

# NEWSLETTER



## NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



# OCTOBER 2023

### FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

As I write this letter we are nearly into October. Where did September go? The nights are drawing in and it has an autumnal feeling. The leaves are beginning to change colour and the conkers are beginning to drop. The House Martins and Swallows near me are gathering and preparing to migrate South. I expect they are waiting for storm Agnes to die down!

We are still picking tomatoes in the green house. I planted some late runner beans in July, and they are doing well, will keep us going until the early frosts.

Most of September we were away on holiday in Ireland, together with our two Labradors. The weather at the beginning of the holiday was warm and we travelled from Liverpool to Belfast. Having spent the day in Belfast we travelled down to Tipperary, as you know it's a long way to Tipperary. We then travelled down to Waterford and then on to County Cork. We then spent three days in Waterville in County Kerry, a hotel where Charlie Chaplin and Walt Disney have stayed. We then moved onto Dingle self-catering for two weeks. The first week was warm and sunny, the second week the weather changed to more cooler conditions and rain. I spent a couple of days fishing and managed to catch a Pollock and a few Mackerel. We then moved back over to Co Cork and spent a couple of days in a nice hotel where we are regular customers. Because of the weather and storm Agnes was brewing, we decided to come home a day early, even so it was a rough crossing.

I was able to make the meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup>, where Cora Weaver gave us an interesting talk on "The Springs & Fountains of the Malvern Hills".

John Slack returned home from hospital recently but is still weak, we wish him well and a speedy recovery.

We welcomed Richard Holyhead our latest new member to our last meeting.

Have a good October and look out for the trick or treaters!

Mike

## **PUB LUNCH**

**TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> OCTOBER**



**The Swan Inn  
Tewkesbury Road,  
Coombe Hill,  
Gloucester  
GL19 4BA**

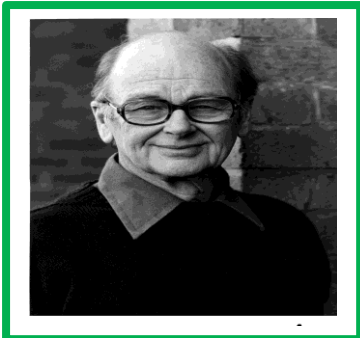


**SPEAKER**

**10<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**Alistair Patrick**

**“Design of Modern Cars”**



**SPEAKER**

**24<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**JACKIE HARRIS**

**“The life of an incredible man”**

**“A short story of Sir Peter Scott”**

## The art of punctuation

A teacher during an English lesson, asked the pupils to write the following statement using the correct punctuation.

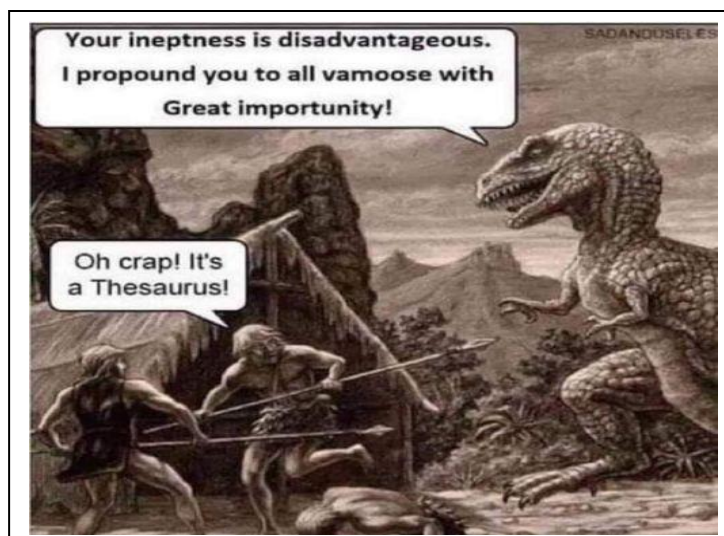
“A woman without her man is nothing”

The boys wrote:

“ A woman without her man, is nothing”

The girls wrote:

“A woman: without her, man is nothing”





## **“A woman in a man’s world – WRAF Air Traffic Controllers”**

**Lynn Hilditch**

Our speaker Lynn Hilditch served in the WRAF twice, once as a single girl and then following marriage, which meant she had to leave the RAF. She moved to stay in Cyprus with her new husband a pilot Flying Hercules Transport Aircraft. The conflict in 1974 when Turkey invaded Northern Cyprus saw them return to the UK.

Three children later, she re-applied to the RAF. Something which had not been possible prior, until new legislation allowed her to re-apply. She was accepted and following training served a further 16 years, retiring from Air Traffic Control in 2000. Her talk was an amusing and informative story of her initial exploits leading up to and during her career in Military Air Traffic Control with a few comments about the attitudes of men towards their female colleagues. Among these comments were that apparently, she had a negative comment on her personnel file because of the one occasion she had to take a day off work to take her daughter to the doctor; apparently her male colleagues did not suffer the same fate.

On a separate occasion, her senior officer wanted to replace her during an air traffic emergency which had developed whilst she was on duty, because he thought she wouldn't be able to handle the situation, being a woman; she defended her position robustly and continued with the situation. She was asked as to why she had not obtained a higher rank than that of Pilot Officer. She replied that promotion within the Air Traffic Service was very limited and a woman would not have been considered at the time.

Although she touched on some of the specifics of air traffic control which were clearly of interest to the members, she wasn't able to go into much detail on the grounds that it was too complicated to go into it in the time available.

The lengthy Q&A session which followed indicated the extent to which her talk was appreciated which continued in the King's Arms afterwards.

**John Martin**



### Springs and Fountains of the Malvern Hills by Cora Weaver

An excellent talk by Cora Weaver about the springs and waters of Malvern was given to us at our meeting on 26 September.

Cora centred her talk on a ramble around the Hills in an anti-clockwise direction, commencing at Barnards Green. She commented that many of the Wells and associated Springs were originally used as their only water supply by local residents. She noted that most of the wells were decorated on the weekend of the first May Day Bank Holiday. This is a relatively modern tradition which has only been practised for about the last 40 Years and is well worth a visit. She showed several of the decorated wells to illustrate her talk. Many of the wells are now dry and the last commercial bottling plant closed around 2010 but it is still possible to collect water from a number of the wells for private use and it is known that people do come from over 100 miles to collect their water.

She started her talk at Barnard's Green because that was the site of one of the first springs that was provided with a Drinking Trough for the Horses which were used for most deliveries in Malvern. This trough was placed on the Green as a memorial to all working animals and particularly those sent to the Boer War in South Africa, which never returned to Malvern. This trough was moved in 1948 to another site but, in common with a number of other wells, was cut off from its supply as a result of the Polio Outbreak in the early 1950's which many attributed to contaminated water.

The next well visited was Lord Sandys Spout in the North-west of Malvern, followed by the Temperance Fountain that was built in Malvern Links by the Temperance Movement at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This fountain was subsequently modified to use the public mains water supply and is still in use. Also to the north of Malvern is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century Fountain which had a very large tank attached to it (50,000 gallons) and associated Stocks and Animal Pound which are still on the site, although the tank has long been dry. A clock tower was added in 1901 when new fountains were installed. Moving on to West Malvern, one of the newer fountains was shown decorated for the 2012 Olympics, not far from Hay Slad fountain which is still in use. It has a chequered history and was saved in 1905 when the public objected to it being demolished and the Council was subsequently ordered to provide a fountain which could supply 2 gallons per minute. This fountain is still in use today.

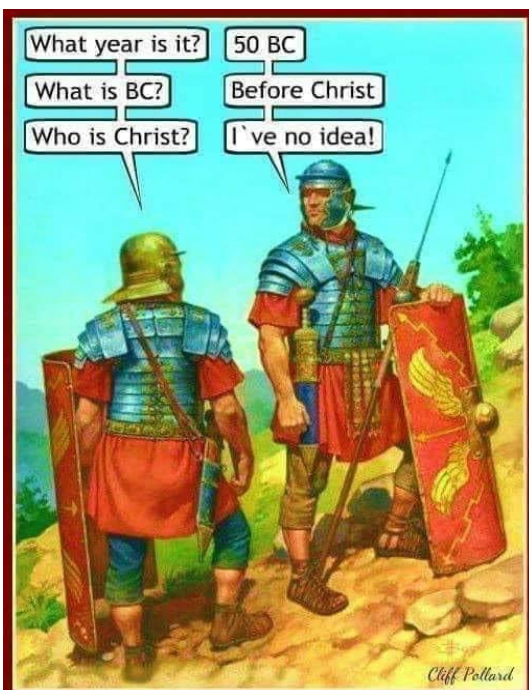
Moving south along the western flank of the Hills there is a spring called Willow Spring but this is no longer in use as it is now contaminated. The next spring before British Camp is Evendine Spring which is in use, but may dry up in drought conditions. Moving around to the eastern slopes towards Malvern Wells we come to one of the most well-known springs, Holy-Well. This was the first site where the waters were exploited in about 1750. A bath house was built to serve visitors to the well and about 100 years later a Bottling Plant was attached to the buildings. Water was sent around the United Kingdom for many years from this Plant. Holy-Well was refurbished in the 1970's and the Bottling Plant, which had passed into the hands of the Schweppes company was upgraded and subsequently it passed into the ownership of Coca Cola.

The Bottling Plant was moved to Colwall where it flourished until it closed during 2010 due to competition from much bigger water plants elsewhere in Europe.

In the centre of Malvern a further fountain was built to celebrate Victoria's Jubilee in 1887, but is now provided with water from the mains public supply. The tour ended with a visit to St Ann's well where the bath house, built in Victorian times, is now a listed Building. This site is still in use, but rather in need for some TLC to cope with the many visitors to the site. There were many other wells mentioned by Cora, but the tour ended in the middle of Malvern with a visit to a new fountain installed in 1998 and called Malvhina. It uses filtered water from the hills and is claimed to be the purest water of all.

An excellent, if rather hurried, snapshot of the large number of Springs, Fountains and Wells around the Malvern Hills

David Clowes



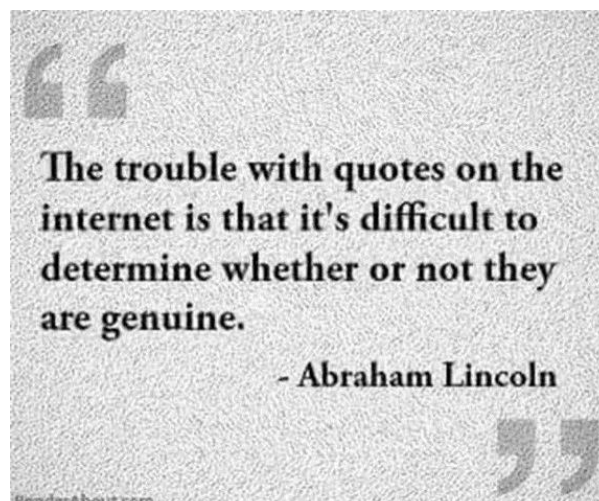
As Chairman of The Optimists Society, I regret I no longer have enough members to make it viable. I feel this is just the start of something completely wonderful!



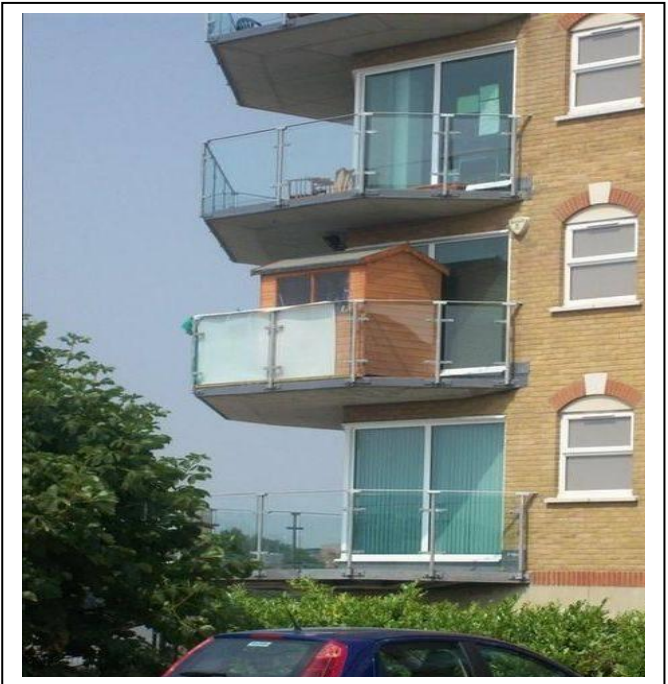
**A good wife can bring  
balance to your life**

**Not paying attention to  
History in school never did  
me any harm. Unlike poor  
Henry VIII himself, being  
shot in the eye by Genghis  
Khan at the Battle of  
Hastings in 1966.**

A truck loaded with thousands of copies of Roget's Thesaurus crashed yesterday losing its entire load. Witnesses were stunned, startled, aghast, taken aback, stupefied, confused, shocked, rattled, paralysed, dazed, bewildered, mixed up, surprised, awed, dumbfounded, nonplussed, flabbergasted, astounded, amazed, confounded, astonished, overwhelmed, horrified, numbed, speechless, and perplexed. Meanwhile, those waiting for the shipment were at a loss for words.



**"The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four people is suffering from some form of mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they're OK, then it's you."**



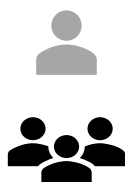
**Every man needs a shed**



"When I was growing up I always wanted to be someone. Now I realize I should have been more specific."



## Unsolved Conspiracies



In 1964 British Intelligence uncovered the identity of the **FOURTH MAN** in the Cambridge Spy Ring as Anthony Blunt. *However, they kept it a secret for 15 years, a decision that is as yet unexplained.*

Blunt was part of the circle of spies, Donald McLean, Guy Burgess and Kim Philby who had previously been identified and fled to Russia before being apprehended. Blunt was older than them and had been a fellow of Trinity College. He had worked at Bletchley Park during the war but pursued a career in academia as an art historian rather than in intelligence. He was Surveyor of the Queens Pictures in the Royal household, work for which he was awarded a knighthood. In 1964, an American Michael Straight, who had been at Trinity College, stated that he had been recruited by the Soviet Union as a spy and it was Blunt who recruited him.

*Why was he not charged with espionage?*

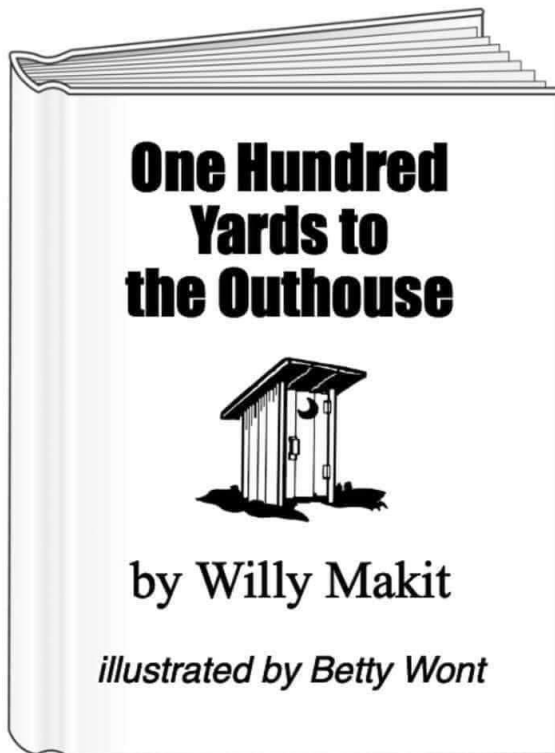
There are many theories: One being that Blunt had obtained details of letters written by the Duke of Windsor during the Second World War to his German relative Prince Philip of Hesse, who in common with the duke, was a great-grandson of Queen Victoria. Philip held a prominent position within the Nazi Party and it was believed acted as a conduit with the Duke and Adolf Hitler. No evidence was ever disclosed. The Duke of Windsor was sent to the Bahamas, perhaps removing him from any Nazi influence.

However, an alternative theory was revealed in a book published by Peter Wright, a retired MI5 officer, who had been involved in Blunt's interrogation. He proposed a different explanation as to why Blunt had been offered immunity.

Wright claimed, that Roger Hollis, Director General of MI5 decided to offer Blunt immunity to prevent another scandal damaging the Conservative Party in the run up to the 1964 parliamentary elections. The Conservative government had already been severely embarrassed by the Profumo affair, the defection of Kim Philby and the exposure of John Vassall, a civil servant working for the Admiralty who had spied for the Soviet Union. If Blunt had been exposed, revelations about his activities would have caused further trouble for the conservatives, particularly in light of his connections to the royal household.

Wright went on to allege that Hollis was in fact a Soviet Mole himself and perhaps Hollis protected Blunt to prevent his own exposure or to stop him naming other Soviet moles whose identities remained unknown to British Intelligence. Debates continue concerning Blunt and Hollis, but we may never know.

*Ironically, the 1964 parliamentary elections were won by the Labour Party and Harold Wilson, who had also been suspected of being a KGB agent, was elected as Prime Minister.*



Last week, my next door neighbour asked me, "Seeing as our houses are the same design, can I ask how many rolls of wallpaper you bought to decorate the living room?"

"Thirteen," I said.

Today, he came round looking angry.

"I've got three rolls left over!"

"So did I!" I replied.

- The Washington Post's Mensa Invitational once again invited readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

**Cashtration** (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.

**Intaxication** : Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.

**Sarchasm** : The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.

**Decafalon** (n): The gruelling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.

**Glibido** : All talk and no action.

**Arachnoleptic Fit** (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.

**Caterpallor** (n.): The colour you turn after finding half a worm in the fruit you're eating.

**Negligent**, adj. Absent mindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown.



**EARLY REMINDER:**

**ONLY 73 DAYS TO OUR  
CHRISTMAS LUNCH**



## **HATHERLEY MANOR HOTEL**

Down Hatherley Lane, Gloucester GL2 9QA

**TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2023**

**“Menu to follow”**

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

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