

NEWSLETTER



NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBOSCIS CLUB



FEBRUARY 2023

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I should start by sending our collective condolences and sympathy to Jane Crisp on the loss of Richard, who sadly lost his battle with ill health some two weeks ago. Many club members will be attending his funeral on 3rd February in memory of, and to celebrate the life of such a pleasant and helpful member of the club. He will be sorely missed by all and especially the tech team which he led.

I'm always glad to see the back of January, mainly because it is mostly chilly and damp. Overall, I should welcome the month as the daylight hours extend and the snowdrops and crocus start to flower and there are other late winter flowering plants such as the hellebores and witch hazel. Also, as the calendar moves into February with an ever-strengthening sun there is the chance to start and feel some warmth in shelter spots out of the wind. Of course, to be realistic we all know that February and early March can be harsh so let's not get over excited.

The club held a pub quiz in January which was well attended and hopefully there will be a similar or perhaps larger turnout for the skittles evening being organised for late February. Thanks go to Chris and Fraser for doing the donkey work in arranging it and a request for numbers will be out very soon.

As far as the photo quiz for this month goes, few of you will have seen the carving but an educated guess will tell you where it is.

In the meantime, all keep warm.

Andrew

Obituary



Richard James Crisp

1940 - 2023

Richard James Crisp was born on 14th May 1940, in Bognor Regis. He attended Brighton and Hove Grammar School, then Brighton College of Technology, before starting his first job at Allen West Ltd, a local Electrical and Electronics Manufacturer.

Richard's boyhood holidays were shared with his elder brother John on their Uncle Percy and Aunt Ruby's farm at Comberton, near Cambridge. These were happy times and were the foundation of his love of the countryside, highlighted later on in his career, when he could only endure a single week commuting to London.

Richard applied for an apprenticeship at CEGB and continued his studies until he was accepted into the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

Richard worked at CEGB, Berkley, moving between the various departments and eventually finding his niche in computers, a career he loved, leading the Research and Development Department.

His team was tasked with finding a computer programme that would calculate the casing reinforcement of the environment of nuclear reactors.

Richard designed the computer suite that occupied a very large room, justifying the safety record of UK nuclear power stations.

To date the calculations are correct.

On his retirement, he started his own Computer Consultancy.

A member of Rotary for over 15 years and President for two terms. He was awarded the Paul Harris medallion for services as Treasurer for over 10 years.

He joined Newent Probus in 2015, heading up the AV Tekkies team.

An avid supporter of Liverpool Football Club, making some interesting exchanges with some Probus members soccer fans.

Richard leaves Jane, his beloved wife of 42 years and stepson Mark, his son Paul and partner Carolyn and granddaughter Katie.

Ray McCairn

14 FEBRUARY 2023

Peter Petrie

“The Mappae Mundi”

DRAWN AT THE CLOSE OF the 13th century on a single calfskin, the Hereford Mappa Mundi has survived 700 years and is now one of the most significant historical maps in the world. The map was designed from the start not for practical navigation, but as an inspiring work of art. Following the medieval tradition, the circular map shows the known world with Jerusalem at its center. In some places it is surprisingly accurate, in others, shockingly off-base. The labels for Europe and Africa are transposed, for example. It is full of curious anomalies as well, from mysterious animals and Biblical scenes, to the fanciful and freakish unknown peoples of far-off lands. All told, the map includes around 500 illustrations of people, places, animals, cities, and towns, including 15 Biblical events and 8 taken from classical mythology.



PUB LUNCH

The Weston Cross

Weston-under-Penyard

Tuesday 7 February 2023



SKITTLES EVENING

THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY

KINGS ARMS, NEWENT,

7pm

Contact Chris Johnson



28 FEBRUARY 2023

Chris Witts

The Mighty Severn Bore

The Severn Bore is one of Britain's few truly spectacular natural phenomena. It is a large surge wave that can be seen in the estuary of the River Severn, where the tidal range is the 2nd highest in the world, being as much as 50 feet (approx. 15.4m)

The shape of the Severn estuary is such that the water is funnelled into an increasingly narrow channel as the tide rises, thus forming the large wave. The river's course takes it past Avonmouth where it is approximately 5 miles wide, then past Beachley and Aust, then Lydney and Sharpness where it is approximately 1 mile wide, and soon the river is down to a width of a few hundred yards. By the time the river reaches Minsterworth it is less than a hundred yards across, maintaining this width all the way to Gloucester.

As well as the width of the river decreasing rapidly, then so does the depth of the river also change rapidly, thereby forming a funnel shape. Therefore, as the incoming tide travels up the estuary, it is routed into an ever-decreasing channel. Consequently, the surge wave or bore is formed.



(a)



(b)

Guess where?



The police just pulled me over and said, "Papers?" I said, "Scissors, I win!" and drove off. I think he wants a rematch - he's been chasing me for 45 minutes!

A little known fact about England footballer Danny Welbeck.
His dad was a bomb disposal expert called Stan.

My grandchildren have iPhones. When I was six I had a phone like this...



The Capture and Retaking of South Georgia



“THE SOUTH GEORGIA SKIRMISH”

The South Atlantic is an inhospitable place, as Ken Ingemills eloquently explained by words and pictures in our first talk of 2023. At first glance there seemed no reasons for maintaining sovereignty over it, as Britain had fought so hard for in 1982 with its sister island the Falklands. However, as Ken’s talk unfolded, it became clear that as well as the somewhat dubious historical reasons, there were patriotic ones, as a referendum had shown that 99% of the resident population wished to remain under British control.

Ken introduced himself by explaining his credentials for giving this talk, by saying that he had spent his career as a Met Office weather forecaster, the majority of which was covering the South Atlantic, including several postings to South Georgia; part of this necessitated obtaining security clearance as one of his duties involved forecasting the likely weather at the time of the offensive to reclaim the Falklands following the Argentinian incursion.

Compared to its “older brother” battle of the Falklands, the struggle for South Georgia, or to give it its proper name The Battle of Grytviken was a comparative low-key affair. The fact that South Georgia and the Falkland Isles are some 800 miles apart surprised many of us. Essentially, the Argentines landed, without permission on the east coast of South Georgia after overpowering a group of some 20 or so Royal Marines but not before the marines had hit a helicopter and landed several hits on the corvette *Guerrico*.

The operation to retake the island was officially named "Operation Parakeet", it was known among British troops as "Paraquat", after the industrial weedkiller. There then followed 24 hours of “cat and mouse” with the British ship *Endurance* stalking the *Guerrico* and vice versa with each insisting that the other surrender.

Despite being warned of the dangers, 15 men of Mountain troop, led by Captain Gavin Hamilton, were airlifted onto Fortuna glacier by two Wessex helicopters. They were immediately confronted with extreme conditions including 100 mph winds and freezing temperatures. Deep crevasses slowed the advance, and when the men attempted to set up camp and wait out the storm, their tents were swept away by the wind. Finally, after 15 hours on the glacier, Captain Hamilton requested evacuation, with the message "Unable to move. Environmental casualties imminent." Three Wessex helicopters were dispatched from the Task Force: two Wessex Mk5s from *Tidespring* and one Mk3 from *Antrim*. After one failed attempt, they managed to locate and embark the stranded SAS men, but in whiteout conditions, one pilot became disorientated and his aircraft crashed.

The passengers were loaded onto the two remaining helicopters, but soon afterwards one of these hit a ridge and crashed, though once again without any serious casualties. The last Wessex, *Antrim's* Mk3, after having offloaded its troops on board the destroyer returned to the glacier and after two failed attempts managed to retrieve the downed SAS and aircrew, though their equipment had to be abandoned. The pilot, Lieutenant Commander Ian Stanley, managed to nurse his overloaded aircraft back to *Antrim* and make an emergency landing on her flight deck, for which he was later awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

HMS *Antrim* entered Stromness Bay in order to insert another SAS force. This time, Boat Troop, were to be inserted in five Gemini boats. The attempt almost ended in disaster when two boats' engines refused to start and they were swept out to sea by an unexpected gale. One boat was rescued the following morning by *Antrim's* Wessex, while the other managed to restart their engine and reach the shore on the Busen Peninsula.

After towing another boat to shore, Tommy Turtle went back to search for the others. The three remaining Geminis reached their intended objective on Grass Island, where an observation post was set up, after the men of 17 Troop had scaled a cliff in freezing conditions.

The arrival of the submarine *Santa Fe* posed a significant threat to the British Task Force. However, it was located by *Antrim's* Wessex using radar and engaged with depth charges. One charge bounced off the boat's deck but the other exploded alongside, rupturing the port ballast tank and piercing an external fuel tank. Now unable to dive, she was forced to reverse course towards Grytviken.

The Wessex was then joined by a Lynx which launched a Mark 46 torpedo, but the weapon was configured to home on submerged submarines and passed harmlessly underneath its target. Wasps then joined the attack firing AS-12 missiles.

As *Endurance* was much closer to the action, her Wasps were able to rearm and attack several times, while *Plymouth's* Wasp was able to carry out only one attack. As the submarine approached Grytviken, Argentine positions at King Edward Point opened fire with rifles and anti-tank rockets, and during the last Wasp attack, the crew attempted to defend themselves with small arms and at least one machine gun, but with no effect. The last missile fired caused the most damage, destroying the periscope standards and nearby pumps and injuring a sailor who was manning a machine gun. By 1100, the crippled *Santa Fe* was once again moored at Grytviken pier, where she was abandoned by her crew.

The whole incident had been resolved without any loss of life after twelve hours of diplomatic activity between London and Buenos Aires, culminating in the Argentines surrendering, to be eventually repatriated. However, they were not accepted by the Argentine government and were sent back via Uruguay, they felt that if the public had found out the invasion had been a huge failure it would have caused embarrassment to the military Junta back in Argentina.

Meanwhile a full-scale battle had raged on Falkland itself but again the outcome ended in a triumph for Britain.

There was little time left for questions at the end of Ken's talk, but members agreed that it had been eye-opening which shed some light on an adventure in the South Atlantic

Peter Hayes



I assume someone actually approved these signs....Really?



In the previous newsletter, when the editor featured about Gloucester being the first to install a new TV service, it set me thinking. Here is the product of that cogitation

When a hitherto unknown company set up shop in Gloucester in the immediate post war period it was the fact that this was a pioneering enterprise, rather than its product, that set tongues wagging. The company was Link, Sound & Vision [LSV] and its revolutionary service was to pipe the new-fangled television into Gloucester homes via cable. That it included radio as well serves to show that sound, as well as vision, still played a part in peoples' lives.

We then lived in the inner city, within a few hundred yards of the company's offices; this made us ideal "first adopters" of the service. And so, for the princely outlay of 7/6d (38p) a week each, our street was soon awash with miniscule sized black and white screens; the set was supplied by LSV and was not much bigger than a shoe box. Bear in mind that a TV set could cost several hundred pounds; this at a time when a good wage was under £10 per week. The more status conscious of us would never draw our curtains; content to let the TV set burble away all day, irrespective of the fact that for most of the time there were no programmes available but its flickering light showing all and sundry that the occupants actually **had a television set.**

The idea was that the company would lay cables, either under the roads or over the rooftops and participating households would, for a fee, "plug in" and thereby receive a TV picture plus the BBC home service and light programmes plus, and here my memory defeats me, that teenagers' favourite Radio Luxembourg – i.e., what seemed like nonstop pop music. Now that will never catch on. The first big obstacle that the LSV encountered was getting wayleaves for their cables to pass over or under peoples' property. Often this led to strife when one householder refused permission, thus depriving his neighbour the chance to have one.

You must remember that in the early 1950s, the vast majority of cars on the road were those built in the 1930s, long before anyone thought the TV was within the grasp of ordinary people. Consequently, the cars had never been built with "suppressors" to stop interference on TV sets from their engines. Passing traffic could ruin an evening's viewing, with flashes and crackles from the screen. This was another bone of contention with owners of unsuppressed cars refusing to fit suppressors. The LSV sets were immune to this.

Sociologists have marked the introduction of (relatively at least), low-cost TV for the masses as one of the biggest changes in human behaviour, it was to sound the death knell of the cinema and, with the advent of Pay TV to question the viability of live sporting fixtures.

Never mind; the genie cannot be put back into the bottle and, while the war and air raids were still a recent memory, households relaxed in front of a tiny black and white 9-inch screen, restricted to just a few hours per day. Escapism ruled; the world of rationing and shortages stopped outside the front door. No matter that in the hearth maybe just a solitary coal burned and we all shivered, we had a TV

Peter Hayes

INSIDE A BEEHIVE



Our talk on 24th January was all about Beehives. I suspect that, like myself, most of us see Beehives around the countryside or in gardens and know very little about their life.

Howard commenced his talk by reminding us that Bees have been giving us honey and beeswax for at least 4000 years as, in modern times, honey, still perfectly edible, was found stored in jars during excavations in Ancient Egyptian Temples.

Howard told us that most Honeybees in the UK are the European Bee, but this species had suffered badly from the Varroa Mite in the early years of the last century as an Asian Bee had gradually been moving north. This bee was infected by the Varroa mite which was very infectious to the European Bee and nearly wiped out our Bees in the latter half of the 20th Century. Fortunately, modern drugs have been developed in recent years to counter this disease and our Bees have recovered well in recent times.

Howard told us that as long ago as the Roman occupation of our country, Bees have been kept in England and there are records showing that Beeswax was so precious in Tudor times that Tax could be paid in Beeswax.

Howard's interest in Bees was encouraged by his father who kept Bees that had originated from Buckfast Abbey in Devon and were passed onto him by his father. He learnt much of his Bee Keeping skills from his father and, when his father died, Howard kept up the tradition of telling the bees that he had passed away and that he, Howard, would now be looking after them. The Bees, he assured us, had responded well and prospered under his own management.

Today honey is often referred to as "Sunshine in a Jar". Howard assured us that when first produced honey is in its runny form. Any good honey will, if stored in suitable conditions, turn in due course from runny to the solid granulated state. There is no difference between these forms and, if desired you can return granulated to the runny state by gentle heat or a short spell in a microwave oven. He also assured us that good quality honey has no need of a "best by" date as it will last indefinitely if well stored.

Originally bees were kept in basket hives and it is only in recent centuries that the type of hive we see today has been introduced. Largely because they were developed to make it much easier to extract the honey and beeswax from the hive without difficulty. Bees, Howard told us will visit sources of nectar in flowers, trees and shrubs up to 8 Km from the hives. The bees always return to their own hives, so if the hives are taken to a distant location the bees will relocate easily and still return safely to their own hive. To produce a pound of honey, active bees need to make about 10,000 journeys to the source of Nectar and they will visit about 200 flowers on each journey (A total of 2 million visits). A typical hive will have up to 50,000 Bees in residence at the end of the summer, so the entrance to the hive is very active on a warm sunny day.

At the end of the talk Howard showed us the typical makeup of the hive and how the top part of the hive has a number of frames on which the honey is deposited and the wax produced to seal each cell in the frame. The honey and wax are then extracted and spun on a centrifuge to produce the honey and split it from the wax.

A fascinating and most instructive talk by a very enthusiastic and dedicated Beekeeper.

THIS MONTH in 2013

North Korea conducts its third underground nuclear test, prompting widespread condemnation and tightened economic sanctions from the international community

Nearly 1,000 people were injured by a meteorite which crashed in central Russia. One Russian politician reportedly blamed American weapons testing for the incident although it's thought to have been caused by the partial burning of a large meteor in the lower atmosphere.

Scientists confirmed a skeleton buried under a car park in Leicester was that of English king Richard III. The lead archaeologist said it was "beyond reasonable doubt" the bones were those of the monarch, who was killed in battle in 1485.

American scientists use a 3D printer to create a living lab-grown ear from collagen and animal ear cell cultures. In the future, it is hoped that similar ears could be grown to order as transplants for human patients with ear trauma or amputation.

Pope Benedict XVI unexpectedly announced his resignation on grounds of poor health, making him the first pope to do so in nearly 600 years. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio from Argentina was subsequently elected as Pope Francis.

VALENTINE THOUGHTS





**Congratulations to John Weeden, Ray McCairn
and Anne Pearson on winning the Quiz on January 26**

**Thanks to all those who
submitted articles.**

Ed



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