



PROBUS



RECORDER

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Colin Chamberlain

As you may well have heard, the Club has now lost a further ex-member this year - Malcolm Coles. I understand he was a member for at least 10 years and retired from the club in 2018 having attended irregularly due to ill health for the last 4-5 years. It is a sad addition to the loss of David Bryan earlier this month, as well as to the relatively recent losses of Richard Clarke, Chas Allberry and Tony Harris. Apart from the sadness of their passing, it is a reflection on our reducing numbers and anything you can do to encourage new members would be appreciated.

As for David Bryan, my memories are of Enid and I meeting David and Daphne in Scotland in October 2022 after they moved to Balfron from Gillingham, and that we passed a pleasant afternoon having a chat over tea at the Winnock Hotel in Dryman.

On a more pleasant note, the Barbeque at the Rugby Club was a great success due to the great work by Jeanette and her team, and to the Weather God who took pity on us, after the worst summer any of us can remember. As I mentioned at the last meeting, I must also record my thanks to my new secretary, Roger Ellis, for suggesting we switch to the Rugby Club over a year ago, and then for following it up this year by actually setting a date to start the ball rolling.



And now for Part 3 of "IT PAYS TO COMPLAIN" (see issues 220 & 221)

Last month I took my car to Mercedes in Salisbury for a Service. When I picked it up the Report said my First Aid Kit was out of date and would I like to purchase a new one - at £80, and that my windscreen wipers were smeary, and would I like to purchase new ones at £49 - both of which I laughingly declined. The agents also recorded a grease leak from a pulley bearing and quoted a price of £160, and should they deal with this straight away? My answer was 'let me think about it', knowing that I would take it to the local Mercedes & BMW man in Gillingham.

The next day I remembered that I had taken out an Extended Warranty on the car through the same Mercedes Garage in Salisbury. I looked up the details of what was covered - although there seemed to be more that wasn't covered! - and hardly anything appeared to be covered, especially if they played the 'Fair wear & Tear' card, but anyway I called the garage and reminded them that I had this Warranty, and to my surprise they said it would cover the repair. They subsequently picked up the car and returned it to me cleaned and valeted. Whether they did the repair I have no idea! But at least I felt better about it.

WELFARE & SOCIAL

Welfare – John Owen

As you will have already seen, we have lost an honorary member – David Bryan, and also an ex-member of the club – Malcolm Coles.

Our core group of current members, however, generally remains in reasonable health - although Jeffrey Hall is continuing with his treatment at Southampton hospital and Peter Bonson, although home, is no longer able to leave the house and receives care four times a day. Peter's wife Freda says he would love to see visitors but please phone first in case the carers are there.

David Hooker has recently had a stent implanted at Salisbury Hospital and is well on the way to recovery. No doubt many others of us are harbouring various ailments, and with that in mind I would encourage members to make to use of a Men's Health Event held at [RiversMeet Leisure Centre](#) on Friday 15th of September from noon to 7pm.

In the meantime, a few workplace nicknames which may raise a smile.....

1. Wicket Keeper - First to put the gloves on, but then stands well back!
2. Sensor Light - Only works when someone walks past!
3. Blister - Appears when the hard work is done!
4. Lantern - Not very bright and has to be carried at all times!
5. Wheelbarrow - Only works when pushed!
6. G. Spot - You can never find him!
7. Alexa - Knows everything!
8. Splinter - An annoying little prick that gets under your skin!
9. Harpic - Drives everyone round the bend!
10. Thrombosis - A slow moving thick clot!
11. Cordless - Takes ages to charge him up, but only lasts a few hours!
And for the workers, a Boss's nickname.
12. Lombard – Loads of money but a right dipstick!

Social - Future Club Events in September - Editor

5th September 2023	<i>Talk - The Great Bustard</i> Phillip Tryner
6th September 2023	<i>Visit - Shillingstone Station</i> (North Dorset Railway)
18th September 2023	<i>Visit - Museum of Jurassic Marine Life</i> (Kimmeridge)
19th September 2023	<i>Talk - The Lost Villages of Dorset</i> Mike Spencer Plus Lunch – The Walnut Tree, Mere (12.30 for 1.00pm)



REPORTS ON OUR AUGUST TALKS

‘Flags of the World.’

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Dick Taylor - 8th August 2023



Dick Taylor rose through the ranks of the British Army having started his service as a Junior Trooper in the Junior Leaders Regiment of the Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) in Bovington. He retired in 2013, leaving the regular army as a Lieutenant Colonel, although he remains in the Army Reserve and has since been mobilized for operational service three times for tours overseas. He has written a number of books on modern military history and is the official historian of the RAC. This talk, aided by PowerPoint slides, covered the national flags of the world (and other types of flags), and included examples of the history and design of some national flags.

*Note: **Vexillology** is the ‘study of flags’.¹*

Firstly, Dick Taylor explained some of the terms used in describing various parts of a flag, some of which are listed below:

Canton: The upper left portion of a flag (flown next to the flagstaff); for example, the ‘stars’ on the US flag, or the Union flag canton on the Australian and New Zealand flags.



Fimbriation: Small stripes of colour placed around areas of different colour to enable them to stand out; for example, when an area of colour is the same as the area on which it is placed - such as the white lines surrounding the red cross on the British Union flag.



Jack: A flag flown from a short jackstaff at the bow of a vessel.



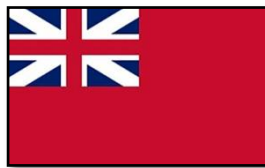
¹ Vexillology: ‘n. The study of flags.’ The Concise OED

Ensign: A national flag flown on a vessel to indicate nationality, generally on the stern of a ship.

White Ensign: Royal Navy ships fly the white ensign (white background with a union flag canton).



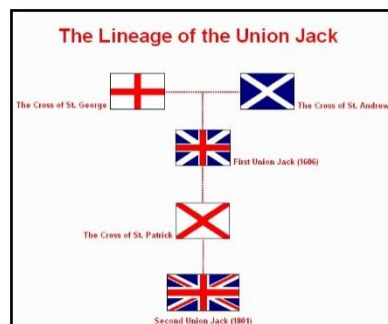
Red Ensign: British registered merchant navy ships fly the red ensign (red background with the union flag canton).



Dick Taylor then presented a single PowerPoint slide showing the flags of all the 193 United Nations-recognised countries of the world (plus also the flags for Palestine and the Vatican). Other types of flags and standards were also shown.

The British Union Flag (now commonly referred to as the Union Jack) is an amalgam of constituent parts of the UK. Dick explained that back in 1606, England and Scotland were two separate sovereign countries, but with the same head of state (James 1st of England, and 6th of Scotland). The first Union flag was created by combining the English flag of St George (red cross on a white background) with the Scottish Saltire (the blue St Andrew's cross on a white background).

The present design of the Union flag follows the union of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801, when the red saltire of St Patrick was added.

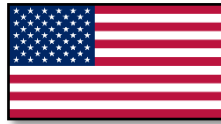


The design of the American national flag followed the Declaration of Independence, when it consisted of 13 white stars, and 13 stripes, representing the 13 original colonies – with the white stars on a blue canton. The flag has changed a number of times since², with the addition of more stars as new states joined the union. The present 50 stars version dates back 63 years, following the addition of the last two states, Alaska and Hawaii.

² The design of the flag has been modified officially 26 times since 1777.



1776



1960

The PowerPoint slides showed the sheer diversity of the various national flags, and Dick Taylor talked about the origin of many of these, plus other standards, such as the Royal Standard of the British monarch.

Following questions, the Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

Report: Alan Jeffs

‘The Golden Age of Glass.’

Dr Francis E Burroughes – 22 August 2023



Dr Francis Burroughes is an accomplished speaker and lecturer. Before ‘retirement’ and during his professional career he had been a school teacher and company director; not to mention his spare time role as church organist, and musical conductor of various choral societies and musical groups. He has a keen interest in, and knowledge of, antique glass. This talk concentrated on English glass making, particularly of the 19th and early 20th century. During his talk, Dr Burroughes handed round various glass objects from his extensive personal collection, as he told us about the different techniques and skills used in their design and production. Members were allowed carefully to handle and examine these artefacts. They were from a period when Britain excelled in the design, decoration and production of high-quality glassware.

During the 18th century, a glass excise tax was introduced, which lasted for almost 100 years, and covered all glass making in the country, until it was removed due to the negative effect on trade, as glass became more expensive. The main centre of glass production was in the midlands, around Stourbridge. An 18th century decanter was passed around, showing how decanters and stoppers were made, numbered, and married up, so that the stopper fitted exactly. Dr Burroughes explained how the gold leaf decoration was applied into the engraving using honey.

Stourbridge developed into a major centre of glassmaking because of its natural resources of soil, sand and coal (higher temperatures are reached by coal over wood); canals linked various parts of the country, reaching the ports for export. Glass was more easily and safely transported using canals rather than bumpy roads (and this continued with the coming of the railways in the mid-19th century).

The production of higher quality glass, using higher temperatures (improved when gas supplies were introduced), and the development of the chemical industry, and the making of coloured

glass, led to a veritable explosion in the making of highly decorated glass, using gilding and enamelling techniques.

Dr Burroughes showed us a glass jug with a greenish hue; this colour was achieved using uranium; also, a darkly coloured glass was made using petroleum.

Glass produced in Wordsley, Amblecote and Brierley Hill in the Stourbridge area were recognised as producing cut glass, and glassware of a very high quality, also using engraved and etching techniques.

Various stages are involved in making coloured decorated glassware. Cameo glass is made by carving through fused layers of different coloured glass. Cane glass is made using different strands of glass in the glass blowing process to add patterns and stripes to glass objects.



Fashions changed, and by the end of the 19th century, the move was more away from the highly decorated style of glassware to a more art nouveau style. After WW1 there was more glass made in the art deco style, for example, with the use of chrome rather than silver. In England, following the Second World War, the glass industry for major manufacturers slowly declined. A handful of glassworks remain, specialising in cut crystal. Caithness Glass, established in 1961, is a Scottish artistic glassmaking company, well known for its paperweights.



Italian glass became popular after the war (typically made in Venice on the island of Murano). Also Scandinavian glass, usually with muted colours. Today, China, India and Africa are major producers; Africa is a major producer of recycled glass products.

This was an interesting talk, which was followed by a lively question session. Members showed their appreciation in the usual way. The chairman gave the vote of thanks.

Report: Alan Jeffs



Obituary – David Bryan (*former Honorary Member*)



If anyone deserved his Honorary Membership of the club, it was our good friend David, who sadly passed away in hospital after a short illness at the end of July. Before his move to live near family in Scotland two years ago, his contribution to Probus activities during 17 years of membership was truly special. Soon after joining, he agreed to succeed Brian Walker as Social Secretary and he introduced a creative programme of new outings and events, including the visits to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra each year. These went on to become an annual special event until Covid intervened. He served as Vice-Chairman and Chairman and also contributed several memorable talks including – “*Big Guns to Little Pills*” and “*Hardy’s Dorset*”, both in 2006, and then an entertaining personal collection of his “*Desert Island Discs*” in 2008.

These subjects reflected David’s wide-ranging interests – most notably music, local history and literature and also cricket. He served as treasurer to St. Mary’s church council and together with his music-teacher wife, Daphne, he took special pride in the musical success of their daughter Katherine, who became principal flautist with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra based in Glasgow, and also a notable soloist. This led to their decision to move to Scotland to be close to family including grandson Torben.

Meanwhile, there was the saxophone! A man of many talents, David spent many hours of practice until he felt ready to achieve his ambition to form a modern jazz group. Together with friends (including our own Horace Erridge on drums) they performed at events in the area for several years and David was in his element, playing the music of some of his heroes.

But members who have joined Probus since 2006 may not be familiar with that remarkable first talk about his career experiences, which our ‘scribe’ at the time, Stan Johnson, described in the Recorder as “*moving and dramatic*”. David told us that when he retired from service with the Royal Artillery, followed by a spell with Marconi selling high-tech weaponry, he decided on a complete change and applied for a job with the Leprosy Mission – hence from ‘*Big Guns to Little Pills*’.

In his talk, David described vividly his work with a team setting up a clinic in Bangladesh with this example – “*Buildings were made of wood or mud, 30 people in a small room making a lot of noise, a woman and child showing signs of the disease, the mother had a claw-shaped hand with two fingers missing, both had large bright eyes and bodies like skeletons, clearly starving. Local doctors had refused to help her, such was their fear of leprosy. She was cast out by her community and had walked many miles on blistered feet.*”

There was much more ... but in describing the challenging work of the Leprosy Mission, David also explained that the disease is not a killer and is not hereditary, but it is caught from germs in the air which produce disfiguring lumps on the face. Victims who die simply ‘die of neglect’, he said. It is found mostly in tropical countries and can be cured, especially if caught early, but this is difficult because of the stigma and fear attached to the disease. The total number of cases in the world at that time was about 3.5-million, mostly in India, but is rapidly diminishing.

Not surprisingly, Probus members responded generously to David’s talk with donations for the Leprosy Mission.

P.S. By way of follow up, the latest information from the Leprosy Mission indicates that the

number of known cases worldwide had decreased to about 2-million by 2020, but this figure probably increased again during the Covid epidemic. About 200,000 new cases are reported each year. The LEPROSY MISSION has been chosen by David's family for donations to be made in his memory following the funeral on September 1st.

Obituary – Malcolm Coles (former Member)

Malcolm Coles was born in South Wales in 1939 with Danish parentage on his mother's side. On leaving school he joined the RAF as a technician, where he worked on a range of equipment from the Meteor fighter to Firestreak missiles and other ordnance of various kinds. During his time as a young man in the RAF, he was based in a number of places including Leconfield in Yorkshire, Chivenor in Devon and Castle Martin in Pembrokeshire.

It was whilst at Castle Martin that he was allowed one day a week release from his military duties to attend a college in Swansea to undertake technical studies - and when he left the RAF in 1964, he remained with the MOD in South Wales at a Meteorology Unit in Cardiff, as what was known in those days as a Professional Technology Officer.

Malcolm stayed with the MOD throughout his working life. During his first 11 years he worked on projects relating mainly to flares, chemicals and explosives and spent quite a lot of time based at the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down, near Salisbury. In 1977 he gained promotion and became involved in the development of the then new Respirator for all the Armed Forces - working with civilian contractors Avon Industrial Polymers, based at Melksham and Bradford on Avon. In 1990 Malcolm gained further promotion, this time to Senior Professional Technical Officer and spent a short time with Westland Helicopters in Yeovil, before moving job and taking charge of the now-closed RAF Chilmark, one of the central depots for all RAF explosives, where he also had responsibility for testing weapons from Saudi Arabia under the Al Yamama Agreement. His work looking after explosives continued when RAF Chilmark closed in 1995, and further moves took him to military bases in the Midlands, and finally to the RN at Foxhill in Bath. He retired in March 2004, having completed 49 years' service with MOD – a near-record within the civilian element of the MOD.

Malcolm and Jane lived in Warminster before moving to Gillingham in 2011, where they continued their retirement hobbies of photography, film-making and gardening. Malcolm specialised in making wedding and business videos in Wiltshire and Dorset - he was a creative editor, until ill-health intervened. Meanwhile, he joined Probus in 2014 and provided a talk on his unusual MOD experiences, as described above. He was as active as possible within his limitations, which required frequent medical treatment which he coped with stoically. He came to our meetings as frequently as possible and specially enjoyed the visits to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. But eventually he found it increasingly difficult to remain seated and, as the years passed, he was fortunate in the care which Jane was able to provide at their home.

Malcolm's funeral will be in Gillingham on September 19th and his loss will be mourned by their two families, who are now based in Sussex and Devon.



ENDPIECE – Editor

I said I was good at making decisions. I didn't say the decisions I made were good.

NO I CAN'T DO SNAPCHAT OR TIKTOK BUT I CAN WRITE IN CURSIVE, DO MATH WITHOUT A CALCULATOR AND TELL TIME ON A CLOCK WITH HANDS.

Pre internet chat room using An old version of windows...



A friend suggested putting horse manure on my strawberries... I'm never doing that again, I'm going back to whipped cream.

An old Doberman starts chasing rabbits and before long, discovers that he's lost. Wandering about, he notices a lion heading rapidly in his direction with the intention of having lunch.

The old Doberman thinks, "*Oh-oh! I'm in deep shit now!*"

Noticing some bones on the ground close by, he immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching cat. Just as the lion is about to leap, the old Doberman exclaims loudly, "*Boy, that was one delicious lion! I wonder, if there are any more around here?*"

Hearing this, the young lion halts his attack in mid-stride, a look of terror comes over him and he slinks away into the trees. "*Whew!*" says the lion, "*That was close! That old Doberman nearly had me!*"

Meanwhile, a squirrel who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree, figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the lion. So, off he goes. The squirrel soon catches up with the lion, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the lion.

The young lion is furious at being made a fool of and says, "*Here, squirrel, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine!*"

Now the old Doberman sees the lion coming with the squirrel on his back and thinks, "*What am I going to do now?*" - but instead of running, the dog sits down with his back to his attackers, pretending he hasn't seen them yet, and just when they get close enough to hear, the old Doberman says "*Where's that squirrel? I sent him off an hour ago to bring me another lion!*"

Moral of this story...

Don't *mess with old dogs!!!*

Age and skill will always overcome youth and treachery! Bullshit and brilliance only come with age and experience.



**DON'T MESS WITH
OLD PEOPLE
WE DIDN'T
GET THIS AGE
BY BEING STUPID**