



# PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET – No. 185 – June 2020  
([www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk](http://www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk))

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**CHAIRMAN'S NOTES** - *"O the month of May, the merry month of May,  
So frolic, so gay, and so green, so green, so green!"*

This might have been the case in Elizabethan England (of the first such monarch) but it most certainly doesn't ring true in the current circumstances – or does it? This enforced confinement is wearing a bit thin. In my working life, imposed living in confined spaces was a regular occurrence, but I have to admit this lockdown is now becoming paralytically tedious. There seems to be a perpetual lethargy in quarantine; gone are life's extremes and excitements. On the other hand, the government has made physical exercise almost mandatory during this lockdown.

Like most people, I miss my children and grandchildren, the camaraderie of friends, and going to theatres, shops, cinemas and restaurants. Zoom, FaceTime and Houseparty just don't really do it for me. They have their good points, but they are often frustrating because everyone talks at once and the broadband often crashes and sticks. I'm sure we all long for 'release' and hope for a return to 'normal' life, but it doesn't look to be coming any time soon.

One of the little excitements allowed by the relaxation of rules is that the Newt in Somerset has opened its gates to visitors. Many will remember our Club visit last year, but visiting now almost seems 'naughty' - an escape. And even more amazing – entrance is currently free. The café and restaurant remain closed, but one is free to wander the gardens at will (keeping social distancing of course), and one can even get into their food/produce shop, but I suggest you keep your wallets and purses under lock and key if you do so – the prices my Dear!!

With respect to our Editor – and with a hope of being allowed to frolic in the merry month of May, I will finish with a sally into the weirdness of our government-organised breakout. Why is it that cricket remains constrained? Unlike football, rugby and hockey, it is a rare team sport that comes so near to fitting the criteria for social distancing without difficulty. It is now being allowed but only in a very miserly form - outdoor nets only and no games, and with the provisos that only two people occupy the net at any time and adjoining nets are left empty. With a few modifications to the playing conditions might we yet see the game set free. Anyone for a frolic? – Nick Hall.

## **WELFARE REPORT by Gordon Banks.**

*One of the shortest wills ever written: "Being of sound mind I have spent all my money"*

**Chas Allberry** is having physio twice a week, and so is improving.

**Richard Clarke** is progressing.

**John Houchin's** wife Christine is on the mend.

**Peter Nation** is also having physio and improving slowly.

**Dick Ripper's** wife Jenny is getting back to normal and is cheerful.

*And another Story!*

*How did your blind date go? Terrible; she showed up in a 1926 Rolls Royce.*

*What's so bad about that? She was the original owner!*

## Books Which Inspired Me as a Teenager – by Ian McLellan

There were several books I read as a teenager which inspired me and have remained in my thoughts and pushed me to actions and direction over the years to investigate our natural world.

The first which especially applies today is *Silent Spring* by Rachael Carson, the environmentalist campaigner, in which she describes the awful decimation of wildlife in the USA during use of DDT insecticides and how they enter the food chain. This followed her *The Seas around Us*, still relevant to us. Secondly, was David Attenborough's Zoo Quest series especially *Zoo Quest for a Dragon* describing the Komodo Dragon then largely unknown to the world. I was pleased to see one in Singapore Zoo. This book and series encouraged me to raise my horizons. Next was *Aku Aku* by Thor Heyerdahl describing his expedition to Easter Island, which left me with a lifetime obsession with the island and I was able to visit it in 2004. This expedition followed his previous one on rafting to Polynesia from Peru, *the Kon Tiki Expedition*. Fourthly, a comparatively unknown man and book, JLB Smith and *Old Fourlegs*. This covers how a chemistry academic was so interested (and into fish) that he was informed of the capture of a Coelacanth off South Africa in 1938. Previously this fish was thought to have become extinct millions of years before. He turned this into a fanatical hunt which in the 1950's successfully found Coelacanths living off the Comoros Islands, North of Madagascar. The importance of the Coelacanth is that its fins are on short 'legs' indicating an evolutionary path to life leaving the sea onto land. Finally, no book can sum up more about my interest in sea life than Jaques Cousteau's *The Silent World* and his exploration under the ocean's surface. Each of these books show the author's relentless drive to accomplish their goals.

Now I must ask myself the question: 'Why did I do medicine'? Perhaps that is due to me being seduced by the concept of Grimsdyke in Richard Gordon's *Doctor in the House* and becoming a perpetual student. Where did I go wrong? Well it was because I liked taking and passing exams.

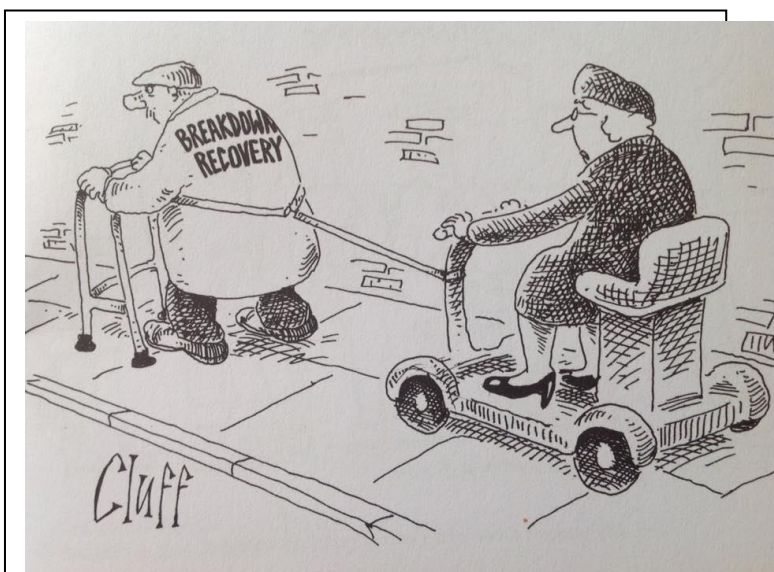
### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*This suggests a theme for future contributions from members on books which inspired you?*

Here for a start are my own memories:

The "set" books for the school certificate at High School were the boring "Silas Marner" by George Eliot and Shakespeare's "Henry V" (best remembered for the outing to the local cinema to be inspired by Laurence Olivier!) But then I escaped to go home to the previous day's newspapers (collected on my morning delivery duty at WHSmith) in order to read every exciting report of the Allies successes in Italy and France in 1944 and 1945....and thus forming my ambition to become a war reporter (which I achieved, but minus a war!)

- Peter Marshall.



Cartoon contributed by Mike Robinson – and chosen from his daily offerings on the [BournemouthDorsetProbus](#) group website on Facebook.

## NEIL LOCKHART.

Older members will be saddened to learn of the recent death of Neil, a retired Lieutenant-Colonel, who was an active member for many years and served as Vice Chairman in 2004. But he will be best remembered for the most spectacular Probus talk in our history! In February 2005, the speaker was his son-in-law, Major Michael Whatley, on the history and duties of the Household Cavalry since it was created in 1600. His slides illustrated their role from the Battle of Waterloo to WW2 in North Africa, then the Falklands and the Gulf War – plus the well-known ceremonial occasions in London. The Major was accompanied by two fully uniformed troopers and he described the history of their regalia including the highly burnished, plumed helmets and shining breastplates. We then moved outside to the Olive Bowl car park to find a horsebox in which they had brought a highly-trained regimental horse, complete with ceremonial harness, for a further demonstration – as seen below!



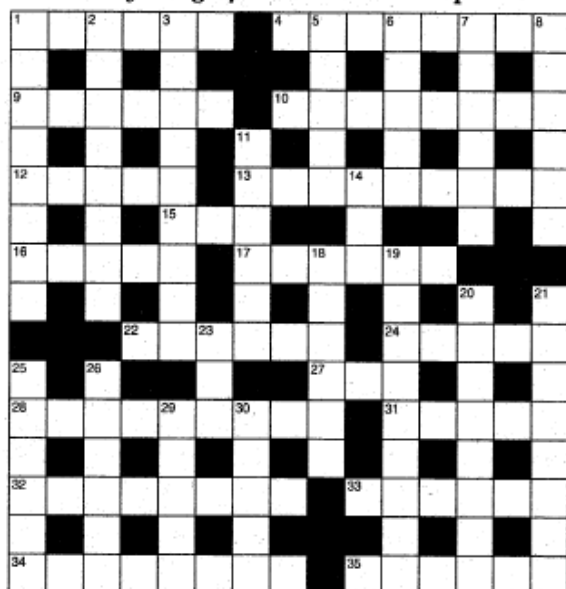
**PROBUS IN LOCKDOWN ....** Just for the record, in case future members do not believe it, some of us now gather on Tuesday mornings for a congenial chat ... courtesy of Peter Grange and Zoom technology, as shown in the computer screenshot below (with apologies to Chris Spencer!) *DETAILS FOR EACH WEEK CAN BE FOUND ON THE PROBUS WEBSITE – SEARCH ON THE “OUTINGS” BUTTON.*



And finally, to fill some time during the lockdown, here is a crossword .... contributed by Alan Poulter with the offer of an unspecified prize for a correct solution!

Answers in next month's Recorder.

### The Daily Telegraph Crossword Competition



#### ACROSS

1. A stage company (6)
4. The direct route preferred by Roundheads (two words- 6,3)
9. One of the evergreens (6)
10. Scented (8)
12. Course with an apt finish (5)
13. Much that could be got from a timber merchant (two words- 5,4)
15. We have nothing and are in debt (3)
16. Pretend (5)
17. Is this town ready for a flood? (6)
22. The little fellow has some beer: it makes me lose colour, I say (6)
24. Fashion of a famous French family (5)
27. Tree (3)
28. One might of course use this tool to core an apple (9)
31. Once used for unofficial currency (5)
32. Those well brought up help these over stiles (two words- 4,4)
33. A sport in a hurry (6)
34. Is the workshop that produces this part of a motor a hush-hush affair? (8)
35. An illumination functioning (6)

#### DOWN

1. Official instruction not to forget the servants (8)
2. Said to be a remedy for a burn (two words- 5,3)
3. Kind of alias (9)
5. A disagreeable company (5)
6. Debtors may have to this money for their debts unless of course their creditors do it to the debts (5)
7. Boat that should be able to suit everyone (6)
8. Gear (6)
11. Business with the right end in sight (6)
14. The right sort of woman to start a dame school (3)
18. 'The War' (anag) (6)
19. When hammering take care to hit this (two words- 5,4)
20. Making a sound as a bell (8)
21. Half a fortnight of old (8)
23. Bird, dish of coin (3)
25. This sign of the zodiac has no connection with the Fishes (6)
26. A preservative of the teeth (6)
29. Famous sculptor (5)
30. This part of the locomotive engine could sound familiar to the golfer (5)

Contributions for the July issue of the Recorder will be welcome – including your memories of the books you read in your teens which influenced your future. Please send them to me, Peter Marshall (editor pro tem) at pmsatellites@btinternet.com