



THE PROBUS CLUB OF CHRISTCHURCH (FOUNDED 1977)

NEWSLETTER June 2021

President's Jottings



Hi everyone,

It is with a degree of optimism that I type these jottings for our June Newsletter. Our first Club meeting at the Christchurch Harbour Hotel since the AGM in March 2020 (can you believe it has been that

long?) is scheduled for Tuesday 6th July, subject to any late changes in the Government's "Roadmap out of Lockdown".

Our first social events of my year in office, Coffee & Cake at the Cliffhanger Cafe on 26th and 27th May, were well attended. It was great to see and talk to everyone and, judging from the positive comments, was enjoyed by all. Thanks go to Social Secretaries Richard and Keith for organising and to the Cliffhanger staff who looked after us.

Your Committee has been meeting regularly via Zoom and managed to fill the 40-minute time slots with Club business on every occasion. Our Social Secretaries have many social events planned for the future, and every member of the Committee has been working hard on their particular portfolio to ensure a smooth return to Club meetings.

I hope you and your families are well and have coped with the various restrictions placed on us over the past few months. I have heard many stories from friends who have used lockdown to take up new pastimes, e.g. running, cycling, DIY, learning to play a musical instrument, using social media and even paddle boarding! It would be interesting to know if any of you have taken up a new pastime – could be an article for the next Newsletter!

"Enjoy Your Probus"

Best Wishes,

Keith Puttick President

A message from our Programme Secretary

With things looking so much better, let's hope that we do not have a resurgence of the virus. In the hope that we are going to be closer to normal for our July meeting, here is the programme of speakers for the rest of the year:

6th July: 'Confessions of a Miss Spent Youth'
Richard Porter

3rd August: 'Computer Scams'
Ian Shulz

7th September: 'Life on a Submarine during WW1'
Chris Minns

5th October: 'Lawrence before and after Arabia'
Colin Van-Geffin

2nd November: 'Lesser Known Bournemouth'
Steve Roberts

7th December: 'Literary Paris'
Brian Freeland

Let's hope this gets us off to a good start.
Richard Porter and Robin Haggett



Wherever I hang my hat...

Back in October, Frank House wondered whether any member had lived in more different places than he had (11 including South Africa and Canada).



This prompted Geoff Wilson to bid for the position of Number One Nomad:

“I think I can "top" Frank House's foreign stays - if not the U.K. ones - which I suppose is not surprising considering my career as a travel agent!

U.K.

1. Born Wallington (Then Surrey - now part of the London Borough of Sutton)
2. Hengoed, Glamorgan, South Wales (2 plus months Wartime Evacuation)
3. R.A.F Hednesford, Staffs. (National Service)
4. R.A.F. Lytham, Lancs. (National Service)
5. Borough Green, Kent
6. East Oakley (Nr. Basingstoke, Hants)
7. Okeford Fitzpaine, North Dorset
8. Christchurch

Abroad

Whilst employed by Thomas Cook, I was fortunate to be sent to each of the following offices for periods of between 3 months and one year:

Europe: Paris, Rome, Stockholm and Geneva

Beyond Europe: New York, Melbourne, Bombay (now Mumbai) and Cape Town

During my career - and subsequently on cruises, etc. - my travels have taken me to about 60 different countries, so I consider myself to have been extremely fortunate, especially significant in the present circumstances, which seem likely to severely restrict foreign travel for some considerable time and may never return to the freedom we previously took for granted.”

Meanwhile, Les Denmead presented his impressive nomadic credentials: 22 places, including 6 in 2 years on National Service! All these in just 4 counties in the south and west, and most since the age of 18.

Finally, your editor James Robertson was born into an army family, so has notched up a fair few places – 12 in 16 years! 20 in all, including Singapore and Aden. And not counting different homes within the same location. Yes, ‘Papa was a Rolling Stone...’

Probus Itchy Feet Awards go to all the above. Ed.

Robin Haggett has some news of a veteran's return to the circus

Many members will be aware that for the past ten years my son Paul has been a director of ‘Circus Wonderland’, appearing as Popol, the traditional white face clown.

Together with his comedy partner Kakehole, he has recently acquired a clown car, with a distinctive number plate URA 1, which has an interesting history, shortly celebrating 50 years in showbusiness. It has had a number of different owners from the circus world, and also Ken Dodd for a brief period, but has sadly been left to rust in the recent past, until they arranged – during lockdown – for it to be completely restored.

The car body was completely stripped from the chassis, which was sand blasted and repainted. New tyres, battery and parts were sourced, the seats reupholstered, and new mechanisms created to replace the antiquated gas compression system that powered the car's more eccentric functions. The doors fall off, the mud guards fly up, head lights shoot upwards, the rear passenger seat tips backwards, etc!



To see the car in action, Circus Wonderland is due to be appearing in Bournemouth (Redhill Park) from 21st July to the 1st August.

And finally, Paul has asked if there is room in my garage to store the car, when the season is over. It puts a whole new meaning on the phrase ‘a two car family’!

Where was I? I was in Egypt!

Many thanks to James Robertson, Roy Townshend and Geoff Wilson, who after diligent research kindly responded, mainly correctly, to my appeal.



The answers to my questions in the March newsletter are as follows:-

1. Middle East Land Forces
2. RAF Fayid
3. Egypt (Suez Canal Zone)
4. Ismailia
5. Great Bitter Lake
6. By Faith & Confidence

Suez was one of the most unpopular Army postings. The harsh climate was regarded as unhealthy, accommodation very poor and the local population extremely hostile.

In effect, as an army of occupation, all personnel were regarded as being on active service, but this was not recognised until June 2003, when following a long and sustained campaign by ex-servicemen and women, Prime Minister Tony Blair announced the award of a Suez Canal clasp to the General Service Medal. I received mine in November 2004, 49 years after demobilisation. Disappointingly, the clasp is inscribed 'Canal Zone'- no mention of Suez! Well done Mr. Blair!!

Chris Taylor



A date for your diary, not to be missed...

**Picnic at Wilverley Plain,
Burley Road, Brockenhurst SO42 7UP
Wednesday 23rd June 2021
meet from 12.00 midday**

Wilverley Plain is the ideal place to set up a couple of chairs, sit back and take in the amazing views across open heathland.

This extensive grassy lawn offers valuable grazing for ponies and the occasional deer, The heathland is also home to many important bird species. From the car park there's easy access into the adjoining woodland with a waymarked trail. There are toilets at the site.

So, please do come and join us for a 'picnic in the forest'.

Directions: From the Somerford roundabout, take the A35 towards Lyndhurst. Follow the A35 until Holmesley then turn off left, signposted 'Burley / Burley Manor Hotel / Setthorns'. At the T junction, turn right onto Burley Road, signposted 'Brockenhurst'. After approximately 2 miles, turn sharp left at the green Forestry Commission sign 'Wilverley Plain Car Park'.

Note: there are 2 other left turns signposted 'Wilverley Cottage' and 'Wilverley Scout Camp' shortly before the correct turnoff.

Enjoy Your Probus...



There's a story about a man bitten by a dog, and when he learned the dog had rabies, he began a list. The doctor said, "There's no need for you to make a will—you'll be fine." "Oh I'm not making a will," he said. "I'm making a list of all the people I want to bite."

How's this for a Sweet Tooth Tale?



Noah Ruiz, a four-year-old from New York, is a big fan of the cartoon character, SpongeBob Squarepants (for those not in the know, he lives in a pineapple under the sea). Noah is also smart enough to know how to access his mother's Amazon account... oh and he really likes ice pops too!

The impressively skilled four-year-old secretly logged onto Amazon and purchased 51 cases of SpongeBob ice lollies - 918 in total – to be delivered to his auntie's house. The total bill ended up at an enormous \$2,618.85 (£1,872).

When the huge boxes of icy treats arrived, Noah's mother, Jennifer Bryant, contacted Amazon who advised that they weren't able to accept a return or refund the payment. The social work student and mother of three was worried about the financial impact of Noah's impulse spending, but thankfully, the saga has a happy ending.

A fundraiser set up to help Ms Bryant pay for the ice lollies has raised more than \$14,000 (£10,000), with contributions flowing in from across the US. Noah's family say that once the bill has been paid, all remaining funds will go towards his education. Noah is on the autism spectrum so needs additional support and Jennifer is really grateful for the help they have received. She wrote on the GoFundMe page: "Thank you SO much for your mind-blowing generosity and support."



Chuckle Time

Coronavirus – warning about vaccine

This happened recently and is an important lesson for our friends and family in the older age group. A friend had his second dose of vaccine at the vaccination centre. Shortly afterwards he began to have blurred vision and struggled to get home. He rang the vaccination centre and asked if he should go straight to the hospital for help. He was told NOT to go to the hospital, but instead to return at once to the vaccination centre and pick up his glasses...

“I’m insulted!” Quotable Quotes

"He had delusions of adequacy." - Walter Kerr

"He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary." William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)

George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill: *"I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend, if you have one"*

Winston Churchill, in response: *"Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second . . . if there is one."*

"I've had a perfectly wonderful evening. But I'm afraid this wasn't it." Groucho Marx

"He has Van Gogh's ear for music." Billy Wilder

"His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork." Mae West

The Bathtub Test

During a visit to my doctor, I asked him, "How do you determine whether or not an older person should be put in an old age home?"

"Well," he said, "we fill up a bathtub, then we offer a teaspoon, a teacup and a bucket to the person and ask them to empty the bathtub."

...
"Oh, I understand," I said. "A normal person would use the bucket because it is bigger than the spoon or the teacup."

"No" he said "A normal person would pull the plug. Do you want a bed near the window?"

ARE YOU GOING TO PASS THIS ON ... OR DO YOU WANT THE BED NEXT TO MINE?

Tim Vine one-liner

I was going to write my will today but then I thought, life's too short.

Alexa's favourite joke:

Why do pirates sing?

They like to hit the high seas!

Thank you to all contributors to this edition (except Alexa). Ed.