



PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET - No. 189 - October 2020
(www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk)

CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS - FROM NICK HALL

Before mentioning the dreaded lurgi, I would like to pay tribute to Jean Harding, the widow of Ralph Harding - one of our past Chairmen. In our search for lost Probud archive material, Jean has provided us with a great many documents and photographs in relation to our Club, and so helped to re-build our collective memories. Peter Grange has already managed to load many of the photos onto our website, where they can be viewed as "Jean's Photos" (Parts 1 & 2). Thank you, Jean - a generous gesture!

Moving now to the pandemic; members will be aware that cases of Covid are now increasing exponentially. The recent press conference given by Sir Patrick Vallance and Professor Chris Witty (without the aid of any gabby politician), will have sobered up anybody who had exploited what felt like the final weekend of summer, or the hopes that everything was becoming freer and easier!

In summary, what they put forward was that:

- the virus remains pretty unimportant for the young and healthy.
- it remains very important for the old and infirm (the virus has not weakened).
- treatments are not yet good enough to be sanguine about being infected. Vaccines are on the horizon but will not be here in time to influence the next few months.



In line with this, our recent Probud survey to sound out members as to the potential for re-starting some form of Probud gathering was nipped in the bud by these developments. However, you will probably want to know that the majority of you had already voted for maintaining the 'status quo', and for not going ahead with meetings of any sort at the moment.

What has emerged from scientific advice is that the elderly (therefore our Probud membership) would be wise to reinvigorate their social distancing and hygiene measures. The bug is back for the winter and it is dangerous. It is not a time for laxity. (Especially as people in general might be suffering from 'precaution-fatigue' and might begin to be less assiduous in their ways - i.e. letting their guard down.)

Just in case you think we in England are worse than everywhere else regarding the spread of Covid - a cautionary tale from the US. One infected man in Ohio caused 53 secondary infections (and 35 further cases) following attendance at a Church service. American Church services are very different to our own, and it is thought that the communal singing/praying in a closed environment was particularly favourable to virus spread. But the lesson is that social distancing is particularly important indoors.

In short - my message as Chairman is that it is time to be wary again. Sorry!!

WELFARE NEWS from Gordon Banks.

We all appear to be keeping our heads down and obeying "an apple a day,,,etc." But there is one unfortunate development to report. While **Brian Garton's** wife Sidonie, is recovering well at home following her heart operation, Brian recently suffered a stroke and was rushed to Yeovil from where he was transferred to Bristol for an emergency procedure. We understand that after a shaky beginning he is now much improved. His wife hopes that he will be transferred back to Yeovil very soon so that it will be easier to visit him.

Apart from this, **Chas Alberry** had a fall last week and suffered a cut to his head that was bad enough to be taken by ambulance to Yeovil to be patched up. He was sent home again but is due to go back to Yeovil in the very near future for tests/assessment to see what they can do to improve life for him.

On an improving note, **Bertram Akhurst** has pretty well recovered from his fall and remains cheerful. **Peter Nation** has had an eye injection, which has improved his vision. He will see a consultant for a review.

Apart from these reports and to lighten the mood, I thought you might like a snippet from the land of Vorsprung durch Technik.

*"What did the cowboy say when he walked into a German car showroom?"
"Audi".*

MEMBERS FORUM (contributions please....)

Dear All

It seems as though our Prime Minister has a personal vendetta against the Probus Club of Gillingham and we will therefore be unable to meet anytime soon.

However, I had a telephone conversation with Horace on Saturday who is remarkably well as is his friend Mary who is 99 and recovering from a slight fall. This is to tell you that he has spoken to Rob Richardson recently who moved to the Sheffield area not so long ago to be near to his son. Rob is doing fine and asked him to pass on his best wishes to all his Probus friends in Gillingham.

Hoping to meet some of you soon depending on what the Government will allow us to do.

Keep well, Roger Ellis

Dear Editor

Last month I wrote a few thoughts about keeping healthy during this time and the consequences of catching the Covid virus. Some of this may have seemed alarmist so I thought I should recount what happened to me following influenza.

In 1978 I was 34, stopped smoking a pipe a year before, was going for a run before breakfast each day and had been a Consultant in Leicester for 2 years. My practice was in Anaesthesia with Intensive Care responsibilities in the Cardio-Thoracic Unit dealing with patients who had heart and lung problems both before and after surgery. In October I went down with influenza which was fairly bad. I could expect to be recovering after 3-4 days. On the 3rd day I realised something had changed, I felt much worse, had a higher temperature and was continually coughing green spit. I had post influenza pneumonia. Over the next 2 weeks my lungs gradually got worse, about 50-60% of my lung was out of action. I was extremely ill and scared. Because I was a doctor those who were looking after me thought I would tell them if I needed to go to hospital rather than stay at home. They did not realise I

was not really functioning in mind as well as body, due to lack of oxygen, my lips were mauve-purple rather than pink, Due to the lack of oxygen getting to my brain I was having very strange dreams. I should have been in hospital being given oxygen and even intensive care. I think I may have needed being ventilated. Of course, I did not realise any of this until I recovered. I was actually well on the way to dying.

Somehow, I managed to improve and recover, I spent another 8 weeks coughing which meant I tore all the muscle on one side of my chest which made it painful and difficult. It is possible to break ribs and collar bones by coughing violently. It is extremely difficult to describe and impart to you the full direness of what had happened to me. It took 3 months for me to recover enough to go back to gentle work and even then the next year was scary, I would have periods of coughing and chest discomfort at times. It was an education to me how quickly one's health can change.

Ian McLellen

FISHY TALES ...

On our weekly on-line Zoom chats with members, Dave Hooker regularly reports on his new 'lockdown' hobby of fishing at a local lake and he proudly shared the picture (right) of his prize carp, so congratulations to Dave ...

.....and then Pete Grange responded with the picture below of his prize catch – a dorado (or mahi mahi) caught (he says!) in the Indian Ocean off Mauritius 2016.

No comment!



“FAKE NEWS”

Prompted by our Zoom discussions about fishing – plus allegations in the US Election about “fake news” – Chris Spencer has contributed this extract from his paper to the U3A philosophy group called: EVERYBODY LIES!

The fisherman held out his hands forward as he explained the size of the fish that he had hooked. It had got away just before he could slide his landing net underneath it.

“It was that big,” he said excitedly. “That’s not very big,” came the reply from the onlooker. “Pretty average if you ask me.” “Yes, it was,” said the angler defending his case. “It was that big between the eyes!”

The internet has given rise to masses of information, much of it unaudited. This has been exploited by people interested in propagating misinformation and lies. One of the most glaring examples of this is President Trump. However, there are now ways of using the internet to correct misconceptions and making information more valid.

Historically, we have arrived at conclusions about how people think and what they believe, by listening to teachers, and also by running surveys. Teachers will have their own prejudices which will tend to be passed on to their students. If teachers are being paid by the parents, as is the case in public schools, they will tend to reinforce the prejudices held by the parents. Students will not question them, and therefore perpetuate the prejudice.

With surveys, people are asked their views about certain matters by answering a questionnaire. The problem here is that people tend to give the answer hoped for, or they lie if they are too embarrassed for others to know their real opinion. So the true answers do not necessarily result, leading to surveys that are prone to large errors.

It is now possible to overcome this prejudice and obtain facts. The internet allows us access to big data. It allows us to analyse these statements using billions of pieces of data of fine detail rather than using opinions that are biased by personal advantage.

TEN YEARS AGO: In October 2010, Chairman Dick Ripper began the process of asking members their preferences for a future venue for our meetings; also, Alan Lipscombe took us on a visit to the Gillingham Electricity Sub-station; there was a report from our coach trip to the Royal Horticultural Society’s Gardens at Wisley; Bonnie Sartin from The Yetties provided a musical presentation; and there was a talk from “Behind the scenes at a flower show” from Chris Smith.

The monthly Recorder continues to provide a regular link for Probus members during this long Covid19 period of self-distancing, etc. More contributions of interest to our members will be gratefully received for future issues – please send them to me, Peter Marshall (editor pro tem). My e-mail address is: pmsatellites@btinternet.com