



## The Probus Club of Berwick-upon-Tweed

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

Issue 13 – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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A Happy New Year! May 2021 be much better than 2020

Dear Member

If you follow Councillor Georgina Hill's Facebook page you may have seen Dr Jimmy Mitchell was the first to get his coronavirus vaccine in Berwick. Since then, I have spoken to quite a few members, all of whom have received their first inoculations, and some will receive their 2<sup>nd</sup> one next week. The Well Close vaccination centre is doing very well and many have expressed thanks and admiration to staff for the slickness of the process. I received my first jab last week but I have to wait for 12 weeks before getting the booster.

It is difficult to see when we might be able to resume our weekly meetings but there is light at the end of the tunnel now that there are three approved vaccines. Of these, the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine is possibly our best hope as its storage and distribution requirements are so much easier; and, of course, the Government has secured 100 million doses of this. Perhaps we might look to meeting again in the Parish Hall in July or August. I do so miss our Wednesday meetings.

This edition includes Probus Berwick News and articles from **Michael Wright** on 'Well Known Composers' and **Colin Wakeling** demonstrates his attitude to the game of Golf. A **Mr Alan D.** features in 'Letters to the Editor (again!).

Keep safe; keep well

~ *Homer*

### Who Said?

“ I'm one for new things: I like new technology, I like new music, I'm not entrenched in some view of what culture should be. I like the fact that it's constantly changing and that language is changing, that behaviour changes. ”

*Answer on last page*

### Who is this?

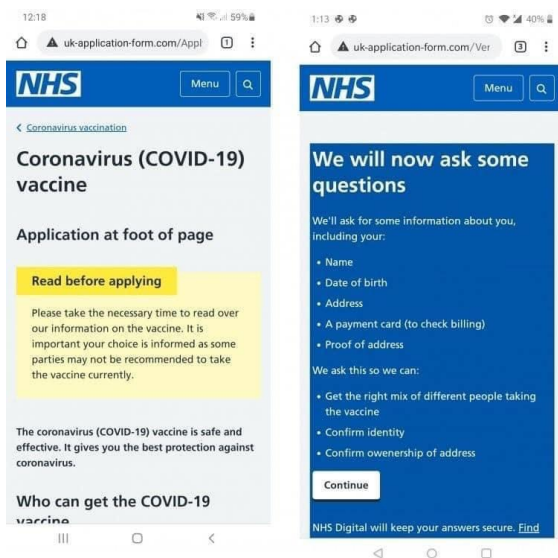


This is a photograph of one of our members, some time before he joined Probus. Who is he? Let the editor know your thoughts.

## Vaccine Scam Alert!

Please be aware of this fake NHS text that has been circulating, advising people that they are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

The link takes you to a false NHS website that asks for various personal details →



**The NHS will never ask for your bank details.**

## Special General Meeting of Probus

Members should by now have received, by email or by post, notice of the Special General Meeting [SGM] to be held electronically (online) on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February. The purpose of this is to elect the 2021 Office Bearers and Committee and to decide the level of 2021 subscriptions.

If you have not received your Notice, please let me know by telephone (numbers on page 1 under the masthead).

The existing Committee agreed at the October Committee to continue in office until a properly constituted AGM or SGM could be convened.

David Mumford fulfilled his commitment as Chairman on 31<sup>st</sup> December, passing the reigns on to Antony Chessell, his Vice- Chairman, now Acting Chairman.

We now also have an Acting Treasurer, Michael Wright, who will take over from Homer as soon as possible, and an Auditor, Harry Wilson. Regrettably, George Martin, has had to relinquish his role through failing health and so we are seeking a new Programme Secretary.

Antony, Michael and Harry need to be confirmed in office by means of this Special General Meeting, as do the remainder of the Office Bearers and Committee.

The Notice of SGM included a Form for you to use to nominate other members to office (having obtained their permission beforehand, of course).

You can also click the following button to get an online Nomination Form –

[Click to get Nomination Form](#)

We obviously cannot meet in person and many of you are averse to participating in a Zoom (virtual) meeting, so we are conducting the vote by means of an electronic Voting Form (similar to the Nomination Form) which will allow you to cast your vote(s) for Committee and the level of 2021 subscription.

The Timetable for Nominations and Voting is as follows: -

1. **9th January:** Notice of Special General Meeting sent out to members ✓
2. **31st January:** Deadline for completed Nominations (in Secretary's hands)
3. **1st February:** Voting Forms (electronic and printed) sent out to members – *you can vote anytime up to 10<sup>th</sup> February*
4. **10th February:** Formal Date of Special General Meeting; **the Deadline for voting.**

## A Tribute to retiring Office Bearers 2020

Before the start of lockdown **Charles Fairfield** resigned as Treasurer, as a consequence of ill health. Charles was always there at the door to welcome us and take our meeting money and subscriptions at the start of the year. He also organised our annual lunches for many years but I had not realized until recently that he served as Secretary since 2008 when Chairman Phil Reynolds recruited him. He later switched to the role of Treasurer. That is a long length of service to the membership and we owe him a great debt of gratitude.

He has been of enormous help to me as acting Treasurer since October while we were struggling to change our account signatories at the TSB. Thanks, Charles.

**David Mumford** was our Chairman for 2020. Some might think he got off lightly as he only had to chair 11 meetings until the start of lockdown, but they'd be wrong!

He has had to chair Committee Meetings in June, October, November and December while we dealt with decisions on criteria for a resumption of weekly meetings, arrangements for Remembrance Sunday and a blizzard of correspondence from me regarding our bank account at TSB when we were reduced to one cheque signatory after

the sad passing of George Robertson in August and Tony Lee in November.

We have been trying to add signatories since February, but delays caused by the lockdown resulted in complicated bank procedures which are still ongoing. During this time David has generously provided Probus with temporary funding to allow us to meet outstanding commitments to the Parish Church. A big thank you is due to David, and a reimbursement cheque when we eventually can operate the bank account again!

**George Martin** has been Secretary (including the commitment to engage speakers for our meetings) for many years. Failing mobility forced him to relinquish the secretarial role at the end of 2019 but he retained the task of recruiting speakers, a task he fulfilled with great panache and expertise. It is no mean feat to find 50 speakers a year, but George always managed to deliver a full programme from year to year. He also organised the annual outings.

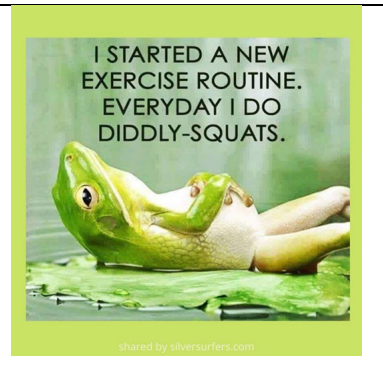
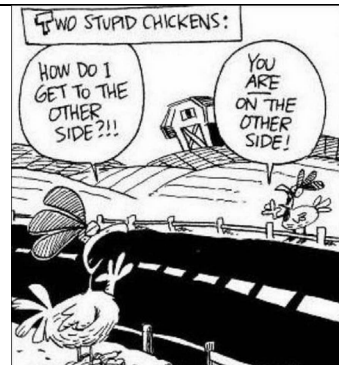
George was Probus Chairman in 2003.

Unfortunately, failing health has forced him to retire as Programme Secretary at the end of 2020.

This is a big role to fill and George is due a huge vote of thanks from all of us for his huge contribution.

*Homer Lindsay*

Social Media snippets



## WELL KNOWN COMPOSERS

By © Michael Wright

Whilst I believe that many music composers of recent times have considerable talent (I'm thinking of John Lennon, Elton John and Karl Jenkins for example), this article focuses on music composers of earlier times. There are many I could include but I only have time and space to cover five of them - Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Faure and Vaughan Williams. Between them they cover several hundred years and very different styles of music. I'm also happy to say that I'm a "fan" of their music. I'm very conscious that I'm omitting many fine musicians including Purcell, Bach, Haydn, Saint-Saens, Delius and Britten, all of whom would, along with many others, make most people's lists of favourite composers. If they are favourites of yours, why not write a piece on them for the Club's Newsletter? However, in the interest of brevity, I'll just cover the five above.

**George Frideric (Frederick) Handel** was born in 1685 at Halle in modern Germany. His father (aged 63 when George was born) was an eminent barber-surgeon and his mother (his father's second wife) was the daughter of a Lutheran minister. The family were staunchly Protestant. Handel took organ lessons from the Halle church organist and, by the age of 15, was a proficient player. He took some lessons in musical composition whilst continuing to live in Halle. He went to the recently founded University of Halle between 1702 and 1707. He travelled to Italy to further his musical education and, in 1710, moved to London to be part of the court of King George 1, the first monarch of the House of Hanover. He became a naturalised British citizen in 1727. In this period he wrote his most famous works, much of it directly for the King, the Water Music, Music for the Royal Fireworks, the coronation anthem, Zadok the Priest (which has been sung at every coronation

since then) etc. Most memorably, he wrote the sacred oratorio, The Messiah. It is believed that he completed this work in 24 days from start to finish. The Messiah has been sung thousands (probably millions) of times, especially at Christmas and Easter, during the past 400 years. Handel lived in London for the rest of his life. He never married. He went blind, died in 1759 and is buried in Westminster Abbey. Unlike many other composers, Handel became wealthy in his own lifetime principally because his compositions, particularly his operas, were enormous commercial successes.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (he actually had a much longer name) was born in Salzburg in Austria in 1756. He was a prolific composer despite dying at the age of 35 (or perhaps because of his work schedule). He had a precocious talent composing his first symphony at the age of eight. His father taught him music until it was apparent that, given his talent, he needed specialist tuition. He travelled extensively throughout Europe with his family. This included two visits to London to spend time with Johann Sebastian Bach who was working there in the 1760s. During these tours, he performed concerts on various instruments often based on his own compositions. From the age of 16 or so, he was employed at the court in Salzburg but left after a few years because the salary was very low. He moved to Vienna and found more lucrative work. At the age of 26 he married and had six children by his wife. However, only two of his children survived infancy. The two surviving children (both boys) became musicians but neither was as talented as their father. Mozart is regarded by some people as the finest composer of all. Frank Joseph Haydn said so. Mozart composed a wide variety of music including operas, symphonies and concertos for full orchestras and quartets. A particular favourite of mine is his Clarinet concerto composed in 1791. Many years ago I had a bachelor friend who had Mozart's music playing in his flat constantly.

Mozart did not enjoy good health throughout his life but, perhaps exacerbated by his phenomenal workload, he died in 1795. Shortly before his death he completed the Requiem for which he is remembered. There have been a number of books written and films made about Mozart's life.

**Ludwig van Beethoven** was born in Bonn in 1770. He made a remarkable contribution to music by starting as a classical composer (in the style of Bach and Handel) but, despite increasing deafness, becoming the first major composer of the so-called "romantic" period of music. His father was his first teacher and Beethoven published his first compositions in his twenties. He earned his living by teaching and as an organist. His first symphony was published in 1800 by which time his hearing had begun to deteriorate. He then began a period of prolific composition publishing his only opera (Fidelio) in 1805 and a wide variety of other work culminating in his final (ninth) symphony just before his death in Vienna - in which he lived - in 1827 by which time he was bedridden. He has become arguably the most performed classical composer.

Gabriel Faure was born in a small town in the south of France into a modestly well to do family. They were not especially musical but from an early age, Faure displayed considerable musical talent and he was sent to a school which specialised in music. He trained to be an organist and began composing. At the age of 19 he wrote a beautiful piece, Cantique de Jean Racine, which happens to be one of my favourites. In a relatively long life he wrote many pieces, one of which, his Requiem, has become well known, especially the Pie Jesu. He spent his professional life as a teacher (both privately and in music colleges) and composer in Paris. He formed a lifelong friendship with another composer, Saint-Saëns, and rubbed shoulders with other well-known French composers of the 19th century including Widor, Bizet and Ravel. He

married rather unhappily and had two sons, neither of whom was especially musical. After a spell of ill health, he died at the age of 79 in Paris by which time he became known as the "grand old man" of French music.

**Ralph (usually pronounced Rafe) Vaughan Williams** is the only English composer I have included. His family were of English and Welsh descent with a number of High Court judges in their number. He was born in Gloucestershire in 1873 into a comfortable family, his father being a Vicar who died at a young age. He was sent away to various boarding schools, notably Charterhouse, and then went to Cambridge and



to the Royal College of Music where one of his first teachers was Hubert Parry, composer of a number of well-loved organ pieces.

Vaughan Williams became a composer, teacher and performer, especially on the violin. His composition "The Lark Ascending" has consistently been voted as people's favourite piece of classical music in various polls over the years. It is based upon a poem by George Meredith. He composed a great deal of orchestral music as well as hymns and secular songs. At the age of 42, he volunteered for the Army at the outbreak of the First World War, an experience which profoundly affected him and inspired further compositions after the War. He died at the age of 85 in 1958 and is buried in Westminster Abbey composing music until shortly before he died.

These are simply fairly superficial reflections on the lives of just a few composers. Many others could be included.

© Michael Wright  
December 2020



<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Letters to the Editor</b></p> <p>Dear Homer,</p> <p>Not being "computer literate" as you are well aware, I rely a lot on others for information on various local happenings. The latest one my granddaughter has just pointed out to me she finds most amusing as it concerns a body of old men "just like you grandad, you know. Probably all or most among those in line for the first COVID-19 jab"</p> <p>Anyhow it seems they play funny games among themselves. Recently someone upset the person they call the Secretary by addressing him as half secretary - half treasurer. "He was most annoyed and made sure that all members know that he was a 'full' secretary and very quickly, Putinesque style, a full treasurer appeared.</p> <p>They also have various other gentlemen</p>	<p>acting as Chairman etc. but have now discovered that an election for officers for 2021 is required. This promises to be a lot of fun as it looks as though it will be mainly by the internet. I looked at a previous internet message suggesting 'online' meetings or 'Zoom' meetings. Judging by the response from the members it seems you are not alone in wondering what and how all those typewriter things can be used for communication when you just need to pick up a telephone. That's all for now, Grandpop, I'll keep in touch.</p> <p>'Oops' the penny has just dropped. She is obviously unaware that I am a faithful and loyal member of Probus who admires those whose efforts keep our club in existence in these strangest of times.</p> <p>"Nil Desperandum."</p> <p>Alan D.</p>
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© Colin Wakeling on Golf



<p>I lay no claim to have any great golfing experience and would not dream of commenting on the finer points of the game. I might, secretly, even subscribe to Mark Twain's view that golf was a good walk spoiled. In the eyes of some enthusiasts, that rules me out from advancing any opinion on the pastime, but why not risk it?</p>	<p>'Golf, like measles, should be caught young.' (P.G. Wodehouse). At an early age I rescued one of my father's mouldering clubs from the depths of our dilapidated shed and took a swing at a mangy tennis ball. It soared gracefully heavenwards, only to descend several gardens away with accompanying sound effects suggesting anything but a soft landing. My venture ended there. The</p>
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errant club was quickly returned to the tender mercies of the resident wood worm. My parents were not acquainted with the residents at the far end of the street, but fear of retribution haunted me whenever I chanced in that direction.

As a coach driver, I encountered many golfers. In general, they seemed an unlovable lot, especially when well refreshed in the club house after a 'strenuous' day on the course. Getting them back onto the coach was the bane of any driver's life.

Loading their clubs was the beginning of a fraught process. Critical advice was plentiful, but unhelping hands remained firmly in pockets. Bags carefully stacked in drop-off sequence had to be hastily re-arranged at the mere whiff of booze at an extra destination. Once on the road, how long would it be before a discordant chorus of 'Stop the bus I need a wee-wee'? The driver didn't really want one, but that was no concern to them. Avoiding wayside hostelries on the way home became a fine art.

One well-oiled group returning from East Lothian to Edinburgh wanted an unscheduled drop-off by Leith's Banana Flats in Cables Wynd ('A' listed, and a location for 'Trainspotting') to allow some of the party to sample the delights of the nearby Malt Whisky Society. In the gloom of indifferent street lighting, with equipment randomly pulled onto the pavement, a couple of local 'opportunists' saw their chance and hightailed it with a golf bag. Concern evaporated as the group revelled in the idea of a lucrative insurance claim. A forlorn hope as the operator's insurance only covered theft from a lock



fast vehicle. Despair finally settled when it was realised the bag contained the keys to its owner's Mercedes.

An exception was a group based in a Leith Orange pub – not so much because of its décor but because of its politico-religious affiliations. A portrait of King 'Billy' dominated the bar. Once I'd discarded the company issue green blazer ("youse a' right, but we cannae stand yer jaikeet") we got on famously. They drank up and left at the allotted time and returned straight to base. What's more, they could also hold their drink.

Golf bags may be heavy, but reasonably straightforward to stow in a luggage locker. The addition of wheels and then powered trolleys with the added weight of a battery, meant loading became a nightmare.

In common with a respected journalist, I noted that these days "the worlds of golf and technology collide" so I thought I was being helpful by suggesting a means of locating lost balls sooner. Could they not be fitted with some form of basic electronic locator? The element of skill would remain. The player would still have to avoid playing a duff shot, and the ball would still have to be played out of the rough, but needless effort could be avoided.

My buddy pointed out that such devices would cost more than the balls themselves, conveniently ignoring the fact that the cost of technology is rapidly reducing. However, there is already at least one patent for a ball strong enough to enclose and protect electronics from the blows received in routine play.

I am sure the technology in daily use in car keys would require little adaptation for the golf course, and even be able to program a ball to emit a harsh whistle if struck by someone other than its owner.

TV commentators draw on course visualisations for their presentations. Personalised versions are being marketed. The GolfBuddy Voice 2, a GPS /



Rangefinder, pre-loaded with the details of more than 38,000 courses, provides the golfer with dynamic distance readings and field shape information. This device is compact enough to be easily portable. Further 'smart' features which take account of hazards and variable playing conditions, are probably not far away. Such devices cannot swing the club, but they can provide an accurate picture of the course and the challenges ahead. Smart grips capable of analysing shots are already in existence.

Professional golfer, Phil Mickelson, believes that "the object of golf is not just to win. It is to play like a gentleman and win." I suppose that using technology is not quite 'sporting', which perhaps explains why motoring is no longer 'gentlemanly' because drivers, or their companions, rely on technology instead of navigating themselves.

I confess that I may have missed the point of golf for aficionados – the challenge, the skill, and the sportsmanship as well as its health benefits. 'The British Journal of Sports Medicine reports that golf is good

for mind and body, can extend life span, risk factors for heart disease and stroke, boost older peoples' strength and balance, and assists mental well-being.

The positive aspects of the game were emphasised by the 'Wisest Fool in Christendom', King James VI, when he lifted a ban on golf that had been introduced to encourage archery practice. Needless to say, kirk sessions objected to the playing of golf on the Sabbath. In the same spirit the Minister at Inveresk, near Musselburgh, writing in the second quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, commented "It is to be much deplored, however, that an exercise in itself sufficiently stimulating, should frequently be prostituted to the purposes of gambling, and that so many of the young who are employed as cadies or club-carriers, should be initiated in the practices of vice partly from the evil example of those in whose gambling transactions they take a deep interest, and whom they in this respect on a smaller scale ludicrously imitate, and partly from the mistaken liberality of their employers, who, by extravagantly overpaying them for their services, not only furnish them with the means of vicious indulgence, but totally unfit them for the sober and steady industry of any laborious calling." So there!

P G Wodehouse also suggested that in order "to find a man's true character, play golf with him". It could be illuminating to pair Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un on the golf course. Would it be a 'gentlemanly' game? Heaven forfend – more likely a grudge match. 'Goldfinger' meets reality!

Sadly, golf is not as popular as it once was. In recent years clubs have closed and there is a dearth of female and younger members. Players tend to be white European heritage, middle-aged to older males, and relatively well off. Dress codes and any hidebound membership conditions are regarded as a deterrent.

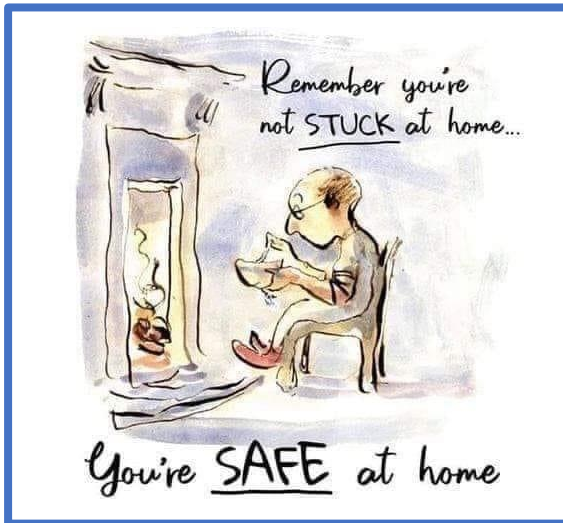


Perhaps if golf is to flourish, it will have to become less 'gentlemanly', so there could be a place for applied technology on the links after all?

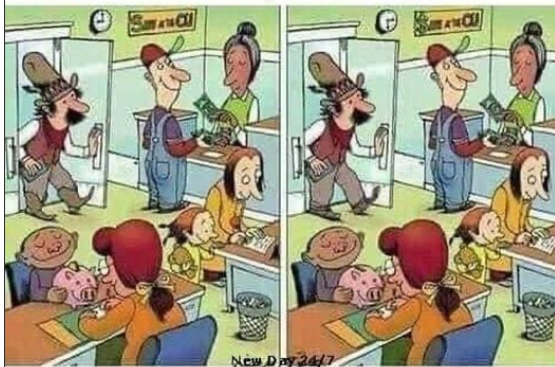


© Colin Wakeling

### More Social Media Snippets



There is **only ONE** difference between both pics would you find it



**SIX LITTLE STORIES WITH LOTS OF MEANINGS**

1. Once all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella. That is faith.
2. When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. That is trust.
3. Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set alarms to wake up. That is hope.
4. We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future. That is confidence.
5. We see the world suffering, but still, we get married and have children. That is love.
6. On an old man's shirt was written a sentence "I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience." That is attitude.

**Have a happy day and live your life like these six stories. Remember - Good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find and impossible to replace!!**



### Who Said?

“I'm one for new things: I like new technology, I like new music, I'm not entrenched in some view of what culture should be. I like the fact that it's constantly changing and that language is changing, that behaviour changes.”



Mark Robert Bailey, known by his stage name Bill Bailey, is an English comedian, actor and musician. Bailey is known for his role as Manny in the British sitcom *Black Books* and for his appearances on the British panel shows *Never Mind the Buzzcocks*, *Have I Got News for You* and *QI*, as well as for his stand-up work.

**Strictly Come Dancing's 2020 Winner**

**Bill Bailey was born on this day, 13<sup>th</sup> January in 1965.**

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.