



PROBUS RECORDER



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

Issue No. 250
November 2025

Chairman's Notes

As 2025 nears its end and the days grow shorter and the nights longer, we naturally tend to enjoy the indoors rather than the outdoors. However, as per my recent script advocating making greater efforts to improve our health, I am about to embark on a course of 'keep fit' at the Riversmeet Leisure Centre with a view to losing a few pounds and generally improving my fitness. Wish me luck! That said, I must congratulate Colin Chamberlain for his efforts finding some excellent pubs for us to enjoy. The menus he has provided these past few months have been really good, so my battle with my weight may yet take some time!

I must also thank Peter Hurst for organising our latest visit to the Signals museum at Blandford. We visited this museum some eight years ago and there have been vast improvements in the displays and layout. Other than being trapped on the upper floor with my wife when the lift broke down, it was an excellent visit.

If you look on our website, you will see that both the Christmas lunch and dinner menus have been added. The coach pick up arrangements will be added soon. There will also be a wine list to pre-order from, so that the problem of ordering drinks at last year's dinner will hopefully be avoided this year. Payment for the Christmas dinner should, where possible, be made via bank transfer for £30 per person, plus £7.50 for those using the coach. Apologies for the increase in the coach fee but prices have risen, and we have had a £5.00 fee for some years. If you cannot do a bank transfer, our Treasurer Kenneth will be happy to take cash, but not cheques - which incur costs!

Despite having two guests and potential new members recently, we continue to have a dangerously low membership. I have tried a number of ways to promote the club this year - as yet, to no avail. I earlier asked Paul Hooley to use his expertise in communicating with the big wide world and he has concluded that we have tried pretty much everything he would have suggested. To that end, his final observation is that the most likely way to boost numbers would be to open the club to mixed membership. While there is no proposal to do such a thing, I feel it is important that we gauge the views of the membership at some point this year. Watch this space!

Finally, Ann and I came across '*The Longest Yarn*' while on holiday in Normandy last year. To celebrate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, ladies from France,



England, Canada and America took on the challenge of knitting representative scenes from that time. Since then, this display has come to Britain and has been travelling around the country. It will be on display at Sherborne Abey until November 27th. There are approximately 80 scenes, and we found it very moving and equally impressive.

John

WELFARE & SOCIAL

Welfare

- **Ron and Linda Walker.** As has been mentioned before, Linda does not have blood pressure issues; rather she has a rare problem which causes raised pressure in her arm. Ron reports that they are both making the best of their lives, but they are no further forward in getting treatment for Linda. It appears that there is a waiting list of about 17 weeks before she will be able to see a specialist.
- **Robin and Jill Lloyd Williams.** Dave Hooker hopes to meet Jill at the end of the month, but as of now it appears that Robin has to have a major heart operation, and that no date for this has yet been proposed.
- **David Frayne.** Dave Hooker reported the recent death of David Frayne who was an early member of our Club. Furthermore, his wife Elizabeth (Liz) had died within two weeks of her husband's death.

Social – November Club Events

11 th November 2025	Two sets of Medals A Unique Award for a Unique Man <i>Kevin Patience</i> The extraordinary story of Jeffrey Lincoln-Gordon, born in India, who joined the local railway before getting an unpaid job with the Indian Post Office. He was sent to the Western Front in 1914 in charge of mail, then to Mesopotamia, before joining the Royal Flying Corps and training as a pilot. After his WW1 service he returned to the Indian Post Office and in 1942 was captured at Singapore and worked on the Death Railway. He survived, and after Indian Independence retired to farm in Kenya where he became involved with the Mau Mau Emergency.
25 th November 2025 (Wives/Partners)	1960's Television <i>Les Yates</i> (Self-explanatory)
Wednesday 26 th November (Wives/Partners)	Members' Christmas Lunch <i>The <u>Montague Inn</u> at Shepton Montague</i> 12.30 for 1pm



Reports on OCTOBER TALKS

14th October

Dr Stephen Payne OBE

HM Yacht Britannia A National Flagship?



Dr Stephen Payne spoke to us in February this year, when he recounted his leading role in the design of the Queen Mary II. He told us how one of his earliest memories was of watching Valerie Singleton on the liner RMS Queen Elizabeth for Blue Peter in May 1965, and how when he was nine in 1969, his family had a tour of her successor, the newly commissioned Queen Elizabeth 2. This sparked a life-long fascination with naval architecture.

This time Dr. Payne gave a brief history of the development of the various Royal Yachts; the original being commissioned for Queen Victoria a year before her death and finished without her seeing it. He described how there had been several reincarnations of the Royal Yacht before the last one was decommissioned in 1997.

Widely known as the late Queen Elizabeth's favourite royal home, Dr. Payne described the varied requirements and roles of the Royal Yacht. From travelling around the world visiting British and Commonwealth countries, to entertaining business and political officials, as well as taking other royal families across the globe. The yacht had multiple resources to support these roles, including a large laundry and superbly functioning kitchen and equally well-equipped medical facilities. The crew however had less comfortable living quarters, until the final yacht allowed for some independent living and sleeping quarters.

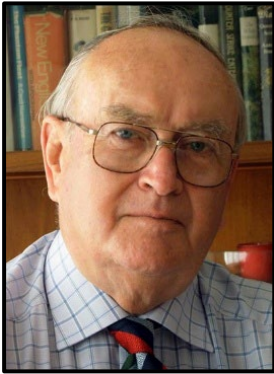
The Queen and Prince Philip often described the Royal yacht as their favourite 'ROYAL HOME', as it was the only royal accommodation where they were able personally to decide on the décor and furnishing for their rooms, and where they were able to relax and feel most comfortable and at ease.



28th October

Anthony Holt

Sailor – Pilot Corridors of Power and Clubman



Anthony Holt MBE was an officer in the Royal Navy for 30 years, leaving as a Commander in 1992 to run the Naval and Military Club in Piccadilly, and then the Army and Navy Club in Pall Mall. His naval service took him around the world including a two year spell on secondment to the Australian Navy.

He is married and lives in Dorset, where he now spends his time writing, sailing his yacht, working as a volunteer Coast Watcher and as a member of the Weymouth Harbour Board, as well as entertaining his four grandchildren.

His talk to the Club was largely biographical and took us through his time on the many vessels and stations in which he served, including those during his time on secondment to the Australian Navy, notably during that nation's involvement in the Vietnam war.

He began his Naval career as a General List officer before undergoing pilot training and spending the remainder of his service under the auspices of the Fleet Air Arm. His talk included reminiscences of the many unusual and interesting incidents in which he became involved, and the many varied people at all levels of society with whom he had dealings. Rather than attempt to run through these, anyone who wishes to see a summary of his life should go to:

<https://anthonyholt.org.uk/about-anthony-holt/>



ENDPIECE (Editor)

A Short Story – “Flash Fiction”

(A frightening foretaste – albeit written in the US??)

“Sorry Dan, But It’s No Longer Necessary for a Human to Serve as CEO of This Company”

By Eric Cofer

I like you, Dan, I really do. You’ve been the face of this company for many years, overseeing a period of unprecedented net growth. And on a more personal level, you’ve become a dear friend. Heck, our wives attend spin class together twice a week! But unfortunately, friendship only means so much in today’s cutthroat business environment. We - that is, the board and I- have poured over every possible budgetary alteration, and we just can’t conceive of a scenario in which retaining your services makes logistical sense. All the research we’ve conducted behind your back over the last three years suggests that the position of chief executive officer for our multi-billion dollar corporation can be more efficiently performed by a robot.

Effective immediately, you have been relieved of your duties. ROB-X164, seated to your left, will be sworn in as your replacement, with a formal announcement coming this afternoon. While we’re sure this is quite a shock to you right now, we do believe that in time you will accept that this decision is in the best interest of the company.

In your present state of fury, you’re probably wondering, “*What makes ROB so special?*” The short answer? Everything. We see in ROB a more personable, less error-prone version of you. In our trial runs, he’s performed admirably, demonstrating unparalleled adeptness in strategizing, team-building, allocating, internally storing frozen foods, and launching fastballs in excess of 200 miles per hour. What we’re talking about here is someone who can guide this company to unscaled heights, not to mention its first corporate league softball championship in thirteen years.

ROB has proven himself to be quite the workaholic. It’s a never-ending cycle of productivity with this guy—there’s no taking off for sick days, vacation, or even sleep. There’s also no division of commitment to worry about. No wife, no kids, no embarrassing coke problem. In other words, he’s not burdened with the distractions that plague sentient beings.

He completes tasks at astounding rates—rates you simply can’t compete with. Let’s say he wanted to make love to your wife, which he most certainly does not, as he’s completely devoid of sexual desire, but if he did, he could do so in one-quarter of the time it takes you, with half the effort and twice the vigor, eliciting sixty-four times the sexual satisfaction. Factoring in your age, heart

rate, and penis size, as well as that new Facebook pic of your wife in compression shorts, ROB arrived at these figures in 3.7 seconds, or approximately the amount of time it takes you to react to the most vanilla softball pitch imaginable.

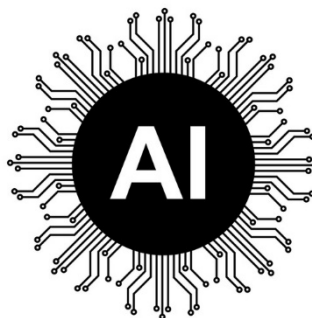
If you're still not convinced of ROB's utter superiority in every conceivable facet, take a gander at these visual aids:

- Here's a photo of ROB shaking hands with a prominent shareholder. What a grip!
- Here's a chart of our projected earnings over the next five years. Notice the sharp upward spike at the chart's left extreme. That signifies the moment you exit the building, which should occur within the next seven minutes.
- Observe the accompanying GIF: a smiling baby perpetually surfing through waves and waves of cash. We expect the company's future to closely resemble this image.
- And here's my favorite. As you can see, it's an oil painting of ROB embracing me in his arms, lifting me up to the heavens as I triumphantly hoist the corporate softball league championship trophy. You may have noticed that the year engraved on the trophy is outdated. Unfortunately, ROB was still in beta testing last season.

Look, Dan, this is a tough break for you, no doubt. It's not every day you're told that your job - which your entire sense of self-worth hinges upon - can be better managed by a series of interconnected chips and wires concealed beneath a shiny, metallic exterior. In fact, it's really only one day that this happens, and that day is today, so things can't get much worse for you going forward. Take comfort in that.

Please be sure to hand your office keys over to HR on your way out. And Dan, lest you suspect that this is some sort of calculated, vindictive act on my part, trust me when I say that this decision has nothing to do with you hitting into a game-ending double play with the bases loaded in the championship game four years ago. Absolutely nothing to do with it at all.

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To You All!