



Get your MoJo working!

MoJo is the new, secure and confidential email system adopted by the club for internal communications.

The personal information about you held by Probus is now under your direct control. It will be used to send club updates and links to agendas and minutes as well as to compile future editions of the members list booklet. The 2021 edition is enclosed with this *Probity*.

You should by now have received an email from the Hon Secretary giving instructions on how to access and update your personal profile.

Mighty Lancaster lauded by David West

At the November meeting David West explained in his Zoom presentation that his interest in the “mighty” Lancaster stemmed from the fact that he was ten years old at the end of world war two and his life had been dominated by wartime.

On the outskirts of east London, where he grew up, near the north circular road, there was severe bombing “night after night”. The daily conversation centred on barrage balloons, gas mask practice and Anderson shelters. → page 4

- If you have always found your photo in the members’ booklet unflattering now is your chance to substitute the shot you prefer.
- If you have a Walter Mitty tendency and wish to be Rev, Dr or Lt Col, now’s your chance to upgrade free of charge by clicking your preferred title!

Paying: when you’ve confirmed your membership and updated your profile it’s time to pay your annual sub (unchanged at £40). Pay by BACS using internet banking. The Hon Treasurer will update your MoJo record to acknowledge the payment. **It couldn’t be easier or safer!**



Bernard & Judy’s canyon odyssey

Ten years ago Bernard and Judy Novell spent three weeks touring six states and eight national parks in the south-west USA. At the December meeting Bernard entertained nearly 30 of us on Zoom with a pictorial and superlative-laced account of the trip.

It began in San Francisco, where we learned to differentiate between trolleys and cable cars and noted that Alcatraz is the site of the first lighthouse on the Pacific coast of America. It ended at Santa Fe, New Mexico which, at 7,199ft, is the highest state capital in the USA. Bernard and Judy’s Odyssey took in the Sierra Nevada →page 4

In Bernard’s picture above you may just make out the silhouette of a fellow visitor to the Skyline Window at Arches national park near the Colorado river, in Utah.



Trade marks, good design and high-quality products are meat and drink to mystery member six. Not for him the mumbo-jumbo of modish management theory.

A brand may be “fine” or “fuddy-duddy” but it’s never a “platform” to be “assessed” and “refreshed” by “metrics”.

He exudes bonhomie, remembers names and can match them to faces, abilities that make anyone feel at home (important in his trade) and the hallmark of the effective sales manager he was.

Born in Oxfordshire, he doesn’t regard himself as a local boy. With father in the RAF the family moved around a fair amount.

They settled eventually in a home town shared with Hollywood heart-throb, Cary Grant, who would pal-up for snooker with his father when Grant visited his own elderly mother. He met the great man twice: he was a “lovely chap” who spoke just like in the movies. “I even sat in his Rolls Royce, although **he** didn’t know that!”

He dreaded the thought of an “office job” so joined a local department store and was promoted rapidly. Recognising his potential, the firm sent him to summer schools in sales and marketing. But frustration with responsibility for people who were “not especially bright or progressive in outlook” drove him to look elsewhere.

Hard work, a series of career moves that took him to London, Bournemouth and the West Country and a good war during company M&A activity culminated in

appointment as his firm’s national sales manager for the UK and Ireland. It was the need to be “within an hour’s drive” of London, Heathrow and High Wycombe that drew our mystery member back to the Thames valley, to “the best house I could afford” after the market turbulence wrought by Nigel Lawson’s reform of mortgage interest tax relief.

Commerce is in his blood. But it’s far from the only field in which he excels. He’s a “king one-holer” at golf, a recreation that’s kept him fit for thirty years. Had he not quit serious play a couple of years ago he might have “lowered his handicap to single figures”.

On arrival in The Gap he bought the motor cruiser that became his “small boat on the tidal Thames” and managed to jump the queue for a coveted mooring at Henley. He saw his boating milieu as “mainly regattas and leisurely cruising”. But his horizon expanded massively four years ago when he received an email. A chandler in Essex had called for volunteers to sail round GB in a fundraiser for Macmillan, a favourite charity.

The voyage, anti-clockwise from the Crouch, was in six stages, with scheduled crew changes at each stop. Our mystery member joined at Inverness, at the start of stage two.

The adventure ended at the Essex chandlery five weeks later, following calls at Oban and Troon, Peel on the Isle of Man and Dublin. The next stop, at Milford Haven, was unexpectedly long while “appalling” gales that slowed the crossing from Ireland passed over and a broken-down engine was replaced.

An earlier boating encounter had brought our mystery member enviously close to Princess Diana. This was in 1995, just two years before her death.

Having been denied a place at Chelsea Harbour design week his company gate-crashed the event as a pirate exhibitor, with a pop-up showroom on a Thames barge furnished lavishly in the company’s wares.

It caught Diana’s eye after she worked out at the fitness centre opposite and she invited herself aboard. “She came out of curiosity. I was there but not introduced”, he laments.

He has fond memories of the Grosvenor House dinners of the Royal Warrant Holders Association, the ultimate commercial networking event. Notable guest speakers included the Duke of Edinburgh and the best known *Speaker* of all, George “Order, order!” Thomas, the late Viscount Tonypandy.

“We had stuff in Frogmore and Buckingham Palace and other royal buildings”, he

VENTURING OUT

I’ve decided to grab the bull by the horns and I’ve booked my first trip for 2021 this morning. I am off to Iceland in February.

If that goes well I’ll probably look at Waitrose in March and Tesco in April.

(With apologies to Richard Forde)

explained casually, “but not as an exclusive supplier”. It was “good advertising” but the warrant could be withdrawn at any time. “You had to keep supplying to retain it”. The bills were paid... “mostly”.

His grandfather had encouraged him to learn Latin and modern languages. His father was good at languages but “they passed me by”, he admits, a regret made more poignant by his daughter’s fluency in French and German.

Visiting her in Australia gives mystery member six the opportunity to indulge his love of lobster and oysters at affordable cost, washed down with Saint Émilion and Oyster Bay sauvignon blanc.

One of his hidden talents is as a medium-fast bowler, in which capacity he represented both school and firm. He’s also keen on rugby, but as a spectator, not player.

A pet hate is “bad language”, whether on the terraces or elsewhere. “Swearing is a sign of insecurity”. Tailgating annoys him, too. “Don’t they realise they can’t pass 20 cars at once?”

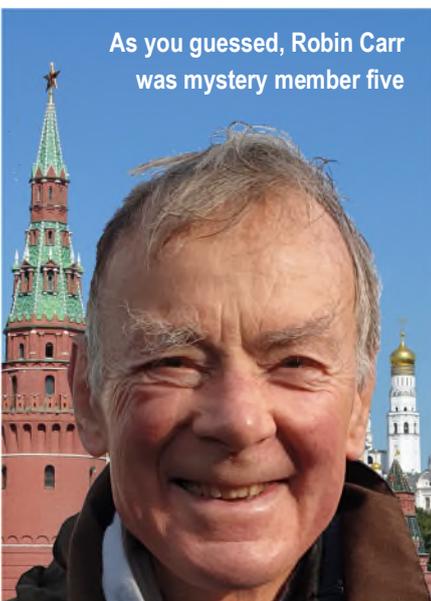
He discovered a liking for opera by accident. Under an *FT* scheme to make the arts accessible he was offered two £120 tickets at £10 each to hear Puccini’s *Turandot* at Covent Garden. He was working in Devon and the tickets were for “tomorrow” but somehow he and his wife made it.

His desert island disc is less high-brow, *The girl of my best friend*, by Elvis. It was his best friend who introduced him to his future wife and it was always “their” song.

The book he would want on the desert island, *Sailing essentials* by Steve Sleight might help him escape. His luxury, a supply of Fullers’ London Pride, might persuade him to stay. *Who is mystery member six?*

Look for the answer in the next Probity

As you guessed, Robin Carr was mystery member five



XEDSXWORD No. 5

The Compiler will pay £10 to the charity of choice of the sender of the first all-correct solution drawn out of the hat.

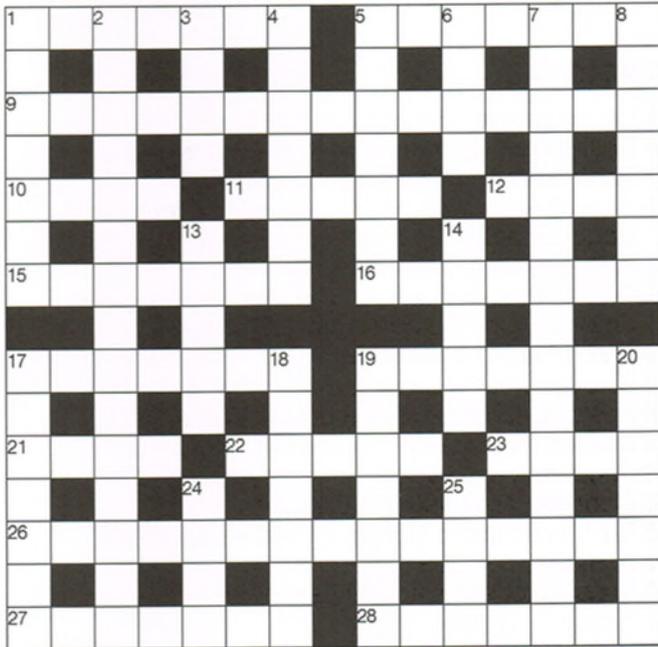
Closing date 31st January 2021

N.B. Send your entries to John Gray,

john@thegrays.myzen.co.uk

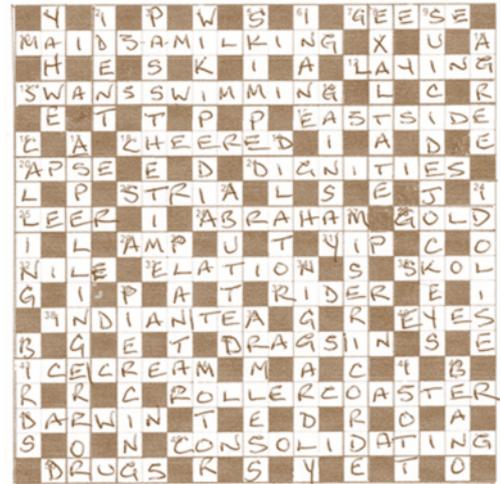
or

13 Holmlea Road



Name(s).....

Charity.....



Solution to XedsXmasXtravaganza!

Congratulations to the winners

Don and Hazel Shrimpton

Across

1. Confused, but she's a goddess in bed! (7)
5. "Wuthering Heights", e.g., is beneath Form 1B (7)
9. Angrily taking part in the Ball. (7,4,4)
10. Book in American -and throw out. (4)
11. Telegraphs back "Sew in religious instruction" (5)
12. On the level, it is a house. (4)
15. Cook me curry and this will show if it's hot. (7)
16. I get near Island race in sprucer attire (7)
17. He won't hand out bouquets for nothing! (7)
19. Beer's a constituent of pink gin. (7)
21. State name during Radio Wales broadcast. (4)
22. Silver-lined pot of irreligious nature. (5)
23. Riot about a threesome. (4)
26. They practise until they're ready to drop! (9,6)
27. Secures re-invested savings. (7)
28. Elizabethan poet gave directions to Nazi architect. (7)

Down

1. Undesirable behaviour shown by poor class. (3,4)
2. Government department, not the industrial Chaplain's domain. (8,2,5)
3. Go under canvas. (4)
4. Tidying up one's sense of worth. (7)
5. Felony takes on an historic war. (7)
6. Shade seen when a shy girl blushes! (4)
7. Thieves who steal only watches. (5,4,6)
8. Maker given credit to consume alternative. (7)
13. Danish trumpet I'd found glowing with unnatural glare (5)
14. Warped taste for civil power. (5)
17. Dolphin star tiddlywinks player? (7)
18. Domestic storms a-brewin' here! (7)
19. Dutch settlers surrounded upset volunteers, but they went ahead! (7)
20. "The Godfather" reissued as porn S.O.S. (7)
24. Cure turns greyish-yellow. (4)
25. Let off without charge. (4)



Bernard's panoramic shot of the Amphitheatre at Bryce Canyon, Utah

Mighty Lancaster

→ from page 1

His mum moved to Lincolnshire “to get away from it all”, only to discover that a big air base was being built beside their new home, to accommodate two squadrons of Lancasters. His house was near the short runway and he spent hours running around the airfield perimeter. It was his route to school.

David later worked for Aston Martin, on the design of the DB4, and had moved to their office near Newport Pagnell. One day he heard the “unmistakable” sound of a Lancaster overhead and came to discover that a plane, built near the end of the war which had not seen active service, was being maintained at nearby Cranfield. A group of enthusiasts was planning to restore it (*pictured below*) to the WW2 design.

He pointed out that this was the era of

the V-bombers. Aircraft from the war were being scrapped. No Stirlings or Halifaxes survived and he knew of only one Lancaster, at the RAF museum in Hendon.

He described the gestation of the heavy bomber. The damage wrought by WW1 Zeppelins had shaken the UK into appreciating the potential of air warfare. As a result we embarked on a design programme for a heavy, long distance bomber before WW2. Among all the major powers, including the USA and Japan, the UK was the only country to do so.

Churchill acknowledged that the Battle of Britain's success was due to the fighters but “bombers alone can provide us with the means to victory”, he said. By 1941 Britain had three new heavy bombers, the Halifax, the Stirling and the two-engine Avro Manchester, considered to be the “father” of the four-engine Lancaster. In effect, the Manchester and Lancaster were

Odyssey → from page 1

range which, at 11-14,000ft, is higher than the Rockies; Las Vegas; Yosemite; the Dead Giant (a tree with a stagecoach-sized tunnel through it); Death Valley and other ghoulishly named sights, including Badwater Basin, the “lowest point in the western hemisphere” at 282ft below sea level.

Then it was on to the Grand Canyon, which is up to 18 miles wide and one mile deep and the “continental divide” at Independence Pass (12,095ft). This determines whether rainwater drains to the Atlantic or the Pacific. It is north of Santa Fe and not far from a “sanctuary” dedicated to the late country singer, John Denver.

This gloriously illustrated talk is on the Probus website.

developed in parallel and when the Manchester began to suffer frequent engine failures the Lancaster was ready to step in. It could fly higher and further than any other bomber at the time, and went into service from 1942. “By 1943 it had started to play a decisive role.”

This bomber programme, David said, marked the start of the “rise of British air power”. Britain led in aircraft design and “the Germans would never catch up”.

David provided a wealth of technical and design details, anecdotes about the designers and pilots, statistics (its “outstanding” bomb carrying capacity), interpretations and accounts of bombing raids (the “morale boosting” raid on Cologne) involving the Lancaster and Bomber Command.

See David's talk on the Probus website.

