



PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM DORSET - No. 194 - March 2021
(www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk)

VICE-CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

As members will be aware our Chairman, Nick Hall, is currently in Yeovil Hospital so it is logical that I take up the Chairmanship earlier than I would have wanted. He has not had a stroke, but because of the symptoms he has shown he is in the Stroke Unit. Ian McLellan has told us that this unit is one of the finest in the South West so he is in good hands. Nick is awaiting the result of his latest MRI scan and is receiving speech and language therapy. He continues to show signs of improvement.

Accordingly, I have been asked to introduce this edition of the Recorder and I have to thank both Richard Clarke and Peter Marshall for agreeing to edit and put together this and the next few magazines.

With regard to the Covid pandemic the situation is a little better and the proposed date for easing all restrictions is June 21. However, this date is not written in stone and could be subject to deferment if circumstances change.

Nick, Colin Chamberlain and I had talked about what we should do when we know we would be able to start the meetings again, and the initial thought was to have a celebration buffet for members, joined by wives and partners. This idea was welcomed by those members who took part in the latest Zoom "chat", but it was pointed out that to do this in late June was speculative and better to defer the meal until August when Probus does not usually meet. If we were able to arrange the usual BBQ, that would seem to be perfect. Members and their families would by then have got used to going out again, and normal Probus meetings could restart in September. However, it is too early to say what restrictions would still be in force with regard to the wearing of masks and social distancing.

Finally, you will be glad to know, our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for May 11, so please mark it in your diaries.

We will have to hold the AGM by Zoom as we will not be allowed to meet by that date and Peter Grange has mentioned later in this edition there are ways that members, who are not on the internet or who are uncomfortable about using Zoom, to use their land-line telephone or mobile can join the meeting if they wish to do so. The AGM is likely to be uncontroversial and as we have not met since March 2020 there will be few reports from officers.

Nick or I will let you know more in another edition of the Recorder. Keep well and look after yourselves and those you love.

Roger Ellis

Zoom Meetings



For much of the lockdown several members have been meeting informally via an internet tool called Zoom. Zoom allows people to access a virtual meeting from their own home using an internet-connected computer, smart phone or tablet. These meetings are often just for a chat but for a few recently we've had a speaker, drawn from our membership. The meetings take place every Tuesday at 11:00 am. Recently it's become possible to join these meetings by conventional telephone, which may be of interest to those members without an internet connection. Access is made via a local rate phone number, a selection of which are listed below. The procedure is to phone one of the numbers where you will be prompted for the "Meeting ID" and passcode, also listed below, which are entered via the phone keypad. You will also be asked for a "Participant ID" which we don't use so put in whatever you like.

If you are interested in joining in by phone please contact Peter Grange on the morning of the meeting just in case we have to change the Meeting ID at short notice. You may also contact Peter on a day before the meeting day if you'd like to try a "dummy run".

Peter Grange

Access telephone numbers:

0330 088 5830, 0131 460 1196, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0203 901 7895,
0208 080 6591, 0208 080 6592

Meeting ID: 781 4570 6920
Passcode: 7989213

A man who stood his ground: Eric Quinton Hazell

After World War II, as vehicle production restarted, an association arose – a closed shop - which informed the world at large that the only way to buy spares for your motorcar, was to buy from the original equipment maker (O.E.). The organisation's aim was to stop firms that supplied garages from supplying anything but O.E.

Eric Quinton Hazell had just come out of the army in 1946 and bought into a small garage in Mochdre, just outside Colwyn Bay in Denbighshire, North Wales. He couldn't get certain spare parts for many Austin, Morris and Ford cars, but the premises fortunately had a substantial workshop. Of course, motorcars were far simpler then than they are now, but

Q.H. decided to make his own parts in that workshop. This was asking for trouble for a little guy who was about to challenge the huge corporations with their all-embracing association which damned anyone from supplying spare parts that were not O.E.

He was of average height but a big man nonetheless. If he entered a room you knew about it. Quinton Hazell once told me that from boyhood he was blessed with physical (and so I was to discover) mental strength as well. He had a presence. This gift took him eventually all over the world selling his vehicle spare parts. But let us return to that little garage and workshop. He started to sell his spare parts to outlets that just couldn't get Morris, Austin etc spares so soon after the war. The proprietor would say "I can't buy your track rod ends, ball joints etc, Mr Hazell, or I'll fall foul of the association." Q.H. would say, 'Well you won't be able to service your customers then and they'll go elsewhere.' Soon suppliers began to buy his kits.

His argument was to sell a better product where there is a market crying out for it, and sooner or later you will beat the bully. Eric Quinton Hazell was a brave man. Soon his production orders began to outweigh his ability to produce. There were no suitable premises for rent, so he took his order books to a bank in Deganwy, near Llandudno, raised money on the strength of his orders and built a factory nearby. It took only eight months from a green field to a large, finished building. As one section was finished Q.H. and his engineers moved across to give them more production room.

I started work there in 1972 as a design draughtsman, coming up from Kent. It was a leap of faith for me and it worked. I left the company in 1985 after receiving an offer to run a small design office nearby. This worked out, but I always had a soft spot for that man who outplayed the establishment bully.

Dave Hooker

Contributions for the April edition of the Recorder should be sent to Peter Marshall (*editor pro tem!*) on pmsatellites@btinternet.com