



“ proBITS ”

an occasional publication
from the

PROBUS CLUB
HORLEY & DISTRICT

issue 12
9th March 2020

INTRODUCTION

This epistle is seeing the light of day in response to the Covid-19, or Corona Virus, being the cause to postpone our lunch meetings until further notice.

The Probus Club Horley & District's Committee wants to stay in touch with the Members and the Members to stay in touch with each other.

It is very important, in the situation we find ourselves in, to be "connected"

Complete isolation from our friends/family is a dangerous thing.

The majority of our Members have access to email - only 4 don't - and those without will receive "proBITS" in printed form. Hopefully, they'll submit their words of wisdom in a more traditional manner, like delivery by hand, snailmail or even pigeonpost ! Contributors also receive a print.

The "proBITS" newsletter can only exist successfully with the cooperation of all Members concerned, that must be obvious to everybody.

I plead therefore with all Members to make a contribution, however small.

The email address for "proBITS" contributions is :
jpd.l.probus@icloud.com

As a guideline : maximum about 850 words for a 2 page spread.

If pics submitted, deduct 30 words per pic.

Text in plain A4 Word document/email.

Pics sent *separately*, in JPG or JPEG format,
NOT embedded in your document.

Please note : your copy may be edited !

If you submit early enough you'll receive a proof print.

Please email or mail your contribution for the 13th issue, to be received *before* Tuesday the 6th of April. Each edition will land in your mailbox on the second Tuesday of the month, the same day we would normally have lunch. Many organisations have a newsletter of some sort. Virtually all of them struggle to get pages filled. I really hope that the ProBus Club of Horley & District, with all its Members having (had) interesting professional lives and interests, will prove to be an exception to the rule.

And no, you can't use the excuse that you don't have the time

There's no need to wait 'till next month - you can submit NOW !

A Senior's Version of Facebook.

(also known as FakeBook - ed.)

For those of my generation who do not, and cannot, comprehend why Facebook exists : I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles. Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom. I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch, and doing what anybody and everybody does every day. I also listen to their conversations, give them "thumbs up" and tell them I "like" them. And it works, just like Facebook ! I already have 4 people following me : 2 police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist.

contributed by John Alsop

BRAIN TEASER - what does the symbol/letter/figure stand for ?

1. T holly & T I
2. T luck O T I
3. To add I 2 I
4. T tip O T I
5. No R @ T I
6. T I man

Practical Tip :

If you want to blow your nose and also polish the lenses of your glasses, it is best if you don't do it in that order.

Interesting facts ?

"Facts are stupid things" according to Ronald Reagan during his speech at the Republican National Convention in 1988.

Are you 75 or over ? Unless you've always been a veggie, you will have eaten slightly more than 8 whole cows during your life.

In Feb 2008, "The Register" did an interesting survey. They asked if people were prepared to refrain from having sex for 6 months, in return for a super 50" flatscreen TV. A surprising 47% of men said yes. For women the TV wasn't that important, only 35% said they would. Football was much more important to a lot of men - just 17% said they would stop watching in return for a new set.

A Best Kept Secret.

As many of you know, I am usually up for a challenge. But when Harry and Helen Bentley asked me, along with David Sharratt, to go on a men's taster day to sing with the Rock Choir, I agreed with some trepidation, as I don't have the best voice. Some of you may remember Harry and Helen. He was an active member, who was a committee member and also looked after the audio equipment. Unfortunately, they have now both passed away. For those not familiar with the Rock Choir, it is described as being the United Kingdom's original, and the world's largest, contemporary choir. It holds three Guinness World Records – 'biggest hit act in the UK', 'largest musical act to release an album' and 'largest song and dance routine held at multiple locations. The date escapes me when Harry, David and I went to Guildford to attend this taster



day, but we were put into groups depending on our voice. There were three leaders who were very enthusiastic. At the end of the day we were asked if we would like to come back for further secessions, with the view to joining with other men's groups throughout the UK and eventually getting together to sing at the Wembley Arena. We were told to keep this a secret and not to breathe a word to anyone. This did mean I would need to commit to further workshops. I was up for this, and enjoyed the day. We then had to practice at Guildford over the next few Saturdays. We practiced singing various songs, so that we had a good harmony and learnt various dance moves. Caroline Redman Lusher, founder of the Rock Choir, had a vision to have a surprise act on the day - getting 100 men to sing, with actions, to a Roy Orbison classic,

Pretty Woman. I think the reason for this was that most of the Rock Choirs in the UK are made up of women and on the day at Wembley it was expected there would be about eighty percent women, so this was to be a surprise for them. For the next few weeks at Guilford we rehearsed as a small group preparing ourselves for the big day on 18th May 2011 when we would join with the other groups from all corners of the UK. On the day, we met in Dorking with our wives and friends and were taken to Wembley by coach. It had been decided that our performance would be right after the interval. During the interval we changed into our white shirts, as we all needed to look the same. It was a great feeling walking out on stage with the other men and to perform to a full audience at Wembley. It then became clear to our partners why we had been very secretive and spent a lot of time in Guildford over the past few weeks and also why we had not returned to our seats after the interval. A video was produced and our performance is still on YouTube. If you would like to spot us both, you will see Harry in the front row in the centre, and I am in the fourth row on the far left. During the performance, looking towards the audience and the cameramen, I was so surprised to spot a colleague operating the camera nearest to the stage. At the time, we were both working at Thales in Crawley. Neither of us were aware that the other was going to be there. He was contracted to film the performance and produce a DVD, the production was also shown on Channel Four. What a strange coincidence ! The rest of the show continued and we returned to Horley in the coach, very tired but also excited. A wonderful day had been had by all.

contributed by Roy Page

www.Rockchoir.com

the link to the performance :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFXsd5u09UM>

Pic of the month.

To say that "this is a rather unusual way of parking a motorbike" is probably a bit of an understatement. I asked some people nearby but my question about the circumstances was met with a shrug of their shoulders. You will find this just past Handcross, near one of the houses on Slaugham Lane.

JPDL



Bessy's mid-life career move.

At the tender age of 23, I unexpectedly found myself in charge of an East End building site for a 21 storey block of flats. It is quite a lonely feeling, standing in the middle of a hoarded but empty space, in a pretty rough area, with only a roll of drawings in the car boot for company. After a day spent in the type of grubby phone box that makes you want to take a bath, I managed to organise the accommodation and the transfer of two carpenters and a gangmaster to get things going. In the course of talking to the plant yard people I had a stroke of luck. They begged me to find a home for one of the firm's stalwarts and his two guard dogs. They had been stuck in the yard for a month and the staff were scared of being bitten. Tom O'Connell was a huge man, a solitary character who had spent his life guarding our sites and came with a large company caravan, an enormous black Great Dane which could have had a cameo role in the Hound of the Baskervilles and a medium sized Alsatian which was the most dangerous dog around. Tom had worked with me a year before, as a chainman (site engineers assistant) and we got on very well. After a couple of weeks of hard work and some slightly dodgy petty cash expenditure, we were set up with water, electricity and a working phone. All we lacked was someone to do the cooking, so the word canteen was added to the vacancies board on the site gates. Two days later when I arrived at 07:30 as usual, Tom met me with a worried look on his face and said that there was a woman waiting to see me. The reason for his concern was that when we worked together previously, the unbelievably randy Site Agent was known as Dave "the Ram" B..... and Tom in his security role, often had to fend off besotted ladies and angry husbands. I reassured him that I did not behave like Dave and went to see what the lady wanted. There was Bessy, a middle aged lady who looked very much down on her luck. The first thing I noticed was that she wore a threadbare wig with the mesh base showing through. In the course of conversation, she explained that she had to give up her previous occupation because of hair loss. She was desperate for a job. She admitted that she had never worked on a site before, so I conducted an in-depth technical interview. It went like :- Can you cook a good fry up ? - "Yes" Can you deal with very difficult men ? - A very confident "No problem." For some inexplicable reason I liked her and so started her there and then, gave her £10 to buy some food and the challenge of cooking the five of us lunch. Lunchtime arrived and we walked into what can only be described as a greasy spoon banquet. What a find ! Bessy did a terrific job for the next 70 weeks, employing two further ladies and when I made the mistake of employing a union plant who became the convenor shop steward, the only thing he never complained about was the canteen. The next character in this little drama, was Mr. G.....We had a party wall agreement with him as he owned the two

adjoining buildings, a sewing machine sweatshop and a brothel. He was an orthodox Jew with the normal all black outfit of long coat, big hat and pigtails. In the end we had a good relationship but initially he was very upset with me for as he put it," the sewing machines were jumping off the benches due to the piling vibrations."

In order to try to calm things down I invited him into my office for a cup of tea. When Bessy came in with the tea, she surprised me by saying "Hello Mr. G, would you prefer your usual strong black coffee instead of tea ?" When she left to



make the preferred drink, I asked him how he knew Bessy ? He replied that she used to work for him, "the best girl I ever had". Then with a head turning wink which caused his pigtails to sweep across his face, like windscreen wipers, he whispered "she will do anything for you." Slowly, even this naïve country boy realised that Bessy's previous occupation probably did not involve a sewing machine ! Over the rest of the project Tom started to smarten himself up and Bessy became a dog lover, fattening them up with an extra meal each day of bacon and eggs and often, when Tom shut the gates as I left at 18:30, she was cooking Tom's evening meal !

contributed by Roy

Interesting facts ?

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history.

Spades - King David Hearts - Charlemagne Diamonds - Julius Caesar
and Clubs - Alexander The Great.

Multiplication exercise : $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$

If the statue of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died because of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

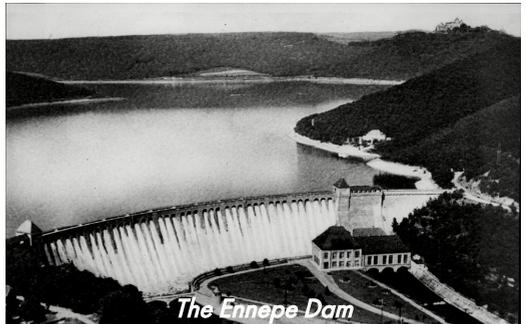
Roy Pointer - Cinecameraman - A tribute

Roy Pointer (1923 – 2004) lived near us in Cheyne Walk. I used to travel with him occasionally when we were both commuting to London. His last major job from the mid '70s to the early '90s was as cameraman for the TV series 'The Sweeney' and 'Minder' - a total of 167 episodes. Previously in the '70s he worked on several major films and would tell me of amusing incidents during production. On one occasion they were filming a battle scene in a large grassy field in Spain when suddenly the camera buggy, cinecamera and Roy disappeared into a large ditch hidden by the long grass. Fortunately, buggy camera and



Roy were undamaged and Sean Connery (who apparently was very strong) and the film extras hauled them out of the ditch and filming continued. Earlier in the '60s Roy had a varied career. He made several 'glamour' films with a famous beauty of the day - Pamela Green (1929 - 2010). After a

diligent search on the internet, I managed to find a couple of pictures showing Roy and Pamela at this time. Of course, all these girls are now in their 80s or even 90s, so they may look slightly different today. I hope that their lives were as happy as they appear in the picture. In later life Pamela lived with Douglas Webb DFM (1922 - 1996). He was one of the famous Dambusters. His Lancaster was the only one to attack the Ennepe Dam which was hit but not breached. They lived in Yarmouth, on the Isle of Wight, where Pam was a member of the Women's Institute !



*contributed by
Arthur Meaton*

www.pamela-green.com

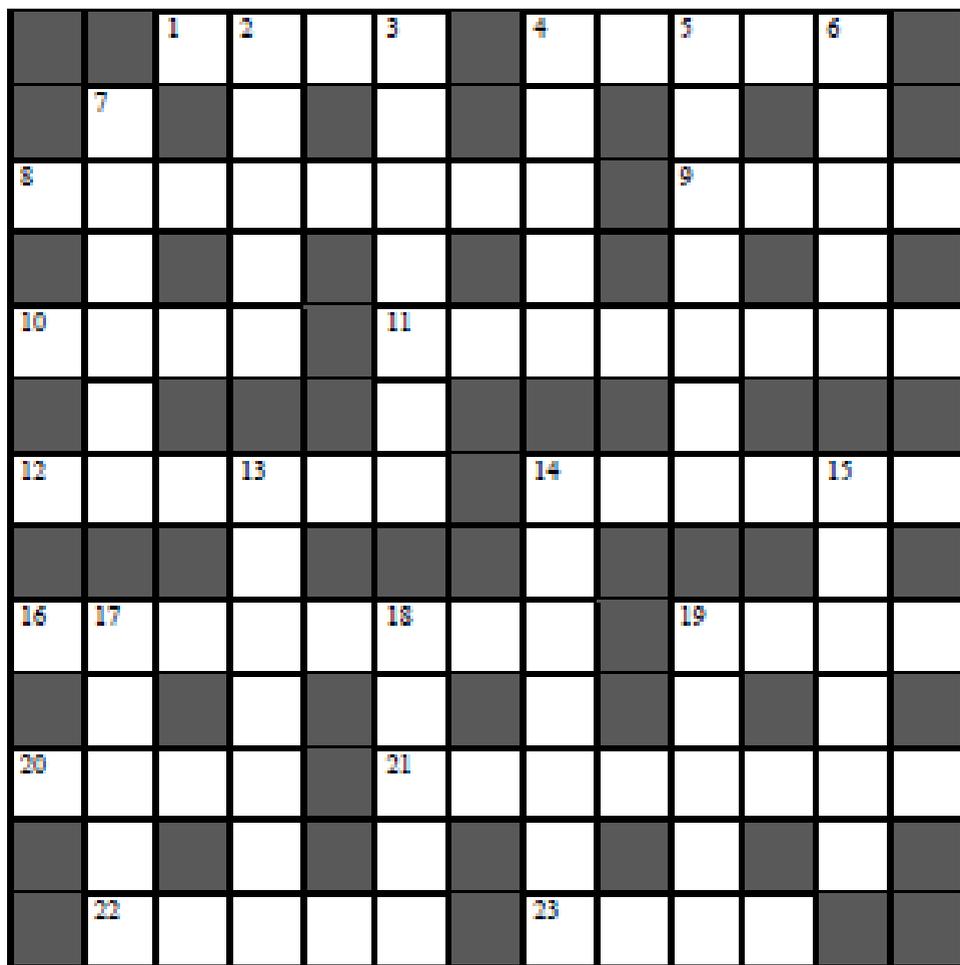
Affairs of The Heart - A triple whammy with a difference.

I have known for a considerable time that one of my partners at my Bridge club was in a former life a senior operating theatre sister. What I did not know until recently was that in the Sixties she worked at the hospital where UK pioneering heart transplant surgery took place. She showed me a photograph of the team who carried out the first transplant performed by Donald Ross. There she was in the front row, uniform and all. This photo got me got me reminiscing to India where I was auditing a large pharmaceutical company in Mumbai. The CEO invited me and my colleague to a small party (his words) at The Indian Ghymkana to celebrate his daughter going into "Purdah". We duly arrived laden with flowers for the ladies. The "small" party comprised several hundred guests milling about the polo pitch with food stalls on three sides groaning with indescribable goodies and a fourth side boasting a table laden with trinkets which made Hatton Garden look like an East End market stall. I was introduced to an unassuming looking man who took some interest in what we were doing in India. He asked specially what was current in immune suppressants. Not my field but I tried to give as much pitiful information as I knew. After we parted I asked who he was. Turns out he was the first surgeon in India to perform a heart transplant. The hole I wished for, down which to fall, never appeared. And for me the show stopper. Now we are in New Brunswick, New Jersey USA. I was auditing a small packaging company engaged in assembling MMR vaccine packs prior to shipment to a sterilisation plant elsewhere in New Jersey. The company had been founded by a retired director of Union Carbide using venture capital and was now being successfully run and managed by his wife. The whole place was spotless with levels of cleanliness and hygiene far in excess of the requirement for such a relatively low-key operation. Such levels are not achieved by just reading a book and following what is written therein. There has to be an element of motivation or vocation, call it what you will. So, I asked the question of her. Does this come from the book or from the heart ? Her reply made the hairs on my neck stand up. "Cleanliness and hygiene are of paramount importance to me" she replied. She took my hand and placed it on her chest. "It comes from the heart" she said. "Feel that beat. After all it was given to me by Christian Barnard all those years ago when I was his theatre sister on the first ever heart transplant". Follow that !!

contributed by John Startup

41% of British full-time employees work 40 Hrs or more. This compares with 16% in France. Sweden is better still, there it's only 9%.

source : EUROSTATS



Across :

- 1 - Blood sucker to run away from, we hear (4)
- 4 - Surreptitious looks at high points, so to speak (5)
- 8 - Idle daub concealing a shrub (8)
- 9 - Double performance of French alien (4)
- 10 - Initially found less usual exit for hot gases (4)
- 11 - Food for thought from welcome letters ? (8)
- 12 - One of a pair notes a sharp pain (6)
- 14 - What you seek is a new direction to royalty (6)

- 16 - An agreement to reduce size ? (8)
- 19 - It takes a crooked mile to find this tree (4)
- 20 - Nineties rock band that may not be too distinct (4)
- 21 - Embellish or label a charitable organisation (8)
- 22 - Reserves left on a sharp nail ! (5)
- 23 - The ambience of a golden artist (4)

Down :

- 2 - The French trail youngster for a cooking utensil (5)
- 3 - Name one extraordinary plant! (7)
- 4 - By the sound of it a fairly ordinary looking tool (5)
- 5 - Location of a formal speech ? (7)
- 6 - Perfume may be despatched to the listener (5)
- 7 - Note curious rule before start of wary flier (6)
- 13 - Not abnormal, it's as it should be (7)
- 14 - Take ten in old money for an aerial (7)
- 15 - A winter coat from lower Minervois (6)
- 17 - Young flier absorbed by meadow lethargy (5)
- 18 - Initially ate cheese or ripe natural fruit (5)
- 19 - Creature found on Pink Floyd album in France, maybe ? (5)

Solution for N° 11 - February :

Across : 1 - Balloon, 5 - Samba, 8 - Rigid, 9 - Distant, 10 - Humerus, 11 - Issue, 12 - Reside, 14 - Hedges, 17 - Forgo, 19 - Uniform, 22 - Abysmal, 23 - Decor, 24 - Nylon, 25 - Waxwing.

Down : 1 - Berth, 2 - Legumes, 3 - Order, 4 - Nudist, 5 - Sessile, 6 - Means, 7 - Antlers, 12 - Refrain, 13 - Doorman, 15 - Gnocchi, 16 - Outlaw, 18 - Royal, 20 - Index, 21 - Morag.

BRAIN TEASER answers :

- | | | |
|----|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | T holly & T l... | The holly and the Ivy |
| 2. | T luck O T l ... | The Luck of the Irish |
| 3. | To add I 2 I ... | To add Insult to Injury |
| 4. | T tip O T l ... | The tip of the Iceberg |
| 5. | No R @ T l ... | No Room at the Inn |
| 6. | T l man | The Invisible Man |

contributed by Dave Sharratt

A country wedding in a very different world and time.

Inspired by the splendid 60th anniversary photos of three of our members in a previous proBITS, I looked closely at our group picture frame of family weddings hanging on our staircase wall. This one of my maternal grandparents wedding in 1901 shows best how life has changed. They all look very serious, but this was probably necessary to maintain the pose with a slow camera. My favourite character is the good-looking chap on the left hand side. With his watch chain he looks very smart as far down as his ankles. Then the size of his turnups suggests that he borrowed the suit and his muddy shoes might mean that he walked to the occasion across fields. The bike behind him could be his as the others appeared to be couples, apart from the man on the right-hand side.



The wedding was at Harmondsworth and there is a record that the couple lived in farm cottages in nearby Sipson. The background looks like a barn on Sipson Farm where it seems they worked. These villages are still there but overwhelmed by Heathrow Airport. The pair of them went on to have nine children, only five of these survived and they were all girls. Grandad lived to 82 and Grandma to 93 and as I spent two days a week with them in my early years, I have lots of memories but relevant ones are :

Icicles hanging from the cistern in the outside toilet.

Sitting in a tin bath in front of the black iron cooking range.

Granddad telling me tales about driving his steam lorry to Covent Garden.

We now take a kitchen, a bathroom and central heating for granted.

contributed by Roy O'Donnell

Interesting facts ?

You will not be surprised to know that Iran is not a good place to be gay. Male and female same-sex is punishable by 100 lashes, or even death, in this Islamic republic. The regime has not shied away from applying corporal punishment to those who flout the law and that even includes teenagers in this civilised country. Miraculously, the country's president maintains that there are no homosexuals in the country. This makes one wonder what all those people are being executed for... But Iran's trans-sexuals are an entirely different matter. In 2007, according to official figures, Iran had about 20,000 of them. More sex-change operations are performed in Iran than anywhere else in the world, if you disregard counting Thailand. In 1983 Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa authorising such operations and this was reinforced by his successor Khamenei. Trans-sexuality is considered a sickness in Iran, as opposed to a sin. However, individuals who have undergone a sex-change operation are prone to abuse and stigmatisation. Still, that probably beats the government's circus of a 100 lashes in a public place, or even beheading.

source : The Guardian

A week in Puerto Rico.

Some time ago, and in the latter stages of my career, I had to go solo and was scheduled to audit a site in a town named Humacao. Being a popular seaside town, it had a tourist district with a casino, various water-based sports and a nice golf course as the major attractions. The place was in particular popular with well-heeled Americans. The hotel which I checked into was a favourite, a "standard 5* establishment". Unfortunately, and unbeknown to me, the place was having quite a major refit which resulted in a limitation of the guest numbers. Some of the advertised services were also absent. However, Happy Hour came and we few guests had a convivial time before dinner. The barman had sadly overestimated the stocking of the bar and was left with a very large number of unopened bottles. Now Puerto Ricans sound very much like "Speedy Gonzalez" when speaking English so please imagine him when he said "Senor, I have much liquor left over and I aint gonna take it back so please, please help yourself to everything that's here." Nuff said! There was enough base mix for many Pina Coladas and a bottle of Bacardi for good measure. Several bottles of red and white wine and some whisky completed the haul. I had the biggest private bar on the island and sadly nobody to share it with. How I managed to get up for work during that week, never mind what state I was in, I still don't know.

contributed by John Startup

Highlighting a Local Club or Organisation.

Horley Lawn Tennis Club, 1894 to the Present Day.

The Holmesdale Directory for Reigate and Redhill in 1914 referenced "the Horley Lawn Tennis Club, founded in 1894, provides lawn tennis, croquet and bowls for its members. The ground is situated opposite the Vicarage and forms part of the Vicarage Glebe". The Club started on 3 grass courts with croquet available on one of them. A Bowling green was also part of the land under separate management. The pavilion was shared by all 3 sports. The Club did not prosper in its early years and in 1900 was close to bankruptcy. In 1901 a new Secretary was appointed and by the 1902 AGM the Club had a balance of £20 due to his efforts but raised the subscriptions to 12s 6d. 1902 saw the ground enlarged to 4 courts and the pavilion even had a dressing room added. By 1903 mains water came but was only a standpipe in the Vicarage Lane hedge. The pavilion and water were in use unchanged until the 1960s. At the 1905 AGM the Club was back in the red due to the purchase of a large hand-drawn roller, which is still at the Club today. However, at this meeting the Secretary Mr. WG Corscaden retired and gave the Club a cheque covering the cost of the roller, saving it again. The Club was now well established, croquet had disappeared but tennis and bowls continued. At the start of the war in 1940 one of the early members was Mrs Phyliss King, who as Miss P Mudford won the Ladies Doubles at Wimbledon in 1931 and then captained Great Britain in the Wightman Cup. She organised a Tennis Exhibition in aid of the Red Cross War Effort. The Bowling Club allowed their rinks to be used and 4 Wimbledon players supported the event which attracted 500 spectators. A respectable £500 was raised. Due to WW2 the Club closed in 1942 until the end of the hostilities and reopened in 1947. This resulted in hard work for everyone to relay the grass courts and the bowling green too. A bright pink hard court was built to overcome the inclement summers. Members returned to much the same conditions as before, they still had to carry water from the standpipe and then there was the pavilion !!! Remembered by many for rotting floors, dilapidated gas ring, the bar was in a locked wooden chest, an outside loo and many hours on the veranda waiting for the rain to stop..... Ever since 1894 a peppercorn rent was paid to the Parish Church, but now things were about to change - in 1956 the Club was able to buy the freehold of the land. This meant the tennis section could now end the difficult relationship it had with the Bowling Club of having to share the pavilion, such as it was. The Tennis Club gave the Bowling

Club 10 years to find alternative grounds. This was a difficult time for the bowlers but happily space was found in the Horley Recreation Ground and was the start of both Clubs becoming what we see today. The Club has had 3 'new' pavilions since the original one was removed. The first was in the car park, a prefab unit delivered complete on the back of a lorry. Small, it but enabled the Club to get water and have proper toilets with changing rooms. It also had mains electricity which then permitted the installation of floodlights. The next pavilion was again pre-built in sections and much larger. It will be remembered by many and served the Club for several years until the foundations slipped and lack of security caused it to be unusable. For 4 years the Club raised funds to build 'new' pavilion no 3. Sadly, just as the pavilion was nearing completion, a large part of the structure was destroyed by fire. Disaster? Not quite, the Club was lucky on 2 counts. The fire was the work of an arsonist. Where the fire started it had an easy route to roof space, so the roof was destroyed but the walls remained intact. Also, the building hadn't been handed over by the builders, so no financial damage to the Club. The Club is still on its original site, with good membership, a thriving junior section, coaching for all ages and ability, 7 hard courts – 5 of them floodlit and a practice half-court with return walls. As the Club enters its 127th season everyone is ready to start playing again once the Covid lockdown is lifted.

contributed by Lawrie Perfect, President HLTC



This article acknowledges the research undertaken by Peter Knight (who was Club President in 1994) and others to celebrate the centenary of the Club.
www.horleyltc.co.uk

And finally...

Even in these dark days there are still enough reasons to celebrate !

In March we pay tribute to the parents of the following people :

Peter Brew arrived on the 2nd.

On the 7th David Sharratt saw the light of day.

On the 18th Jim Roe increased his family with one.

David Brown also chose the 18th to appear.

Arthur Browne waited until the 29th, because that was a Tuesday
and he knew Tuesdays were going to be important.

Please let us know if your birthday is also in March but is not mentioned.

The editor always has the last word.....

I would like to say a very warm "thank you" to those people who have,
with their contributions, made this issue of proBITS possible - take a bow !

Contributions for the next issue are very welcome (if not essential) - and you
still have enough time on your hands ! More details on page 2.

Receipt *before* the 1st of next month would be much appreciated.
It gives (just) enough time to prepare the next issue.