided to sample the wares of a "House of Desire"!! On deciding on a particularly nice young girl, he whispered a request in her ear, she looked at him and shook her head and walked off. So he tried again with another, again he whispered a request in her ear and she stared at him and said "You're joking?" Getting rather frustrated he asked another lady and this time got a rather surprising response "What? Not in your dreams mate". Just then the "Madam of the establishment" arrived and asked "What on earth is going on?" What have you been asking my girls. He responded rather sharply " All I asked, was could I pay in Sterling"

Club Meeting on 11 October

Our meeting on 11 October turned out to be rather unusual. On arrival at the hall, we found out that there was no power, this was we were informed, (rather belatedly) due to a pre-planned 5-hour Power Disruption. This created a dilemma as to how our visiting speaker would be able to carry out his presentation. While we pondered the issue, we gathered outside in the morning sunshine. It then became obvious that the speaker Peter Petrie was not coming. It transpired his nonattendance (for which he apologised most profusely) was due to a family bereavement. He will return in February next year to give his talk on the Mappae Mundi.

Rather than cancel the meeting. It was decided to adjourn to the patio at the rear of the hall, which was bathed in wonderful Autumn sunshine.



However, even without coffee, we were not downhearted - as we had Magic Mike – and it was warm enough to sit outside.

Mike very kindly agreed to speak to us with no notice at all, and being the consummate professional, he thinks he is, gave us a highly entertaining 45 minutes on the state of the nation (dire), with numerous asides when they occurred to him.



In no particular order, as that is how it was, Mike reminded us that the Queen had voluntarily agreed to pay income tax in 1992. Mike had been at a formal lunch with a well-known firm of Solicitors who were boasting that they acted for more Dukes and Duchesses than any other firm. Midway through the meeting Mike received a call from the BBC asking him to comment on the royal family's tax affairs. He felt that this had redressed the balance somewhat.

He recalled that Liz Truss had granted oil drilling licences for some North Sea fields to Shell. As the licences were released Shell named them AUK, BUK, CUK etc at which point they realised what would happen when they got to F. They are now named after seabirds, such as Auk, Brent, Cormorant and Fulmer.

Just a few days before our meeting Mike had been asked by The Telegraph to write an article on the Kwarteng/Truss budget. He did so, effectively calling it disastrous, and referring to Anthony Barber (Ted Heath's Chancellor) making the same mistakes when similarly concentrating on "Growth, Growth, Growth" decades beforehand – that ended in a state of emergency and inflation at 24%. Mike said he could see history repeating itself. The newspaper was not happy and thought his article too negative! Apparently, Alastair Heath of The Telegraph had taken the view that it was the best budget in the circumstances, and Mike's article was not used. However, within a day or two, The Telegraph had realised that Mike was right and had changed its tune.

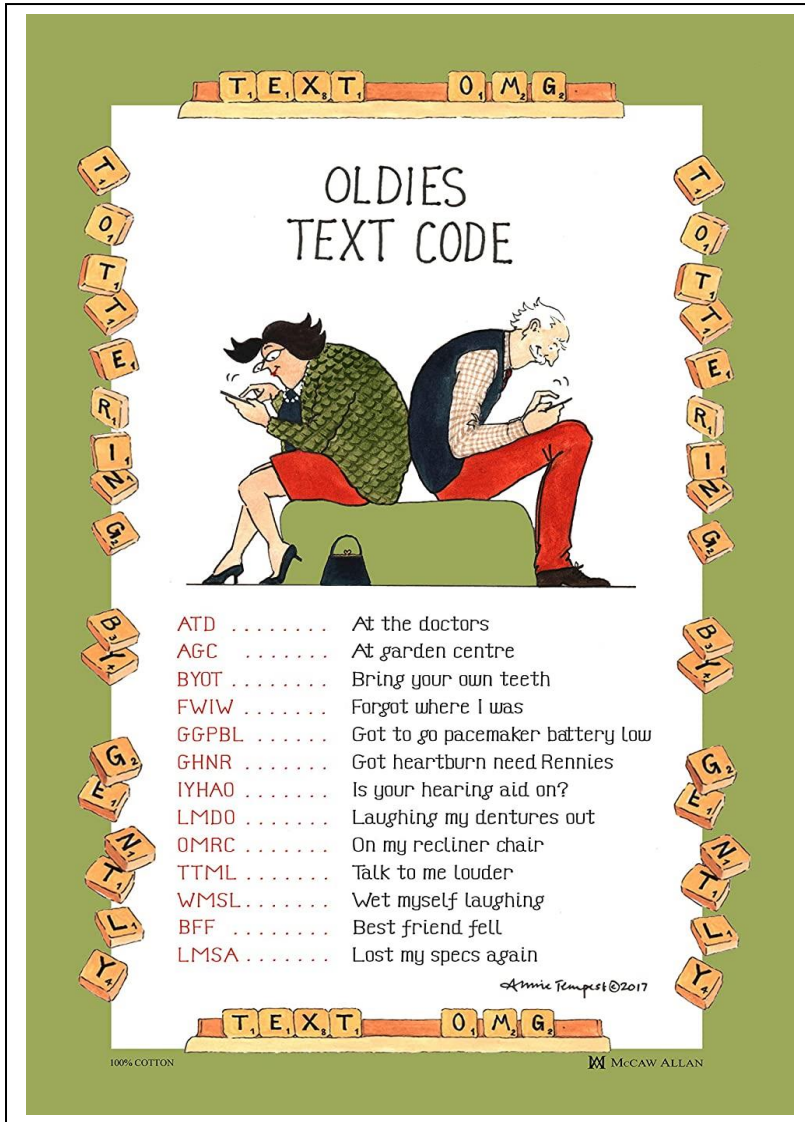
Mike then told us about the UK Tax Code. He said it was the longest book in the world apart from the Indian Railway timetable (not sure this is true, but we certainly have a ridiculous and unnecessarily complex system)

A government which sidelines the OBR and also cancels its tax simplification work is simply asking for trouble. Mike thought it appropriate that the day on which the government has said it will justify its mini-budget is 31 October, which is Halloween. Whether there is any way the course it has taken can be justified we will find out then!

John Węzdęn

The New Tory Party Logo revealed





This month 10 years ago

- **Barack Obama wins a second term as President**
- **Eurozone economy returns to recession**
- **Lord Leveson announces the findings of the enquiry into the British Media**
- **Labour MP Margaret Moran found guilty of 15 counts of false accounting and six claims of False Claims totaling £53,000**
- **The last Typewriter is manufactured at a Factory in Wales**
- **Nadine Dorries suspended following her announcement that she will be appearing in the TV show "I'm a Celebrity"**
- **Elections for the 41 positions of Police Crime Commissioners are held, marked by voters' apathy with a turnout of just 14.9%**
- **There were 6 byelections all won by Labour**



YET MORE RVELATIONS FROM WITHIN THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT by Mike Warburton

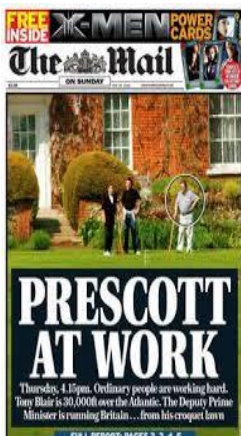
Fellow member Mike Warburton was his usual ebullient self when he gave a talk on the misdeeds and misdoings of our masters, if not mistresses, who we have elected to govern us – our Members of Parliament.

Mike has had first-hand knowledge of this, having been, in a previous incarnation, a tax adviser to the rich and famous. Perhaps unaccountably to us “ordinary mortals” living on a wage and under a PAYE regime, the super-rich have an almost pathological wish to hang on to every penny when I, for example, would be quite happy once in the improbable event I had made my first (and probably last) million to hand over say 40% of it to the government as long as I could retain the balance.

As we heard, it is not only the government who are susceptible to earning something “on the side”; the rich and, indeed, the not so rich are equally guilty but it is not just about hard cash, prestige can play a part too.



One of the most infamous of recent years and one which Mike had a hand in revealing was that of the then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and his long-term mistress Gaynor Regan. When the affair became known, he lost his job and with it the right to stay in his grace and favour residence in the upper class No1 Carlton Gardens, cheek by jowl with Buckingham Palace. He refused to vacate the flat until Mike, pointed it out via a political journalist, that whereas it was hitherto rent free, now, due to its value, it would attract a tax bill of some £373,000 p.a. and that's at 1960s values! A compromise was hurriedly reached whereby Robin occupied just a part of the premises.



Someone else who was similarly attached to his official residence was John Prescott, deputy Prime Minister in the Blair government. After the notorious egg throwing incident when Prescott was on the receiving end of one lobbed at him by a member of the public and he retaliated with an uppercut, he lost his job as a result. He also lost the right to stay at Dorneywood, the grace and favour mansion in Buckinghamshire and to use the croquet lawn there to which Prescott had become a devotee. When the cost of continuing to reside there was made known to him, the attraction soon palled.



At the other end of the scale was the scandal of the Women’s State Pension when, due to a computer glitch, many married women had not been given credit for the years that they had spent out of paid employment caring for their children. HMRC were obdurate in refusing to recognise this and it took many years of dogged detective work, especially by Liberal MP Steve Webb, before the HMRC would admit to any wrong doing.

A similar circumstance occurred over the State Pension. Due to a failure of communications, pensioners were not notified that their State pension was being paid gross i.e. without deduction of tax. This culminated in 1.4 million pensioners owing on average £1400 each. Thanks to Mike priming certain financial journalists and MPs, HMRC agreed to write off nearly half a billion in unpaid tax.

Of course, sometimes, even if rarely, the taxman is in the right yet still loses.



As in the case of Ken Dodd who had been systematically under-declaring his income for years. When at last he was rumbled, he refused all HMRC offer to negotiate a settlement. In spite of it being an open and shut case, when HMRC took him to court, they lost. This led an exasperated official to exclaim “We should have had more sense than to sue him in, of all places, Knotty Ash, his home town, where he is regarded as a saint”

Ken Dodd left his wife £27.7m in his will.

In winding up his well received talk, Mike revealed, almost as an aside, that he had once serenaded Mandy Rice-Davis, who was a leading player in the infamous political scandal of the 1960s – the Profumo affair.



Before anyone got the wrong idea, Mike quickly added that he was a schoolboy at the time and, as he was living near the Astor estate of Cliveden, he was one of a choir of carollers.

All in all, Mike gave us a glimpse of a world where we would be unlikely to be allowed to penetrate and he was warmly thanked by our vice chairman Mike Townsend

What am I?



(a)



(b)

A jocular Scot'
from Glencorris,
Fell in love with a
Slender Loris,
All went well until
the Scot' could
tell,
That Doris was
actually Morris.

I Dr Norman Finkelstein
"If you ever feel useless,
remember
it took 20 years,
trillions of dollars
and 4 US Presidents
to replace the Taliban
with the Taliban"

**Zsa Zsa Gabor got married as a one-off, it was
so successful she turned it into a series.**

Bob Hope



That's all folks. See
you next month.

**Don't forget to book
for the Christmas
Lunch**



**Thanks to all for your support and
who supplied articles**

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