

LURGAN-born David Hannon was the guest speaker at Kyrle Probus Club's recent meeting and the gentle humour of the Northern Irishman shone through as he described his 'Early Days in Broadcasting.'

David started his working life as a teacher in a prep school and then a technical college in his home county of Armagh, but found he had time on his hands and rang a friend at the BBC in Northern Ireland, a sports producer, to see if there was a job available. His friend invited him to come in and read the sports results.

While doing this, he heard there was a job coming up in BBC television outside broadcasting. He sent off an application form and was asked to attend for an interview. In this he was asked about what David described as basic television 'grammar,' such as where to place TV cameras at an event.

All this resulted in him being offered a contract as a BBC Northern Ireland television outside broadcast producer. He was later sent over to London, where he covered the Wimbledon tennis championships and also a Test match at Lord's, which he found exciting.

He returned to Northern Ireland, where he got married and when he returned to work after his honeymoon, he was asked to do a documentary for a children's programme on life in the armed services, when he was in charge of four cameras. Also for this programme, he became the first person in the BBC to edit video tapes.

He went on to cover, sports events, church services, the Songs of Praise programme and a Royal visit that lasted three hours. He said one of the most memorable events he was involved in, came in 1963.

At the beginning of that year, Cardinal William Godfrey, Archbishop of Westminster died and on the way home from attending his funeral mass, Cardinal John D'Alton, Archbishop of Omagh, caught pneumonia and he died.

David and his television crew covered the funeral mass at St Patrick's Cathedral, at a time, March 1963, when there was up to 3ft of snow all over the place. The Mass was due to start at 12 pm, but at a quarter to 12, the lights went out. What to do?

Someone opened the great West doors of the cathedral, the sun, reflecting off the snow outside, shone in and thankfully, they had the perfect light for transmitting the service, said David.