



We'll meet again—on ~~11~~ 11 August

Yes, it looks like we'll be able to meet again face-to-face on 11 August. With our traditional venue out of bounds for the immediate future the committee has agreed, after a painstaking search, to move to the Shillingford Bridge hotel.

Arrangements will as far as possible return to those familiar before the pandemic and lockdown, with coffee on arrival and lunch available by advanced booking. Parking is free but to avoid a fine you must register your car with Alan Matthews in advance or at the hotel reception on arrival.

It's assumed you will want to share transport where possible.

Full details will be circulated well in advance by the Hon Secretary.

The Chairman and committee look forward especially to welcoming those of you who've been unable to join in the virtual meetings over the past year.



You had to be tactful and confident of your ground to disagree with the Duke of Edinburgh to his face. Mystery member nine admits coyly to

having done so – and he's survived to tell the tale.

He's also trekked the mountains of Rwanda to find the endangered mountain gorillas. Their survival is attributed to David Attenborough's 1979 TV series, *Life on Earth*, but they also starred in the 1988 Hollywood blockbuster, *Gorillas in the Mist*.

In an age when many struggle to communicate by Zoom it is startling to note that our mystery member successfully delivered an academic lecture by satellite across the islands of the South Pacific...more than thirty years ago.

His genealogical probing revealed that his family (including a great grandfather from South Stoke) comes "predominantly from Berks Bucks and Oxon". His direct ancestors were Oxfordshire boot makers who migrated to Reading in the late nineteenth century. A surprising discovery was that the first child in each of five successive generations was → [page 2](#)



To avert the risk of a parking fine please let Alan Matthews have your car registration number as soon as possible and definitely before the meeting



“Never trust what you see on TV”

We had a generous dose of reality and unreality TV by Zoom in June when Christine Green gave a breathless and lavishly illustrated account of her 15 years working and freelancing as a graphic designer for the BBC. It was a behind the scenes look at television graphics and programme making, leading her to conclude: "You can never trust anything you see on TV".

We went away with a fascinating insight into the tricks of the TV and movie animation and graphics trade and an admiration for the innovative and resourceful backroom people whose painstaking work helps make those in front of the camera look clever.

Christine joined the Beeb "when everything

had been done by film" and the corporation was "transforming into digital techniques". So she's witnessed the old and new first-hand.

“From being really small and addicted to *Blue Peter* and *Vision On* all I wanted to do was make pictures for television.”

She made extensive use of the BBC's futuristic Radiophonic Workshop and, in the days before computer graphics, recalls assembling Lego "brick by brick" to animate a statistical chart.

The many well known people she's worked with include Patricia Hodge (*Tales from Marques*), David Craig (*Our Friends in the North*), Sandy Toksvig and John McCarthy (*Island Race*) and Fiona Bruce (*Antiques Road Show*—see picture, left).

Programmes for which she's →page 4

Mystery member from page 1

born less than nine months after their respective parents' weddings. This was "less a matter of licentious behaviour than Darwinian necessity", he surmises.

The Royal Navy was his preference for national service but getting in was hard unless you had family connections or had been a naval cadet.

However, it was the Cold War and the Navy needed recruits who understood Russian. So he enrolled at the Joint Services School for Linguists and spent a year in Germany monitoring Russian communications.

Next came a degree in French; but he avoided following his peers into business and school teaching and had yet to discover his academic potential.

He had, as a small child, immersed himself in guides to English seaside resorts, and this proved to be an early sign of a wanderlust to come.

However, his first application to join the career service of the British Council, the cultural arm of Britain's overseas representation, was unsuccessful.

"As a consolation", he accepted a scholarship at the University of London Institute of Education to train as a teacher of English as a foreign language, with the opportunity it offered for a working life abroad.

As "the academic he had never intended to be", mystery member nine used his practical experience and knowledge of linguistics to inform an "exploratory study" that has, according to Google, appeared in over a hundred editions and sold thousands of copies, "world-wide and in translation to six languages". Confronted with this surprising citation he said it helped explain why he had been "astonished" a couple of years ago to receive "an unexplained royalty from his publisher" for sales of a book published some forty

years earlier.

Mystery member nine is upbeat about things he has not done. He's glad he turned down an offer to work in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, now called Kiribati and Tuvalu, partly because he was "expected to set a good example by always dressing for dinner" and partly because "contraceptives were unobtainable" on the islands!

He was relieved to have declined a job offer in 1963 at the University of Huế near the border between South and North Vietnam, "as a few weeks later the Viet Cong invaded and took it over".

And he's proud to have said "No" when invited to deliver a lecture in South Africa to commemorate the first arrival of British colonists. This was long before we'd heard of the "cancel culture" and empire revisionism.

More recently he was a leading member of the team that developed the Goring neighbourhood plan, adopted in 2018 after five years of deliberation, negotiation and consultation.

An enthusiastic wine buff, his desert island luxury would be "a wine cellar, suitably filled". He'd like access to e-books, so a good broadband link would be essential. He's more specific about discs: *Lullaby of Birdland* by George Shearing and *Potato Head Blues* by Louis Armstrong, with his classical tastes satisfied by Mozart, through the piano concertos and *Così fan tutte*.

He's long given to the charity, WaterAid. "In my travels, especially in Africa, I have seen the huge impact on people's lives of improved access to fresh water," he explained.

It was when working in Conakry, capital of Guinea that our mystery member had dinner at the residence of the ambassador with Dennis Healey, with whom he had much in common

academically. "He was put up at the hotel where I was living so I chauffeured him to and fro". We had several deep discussions about the politics of west African and elsewhere".

The Duke of Edinburgh chaired a panel set up to judge a book award established by the English Speaking Union. When he suggested a worthy winner, our mystery member had the temerity to disagree. The duke acknowledged that he was among experts and, with his customary grace, bowed to the judgment of our mystery member and his fellow academics.

It was in 1966 that mystery member nine joined a newly established university department, progressing to head the department and become Dean of the Faculty.

He has not retired in the sense that most of us understand it. Instead, like some others who reach pre-eminence in their chosen fields, he's been awarded a title that carries all the prestige of a job but none of the work load.

It represents a lifetime of accumulated wisdom and helps his alma mater keep a hold on him for when this wisdom comes in useful.

Who is mystery member nine?

Look for the answer in the next Probity



Mystery member 8, Mike Brodie, helped raise £150,000 to refurbish the Monell Room

XEDSXWORD No. 8

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

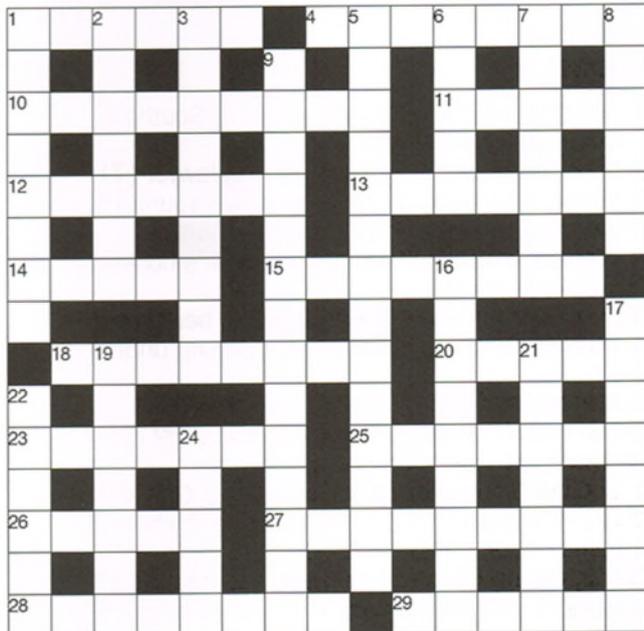
Closing date 31st July 2021

N.B. Send your entries to John Gray

john@thegrays.myzen.co.uk

or

13 Holmlea Road



Across

1. Disreputable revolutionary joined comic Costello. (6)
4. Cleaner took boy into care. (8)
10. He cuddles up as planned. (9)
11. Doctor everybody, it sounds - sleepy-sounding! (5)
12. Lines laid down by judges. (7)
13. Musical note as surgeon may perform? (7)
14. Gives drugs during Cluedo sessions. (5)
15. Stretch for Tesla's Musk hitting barrier. (8)
18. Document requesting movement of wine? (8)
20. Ropey description of girl with nothing on! (5)
23. Goes North for advance notice. (5,2)
25. Hairstyle often seen on beaches. (7)
26. Boy the French often found in the kitchen. (5)
27. Metro unit can make trains punctual. (3,2,4)
28. U.S. General stuns composing such atonal music... (8)
29.can make vocalist resign! (6)

Name(s).....

Charity.....



Solution to XEDSXWORD No 7

Congratulations to the winner

Janet Hurst

Down

1. Holmes's yardman left on the dais. (8)
2. Supports Sdloh! (7)
3. Pleasure seekers can be so dishonest. (9)
5. Horny co-editors applied soothing cream! (14)
6. Clear back, for example, between furrows. (5)
7. Obdurate-sounding 80's pop star. (7)
8. Cried out, deeply affected. (6)
9. French Band-Aid makes firmer dressing. (7,2,5)
16. Pill I swallowed in gaol recalled Churchillian disaster. (9)
17. If ancestor lost energy, you'd have to put up with it! (8)
19. Heard the groom might place what the jilt did? (7)
21. Drooping salvationists on child's horse, swallowing gin! (7)
22. Chat about the French cottage. (6)
24. Possibly least likely to take without permission. (5)

“Never trust what you see on TV”

→ from page 2

created and produced video and animation sequences include the Queen’s Christmas broadcast, *Foyle’s War*, *Elizabeth R*, for which she designed the distinctive “E” logo (see page 2), *Underbelly*, for which she had spent two days filming and three editing “dead things” and *Treasures in Trust*, about the National Trust, a programme defined by Christine’s sequence of vegetation growth and

“To defeat Hitler the continent had to be invaded. Once the Allies had a foothold on the continent a harbour would be needed. The “disastrous” Dieppe raid, Operation Jubilee of August 1942, had shown that an existing port could not be taken because they were all fortified; and that unmodified tanks “could not get a grip” on a shingle beach. “So, two harbours were created.”

This, explained Michael Dunn in his Zoom talk on 12 May, was the rationale for the amazing Mulberry harbours that reinforced the successful D-Day landings in June 1944.

Mulberry A was used by American forces at Vierville-Saint-Laurent and **Mulberry B** by mainly British and Canadian forces, at Arromanches les Bains, both in Normandy.

Surveying the coast in preparation for Dieppe had been done in part by rudimentary aerial photography and in part by analysis of picture postcards bought or sent by people on holiday. This was not enough and intelligence had to be improved.

A special working group, known as Transport 5 (TN5) had been set up at the War Office in 1941 to look at the problem of port repair. It was led by Brigadier Bruce White, a consulting engineer and seasoned soldier from the first world war. He expanded the brief of TN5 to include a possible future invasion of Europe.

The Admiralty began developing ideas independently, under Admiral Hallett, who had commanded the Dieppe raid, again using a team of civil engineers.

The planning was “clearly viewed as rudderless”, said Mike, and Churchill instigated a review of “what was going on”.

A May 1942 memo from Churchill demanded, “piers for use on beaches... that must float up and down with the tide. The anchor problem must be mastered. Let us have the best solution worked out. Don’t argue the matter. The difficulties will argue for themselves.”

A practical experiment demonstrated to defence chiefs that breakwaters would be essential for each of the two temporary harbours planned.

The one developed successfully was made of steel reinforced concrete caissons, towed in train across the channel and sunk a mile or so off-shore. The scale can be

decay through the seasons of the year. A thirty-second title sequence for *Our Friends in the North* represented four full days of shooting and editing.

Christine left the BBC staff to go freelance when the producers for whom she mainly worked “went off to become feature film makers” for the cinema and streaming services, “leaving me high and dry”. She “felt too creative to teach” but, nonetheless, used her experience to start a class in *Kirigami*, the Japanese art of 3-D paper cutting.

“This led to the job of my dreams”, supporting and appearing in the BBC’s reality TV show, *MAKE! Craft Britain*, screened five years ago. “It was a joy to do, really exciting!” She’s gone on to build a business teaching paper cutting and patch-making crafts around the UK, including at Ardington, near Wantage. She also takes commissions and obtains most of her fabric from car boot sales. “I consider myself extremely lucky to do what I love and love what I do!” **See all this and more on the Probus website**

The Mulberry miracle



imagined from the specification that the temporary harbours each needed to be “the same size as the port of Dover”.

Some caissons incorporated anti-aircraft stations that were “enthusiastically used”.

Remains of the caissons can still be seen at low tide off Arromanches and at Littlestone beach, near Romney Marsh in Kent.

Among the many spares made, some sunken caissons off Selsey Bill have proved to be “havens for fish”, reported Roger Wood during the Q&A session.

The harbour that became known as the Mulberry was a highly flexible structure consisting of elliptical sided steel bridges or “whales” connected by spherical bearings to flat, concrete or steel floating “beetles”, with pierheads on jack-up legs or “spuds” that sank

into the sea bed for stability.

They were put together in eight months by a labour force of 15,000, many inexperienced.

Some 300 firms were involved in making pierheads and some 250 in making the roadways, supervised by seven firms of consulting engineers. The work was procured on a cost-plus basis without competitive tendering; but “meticulous” records were kept and good value obtained.

Each of the 23 pierheads had an independent power supply adequate for operating its own jacking mechanism. Mulberry B had an offloading capacity of six thousand tons a day and Mulberry A five thousand tons.

The Mulberrys proved durable and it was ten days in use before Mulberry A began to fail. This was attributed in part to unfamiliarity with Channel weather conditions among the Americans, who did not apply enough attention to detail in deployment.

However, as Tony Laurence pointed out in Q&As, the Americans offloaded more supplies in total, using a mixture of methods.

Most film footage of the temporary harbours in use was taken of Mulberry A. This is why newsreels reproduced in documentary films today tend to show American servicemen and British and Canadian troops are rarely seen.

A model of Mulberry B, made by Bassett Lowke of Northampton for design proving purposes, is on permanent display at the Débarquement museum at Arromanches.

A lasting memento is that Arromanches is twinned with Instow, north Devon, where some of the D-Day rehearsals were held.

You can see Michael’s well illustrated presentation on the Probus website.

Mulberry roadway on test off Cairn Head, Dumfries and Galloway

