



The Probus Club of Locks Heath

Volume 8: October 2020 "Local News"

Email: probuslocksheath@gmail.com

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](#) as well as articles on our first journey into the world of Skype! A new section containing links to [Local News](#) has just been added

Our Newsletters for [March](#), [April](#), [May](#), [June](#), [July](#) and [August](#) are also now available online.

Note that for easier navigation you can also [link directly to all sections of our web site from here](#)

Seagulls over WARSASH

By Vic Croft



Our house looks over the 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, [Strawberry Field](#)

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](#)

Scenes from a Sailor's Life – How the Captain got his dates

By Barrington Daubeny



This is a story of a voyage on the waters of Babylon more than forty years ago. In 1976/77 congestion in [Arabian Gulf ports](#) was of truly monumental proportions. It was common to have one hundred or more ships anchored in the queue outside each and every one of

these Gulf ports.

I was serving as a young Captain in a twenty year old general cargo ship bound for [Basra](#). The ship herself was typical of her type, but in motorists' terms she could be best described as 'an old banger'. On arrival off Khorr Al Amaya, outside the entrance to the river, we anchored to wait our turn. Ships were all around us – too many to be accurately counted.

To my surprise, after only a few days of waiting we were called to the pilot station in order to proceed up river. Only later did I realise that this was just a ruse to make it seem as if there was little waiting time for either Basra in Iraq or [Khorramshahr](#) in Iran. The fact was that the port authorities stuffed the river with anchored ships – not quite for the full distance of seventy miles from the sea to Basra – but just about anywhere where there was any room, and in some places where there was not.

Known as the [Shatt Al Arab](#), this waterway is formed some one hundred miles from the waters of the Gulf, by the confluence of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The banks of the waterway are very low all the way to Basra. At the mouth these banks are covered with reeds and grass, but upstream this is soon replaced by vast groves of dates. These dates grow right to the water's edge. It is a very muddy river. It is soft [alluvial mud](#) – difficult to walk on so they say, but also forgiving to ships that come to test its resilience.

After crossing the [Bar](#) we made our way upriver passing the regular columns of anchored vessels. It is tidal here and in consequence at regular intervals the anchored vessels swing. No longer neatly parallel to the banks, they lie athwart the stream waiting to take up a new heading as the changing tide strengthens.

Above [Khorramshahr](#) and below Basra, it was our turn to squeeze into an anchorage spot. Of course I might have known it would happen – after all she was an 'old banger'. Correctly angled across the flood stream we headed towards the bank, intending to bring up, swing neatly to the tide and so end up in the middle of the river pointing downstream.

[Slow Astern](#) came the order. Dingaling, went the engine telegraph: but there was no familiar cough, wheeze, thump of an engine start. "Full Astern". Still silence from below. "Let go Starboard anchor". Crash, rattle: out went the anchor.



With no diminished headway the vessel drove serenely onward, and into the river bank. [Date palms](#) bowed down over the Foc'sle head and completely hid the men of the anchor party from our view.

The [river pilot](#) was quite undismayed. "Tell them to pick some dates", he said. However, before such a practical and opportunist order could be complied with, the engine came back to life and began to shudder and shake us astern. Slowly we backed out of the mud – and away from the dates.

Three weeks we lay at that anchorage. Each time the [tide turned](#) we had to stand by the engine. As we swung – and the ubiquitous dates seemed almost close enough to be picked from the poop – a short burst of engine kept us clear. Our desire for these [succulent sticky fruits](#) remained unsatisfied. Finally came the day when it was our turn to go to a berth and discharge our cargo in Basra. A

few days later, just before we sailed, the local ship's agent presented me with a parcel.

"For you [Captain](#) A present from Iraq". Later – clear of the river and heading thankfully to the open sea – I unwrapped the gift. Inside, was a large presentation box – of dates.

Local News

There are a number of local news sites which (with some duplication) provide latest news for local areas.

You can access them here:

- [Sarisbury](#)
- [Locks Heath](#)
- [Fareham](#)
- [Park Gate](#)
- [Warsash](#)

A key item at the moment is the implementation of Car Parking charges in areas which have traditionally been free parking. You can find more on that in [the following article](#) written by Probus Locks Heath member Mike Ford.



A plea for help

We are trying to keep the website updated with information of interest added when available.

We have requested that all members keep the committee informed of their own wellbeing and how they are coping with current situation, how about sharing some of that with the Group? We have been aiming to produce a monthly online Newsletter throughout the situation. **But we are running out of input!**

Anecdotal stories of past adventures either personal or via a Club activity can be shared too. Everyone can contribute! (*not having time is not now an excuse*).

Hand writing, email, and other forms of communication are acceptable.

See our new sections [Memories](#) and [Our Members](#). Let your's be the next article added to these or other sections. All contributions will be gratefully received.

Please send your input to probuslocksheath@gmail.com