



PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET
(www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk)

Issue No 192
January 2021

Chairman's Notes - *Nick Hall*

The business of producing the Recorder under current circumstances provides a spectrum of outlook as wide as any that I can remember. On a note of sadness, we have permanently lost a member and former Chairman, Dick Ripper, but on the other hand, our membership appears to be keeping relatively healthy with no reported instances of Covid-19.

It may be tempting fate to state this, but our age group stand to be amongst the first to be offered vaccination against the disease. Against this background we have no knowledge as to when and under what conditions we might be allowed to meet again. In the meantime, Peter Grange continues to 'flog his wares' using Zoom, while the effects of Winter weather and the 'Rule of 6' impinge on Alan Poulter's attempts to gather members in the open space of Gillingham Town Meadow. All-in-all it is a mixed and not altogether upbeat outlook for our membership.

But look forward we must – and in doing this I hope we can all agree that there **is** light on the horizon for 2021. With vaccination on the cards, we can begin to think positively about 'resuming normal service' in some form or other. In the last Issue of the newsletter, you were provided with a line of thought as to how we might re-start our schedule of meetings when that is allowed. I suggest that this is now a reasonable aspiration for the coming months, and on that note I see hope for our Club and wish every member and their families the very best of health and happiness for an uplifting 2021.



WELFARE and SOCIAL NEWS - *Gordon Banks.*

It is heartening to report that all of our members continue generally in good health, especially as far as Covid is concerned.

It has also been a comfort to know that the **Houchins** and the **Bryans** managed to become reasonably settled in their new homes before Christmas, despite all the problems thrown in their way.

Brian Garton was sent home during Christmas week, but sadly remains bedridden. His wife Sid has had to arrange a hoist to lift him out of bed every day so that he can sit up for a time. She has also had to arrange for a live-in carer to help, but unfortunately the cost of this is not covered by the NHS, and they face a big hole in their savings. In the circumstances, Sid remains surprisingly upbeat despite the problems they face.

Ken Stedman continues his recovery at home after his cataract operation.

Peter Nation reports improvements in his life now that he has been provided with new spectacles!

Wife: "Did you put the cat out?"

Husband: "I didn't know he was on fire."

*A man met Van Gough in a pub and asked if he could buy him a drink.
"No thanks" said Van Gough "I've got one ere".*



Memories of Dick Ripper – *Peter Marshall*

One of the pleasures of my 20 years with Probus has been the opportunity to know so many fellow-members with such a wide range of experiences (many of which take a while to discover until they contribute a talk). This was the case with Dick, who joined us in 2005 – allegedly moving from Shaftesbury Probus because they were admitting female members!



As the years went by, we discovered in stages his remarkable life story. After graduating from University College London with a science degree, he worked on Research & Development with Unilever for many years and was involved in expanding their overseas businesses in Malaya, Brazil, India and Trinidad. He then moved to Cadburys, working at senior level in Nigeria and the USA as well as in London. His wealth of international experiences made every conversation with Dick an enlightening pleasure – particularly when discussing, even debating, current affairs.

He took his determination to enjoy a full and challenging life into his retirement years which included climbing Kilimanjaro and then part of Everest in his 70s, making a parachute jump in his 80's, remaining active with local walking groups and also playing tennis regularly until quite recent months. He was involved in various local affairs in Shaftesbury for many years

and also contributed his years of business experience to the work of the Prince's Trust. And at home, his DIY accomplishments were another testament to his range of talents.

Dick's well-travelled family have followed in his footsteps in many ways and he has taken special pleasure from the accomplishments of three of his grandchildren as successful professional musicians – including concerts which many of us have enjoyed at performances in this area.

At Probus, in addition to his talks and participating with Jenny in all our social activities, he took over as the second editor of The Recorder in 2006 and then went on to become our Chairman in 2010. His wisdom and judgement contributed to the club's progress in many ways and we were indeed fortunate to have him among our membership for so many years. And now, in this difficult period for staying in touch, his unexpected illness and death at the age of 89 came as a shock to us all. We will long remember him for his warmth, his comradeship – and his curly walking stick!



The Development of Understanding “Weather” –

A Report by Alan Jeffs - following a talk given using ‘Zoom’ by Nic Griffin.

Nic delivered an interesting talk in an unfamiliar Zoom environment, to members who had signed in to Peter Grange's weekly on-line virtual chat session.

Human existence has always been heavily influenced by the seasons and weather patterns. Nic explained how the science of weather forecasting has developed over hundreds of years, with important discoveries and contributions along the way. His talk traced these developments from the early days of weather forecasting; he emphasised the importance of weather events to people in their everyday lives thousands of years ago, by citing the number of times reference is made to extreme weather events in the bible (tempest, storm, thunder etc).

The basic science is that water is evaporated by the heat from the sun, forming clouds. When the clouds become heavy enough, droplets of water fall under gravity as rain, thus completing the cycle.

Edmund Halley – the second Astronomer Royal, discovered in the 18th century how the trade winds work (these are the prevailing east-to-west winds that flow in the Earth's equatorial region).

Robert Boyle (Boyle's law) confirmed back in the 17th century the relationship between pressure and volume of a gas. Robert Hooke was an assistant to Boyle and worked on a machine to measure wind speed (anemometer). The Beaufort scale – a measurement of wind speed, was devised by the naval officer Francis Beaufort in 1805.

Sir Christopher Wren (the architect of St Paul's Cathedral) invented a tipping bucket rain gauge to gather and measure the amount of rainfall over time. Evangelista Torricelli (17thC) invented the barometer, to measure air pressure – used to forecast short term changes in the weather.

Again, in the 17th century, Daniel Fahrenheit invented the mercury thermometer and the standardised Fahrenheit scale to measure temperature.

The Frenchman Coriolis discovered what is known as the Coriolis force; this deflects the direction of the wind in the northern hemisphere to the right, and to the left in the southern

hemisphere – influencing global cyclonic wind patterns.

Luke Howard was an amateur meteorologist who, by his observations, invented a nomenclature for clouds (main types stratus, cirrus, stratocumulus, cumulus, and cumulonimbus).

Communication of weather conditions in different parts of the world was made easier by the development and use of the telegraph system by Samuel Morse in the 19th century.

The weather is influenced by the core of strong winds blowing several miles above the earth's surface blowing from West to East. Known as the jet stream, these air currents which so affect the weather were discovered by the Japanese meteorologist Wasaburo Oishi.

The BBC shipping forecasts broadcast for the Maritime and Coastguard Agency for the seas around the coasts of the British Isles are based on the warning service for shipping introduced in 1861 by Vice-Admiral Robert Fitzroy. One of these sea areas is now named after Fitzroy

Nic Griffin's final slide showed the effect on sea levels caused by global warming.

Thank you, Nic, for overcoming the challenges of virtual communications and delivering this talk.

Alan Jeffs

After Note: Should anyone wish further information as to how the weather has written and painted itself into the cultural life of Britain, the BBC provides a recording called [A British History in Weather](#).



Editorial Footnote.

It remains for me as Chairman and Editor to thank everyone in the Club for their participation in our weird Club life in 2020.

Articles for Publication. As one of the few means of reaching every one of our members during the time of Covid, I would like to encourage anyone who might have a story to tell to submit it (graphics welcome!) for publication in future versions of the **Recorder**.

“Stay Safe”

