



The Probe

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Everyone has a book in them ...

... but getting it out is not a simple task. **Dorothy Anne Phillips** took us through the process of creating her book, *Victor and Evie: British Aristocrats in Wartime Rideau Hall*. What started out as a story about a cottage on Blue Sea Lake (in the Outaouais, about 100km from Ottawa) ended up as a book about its builder – Sir Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, Governor-General of Canada, 1916-1921, and his wife Evie.



The Governor-General's Medal

Once she had committed herself to the project, Dorothy undertook extensive research into the lives of her subjects. Some information came from the National Archives, some from Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, home to 16 generations of the Cavendish family, Sir Victor's diary, letters by his aide-de-camp and other sources across Canada. Most impressive was the database of information of which we saw only 30 entries covering 23 October to 15 November 1916. There are 9 columns to identify the item (sequence, date, people, etc) and a tenth column of notes – "Montreal Daily Mail – Arrival in Halifax"; "Letter of apology for not being in Halifax to greet him" (from Prime Minister Borden); "picture of vice-regal party at Rideau Hall"; and hundreds more. Somehow these became a book.

To make sure she was writing professionally, Dorothy took courses at UBC, Humber College and Carleton, supplemented by private courses and membership of the Canadian Authors Association and Ottawa Independent Writers.

Dorothy's **Five Steps to Writing Creative Non-fiction** are:

- Think of a possible story based on events.
- Research and record details of the story
- Study fiction techniques:
 - characters, dialogue, setting, time, plot, conflict, tension, narrative arc
 - study language: sentences, paragraphs, rhythm, metaphor
- Write and rewrite
- Publish

Easier said than done!



From Chatsworth House to Rideau Hall

Chatsworth, in Derbyshire, has been the home of Dukes of Devonshire for 500 years and 16 generations.

If it looks familiar, you may have seen it as *Pemberley*, the home of Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* and *A Death at Pemberley* or other TV shows or films. Or perhaps you were one of its 1,000,000 visitors.

The Dark Mirror

Norma Domey's talk was a reflection on the life and times of Viola Desmond. By a happy coincidence this was within a few days of the Bank of Canada announcement that Mrs. Desmond would be the new face of our \$10 bills.

There is much more to the Viola Desmond story than a black woman sitting in a "Whites Only" seat in a cinema. Viola, one of 10 siblings, was brought up in the Black Community of Halifax. Her father was a respected member of the community who, after a varied career, opened a barber shop. Viola taught school for several years and then, with the examples of her father and of Madame CJ Walker, the first American Black Female Millionaire who built her own beauty empire, Viola went to Montreal and then Atlantic City and New York to learn the business and returned to open *Vi's Studio of Beauty Culture* in Halifax, for Black clients and professionals.

This successful businesswoman who had opened several salons, trained other salon staff and developed her own line of cosmetics, was on her way to Sydney for a business meeting when her car broke down in New Glasgow. An evening at the movies seemed a good way of passing time but the seat she chose was in the "Whites Only" section. She declined to move and the manager called police who arrested her and put her in jail overnight. She was released the next day on payment of a fine for defrauding the N. S. Government of one cent of tax revenue.

Viola applied to the N.S. Supreme Court to have her conviction quashed. The Court reserved its decision on the application which meant that the case was not heard.

Concerned for her safety and the safety of her businesses and employees, Viola sold everything and eventually moved to the US.

But she had sparked a civil rights movement in Nova Scotia.

Change didn't happen quickly. Members of Nova Scotia's Black population were no longer willing to endure life as second class citizens. In 1954, segregation was legally ended in Nova Scotia thanks in large part to the courageous determination of Desmond and others like her who fought to be treated as equal human beings.

In 1955, nine years after Viola's confrontation at the Roseland, Rosa Parks refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama. The United States Congress has called her "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement".



Norma Domey

In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I have a dream" speech. A dream Viola Desmond had 17 years before.

On screen at the Roseland that fateful night were Olivia de Havilland and Lew Ayres in *The Dark Mirror*.

*"... And when great souls die,
after a period peace blooms,
slowly and always
irregularly. Spaces fill
with a kind of
soothing electric vibration.
Our senses, restored, never
to be the same, whisper to us.
They existed. They existed.
We can be. Be and be
better. For they existed."*



Maya Angelou

Norma took a quote from Maya Angelou to describe Viola Desmond: "...born of flesh and destined to become iron, born a cornflower and destined to become a steel magnolia..."

The verse to the left is from Angelou's best known poem, *When Great Trees Fall*

Ontario District #1 (E) Meeting

Most of the clubs in our Probus District were represented at the April 17th meeting in Kingston but a couple were still in shock from the weekend weather. **Hugh Reekie, Joyce Wright and John Wright** joined the other delegates and **Jamie Doolittle** our Probus Canada Director.

Probus Canada Web Site

A key design requirement is to make the site, and hence Probus, attractive to casual and curious visitors, while providing information services to clubs. Instead of all the postings being handled by one person (think: 200 clubs wanting a newsletter posting every month), each District will be asked to provide a volunteer to handle local updates. The new site will be available next month. The costs of the site will be accommodated within our annual fee to Probus.

Club Liability Insurance.

This insurance covers meetings, outings and other 'official' activities of a club, including train wrecks! This happened at a club outing when a locomotive, coupling to the carriages, came in too fast and the shock caused several falls (no serious injuries). Probus insurance was secondary to the train company's.

Probus Licence Plate Surrounds

Hugh has a batch for sale at \$2 each. Get them while they're hot. The minimum order is 200 so, for future orders, it will require several clubs to get together.

Spring Fling

Jamie was quite taken by the 2017 Spring Fling and is working with people from District #2 to hold one for their clubs. He asked for a club (or clubs) to organize a 2019 event for our District. (We have not organized one since 2009, at the Hellenic Centre).

Newsletters

Clubs had been asked to include Newsletter Editors in their delegations and they met in a break-out group. There is a considerable variation in approaches. Some clubs distribute the newsletter by email or email plus snail-mail. None use snail-mail exclusively although some used to. Size varies from 4 to 10 pages. Production is by MS Word or MS Publisher. Budgets range from minimal to about \$150 per year.

In another breakout group, Joyce stirred up quite a bit of interest in our "In-house" speaker meetings.

The suggestion that the next years spring meeting be held a little later, was enthusiastically endorsed.

15 Years Ago in Probe

Monica Scheifele told us about *10,000 Villages*. The eponymous store in Westboro sells the products of village artisans who are given a fair price for their work. She quoted the case of a Batik maker. A company provided the silk and paid her \$4 of which \$2.50 went for materials. The item sold for \$75 in North America. By paying a fair price the 10,000 Villages organization changed what was, effectively, slavery, to a job.

Our March speaker was the **Rt. Hon. Herb Gray**. At that time, Mr. Gray was the Chairman of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission (IJC). The IJC owes its origin to the Boundary Waters Treaty Act of 1909. The Commission consists of three Canadians and three American Commissioners and is responsible for investigating and recommending to the two Governments those trans-boundary water applications and water and air pollution problems that are referred to it by the two Governments.

Also in the issue was a version of a questionnaire by the **Minehead Probus Club (UK)**. Looking ahead to the responses, we found that we rise at 7:30 (on average) and eat our main meal at 6. Pet hates are phone solicitations, loud music, advertising flyers, cold weather and tailgaters but "dirty shoes on a clean floor" sounded like a long standing issue in one household. Other questions were about TV, churchgoing, monarchy, pets, newspapers, magazines, authors and parliament. Unfortunately we asked respondents to rate parliament A to E without saying which was the favourable end of the scale so we could not read much into the responses. Maybe we will do it again sometime to see if we have changed.

UK Probus National Magazine had some notes about trips by UK clubs: "Early on Sunday some 45 members - all of mature years - left the Red Lion in Midgley's coach bound for Paris." (Shadwell & District); "... a combined party of 49 members and guests visited Holland. The first experience was to cross the North Sea overnight ..." (Pontefract); "After returning to Tuscany for a further visit ..." (Cheltenham Regency); "... 35 members, wives and friends set off just after 5 am, bound for Boppard on the Rhine." (Wednesfield).

A notable guest was **Allan Porter**.

Dues 2018

Please check the sign-in sheet and make sure it says "Paid 18" against your name. If not, **Wib** or **Bob** will be pleased to take your dues. (\$25 for singles, \$40 for family).

May 23rd Nicholas McCarthy Beechwood Cemetery

In 2009, Beechwood was recognized by Act of Parliament as the National Cemetery of Canada. It is the final resting place for 75,000 people including many members of the Canadian Forces, Veterans, War Dead, RCMP and Ottawa Police, plus Governors-General, Prime Ministers and Canadian Victoria Cross recipients. Beechwood operates on a not-for-profit basis and is not publicly funded. All funds are dedicated to its maintenance, preservation and enhancement. This care has added a botanical garden dimension including an exceptional collection of hostas.

Nicolas (Nick) McCarthy, the Director of Marketing, Communications and Community Outreach, will guide us through both the history and the botany. Nick began his career in various federal government departments and agencies and then moved to the Not-For-Profit sector. An Ottawa native, he studied at the University of Ottawa, receiving his Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and French Literature.

What's on YOUR Bucket List?

Do you want to follow **Guy Thatcher** (August 2010, April 2014) along the Pilgrim's Way to Santiago di Compostella? Or **Trudi Stephen** (March 2013) to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro? Or an Adventure Tour with **David Newland** (Nov 2014, Oct 2016)? Did **Robert Kazanits** (June 2013) make you want to visit The Hermitage? Or maybe other museums or galleries - The Prado? The Louvre? Did the **Galigans** (October 2016) inspire you to see White Rhinos in their native habitat? Are you going to read **Gibbon's** *Decline and Fall* ... all the way through instead of dozing off after 3 pages? Is renting the NAC to give a recital, on your list? Perhaps a version of **Babette's Feast** is on the menu. How about genealogy (**Noreen Wolfe**, February 2001)? A visit to faraway places with strange sounding names or just to see the sun go down on Galway Bay?

Drop off your bucket list at the Membership Table next month - anonymously, if you wish - and we will compile them.

Maybe if enough people want to see penguins in Antarctica we could arrange a bus tour!

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.

June 27th Peter Kunstadt The Promised Land

If you regularly drive on Bank between Heron and Billings Bridge, you will know the blue **Kunstadt Sports** building. **Peter Kunstadt's** book *The Promised Land* takes us from Prague's Wenceslas Square, with its Russian tanks looking out beyond the statue of "Good" King Wenceslas, to a new life in Canada.



Peter was a member of the Czechoslovakian National Ski Team in the 1960s, but that came to an end when the tanks arrived. He and his fiancée, Susan, escaped from Czechoslovakia and settled in Ottawa. He continued his ski racing career well past his 70th birthday and is still considered 'Elite' in the Canadian Masters Alpine competitions.

But that is today. Peter will take us back 50 years to Pražské Jaro - Prague Spring.

August 22nd In-house

* * * CHANGE * * *

The 5 speaker format stays the same, except that this year you have to rush to put your name on the list. Colin must have been using a bigger stick than his predecessors as he has already recruited 3 speakers!

Christmas in August?

This is not a weather forecast. The proposed change is that YOU supply the food for the picnic and, in exchange, the Club will have the Christmas Party catered. That should make things easier in December.

Details - who brings what - later.

We'll see how this works out before saying that it will be the new normal.