

Samlesbury & Cuerdale Parish Council

SAMLESBURY AND CUERDALE PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER October 2020

Notes from the Chairman

Who would have thought that on 31st December 2019, when we wished friends a Happy 'New' Year, we would have found a world 'new' to us all.

The words 'Furlough' and 'Staycation' were seldom, if ever, used by anyone in daily life. But the new world is going to be with us for a while.

'Zoom' meetings and working from home are now the 'new world' and it illustrates how necessity fuels solutions. Face coverings and PPE are now as important as wallet, keys and phone.

The irony of wearing a mask in town and city centres, when traffic pollution has fallen considerably, seems a little confusing, but necessary to protect all our loved ones, "*Hands, Face, Space.*"

In these uncertain times, it has never been more important to support our 'local' businesses. We need all these fantastic, diverse people to help re-build our futures.

- During lockdown the Parish Council has had to follow all the rules regarding safety. Only one meeting had to be cancelled, but the others went ahead using Zoom, or were socially-distanced. It is upsetting that the public are still not allowed to attend the meetings.
- Day to day business of the Council has, however, been un-changed, because the Parish needs to keep running. All issues brought to the attention of Councillors were discussed and acted upon. I would like to thank Cllr. Barry Yates for his continued support, helping to get pot-holes filled and roadside drains cleared. His continued support is essential for all the services to be maintained.
- With the retirement of our previous clerk, Mr. Paul Mulrooney, one of our main priorities was finding his successor, as the role is pivotal. Interviewing in lockdown was interesting, but I am pleased to announce that *Aimee Barton*, a former hairdresser and daughter-in-law of one of our previous Council members, has taken the position. Aimee lives at 'The Barn,' Park Lane, Mellor Brook, BB2 7PY and can be e-mailed at sandcparishclerk@outlook.com The Council would like to thank Rachel Greenwood, (clerk of Ramsgreave Parish Council), for mentoring Aimee, and also Paul, for his offer of help, as there are no training courses available at present.

- Another new member of the Council is Sue Redmayne. A local farmer and mother-of-three, Sue is our representative for Cuerdale. She is closely connected to Samlesbury School and has a passion for the 'Green Belt' and flooding issues. Her number is 07885 729722.
- Although use of the Memorial Hall has been limited this year, the work of the Civic Society cannot have gone un-noticed and few can have missed the floral displays, hanging baskets and products for sale.
- Our request for double yellow lines at the end of Spring Lane has finally been given the go-ahead and hopefully will be in place during this financial year.
- The weir on the Ribble between the Lower Hall and Brockholes has now been removed and only time will tell if it helps to mitigate the flooding in future.
- The coping stones and top four courses of the red brick wall on Spring Lane have collapsed near Nab's Head, because rowan, elderberry and ivy had taken root amongst the mortar. The problem has been brought to the attention of United Utilities.
- The works at the United Utility dirty water treatment plant are, amazingly, on track, which is a tribute to the work of Laing o'Rourke and their team, who have found a way to keep working through the pandemic.
- James Hall has once again taken the opportunity to put in an application for a petrol filling station and convenience store and the Parish Council are once again opposing the application and supporting the Windmill Garage, an award-winning asset to the community. We need affordable housing, not 'another' fuel station.
- Construction of the University of Sheffield's Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre (AMRC) North West, has begun on the Enterprise Zone, and is expected to finish in September 2021. They will work with all sizes of business, including 'global aerospace giants.'
- The Charity Bonfire and Fireworks at the Nab's Head has had to be cancelled this year. We took advice on a socially distanced event, but unfortunately it was too difficult to guarantee the two metres or the 'bubbles.'
- As it stands, it looks like the Carols around the Christmas tree will also have to be cancelled. Fingers crossed for next year.
- Remembrance, however, appears to be going ahead. The wreath will be laid at Cuerdale Cross on Wednesday 11th November at 10.30am and at the War Memorial Hall at 11.00am
- Stay safe and if you need any assistance, please contact myself, or any of the Councillors listed on the website.

Looking Back: The English Electric Co Ltd and its Successor Companies

(Taken from oral history & *Test Flying in Lancashire from Samlesbury & Warton Aerodromes*: J.H. Longworth).

English Electric began life during WWI, when the Admiralty instructed two firms,

Dick, Kerr and Co. Ltd. (electrical engineers) of Preston, and Phoenix Dynamo Manufacturing Co. Ltd. of Bradford, to co-operate with the design and build of bi-plane flying boats for anti-submarine coastal patrol. Both were already heavily involved in munitions work, and Phoenix were already producing sea-planes for the Royal Naval Air Service. The majority of WWI builds were *Felixstowes* and *Kingstons*, which were test flown off the Ribble estuary. A few mergers/takeovers later, they became known as the English Electric Co. Ltd., (E.E) and from 1926-1938, they concentrated on domestic electrical appliances and locomotives.

In the time leading up to WWII, the government were increasing aircraft production and E.E offered their services. The Government bought up some land in Samlesbury (originally purchased for a small, civil airport), compulsory-purchased some extra land on the north side, by-passed Myerscough Smithy Road with a new Whalley Road, and started building in 1938. Nearly 3,000 medium and heavy bombers were assembled and tested on the site, *Hampdens*, *Halifaxes*, and in the latter stages of the war, *Vampire* jet fighters. Test pilots were billeted in Samlesbury Hall Cottage, where the back lane gave quick access to the airfield.

Towards the end of the war, E.E decided to stay in the aircraft industry – where other manufacturers regarded them as ‘those upstarts up north’ – and establish their own design team. In 1944 they took on a Chief Engineer, Edward Petter, a visionary aircraft designer. Petter (known as Teddy), soon recruited Frederick William Page (Freddie) as the company’s Chief Stressman and then gradually built up a new, high flying team.

Petter’s world-beating *Canberra* – a twin-jet, high altitude, high speed, unarmed, highly manoeuvrable light bomber, was first test flown in May 1949. But before *Canberra* had taken to the skies, Petter had also designed the Mach 2 *Lightning*, an interceptor/fighter which achieved supersonic climbing speeds. The two programmes ran concurrently and both created a boom in export sales, whilst many were also built abroad under licence.

Back in 1947 E.E had acquired a larger aerodrome at Warton and two of the most well-known post-war test pilots were ‘Bee’ Beamont (also recruited by Petter), and Johnny Squier. Bee was Chief Experimental Test Pilot based at Warton, whilst Johnny was Chief Production Test Pilot at Samlesbury. Having fought in the Battle of Britain, both were numbered amongst *The Few*, and both (at different times), lived in the parish – Johnny at ‘The Tenements’ (later called Huntley Woods Farm) and Bee at Samlesbury Hall Cottage.

E.E had become Europe’s most experienced aircraft research, development and flight-test organization, making an enormous contribution to Britain’s air defence and security. In 1960 there were further mergers and they became known as the *British Aircraft Corporation* (BAC), before being nationalized as *British Aerospace* (BAe) in 1977. From AD 2000 the company was named *BAE Systems*.

Petter left E.E in 1950 and became Managing Director of Folland Aircraft, whilst Page stayed with the Company and held many senior positions, before becoming Chairman and Chief Executive of the *Aircraft Group of British Aerospace plc.* in 1977. So the new roads on the airfield, *Petter Court* and *Sir Frederick Page Way* are named after two remarkable men. (Roland Beamont has also been remembered with *Beamont Drive* – on the site of the former Strand Road aircraft factory in Preston – and *Beamont Way* at Amesbury, near Boscombe Down in Wiltshire. The *Roland 'Bee' Beamont Memorial Shield* is awarded annually to the outstanding young engineer of the year.

William Edward Willoughby Petter CBE, left Folland in 1960 and died in France in 1968 aged 59 years.

Sir Frederick Page, CBE, FRS, FRAeS, was involved in the design/development of *Canberra*, *Lightning*, *Jaguar*, *Tornado* and *Eurofighter*. He retired in 1983 and died in 2005 aged 88 years.

John William Copous Squier MBE, was an early member of the 'Guinea Pig Club.' In 1956 he moved from production test flying to experimental/development test flying at Warton and was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Services in the Air (1965). Johnny survived a number of forced landings – including one outside Samlesbury's perimeter fence – and he once had to eject at 40,000 ft., whilst conducting fast roll trials at Mach 1.7. Visibility was poor, rescue services failed to spot him, and he was lost in a 20ft. swell on a rain-lashed Irish Sea for over 28 hours. After his test flying days were over, Johnny concentrated on cockpit escape systems, before retiring in 1983 and becoming a JP. He died in 2006 aged 85.

Roland Prosper Beamont, DFC and Bar, DSO and Bar, DFC (USA), Croix de Guerre (Belgium), OBE, CBE, DL, FRAeS, also had some hair-raising times, including losing the canopy of his *Lightning* whilst flying at 600mph, nearly 2 miles up over Lancashire. Despite his features being wrenched out of shape and his nose flattened against his face, Bee managed to fight his way back to Warton and land safely. He was the first British pilot to reach both Mach 1 and Mach 2 and set many flight records, before taking on managerial and sales/export responsibilities. Bee retired in 1979 and became a prolific author. He died at Salisbury in 2001 aged 81 years.

The next Meeting is Thursday 26th November 2020, in the War Memorial Hall at 7.30pm
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