

# PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET - No. 187 - August 2020 (www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk)

# CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS - FROM NICK HALL

Before starting my 'musings' I wish to thank Peter Marshall for his work on behalf of the Club to ensure that the news of Horace Erridge's marvellous feat of achieving 100 years on this earth was broadcast in so many ways - in print and through the ether. It was totally fitting for Horace (and I hope enjoyable for him despite his early starts!), and good for the Club's profile in the community. Thank you, Peter!

As to our current ways of life, I don't know about you but I am finding it quite difficult to work out exactly what the Government is advising us to do – or not do - right now. On the one hand we are told not to 'socialise in groups of more than two households/household bubbles'; on the other hand people generally are being encouraged to go back to work in offices and factories – to use public transport – to go out to eat/drink in restaurants and pubs - to go on holiday within the UK and to 'cleared' foreign countries, thereby suggesting people meeting in relatively large numbers.

Despite this rather confusing stance, the 'rules' are being relaxed and from the 1<sup>st</sup> August the Government is allowing the first tentative steps towards restarting our collective social life: "Venues following COVID-19 guidelines can host larger groups provided they comply with the law. This can include weddings and funerals (which we advise should be limited to no more than 30 people), religious ceremonies and services, community activities and support groups".

My interpretation is that we are a '**community activity**', but the major impediment is the limitation of 30 people. Since the Club has 46 members, and it seems likely that most of us will want to attend an 'inaugural reconvening' of the Club, our chances of holding such a meeting in the near future remain slim.

However, to finish these jottings, I feel that we should give thanks that the pandemic has been kept under relative control. This is in contrast to the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918, where someone asked their Grandfather about his experiences as follows.

"Why couldn't you mourn, Grandpa?" I asked. He replied, "We were too busy burying our dead and keeping our families safe. We barely had time for a priest to bless your uncles' bodies before we put them in the ground. We were so afraid someone else would get sick if we did not bury our dead within hours."

Something about counting our blessings?

# WELFARE NEWS .....from Gordon Banks.

The good news is that we are mostly going on O.K.

**Chas Allberry** is more comfortable. **Richard Clarke** is on the mend. **John Houchin's** wife Christine is much better. **Peter Nation** is finding the physio very helpful. **Dick Ripper's** wife Jenny is now fine.

Doctor, my wife has lost her voice. How can I help her get it back? "Try coming home at three o'clock in the morning.

Who was the leading ice-cream manufacturer in Biblical times? Walls of Jericho.

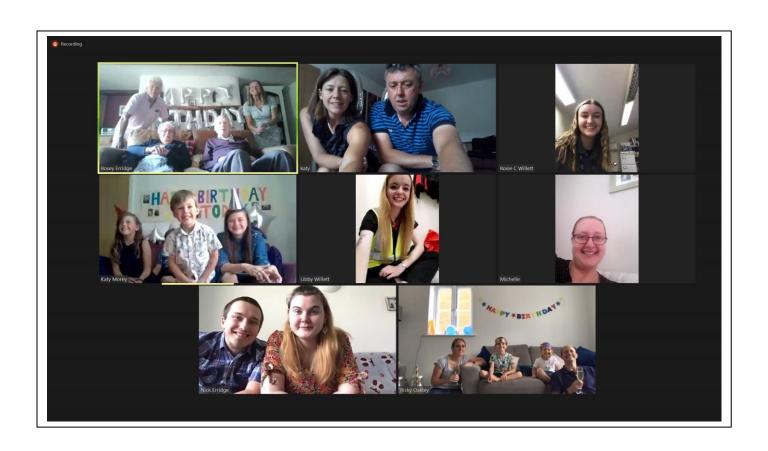
# Horace's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party – at his son's home in Tarrant Hinton.



The birthday cake in the photo on the left was created as a kettle drum with drumsticks (what else?) which Horace shared on the day with his son David and wife Rosey, and long-time friend Mary (the group seen at top left in the 'screen shot' pictures below).

These shots show how, because of the Covid-19 restrictions, fourteen of Horace's family were beamed in by Zoom from various locations for the party – Taunton, Blandford, Gillingham and Bishops Stortford. Two more great grandchildren were working and unavailable at the right time – but Horace's niece Lynn joined in by phone from the USA.

(Altogether a terrific effort by David Erridge to make the most of such a special day for his father, in spite of the all the restrictions – Editor).



## From Dave Hooker:

Here is a little poem I wrote when I was nineteen years old. It certainly applies to us all in Probus now.

As I relaxed my youthful frame near two decrepit men
Their conversation caused me put these words down with my pen
One poor old man of declining years was grumbling of his pains
The other pot-bellied now, a remnant of his gains
They neither saw nor heard the other's need for consolation
Talking voices both as one crying out for preservation
When I see with youthful eye my predecessor's plight
I swear I will remember when I have failing sight
Youth is for the young, 'tis said that all of us must die to float around
Forever 'twixt the hills and 'twixt the sky
When my time's approaching I hope I'll not become like either those
Decrepit men, their sadness I have sung.

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# Edward Rawson: Gillingham's Great Émigré. By Ian McLellan

Edward Rawson was a lawyer working in Gillingham in the third decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. He was born here in 1615 and his parents were David and Margaret Rawson. The family was well off financially. In about 1634 he married Racheal Perne, apparently gaining a dowry of £300.00 at the marriage. His mother-in-law noted this and only left him a nominal sum in her will. He migrated to New England in 1837 during the Puritan Great Migration of 1820-1840. He settled in Newbury, Massachusetts and in 1638 became Town Clerk, Notary Public and Registrar. He also became a Selectman and Deputy to the General Court from 1638-1650. He was obviously well looked upon by his peers in these administrative roles during the early part of the settling of New England and received grants of land in reward, which must have provided him with a solid platform and support from the population of the area.



In 1650 he became Secretary to the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, a role he continued in until 1686. He and his family moved to Boston, retaining some of the land in Newbury.

These 36 years were significant in the development of Massachusetts and his work cannot be belittled. Rawson was a senior and constant administrator or manager for the workings of the state. He was reasonably wealthy and therefore could afford public service for little income. In fact, in the early days he paid his entire salary to his clerk. However, he did receive further grants of land He was in the background but always there. Some of the special projects he worked on were the revision of The General Laws of the Massachusetts Colony which included the standards for practice of Chirurgions (an archaic name for surgeons – Ed.!), Midwives and Physicians and The First Thanksgiving Proclamation June 20<sup>th</sup> 1676. He was also concerned with the requirements of the law, counter signing the warrant for three persons accused of regicide by King Charles II and he was forced to proceed against the Quakers. He had a further role as Recorder for the County of Suffolk.

Little is known of his later life, but he died in 1693 in Boston. He and his wife had a total of 12 children and there are many descendants. President Taft was distantly related via the Perne family. Two points surprise me, firstly that little is publicised locally about this significant man and also that we do not seem to get any of the descendants visiting us? Perhaps there is an opportunity here for contact with those who communicate with each other through the genealogy sites and introduce them to Edward Rawson's home town. This might increase Gillingham's tourist visits.

(Footnote: Rawson Court in Gillingham High Street is now sheltered housing/old peoples home and also includes the old vicarage and the new building addition. It is opposite the Town Meadow; the vicarage is Grade 2 listed..)

### IS HYDROGEN THE FUTURE?

A couple of Probus zoom meetings ago the subject of the future of electric, hybrid and hydrogen cars was briefly discussed. I am not an expert on the subject but have given it some thought. The drive for renewable energy is much wider than propulsion systems used in cars and seems to be driven by two requirements: avoid global heating; and reduce air pollution - especially in cities. These are frequently seen as complementary, and sometimes get confused. Global heating is potentially the greater danger. We all know of the extinction of the dinosaurs. However, there are 4 extinctions in geological history that were bigger and more far reaching. The biggest, The Great Dying, occurred at the end of the Permian period, and was most likely driven by global heating and rising seawater. Today, air pollution in our cities kills people.

In recent history, there has been a drive to reduce, and eventually remove, the reliance on coal-fired generators for our electricity. Coal is both dirty and generates vast amounts of greenhouse gases. Gas is a fossil fuel and so contributes to climate heating. So when we hear reports about successes in generating all the grid electricity without coal, we must be aware that it is now necessary to close the gas-fired electric generators (or capture the carbon dioxide produced).

There is then an additional challenge: we need to stop using all fossil fuels. It means that we need to stop using gas for domestic heating and cooking. Little is gained by using electric cars if the electricity is generated by gas. Today, the vast majority of hydrogen is produced from gas. So it might help beat pollution, but still does not solve the climate heating danger. Thus, the electric grid needs to generate far more electricity than it does today. This highlights the massive challenge that faces us all. So, if we managed to upgrade the current electricity grid to 100% renewables we would only just have started to address the challenge.

The aeroplane industry claims it will get over the problem by using biofuel. However, if they manage to increase their use of biofuels by 100 times then something like 99.8% of aircraft will still be using 100% fossil fuel.

So all this drives towards the conclusion that we all must use energy only when it is vital to do so, and then we must use it more efficiently. Houses need to be better insulated. Transportation needs to do a better mpg. We should consider moving away from globalisation - building things in places where they are needed rather than on the other side of the world. That way we avoid using energy on transportation.

So how do we generate electricity from renewables? The standard ways are wind, solar, tidal, hydro-electric, wave, and current. The problem with these is that they cannot be guaranteed. Ultimately, they all depend on the sun. If the wind stops blowing, if it gets dark, when the sea is at high tide, if there are no waves ... then electricity cannot be generated. So first we need to diversify so as to reduce the time when electricity cannot be generated. It also means that we need to have a potential capability well above the total required at any specific time. We also need some way to store electricity for use when it's needed but cannot be generated. We need different forms of batteries. We could use batteries as we know them. We could use excess electricity to pump water to a higher reservoir so it could be used later to provide hydroelectric power. We could use gravity, by utilising old coal mines in which to lift heavy weights using excess electricity, then lower them to drive generators when there is a shortage of electricity. We can store energy chemically. Hydrogen is a typical example. Generate it using electrolysis, then burn it (perhaps in fuel cells). So hydrogen would seem to provide an important capability- especially for transport. But, and it is a big BUT, it must be made using only renewables, or we simply miss the whole point.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT!

**Chris Spencer** 

The monthly Recorder, together with Peter Grange's excellent idea of weekly, informal Zoom gatherings, provides the only regular link for Probus members during this long but necessary period of quarantine, facemasks, self-distancing, etc. More contributions and comments of interest to our members will be gratefully received for future issues – please send them to me, Peter Marshall (editor pro tem, until the delayed AGM). My e-mail address is: pmsatellites@btinternet.com