



PROBUS RECORDER

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES – *Roger Ellis*

You can all now relax, this is my last Chairman's thought's! Nearly a damp eye...



You all know your Chairman's emotions are easily brought to the fore, but as Max Bygraves used to say "... *let me tell you a story*".

I was on duty at Bishops Lydeard about two months ago on a Saturday and the last train had arrived with passengers going to the Car Park to drive home. The Guard told me there were faulty door windows that needed to be blocked up in two of the coaches, and could I find an appropriate screwdriver. Not a problem, so over to the Mess Room to locate the tool required.

This all took time, and what with closing the public toilets (always a pleasure), and shutting and locking gates, it was now getting on for 7pm - nearly an hour after the train had arrived. Walking back to the Mess Room to return the aforementioned screwdriver and set the alarm for the station I met one of the volunteer maintenance men, a Mike Collins. I knew Mike but did not expect him to still be there and enquired politely why. He explained that he saw my car still in the staff Car Park later than it should have been and wanted to make sure I was alright and not lying unconscious somewhere.

I don't know if I would have thought of doing that, but I like to think I would. It is part of the railway culture in that you look after one another, and I am sure other industries are the same.

On a similar subject

If Mike Collins lived near Gillingham, I would have tried to persuade him to become our Welfare Officer as we need someone like him to check up on our members from time to time to enquire as to their wellbeing - both physical and mental. The pandemic and the restrictions it has imposed have had an unfortunate effect on some members - and we need to keep in contact with them and their families. Please have a think

Keep well.



REPORTS ON OUR APRIL TALKS

‘Citizens Advice – Central Dorset’

Daniel Cadisch – 5th April

Mr Cadisch, the Chief Officer of Citizens Advice (“CA”) for Central Dorset provided the twenty-one members present with a description of the overall aims & objectives of CA, outlining the activities of this valuable service in relation to the local Central Dorset community.

The Central Dorset branch is based in Gillingham, with between 30 to 35 volunteers providing help and advice, supported by 5 to 8 paid staff. It covers an area in the north and east of the county including Blandford and Sturminster Newton. Most of their funding comes from local government in the form of grants. These are supplemented by donations from the general public. Recently, a 3-year contract was agreed between Dorset Council and CA, giving them greater core financial stability.

Mr Cadisch’s presentation described the national CA Bureau from its beginnings at the start of WWII under the aegis of the National Council of Social Services (the forerunner of today’s National Council for Voluntary Organisations). At that time, it was established by the government as a charity for disseminating information on social welfare to the public, and this was achieved through the use of mobile vans, a mode of communication that is still used in many parts of the country today.



The original CA Van - c. 1939



A typical modern CA van

The scope of CA has expanded greatly over the past 82 years. Nowadays, the [Citizens Advice](#) organisation, amongst its many functions, assists with consumer rights, supporting witnesses in courts through the Witness Service, and now giving pension guidance to people aged over 50, when in 2015 it took on the face-to-face government service for [Pension Wise](#).

Mr Cadisch then presented a pie chart outlining the multitude of cases that CA deals with, over 40% of which are related to claiming Benefits. In 2020/21, the CA service in the Dorset Council area reported helping 14,974 clients deal with 50,314 issues, enabling clients to achieve £7.44 million in financial gains, including the rightful claim of benefits and the write-offs of debt. Clients typically have a variety of related difficulties and knock-on effects – such as redundancy, unfair dismissal, rent arrears, debt and divorce.

[North Dorset CA](#) has its headquarters at The Courtyard in Newbury Court, Gillingham (opposite

the Lidl car park entrance). Mr Cadisch explained the close cooperation that North Dorset CA maintains with the Gillingham Food Bank, and Macmillan Cancer Care who lack direct representation in the area, and other smaller local charitable organisations.



Gillingham Food Bank



The **Dorset Macmillan Citizens Advice Service** is funded by Macmillan Cancer Support to provide advice to people with cancer, and to support their families and carers. Mr Cadisch also mentioned that he and his team work closely with 5 hospitals and hospices and take referrals directly from them.

A large part of the presentation was given to describing the role that CA played during Covid – particularly by helping clients with the intricacies of applying for Universal Credit and using the furlough scheme. Mr Cadisch and his colleagues evidently adapted ably to the new environment and reported a surplus of £64,000 for 2020/21, compared to an adjusted figure of £45,000 in 2019-20. Total income was £1.04m derived from its range of funding sources. Dorset Council provided 32% of the total. Expenditure for 2020/21 was £980,000 of which payroll accounted for 76%.

Whilst the pandemic caused unprecedented challenges for the CA service, Mr Cadisch had been pleased with the rapid response of volunteers locally, who necessarily had to work from home and, by virtue of a grant, were each provided with laptops to continue their work. A phone service, webchat and digital advice online had already been developed before Covid, and so CA was able to continue to support people throughout when it became unsafe to do so face-to-face. Mr Cadisch that there had now been a cautious but necessary return to in-person meetings given that many clients do not have ready access to the internet or telephone.

In addition to providing advice to clients, it was explained that, while the CA is independent and impartial, it does seek to influence policy makers nationally and regionally, offering them guidance on how to provide funding and implement procedures more efficiently and effectively. Notable examples included the presentation of evidence to the government on problems with the *Universal Credit* rollout and raising the issue of loyal long-term customers paying too much for utilities like broadband, and the *'loyalty penalty'* that it raised. This latter example was pertinent to Mr Cadisch's final slide on the cost-of-living crisis, whereby following straight on from the problems linked to Covid, rising inflation and the associated burgeoning bills have already placed many people in difficulty and caused them to seek advice from CA.

Naturally, the CA team work closely with Dorset Council, and the latter - together with The Dorset Community Foundation and the CA - launched an appeal earlier this year asking people to donate any winter fuel payments they did not need to help others afford heating without scrimping on food. Thanks to generous donations from residents, over £75K was raised, and these funds have now been allocated to CA for distribution through "*Surviving Winter*" grants to those households suffering fuel poverty.

In conclusion, CA provides a range of services, not exclusively for the financially hard-up, but in many other areas such as legal, pensions and health advice, and through this has clearly succeeded in maintaining its valuable assistance with dedication and determination during the past extraordinary time of Covid.

Following a Q and A session, the Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

Report: Kenneth Wilson

‘Midnight Heroes’ – The story of the musicians who played to the end on the Titanic

David Kaplan – 19 April

Introduction.

Our guest speaker David Kaplan is an American, born and raised in Washington DC. He has had a lifelong interest in the RMS Titanic disaster. The ship was a British passenger liner, operated by the White Star Line, which sank in the North Atlantic Ocean on 15 April 1912 after striking an iceberg during her maiden voyage from Southampton, UK, to New York City.

After a career in education, David has given presentations to many groups and organisations, and latterly, on cruise ships Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary. He is a member of several Titanic societies.

Presentation.

The presentation was given as a series of PowerPoint slides that were accompanied by words from David Kaplan to flesh out and explain the images; it was based on a specific aspect of the Titanic’s sinking – namely the eight musicians who played music as long as they possibly could while the ship was sinking, in an attempt to calm and pacify the passengers.



All perished, and their action was recognised by the public, with memorials erected as far away as Australia. The final tune they played as the lifeboats got away and the ship went down was the hymn ‘*Nearer my God to Thee*’.

The ship’s eight musicians, known as the Titanic’s ‘Orchestra’, had boarded at Southampton and

travelled as second-class passengers. They had been contracted to White Star by the musicians' agency firm of C.W. & F.N. Black, in Liverpool, and were members of the Amalgamated British Musicians Union.

Until the final performance they performed as two separate groups - a quintet, and a trio made up of a violin, cello, and piano. Their rate of pay was the princely sum of £4 a month!

Background notes were given for each member of the orchestra:

- **John Westley Woodward.**
Aged 32. Born in West Bromwich. Cellist.
- **John Frederick Preston Clarke.**
Aged 28. From Liverpool. Bassist.
- **William Theodore Ronald Brailey.**
Aged 24. From London. Pianist;
served previously on *RMS Carpathia*.
- **John Law Hume.**
Aged 21. From Dumfries. Violinist.
Had previously played on other ships,
including Titanic's sister ship *RMS Olympic*.
- **Roger Marie Bricoux.**
Aged 20. Born in France but moved to
Monte Carlo as a young boy. Cellist.
Declared a 'Deserter' by the French Army in
1913 and not officially registered as 'dead'
until 2000. Previously served with William
Brailey on the *RMS Carpathia*.
- **Georges Alexandre Krims.**
Aged 23. From Belgium. First Violinist.
Played for two years at the Ritz Hotel until
March 1912.
- **Wallace Henry Hartley.**
Aged 23. From Colne, Lancashire. Violinist.
Played in Yorkshire orchestras before
service on liners *RMS Lucania*, *RMS Lusitania* and *RMS Mauretania*.
- **Percy Cornelius Taylor.**
Aged 40. From London. Cellist.



This was just one of a number of David Kaplan's presentations (including one on the sinking of the *Lusitania*, that he presented to Gillingham Local History Society later that day).

Following questions, the Chairman gave the vote of thanks.

Report: Alan Jeffs



ENDPIECE - Editor

What makes 100%?

From a strictly mathematical viewpoint it goes like this:

- *What makes 100%?*
- *What does it mean to give **MORE than 100%**?*
- *Ever wonder about those people who say they are giving more than 100%?*
- *We have all been to those meetings where someone wants you to give over 100%.*
- *How about achieving 103%? What makes up 100% in life?*

Here's a little mathematical formula that might help you answer these questions:

If:	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
is represented as:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Then:

H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K
 $8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11 = 98\%$

and:

K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E
 $11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5 = 96\%$

but:

A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E
 $1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5 = 100\%$

and:

B-U-L-L-S-H-I-T
 $2+21+12+12+19+8+9+20 = 103\%$

and:

look how far ass-kissing will take you!!
A-S-S-K-I-S-S-I-N-G
 $1+19+19+11+9+19+19+9+14+7 = 118\%$

So, one can conclude with mathematical certainty that while **Hard Work** and **Knowledge** will get you close, and **Attitude** will get you there, it's the **Bullshit** and **Ass-kissing** that will put you over the top.