



The Probus Club of Locks Heath

Volume 4: June 2020 "Keep your Distance!"

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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 our 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

SECRETARY



The Committee trusts you and your family are all keeping safe and well and looking forward to having opportunities to meet others outside your own household. It would be really useful if you could drop us a line to to say how you are coping during the lockdown:-

For instance, did you receive an NHS "Shielding" letter and suggesting you isolate (or hibernate!!) for 12 weeks ? And, if so, receive a food parcel? Are you using Facebook, WhatsApp, Zoom etc., to keep in touch with family and friends (did you know we have created a Facebook page for the club?) or just phone and emails?

What are you most looking forward to:-
meeting up with friends and family?

holiday or get to holiday home - in England or overseas ?
meeting up with other Society or Club members? Going out on your Boat, Yacht, Caravan or Plane? Anything else ?

It would help if you can let us have an indication of your age or year of birth for our (anonymous) survey? We will share (to those who respond) these anonymous survey results of any responses to the above.

PLEASE TRY the NEW Probus Site links Webpage [>LINK<](#) and let us know what you think. Even better, if you have a good stories to tell, send it to us. **VE or VJ Day 1945 memories would be terrific to put into our Website news.** Either contact a member of the committee or send them directly to probuslocksheath@gmail.com

Yours sincerely

Probus Club of Locks Heath Committee.

Memories

A Choirboy at Heart

By Tim Mitchell



I was conceived in peace but born in war, in October 1939. I often reflect on how difficult that must have been for my parents, especially as my father took a commission in the Royal Marines the day war was declared.

We lived in Oxford, where my father had been a librarian at the [Bodlean](#) and my mother secretary to the Editor of the Oxford Times. Towards the end of the war we went to live in a farmhouse in west Wales where my father was adjutant to the marine training camp for the invasion.

Thus I went to a tiny Welsh primary school where I learnt a little of the language. While on the farm I learnt [how to milk a cow](#) and whistle through my fingers for sheep dogs. And I opened my first Post Office Savings Account, [Llwyngwriil](#) 26.

Then back to Oxford, where my father collected his MA and trained for the clergy. I was sent to Greycoats School, Oxford. It was a girl's school, Preparatory for boys. I was a regular customer of [Blackwells](#) and learnt to love books.

Father was duly ordained and we were sent to the Medway towns, where he became a curate in Rainham then vicar of Borstal (the village not the institution). I went to Kings School but soon won a scholarship to [Westminster Abbey Choir School](#). That meant boarding next to the Abbey, in Deans Yard. We rose early each day,

had to run round Deans Yard then have a cold shower before breakfast followed by an hour's choir practice. We sang ten or eleven services a week in the beautiful historic Abbey, with the sound of our voices and the organ echoing through it.

Special memories include Bach's [St Matthew's Passion](#) with an orchestra; roller skating on the flat roof of our five storey school; being first to grab each week's copy of the [Eagle](#), the only comic allowed; carrying our books in our hymnals as we processed for Sunday evensong with a visiting preacher; playing cricket each week in the grounds of Lambeth Palace; singing at the opening of the Festival Hall, with Royal family and members of the Government.

With a year to go before I was due to go to public school, my voice broke so I had a magical year at a small boarding preparatory school in Dorset. Such memories, tree climbing, bird nesting, building camps in the thousands of acres open to us. The headmaster, a retired [Indian Army](#) Colonel, going out before breakfast with his 12 bore to bag a couple of pigeons. I and another boy being paid to collect the school milk in a churn before breakfast each day, dragging it back through the fields from the farm on a trolley.

Lying in bed on Summer evenings listening to the rooks in the beech trees, the sun always shining on our cricket field. Such Memories!

Our Members

Introducing Vic Croft

(Yes, we know you know him already)



Born in 1930, I went to a [secondary modern school](#) learning the violin and playing in the school orchestra. We were the top school orchestra and won all the Musical Festivals in the UK at the time. I left school at fourteen and found a job quickly at [Enfield Rolling Mills](#) as a post boy. As soon as my father knew, he was annoyed and said that I must be a civil servant, so I agreed to be an engineer.

I started in the [General Post Office \(GPO\)](#) as a telegraph boy until I reached the appropriate age to join the GPO engineers. The eldest telegraph boy joined the Navy providing me, as I was the eldest junior, the opportunity to progress at which point I was given a motor cycle.

At fifteen I was the youngest person to get an official licence under the [Ministry of War Transport](#). Called up for National Service, I joined the RAF, and trained to be a wireless operator. I was put on a new secret Ground Control System from the USA and left to go into a factory in Enfield Middlesex servicing aircraft instruments. When I left, I joined a London company doing the same thing in Wardour Street later joining [De Havilland](#) servicing instruments at Hatfield, starting an equipment evaluation scheme about a month before Which was launched.

Shortly after I met my wife Enid, who had just returned from Chile following a broken marriage. We were both in [Hertford Cine Club](#) and I sent off a film to the [Edinburgh Film Festival](#) winning a 'Commended' badge, only to find out that my wife had won outdone me being 'Highly Commended' – I had definitely met my match!

My boss at De Havilland had left to join Plessey in Titchfield and when sailing in Portsmouth he invited me to look around [Plessey](#). A couple of months later I was offered a job with them (now British Aerospace) to set the up the same system. We moved [Warsash](#) shortly after.

I started in Fareham and later (as all the instruments were made in China) moved into Test Chamber calibration. Some years later I was asked to join a Portsmouth company at Plessey's request, but unfortunately they they went bankrupt. However, having earned my spurs and developed a personal reputation, I was deluged with people to start a [Test Chamber company](#) which I did very successfully serving people like Nokia, Ford, and Rolls Royce etc.

I retired in 2012, joined Probus shortly after and I'm still here!

Blast from the Past

I REMEMBER

By Maggs & Chris Collier



We enjoyed a most entertaining evening at the Chichester Festival Theatre on Monday 16th July, watching, with other Probus members, the musical, 'Kiss me, Kate'. This production, directed by [Sir Trevor Nunn](#) was a musical adaptation by Cole Porter of Shakespeare's "[Taming of the Shrew](#)".

This is a fictional American musical within a play – with cast members playing dual roles to portray the different versions – amusing, talented and choreographed so well. Statuesque leading lady, [Hannah Waddingham](#), played Lilly and Kate – "The Shrew" (I Hate Men!!!) and dashing leading man, [Alex Bourne](#) played Fred and Petruchio, "The Shrew Tamer". Lots of wit and superb voices.

Magical scenery changes appeared using voile drawn up from a chest to create trees, tents and arches whilst the audience was distracted by players dancing, in stunning costumes.

The almost lovable gangsters, together with the well known Hollywood songs of the 1940's – 'Another Op'nin, Another Show', 'So In Love' just added to the enjoyment of the evening. We laughed to hear another members comment – "They don't make songs like that any more!!"

Whilst sitting here writing these notes ten days after the event, it reminded us of another song from the show – [It's too darned hot](#) "

OTHER HITS – "We open in Venice", "Another opening another show" and "Brush up your Shakespeare"
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Editor's Note: Clearly an extremely memorable evening. And for those who want to relive the evening, you can see the [full lyrics](#) of the songs and a complete rendition of the musical at the [Royal Albert Hall](#) using the links in this paragraph.

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