



# 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 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 WEBMASTER



Good morning, afternoon or evening everyone. I trust that we are well and able to make use of the newly planned restrictions in our period of Lockdown.

Whilst our lives will remain disrupted and we will not be able to resume regular Probus meetings for some while, I hope that you are both finding the website interesting and enjoying some of the old and new articles that have been featured. In particular you should take a look at the following new sections if you have not already done so: [Blast from the Past](#), [Memories](#) and [Our Members](#)

As well as creating new sections such as those linked above, we continue to keep the website updated on a regular basis and for those who prefer a regular "printed" Newsletter are currently producing an [online monthly Newsletters](#) which can be viewed

online (in which case you will be able to follow any links of interest directly from the page) and simply printed onto two sheets of A4 and read at your leisure.

I am greatly indebted to [Vic Croft](#) and all others who have provided material for the website, we can never have too much so, ..... PLEASE send any item that you think may be of interest to fellow members directly to [probuslocksheath@gmail.com](mailto:probuslocksheath@gmail.com)

## Memories

### A Rude Awakening

By Tim Mitchell



I had been destined for public school but while at the Abbey I arrived back late one term after a bad cold to find I had to sit a test. I'd no idea what it was or why, I'd never seen anything like it but thought it rather fun. Anyway a few weeks later I was told I had passed my 11+ with flying colours. So what? I was going to public school. But a [clergyman's stipend](#) was meagre and our local grammar school, [Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School](#) had a good academic record. So it was that instead of going to Kings School I went to the Maths school in Rochester, which was also the catchment for Chatham, where the dockyards were.

And it was tough. There was a strong work ethic, rigid discipline and emphasis on results. Everyone else had been studying the curriculum for two years so I was way behind and in some areas never caught up. And I knew no one. There were 600 boys at my first assembly and the noise was an overwhelming waterfall. I had an extreme [Oxford accent](#) and had to drop that fast. I was caned often and had few friends. There were some highlights, like our English teacher who instilled a lifelong enjoyment of [Jane Austen](#) and [Shakespeare](#). (I still remember a trip to the Old Vic some 65 years ago to see Richard II with John Neville and Virginia McKenna.)

I struggled through to "O" Levels, then joined the 6th form which proved more amenable as most of the rougher elements had dropped out. Some of the teachers were very good and took more interest for A level. We got a new headmaster who was truly inspiring. I played cricket and rugby but not very well. However I played tennis for the school and swam at the local baths every day as well as learning to ride. The school drama group was impressive and I particularly remember the [Mikado](#) and [Treasure Island](#). Meanwhile my father had been moved to become vicar of Meopham and rural dean of Cobham. It was a huge improvement for me and my two younger brothers, with lots of delightful people and lovely countryside and at last I met some girls!

Then I got my A level results and was accepted by [Reading](#)

[University](#) although I was only 17. My course was Psychology and Economics, but after a year I dropped Psychology because it was so theoretical. I greatly enjoyed my time there and matured a lot. As well as meeting plenty of interesting people, I played chess and bridge for the University. I also discovered [jazz](#) and sailing, which has lasted me a lifetime. I duly graduated with a 2.1 (and remembered one of my old school reports (surely he'd do better if he did any work at all".) One of the most important things I learnt was it was time I stopped drifting and started working with perseverance.

But I wanted a break before entering a new career. Through my parent's connections I managed to take a "job as a supernumerary" on a tramp ship, using the owner's cabin and with my own steward! We went to [Casablanca](#) and back and I enjoyed playing cards with the crew, drinking the duty free beer and smoking the duty free cigarettes and dining with the officers. Then after a six week holiday in Paris I took a job in the City, with a [Lloyd's broker](#). They paid me a pittance but promised that if I worked hard they would pay me well. And I did and they did. After my my first year! I never had cause to complain. But that's another story.

## Our Members

Introducing Jim Dodd

(He's got a bee in his bonnet)



Jim told us that he has lived in this part of the world for some forty years and was born in Slough in 1946. He joined the [army as a surveyor](#) and went to Germany and the Middle East while in service.

He joined IBM and came to the South Coast first to Park Gate and then later to Warsash and finally to Sarisbury. He has lived there for some thirty odd years.

When IBM was restructuring under new CEO [Lou Gerstner](#) he worked in Northern Spain for a while before joining a company called [Electronic Data Systems \(EDS\)](#)

At EDS he worked in the IT business specifically on [Inland Revenue](#) accounts although clearly he has nothing more to do with that now (so you are all safe) From being a Project Manager he moved into quality and for ten years or so was an [International Standards Organisation](#) (ISO) consultant working as an ISO auditor but to an American Standard.

He took a retirement package and left IBM at the age of forty eight eventual retiring fully at the age of 63. Since then he has been heavily involved in a number of local activities and is a keen gardener with his wife Rita maintaining their large plot which includes two [bee hives](#) at home as well as others situated elsewhere where. Anyone for honey?

## Blast from the Past

### SEAGULLS OVER WARSASH

By Vic Croft



Our house looks over the [Strawberry Field](#) in Warsash and we have lived there for many year's. One thing that has always been a bit of a puzzle to me concerns seagulls. Every morning at dawn [seagulls](#) begin to arrive from every direction. Small groups circle the field as they arrive, and after circling they eventually make a landing.

This can often take about three quarters of an hour as the birds [flock from all directions](#). The weather seems to have little effect as it happens every day come rain or shine (and even snow!). Once landed the seagulls collect together and mill about for a short while before taking off as a group.

They fly around the field to another spot, usually flying about twenty feet or so above the field. Sometime they rise to rooftop height, but generally it's much lower. When they land at this new spot in the Strawberry Field they walk about silently, but still stay in a group.

Occasionally they are disturbed by an early [dog walker](#) or someone out early, but when that happens they either take off and select another spot further away, or fly around a bit until the intruders have moved away.

When they land the group generally stay close together and it's only the odd one or two that fly or hop over to a particular seagull. This [landing and flying around](#) can last for an hour, and sometimes even longer. Finally a section of the group will take off from the main section and fly off towards a distant destination. It looks like the seagulls are heading back in the direction they came from originally.

Then a few minutes later another group leave the main section and head off in a different direction. This goes on until the last group leave the field and there are no seagulls left.

I went to a talk a couple of years ago about [Solent Bird Sanctuaries](#) and afterwards asked the lecturers' about this strange observation that has been going on for years. I was told that they "[were just feeding like they do on rubbish tips](#)". When I pointed out that they were definitely not feeding and seemed to be socialising, but were just standing next to each other, they just didn't believe me!

*Article first published in Locks Heath Probus Newsletter, Issue 28 February 2013*

**Editors Note:** [Gull island](#) Hampshire is a small uninhabited island at the mouth of the [Beaulieu River](#) in [The Solent](#) The island is an area of raised ground approximately 1000 metres long and up to around 180 metres wide amid the tidal sands to the east of Needs Ore Point, and separates the river from the sea for its final stretch before entering The Solent. It forms part of the civil parish of [Beaulieu](#)

If you have any comments on this Newsletter, please contact [probuslocksheath@gmail.com](mailto:probuslocksheath@gmail.com)