



The Probus Club of Berwick-upon-Tweed

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

Issue 8 – 16th September 2020

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

Dear Member,

It has been a very busy few months for me, involved as I am in the COVID-19 secure online version of Berwick Heritage Open Days (HODS) which is on now, from 11th – 20th September. Your latest newsletter is a week late for that reason.

It is appropriate that we feature **Bob Steward** during HODS as he describes his 'Life as an Archivist'. **Harry Wilson** demonstrates he knows some latin as he relates his encounter with a salesman at the RHS Flower Show in Tatton Park. **Antony Chessel** knows a lot about Aphrodite's Island while **Alan Dumble** shares some wartime memories.

I could have filled a couple more pages this time around, but I've held over some articles for the next newsletter. That doesn't mean I won't be looking for more from you.

Resuming our Probus Meetings seems even further away as a new coronavirus spike hits many parts of the country.

I'm wondering whether we might try a Probus virtual meeting online using Zoom. Our speaker presents from the safety of his home, as we do. Want to try one, with a Probus member as the first speaker? Let me know what you think. - *Homer*

Who Said?

"It became the joke of the neighbourhood. If the umpire ruled me out on a bad call, I'd take the fake eye out and hand it to him."

Answer on last page of the newsletter

HL

Who is This?



This is a photograph of a member of Probus a little while before he joined.

Answers by email, text or phone to the editor

I have had only one suggestion from members as to identity; and that was of the image in Edition 7 - HL

Caveat Emptor by © Harry Wilson

Some years ago my wife and I were walking around the trade stands at the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park when we were accosted by a salesman who proceeded to tell us about his splendid Scottish hotel and the special rates available only during the Show. Suffice it to say that we were sufficiently intrigued to part with a deposit towards a 3-night break to be taken any time within the next 12 months.

Time went by and we suddenly remembered our deposit and hurriedly arranged a visit for the following weekend. Luckily the weather was set fair and we drove North with expectations of splendid views of mountains and lochs and a warm Scottish welcome. The location did not disappoint as the lochside setting amidst mountains rising to over 3000 ft whetted our appetites for what was to come.

As we registered our arrival, we were told that our rooms were not in the main house but in one of the adjoining cottages (our first and only stroke of luck during the next three days). The cottage was a tiny two-storey house with living-room and kitchen on the ground floor and bedroom and bathroom upstairs. As the weather was decidedly chilly the heating was on and the cottage pleasantly warm (we soon found the oil-fired central heating boiler and the cottage rapidly became even warmer).

The first disappointment came with the bedroom where my wife found that the bed had not been made and worse, the sheets had not been changed from the previous occupants. Back to reception and eventually a surly youth appeared with replacement sheets, clean but not ironed.

The terms of our break were dinner, bed and breakfast and our long drive had made us hungry so we went back to the dining room in the main house. This was a splendid room with an imposing fireplace, laid ready to light a fire. Sadly no one came to light the fire. It was bitterly cold. Most of the items

on the menu were "off." We weren't alone in our disappointment. We ate quickly and fled back to thaw out in our nice warm room.

Next morning we were back in the chilly dining room for breakfast where the two waitresses were dressed in parkas and scarves; we were told that the central heating boiler had failed and there was no hot water in the rooms. How lucky were we to be in one of the cottages and in control of our own heating?

With two days to go with our package, we decided to make the most of the superb location but to use no more of the hotel services apart from those in our cottage. A trip into the nearest town enabled us to stock up with a selection of local produce to provide our remaining meals which we ate in our room, making use of the odd collection of cutlery, crockery and cooking utensils in the kitchen.

As we checked out at the end of our stay, the manager apologised for the failure of the heating and asked if we had otherwise enjoyed the visit. We replied that there had been a number of problems beginning with the unmade bed but that things would have been very much worse had we been staying in the main house. We did pass comment on the unusual selection of kitchen equipment, upon which the manager proudly showed us his collection of Tesco vouchers which he was intending to use to replace the odd cutlery in the cottages!!

When we got home, we found an e-mail asking for a Trip Advisor review of the hotel. We were telephoned by the manager who had been sent a copy of our factual account. After trying unsuccessfully to have us modify our comments, he said that there had been a number of changes since our visit which he would like us to see for ourselves. He then offered us a 50% discount on our next visit and seemed surprised when we did not accept!

My Life as an Archivist *by @ Bob Steward*

I was fortunate to enter the profession at a time of growth in local government, after the 1973 Local Government Act which encouraged county councils and district councils to establish record offices in their authorities, particularly to manage the records produced and stored by those authorities and their predecessors.

After a brief spell in Leeds in the early 1970s, I took over as Archivist for my hometown of Doncaster. The town is historic, and so I was responsible for the Borough's charters dating back to 1194, plus records as diverse as files on collecting the town's iron railings for the war effort in World War II to accounts for the damage caused to the town's grammar school done by Cumberland's soldiers billeted there during their march north to fight Bonnie Prince Charlie. Once I got in the newspapers for riding in a refuse lorry to the town's refuse dump to rescue some papers which had been collected for refuse before I could get to them.

After a few years, I moved to Northumberland as Deputy County Archivist and helped my boss, Robin Gard, in setting up the Berwick Archives in 1980. Here I was able to expand my interests beyond council records and toured many of the county's landed estates, solicitors and churches collecting in their archives. Here the term 'dusty archives' is true, as I could spend the day in an attic or cellar, emerging covered in dust. Since an Archivist can't keep everything, part of his role is to appraise papers, deciding what to keep and what to discard. In a way, an Archivist determines what historians study, as what is discarded is lost for ever.

We set up a scheme to collect every school logbook in the county. (A logbook is the daily record every head teacher had to compile) –

these sometimes went back to the 1860s and were an excellent social record of the local community. Robin Gard was keen on oral history ie tape recording reminiscences, and as a result we built up an excellent resource on the county's mining community before it was lost, as miners died. We also took in major photographic collections from around the county too.

I have always liked setting up archive departments, and so, at the time Scotland was establishing local archives (a few years later than England), I was appointed, in 1990, as the first Archivist for the then Highland Regional Council (soon to become Highland Council), based in Inverness, responsible for the records of 5 County Councils and 12 Burghs, stretching from Wick to Grantown-on-Spey – an area, I was told the landmass was the size of Belgium. Some of the Burgh records of the Highlands went back to the 15th century and were found in a variety of stores – solicitors offices, redundant council offices and once in (closed) public toilets.

I approached a number of the Highland Lairds in their estate offices and was able to collect their papers which covered the centuries. My favourite collection was the Inland Revenue Maps of 1910 which record the ownership of every building and piece of land in that year. Scotland is much better than England in having records of property, with registers of sasines and valuation rolls giving every property's ownership and tenancy back to the mid 19th century, if not earlier.

This brings me to the reason for having archive departments – not only because they assist one's council employer in its work, but also they offer a service to the general public who wish to research the history of their family or house, and help

<p>the local history of their area or a particular subject like railways or crofting.</p> <p>This also means spending hours back in the office compiling lists, indices and catalogues of the records one has collected so they can be used by the public. Technology now means that many of these lists can be put online, but it will be a long time, if ever, before the mass of documents in an Archive can ever be digitised. While in the Highlands, I did experiment with digitising my lists of Inverness Court records (including transportation to Australia, and illicit distilling!) back to the late 1700s, and these were popular.</p>	<p>those interested in Archives have to be kept in secure, environmentally correct stores, so a lot of my time was spent seeking out such accommodation – eventually they ended up in a bank vault in Nairn and in rooms in Inverness Castle.</p> <p>Promoting archives is something I grew to enjoy, which meant days giving talks and setting up exhibitions around the Highlands. Because of the distances involved, occasionally I spent the night in some West Highland village and offered numerous 'wee drams' to while away an evening after a talk to their local history group.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">© Bob Steward</p>
--	---

Berwick Heritage Open Days 2020, 11th – 20th September

<p>The team at Berwick Heritage Open Days were not going to be defeated by the coronavirus and resolved to replace the usual events showcasing buildings and staging tours of historical importance with an online presence. A website has been developed http://berwickhods.org.uk/home and went live on 22nd August.</p> <p>Linda Bankier, the Berwick Archivist leads the Steering Group. The experts, Linda, local historian, Jim Herbert and Dr Catherine Kent, an architectural historian, set about recording video tours and talks that in normal times would be delivered in person.</p> <p>No less than nine video tours have been produced plus 'A Unique Parish Church' contributed by Berwick Parish congregation along with two short videos on the stained-Glass windows and W. Noel Hodgson, Berwick's War Poet. Five live online events are also being staged through the video conferencing service Zoom; three have now occurred and were well attended, including one lady from</p>	<p>Canada, and were a great success. They are:- 'Heritage Question Time' on 13th September; 'Berwick Archives Revealed', a talk by Linda Bankier on Tuesday 15th; 'The Battle of Halidon Hill', an illuminating talk by historian Jim Herbert on Wednesday 16th; 'If The Walls Could Talk: Investigating the 18th Century Smoke Drawings At Berwick Barracks' presented by English Heritage on Friday 18th and, finally, a second round of 'Heritage question Time' at 4pm on Sun 20th → http://berwickhods.org.uk/heritage-question-time/. There is still time to book this last event at the website link provided. During the weekend of 18th September you can go on the Secret Spittal self-guided walk to find out stories about people and buildings between 10:00am and 4:00pm → http://berwickhods.org.uk/secret-spittal-a-walk-around-spittal/. To close the 10-day event take part in the Berwick InQUIZition on Sunday evening at 8:00pm → http://berwickhods.org.uk/berwick-inquization/</p>
--	---

Aphrodite's Island.

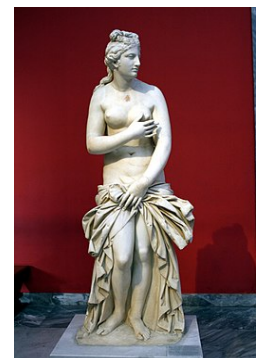
Gwen's and my elder daughter and family live in Cyprus but, for the last two years, we have been prevented from visiting them on three occasions, firstly because of the demise of Thomas Cook in 2019 and then, in April and September this year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The history of Cyprus has a fascination for us because history and archaeology are everywhere, the island having been ruled in turn by Egyptians, Phoenicians, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders, Franks, Venetians, Turks and finally, the British, before achieving independence in 1960. The invasion by Turkey in 1974 led to the partition of the island and the separation of the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities by a 'green line' buffer zone right across the island, patrolled by the United Nations. All these occupations have left their mark and, very often, we have literally treaded our way through history, as evidenced by the many archaic and classical remains lying on the surface of the ground.

We are also very conscious of the myths and legends, most notably the cult of Aphrodite (Roman Venus), the goddess of love and sex, rescuer of sailors, guardian of plants and goddess of marriage and civil harmony. Cyprus is the land of Aphrodite, who was born rising from the sea-foam in the south of the island near Pafos. There are three large limestone rocks (see right), known collectively as the Rock of Aphrodite, from where she was towed to the shore on a shell towed by dolphins, interpreted by Botticelli in *The Birth of Venus*, Uffizi Gallery, Florence. A local legend says that swimming around the rocks at full moon will make you a year younger with each lap. Although we can see the great benefit that would accrue in our case, so far, we have not tried to do this and, were we to attempt it, our daughter would say that, at our age, we should know better.



Aphrodite's father was said to be Uranus, who was the sky, but in Homer's *Iliad*, she is the daughter of Zeus and Dione. Her spouse was Hephaestus (Vulcan) and, amongst her lovers were Ares (Mars), Hermes (Mercury), Adonis and Anchises. Her children included Aeneas, Harmonia, Deimos, Phobos, Hermaphroditus, Priapus and Beroe. The girdle of Aphrodite made its wearers irresistible to others and the hand-mirror of Aphrodite with its small cross-grip still remains the symbol of the feminine gender.

We have visited the ruins of the Temple of Aphrodite at Palaipafos (Old Pafos) near to the goddess's birthplace which is said to be the most important shrine of the goddess in the ancient world. A sanctuary was established here in the 12th century BC and, preserved in the museum, is the cult statue, a large black basalt rock described in literary sources in antiquity and portrayed later on Roman coins (see left). It certainly bears no resemblance to the many shapely depictions of Aphrodite in painting and sculpture such as the



Syracuse Aphrodite in the Archaeological Museum, Athens (see above).

The other important shrine to Aphrodite is one of our favourite places; this is the temple on the acropolis, overlooking the ancient city of Amathus, near Limassol. The site appeals to us because of its remarkable, lofty situation overlooking the azure-blue Mediterranean Sea and the over-riding and atmospheric sense of history. It can be a hot expedition but the climb up amidst dust, stones and past ancient tumbled walls, provides ample reward. The broad summit reveals overlying building phases from the Archaic-Classical, Hellenistic, Roman and Early Christian periods but, within the Archaic-Classical site of the Sanctuary of Aphrodite, we are always drawn to the site of two colossal vases, one a fragment of the original, and the other, a replica of the original which is now housed in the Louvre. The use of the vases is unknown but perhaps if water was contained within them, it was considered to be miraculous, perhaps to promote health or fertility or longevity.



I had thought about bringing back a replica of Aphrodite for the garden, to stand in a suitable ivy-clad bower but, if I wasn't even prepared to swim a much-needed ten times around Aphrodite's rock at full-moon, there was little prospect of me carrying a heavy stone statue home.

© Antony Chessell

Photos: Syracuse Aphrodite-Wikimedia Commons Licence, attribution, G. dallorto; other photos, author's collection.

Some Memories of Wartime

To begin at the beginning. A seven-year-old child listening with his parents and brother to those words as they came from what is now regarded as a vintage radio set via a tall aerial in the backyard. A broadcast heard by millions and which I remember to this day, or as Rob Wilton famously put it, "The day war broke out" etc.

Very soon after, my elder brother and I found ourselves carrying our gas mask cases and haversacks, along with crowds of other children, at Sunderland railway station waiting to be evacuated. For us we eventually ended up at the village of Aycliffe with its schoolhouse and village green. Now

completely vanished because of today's developments but not the memories. This was then the period of the "phoney war" and soon we, not unwillingly, returned home.

Unfortunately, my father died leaving my mother to bring up two boys, an eight-year-old and twelve-year-old which she managed to do with great success for which we were ever grateful. It was now that the bombing started. Thankfully by this time air-raid shelters had miraculously sprung up everywhere. We lived in a street of terraced cottages where there was, planted in each back yard, a brick and concrete shelter with a metal escape hatch at the rear. Other house shelters were the 'Anderson' and the

'Morrison' an indoor one rather like an extra-large iron tabletop and base. Then of course the schools had their own shelters and there were public shelters around the town.

Along the coastal sands barbed wire was everywhere hoping to deter beach landings and further out of town most of the flat fields had concrete pillars scattered around to prevent aircraft landings. Pill boxes appeared at strategic points. I remember there was one at the end of the Alexandra bridge cleverly disguised as public toilets.

At first the bombing was fairly light and we tended not to use the shelter very much. One evening things seemed a lot more unusual. Searchlights flashing like mad, anti-aircraft guns going non-stop. It was clear that the world's largest shipbuilding town was 'Target for tonight' so my friend and I joined my brother, mother and a couple of neighbours in the shelter. On and on it went then suddenly there was an almighty bang. Eventually the 'All clear' sounded. As we looked at the house we saw that our bedroom windows had been blown in and that if we had been in bed we would have been cut to pieces with the glass shards. We always thereafter went into the shelter as soon as the siren sounded! It turned out that a parachute mine had been dropped two streets away wrecking several houses. Of course, my friend and I were mainly concerned with our shrapnel collection and in fact a few days later our picture appeared in the local paper. I'm sure I still have it somewhere.

The words 'Target for Tonight' leads me off on another tack. That of some of the music

of those days. Vera Lynn naturally comes to mind. However I seem to remember at school we were taught 'The Star Spangled Banner'--"the land of the free and the home of the brave." "To arms you sons of France--to death and liberty." and then "There will always be an England an England that is free if England means as much to you as England means to me. Red White and Blue, what does it mean to you---etc." My goodness what would the Twitterati have to say about that?' Target for tonight' is from 'Coming in on a wing and a prayer----what a show what a fight we really hit our target for tonight---etc." I often recall my schoolmistress when I was about eleven and struggling with the piano, how pleased she was when I played for her "Silver wings in the moonlight"-----"if you love him like I do please take care of my love" I could see a tear in her eye. Later I discovered that her husband was a fighter pilot!

There are so many more memories so I'll take a break here with a more recent one. A few years ago on a visit to Yorkshire I went to visit a war museum, I seem to recall it was in or near Pickering. It was quite fascinating. I think I was in a mock air-raid shelter looking at some photographs when suddenly an Air-raid warning siren went off. My stomach turned over for a moment. Yes after 60 years it brought it all back to me.

© Alan Dumble

What is Social Prescribing?



Read on to learn about Personalised Care

Social Prescribing: -

Many things affect your health and wellbeing. GPs tell us that a lot of people visit them feeling isolated or lonely. Or they might be stressed out by work, money and housing problems. Sometimes it's the stress of managing different long-term conditions.

That's where social prescribing comes in. It starts with a conversation. It might be the conversation you've just had with your doctor. Or with another person in the practice team. The local telephone number is 07485 314254. For more information about social prescribing visit <https://england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/>

Who Said?

"It became the joke of the neighbourhood. If the umpire ruled me out on a bad call, I'd take the fake eye out and hand it to him."

Peter Michael Falk was born on **September 16, 1927**, in New York City, New York. At the age of 3, his right eye was surgically removed due to cancer. He graduated from Ossining High School, where he was president of his class.

Peter Michael Falk (September 16, 1927 – June 23, 2011) was an American actor and comedian, known for his role as [Lieutenant Columbo](#) in the long-running television series [Columbo](#) (1968–2003), [Primetime Emmy](#) (1990) and a [Golden](#) starred as Columbo in first with [Gene Barry](#) in [Grant](#) in 1971. The show [Mystery Movie](#) series [ABC](#) from 1989 to



for which he won four [Awards](#) (1972, 1975, 1976, [Globe Award](#) (1973). He first two 90-minute [TV pilots](#); the 1968 and the second with [Lee](#) then aired as part of [The NBC](#) from 1971 to 1978, and again on 2003.^[1]

Falk was twice nominated for the [Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor](#), for [Murder, Inc.](#) (1960) and [Pocketful of Miracles](#) (1961), and won his first [Emmy Award](#) in 1962 for [The Dick Powell Theatre](#). He was the first actor to be nominated for an [Academy Award](#) and an [Emmy Award](#) in the same year, achieving the feat twice (1961 and 1962). He went on to appear in such films as [It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World](#) (1963), [The Great Race](#) (1965), [Anzio](#) (1968), [Murder by Death](#) (1976), [The Cheap Detective](#) (1978), [The In-Laws](#) (1979), [The Princess Bride](#) (1987), [Wings of Desire](#) (1987), [The Player](#) (1992), and [Next](#) (2007), as well as many television guest roles.

Falk was also known for his collaborations with filmmaker and actor [John Cassavetes](#) in films such as: [Husbands](#) (1970), [A Woman Under the Influence](#) (1974), [Opening Night](#) (1977), [Elaine May's Mikey and Nicky](#) (1976) and the *Columbo* episode "[Étude in Black](#)" (1972).

Director [William Friedkin](#) said of Falk's role in his film [The Brink's Job](#) (1978): "Peter has a great range from comedy to drama. He could break your heart or he could make you laugh."^[2] In 1996, [TV Guide](#) ranked Falk No. 21 on its 50 Greatest TV Stars of All Time list.^[3] He received posthumously a star on the [Hollywood Walk of Fame](#) in 2013

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.