



PROBUS RECORDER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET
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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Roger Ellis

Your Chairman does a U-turn (*'again'* some would say)

A little time ago I said to our fantastically talented Secretary that I thought our Probus lunches should be bi-monthly, as I couldn't be bothered to organise them more frequently. Now there is honesty for you!

It means finding venues that are still open on a Tuesday, which is still a problem, visiting the public house, obtaining a suitable menu and then the task of putting this on the web site. In addition to which I like to make sure on the day that everyone receives their chosen course and has a pleasant lunchtime, even if they have to sit near to myself. (*"Oh no, he's not going to mention railways and golf again"*).

However, we had a lunch in January thanks to Roger Lester, and I have other ones lined up for both February and March, in addition to which I know where we are going to in April. Why have I made this life-changing decision? Well, I was spellbound by the look of sheer pleasure on Colin's cherubic face when he ate a spoonful of Sticky Toffee Pudding.

Seriously, after the problems caused by the pandemic, I have been so pleased by the numbers of Probus members and their wives/partners who have supported the lunches that it has all been worthwhile.

Those of you who were with us last Tuesday will know that John Owen is looking to re-start our outings possibly in April, and so it looks as though we can all look forward to a more normal Probus calendar in 2022.

Keep well.

WELFARE and SOCIAL NEWS

There continues to be little of note with regard to members' physical health. As you heard at the last meeting, **Ken Stedman** is waiting for keyhole heart surgery, and is still troubled by his legs.

Having made such a short report, I feel that a little bit of heavy thought might be in order – hence the following '*bon mots*':

- I rang up BT and said that I wanted to report a nuisance call.
They said "Not you again!"

- I went to buy some camouflaged trousers the other day, but I couldn't find any.
- So there I am at the Wailing Wall, standing there like a moron, with a harpoon.

REPORTS ON OUR JANUARY TALKS

'Beekeeping'

Mike Madgwick - 11 January

One of our new members, Shaftesbury resident Mike Madgwick, told us about honeybees and beekeeping. Mike is an experienced beekeeper, and his detailed talk had our rapt attention, evidenced by the many questions during and following the talk.

Honeybees are important pollinators for flowers, fruit and vegetables, along with other species such as bumblebees, other bees, flies, beetles, moths and butterflies, ants, wasps and bats.



Apis Mellifera – 'Worker' bee

There are seven species of honey-bearing bee of the genus *Apis*, but the single *Apis Mellifera* is the domestic honeybee farmed by beekeepers; also called the European Honeybee, or Western Honeybee.

Mike explained that there are two honeybee sexes, male and female, and within the latter two female castes – the females that do not attain sexual maturity (known as '**workers**') and '**queens**' (females that are larger than the workers).

The males are '**drones**'; they are larger than the workers and only live for a short period. Queens mate with many drones and store sperm in their body in a structure (spermatheca) allowing them to control the fertilisation of their eggs.



'Drone' Bee



'Queen' Bee

A queen can lay 2,000 or so eggs in a day that are either fertilized or unfertilized. Unfertilized eggs develop into drones, and fertilized ones into females, which may be workers or virgin queens. The virgin queens are fed royal jelly, a substance produced by the salivary glands of the workers. When not fed solely on royal jelly, virgin queens will develop into workers.

Honeybees use wax produced in the worker bee's body to build a honeycomb composed of six-sided cells. Food in the form of honey, plant nectar and a substance made from pollen is stored in the cells. Beekeeping is the art of caring for and managing, colonies of domestic honeybees commonly in man-made hives.

Beekeepers (Apiarists) keep bees in order to produce honey, and other products such as beeswax (used for making candles), pollen and royal jelly. The ability to move hives around is also beneficial to farmers in pollinating their crops. Hives contain thousands of bees, which have a foraging range of up to 4 or 5 miles. Heat is generated within the hive by the vibration caused by the bees.



The invention of the movable frame hive, and its further development by the American apiarist

the Reverend Lorenzo Langstroth, with the incorporation of spaced removable frames containing a honeycomb was a major development in modern beekeeping; and frames can be safely removed without damaging the bee colony.

The dangers of diseases (some are notifiable) and predators (Asian hornets, Varroa mites etc) which can decimate bee colonies, are things which must be closely monitored by beekeepers, and reported when appropriate.

Mike's talk with overhead slides also gave examples of other types of hive in other countries, and natural tree hives. This excellent talk also made reference to the method of spinning and extracting honey. He also explained that honey produced on an industrial scale is often adulterated and not 100% pure naturally produced honey. Following questions, the Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

Report: Alan Jeffs

'Europe By Train - A Pictorial Tour'

Roger Ellis – 25 January

Belgium

Bruges



A picturesque city by canal boat. Many chocolate shops - Yum! Very strong beer-11% proof! They also brew a chocolate flavoured beer - best of both worlds

Ghent



Belgium's second city in Flanders. Wandered into the red-light district by accident- oops!

Ypres



The Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing 1914-18. The Last Post is still sounded every day. A past relative is named here, very poignant.

Holland

Amsterdam



A tremendous railway station. Canal boat trips, river walks and windmills.

The red-light district here is lit up at night- no mistaking it!

Ostend



The grand church of St Petrus and St Petrus dominates the town. A coastal tram ride just 6 euros. Mussels and chips, maybe?

France

Paris



Very busy and expensive; not to my liking.

But the Eiffel Tower is a 'must see and ascend icon'.



The Montmartre area is much nicer to wander around.

Took the TGV out of Paris heading south

Strasbourg



A delightful old city, both French and German in origin. Picturesque old buildings.

Onwards to the south of France

Antibes



The harbour here was full of expensive yachts, but an old wooden sailing boat was the main attraction. Along the French Riviera to Nice.

Nice



Nice is very nice! Especially the old town and harbour. The 'Promenade des Anglais' is always busy. Thence to Monaco

Monte Carlo



I was not impressed! Too much bling. Again, the old part is much more pleasant.

Germany

Cologne (Köln)



The cathedral tour was very expensive, but worth it for the magnificent stained-glass windows.

The Chocolate Museum is a another must- *mmm!*

Hartz Mountains



A tourist destination since Victorian times (or the German equivalent) with its narrow gauge railway system. The highest point is the Brocken which had an East German listening station. It's said that radio traffic in Britain could be picked up.

Austria

Vienna



This time by sleeper train (with delicious lunch packs).
But the cabin over the bogie wheels was noisy so not much sleep.

Sleeper trains are in decline all over Europe due to budget air travel. However, there is a resurgence as travellers avoid airports and the crowds.

Vienna is a delightful city with much to see. The Spanish Riding School with the white Lipizzaner horses is a must but go on practice days- much cheaper.



The giant Ferris wheel in the Prater Park (Riesenrad) - made famous in 'The Third Man' film - looks superb at night, all lit up

Switzerland

Geneva



The lake, the fountain and paddle steamer trips.
And the Swiss railways- Great!

Lausanne



The famous bridge Kapellbrücke (chapel bridge) rebuilt after a disastrous fire in 1993

The Landwasser Viaduct



Spectacular views of it from the valley and from the train going over it.

Italy

Venice



By high-speed train, then a long coach journey.
Impressive, but far too busy. Best in winter.

England

Paddington to Penzance Train



This is a tremendous trip. As train manager, the return journey for me would be very quiet after Westbury (no more tickets to check)- time for a nice coffee and a snack- marmalade sandwich anyone?

Note: These are not Roger's photographs, which are being saved for another trip

Report: Alan Poulter

ENDPIECE - Editor



They're Back! - Wonderful Church Bulletins.

(Real church bulletins or announcements at church services in the USA)

- The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- The sermon this morning: '*Jesus Walks on the Water.*'
The sermon tonight: '*Searching for Jesus.*'
- Ladies; don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.
- Miss Charlene Mason sang '*I will not pass this way again*', giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Next Thursday there will be try-outs for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be '*What Is Hell?*' Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.
- Pot-luck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.
- The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.
- The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.
- Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.
- Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

And this one just about sums them all up:

- The associate minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday:

'I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours.'