



PROBUS



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET
www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk

Issue No. 214
 November 2022

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Roger Lester

This unique year continues! We lost the Queen who reigned for 70 years and got a new King who is 74.

We've had 3 Prime Ministers in 7 weeks, one of whom only lasted that long and have now got one who has only been an MP for 7 years. The number 7 seems to crop up quite a bit in one form or another. Let's keep our fingers crossed for a much more settled time to the end of 2022 and beyond.

During my daily walks around our area, I can't help but notice the effects of the dry hot summer, tarmac roads and paths are cracking quite a bit from the sub soil drying out. But hopefully the much-needed rain recently - we have had 3 inches in 4 days - will remedy this without need for costly repairs.

The clocks go back this weekend, so winter is well & truly on the way. But if the temperature stays as warm as recently, perhaps we won't notice it so much this year - and it will keep our fuel bills low!!

With only 6 months until our next AGM I would like you all to consider volunteering for the following positions, which have been filled by the same members for quite a few years: - Vice Chairman; Secretary; Welfare Officer; Lunch Organiser; Scribe; and also an Auditor. For my own part, I am quite happy to continue as Speakers Secretary.



WELFARE & SOCIAL

As we get older the news is not always good, and I have to tell you all that Chas Allberry is receiving end of life care. On a lighter note, Chas has always had an impeccable taste in cars and his Mercedes always looked as though it had just come from the car showroom. But above all, Christine has our best wishes, and we are thinking of them both.

I had a call from Angela Stone recently following receipt of the card that I had sent to her and Roy on behalf of us all. She said it had cheered them both up when it was received, so it was money well spent on a stamp.

Regarding our monthly lunches I am going to go back on my word, and if you remember it is a person's privilege to change their mind. Pamela and I went to the Udder Farm Shop recently to

eat on a Friday evening and the Manager recognised me. (I think it must have been my sparkly lilac lipstick that did it.) We talked about the problem I had getting a menu from Udder and she promised it would not happen if we went again. As a result, I am thinking about using this venue for March 2023.

As usual, I look forward to seeing you on 1st November.

Roger Ellis

Future Club Events - Editor

Tuesday 1st November	Talk – <i>‘The German Occupation of the Channel Islands in WWII’</i> - by James Porter.
Tuesday 15th November	Talk – <i>‘Replenishment at Sea’</i> – by Richard Andrew Hamlyn
Tuesday 29th November	<p align="center">Wives/Partners Invitation Day Talk – <i>‘Medical Negligence’</i> – by Ian McLellan <i>Followed by</i> The Club Christmas Lunch Royal Chase Hotel, Shaftesbury 12.30 for 1pm</p>



REPORTS ON OUR OCTOBER TALKS

‘Right Royal Shenanigans in the Georgian Era’

Mike Rendall – 4th October 2022

Mike Rendell, author, historian and former lawyer, has written several books about life in Georgian times. Having told us in an earlier talk about the day-to-day life of one of his ancestors, this talk concentrated on the lives of the Georgian Royals – how, by and large, the acceptable practice in royal court circles was for men to take a mistress (or mistresses). They really were a naughty lot! But the Stuarts before them were just as bad.

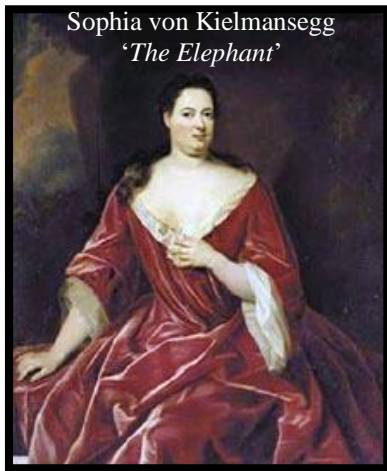


Barbara Villiers

King Charles II had many mistresses, including Barbara Palmer (formerly Barbara Villiers), later Duchess of Cleveland, by whom he had five illegitimate children: and Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth. James, Duke of York, Charles’s brother also had many mistresses, fathering many children.



Louise de Kéroualle



Sophia von Kielmansegg
'The Elephant'

The Hanoverian George I had a mistress of rather ample portly proportions, Sophia von Kielmansegg, known as 'The Elephant'. As it happened, she was the daughter of his father's mistress! His other mistress, who also came to England with him when he assumed the throne, was of much scrawnier slender build (she was known as 'The Maypole') by whom he had three illegitimate children.

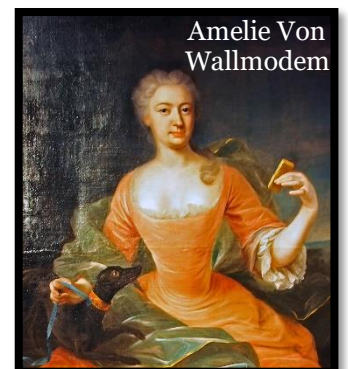


Melusine,
Countess Von der Schulenburg
'The Maypole'

In his turn, George II had two mistresses - of which his wife Caroline was fully aware. Henrietta Howard (later Countess of Suffolk), and Amalie Von Wallmodem (later Countess of Yarmouth).



Henrietta
Howard



Amelie Von
Wallmodem

Sometimes various Royals were caught out in their bedroom escapades. Such was the case of a brother of George III, Henry, Duke of Cumberland. His marriage to a commoner against the King's wishes actually led to The Royal Marriages Act of 1772. Duke Henry was sued by Lord Grosvenor for what was described as 'criminal conversation' (adultery) after he was discovered in bed with Lady Grosvenor, and damages of £10,000 were awarded.

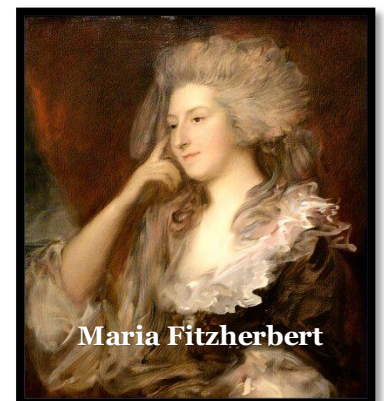
By contrast, King George III who was a good family man, was devoted to his wife Charlotte, with whom he had 15 children, and he never took a mistress.

George III's son, however, was a different kettle of fish. This George later became Prince Regent, as a result of his father's illness, and eventually became King as George IV. He led an extravagant lifestyle, and a dissolute way of life. As a young 17-year-old he was attracted to the actress Mary Robinson; he offered her the huge sum of £20,000 to become his mistress. Later, there were numerous other women, including the courtesan Elizabeth Armistead (who later became the mistress and then the wife of the politician Charles Fox). George secretly contracted a marriage to twice widowed Maria Fitzherbert in 1785. However, Maria was a Catholic and so this was invalid under English law, and his father King George III never gave his approval.



The Prince Regent

Later in 1811 he (the Prince Regent) married his cousin, Caroline of Brunswick, but it was an estranged marriage since they didn't live together.



Maria Fitzherbert

George IV's brother William became King William IV, who at the time of his death had no surviving legitimate children (leading to his niece Victoria becoming Queen). But he had ten illegitimate children with the actress Dorothea Jordan, and relationships with other women during his naval career.

Many of these relationships were cleverly lampooned in the press in cartoons, without actually spelling out names. The courtesans and other women in these circles were leaders of fashion.

This talk was certainly an eye-opener on Royal life in the Georgian era. Roger Ellis gave the vote of thanks.



Dorothea Jordan

Report: Alan Jeffs

'Tzar Putin'

Nigel Hawkins, 18th October 2022

Nigel is a member of the Shaftesbury Probus Club. During his career as a solicitor and working for international companies, he visited Russia on numerous occasions, and this gave him a knowledge and understanding of that country's politics.

Vladimir Putin's climb to power began early: Born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), his grandfather was a cook for the Russian communist elite and a communist party member. As a youngster his physique was slight, and he was bullied but training to championship standards in judo stood him in good stead.



He had enrolled into the KGB and whilst posted in Dresden, East Germany, his threatening tactics saw off a riot. He went on to work in the mayor's office in St. Petersburg, where he gained experience in controlling the dealing of oil exports.



He developed a knack of keeping himself in the background but exercising control via others (who were always expendable). He moved into politics with the aim of re-uniting Russia following its break-up under Yeltsin and Gorbachev, and this approach has stayed with him throughout his career.

He positioned himself to be elected president after Yeltsin retired. At that stage he needed to stabilise the faltering economy of the now-reduced Russia, which had lost 25% of its territory and 40% of its industry (much was now located in the break-away states) as well as half its population. However, his first Prime Minister (Mikhail Kasyanov) was a sound economist. In addition, luck was on his side as the world oil price quadrupled and he had inherited an eight-fold increase in oil production and a four-fold increase in natural gas supplies all due to the use of western technology (thanks to the involvement of BP and the American company Exxon Mobile). The inflow of revenue from exports allowed a vast cut in income tax and corporation tax, which resulted in the population and Russian companies paying their taxes rather than concealing their incomes! Thus Putin's "team" were able to bail out the Russian economy during the 2008 recession.

Then Putin set about securing his political position. He took on the oligarchs and media moguls who controlled and profited from natural gas and oil resources, industry and TV stations (hence the propaganda apparatus). Meanwhile ordinary Russians saw their standard of living improving with the influx of western goods and services. His cohorts employed all the dirty tricks once used by the previous communist regimes. Private companies were sold back to the state at knock-down prices by the use of duress; their owners were paid off and exiled or illuminated by spurious trials - or worse. This also applied to the TV stations and thus the propaganda (i.e. news) machine was in his hands (via his long-time assistant Igor Sechin). This process, of course, allowed Putin to cream off a sizable slush fund.



Potential political opponents were likewise eliminated. There were over 800 trials, some resulting in hangings for treason. There were shootings and the use of Polonium and Novichok.

Money was spent on the Chechen war (a breakaway state in southern Russia). The bombed-out state that resulted was later rebuilt as if nothing had happened. These machinations and aggressive tactics secured his position and allowed a second term as President (with a puppet Prime Minister) following a bogus referendum. Changes in electoral laws could allow him to stay on until 2036, when he would be 83. This also gave him the opportunity to progress his dream of a re-uniting all lost Russian territories.



The successful Sochi Winter Olympics (costing eight-times as much as any previous games) gave cover to a power grab through so-called 'mercenaries' (The Wagner Group) in Crimea, and for 'peace-keeping' troops to move into Georgia and stay. The Russian media hailed this as the 'new age of Russia'. It was a triumph - after all, Russia had withstood the Mongol invasion, defeated Napoleon and seen off Nazi Germany. No mention was made on TV of Russian atrocities carried out in Chechnya, Afghanistan, Kosovo or Syria (whilst assisting Assad put down the Arab Spring uprising - and gaining a Mediterranean naval base).

Putin's distaste for eastern European states joining NATO required more subtle means of attack. Propaganda from the Russian TV channel 'Russia Today' (RT) and a vast onslaught by Russian internet hackers were to be used to influence potential outcomes, with the possibility of working wonders for Putin's state.

- Influence Trump's election in the US(?)
- Cast doubt in British minds about their Brexit voting(?)
- Possibly even assist Scotland's voters to break away from the UK (?)
- The controlling of gas supplies and prices to eastern European countries.
- Later applying the same tactic to all of Europe, using Russian gas supplies fed through Germany.



The Russian occupation of eastern Ukraine and then its "special military operation" to overrun the whole country was, in Putin's mind, a logical next step. It has not gone well and is becoming a big problem for Putin. How will it end?

There followed many in-depth questions after a talk that was well received.

Report: Alan Poulter



ENDPIECE – Editor

Our late Queen (Taken from a Twitter feed amongst the ex-military)

Made me smile 😊

An old mate just sent it to me!...

I was on a Guard of Honour waiting for the King of Saudi Arabia on Horseguards. Right Flank Scots Guard (100 guardsmen) gap HM Queen mounted in uniform and CO, Col Gerald, then Queens Company Grenadier Guards(100 guardsmen). We're stood at ease waiting. Col Gerald's charger(horse) erupted with horse poo, full volume for two minutes. Col Gerald says, "Sorry about that your Majesty!" She replies in a wonderful voice, "That's alright Gerald, I thought it was your horse!" 200 guardsmen silently cried with laughter and tapped their rifle butts on the gravel. From that moment every man there adored her!