



The Probus Club of Berwick-upon-Tweed

Welcome to our 'It's Good to stay in touch' Newsletter –

Issue 6 – 15th July 2020

Edited by Homer Lindsay, homer@thelindsays.info Mobile 07749 458484, 17 Cornwall Avenue, Berwick, TD15 2NX

Who said?

We live inside our universe and cannot get a bird's-eye view of it from outside. And we cannot even see all of our universe. Distant parts of it are expanding away from us so fast that they are invisible; they go faster than the speed of light. Having bigger telescopes to see fainter stars will not help us here: invisible is truly invisible.

Answer on last page

New Hobby



My wife and I became interested in the sky at night when we stayed at the Twice Brewed Inn in Twice Brewed, near Hexham and attended a dark skies event run by [Go StarGazing](#). I recently bought a telescope and the moon above is the first image captured. It has not been edited. **Homer**

Dear Member

Only one member, Ian Hannah, participated in the Zoom demonstration and online training on 6th July. He and I have both used Zoom before, so we were able to spend a very pleasant half hour catching up and chatting generally.

The Committee Virtual Meeting was held on Wednesday 8th July to discuss our Honorary Treasurer & Auditor vacancies; and also, to consider the criteria or steps required before we could think of resuming our Probud meetings at the Parish Hall. I set out on page 5 what we think must happen before we could safely meet again in person. Your thoughts on the matter are invited and will be fed back to the Committee.

Antony Chessell provides a Tale of Berwick Pier while **Ian Hannah** remembers the Penmanshiel Tunnel disaster. **Alan Dumble** is to be found, again, somewhere in this publication ☺

Do you have a photograph of the young you? Enter it into the 'Who is this' feature of the Newsletter? Send it to me for publication.

Stay safe; stay well, **Homer**

Lockdown in the Garden

Yet another sweltering day during 'lockdown'. Yet another day in the garden to look forward to. With a very painful back limiting my time for actually gardening it wasn't long before I settled into my garden routine. This consisted of first of all fetching a lounge chair from the summer house and placing it in my favourite spot in the garden. Next came the little table on which the cooling bottle of wine was placed together with glasses for self and gardening wife – when she required sustenance for her labours. Then the 'must have' Daily Telegraph complete with pen in case I could manage some of the crossword clues. (I well remember the one and only day I managed to complete it. My wife found me snoring my head off with an almost empty wine bottle alongside!) and to complete the preparations together with the paper and whatever biography I was currently reading.



After settling into the lounge I looked around. This always gave me great pleasure. To be in the centre of a town surrounded by

a garden and trees other properties hiding themselves behind ivy covered walls and fences. Directly ahead a splendid copper beech in another garden immediately beside the one in my own. Turning my head slightly then came the most magnificent 'weeping willow' in Berwick not fifty yards away. Further round again there is to see many more trees all in full leaf. Amongst them a huge apple tree which each year produced a bountiful crop of apples. This always amazes me, as a wartime child in an industrial town at a time when such fruit was so scarce, and now to see the fruit left to drop and rot. However the two local pheasants are attracted occasionally.

Added to the view when there is a slight wind through the tops of the beech trees can be seen the clock and top of the Town Hall tower.

The trees naturally attract large numbers of birds which I find of great interest. I have heard of a secretary of a local businessmen's club who has, during lockdown, taken to holding conversations with his pet dog. Prior to lockdown I would have found this rather eccentric behaviour but now I find myself whistling away to my little robin friend and him whistling back I can feel for the secretary. Actually during the breeding season I found that when the blackbirds nesting amongst the various trees went silent I could start them off again by whistling to them. The only drawback is I've been told this is rather eccentric behaviour even after a glass or two of wine.

Strangely enough these tales of how enjoyable life in the garden can be reminds me of the young schoolmistress taking the English classes at the local grammar school during the war because of the paucity of masters she had the unenviable task of

teaching our class of thirty unruly fifteen-year olds – thinking only of football and rugby – the ins and outs of poetry for School Certificate. She would be amazed that not only could I be attempting to be writing a story let alone being able to quote from one of her favourite poems. So I bear her in mind lying on my lounge the sun shining in the garden while I write from Dorothy Gurney's poem →

The kiss of the sun for pardon,
The song of the birds for mirth
One is nearer to God's Heart in a
garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

© Alan Dumble

Berwick Visual Arts are showcasing ... The Glasgow Boys and Girls

Online exhibition



We are delighted to announce the launch of *The Glasgow Boys and Girls*, a virtual exhibition curated by the Fleming Collection and hosted by Art UK which can be viewed [here](#)

The Glasgow Boys and Girls were a group of radical young artists, most of whom came from Glasgow or thereabouts, who rebelled against the jaded Victorian passion for highland scenes and story-telling pictures. They sprang to prominence in the 1880s as documentary painters of rural life in all its harsh reality.

The virtual display is a forerunner to the exhibition *The Glasgow Boys and Girls* which would have opened at the Granary Gallery this week; however, we still plan to stage the exhibition later this year, with more details announced as soon as we can.



[The Glasgow Boys and Girls](#)

The exhibition is one of the first to be showcased through Art UK's Curations, a new tool launched today that allows any member of the public to curate their own exhibition, providing access to the nation's public collections.

To hang alongside highlights from the Fleming Collection, other stand out pieces from public collections including the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland have also been selected.

We invite you to spend the time exploring the work of the Glasgow Boys and Girls and learn more about the works of E A Walton, John Lavery and Bessie MacNicol amongst others, from the comfort of your home.

View the online exhibition [here](#)

Editor's note: If you are reading this on your computer or tablet, the underscored links will work and take you to the online exhibition. If you are reading from a printed copy the online address is <https://artuk.org/discover/curations/the-glasgow-boys-and-girls#>

When can we return to Normal?

Many think that we will never return to what we all knew as normal; reference is often made to 'the new normal'. For Probus members this is of great concern and it is why the Chairman introduced the topic at the recent virtual Committee Meeting.

"It will be some time before there could be any possibility of resuming meetings," he said, but he felt it was necessary to consider the issues that would need to be addressed for a decision to be made. Probus members are classed as in a vulnerable age group and many will be shielded.

Committee members present concluded that the following would have to have occurred: -

- Government policy and COVID-19 regulations will have to be relaxed to allow indoor meetings in excess of 25 people. *Some of our members live in Scotland where regulations and timings differ*
- The Church opens the Church hall to Clubs and Organisations
- Members will be willing to attend meetings again and wives approve. *Members should be canvassed when the time comes as a prerequisite to resuming meetings*
- Speakers will be willing to come to address meetings

This list will be kept under review.

What are your views?

It would be good to hear from members and you are invited to express your opinion. Send them to the Secretary at the email address or home address at the top of page 1. All views expressed will be collated in an article in a future newsletter.



Penmanshiel Tunnel Disaster Memorial
[cc-by-sa/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/) - © [James T M Towill](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/3592056) - [geograph.org.uk/p/3592056](https://www.geograph.org.uk/p/3592056)

The Penmanshiel Tunnel Disaster

Recollections from Ian Hannah

The first thing I knew about the disaster was about 8pm on the 17th March 1979, when I received a phone call at home from British Rail requesting me to supply a bus to replace the 10,50pm train from Edinburgh Waverley to Berwick, as the 10.50pm London train was being diverted between Edinburgh and Newcastle via Carlisle. I decided to operate this journey by myself, as it was a Saturday night and I thought most of my drivers, would have had a drink by then. There were only about 20 passengers, which included a young couple, who were on their way to East Ord Caravan Park for their honeymoon. It was a particularly cold night and the roads were icy and of course I had to call at every station between Edinburgh and Berwick. I had an elderly couple, who lived in Ness Street, so I dropped them off at the end of Silver Street. Unfortunately, due to icy roads the bus refused to go up Hide Hill, so I was

The Penmanshiel Tunnel Disaster *continued*

forced to go over the old bridge enroute for East Ord Caravan Park and the young couple thanked me very much on leaving the bus.

Monday morning our Traffic Manager phoned and said, we would be operating a shuttle service between Berwick and Dunbar within a few days and they were sending me a bus and I was to start another two drivers, on condition that they would only be employed during the emergency. I found two men very quickly but of course they had to be trained and they sit their PSV Driving Test and of course pass the Company Doctor. The bus arrived Monday afternoon and I think we began operating the shuttle service on Tuesday. If I remember correctly, we had to have a bus at Berwick Railway Station between the hours of 7am and 7pm, so it was hard going until the extra drivers were available. The United were also involved but occasionally they were unable to fulfill their agreement and we had to step into the breach. There were other Eastern Scottish depots involved and also Edinburgh City Transport.

Shortly after the shuttle service commenced, I had a visit from one of our Directors, who asked me if I needed assistance. I didn't think it would last a year, so I said that I would manage (the worse decision I ever made). Occasionally I would receive a phone call about 8pm from the railway station requesting a bus for 9pm, sometimes I drove it myself, but many drivers would tell me on the day that if a bus was requested, they would be available.

Overnight trains from Edinburgh and London were diverted between Newcastle and Edinburgh via Carlisle. One morning I was awakened at 3am by someone knocking on my front door. It was a British Railway official.

There had been a derailment between Newcastle and Carlisle and they required 6 buses at 5am and 6 buses at 6am. I phoned the DTS at Dunbar but he was unable to help and I phoned Clive Paxton at United and he offered the loan of a double deck bus. I decided to do it ourselves, although it would mean that the 6am railway passengers would have to wait a short while for the buses returning from Dunbar and also our first bus journeys from Berwick would be delayed, but it was an emergency. I knocked 3 drivers up who lived near me and asked if they could manage to be at Berwick Railway station for 5am and they all agreed. I had to walk to Berwick, as I had left my car in the depot the previous day. On my way over the bridge, a car stopped and the British Railway official got out and told me he only needed 3 buses for 5am and the station staff would phone me and let me know how many for 6am. I continued walking, opened the depot and wrote out the hire notes for the drivers. The three drivers arrived, collected their hire notes and buses and made their way to the railway station. I didn't receive a phone call from the station, so I drove up and found the porters playing cards. I asked them if they still required 6 buses at 6am and they said that they did, so I had to knock another 3 drivers up and thankfully they all agreed. I never received any complaints from any bus passenger so everything must have worked out OK.

As a token of appreciation, British Rail invited two members of every participating depot to lunch and presented each of us with a British Railway tie. The Depot Engineer, Joe Robinson and I represented Berwick. After all both of us had done extra work without any extra salary and it was only by the co-operation of the maintenance staff, drivers and me that we achieved it.

Ian Hannah

A Tale of Berwick Pier

Recently, I was interested to read two 16th century poems which were probably written contemporaneously or soon after the Battle of Flodden 1513. One of these poems was edited by Rev. Robert Lambe, Vicar of Norham, in 1774 and was dedicated to John Askew of Palins-Burn, Esq. [Pallinsburn House and Estate is near Crookham]

Rev. Hastings Neville states that Robert Lambe was of a scholarly disposition who took up the study of Ballad poetry in the North and had remained a bachelor for many years. Robert's friends urged him to seek a wife; he remembered an old acquaintance in Durham, a carrier who had a daughter whom he had not seen since she was a child. He thought that it would be simple for her to come up to Berwick on one of her father's waggons. The exotically named Philadelphia Nelson (Philadelphia from the Greek φιλεω [phileo] 'to love' and αδελφος [adelphos] 'brother') was said to be 'very charming'. She accepted the plan and her father considered it an eligible a match for his daughter as Norham was one of the choice benefices in the patronage of St. Cuthbert's Dean and Chapter'.

The tale becomes even more astonishing. Robert and Philadelphia didn't know each other and the latter must have been very trusting by agreeing to come to Berwick unaccompanied, meeting Robert at an agreed time on Berwick Pier and identifying herself by carrying a tea-caddy under her arm. It seems hard to imagine, but the bookish and forgetful Robert did not turn up and the poor girl wandered up and down the pier. An old customs-house officer on his rounds, saw a pretty girl at nine o'clock, saw the same girl at twelve o'clock and saw her finally at six o'clock, 'this time weeping bitterly'. On questioning her, 'she



poured into his ears the tale of Lambe's treachery and deceit'. The old man reassured her "Come home with me tonight and we'll go over together to Norham in the morning. Lambe is a friend of mine, a good fellow, but absent-like in his mind. I'll warrant he's forgotten all about it". A meeting was arranged and Philadelphia must have been very forgiving because the marriage took place, the bridegroom's present to his wife being a silver teapot, presumably to go with his wife's tea-caddy. Records show that Robert and Philadelphia were married in Norham on 11 April 1755. Rev. Neville

tells us that a teapot is always given to descendants of Robert Lambe, named Philadelphia.

The present Berwick Pier was not the one upon which Philadelphia wandered up and down in her distress. Berwick Harbour was transferred by Act of Parliament on 9th June 1808 from Berwick Corporation to The Berwick Harbour Commissioners. The new pier was designed by John Rennie and completed in 1825; the Grade II listing suggests that part of the new pier was built on foundations of the Elizabethan pier. Perhaps, in the mid eighteenth century, the Elizabethan pier was still sufficiently intact for Philadelphia's perambulations. Probus members may know more about this earlier pier.

© Antony Chessell

Sources:

1. ed. Lambe, Robert, *An Exact and Circumstantial History of the Battle of Floddon* [sic] in verse written about the time of Queen Elizabeth, Berwick Upon Tweed, Printed and Sold by R. Taylor, and by E. and C. Dilly in The Poultry, and G. Freer, Bell-Yard, London, 1774
2. ed. Forsyth Scott, Robert, *Admissions to the College of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge University, Part III, 1715-1767*, Cambridge, printed for the College at The University Press, 1903, pp. 413-4
3. Neville, Rev. Hastings M., *A Corner in the North: Yesterday and To-day with Border Folk*, Andrew Reid & Company, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, 1909, pp. 151-2

Photo: An 18th century fruit-shaped tea-caddy

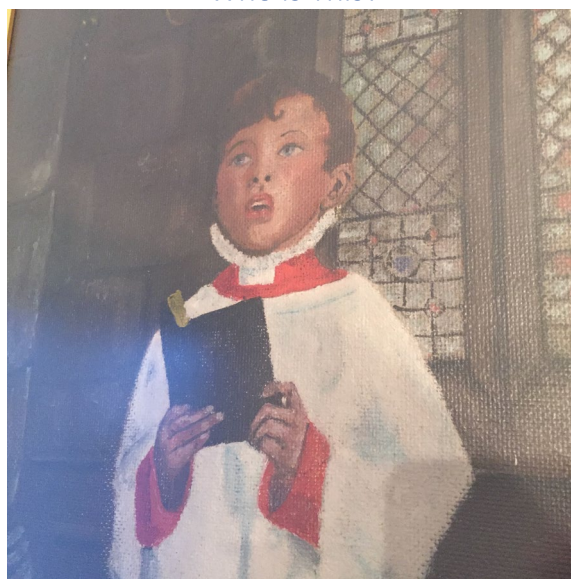
Would a Probus Online Meeting appeal to members?

Tens of thousands of people have embraced online technology during the lockdown because it was the only way they could see and communicate with loved ones – parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren.

There are several technical solutions for those who have a computer, a tablet or even a smart phone. Zoom and Google Meet are two of the most used because they have free accounts. The Probus Committee have used Zoom. Up to 100 people can join a virtual call; Probus typically has 25-28 at a normal meeting. We could make it work!

Let Homer know if you are interested

Who is This?



This is an oil painting of a member long before he joined Probus

Who said?

We live inside our universe and cannot get a bird's-eye view of it from outside. And we cannot even see all of our universe. Distant parts of it are expanding away from us so fast that they are invisible; they go faster than the speed of light. Having bigger telescopes to see fainter stars will not help us here: invisible is truly invisible.

It was **Jocelyn Bell Burnell** who was born on this day, 15th July 1943 in Lurgan, Northern Ireland.



Jocelyn Bell Burnell was still a research student at Cambridge University when she was part of the team that was the first to detect a radio pulsar in 1967. It is now considered to be one of the greatest astronomical discoveries of the 20th century. The discovery won the 1974 Nobel Prize for Physics but was controversially awarded to just her supervisor Antony Hewish and astronomer Martin Ryle, despite Burnell Bell being the first to spot the pulsar in the data.

Bell Burnell went on to a distinguished career. She served as the President of the Royal Astronomical Society (2002-04) and in 2018 was awarded the Breakthrough Prize in Physics worth \$3 million which she donated to the Institute of Physics to set up a bursary scheme to allow more women to work in physics.

Was this Newsletter worthwhile? Your feedback would be appreciated, along with suggestions and contributions for future editions during the COVID-19 crisis. Contact details on page 1.