



PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM DORSET – No. 184 – May 2020
(www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk)

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

What times we live in! As I put my fingers to the keyboard I remind myself that I am entering a second and unexpected year as Chairman. When Ron Walker handed me the badge of office in May 2019 little did I - or any of us - know what was in store in 2020, but as we enter the umpteenth week of lock-down I am struck by the sheer resilience of our members. After all, we are part of the section in society that is considered most at risk, but whoever I talk to I find a resigned but cheerful acceptance of our lot.

Because we are unable to hold our AGM and thereby vote in a replacement, I am unable to thank Richard Clarke in person and publicly as he relinquishes his role as Editor of the Recorder. However, I want to pay tribute to him on all our behalves; he has held the appointment for a number of years, and the results have been a testament to his hard work, application and common-sense. He will be a difficult act to follow and I am thankful to have this opportunity to record our collective thanks for all his efforts.

As outlined in my recent message to members, I am most anxious to ensure that every single one of us feels that their welfare is important to the Club – **IT IS!** While the lock-down lasts, the bedrock of our association continues to be telephone contact between members. After all, the telephone is second only to face-to-face communication; telephone conversations allow us to connect directly and very personally with each other, and in our case this is cemented through the formal process involving Committee members.

I am also happy and grateful that those who wish to 'escape' the tedium of lock-down and are able to do so can use the IT facilities coordinated by the indefatigable Pete Grange – namely our Facebook Group page and Zoom meetings. Neither of these replace the all-embracing closeness of face-to-face meetings or one-to-one telephone calls – i.e. they do not cater for those without the necessary IT and/or the competence and above all the wish to use it. But they are a useful adjunct to the maintenance of fellowship. We can only hope that the restrictions incurred through lock-down don't last too long and we can return to 'normal' - although that remains pretty open-ended at present, and journalistic 'theories' abound to confuse us.

And finally, I hope you won't mind me saying that I'm currently enjoying the sight of rain falling! It has been lovely to have the long period of sun and growing warmth, but my garden was beginning to suffer, and with the lock-down I have become more immersed in my garden than normal

As WS Churchill put it "[*we must just KBO!*](#)"! -

Nick Hall – Chairman

WELFARE REPORT from Gordon Banks:

Where do birds go for a coffee? To a NESTcafe.

Peter Nation had a fall and went to hospital. He is home now but not very mobile.

Richard Clarke has been in hospital and is home and he is stable.

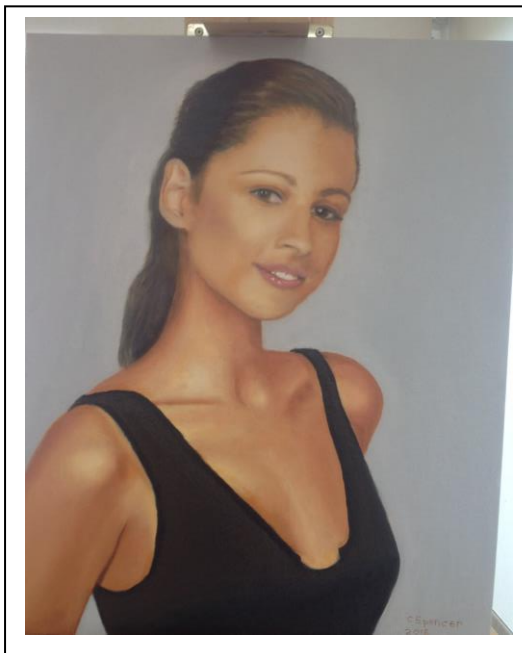
John Houchin's wife Christine had surgery after a fall, but is home again and on the mend.

How does Moses make his coffee? He BREWS.

Chris Spencer – ‘How I learned to paint in oils’ - 3 March 2020

Our fellow member Chris Spencer has delivered a number of talks on various subjects and on this occasion, he told us how he became an art student about five years ago, attending the Classical Art Academy near Bournemouth – initially learning to draw and moving on to painting in oils. The Academy teaches oil painting in the traditional classical way, based on ‘paint what you see’. He explained the various steps and processes, showing a number of his drawings and paintings, and – using these and overhead slides – showed the techniques used in building up from a blank canvass to the finished picture. The first step in learning to be an artist is to learn to draw from still life using charcoal. Chris demonstrated the steps involved in producing a drawing. A line is drawn on the paper to show where the highest point will be; then another to mark the line of the lowest point. The position of the highest point of the object is marked on the top line, and using a small rod, the point is marked on the bottom line to show where the lowest point of the drawing will be. The process is repeated for the left and right positions. Using these four points, important features of the subject can be placed accurately, adding the lines and shading to produce the drawing. A similar process is used when painting, but instead of using charcoal, which would contaminate the paint, a base layer of diluted transparent brown paint is used to totally cover the canvass. A clean soft dry brush (which must be wiped clean during the process) is used to draw on the canvass. Oil paint (the top grades are very expensive) must be of "Artist Quality" if the picture is to be long lasting. Initially the student paints using black and white before progressing to colour. Chris explained how the colours lie on the spectrum (hue), how light or dark is the colour (tone), and the intensity of colour (chroma). He showed examples of painted still life and the use of light and shade. Moving on to his portraits, Chris showed paintings and slides of an Afghan girl and a young woman, demonstrating how the use of light and shade, hue, tone and colour, were used at various stages to produce the finished picture. Members were also shown seascapes – how the sky and clouds are painted first, then the sea, and finally the land and any other objects to be portrayed. Other paintings were displayed, including West Bay near Bridport and Golden Cap; and two examples of Chris’s work are copied below. This was an informative and enjoyable talk, and members were impressed with the quality of the paintings displayed, after only a few years learning to paint.

John Owen gave the vote of thanks, and members showed their appreciation in the usual way. *Alan Jeffs*



We plan to continue to provide the Recorder to all members, but without meetings or talks to report, your contributions will be welcomed and should be sent to Peter Marshall (editor pro tem!) at pmsatellites@btinternet.com