



“ proBITS ”

an occasional publication
from the

PROBUS CLUB
HORLEY & DISTRICT

issue 4
14th July 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 !

This way we should be able to connect all Members.

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 : 425 to 440 words per page, less if pics included.

Plain A4 Word document/email. Maximum 2 pages.

You can email your contribution for the next issue at any time, day or night, but absolute deadline for inclusion in the August edition is the evening of Tuesday the 4th of August. 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 the pages filled. I really hope that the ProBus Club 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

editor

An Obituary printed in the London Times.....Brilliant !

Dear Friends. Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, Common Sense. He has been with us for many years, but sadly is now gone.

No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost under some bureaucratic red tape. To many he will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as : Knowing when to come in out of the rain; Why the early bird gets the worm; Life isn't always fair; and Maybe it was my fault after all. Common Sense lived by some simple, sound financial policies like : don't spend more money than you can earn, and reliable strategies such as : adults, not children, are in charge.

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were put in place. Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student, have only worsened Common Sense's condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer sun lotion or an aspirin to a student; but were not allowed to inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the churches became more like businesses and criminals usually received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live, after a woman failed to accept that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, sued the restaurant and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, Truth and Trust, by his wife, Discretion, by his daughter, Responsibility and by his son, Reason.

He is survived by his 6 stepchildren : I Know My Rights, I Want It Now, Someone Else Is To Blame, I'm A Victim, Where's My Compensation and Pay Me For Doing Nothing.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone.

If you still remember him, pass this on - there may be other people who also remember him. If you've forgotten him, just join the majority and do nothing.

contributed by David Yates

Horley - Surrey's most loyal town.

In 1972 a Local Government Act ordained that Horley and Charlwood should be moved with Gatwick Airport into West Sussex. This was opposed by Surrey County Council and by Dorking and Horley Rural District Council, a large and beautiful area of Surrey administered from Massetts Road, Horley. This extended as far as Wisley to the west. Charlwood and Horley Parish Councils were also opposed. Remote administration from Chichester was not welcomed. It appeared also that Horley might become thereby part of Crawley New Town. The Airport and its revenue would be lost to Surrey. Much of the rest of England was also altered. For instance Yorkshire 'lost' 8 areas, and Humberside was created.

Not a popular move which was later to be reversed. Surrey appealed to Michael Heseltine, Under Secretary of State for the Environment but without success.

Most local people were upset and did not wish to change counties despite the potential advantages of holding on to Gatwick.

On December 5th 1971 1500 residents blocked the A23 at the proposed new boundary in protest. Uniquely in England, a local referendum was held in Horley and Charlwood.

The Surrey side won easily to the displeasure of the Airport supporters.

With the assistance of Sir George Sinclair, the excellent MP, a Charlwood and Horley Bill was introduced in Parliament on October 31st 1973.

Remarkably, this was passed as the final act of Edward Heath's government on the evening of the last day of the parliamentary session; February 8th 1974. The Conservative government lost power soon after.

On 1st April that year there was a realignment of Civil Parish Boundaries. Horley and Charlwood were returned to Surrey. Horley went to Reigate and Banstead and Charlwood to Mole Valley Councils. Sadly Dorking and Horley RDC ceased to exist. Later Horley acquired its own Town Council with local powers and a Town Mayor.

Sir George supported the next Horley campaign which attempted to prevent the closure of the Cottage Hospital but without success. I was to be its last Doctor of the Hospital. There's a family history in this - my grandfather Charles Williamson had been one of its founders. But that is another story !

contributed by Jim Williamson

DAMMIT, I'M MAD is DAMMIT, I'M MAD spelled backwards

Photo of the month

will YOURS be here, in the next issue ?



Shipwreck by Manningtree, Essex. Nikon Z6 with Nikkor Z 24-70, f2.8 at 1/250

@JohnDeLang

Breakfast rush hour.

A fried egg sandwich sun
Between thick white-bread clouds
Drops crumbs of warmth on breakfast land
As salt and pepper-peopled crowds
Scramble workward – walk or ride -
Or crawl in super jams that sit astride
The streaky bacon tarmac roads
That pop and blister as the fat
Black-pudding tyres roll along
In sausage queues that slowly are
Swallowed in the city's maw
As Fairy Liquid raindrops clean
Grey greasy roads for luncheon meets.

contributed by Mike Livesey



unknown source

How big do stars appear to be ?

The apparent size of stars is measured by their angular diameter, the angle subtended at the Earth by a diameter of the star. The largest is that of Betelgeuse (Orionis) which is 0.047 arcsecs. This is the same as a £1 coin at 100 km. (An arcsec is $1/3600$ of a degree, 4.85 microradians) We cannot see stars as 'solid' bodies because the unaided eye can resolve only about one arcmin. An aperture of 3 metres is required to see Betelgeuse as a body. (the aperture required is inversely proportional to the angular diameter) The brightness gives the illusion of size, brighter = bigger. The angular diameter can be deduced indirectly from other measurements such as brightness, temperature (colour) etc. It was not until 1920 that direct measurements were made. This was done by Michelson and Pease who made a modification to the 100 inch Mt. Wilson telescope. Two small mirrors were mounted on a 6 metre beam across the top of the telescope. Two beams of light met at the eye piece and formed an interference pattern, an array of bright and dark lines. Depending upon the distance each beam made to the eyepiece they reinforced or cancelled. When the small mirrors were close together the contrast of the fringes was good but when apart it became poorer. The separation for which it became zero is related to the angular diameter of the star and this separation is less for the bigger stars. The two beams pass along different air paths which are subjected to fluctuating lengths due to the movement of the air. Consequently, if the beams are separated too far measurements become impossible. This limited the measurements to seven stars, from Betelgeuse 0.047 to Aldebaran 0.020. Air movement imposes a similar limitation on the aperture size of ground based telescopes. The measurements were repeated with a 15 metre beam but were difficult and unreliable due to air movement.

Work had been done in radio astronomy using the intensity of the two beams, to measure radio stars. Hanbury Brown and Twiss, in 1956 at Jodrell Bank, demonstrated that it was possible to do the same with visible stars. Using a couple of searchlight reflectors they measured the size of Sirius (Canis Majoris), 0.0061 arcsec. This led to the construction of a larger instrument at Narrabri in Australia.

This consisted of two light collecting reflectors mounted on a circular rail track, diameter 188 metres. Each reflector was 6.7m in diameter and comprised of 252 hexagonal spherical mirrors. The mirror assemblies collected light, they

did not produce a focussed image. The light was directed to a photomultiplier on the end of an 11 M mast. The reflectors were positioned at the ends of a chord which was kept at right angles to the line to the star, under the control of an analogue computer. This enabled long observations to be made with a given separation. The signals from the photomultipliers and control signals were carried by cables, on catenaries, to a central tower next to the control room, hence the circular track. In the daytime the reflectors were kept in a large garage over a section of the track. What is left at the site is visible on Google Earth at $30^{\circ} 12' 33.8'' \text{ S}$, $149^{\circ} 45' 04.8'' \text{ E}$.

The two signals, in the frequency range 10 to 100 MHz, were noise signals produced by the random arrival of the photons. There was a small noise-like signal common to both channels, the correlation, that we needed to measure. It was no more than 0.01% of the main signals. This was the task taken on by Mullards at Salfords, a part of Philips. For the electronic experts among you, it was done by multiplying together the instantaneous voltages of the two signals. The main uncorrelated parts resulted in noise whereas the small component common to both signals produced a d.c. component which could be separated by integration. The correlated signal could be small due the correlation being low and/or the light level being low and it could take more than one night to get a measurable result. Runs of over 100 hours in total did occur. For this reason stars dimmer than magnitude +2.5 were not measured. The correlation measurement was plotted against the separation of the mirrors, kept constant as the system tracked the star. The correlation fell as the distance between the reflectors was increased, just as the contrast had in the Michelson system. The greater the angular diameter, the more rapidly the correlation fell. Between 1964 and 1972 the angular diameters of more than 32 stars were measured, ranging from Canis Majoris $0.0056 \pm 2.5\%$ to Puppis $0.00041 \pm 8\%$ (75 cms on the Moon). In more recent years new techniques have built on the work at Mt. Wilson and at Narrabri to measure more stars. The correlator was designed about 1960 which was a time of major and rapid changes in electronics. Transistors were replacing valves, the possibilities were expanding and using the changes had to be learned. Generally transistors made it much easier to attain the required result.

A question : Why are there so many stars ? The number of stars visible with telescopes is 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 – give or take a few million.

contributed by Arthur Browne

Redefinitions.

Sometimes words take on different meanings over time. Here are a few :

- Insolent : Fell off the Isle of Wight ferry
- Metatarsals : Got together at the White House
- Alcopops : Alcoholic fathers
- Article : Tease a pirate
- Candid : Past tense of "can do"
- Macaroon : Leave a Scotsman on a desert island
- Netherland : To fall on your backside
- Ovaltine : A fat adolescent
- Perversion : The cat's side of the story
- Suffragette : Ryanair

Songs which could have been more successful :

- Trouble Over Bridgewater
- Don't Look Back in Ongar
- Fifty Ways to Lose Your Liver
- People will Say We're in Hove
- I Know Him. Oh Well.....
- Twenty Four Hours from Tulse Hill
- The Tracks of My Tyres
- Portaroo Sunset

Films which could have been more successful :

- Look Back in Ongar
- Shakespeare in Hove
- Sleepless in Sheffield
- Brighton Wok
- Cyrano de Basingstoke

contributed by Derek Hanks

Political Truths.

Government is the great fiction whereby everyone endeavours to live at the expense of everyone else. (Frederich Bastiat, French economist)

We hang our petty thieves, but appoint the big ones to public office.

(Mark Twain, 1866)

contributed by Brian Monk

Des-res.



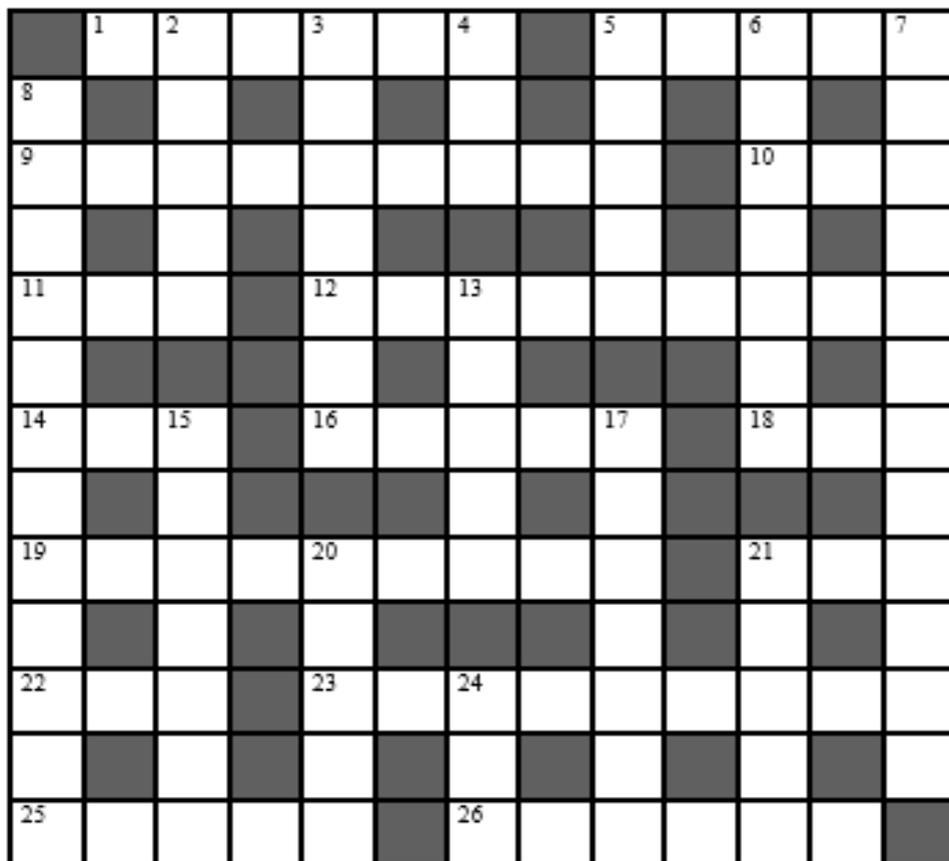
Dave Sharratt has completely rebuilt the annex and is now looking for a bird.

Not all Seniors are senile !

An elderly man walked into a jewellers' on a Friday afternoon, with a gorgeous young blond on his arm. He said he wanted to buy a special ring for his lady. The jeweller showed them a beautiful ring with a £ 5000 price tag. The man said "No, I want something a bit more special". So the jeweller went to his "special stock" and brought out another ring. This one had a £ 40.000 price tag attached. The young lady's eyes sparkled almost as much as the diamonds in the ring and her whole body trembled with excitement. The man, seeing the effect the ring had on her, said "We'll take this one". He said "I will pay by cheque. Of course you want to be sure that my cheque is good and therefore I shall wait till Monday afternoon to collect the ring, so you have time to contact the bank and clear the cheque". On the Monday morning the jeweller phoned the man and said that the cheque had bounced since there were no funds in the account. "I know" said the man, "but let me tell you about the weekend I've had !"

contributed by David Wheatley

The July Cryptic Crossword :



Across

- 1 Composer who keeps his hair trimmed? (6)
- 5 Growth of endless plastic, perhaps? (5)
- 9 Give gold to Manchester United footballer without conscious thought (9)
- 10 Pressure felt as sailor returns to the river (3)
- 11 Type of beetle found in old orchards (3)
- 12 Insect-eater roaming a Mill road (9)
- 14 Catch a revolutionary exclusion (3)
- 16 A review of 2 down could give you a shock! (5)
- 18 A fool in the classroom? (3)
- 19 Eccentric gent in bar may be teasing! (9)

- 21 A lady's other half, perhaps? (3)
- 22 Going up to the middle of Tunis? (3)
- 23 Bucks village in right side for a local walk (9)
- 25 A huge diversion for politician (5)
- 26 Flag a military man (6)

Down

- 2 Shed tears for Daisy (5)
- 3 Bluster of a good man following an explosion (7)
- 4 Right to reverse decomposition (3)
- 5 Quiet expert followed by daughter took regular steps (5)
- 6 Throw biblical priest a flower (7)
- 7 Cleric feeling ill on the tube? (7,5)
- 8 Flier describing a girl's embarrassment (7,5)
- 13 African mum's first class (5)
- 15 Decorative flier, perhaps? (7)
- 17 Looks at tattered red rags (7)
- 20 A weird sounding bird's nest! (5)
- 21 The end of fasting can be quite painful for a singer (5)
- 24 To compete with others, that is, after victory (3)

Courtesy of Friends of Warnham LNR

Around the White Mountain

Mont Blanc (or Monte Bianco to the Italians) is the highest mountain in western Europe, standing at somewhere between 15,700 feet and 15,770 feet ; it varies each year depending on the depth of the summit's year round pure white snowy cap which gives the mountain its name. The first recorded successful ascent was in August 1786 by Jacques Blamart and Dr Michel Paccard. The first recorded pedestrian tour, though, took place 20 years earlier and it is this route that is still the basis of the today's Tour of Mont Blanc (TMB), one of the world's classic long-distance hikes.

The route completely circles the Mont Blanc massif passing through France, Italy and Switzerland and includes ten high mountain passes. My two equally senior companions and I stuck with tradition and tackled the challenge in a clockwise direction, starting on the last day of June 2015, just to the South of Chamonix.

Being men of a certain age, we carried only day packs containing cameras, waterproofs, first aid kit, emergency kit, navigational aids and lunch. We preferred to have our overnight luggage transferred daily by road. The exceptions were the three nights spent in mountain refuges when we had to carry toothbrush, change of clothes and so forth. Our accommodation included mountain refuges, hotels and country inns, all of which provided excellent sustenance, hot showers & cosy accommodation.

The first day was typical of most of those to follow; a long uphill haul all

morning, through a col and then down into a valley for the night. This article does not allow a detailed account of every day but my diary entry for our first day will give a flavour : **“A long and demanding first day covering 13 miles, with 5,239 feet of ascent. Departed Hotel Slalom, Les Houches at 09.20, visited the bakery for lunch**



snacks and then, after a short section through the village, it was non-stop uphill through woods, pastures and flower covered meadows towards the Glacier Bionnassay, traversing its fast flowing outflow on a rickety suspension bridge. A short stop for lunch by the water then another long slow hot climb to the high point of the day, the Col de Tricot at 7,000 feet. An hour steep descending brought us to the Refuge Mirage whose offering of cold beers proved too tempting to pass by and gave us courage for the final ascent of the day to the Auberge de Truc and yet more refreshment. Two hours steady downhill through beautiful woods with a final level section along the river to the Hotel Chemenaz at Les Contamines. After 9.5 hours on our feet and temperatures of almost 8°C all day, the five-course dinner with wine included was very welcome. A tough first day and we all slept like logs.” Our second day was similarly strenuous ending at the most southerly point of the route, Les Chapieux. The following morning saw another steep climb to the Col de Seigne which marks the frontier with Italy. This was the first day of carrying heavier packs, so an afternoon of relatively level walking was welcome. This led us to our first night at altitude, at the spectacularly located Refuge Elisabetta. The next day saw mainly descents (tough on old knees but walking poles helped take the strain) to the delightful small Italian town of Courmeyer and a welcome day off. Not ones to be idle, though, we took the futuristic Skyway to Punta Helbrunner, a little below the summit of Mont Blanc. Fantastic engineering with cable cars that turn a full 360 degrees whilst ascending. Wonderful scenery

and a chance to walk on the Glacier du Geant, followed by excellent coffee and freshly baked croissants - all at over 11,000 feet and outdoors ! Whilst there is a standard TMB route that most fit walkers should be able to manage, there are several "variantes" taking in more spectacular viewpoints, tacklable depending on the weather, one's penance for exposure and personal fitness. By our 8th day, and now in Switzerland, we were ready to tackle the first of two "deviantes". Being gluttons for punishment we took on the challenge of the highest, Fenêtre d'Arpette, a pass of some 8,750 feet. Not high enough to cause altitude sickness for most people but nevertheless a tough physical challenge for us. But we made it after four hours climbing, enjoyed lunch at the Fenêtre, high above the clouds looking down on the fast retreating Glacier de Trient. Following a comparatively easy day and a return to French territory came our second and most challenging "variante" – a series of metal ladders, rungs and fixed rails against vertical rocks. Very exposed and not for the faint hearted but rewarded with some of the best views of the trip. The final two days were the easiest; the route staying at altitude high above Chamonix with one last night in, albeit, a rather basic refuge but directly opposite Mont Blanc which seemed to be within touching distance. All that remained was a whole day downhill to our starting point in Les Houches.



We were fortunate in having fine weather for the whole hike, with just an hour of rain during dinner one night. The daily temperature was around 21° – if anything too hot , but the blue skies, green meadows and snow- capped mountains made for fantastic views almost every hour of every day. Mont Blanc itself was rarely out of sight. We hiked for 10 days with an average nine hours walking covering a total of 116 miles, ascending (& descending – usually tougher) 39,800 feet. That's equivalent to ascending Everest 1.5 times ! We came home with a huge sense of achievement, injury free, thankful for the superb weather and wonderful hospitality but wondering how on earth all three of us could have put on weight. Hmm.. maybe the hospitality was just too good. Nothing to do with our willpower of course ! Mont Blanc is nowhere near the highest mountain in the world. However, its magnificence and charisma are to me second to none.

contributed by John Alsop

Covid-19 government guidelines for residents living in the North of England.

If you can decipher the following text you were born either North of the
Watford Gap or you have very strong ancestral links with the area.

Otherwise sorry, you are just unfortunately a Southerner.

If thaz bin workin from om and tha can still wok from om.... Wok from om,
If tha cant wok from om and thi gaffa sez thackan gutta wok, n thi other ayf cn
watch kids = gutta wok but gu steady gerrin theya.

Tha cn guwaart t't park to walk thi dog for as long as tha wants as many times
a day as tha wants as long as tha steers clear o fowk.

If thaz gorra mask, wear it t't shop

That's it fo naa, gerron wi it.

Still don't....

Poison thi sen

Risk injurin thi sen

Guwaart if tha dunt av to

Gu t'busy places

Av gutta gu now, so ill now shuut mi gob

contributed by Dave Sharratt

The meaning of "Parroting"

An old lady lived on the top floor of a five storey building. No lift so she didn't go out often. However, she had, as a companion, a large African Grey parrot, called, of course, Polly, to which she talked every day. One day, the old lady was going shopping. Lately, there had been a few break-ins in the area while people were out. So the old lady said to Polly "If anyone knocks on the door say 'Who is it ?' and they will think there is someone in." Off went the old lady. Sometime later there was knock on the door. "Who is it ?" said Polly. "Its the insurance man" came a voice, somewhat breathless after having climbed the five flights of stairs. "Who is it ?" said Polly again. "Its the insurance man" was the reply. "Who is it ?" repeated Polly. "Its the insurance man" came an exasperated voice. "Who is it ?" repeated Polly again. "Its the insurance man" was the reply in a high strangulated tone. "Who is it ?" said Polly "Its the insurance man" was the shouted, now angry reply. "Who is it ?" from Polly. This time there was no reply but a dull thump outside the door. A little later the old lady returned, to find an overweight middle-aged man lying dead outside her door. As she opened the door, she said to herself aloud, looking at the body, "Who is it ?"

contributed by Mike Livesey

A P45 moment !

The airline I worked for operated high level VIP around-the-world flights, for an American tour company, where we reconfigured our B757 aircraft from 233 seats to 79 first class seats. The passengers stayed with the aircraft and crew throughout; it was essentially an airborne cruise. Everything was excellent, high class service with on-board chefs and of course top level cabin service. One of the challenges was getting the crew visas, especially as some crew needed two passports due to the time that was required to obtain visas and maintain normal daily operations. For this particular trip we had been unable to obtain Chinese visas before the flight departed the UK. This should not really be a big problem, since we had a stopover in Kathmandu for 3 days, and the Chinese embassy there would be available to issue our visas. The crew arrived in Kathmandu and were due to go to the Chinese Embassy the next day, a Wednesday. The crew duly arrived at the Embassy but it transpired that it was a Chinese bank holiday and therefore the embassy had closed ! We still did not think it was going to be a big problem because we had the permit to go into Chengdu the next day for the passengers, so we could land in Chengdu, drop off our passengers, then ferry to Hong Kong to get visas. We could use the 3 day stay that the passengers were going to have in China. The company were happy with plan B. The next day the flight departed Kathmandu, en route for Chengdu, arrived in Chengdu. The passengers were landed, then suddenly the crew were arrested, the aircraft impounded, and the crew deported to Hong Kong ! This was my worst nightmare ! Definitely a moment to be handed my P45..... We had to buy tickets on China Southern to Hong Kong for all of the crew. Once I was aware of this I phoned the Department for Transport and explained what had happened, where my contact on the other end of the phone said "Ahh !" "What do you mean with Ahh ?" I said. "Well yesterday the UK government required carriers from China to have transit visas through UK for their crews, we advised BA and Virgin but forgot to advise you as your flights are rather infrequent !" So our flight was in fact China's retaliation for a UK policy ! The crew obtained their visas and were allowed to fly back to Chengdu. Then our aircraft was released from being impounded. Finally, we flew out of China the next day with our passengers, none of whom had any inkling of the drama behind the scenes. Fortunately, I was not handed my P45 !

contributed by Eddie Redfern

And finally...

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

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

On the 3rd Chris Tollast increased the local population with one.

On the 30th Derek Hanks saw the light of day.

On the 31st David Wheatley took his first breath.

Please let us know if your birthday is in July 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 fourth issue of proBITS possible - take a bow !

Contributions for the August 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 4th of August 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 August, the 11th.

Our website : www.probusclubhorley.org