



PROBUS RECORDER



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

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – *Roger Lester*

Unfortunately, I must start by paying tribute to one of our members, Chas Allberry, who passed away in October. Chas was a smashing bloke and had been the Speakers Secretary for quite a few years, until I took over the role from him 8 years ago. Our thoughts go out to his wife Chris and his family in this time of loss.

On a lighter note, a large number of members and their wives spent a very interesting day at the Tank Museum in Bovington on November 17th, taking lunch in the well catered-for onsite cafe and then visiting a WW1 trench in the afternoon.

At present we have no visits planned, but I understand that a visit to Exeter by train - strikes permitting - has been suggested. The train takes you to the heart of the City with a museum and a very interesting Cathedral to visit, and with the opportunity for plenty of retail therapy for the ladies!! As I am Exeter born & bred, I naturally think it is a great idea!! I would imagine if it goes ahead, that it will be in the Spring, so a possible note for your diaries – and no need for driving or trying to find parking.

Turning now to the Christmas Dinner, I would like to remind members that a cash raffle will be held - with profits going to the '[Blood Bikes](#)' and the '[Dorset Air Ambulance](#)'. There will also be a collection for the staff at the Grange.

As I will be away between now and the Dinner, I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous New Year. I look forward to seeing you at the Dinner, or at our first meeting of 2023 on January 10th.

WELFARE & SOCIAL – *Roger Ellis*

As most of you are aware, Charles (Chas) Allberry passed away at the end of October, and on 23rd November, together with eight other members of our Club including wives and partners, I attended his funeral ceremony at Salisbury Crematorium.

These occasions can never be said to be 'nice', but this one was certainly fittingly uncomplicated – with no hymns, which was a refreshing change, but I think the highlight for me were the photos of Chas, Christine and the family taken over the years and projected onto a screen to the accompaniment of "[Unforgettable](#)" by Nat King Cole. Tributes were spoken by Chas's son-in-law and by a lifelong friend, Trevor. It is at such times that you learn things about a person you

never knew before, and it was so lovely to know that Chas was a great practical joker.

I know he was loved by Christine and his children, and I bet his Grandchildren always looked forward to visiting Granddad.

Christine appreciated the effort made by members of the Probus Club of Gillingham to travel to Salisbury, and it was good to say our farewells to a much-loved member.

Roger Ellis

Future Club Events - Editor

Tuesday 13th December 2022	Probus Club Christmas Dinner <u>The Grange at Osborne</u>, Sherborne
Sunday 25th December 2022	Christmas Day
Tuesday 10th January 2023	Next Meeting: 'One Plod at a Time'



REPORTS ON OUR NOVEMBER TALKS

The German occupation of the Channel Islands in WWII

James Porter – 1st November 2022

James Porter is a retired Lt. Colonel, originally from Guernsey, Channel Islands. He had 41 years of Army service in various postings, including Sandhurst, the Army Staff College, and the Ministry of Defence. Now living at Sturminster Newton, in addition to being a speaker he is a freelance yacht skipper/instructor, chairman of his local British Legion branch, serves on various local committees, and runs a military history group in Dorchester.



The Channel Islands are situated a few miles off the French Normandy coast and comprise two crown dependencies – the Bailiwicks of Jersey, and Guernsey, the latter consisting of the islands of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark, Herm, and some smaller islands. These were part of the Duchy of Normandy, and therefore have come under the English crown since the time of William the Conqueror (1066 and all that!).

During the first few months of WWII life in the islands went on relatively normally (the 'phony war'), apart from some people leaving for the UK to sign up as volunteers. This all changed

following the collapse of France and the German lightning push through the Ardennes. The British government had decided that the Channel Islands were of no strategic importance and were indefensible; evacuation plans were put into place, with many people – particularly children, evacuated. The Channel Islands were declared an ‘Open Town’ without military defence. By June 1940, rather muddled evacuation measures had been completed. The Germans had not realised the islands had in fact been demilitarised, and after some preparatory reconnaissance and bombing on 28 June, the military occupation began on 30 June 1940 (lasting until liberation on 9 May 1945). The Germans quickly consolidated their positions, bringing in troops, and establishing communications and anti-aircraft defences.



Initially everyday life continued normally in some degree for the islanders, but by August 1940 military control had changed. The commandant issued orders instructing that laws passed by the Island Legislature (civil administration of the island continued) would have to be approved by him, and that German orders were to be registered as legislation. Civil courts continued to function, but German military courts would try breaches of German law. Price controls were introduced, and normal types of agricultural production changed, with more production of vegetables, rather than of tomatoes and potatoes. Over half of the remaining population worked for the Germans; fishing was allowed but with restrictions, unsupervised up to one mile offshore, and up to two miles with supervision. Life for the population became progressively much harder. Radios and other equipment were confiscated. Some deportations took place. Food, fuel and medicines became scarce.



The islands were subject to extensive fortification as part of Hitler’s [Atlantic Wall](#) along the coast of Northern Europe. Huge amounts of concrete were used to build these structures. Large numbers of slave labourers were brought in from mainland Europe and the Soviet Union to build these defences. Many of these works remain to this day.

There were several secret small British commando landings on the islands. Resistance by the islanders mainly took the form of

passive resistance, but also producing acts of minor sabotage, or harbouring escapees from the slave camps. In addition, underground newspapers were published containing news from the BBC, and the ‘V for Victory’ sign was daubed on posters etc across the island¹. Major food shortages led to negotiations with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and in December 1944 a Red Cross ship was allowed to deliver food parcels and medical supplies to the Island. By the end of the war, the morale of German troops had declined, and on 8th May 1945, the islanders were informed by the German authorities that the war was over. On 9th May HMS Bulldog arrived in St Peter Port, Guernsey, to accept the German unconditional surrender. HMS Beagle performed a similar duty with Jersey.



The talk was illustrated with power point slides, and our Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

Report: Alan Jeffs

¹ This photograph was taken on Jersey, but similar defacement was evident on Guernsey.

Replenishment at Sea (RAS)

Richard A Hamlyn – 15 November 2022

Richard Hamlyn is a former officer in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA).

This talk explained that '[Replenishment at Sea](#)' is a method of transferring stores, fuel and munitions from a supply vessel to the receiving ship while underway, permitting warships to remain at sea. It was accompanied by PowerPoint photographs and video clips of ships carrying out these drills.

The idea of supplying ships whilst at sea was developed by the British and American navies in the very first years of the 20th Century. There had been even earlier ideas for achieving resupply, although in Nelson's time this could only be accomplished by transferring provisions and people by lowering them from a cliff top to a ship at anchor below. However it wasn't really RAS since the ship was static and tied to the land.

The concept of RAS is easy to understand but difficult to put into operation; it is risky, requiring good seamanship and full attention by those involved. Due to the hydrodynamics involved with vessels travelling at 12-14 knots whilst only 80 to 100 feet apart, the suction caused by the sea running between the ships tends to draw the ships closer together; failure to make necessary adjustments risks a collision.



Having come into position, a shot line is fired from the supplying ship to the ship being resupplied; a phone line is then the first line pulled across, followed by a thicker steel hawser. This is followed by an even thicker hawser which is attached to rising derricks, after which the process of transferring supplies can begin. The operation carries more risk if two ships are being replenished at the same time, one on either side of the supply ship.



In addition to underway replenishment, helicopters are used for vertical replenishment (VERTREP) of ships; however, this has to be restricted to general stores and people, rather than fuel and munitions.

Personnel and equipment are also sometimes transferred by

jackstay on a wire between ships underway.

Richard Hamlyn recounted stories from his own time as a Marine Engineer Officer with the RFA, and answered questions from the floor following the talk.

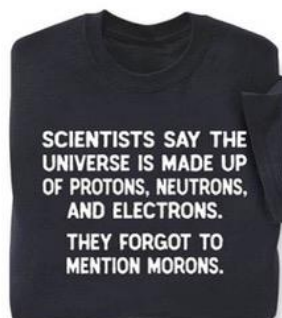
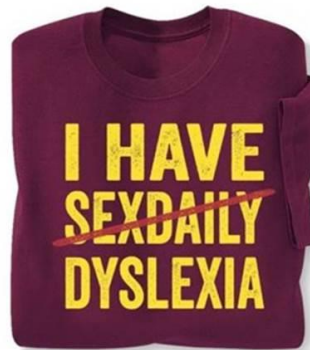


Report: Alan Jeffs



ENDPIECE – Editor

If you are thinking about Christmas presents



.... and a very Happy Christmas to all our readers!