



# The Probe

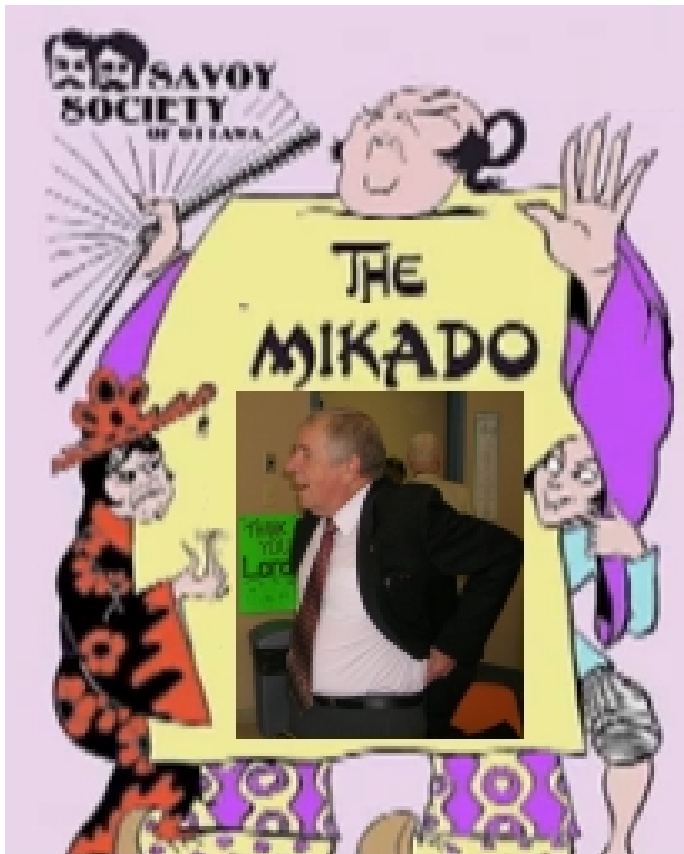
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## March - Dr. John Forster

John regaled us with stories of the Savoy Operas from the early days of Gilbert, Sullivan and Richard D'Oyly Carte's collaboration to the upcoming production of *The Mikado* by the Ottawa Savoy Society.



John Forster chatting after his talk, superimposed on the publicity poster for the performance.

The first opera was *Trial by Jury* (1875) and the others followed in quick succession finishing with *The Grand Duke* (1896 - a failure). Gilbert was as firm a director as anyone in Hollywood and insisted on his instructions being followed to the letter. This approach lasted until 1961 when the copyright expired but many modern productions stick to his script. (At this point, John broke into song, "Stick close to your desks and never go to sea, And you all may be rulers of the Queen's Navee" (HMS Pinafore). The Ottawa Savoy Society adds a little topical levity.

Richard D'Oyly Carte formed a Savoy Touring Company which visited the Theatre Royal in Newcastle, the first theatre in the world to have electric light. He decided to build a permanent home for the operas and the Savoy became the first theatre in London with electric light. In 1921 this revolutionized the London Theatre scene, which, to that time, had been characterized by the smell of orange peel and lamp oil.

The 7-year old Gilbert was kidnapped by Neapolitan brigands (redeemed by his father for 25 pounds) and used this experience in the plot of *Pirates of Penzance*. This somehow led John to Vic Toews and, "My object all sublime - I shall achieve in time - To make the punishment fit the crime - The punishment fit the crime." (*Mikado*)

After graduation, Gilbert became a (not very good) lawyer. "When I, good friends, was called to the bar, I'd an appetite fresh and hearty". (*Trial by Jury*)

Arthur Sullivan was quite different. His friends expected a career in church music. *Onward Christian Soldiers* is one of his compositions. He also composed oratorios, a symphony, concertos and incidental music to many of Shakespeare's plays.

Bringing us up to date, John talked about some of the problems facing opera companies today. These are mainly financial, not artistic. Both the Savoy Society and Opera Lyra have run into problems in the last couple of years. The Savoy Society had to give up Centrepoinde as it had become too expensive and so the company has returned to the Adult High School.

John finished by talking about singing training - he started at age 9 - and the difficulties of singing and moving at the same time. As expected by now, he illustrated his point with a few dance steps from his role as the Mikado.

His final comment - "Singing is good for you."

### **PROBUS' Vital Purpose ...**

**To stimulate thought, interest and participation in activities at a time in life when it is easy to become complacent and self-centred.**

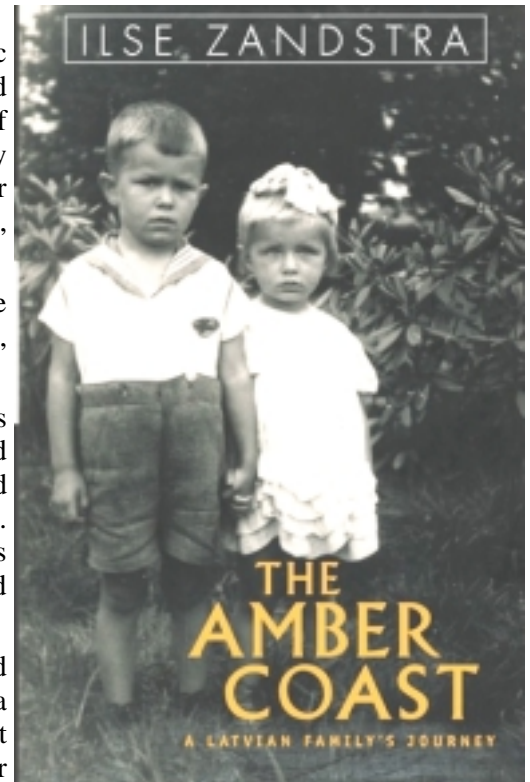
## The Amber Coast

Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania constitute the Amber Coast of the Baltic Sea. Our speaker at the February 22nd meeting led us to Latvia, past and present. Ilse Zandstra, a local author, presented slides and a discussion of her Latvian roots. Ilse was born in Latvia, the second child in a family who fled from their home when Ilse was but a babe in arms. Her experiences have been recorded in her biography "The Amber Coast", which she had made available for purchase and autograph.

In addition to memories from Latvia, Germany, Sweden and Canada we learned, from an immigrant's perspective the trials of war, displacement, language acquisition and culture shock.

The author has lived in Europe, Canada, USA, Columbia, the Philippines and Peru and was able to add anecdotes from some of these areas and answer questions about life as a world traveller. We certainly gained insight and appreciation of one of the tiles in Canada's cultural mosaic. References to love of flowers, a quaint language and family traditions that have been maintained throughout generations in the Western world provide a glimpse of a still rich culture.

Ilse's stories of the journey by ship to Riga in 1990 were well illustrated and tied neatly into her father's profession and lifetime commitment as a naval engineer. The challenges of employment in a whole different climate gave us understanding of some of the upheaval created in her family.



Ms Zandstra's book is available online at [www.lumina.com/store/ambercoast.htm](http://www.lumina.com/store/ambercoast.htm). She has also published other works, among them two children's books in Spanish about a Peruvian spectacled bear.

Ilse joined us for lunch at the Royal Oak and enjoyed pleasant chats with many of our members. She is now a member for this year in our Probus club as the recipient of that gift from Joan Evans who thanked her.

*Lynne Bond*

## You are my Sunshine

Nobody seems to like the term "Sunshine", least of all Marie-Neige our "Sunshine Coordinator" but we do like to keep in touch with members who are under the weather. Maybe to bring them a little ray of sunshine.

If you know of anyone who is missing a meeting or meetings due to ill health, please let Marie-Neige Atchison know. She can be contacted at 613-824-6144 or by email - [m2n2@rogers.com](mailto:m2n2@rogers.com)

And if you have any suggestions for a better title, we would like to hear them.

## Old Lace

From the Lincolnshire Echo: "Wanted. Very old baby's christening gown."

[www.probusaltavista.ca](http://www.probusaltavista.ca)

Our web site has a map, bus timetables, notice of the next speakers and events. It also lists every speaker we have had from Frank Fesco in September 1999 to this year's speakers. and has copies of *The Probe* from the first issue in April 2001.

It provides links to other Probus web sites.

## Spring Luncheon

The Eastern Ontario Probus Spring Luncheon this year will be hosted by the Perth Probus Club on Tuesday, May 15th. The venue is Code's Mill, one of Perth's most beautifully preserved and prestigious heritage buildings.

Perth is about an hour from the west end of Ottawa. If you approach by Highway 7, turn left at Highway 43 (Wilson Street West) and continue to #17 Wilson Street East.

Code's Mill has limited parking but the property backs on to the Wilson Street municipal lot.

While there, don't miss the gift shop.

More information at [www.probusperth.ca/springfling/](http://www.probusperth.ca/springfling/)

## Can't find your keys?

An article in the *Daily Telegraph* via the *Ottawa Citizen* suggests that our ability to find our car keys or wallet may be significantly increased by saying the name of the object out loud. Research indicates that hearing an object's name can improve our effectiveness in searching.

Another study says that if you set off to fetch something, the probability of forgetting what you are fetching is increased if you pass through a doorway.

If we combine the two and say the name of the object as we pass through a doorway, we should have a better chance of remembering why we set off.

One of the advantages of modern technology is that no-one will think you crazy for talking to yourself - they will assume that you are on your cell phone.

## From the Newsletters

### Cornwall

#### Grape Thoughts

If all be true that I do think,

There are 5 reasons why we should drink:

Good wine., a friend, or being dry,

Or lest we should be, by and by,

Or any other reason why !

Henry Aldrich, Theologian & Philosopher, 1647-1710

### North Grenville

"Our membership stands at 173. There are currently 4 people on the waiting list."

The club gets around. In June they plan a visit to Lachute and Montebello and in September, a long weekend in New York City.

## Brochures



Both Probus Centre Canada and our Club have recently published promotional brochures. Both contain the basic purpose of Probus Clubs but beyond that, ours is more specific to our club and area.

The PCC brochure includes some of the history of Probus:

"The clubs spring from two main roots: the "Campus Club" founded by the Rotary Club of Welwyn Garden City, and the "Probus Club" founded by the Rotary Club of Caterham in England in 1965. Since then they have spread worldwide. Probus moved to New Zealand in 1974 and to Australia in 1976. The first Probus Club in North America was the Probus Club of Cambridge, Ontario, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Galt, in 1987."

The PCC brochure lists some features which we take for granted as they have been embedded in the way we operate: "... non-political and non-sectarian."; "... non-profit and non fund raising" "... no compulsion to attend any number of meetings."; "... members may be active members of any other organization ..."; etc.

We published our brochure so that members would have a handy way of explaining Probus to potential new members. **We can easily accommodate more members.**

## How to find us

We meet on the 4th Wednesday of each month except December (2nd Wednesday) in the Hall of Gloucester Presbyterian Church, 91 Pike Street (corner of Lorry Greenberg Drive).

Our meetings begin at 10 but members start arriving soon after 9:30 for coffee and chat. Guests are welcomed.



## May 23rd - Larry O'Brien

High-tech entrepreneur, philanthropist and ex-Mayor of Ottawa, Larry O'Brien will give us a retrospective of his (somewhat turbulent) term as Mayor, and offer his views on the future direction of the City.

Larry built Calian Ltd. from a one-man consulting company in 1982 to a multi-million dollar business. In 1996, he was selected to be one of twelve prominent Canadians to sit on the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Science and Technology (ACST).

The 'kick-off' to his mayoralty campaign was held in the O'Brien Atrium at St. Vincent's Hospital and he was the United Way Person of the Year in 2006.

## June 27th, Sue O'Sullivan

In August 2010, Sue O'Sullivan was appointed Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. This followed a 30-year career in Ottawa's Police Services, rising to Deputy Chief.

A common thread throughout her career has been an advocate for the standing of victims of crime. One of her first acts as Ombudsman was to put forward 20 recommendations aimed at rebalancing our offender-centric justice system.

The Ottawa Citizen (April 23rd, page A10) carries a story by Tobi Cohen on Sue's work on advocacy centres for child crime victims.

## 10-Minute Talks - July

The roster is filling for our 10-minute talks but we are still looking for a couple more speakers. The range of topics is wide and the audience is friendly.

Please let Lynne Bond or John Wright know if you would like to give a talk.

We can help to arrange your pictures from prints or from a computer into a presentation.

## Travel Insurance

Probus Centre Canada has made an arrangement with Johnson Inc. for travel insurance - available to Probus Clubs and members.

For more information, call one of the special representatives at Johnson Inc, Lisa -1-888 412-8822 or Gary - 1-800 661-1973, or visit the [www.johnson.ca/probus](http://www.johnson.ca/probus) website and obtain a quote on-line for Medoc travel insurance.

## Poetry Corner

Many poets and lyricists have tried their hand at April. Carl Sandberg, Goethe, Edmund Spenser (at length), Lucy Maud Montgomery, Emily Dickinson, Longfellow, R.L. Stephenson, among others. The recent bad weather brings to mind **Flanders and Swan's** couplet -

April brings the sweet spring showers  
Down and down for hours and hours.

### An April Night - Lucy Maud Montgomery

The moon comes up o'er the deeps of the woods,  
And the long, low dingles that hide in the hills,  
Where the ancient beeches are moist with buds  
Over the pools and the whimpering rills;

And with her the mists, like dryads that creep  
From their oaks, or the spirits of pine-hid springs,  
Who hold, while the eyes of the world are asleep,  
With the wind on the hills their gay revellings.

Down on the marshlands with flicker and glow  
Wanders Will-o'-the-Wisp through the night,  
Seeking for witch-gold lost long ago  
By the glimmer of goblin lantern-light.

The night is a sorceress, dusk-eyed and dear,  
Akin to all eerie and elfin things,  
Who weaves about us in meadow and mere  
The spell of a hundred vanished Springs.

**Ogden Nash** can usually be relied on for an odd point of view.

### Always Marry An April Girl

Praise the spells and bless the charms,  
I found April in my arms.  
April golden, April cloudy,  
Gracious, cruel, tender, rowdy;  
April soft in flowered languor,  
April cold with sudden anger,  
Ever changing, ever true --  
I love April, I love you.

**Carl Sandberg** takes the "Weird" prize.

Frogs plutter and squdge—and frogs beat the air with a  
recurring thin steel sliver of melody.  
Crows go in fives and tens; they march their black  
feathers past a blue pool; they celebrate an old festival.  
A spider is trying his webs, a pink bug sits on my hand  
washing his forelegs.  
I might ask: Who are these people?

Perhaps we should just wait out the last few days, **but:**

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,