



Chichester & District Probud Club

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

To all Members

1 PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS

As predicted the weather picked up this week, so much so we nearly ate lunch outside over the weekend.

Unfortunately "the dragon's breath" so named by Merlin in the film Excalibur descended upon our walk at the RSPB Pagham on Monday, thus whilst we heard plenty of birdsong which our excellent guide Tom was able to decipher for us, we saw less of the singers than we should have.

At our February lunch we have one guest, Chris Linford, formerly the Headmaster of Downend School and Carole Devlin. Our speaker is Frank Pattison describing "the many faces of Berlin" and the menu is Crisp belly of pork and braised red cabbage with baked duchess potatoes and a rich warm red wine jus followed by Apple and mixed berry crumble tart with cinnamon ice cream and berry compote.

The vegetarian option will be grilled Halloumi and fig salad with candied pecans, blue cheese, red currants and balsamic reduction.

Frank, our treasurer, now on holiday in Hong Kong, tells me that our new card gizmo is delivered, up and working but in his absence at the lunch I do not yet know whether it will be in operation.

2. SECRETARIAL SCRIBBLES (with Speakers' Corner!)

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU WISH TO CHOOSE THE VEG OPTION
AND/OR CHEESE REPLACEMENT
I WILL ADD 2 X GLUTEN FREE

ABSENCES: I have apologies from Messrs BUNYAN, COCKBURN, GILES, GRIFFITHS, HARTLEY, HOOPER, HORNE, LUFFINGHAM and WILLIAMS D
Please let me know asap if you are not attending 07855 580609

THERE WILL BE TWO 'TOP' TABLES - THE PRESIDENT'S AND THE
SPEAKER'S. THEY WILL NUMBER 8 ON EACH. ALL OTHERS WILL BE 6.

PLEASE SIGN IN ON ARRIVAL with Gizmo-Generator, Chris Fuller who will click you in and debit you for £10 so BRING A CARD please!

2.1 RAFFLE: Many thanks to Messrs Currell and Dennett who will offer The Three R's: Rose, Rioja and Romanian Pinot Grigio

2.2 WALKIES:

GUIDED walk on Monday January 29 10-12 at Pagham RSPB CENTRE.

The sun came out, the sky went blue, the fog dispersed, but we ten did too, as by the time the good weather came, we had completed our adventure in very poor conditions!! THAT SAID, our brilliant, omniscient guide Rob found us Mallard, Grebe, Redshank, Geese, Curlew, taught us about birdsong - and we heard so many birds! And shared a remarkable range of information. We listened and learned so much.

Repairing to the Lamb Inn on Pagham Road - thank you David Thornley for the recommendation- a dozen diners enjoyed a fine and convivial Lunch.

2.3 PROGRAMME OF FUTURE SPEAKERS 2024

FEB 8 - Frank Pattison - The Many Faces of Berlin

MAR 14- Bill Avenell – Weather

APRIL 11 - Jay Woogara “From Sugarcane to Surrey- The Indian Diaspora

JUNE 13 - Father Peter Bustin – An ART Lecture

JULY 18 THIRD THURSDAY (avoiding Festival of Speed) David Bickerton
‘Parents at War’

AUGUST 8 Richard Campbell-Robson: SSAFA and recollections being a caseworker.

SEPTEMBER 12 Nigel Gossop – ‘Once Upon a Time ‘

OCTOBER 10 David Thornley, Deputy Director, Outreach for Bognor & Chichester Samaritans. “Learning to Listen”

NOVEMBER 14 Ian Everest - Cinderellas of the Fields – The Women’s Land Army

3 TREASURER’S REPORT

As you are all aware the cost of lunch at Crouchers is quite a bit more than we were used to paying at the Park Hotel.

Attendees at lunch will have to pay a supplement of £10. Payments will be collected on the day by card. I have obtained a card reader for this purpose.

Your cooperation in this regard is much appreciated.

Frank Griffiths
Treasurer

4 MEMBERS WELFARE

Please keep me informed of any health issues and other help you may feel the club can offer you personally. This also applies to any needs of fellow club members you may be aware of.

Please call me on 01243 376170.

David Childs Hopkins

5 PRESS REPORT

Britain's secret war in Dhofar, Oman, during the 1970s was the subject of a talk given to the club's January meeting.

The speaker Lieut-Col (retd) Jeremy Prescott told members about the background to the war, his experiences working with the Omanis for two years and the changes he saw when he returned with his wife 40 years later.

The problem was that the ruler, Sultan Said Bid, kept the region in a time warp and his people began to question his rule. Military intervention was considered necessary as communism was a great threat.

In 1970, Britain became involved in a coup état. The British Army Training team (aka the SAS) was deployed to win hearts and minds and get the rebels on their side.

A major difficulty for troops was that Dhofar was severely affected by monsoon conditions for three months of the year. Military operations were hampered while rebels had free access. Sixty-four kilometres of wire fencing and barbed wire were erected to stop infiltration of the enemy.

The Sultan's son took his father's place, gave an amnesty to rebels and brought an end to Dhofar's archaic status.

Mr Prescott said he volunteered for service in 1978 and went out as second in command. However, he found that he had to take charge immediately. There was unrest and rebels had murdered five Servicemen on a swimming picnic.

The mood was dark, the monsoon conditions made roads impassable and donkeys had to be used for supplies.

When he returned 40 years later, Mr Prescott said, life had changed radically. The population had increased fivefold. There were now long metalled roads, hospitals and universities were open to everyone and the wide sandy beaches gave tremendous scope for tourism. Oman was now well equipped for the modern age.

Mr Prescott now raises funds for Combat Stress

Eve Fuller
Press Officer

6 SOCIAL ITEMS

6.1 The Pagham Walk



Lunch at the Lamb Inn

6.2 Coffee Morning Thursday, 1st February at 10:30 am.

Thursday's Coffee Morning was again held at **The Boston Tea Party in Baffins Lane** at the bottom on the left hand side.

Baffins Lane is off East St opposite to Ask Italian and Rymans.

The nearest car park is the East Pallant Pay and Display (where you find the Chichester District Council offices.)

6.4 Tony Dignum profile

Tony Dignum has have lived in Chichester since 2000.

He was a senior director of leading retailers including Dixons, H. Samuel and Selfridges. He was County Councillor for the Chichester South Division from 2001-05 and Chairman of the Chichester Society, the City's civic society, from 2002-11.

In 2011 he was elected to both the Chichester District Council and Chichester City Council. He joined the CDC Cabinet in 2012 as finance portfolio holder and was Leader of the Council from 2015 to 2019. He re-joined the CDC Cabinet in 2020 until his retirement in May 2023.

He chairs the Chichester Branch of the Historical Association. His main interests are history, politics, downs walking and gardening.

His wife is an ESOL teacher for Sanctuary in Chichester. He has two daughters and six grandchildren.

He went to Peebles High School in the Scottish Borders.

His career was in process and development engineering. It began as an apprenticeship with Exacta Circuits, a printed circuits company in Selkirk. He also studied mechanical engineering at Galashiels College.

6.5 John Spence profile

John was born and raised in a small rural village in Leicestershire but moved to the South coast after graduation from Plymouth.

He spent the early part of his career as an analytical chemist before rising through the ranks to become Laboratory Manager. Leaving his white coat behind he then moved into business development for an environmental consultancy business and next spent a couple of years as Director & General Manager of Greater Manchester Scientific Services Ltd. He then spent a short spell in the UAE helping to develop standards for the proposed free port of Dubai and introducing an air quality monitoring capability in Abu Dhabi.

On returning to the UK, he spent the next several years in a range of roles with Southern Water including; Production Manager, Asset Manager and finally in the corporate strategy function as Head of Environment & Water Quality. In this last role he engaged with government and regulators on behalf of the company and the water industry trade association.

He was a Director of UKWIR Ltd which commissions an R&D programme on behalf of the UK water industry.

On leaving Southern Water John spent six years working independently managing a series of strategic projects for Water UK with several being co-commissioned by

Defra, the Environment Agency and Ofwat. He was also a Trustee and Vice Chairman of a local charity, the Arun & Rother Rivers Trust.

John is a life-long Leicester City supporter and current season ticket holder but having lived in the Chichester area for 34 years is now also involved in Chichester in: Goodwood Road & Racing Club membership, Chichester Festival Theatre, New Park Cinema, the Arts Society, City of Chichester and now Chichester & District Probuss!

6.6 Chris Linford profile

I was brought up in Leatherhead and was lucky to gain a place at Jesus College, Oxford in 1961, reading History. I then did a Diploma in Education, now known as a PGCE.

My first job was teaching in Canada and at the end of the school year in 1966 I then traveled widely through the States and Mexico in my VW Beetle. This was a fascinating experience and extremely interesting. I sold the car in Vancouver and came back on the train through the Rockies to Montreal before returning to the UK. I then joined Downsends School, a Prep School in Leatherhead.

I spent my career at Downsends which when I started was a small school of 200 boy pupils aged 8-13. I then became Deputy Head, and in 1977 I was appointed Head. By then the school had begun to grow and had reached 300 pupils. By the time I retired in 2002 the school had grown to 850 boys and girls aged 2-13 on four sites. I enjoyed my time at Downsends, which was a successful academic, musical and sporting establishment. Our motto was “every child should want to come to school” and I like to think that the staff and I largely achieved this challenge.

During my time there I was on the National Prep School Council, known as IAPS, Secretary for years on the local London Area Prep School Heads Association, and I ran for a couple of years the London Prep Schools London Area Athletic Championships at the West London Stadium, which involved 40 plus schools.

I used to play tennis and squash, but nowadays I enjoy walking the dog, gardening, reading and holidays. We have a large family of five daughters, and now seven grandchildren. This makes a noisy Christmas lunch.

When we retired, we moved to East Ashling and I joined the Betaplus Computer Club, joining the Committee for a time and running their Programme Committee for a decade. I retired from that Committee in 2020.

We moved back to Fetcham in Surrey in 2015 but we kept a base in Fittleworth as I am also on the Committee of the Chichester Music Society. We are now planning to move back to Fittleworth.

7. HUMOUR

7.1 BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WEAR !!

A man and woman drive to the store, only to have their car break down in the parking lot. The man told his wife to carry on with the shopping while he fixed the car in the lot.

The wife returned later to see a small group of people near the car. On closer inspection, she saw a pair of male legs protruding from under the chassis.

Although the man was in shorts, his lack of underpants turned private parts into glaringly public ones. Unable to stand the embarrassment, she dutifully stepped forward, quickly put her hand UP his shorts, and tucked everything back into place.

On regaining her feet, she looked across the hood and found herself staring at her husband who was standing idly by. The mechanic, however, had to have three stitches in his forehead.

PJH 31.01.2024