



# The Probus Club of Locks Heath

Volume 6: August 2020 "Feedback Time"

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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 Newsletters for [March](#), [April](#), [May](#), [June](#), and [July](#) 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 OUR PRESIDENT



We are now well over four months into lock down and what a long time it has been. My wife has had a letter from the government informing her she should remain shielded until the end of July. I would presume many of our members have received the same letter.

I have contacted all the members of the club over this period. I am pleased to say all our coping quite well. Most are being helped by family and friends, and some are more adventurous doing their own shopping. I think the biggest problem is the complete frustration at not being able to do the things we normally take for granted.

One or two of our members have had problems Ron and Eileen Harrop say they have had the dreaded Covid 19 but managed to cope with it at home. Ian McDonalds' Wife, Gwynfa, has fallen and broken her pelvis. I have since spoken to her and she is now walking with a frame and making good progress. I personally had a problem, a chest infection, I collapsed in the garden and ended up in hospital and told I had Covid 19 only to be told three days later the test was negative.

With regard to the future, it is very difficult to see any light at the end of the tunnel. Because of our age and vulnerability I really can't see a time when we are likely to be able to meet again in the next few months. Even if a vaccine was found today it would be many months before we would all be vaccinated. I feel so very sorry this has happened during my year of office as your President. I had many ideas for the rest of the year which unfortunately will now go by the wayside. I am even concerned about our ladies night in November.

The situation we have at the moment is something we have never witnessed before and hopefully will never see again.

Please contact me if you need any help in any way. I might not be able to help but I'm sure I know a man who can!

Take care and look after yourselves and family

Kind Regards, Lionel

## Memories

### My Awakening to (and in) the Middle East

by James Fox



Two years out of University with two years design experience and itching to get my on-site experience. It was mid 70s and my employer a British Consulting Engineering practice had plenty of work overseas and was constantly looking for young engineers to fill posts on all its construction projects. So a simple application and I was whisking my way off to the Middle East. In fact [Doha, Qatar](#).

I was newly married and it was a married appointment, which was great but unfortunately because it was my first appointment overseas I was advised to go out first to sort out living accommodation etc. A wise move.

So with a big kiss and a fond farewell I took my flight from [Heathrow](#) to Doha; a route which I subsequently grew to know very well. The flight left at a reasonable hour, mid afternoon; but because of the time difference and the flight time 7 1/2 hours, I did not arrive until around midnight.

There to greet me was another young engineer with a few months in Qatar under his belt. He told me that I was fortunate in that a flat had just become available so I did not need to stay in a hotel.

What hit me as I got off the plane was the [temperature](#) 28°C at midnight but more than this the humidity. We jumped in to his air-conditioned car, very swish as no such thing as that in the UK back then, and drove. To start with on a new highway but very soon in to a maze of back alleys. We finally arrived, but where, I had no idea. All that I knew was that I was tired; it was one o'clock in the morning

and I needed my bed.

We went through a metal door into a very bare hall and proceeded to climb at least 5 or 6 flight of stairs. I had no idea where I was going. We walked along a very long corridor. All surfaces bare and hard. A door appeared and was opened by my colleague. It was late and he was keen to get to his home so I was given a very brief introduction. So brief that all I was shown was my bedroom and the toilet. It was still very warm and humid and I asked if there was any [air-conditioning](#) . Yes said my colleague and showed me a box in a hole in the wall which he turned on. He then left.

So there I was in a very strange room, very late, but I had a bed. I climbed into bed and tried to go to sleep. The air conditioning unit in the hole in the wall worked quite well, it kept me cool, but it was noisy. So noisy that after a short while I could not take it any longer and had to switch it off. I tried to compensate this by opening the window wide, hoping for a cool draught. *(After a year I grew so accustomed to the noise of the air conditioning such that I had difficulty sleeping without it!)*

There I lay and finally fell asleep. I am sure you have all seen [Tom & Jerry](#) cartoons where one of the characters gets such a fright that he levitates and then crashes back to earth. Keep this in mind. I was not familiar with the Muslim religion in any way. May be this should have been part of my briefing back in Head Office.

What I had not been told or could see in the dark of the night before was the proximity of the [Mosque](#) to my block of flats and in particular the minaret with the speaker attached pointing into my bedroom window. Dawn was at about 5 a.m. and just before this time the first call to prayer was made. FRIGHT is a word that does not fully describe what I experienced. I firmly believe that I jumped whilst in a horizontal position and then fell back into bed. I was befuddled. I could not work out what was happening. I staggered to the window and could clearly see the speaker still making its plaintive call.

Needless to say I did not spend a second night in that accommodation and found out that I was the first to stay there. I do not believe that any other members of our firm did stay there. So was this a [set-up](#) ?

After a few years I grew accustomed to the [call to prayer](#) . At times on a quiet still evening in a big town it is fascinating to hear the call to prayer moving across the town from Mosque to Mosque because of course it is determined by its longitude and when the sun actually rises.

## Our Members

Introducing Derek Treagus

(He's our Webmaster)



Born in Portsmouth, I have spent most of my life living in the Solent corridor between Portsmouth and Southampton. However, as a life long [Portsmouth FC](#) supporter, I do not appreciate living in an area which has a SOUTHAMPTON postcode!

The name Treagus was primarily based in the [East Sussex](#) area in early UK censuses but has now spread far and wide across the UK and the World. The name itself is a derivative of Tregoz, the earliest mention of which is in the [Domesday Book](#) which refers to the village of [Lydiard Tregoze](#) Baron Tregoze was part of the conquering Norman force which took part in the [Battle of Hastings](#) in

1066.

The family was a noble one with many estates across the country, with its own [Coat of Arms](#) bestowed on it, but the official line died out in 15th Century. The name that remains common in West Sussex and the South of England has two vprimary ariants [Treagus and Treagust](#) and probably derives from either lesser members of the family or illegitimate offspring!

I spent a lot of time in Public Libraries and the Mormon Church in Southampton (the Mormon Church at that time had and probably still has the largest collection of [Birth and Death records](#) in the world) researching my family tree tracing and printing individual records, now it can all be done for free including sites that give a [visual view of the distribution of your surname within the UK](#) according to census and other online records.

Enough of my family history..... educated at [Southern Grammar School for Boys](#), Portsmouth (which changed to Great Salterns Comprehensive during my time there), I moved on to study [Chemistry at Bristol University](#) before joining IBM as a [junior programmer](#) in 1979 (I had worked there for the previous two summer vacations as a Summer Student and taught myself the basics of programming with the help of my colleagues).

IBM provided the opportunity to move around to a variety of different jobs, without needing to move company! My next job in Academic Programmes involved setting up and supporting projects in Universities around the UK (as well as the opportunity to travel to the [Cabinet Office](#) in London to install a brand new PC-AT for the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser) before I took up my first management role as manager of the Image and Visualisation team in the IBM United Kingdom Scientific Centre. Much of the work was leading edge with two of the projects my team were working on being featured on [BBC Television's Tomorrows World](#) including (from Memory) a 3D reconstruction of the [Dresden Frauenkirche](#) which was used as part of the fundraising for the actual reconstruction.

Moving to IBM Hursley, I first became the Development and Customer Support Manager for one of IBM's key products [CICS \(Customer Information Control System\)](#) and after that took on the same role within the [Websphere MQ \(Messaging and Queueing\)](#) team. Whilst you may not have heard of either they are integral to many banking and other commercial systems across the world and something you probably use regularly without even knowing.

My final role was as the IBM Hursley Laboratory Manager which entailed a range of responsibilities from managing the site (which includes two listed buildings and has a [very interesting history](#) ) and computer facilities based there through to managing the Hursley Customer Briefing Centre and Graduate recruitment. A very varied role and one which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Retirement has allowed more family time (my wife Elaine and I have three children two of whom live locally, our third though lives in Scotland) and we have recently acquired our third grandchild during lockdown, more travel (until the current restrictions), more more cruises, more time for walking in both the local area and further afield (in 2019 we walked the [last 115km of the Camino de Santiago](#) with fourteen fellow pilgrims) and more time to both play on my now complete range of Apple hardware from iPhone, iPad and iMac to my new MacBook. All very different for someone brought up on [IBM mainframes](#) and [IBM Personal Computers](#) ! I've also been very interested in Digital Photography since the very early days and have a collection of almost 50,000 digital photos!

And, of course, there is the website that I maintain for our local Probus Club, the [Probus Club of Locks Heath](#) , that keeps me both mentally active and up to date with technology.

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