



PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM DORSET - No. 172 - February 2019
(www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk)

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

January has been a relatively quiet month. We had the Skittles evening which was organised by Peter Grange: the winner among the members was Gordon Banks and the Ladies' event was won by Enid Chamberlain. This month lunch was held at the Virginia Ash, Henstridge, which was organised by Roger Ellis. It was his first lunch as lunch organiser and it turned out to be a great success the food was excellent and the staff were extremely helpful. Also it was the first time Probus have held a lunch there and Roger proposes to arrange another there later in the year.

As for the visit to Oakham Treasures, Colin has had to cancel it because of lack of support. However, it could be rearranged later in the year during the warmer weather. We had a Probus golf day at Long Sutton on 24 January but only Roger Ellis and myself from Probus and a guest played so we did not compete for the trophy.

We had two speakers this month, Derek Bradley, a retired Police Officer, gave us a talk about victim support and Dickon Povey who spoke about his experiences during his stay in rarely visited countries. Both of these speakers absorbed the members' interest.

I mentioned at the last meeting that Alan Jeffs our scribe, who reports our speakers for the Recorder, requires help. We are looking for a volunteer who can assist Alan with this task, if interested please contact Alan or Colin Chamberlain (Secretary) or myself. *Ron Walker*

FUTURE EVENTS

5 February

Speaker: **Col John**

Blashford-Snell

'The Eighth Wonder of the World'

19 February

Speaker: **Rosie King**

'Historical Fiction from Scratch'

*Lunch: Hunters' Lodge, Leigh Common 12.30 for 12.45

28 February

Golf at Long Sutton

10 April

Visit to Arundells in Salisbury, Home of Edward Heath. Own transport

Derek Radley – Victim Support in Dorset - 8 January

Derek Radley is a retired Police Officer who served with the Surrey Force, and he has worked as a volunteer with Victim Support for the last 12 years. In the 1970s a review of the criminal justice system identified that there was no organised system to support the actual victims of crime. This led to the establishment of charities to provide support to victims on a county basis, with the first office opened in Bristol in 1974. In 2007 a national Victim Support charity covering the whole of England and Wales was formed.

The charity is part-funded by the Government via the Police and Crime Commissioners, and from donations. Apart from paid office staff, the work of supporting clients is undertaken by trained volunteers. Volunteers initially have to attend a five--day course, and before 'going solo' are accompanied by a volunteer with greater experience. More specialised training is necessary to be able to support victims affected by more serious crimes.

The office for the Dorset branch of the Charity is based in Bournemouth. Persons wishing to ask for help are able to contact a support line (0808 168 911) or can visit online at victimsupport.org.uk.

In Dorset, which is regarded as a county with relatively low crime, there are still thousands of crimes reported to the Police, and a goodly proportion of these are deemed suitable for referral to Victim Support, who contact the victims, and offer help and support. VS volunteers are able and listen and talk to victims in confidence. They can give practical help, and information on the criminal justice system and court procedures. When necessary, they can give help in filling in forms (such as compensation and insurance claims), and provide lines of contact with other agencies. In the main, volunteers offer short- term counselling to help victims of crime get on with their lives.

Mr Radley explained that the Charity is sometimes able to offer some limited financial assistance to victims. He also explained some small practical measures, such as bells on a simple strap to fix on a bag or purse to deter pickpockets, and plastic anti-spiking stoppers to fit into bottles. Victim Support Dorset send speakers into schools to talk to students, and outline personal safety measures they can take to keep themselves safe.

Members recognised that the Victim Support Charity performs a valuable service to victims of crime, who in the past were overlooked when crimes were perpetrated and following questions and the vote of thanks, they showed their appreciation. *Alan Jeffs*

Looking back at my records, I have been 'scribing' for Gillingham Probus for most talks since 2009. New scribing volunteers to report a talk on occasion would be most welcome!



Tribesmen parade in Kano, Nigeria

Dickon Povey – 'I didn't mean to go abroad' - 22 January

Dickon Povey talked about his life and career. Now living near Trowbridge, and having more recently worked as a tour guide in Bath, Dickon's personal life and professional career developed through a combination of incidents and coincidences.

Not being academically minded, and not too interested in study, Dickon left school at the age of 15½, and joined the Royal Air Force as a boy entrant. In addition to being trained in communications, he joined the band, becoming proficient on the bagpipes, eventually becoming Pipe Major. The 1950s was a period of tense cold war between the West and Soviet powers. Britain had been conducting a series of atomic and nuclear tests in the Indian Ocean at and near Christmas Island, which is situated south of Java and Sumatra, about 870 miles northwest of Australia.

Luckily Dickon, who had been stationed in Hampshire, was ordered to fly to Christmas Island for a tour of duty in 1959, a year after testing had finished. Christmas Island was regarded as a good posting – good weather, good sports facilities for the servicemen, and spectacular wild life. Dickon told us about the multiple red crab migrations, and the birds – such as booby birds, which – having no natural predators – were not frightened of humans. So, at the tender age of 19, Dickon had taken the opportunity of taking two holidays on leave in Honolulu.



Subsequently stationed in RAF Duxford in 1965/66, Dickon and others were placed on emergency standby. Something was ‘up’. This was the time of Ian Smith and the Southern Rhodesian Declaration of Independence (now Zimbabwe). The Prime Minister of Zambia (formerly known as Northern Rhodesia before independence in 1964), Kenneth Kaunda, had appealed for British support as he was worried that Rhodesia might invade his country – hence the secret despatch of British troops, including Dickon.

On arrival in Zambia, Dickon had access to a vehicle, as he had been requested to act as a driver by his sergeant, who could not drive. But after landing, he was immediately ordered to go to a small communications building and told to sort and prepare the communications equipment for use.

Dickon managed, with help and advice, to repair the encoding machines (which turned out to be former German Enigma machines – *pictured above*). The Zambia posting turned out to be a life-changing event for Dickon. The attractive young nurse Lesley he stopped and gave a lift to, ended up being his wife. After a whirlwind romance, they were engaged in three weeks. Dickon was posted back to the UK. After Lesley returned, the couple were married.

In the summer of 1967, on leaving the RAF, Dickon joined International Air Radio Ltd. The company ran the communications set up at various airfields abroad. Shortly after training and the birth of his son Simon, it was off to Kano International Airport in Kano State, North West Nigeria to work in airport communications. This was the time of the Biafran War, the Nigerian civil war, when the mainly Christian South-East of the country had tried to break away from the Moslem dominated federal government. After 18 months in Nigeria, the next posting was Kuwait, after training at Bletchley Park, on aircraft automatic landing systems. Following on from this, came work in Saudi Arabia. The last 12 years of service were spent as a British Aerospace Trainer.

Dickon’s talk was illustrated with photographs taken at various stages of his career – including the bungalow in Nigeria, where it was mandatory to have three native staff and a night guard. There were also photos of the procession of the Emir of Kano, with horsemen wearing their colourful tribal costumes. After questions, John Heap gave the vote of thanks.

Alan Jeffs

Volunteer drivers wanted

Gillingham Area Car Link drivers take people in the SP8 area who have no transport to medical appointments, and also on non-medical journeys such as to hairdressers, or shops. Because of heavy demand for such services, more volunteer drivers are urgently needed.

Might you be interested?

Drivers receive 45p a mile expenses. You decide which journeys you undertake. For example, some drivers limit their availability to one day a week.

If you are aged from 25 to 80, have a car, and enjoy meeting people, please contact Robert Wellen on 01747 825131. More information is on the website:

www.gillinghamcarlink.org.uk

Predictions for a 3D printing future

Highlights of a talk by the Head of Daimler Benz.

All major shoe companies have already started 3D printing shoes. The price of the cheapest 3D printer came down from \$18,000 to \$400 within 10 years. In the same time, it became 100 times faster.

Some common spare airplane parts are already 3D printed in remote airports. The space station now has a printer that eliminates the need for the large amount of spare parts they used to keep in the past.

At the end of this year, new smart phones will have 3D scanning possibilities. You can then 3D scan your feet and print your perfect shoes at home.

In China, they have already 3D printed and built a complete 6-story office building. By 2027, 10% of everything that's being produced will be 3D printed. *Thanks to Dick Ripper*

Peter Marshal continues his series on earlier talks by Probus members

Sam Woodcock – March 2003 A Contrast in Teaching Experiences

After starting his teaching career in Dorset, Sam described how he had a 'culture shock' when he moved to take up a new job in North London in the 1960s and encountered crime and child abuse. He was born in Gillingham and brought up in nearby Milton-on-Stour. He attended Gillingham Grammar School and went on to college at Exeter. He then taught for over three years at William Barnes Primary School at Sturminster Newton.

He described how a chance meeting, and his desire for greater experience, led him to become a PE and games teacher at a West Ham, London, primary school. After five years, he became upper school head at a junior school at Woodford in North London, which was much larger with 1,000 children aged 5-11, including 750 in the upper school. He remained there for 25 years, becoming a deputy assistant head and then acting headmaster.

When he first went to London, he recalled, most pupils were East End Cockney types, but by the time he retired back to Milton-on-Stour in 1987, 62% were multi-ethnic with several languages and some were unable to read. He described how holding the required mostly-Christian assembly became difficult with 75% of the pupils non-Christian and there was a need to "tread very carefully".

Material for the March edition of the Recorder should be sent to Richard Clarke on:
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