



“ proBITS ”

an occasional publication
from the

PROBUS CLUB
HORLEY & DISTRICT

issue 5
11th August 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 4 will receive "proBITS" in printed form. Hopefully, they'll relay their words of wisdom in a more traditional manner, like snailmail or even pigeonpost !

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 easy to remember :

proBITS@icloud.com

As a guideline : maximum about 850 words.

If pics included, deduct 30 words per pic.

Text in plain A4 Word document/email.

Pics separately attached, in JPG or JPEG format.

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 6th issue, to be received at the latest on Tuesday the 1st of September - as always : a week before issue.

Each issue will land in your mailbox on the second Tuesday of the month, the same day we would have had 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 & 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

John De Lang, editor

WW2 Civil Defence London.

Civil Defence London was controlled in a secret bunker in Exhibition Road South Kensington, below ground beside the Geological Museum. It was a massive structure, but not that large inside. The entrance was by way of a steel door which was locked after each change of staff. There was a duplicate set of rooms further up Exhibition Road that were checked every Friday by staff from HQ who would likely to have been killed if there was need for the duplicate ! That is war. I visited CDHQ just after VE day and was told that a structure at ground level over these rooms was filled with coiled sprung steel rods to slow up, if not catch, a falling bomb. Thereby limiting damage. Most of the building has been incorporated into post war construction, in part extending the museums, being too massive to demolish.

CDHQ had a double function. During an Air Raid it was a command post for certain specific CD items (more of that later) and after every air raid it collected details of EVERY 'incident' and reported on to ... secret. I was not told. At street level CD had Air Raid Wardens who commanded a specific area with suitable equipment to initially deal with an incident.

Wardens reported to and were backed up by one of nine Command Posts in Greater London who had all CD services available, light rescue, heavy rescue, ambulance etc it was all in a specified number of units and the number of units in each Command Post was known at HQ.

This knowledge was vital for the system to work. For each of the nine command posts HQ had a small container positioned on a large map of



a sign some of us will remember all too well.....

greater London on the wall and in each container was a number of disks, one for each CD unit at that Command Post.

During every air raid these Command Posts would instantly report to HQ as each one of their units was sent out into the streets to deal with an incident. As this info arrived at HQ one disk was taken from the container of that reporting Command Post and hung on the map near to the incident to which it had been sent. HQ thus knew exactly what was going on and could take control at any time especially when a Command Post's container was running out of disks. HQ would then instruct an outer Command Post or even another Region to send CD units to the worse hit areas. Disks were moved as appropriate. It was childish simplicity and it WORKED.

I was shown these disks and was told that back up during heavy raids came from far and wide even towns in the Home Counties.

HQ did retain detailed control of some CD services. I was only told one, the 'Search and Find Dogs' there were only a few such dogs and they were sent directly to where most needed.

Communications was paramount for all to work. Telephones were on special lines and the most reliable communication machines of the day were the two very large teleprinters with their expert girl operatives working a QWERTY keyboard. Early every morning a complete report of all incidents was sent out to secret, some in code -5x5 no vowels and foreign languages. All was totally secret. The military were frequently in the offices.

All the Civil Defence workers had passes to travel during air raids and worked strict shifts all around the clock and could not stand down and go home until replaced. There was a period of several free days just over every fortnight of duty. My sister Florence Cowley nee' Chapman was one of the teleprinter operators. She was one of the girls who contributed to Britain's war effort and will be 100 in September. Among her memories was travelling during air raids, first flying bombs, first rockets, she earned her Defence Medal.

I was shown a large scale map on the wall that showed where every flying bomb had hit Greater London. I was NOT shown a similar map behind a screen showing Rockets. Just a wave of his arm high up. I have only recently learned how the Germans had been fed false data and photos of the devastation caused by each Rocket incident when in fact most landed in fields in Hertfordshire. Some were on target, I saw the devastation of one in Barnet. A girl in Olive's class was killed, just seventeen, so near the end of the war.

contributed by Bill Chapman

Photo of the month
will YOURS be here, in the next issue ?



Schiermonnikoog, an island off the north Dutch coast, by moonlight.
Nikon Z6 with Nikkor24-70. F2.8, 30mm, ISO 12800, 1/3 second, handheld.

A catholic priest, an Indian doctor, a Chinese businessman and a Dutchman were waiting one morning for a particularly slow group of golfers in front of them. The Dutchman fumed "What's with those blokes ? We must have been waiting for fifteen minutes !" The Indian doctor chimed in "Yes, I don't know, but I've never seen such poor golf !" The Chinese businessman called out "Move it, gentlemen please, time is money" The priest said "Ah, here comes George the greens keeper, let's have a word with him." "Hello, George, said the catholic priest, what's wrong with that group of golfers ahead of us - they're rather slow, aren't they ?" George the greens keeper replied "Oh, yes, that's a group of blind fire fighters. They lost their sight saving our clubhouse from a fire last year, so we always let them play for free anytime they like." The group fell silent for a moment. The catholic priest said "That's so sad. I think I will say a special prayer for them tonight." The Indian doctor said "Good idea - I'm going to contact my ophthalmologist colleagues and see if there's anything they can do for them." The Chinese businessman replied "I'll donate £10,000 to the fire-fighters fund in honour of these brave men." The Dutchman said "Why don't they play at night ?"

source unknown

A case of unintended consequences.

My great friend Bill used to tell a story of his first job as a messenger boy at the CWS (Cooperative Wholesale Society) head office in Newcastle. At the time the CWS was a huge conglomerate, making /selling everything for the domestic market. One morning he was summoned to the office of the Managing Director. He was told by the MD that, as he was the best messenger boy, he had been selected for a very important task. The MD gave him six large bundles of papers, tied up with string, and Bill was to take these to the big boiler room. He was to ask the boiler man to open the furnace door and then throw the bundles in the flames. Bill was not to look at the papers, nor to entrust the task to the boiler man. Once he had done this he was to return to the MD's office and report that the task had been completed. Everything went according to plan and it was now approaching midday. At lunchtime several hundred workers came out into the factory yard and looked at the innumerable sheets of paper fluttering down from the sky, joining those already lying on the ground. What had happened was that the furnace flames had quickly burned through the string around the bundles that Bill had put into the boiler fire, releasing the loosened paper into the strong updraft of the tall chimney. The result was papers all over the factory and much of Newcastle. Unfortunately, the papers were copies of the previous years pay & tax details for all the senior managers and directors !

As Robert Burns put it, very aptly :

***The best-laid schemes o' mice an 'men
Gang aft agley,
An'lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy !***

contributed by Arthur Meaton

We all have a past.....

While we are still in the partial grip of lockdown we have the time to do some tracing of our forebears and make or add to our family trees. For those of you with a computer, a very good online site is : **www.ukbmd.org.uk**

As the name suggests, it gives details of births, marriages and deaths and is free to use. As it is a non profit making site it is quite accurate and assiduously corrects any errors reported to it. On the other hand, **ancestry.co.uk** and **findmypast.co.uk** are commercial sites and contain quite a few errors. When using any of these sites, if you cannot find the person you're looking for,

bear in mind alternative spellings or misspelling. However, the advantage of sites like "**ancestry**" and "**findmypast**" is that apart from births, marriages and deaths they include a wealth of other information such as censuses, parish registers, newspaper articles, electoral rolls, etc. There are other free to use sites on the internet, probably the best known being the **IGI** (International Genealogical Index) which is run by the Mormon church. If you have an interest in a particular county the County Family History Society of that county could be of interest. I have CDs for some area's of Suffolk, Sussex and Surrey for instance. If you wish to obtain copies of birth, marriage or death certificates from 1837 onwards, these can be ordered online from the General Records Office in Southport. I have a subscription to "**findmypast**" and would be willing to do look-ups for you, time permitting.

Normally, to start to make progress we need enough detail to get back to the 1911 census. This is the last census currently published. So we now have a range of censuses every 10 years from 1841 to 1911. The 1911 census is interesting in that for the first time it was filled in by the householder themselves rather than an enumerator writing down what he thought he heard them say ! So, in the 1911 census you can see your ancestors own handwriting.

"**findmypast**" are currently digitising the 1921 census under a government contract and this will be published 2021/2022 under the 100 year rule. This is eagerly awaited ! After that there's a huge gap as the 1931 was destroyed by fire during the war (I believe only the Scottish one survived) and the 1941 census was not held due to the war. What we do have is the 1939 Register which was compiled by the government to enable NI numbers and ration books to be issued to everyone with war being imminent. An advantage of the register is that it gives a person's actual date of birth rather than year of birth as in a census. If a person on the register is still alive that entry is redacted. Civil registration was introduced in 1837, so from that date onward details of births, marriages and deaths are available although in the early years some folk were a bit lax in giving birth and marriage details. Prior to 1837 we are mainly reliant on parish registers. These were ordered by Henry VIII in 1538 but the dates that are extant vary widely from parish to parish and you would be very lucky to get ones going back that far. If this has whetted your appetite and you'd like to find out if you are related to some of the great and good and you would like a look up, send me an email or contact me by telephone.

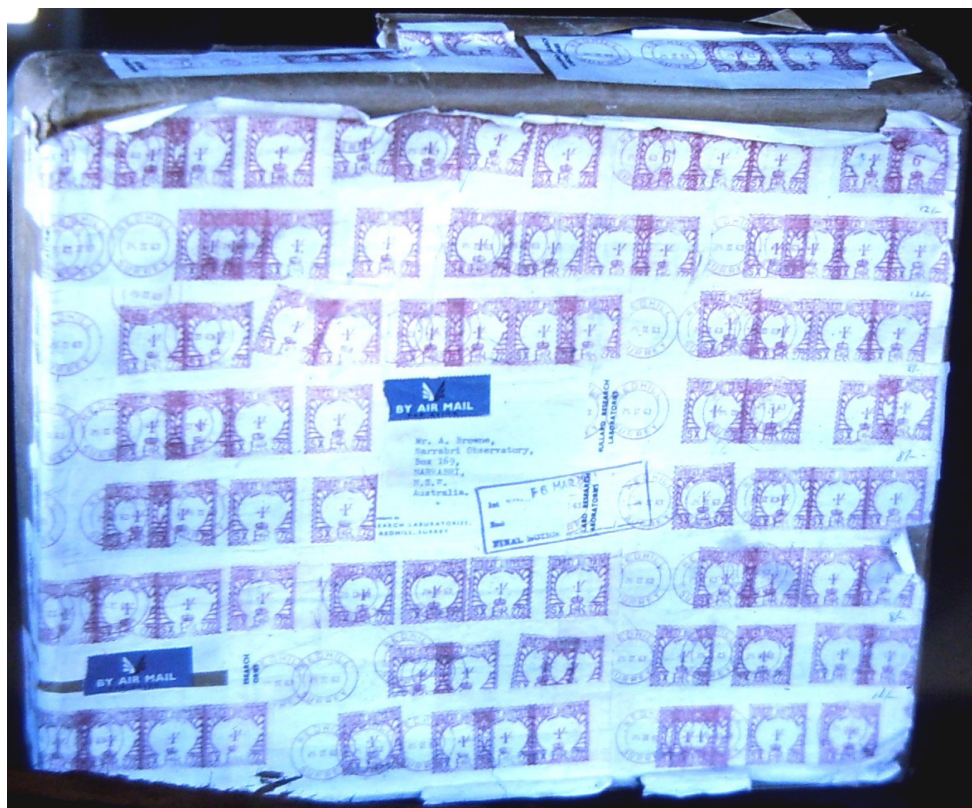
contributed by Ray Langridge

Know your spouse.

At a Couples Conference the speaker mentioned that most married couples are so disconnected that 85% of husbands don't know what their wives' favourite flower is. George leaned over to his wife and whispered :

"I know that one, it's self raising, isn't it ?"

contributed by Brian Monk



Stamps galore.

In 1963, the Mullard Laboratories in Salfords had to send some papers to me in Narrabri, Australia. They did so by airmail. The cost was £4 11s but the office GPO printer was limited to a maximum of 1s. Being in an environment of ingenuity they printed 91 stamps and produced a decorative package.

£4 11s digitally is £4.55, and now is, by the RPI, worth about £99.

Fortunately postal costs are not that high and sending a 2Kg parcel to Australia would cost £10 to £20 depending upon details.

contributed by Arthur Browne

Giving evidence.

My boss and I went to the House of Commons, to give evidence to the Transport Select Committee. The redoubtable Gwyneth Dunwoody was chair of this committee. I was there as the technical adviser and my boss the Commercial Director was there representing company policy. The session was going well, where I would respond to technical questions and my Director responding to the policy questions, without either of us having to decide who responded. Then came a question from an MP, where halfway through the question I switched off thinking my Director would respond. Apparently at the same time he thought it was a technical question and I would answer. Gwyneth Dunwoody obviously read our faces and said "Gentlemen I see that neither of you are ready to answer this question, but one of you must. Oh Mr Redfern, from the look on Mr Roberts' face I think it's going to be you ! All I could do was ask the MP to repeat the question. I don't recall a round of laughter in any select committee that I have attended before or after. (Footnote : we were leaving the building and this voice behind us said "Gentlemen, your evidence this afternoon was very helpful, thank you." It was Gwyneth Dunwoody.

contributed by Eddie Redfern

St Catherine's Hospice.

Recent developments during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Our Members have always taken a great interest in the Hospice over the years and some of us can trace our involvement back to its earliest days, even before building started at the Malthouse Road, Crawley, in 1981.

As you may recall, plans were well advanced to start building the new Hospice at Pease Pottage earlier this year. However, it is not surprising that the impact of the pandemic has meant that the programme has had to be put back to allow the focus attention, resources and expertise on delivering the core services from Malthouse Road and in the wider community as well as ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the patients, their families, staff and volunteers.

The new building will be the single largest expenditure that the Hospice has ever undertaken. The land at Pease Pottage has been secured and the delay has enabled detailed planning to be undertaken that would otherwise have had to run in parallel with the building. This will avoid overstressing resources when the main contact starts.

contributed by David Yates

Page Ten Teaser

	1	2		3		4		5		6		7
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Across :

- 1 - Wait with bated breath for a board game to note (4)
- 4 - Discharge from a marching army (3)
- 6 - A West Point assembly on the grass (3)
- 8 - Doctor Carol is to dig furiously (12)
- 10 - Rotter cut off the end of disturbed insect (6)
- 12 - Al is in the river to find foreign silver (6)
- 13 - They are somewhere else, in another eco-system (5)

- 14 - Late again on the pond ? (4)
- 15 - Temporarily hiding an extra seed covering (4)
- 17 - Sounds like highly desirable way to install a bath, say (5)
- 19 - Savings contain right to the Spanish in the Middle East (6)
- 21 - Indulgent creatures, we hear (6)
- 23 - Excited cubs horde Ivy for the Reserve (9,3)
- 24 - The spirit of engineering ? (3)
- 25 - Twelve inches back (3)
- 26 - Back school to make a record (4)

Down :

- 2 - A magnificent degree is relative! (7)
- 3 - A bird of almighty humour ? (6)
- 4 - Medicinal plant is welcome in East London by the sound of it (4)
- 5 - Plant protection contributing to exotic Loch Earn (6)
- 6 - A right one to the Spanish car-toon character (5)
- 7 - Eccentric aunt trails expert like Sir David (10)
- 9 - Unfortunately cites god to advertise whiskey (7,3)
- 11 - She will shortly display an explosive device (5)
- 12 - Time and inclination for a vagrant (5)
- 16 - Sapper is uncertain about fortification (7)
- 17 - Plea to put right a ball game (6)
- 18 - Make a prohibition order about any Indian tree (6)
- 20 - Rinse after chewing gum (5)
- 22 - Wager about a defeat (4)

Solutions for July :

Across: 1 Barber, 5 Polyp, 9 Automatic, 10 Bar, 11 Dor, 12 Armadillo, 14 Nab, 16 Taser, 18 Ass, 19 Bantering, 21 Sir, 22 Uni, 23 Riverside, 25 Hague, 26 Ensign.

Down: 2 Aster, 3 Bombast, 4 Rot, 5 Paced, 6 Lobelia, 7 Parsons Green, 8 Maidens Blush, 13 Masai, 15 Bunting, 17 Regards, 20 Eyrie, 21 Sting, 24 Vie

Worth knowing.

It is said that in the 1400's a law was set forth that a man was not allowed to beat his wife with a stick thicker than his thumb. Hence we have "the rule of thumb". The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time TV was Fred and Wilma Flintstone.



Chris Tollast came up with a great idea for a new section : *What&Where* is it ? He's even provided the first item and gives you this little hint which, in itself, contains a little hint - it's part of a building on the South Coast.

Possible origins.

At sixes and sevens : A historic dispute between the Merchant Taylors and Skinners livery companies is the probable origin of the phrase. The two trade associations, both founded in the same year (1327) argued over sixth place in the order of precedence. In 1484, after more than a century and a half of bickering, the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Robert Billesden, ruled that at the feast of Corpus Christie the companies would swap between sixth and seventh place and feast in each other's halls. Nowadays, they alternate in precedence on an annual basis.

Goodnight, Sleep Tight : In Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. When you pulled on the ropes, the mattress tightened making the bed firmer to sleep on.

Honeymoon : It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month.

Shiver me timbers : One meaning of shiver, which is now largely forgotten, is 'to break into pieces'. That meaning originated at least as early as the 14th century and is recorded in several Old English texts. So, the sailor's oath shiver my timbers, is synonymous with let my boat break into pieces. The question is whether any real sailor used the term or whether it was just a literary invention.

contributed by Steve Challis

Charity Donations.

From our Treasurer we hear that "In Memoriam" donations have been made by the Club as follows :

To St. Catherine's Hospice : £ 50 in memory of Vic Searson.

To The Salvation Army : £ 50 in memory of David Balcombe.

To the Royal National Lifeboat Institution : £ 50 in memory of Arthur Wood.

Three people who will be remembered and sadly missed.

Before & After.



We have long greatly admired Dave Sharratt's decorating capabilities.

Here is a very good example, where he has

changed a boring, everyday looking new bench into something that now has patina, a lived-in look. He has made it appear like it's been in the family for a long time, sat on by bums of umpteen loved family members and friends.

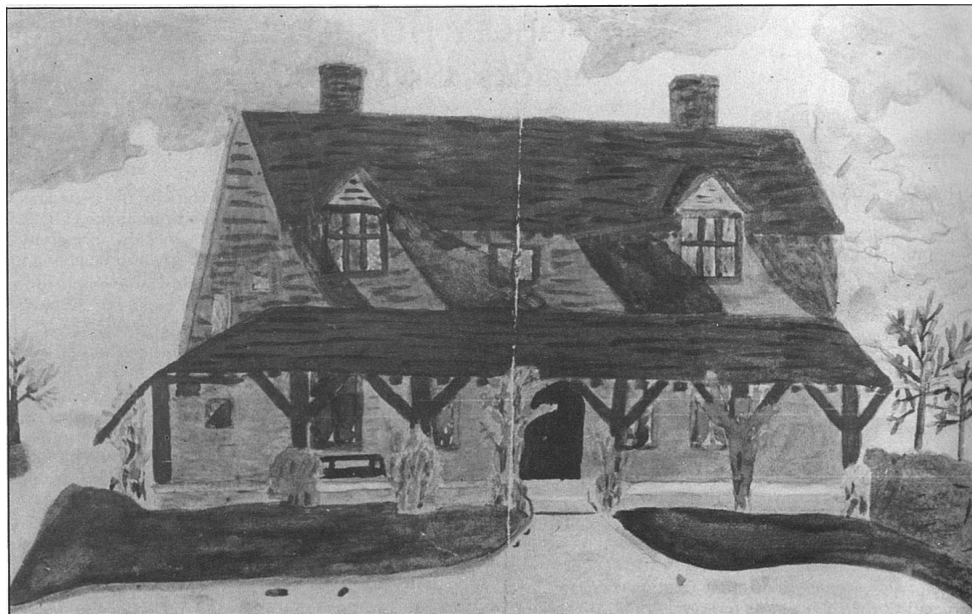
It will surely be appreciated by future generations as a valuable piece, with a very long family history. If only they knew.....

The Horley Cottage Hospital.

It will probably not be long before no one will remember Cottage Hospitals. They were once very common in most small towns in England and medically staffed by a fast disappearing breed of family doctors known as 'General Practitioners'. Of course, Horley had one, although initially, in 1873 it started life in Charlwood. This house in Stan Hill was built by the vicar Thomas Burningham. Some time later it became a hotel called Trumble's. We celebrated its foundation there in 1973.

Medicine was very simple and mostly of little therapeutic value although nursing was a caring and compassionate skill. The first hospital wasn't big - it had just 4 beds. The matron was one of the famous local Wickens

family, assisted by her daughter Sophie. In 1890, my Grandfather Charles Williamson of Clerklands, Horley, became the Medical Officer. A Committee ran the Hospital and it was totally funded locally. The annual expenses in those days : about 500 pounds. Local people also provided food from their allotments and other practical gifts in addition to funds.



*Charlwood Cottage Hospital - 1897 - by Thomas Wilson, aged 14
He died in the New Horley Cottage Hospital 60 years later.*

There are records of both medical and surgical conditions being treated. In 1873 these included Railway injuries, Fractures, 'Corea', Onychia and 'tumours'. There's also the case of the French visitor, who died after a train crash. It is interesting to read the outcomes of some of the treatments. These included recovery from Tetanus. This is somewhat unusual, considering that at the time, on the other hand, deaths from Rheumatic fever and Phthisis were not. The latter tended to follow a haemorrhage.

My esteemed colleague Geoffrey Brown, with local assistance from Jean Shelley and Joyce Lucas, sifted through the records and recorded them. He then turned his attention to the New Horley Cottage hospital in Lumley Road (as I shall do in due course, if the Editor so wishes !) Grandly, this was opened by Lily, Duchess of Marlborough in 1903.

contributed by Jim Williamson

Who's in charge ?

All the organs of the body were having a meeting, trying to decide who was the one in overall charge and responsible for day-to-day performance.

"I should be in charge," said the brain, "I run all the body's systems, so without me nothing would happen."

"I should be in charge," said the blood, "I circulate oxygen all over so without me you'd all just waste away and die."

"I should be in charge," said the stomach, "I process food and give all of you nutrients and energy."

"I should be in charge," said the legs, "I move the body wherever it needs to go so without me you wouldn't get anywhere."

"I should be in charge," said the eyes ! "I allow the body to see where it goes, stop you bumping into things and keep you safe."

"I should be in charge," said the rectum, "I'm responsible for waste removal."

All the other body parts laughed at the rectum and insulted him, so in a huff, he shut down tight.

Within a short time, the brain had a terrible headache, the stomach was bloated, the legs got wobbly, the eyes got watery, and the blood was toxic.

So, there was another meeting of the organs and now they all agreed that the rectum should be the boss.

The moral of the story ?

There's usually an arse in charge !

origin unknown



What&Where ?

If you know it, you've probably been in it - the Littlehampton East Beach Cafe.

And finally...

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

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

On the 11th John De Lang made his parents very happy.

On the 16th Roy Page increased the local population with one.

On the 17th Martin Gee saw the light of day.

On the 19th Paul Smith took his first breath.

Congratulations to you all.

Please let us know if your birthday is in August, but was 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 fifth issue of proBITS possible - take a bow !

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

Please email to :

probits@icloud.com

Receipt by 1st of September latest would be much appreciated, it gives me enough time to prepare the next issue which will see the light of day on the second Tuesday of September, the 8th.

Our Club's website : www.probusclubhorley.org