



# Reading and District Probus Club

## "Telegraph"

December 2024

Web-site Address – [www.probusclub-reading.org.uk](http://www.probusclub-reading.org.uk)

**The Club Committee wishes you all a  
Very Merry Christmas**

Our speaker this month is Lucy Maynard, who will tell us about "The Dogs Trust".

### LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS (Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December)

The menu choices have already been circulated with the invitation to members to join us with their wives and friends at our Christmas Lunch. There will be no Business Meeting on that day and lunch will be served promptly at 12:45.

### UPCOMING SPEAKER ARRANGEMENTS

14<sup>th</sup> January 2025    Jacquie Kavanagh - "The BBC Archives in Caversham House"

11<sup>th</sup> February 2025    AGM – there will be no Speaker this month

11<sup>th</sup> March 2025    Michael Humphries - "Reminiscences of a very Amateur Organist"

8<sup>th</sup> April 2025    Peter Higginson - "The History of Electronic Computers"

### "4<sup>th</sup> TUESDAY CLUB" LUNCH

There will be no 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday Club lunch this month due to it being the day before Christmas!

### BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Yet another barren month. People do not like to be born in December, it means they probably miss out on one annual present!!

### REGALIA & CLUB SALES

If any member wishes to purchase a tie or any other item, please contact Russell King.

#### **Reading & District Probus Club – Committee Members**

**President:** Colin Hatcher    **Vice-President:** Peter Higginson    **Immediate Past President:** Francis Brown  
**Secretary:** David Laird    **Treasurer:** Siraj Vora    **Speaker Secretary:** Vacant  
**Almoner:** Russell King    **Press Secretary:** Vacant    **Regalia & Club Sales:** Russell King

## THIS MONTH'S HUMOUR



[\(Click to play\)](#)

### **SOME TRIVIA FOR YOUR CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer, was created in 1939, in Chicago, for the Montgomery Ward department stores for a Christmas promotion. The lyrics were written as a poem by Robert May, but weren't set to music until 1947. Gene Autry recorded the hit song in 1949.

The first toothbrush with bristles was developed in China in 1498. Bristles were taken from hogs at first, later from horses. The nylon bristles were developed in 1938 by DuPont.

The ancient Egyptians slept on pillows made of stone.

The world's smallest independent state is the Vatican City, with a population of about 1,000 — and a zero birthrate. The Vatican's Swiss Guard still wears a uniform designed by Michelangelo in the early 16th century.

The word 'news' came from the first letters of the words North, East, West and South. This was because information was being gathered from all different directions.

About one tenth of the Earth's surface is permanently covered with ice.

Chocolate syrup was used for blood in the famous 45-second shower scene in Alfred Hitchcock's movie, Psycho, which actually took seven days to shoot.

The color of a chili is no indication of its spiciness, but size usually is — the smaller the pepper, the hotter it is. Capsaicin, which makes hot peppers 'hot' to the human mouth, is best neutralized by casein, the main protein found in milk.

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history: Spades - King David, Clubs - Alexander the Great, Hearts - Charlemagne, Diamonds - Julius Caesar.

Although construction of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Strasbourg started in 1015, it was not until 1439 that the spire was completed.

In Great Britain and the American colonies the year 1752 only had 354 days. In that year, the type of calendar was changed, and 11 days were lost.

Americans eat more bananas than any other fruit, a total of 11 billion a year. Bananas are actually herbs and die after fruiting, like all herbs do.

The largest single flower is the rafflesia or 'corpse flower'. They are generally three feet in diameter with the record being 42 inches.

As many as nine out of ten people are right-handed, and the word for that side, 'right', is derived from a variety of sources, all of which suggest strength. 'Left', on the other hand, comes from the Old English, 'lyft', for useless, weak. Left-handed people are statistically more likely to be geniuses, and to be insane. Left-handedness is more common among writers and some kinds of artists. But lefties tend to be more accident-prone and on average don't live as long. Gerald Ford, George Bush, John F Kennedy Jr, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and Bill Clinton are well-known left-handers.

'Ough' can be pronounced in eight different ways. The following sentence contains them all: 'A tough, dough-faced ploughman strode through the streets of Scarborough, coughing and hiccoughing thoughtfully.'

A typical lightning bolt is two to four inches wide and two miles long.

Clans of long ago that wanted to get rid of their unwanted people without killing them used to burn their houses down — hence the expression 'to get fired'.

The world's costliest coffee, at \$130 a pound, is called kopiluwak. It is found in the droppings of a type of marsupial that eats only the very best coffee beans. Plantation workers track them and scoop their precious poop.

In the 19th century, craftsmen who made hats were known to be excitable and irrational, as well as to tremble with palsy and mix up their words. Such behavior gave rise to the familiar expression 'mad as a hatter'. The disorder, called hatter's shakes, was caused by chronic mercury poisoning from the solution used to treat the felt. Attacking the central nervous system, the toxin led to behavioral symptoms.

*David Laird*  
30 November 2024