



The Probus Club of Berwick-upon-Tweed

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

Issue 10 – 28th October 2020

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Dear Member,

Remembrance Sunday will be a very different experience this year because of COVID-19. I understand Berwick Town Council think it imperative that, at the traditional times, the civic party pays respect on behalf of the community to those who served and sacrificed for us, and that all the organizations and individuals who traditionally have laid a wreath should have the opportunity to do so. However, wreath laying will be enabled on an appointment basis, either on the Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning before the formal act of remembrance, allocating each organization that requests one a ten-minute appointment, while showing due respect to the orders of precedence that normally govern such events.

Our Chairman will lay a wreath at 15:40 on Saturday afternoon on behalf of Probus.

On Remembrance Sunday, the Town Council intend to make as much use of social media as possible, and to ask residents to stay at home, but to observe the two minutes silence by standing on their doorstep or in their gardens as our way, as a community, of bearing witness to the courage and commitment of those who went before us.

Who Said?

"Headlines, in a way, are what mislead you because bad news is a headline, and gradual improvement is not."

Answer on last page of the newsletter

HL

Who is This?



This is the photograph of a Probus member long before he joined the Club. Who is he?

Suggested answers to the Editor.

Two Stories From Alan D.Mitty's Sporting Scrapbook!

'Close call for 'under 18 "favourite" headed the paragraph in the local paper reporting the annual Durham County Tennis Competition. 'We nearly had a big surprise in the first round as the current under 18 champion was taken to 6-4 on the first set but steadied and took the second 6-3. Dumble, his opponent, scored frequently with well controlled drop shots and lobbed to good effect'

I was quite pleased the reporter described the match as such. Actually my 'well controlled' drop shots were a result of last second attempts to reach the ball as it came whistling across the net where my 'lobs to good effect' came when I could just reach the ball and manage to swing the racket at it with no idea where it would land.

(I had more success in the mixed doubles reaching the semi-finals but that is another tale!)

Returning from University, having had an enjoyable term's cricket, I had no hesitation in accepting an offer from my brother to play for Sunderland Police the following day as one of the team had had to withdraw at short notice. Being big-headed as usual and, having 3 or 4 half-centuries under my belt with the college eleven, I quite looked forward to a new challenge. Little did I know. The game was against Seaham Park in the Durham Coast league regarded, for some reason, as a step down from the Durham Senior League. Pre-match talk was about 'The Parks' new professional, a fast bowler from the West Indies. Having lost the toss

our opponents sent us in to bat, joking that we would be having a very early tea break. My turn came to bat at about the sixth wicket down. As I passed the wicket keeper I was greeted with 'Don't worry son he's not warmed up yet.' I remember smiling but not when I realised the distance he went to stand behind the wicket. Taking centre and a look around then readied myself. The bowler sped up to deliver. I saw what appeared to be a little red thing in a huge black hand. The next thing I know was having the ball being thrown back from the boundary for four byes. Next ball a repeat. I played forward again. This time it nicked my bat on its way to the boundary leg side. For a change with the next ball I played forward hoping, as I had yet to see the ball other than in the hand of the bowler, that my bat would protect me. It didn't. I then turned to see my



middle stump being recovered by the wicket keeper some fifteen yards away. I gave the bowler a smile and said well bowled. It took a lot of willpower to

make a steady walk back to the pavilion instead of running as I very much felt like doing.

However, at least I found my level a few years later playing club village cricket in the green fields of Kent.

© Alan Dumble



Your Committee has been working hard on your behalf as the image of our Zoom virtual meeting last Thursday will testify.

If you have been reading your emails you will know that we have decided that the **AGM** which should be held on 18th November is to be deferred until meetings in public are once again permitted. Members of the Committee have all agreed to continue in office until then.

All feedback received to date on this decision from members has been positive.

TSB Branch closure

The TSB Berwick-upon-Tweed branch is to close on March 3rd 2021. This was discussed at the Committee Meeting. We will still have

access to our funds after then as all our outgoing transactions are made by cheque but whenever meetings resume the question of paying cash receipts into the account arises. TSB stated in their announcement that they are negotiating a contract with the Post Office to provide pay-in facilities but whether that will include cash remains to be seen.

To change banks will require a change to our Constitution, another potential challenge in these difficult times.

Treasurer

We have had no Treasurer since March and so it was decided that the Secretary would take on the role of acting Treasurer meantime.

History of Sport *by © Michael Wright*

As I mentioned in an earlier article, I am interested in most sport so I thought I would prepare a piece on the history of sport, focussing on those sports which are most commonly followed by many of us via TV, radio, newspaper or otherwise. This is just a "taster" so, if any aspect of it whets your appetite, I suggest you follow it through with

further reading.

It is generally recognised that the oldest sport which we recognise as such is wrestling. There is evidence that wrestling took place in Ancient Greece and then Egypt and Rome at least 3000 years ago. This was connected with physical fitness and

preparation for warfare. That said, cave paintings found in Japan and elsewhere from perhaps 15000 years ago show that our forebears engaged in sprinting, swimming and similar activities but they were unlikely to have been organised in the way we now understand as competitive sport. That said, the first Olympic Games took place in 776 BC. The emphasis then was on individual achievement. After a break of many hundreds of years, the modern Olympics started in 1896 AD. They are now held every four years and emphasise national achievement both in being selected as the host venue and in performance. The Winter Olympics were introduced in 1924 and are now held every four years on a different cycle to the (Summer) Olympics. Of course, there are those who suggest that international sport is effectively a “war substitute”. Nowhere is this more apparent than with Olympic Games, a matter which I personally regret. The same might be said of all organised sport. The next Summer Olympics were due to have been held in Tokyo in 2020 but have been postponed until next year. Sport is undoubtedly now a leisure activity although attracting tribal loyalties.

Most of the sports or versions of them, particularly the team sports we now follow - cricket, soccer and rugby - and also popular primarily individual sports such as golf and tennis can be traced back many centuries at least to the Middle Ages but the rules under which they are now played were generally established in the 19th century. The Football League, the County Championship in cricket, the Open Golf Championship and Wimbledon tennis for example go back between about 130 and 200 years. Of course, there have been many changes during that time with the addition of new teams (such as Durham becoming a first-class cricket county), the introduction of new competitions such as limited overs

cricket and significant changes to the rules - and other changes are on the horizon notably in football, partly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic - but the fundamentals remain broadly the same as when we were growing up. There are those who suggest that the proposed changes are being attributed to coronavirus but are really more connected with other reasons. The most obvious change in all sport is the development of professionalism and the huge growth in prize money. I am often reminded of my mother’s comment that “when money’s in, sports out”. It was mainly a warning against gambling but could equally be applied to professionalism. As an aside, as I have become older I find myself remembering what my parents said to me more often. What I think we can fairly say is that the survival of any human activity for such a long time is remarkable, but all things have their “season”.

Specifically, the world’s first organised football league, the Football League of England and Wales was established in 1888 (the Scottish Football League started in 1890) initially with 12 clubs, the oldest of which, Notts County, is the oldest professional club in the world having been formed in 1862. Their shirts are, like Newcastle United’s, black and white vertical stripes. Hence their nickname is also the “Magpies”. Their choice of shirts is thought to have inspired the famous Italian club, Juventus, to choose the same in 1903 having been founded in Turin in 1897. Until 1992, all the main professional football clubs in England played in one of the divisions of the Football League. The Football League grew to having 92 clubs playing in its four divisions but, in 1992, 22 clubs broke away to form the Premier League. That number is now 20 so the Football League now consists of 72 club in three Divisions. There is much discussion about which club has been the most successful over the years. Many would

dispute it but, in my view, that accolade should go to Arsenal of London, Liverpool or Manchester United. I wish I could say Newcastle United but, with regret, I concede that its glory days were in the 19th century!!! Our time may come again.

Cricket has been played in England for hundreds of years. The County Championship was established in 1890, initially with 8 teams subsequently expanding to 18 counties. The most successful over the years has been Yorkshire. With the establishing of various limited overs competitions, other counties have come to the fore, notably Sussex, Lancashire and Somerset. The latter in particular (we lived in Somerset for a few years in the 1970s) has done well never having won the traditional County Championship. One feature of cricket which has been lost in recent years has been the use of many smaller grounds throughout the summer in places such as Jesmond, Folkestone and Weston super Mare. An excellent book about this (by Chris Arnot) was published a few years ago. Test matches against other countries (notably Australia) are keenly followed.

The Rugby Football Union of England was established in 1871. It was strictly an amateur game until the creation of the league system and the open paying of players in the 1990's. The dispute about amateurism and the payment of players led to the creation of the Rugby League (which has different rules), principally in the North of England in 1895. The international matches are followed extensively particularly the rivalry between England, Scotland, France and Wales. Rugby Union (and Rugby League) has spread throughout the former British Empire particularly in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.

Tennis and versions of it (played with a

racquet and balls) can be traced back many centuries. A visit to Falkland Palace in Fife will include seeing one of the few remaining real (or Royal) tennis courts in Britain. For many people, tennis is primarily associated with two weeks in summer when the Championship of England is held at Wimbledon (established in 1877) in South West London. A visit there (I've been a few times) makes an excellent day out, especially if you're willing to spend money on strawberries and cream.

Golf and versions of it also go back many centuries. It started either in Scotland or the Netherlands. It is often associated with the small Fife town of St Andrews where there are four courses, the most famous of which is the Old Course. As with many sports, the USA has become the major centre. This led to the final decision (in 1990) to make the standard size of golf ball that which was used in America. Like most sports, professionalism is now the norm in golf. Great interest focuses on the four annual so-called "majors", one of which is the Open Championship (first played in 1860) is played in July each year - always on a course by the seaside, pandemic allowing!!!

There is much more that could be included in such an article but I hope there is something of interest in it which might cause you to explore further. I hope so. I am conscious that I have made a number of potentially contentious claims in this article with which you may disagree. If you do, please let me know via the Editor of our Newsletter.

Michael Wright
October 2020

Unnecessary Inventions

iSleeper



Your phone works just as hard as you do—it deserves a good night's charge. This modern miniature bed features a luxurious cloud-like mattress with an integrated wireless charger. Keep your phone tight and snug under the plush comforter all night long and wake up literally feeling 100%.

Bed rates only; breakfast is extra 😊... HL

The Roslin Gunpowder Mill *by Ian Hannah*

Roslin Gunpowder Mill opened in 1805 and closed in 1954. It consisted of small wooden sheds with no more than 2 or 3 workers in each, spread over a vast area, between Roslin and Rosewell. It had a railway loading platform and a tin tunnel was built from the entrance to the loading platform, to contain the sparks. It was the biggest Gunpowder Mill in Scotland in the 1950s.

It employed 150 workers and they were searched at the gate for cigarettes, matches, jewellery including rings, kirby grips even stays in corsets. It employed in the region of 150 workers. Sisters were not allowed to work in the same shed. The horses' shoes were made of Phosphor and bronze. The workers had to change their clothes before starting work and finishing work.

In peacetime, the gunpowder was used mainly for blasting in coal pits and quarries and in war, hand grenades and bombs. During air raids, they would dive into air raid

shelters. Luckily no bombs landed near them. Occasionally, they would be entertained at lunchtime by ENSA. On one occasion an entertainer pulled a cigarette packet out of his pocket and was quickly bundled off stage and given a severe talking to. All the audiences would have been impregnated by gunpowder dust.

In 1925, 2 girls were killed in an incident. One of them, Pim Arnott, lived next door to my parent's flat. On another occasion, a man and his horse were transporting nitro-glycerine in a cart when it exploded.

My Auntie Dolly worked in the Gunpowder Mill, as did my Uncle Larry until it closed in 1954 and he managed to get a job in the brickworks next to the Moat Pit, both of which have now closed.

During its time there were 25 fatalities, which I think is quite a good record, considering the dangerous nature of their work.



Miscellany



shared by silversurfers.com



NOT EVERYTHING IS CANCELLED

sunshine is not cancelled
spring is not cancelled
love is not cancelled
relationships are not cancelled
reading is not cancelled
naps are not cancelled
devotion is not cancelled
music is not cancelled
dancing is not cancelled
imagination is not cancelled
kindness is not cancelled
conversations are not cancelled
hope is not cancelled



#keeplookingup
SimpleStencils.com

TO THOSE WHO GAVE SO MUCH



WE THANK YOU



Berwick Bridges old & new © Homer Lindsay

Who Said?

"Headlines, in a way, are what mislead you because bad news is a headline, and gradual improvement is not."

It was Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft whose birthday was on this day, 28th October 1955.

Gates co-founded Microsoft in 1975 along with [Paul Allen](#). They developed BASIC then later MS-DOS for IBM before launching Microsoft Windows in 1995. Windows went on to become the most dominate personal computer operating system, with Microsoft using at times controversial anticompetitive tactics. Gates, now one of the richest men in the world, established in 2000 the Bill & [Melinda Gates](#) Foundation for Philanthropic purposes.



He also said, prophetically, "The worst pandemic in modern history was the Spanish flu of 1918, which killed tens of millions of people. Today, with how interconnected the world is, it would spread faster".

I remember MS-DOS.. and Basic! I wrote a replacement for the Caithness Glass Paperweight Collectors' Club membership database in Advanced Basic on an IBM PC. Its predecessor was accidently overwritten circa 1983 and I had a month to complete the task. Off-the-shelf alternatives did not provide the capacity required at the time. Happy Days! **Homer Lindsay**

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.