



PROBUS RECORDER

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

Issue No. 206
March 2022

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – Roger Ellis

It is getting very near the end of my Chairmanship and to many, especially our Secretary, that will be a great relief. The next Chairman will not mention railways, will always stick to the agenda, will never be seen in strange footwear and will always be respectful to fellow Probus members, no matter how annoying they are.

It was a delight to see Dave Hooker last week after such a long period of absence, although he has been present at the Friday meetings in Gillingham, and that brought me to thinking about “*Sheds*”.

As you probably know the “*Shed*” movement has grown over the past ten/fifteen years as it provides an opportunity for groups of men (and women) to meet in numerous locations over the UK, and I suppose all over the world, the object being to, build, repair and particularly to socialise. Our Friday meetings are our substitute for the “*Shed*” and every time we get together there is always laughter, mainly at the expense of Dave Hooker and myself, but always most welcome.

I have a maintenance team at Bishops Lydeard and we meet there to do exactly that every Wednesday. Painting an iron fence can be very boring, but I have had fun driving a Toyota tipper truck and the boys I am with never stop ‘*taking the michael*’ out of my Fiat 500. No change there.

I play golf with Probus member Ron Walker every Thursday and, apart from him asking me constantly how he should play the next shot and what club to use, it is a great four hours.

All these activities are in a sense “*Sheds*” in disguise and - after Covid and the mental problems that isolation has brought about (thankfully not to myself), - I realise the benefit of these social occasions. If someone asks you to meet them for a drink/coffee or whatever just think “*Shed*” and say yes. You might not always want to do this, but the person asking might need your company for a short while. It won't hurt believe me.

Keep safe and well.

WELFARE and SOCIAL NEWS

There continues to be little of note with regard to members' physical health, other than one or two members and partners being afflicted with 'flu – a Covid variety, probably Omicron. Indeed, the Editor and his partner caught the lurgi after looking after grandchildren for a few days – not that he is insinuating that this was the cause!

His experience was neither good nor bad – it certainly wasn't particularly alarming, and he reports that it brought mild flu-like symptoms for a couple of days (cold and sore throat) and

was inconvenient in that they had to isolate for the full 10 days (as legally bound), and only ceased to test positive at the very end of the period. Luckily, it didn't affect their social diary too much, other than preventing attendance at one of our meetings, but he says they were also very aware of their duty to keep away from others and not pass it on. But it must be stressed that it was not a seriously worrying medical/health experience, and that it was so is almost certainly the result of both of them being fully up to speed with their anti-Covid vaccinations.

Apart from this, Ken Stedman continues to wait, and his next hurdle to overcome comes when he has a check-up on the 10th of March to see if his proposed heart operation can go ahead. We wish him well.

Lastly, in order to ensure that you receive the expected words of wisdom!

- *A police bus and a cement mixer crashed. Police are advising the public to look out for hardened criminals.*
- *The guy who invented the umbrella was going to call it a 'brella' - but he hesitated.*
- *I went to an emotional wedding, even the cake was in tiers.*



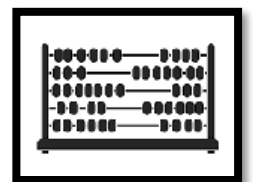
REPORTS ON OUR FEBRUARY TALKS

'The Origins of the Internet'

Peter Mason – 8th February

Peter Mason lives in Mere. Although trained as an engineer, he has considerable experience in Education Training. This talk on the origins of the internet showed how the use of IT and the Internet has developed exponentially in a relatively short time, changing our lives dramatically.

Since the beginning of human existence, people have needed to communicate with one another. Indeed, a form of early computer, the abacus, can be traced back thousands of years. This consists of a counting frame (the modern form) with beads sliding on wires - still in use in some parts of the world today.



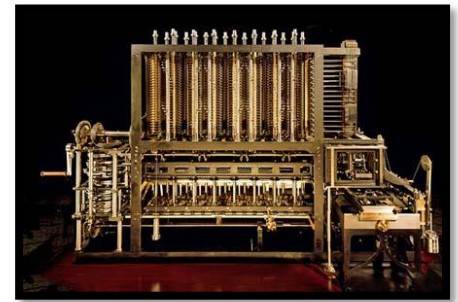
The first mechanical mathematical calculator may have been conceived by



Leonardo da Vinci in about 1500 AD (a replica was built in 1968) consisting of 13 digit registering wheels. The slide rule (invented in the 1620's) was a calculating device with a single logarithmic scale, with individual measuring tools to enable multiplication and division.

The German philosopher **Gottfried Leibniz** invented the binary system, foundation of modern computer architecture. A binary code represents text and computer instructions using a two-symbol system, often "0" and "1".

The mathematician and inventor **Charles Babbage** designed a mechanical computer, the Difference Engine, in 1822, funded by the British Government. The further development of a small working model was later abandoned on cost grounds, as was a general-purpose computer, the Analytical Engine.



The Hollerith Tabulating machine (1889) was an electrical counting machine. Data was encoded by holes



punched in a card, enabling counting and sorting electronically. **Herman Hollerith** founded the Tabulating Machine Company, later merged to form IBM. The machine was developed to help process data for the 1890 US census, but later models were used in business for accounting and inventory control.

artillery firing tables for the US Army.

ENIC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and computer), was the first programmable electronic general-purpose computer. Made in 1945, primarily designed to calculate



The **ATLAS computer** (British) was one of the world's first computer (in use from 1962 to 1971), with a (at that time) huge computing capacity.

The **Apple TAS-80** desk-top micro-computer launched in 1977, was one of the first mass-produced and marketed home computers. The Commodore was another machine for the home market in the 1970's.



The problem was that these machines did not communicate with one another. The main limiting factor was a combination of price, processing capacity and speed of modems. By the late 1970's, prices were reducing and by the 1980's speed had increased very significantly (from 300 bits per/sec to the order of 56,000 bits per/sec (increased substantially since then, and still increasing!)).

The invention and development of the Modem was crucial. This acted as a demodulator for data signals traversing analogue and digital networks. Initially used by news networks to send data faster, it was utilised by the US during the Cold War, eventually being used at the home computer level.

The idea for a global computer network was conceived, later taken up by **DARPA** (the US **Department of Defense Advanced Project Agency**); its initial purpose was to link computers to the Pentagon, to enable computers to communicate with one another.

The OSI model was developed to standardise functions of communication, adopted by the **International standards Organisation** (ISO).

In 1981, the invention of the Router enabled the connection of multiple networks and forward 'packets' of information through networks was developed by the founders of CISCO systems.



The co-inventor of the **World Wide Web** (WWW) was **Sir Tim Berners-Lee** in 1981, an English computer scientist. The web is an information system where documents and other information are accessible over the internet.

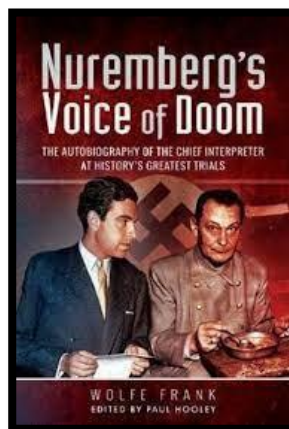
Peter Mason's talk gave more detailed information of the steps achieved along the way leading to the development of the internet. The history showed how many people have played their part, building on what has gone before. An interesting talk!

The Chairman gave the vote of thanks

Report: Alan Jeffs

'Nuremburg's Voice of Doom'

Paul Hooley MBE – 22 February



Paul Hooley lives in Gillingham. Born and educated in Surrey, he has considerable experience in business and local government, including company directorships. Paul is a former town and district councillor, and Mayor of Bedford. Since retirement from business, Paul has spent much of his time writing and lecturing. The subject of his writing and this talk concerns the life of **Wolfe Frank (1913-1988)**.

Wolfe Frank's papers about his life and wartime experiences only came to light 25 years after his death in 1988, and were subsequently studied and compiled by Paul Hooley, leading to his books **'Nuremberg's Voice of Doom'**, and **'The Undercover Nazi Hunter'**.



Frank lived his final years in Mere. People did not realise that this charming polite gentleman was a former playboy (five-times married!), soldier, restaurateur, and former German refugee, who played a leading part in the Nuremberg war trials as chief interpreter for the British after the Second World War. It was this role that earned him the soubriquet '*Nuremberg's Voice of Doom*'. After the war, he returned to Germany undercover as an investigative journalist; it was during this period that he tracked down, apprehended and interrogated **General Waldemar Wappenhans**, ranked fourth on the Allies' wanted list.



Wolfe Frank was born in Saxony in 1913. His father was Jewish and took his own life in 1933; two of Frank's sisters died in the concentration camps. Wolfe became involved with the underground resistance movement, eventually escaping via Switzerland in 1937, landing up and living in England. He actually married his first wife, a Baroness, in 1936, in England. Hitler's German government took away his status as a German national, thereby rendering him stateless.

At the outbreak of war, Frank was initially interred in the UK as a German alien, but along with several others, was eventually released. He joined the British Army in the Pioneer Corps, but transferred from the Pioneers to The Northumberland Fusiliers, joining the British War Crimes Executive with the rank of captain, working as the chief British interpreter at the Nuremberg Military Tribunal trials of German war criminals.

Frank's expertise in accurate instantaneous translation actually earned him the respect of the accused, including Hermann Goering. As the Judges did not speak German, it was down to Frank to relay the '*death by hanging*' sentence to the defendants. Goering had asked to be shot by firing squad as a soldier, but this was denied; however, he cheated the hangman by committing suicide with a cyanide capsule the night before he was due to be hanged.



In later years before his own death in 1988, Wolfe Frank's health had declined, and he took his own life.

Paul Hooley has put considerable efforts in compiling and editing the Frank papers, highlighting the remarkable career and life of this man.

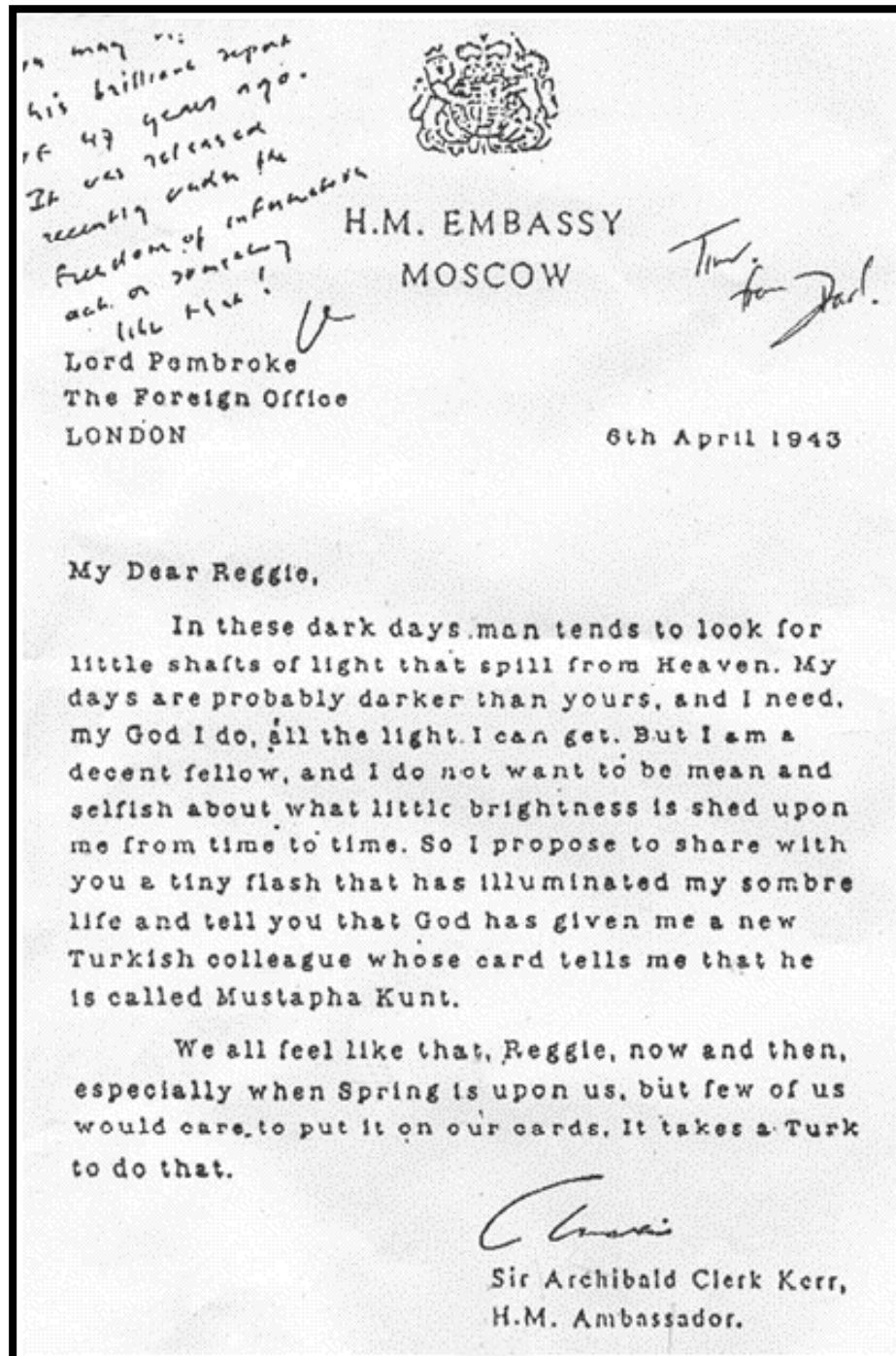
Following questions, the Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

Report: Alan Jeffs



ENDPIECE - Editor

In view of current events in Ukraine, I feel that it is worth sharing with you this letter, written under not-dissimilar circumstances from 'Our Man in Moscow' in 1943.



Apologies for the quality, but it has "been around" and been copied many times.