



The Probus Club of Locks Heath

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Welcome

Our club (official title "Probus Club of Locks Heath") was formed in 1981 and has developed over the years. We now have a membership of fifty which is the maximum we can accommodate at our venue. As such, we do have a short waiting list, but encourage those on it to attend meetings periodically when space permits!

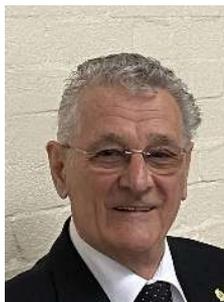
We normally meet at 12.00pm. on the first Thursday of every month at [Sarisbury Green Community Centre](#) when we have a short business meeting and a Ploughman's Lunch followed by a Speaker and finish around 2.00pm. A pay bar is available.

We arrange group holidays, recent examples include a cruise to the Norwegian Fjords from Southampton with Fred Olsen Cruises, a visit to Lake Como in Italy and two river cruises in Europe, one travelling part way by Eurostar, as well as a cruise around Britain.

We organise outings, for example a visit to Greenwich and visits to the Chichester Festival Theatre as well as local events such as an annual Summer Event for members, wives and guests. A *Ladies Day* formal dinner is held in November. Photos from recent events and holidays can be seen in our [Photo Gallery](#).

This month's Newsletter features articles from the new sections of our website [Memories](#), [Our Members](#) and [Blast from the Past](#). Our trial online Newsletters for [March](#) and [April](#) are also now available online. For easier navigation you can also [link directly to all sections of our web site from here](#)

A MESSAGE FROM Probus Club of Locks Heath's PRESIDENT



Dear All

We are now in the fourth week of our mandatory shut down and it would appear many more to come. I hope you are well and managing to cope with the various problems the situation creates.

I have spoken to most, if not all members of the club, over the past week and all seem to be managing, some better than others. If you know of any particular Probuss members' problems please don't hesitate to contact me and I will do my best to help.

On behalf of the club I would like to take this opportunity of sending

our deepest sympathy and condolences to Sephanie and all the family at the passing of John. John was very active member of Probuss and will be sadly missed. The sad loss of John does bring home to us how vicious this disease is and how careful we all have to be in looking after ourselves.

When you become a Chairman/ President of any organisation you always have many grand ideas you hope to achieve during your year of office. I am afraid this year is going to be very strange and fragmented and a lot of my dreams will go by the wayside.

I think this was the first and only time a president has been installed by email.

However we must look forward to the future and hope we will be able to be together as soon as we get the all clear. Please look after your selves

Kind Regards

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Memories

Inside the Cabinet Office

By Derek Treagus



It was 1986, Sir John Fairclough (at that time, plain John Fairclough) had just been seconded from IBM where he had been Managing Director of the Hursley Laboratory to take the position of [Chief Scientific Adviser](#) to the UK [Conservative](#) government led by [Margaret Thatcher](#)

Being keen to ensure that he had the appropriate tools available to him and perhaps also keen to show the value of IBM equipment to Government ([IBM Hursley](#) was later to go on and win two Queen's Awards for Technology), Sir John asked for the newly announced PC/AT (manufactured at that time at the IBM Greenock site in [Spango Valley](#)) to be sent to him for use in his office.

All it needed was someone to install the required software and then install it in the Cabinet Office itself. Having run a number of IBM PC projects at universities across the UK. There was one obvious candidate..... ME!

With the IRA still active two years after the Brighton bombing, security was tight. The PC was taken from Hursley for security checking and delivered to [Downing Street](#) in an unmarked van (his office was in the [Cabinet Office](#) next door to Number 10). Once it

had been delivered I was similarly taken up to Downing Street in an unmarked car.

Whilst I don't remember the exact details of my entry into the Cabinet Office, I was taken to Sir John's office where the PC (serial number 00000003 from memory, pity it wasn't 007) was waiting to be installed. Duly setup, John (IBMs always used first names regardless of their position within the company) arrived, introduced himself and I set about explaining the machine. It didn't take long as he was well versed in and used to using new technology himself.

My final memory is of him showing me the entrance to No 10 Downing Street. Probably the closest I have ever been or ever will be to the Prime Minister and the seat of Government of the United Kingdom.

Our Members

Introducing Mike Cresswell

He's always Wellcome)



I was born and brought up in Chelmsford and went to the local Grammar School where I ended up having done A levels by the age of 17. I decided to join BP as a Student Apprentice doing a Chemistry degree on a sandwich course. I found myself in Kent based at the Kent Oil Refinery where I learned a few of life's lessons: a sentence can consist only of F and B words, you must never wake your boss from a snooze and the unions rule in a situation where the management could not afford a strike! I also spent time at Sunbury Research Centre which was very leisurely.

After I got my degree I went back to the Research Centre but soon became disillusioned and left to join Miles Laboratories an American medical diagnostics company where I was able to register for a PhD which I attained five years later. I left after seven years due to a change in research policy to join Wellcome Research Laboratories where I worked for 25 years. I then moved again when the diagnostics business and many of its employees were sold onto Murex, a Canadian Venture Capitalist which was only interested in maximising profit. I took redundancy in 1998 when they sold the business to Abbott Laboratories which was only interested in buying the patents for HIV and hepatitis tests.

My last job was as the Development Manager for a Medical Diagnostics Company which produced tests used for blood screening and testing for viral and bacteriological infections. This involved scale up from a research prototype, trouble shooting on 400 existing products and producing data for registration around the world.

After retirement I served as a Trustee, Company Secretary, Branch Manager and working volunteer for an old peoples charity. This kept me busy! Since moving to Locks Heath I have been active in the Solent U3A serving as Membership Secretary for seven years and until recently leading a walking group. I am now taking life easily apart from organising lunches and occasional outings for Probus.

Blast from the Past

I REMEMBER

by Leon Simkin



I was chatting to some members the other day and I was surprised that none of them could remember their first car. I don't suppose many of you remember your first car, I do though, and it was a 1933 Wolsley Hornet 12h.p. Saloon. It had many advanced ideas that didn't work but it was a great car. One of the innovations that didn't work was a system of jacks on each wheel called the jackall"system. The theory was there right enough as it allowed any of four jacks to operate just by running the engine, but they were known to sometimes operate when driving along, so I had the system taken out.

I remember I had just passed my test and was heading off to work when I went down a steep hill. To my horror at the bottom was a policeman standing in the middle of the road holding up his hand. What he didn't know was that the Wolsley had rod operated brakes. I knew that the brakes were definitely dodgy because the local garage had tried to make the rod system work better, but they finally told me that the brakes were as good as they could ever be.

The copper stood his ground as the car slowly lost speed and I literally stopped about one foot from him. He walked slowly to the side window and to my amazement said, "I know what you have just done". I waited in horror expecting to be told to get out of the car and receive a Summons or something nasty. "Listen lad, after you have driven through a puddle you must apply your brakes for a bit to dry them out. Now remember that piece of advice and take it easy for a bit, next time you could do someone damage".

I gently drove off on my way to work and thanked my lucky stars that he didn't ask me to do anything at all. I often wondered why he was standing in the middle of the road but I never did see him again.

Article first published in *Locks Heath Probus Newsletter Volume 2, Number 8 in June 2011*

Sad News

We have been saddened to hear over the last month of the passing of two Probus Club of Locks Heath members, John Campbell and Mike Oxenham. Further details can be found in the Latest News section of our website.

Our condolences and best wishes go to both their families at this sad time

If you have any comments on this Newsletter, please contact probuslocksheath@gmail.com