

# NEWSLETTER



## NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



# OCTOBER 2025

### **Message from our Chairman**

Do you sometimes sit back and wonder where the last twelve months have gone? My mother told me many years ago that time accelerates as we get older, but why?

Peter Hayes is, of course, a frequent contributor to our newsletter and I am always keen to read his words of wisdom, so I asked him at the start of our last meeting if he had an explanation. He kindly said the reason is that as we get older we use up an ever-greater proportion of the remainder of our life, which is, of course, logical. I was reminded of this again during the meeting when it was noted that it is now only ten weeks until our Christmas lunch.

George Bernard Shaw put it this way; "The secret of a happy life is to do work you enjoy and then you'll be too busy to know whether you're happy or not." Then again, Warren Buffett, one of the wealthiest people on the planet explained it another way; "When you get to my age you will measure your success in life by how many of the people you want to have love you actually do so. That is the ultimate test of how you have lived your life. If you get to my age and nobody thinks well of you I don't care how big your bank account is, your life has been a disaster"

Probus is all about fellowship where we can make friends and support each other, as well as having fun. Both of our last two speakers commented spontaneously on how much they appreciated the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of our club. That is because we all recognise the importance of fellowship. Long may it stay that way.

**Mike**

## *PUB LUNCH*

**TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER**

**Weston Scrumpy House Restaurant**

**Much Marcle, Ledbury HR8 2NQ**

**1230 for 1300**



What Three Words reference: snips. screaming. mentioned

## *VISIT* - 7th October 2025



## **Westons Cider**

**The Bounds, Much Marcle, Ledbury HR8 2NQ**

**Meet at 10.30 Tour & Tasting at 11.00 12.30**

**£15 per person (paid to the club in advance)**

The Westons Story began in 1878 when Henry Weston settled in Much Marcle and began to produce ciders and perries. Using the wide variety of regional fruit grown in the surrounding orchards, he started pressing and blending. The fermented juice soon proved so popular that his work evolved into a business. Today 'The Bounds', the charming 17th century farmhouse and cider mill where it all began, remains home to his craft.

Each autumn over 35,000 tonnes of fruit is needed to press into ciders so maintaining the apple orchards is a year-round job that takes care and skill.

The Farm Team takes care of the trees, pruning in mid-winter, monitoring the bees and blossom pollination in spring. In summer it's all about keeping a close check on the fruit trees, ensuring the perfect fruit condition before starting the harvest in autumn.



For more information on Westons Cider visit: [www-westons-cider.co.uk](http://www-westons-cider.co.uk)



## Meet The Robin – Your Friendly, Local Bus Service

Looking for a smart, simple way to get around rural areas? **The Robin** is here to help. It's a bookable, on-demand bus service that makes travel easier—wherever you're headed.

Whether you're commuting, connecting to another bus, or simply running errands, **The Robin works the same way every time:**

Just search for your journey, book the ride that suits you best, and go. It's that easy.

### Why Choose The Robin?

- **Local & Affordable** – Designed with your community in mind, The Robin helps you get where you need to go without breaking the bank.
- **Convenient Pickups** – Get picked up close to home, like at a nearby bus stop, without the long walk or wait.
- **Smart Connections** – Link up with other transport services, or travel at times when regular buses just aren't running.

### Connecting You to What Matters

In many rural areas, transport options can be limited or non-existent. That's where The Robin comes in—**bridging the gaps between villages, towns, and essential services.**

Whether it's getting to work, school, a hospital appointment, or the shops, The Robin gives you access to:

- Employment opportunities
- Education and training
- Healthcare services
- Retail and leisure destinations

Where fixed routes stop, **The Robin starts**—making rural travel more flexible, accessible, and connected than ever.

Book over the phone - call The Robin call centre on 0345 2638139 - pay the driver (cash or contactless). 8am – 4pm Monday to Friday. (FREE WITH A BUS PASS)

 [Book via the website](#) - [Login form | Gloucestershire County Council](#) pay via the website or choose to pay the driver

 Book via the phone app ([Apple](#) or [Android](#)) - pay via the app or choose to pay the driver



## READ ALL ABOUT IT

With more and more people reading newspapers online, a recent survey was carried out to find who actually read newspapers and which one.

**THE DAILY MIRROR:** People who think they run the country

**THE GUARDIAN:** People who think they should run the country

**THE TIMES:** People who actually run the country

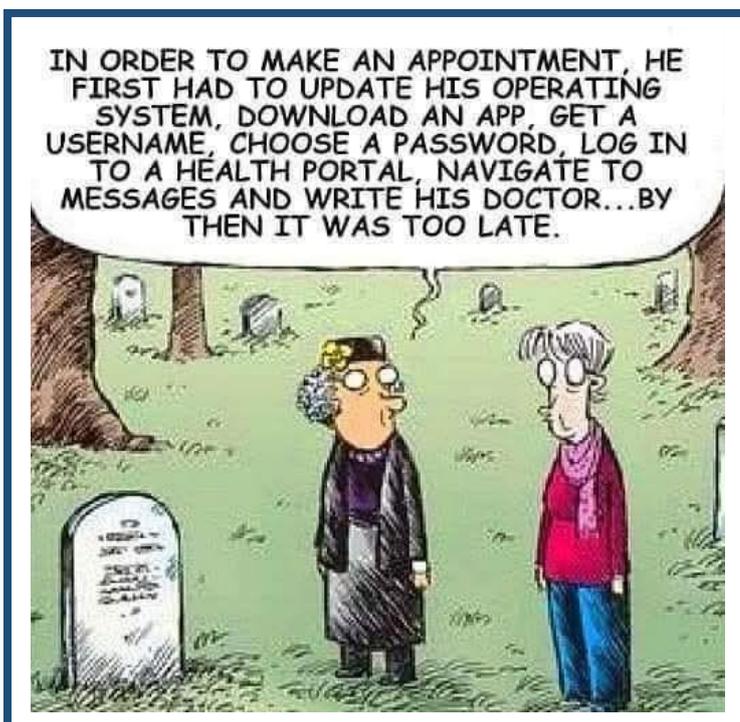
**DAILY MAIL:** The wives of the people who run the country

**FINACIALTIMES:** Those who own the country

**MORNING STAR:** People who think the country should be run by another country.

**TELEGRAPH:** People who think it is run by another country.

**THE SUN:** People who don't care who runs the country as long as they have big boobs.



An old man and a 20 year old are paired together at a golf tournament. They're playing a long par 5 that dog legs around some tall trees.

As the 20 year old sets up his tee shot to hit onto the fairway the old man notes "when I was your age we used to hit over the trees - not around to the side."

So the 20 year old readjusts and tries to hit over the trees - but can't clear them and loses his ball. He tries again and loses that one too...

Then the old man says "of course, when I was your age, the trees were only 6 foot tall."

## SAYINGS

*When in doubt.. mumble, when in trouble...delegate.*

*In case of doubt...make it convincing.*

*Celibacy is not hereditary.*

*Never play leapfrog with a Unicorn.*

*Anything good is either illegal, immoral or fattening*

*Never sleep with anyone crazier than you.*

*Nature always sides with the hidden flaw*

*Ap pipe gives a wise man time to think and a fool something to stick in his mouth.*

*Anything you try to fix will take longer and cost more than you thought*



A clerk who worked in a small office in a factory discovered that there were so many files in his room that there was not any space for anymore. Also each file was so full that that it was impossible to add anymore papers in it. He felt that something had to be done about it. He decided to send a note to the manager explaining the dilemma and asking for permission to destroy those files that were no longer of any use. The following day he received a note from the Manager giving him permission, provided he made copies before destroying them.



### RAF Staveron

The station was used for training and operations from 1936 until the 1950s.

The site is now [Gloucestershire Airport](#).

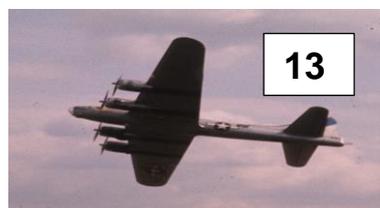
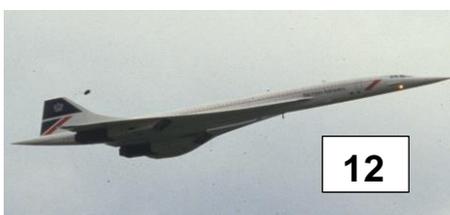
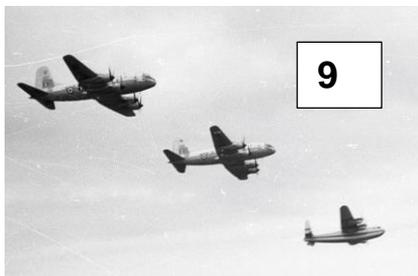
From 1931 there was an airfield near Down Hatherley, and plans were in place pre-war to develop the new site. The RAF took over the site as a training school on 16 July 1936 for training until August 1946. Flying training was conducted at the site on de Havilland Tiger Moths. No. 31 Elementary and Reserve Flying Training School was based at Staveron between 29 September 1938 and 3 September 1939.

During the Second World War a number of units and flights were based at the airfield including No. 44 Group Communication Flight RAF, which operated between 15 August 1941 and 9 August 1946. No. 6 Air Observers Navigation School RAF was also based at Staveron from 1 November 1939 until 17 January 1942.

Post-war, a number of small units and detachments used the airfield including a sub-site of No. 7 Maintenance Unit RAF between 4 June 1945 and 11 August 1953.

The Ministry of Aircraft Protection Guard Dog School was formed in late 1942, located at Woodfold in Down Hatherley. In 1946 the unit, by now called the RAF Police Dog Training School, moved from Woodfold to Staveron

Some momentous images for Gloucester airport of yesteryear



Photos courtesy of Richard Holghzad

For those planes spotters. See how many you can recognise



## **Gloucestershire Airport Sold Amid Safety Concerns and Future Uncertainty**

**Gloucestershire, UK** – Gloucestershire Airport has officially been sold to Horizon Aero Group for an estimated £25 million, marking a significant turning point for the region's aviation infrastructure. The airport, jointly owned by **Gloucester City Council** and **Cheltenham Borough Council**, had been under mounting pressure due to serious safety concerns and the need for substantial investment to secure its future.

Horizon Aero Group, the new owner, is a joint venture between **Vayu Aviation Services** (UK) and **Vensa Infrastructure** (India), bringing together international aviation and infrastructure expertise. The move has sparked public concern and debate over the airport's long-term role, with fears it could eventually be redeveloped for industrial or housing use.

### **Safety Issues Triggered Urgent Action**

In **2023**, the airport faced its most severe challenge in recent history when the Civil Aviation Authority (**CAA**) issued a formal **restriction notice** concerning the safety of air traffic operations. Following an audit, the CAA placed Gloucestershire Airport "**On Notice**", the most serious level of regulatory oversight short of licence revocation.

The audit highlighted several critical issues, including:

- **Outdated air traffic control (ATC) equipment**
- **Procedural failures**
- **Poor change management practices**

This designation placed the airport at real risk of losing its licence — a potentially devastating outcome for both regional connectivity and local businesses

### **A £500,000 Turnaround Plan**

In response, airport leadership implemented a comprehensive corrective action plan aimed at restoring safety standards and public confidence. Key elements of the plan included:

- A **£500,000 investment** in upgrading ATC tower equipment
- A **senior management restructure**
- A **complete review and overhaul of operating procedures** and change management systems

Remarkably, these improvements were carried out **without suspending operations**, a feat described by airport advisor John Ivey as "intense" but handled with "admirable resilience" by the airport team.

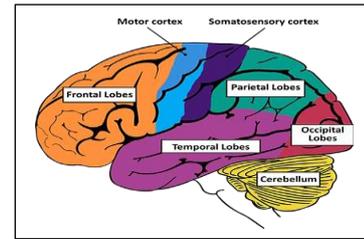
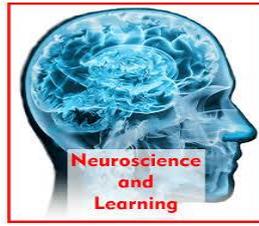
By **July 2025**, the airport had successfully returned to full operational status, with the CAA lifting its oversight measures after the necessary safety standards were met.

### **A New Chapter Ahead**

Despite the successful recovery, the sale of the airport has left many questions unanswered about its future use. While Horizon Aero Group has not yet made detailed plans public, both local aviation stakeholders and community members have voiced hope that the airport will remain a **valuable transport and business asset**, rather than being transformed for non-aviation development.

Council leaders have defended the decision to sell, pointing to the significant financial burden required to modernise and maintain the airport — funding they say is better sourced from the private sector.

As Gloucestershire Airport moves into a new era under private ownership, the region will be watching closely to see whether it remains true to its aviation roots or embarks on a radically different trajectory



## “Stop Thinking.. Start Living

### Learning from Neuroscience & Philosophy

Our talk on 9th September was titled "Stop Thinking - Start living" and presented by **Keith Ray**, a longtime member of Ross Vega Probus club (Vega is the Roman name for the Wye). In this talk Keith's aim was to encourage us to be much more self-aware, to look inside our own brains and become conscious of our inbuilt assumptions and biases. He described how our mindset, accumulated over our lifetimes, completely influences the way we feel and the way we respond to external news or events. He tried to demonstrate this by asking us to consider if we believed in miracles, then wrong-footing us by arguing that every human birth was a miracle. Our mindset often prevents us from seeing the wonder and enjoying life to the full. Yet we rarely challenge that mindset, and that is what this talk was intended to do. Keith acknowledged he is not qualified medically but, he argued strongly that self-awareness and challenging our mindsets can help us deal with depression in ourselves and others.

Keith's passion for insight into the working of the brain has led him to study neuroscience, psychology, CBT (cognitive behavior therapy) and philosophy; and his presentation touched on all these topics, and included relevant quotations from some of his favourite authors. At the heart of this approach is the understanding that our brains are divided into two distinct hemispheres which make very different contributions to our life. He summarized thus *"The left-brain, in predicting how safe we are, focuses attention on 'outcomes'. The right-brain focuses on 'processes' which enable us to experience the world with a sense of wonder"*. The left-brain is judgmental and analytic while the right-brain is non-judgmental, more accepting and creative. Keith claimed most people spend about 95% in their left-brain and this inhibits their ability to 'live in the moment' and appreciate life's simple joys. He wants us to consciously 'go to' the right-brain by deliberately choosing to be non-judgmental, more accepting, more open to alternative explanations.

The presentation provoked lively discussion and many questions. And the irony was not lost on the audience that a talk whose title begins "Stop thinking . . ." managed to provoke a good deal of thought.

Peter Hines



## Ah! Those were the days?



### America is a Gun

England is a cup of tea  
France a wheel of ripened Brie  
Greece a short, squat Olive tree  
America is a gun

Brazil A football on the sand  
Argentina, Maradona's hand  
Germany, an Oompah band  
America is a gun

Holland is a wooden shoe  
Hungary a goulash stew  
Australia is a Kangaroo  
America is a gun

Japan is a thermal spring  
Scotland is a highland fling  
Oh, better to be anything  
than America as a gun

Brian Bilston



A rather henpecked man went on holiday with his wife to Jerusalem. Whilst there she unfortunately died suddenly.

The local Funeral Director explained that there were two options on what to do with her body. She could be buried locally for £100 or flown home for £500.

The man thought about it and said he wished to have her flown home for £500.

The Funeral Director was rather puzzled and said why pay so much to have her flown home when she could be buried locally for so much less.

The man replied "Long ago a man died here, was buried here and three days later he rose from the dead"

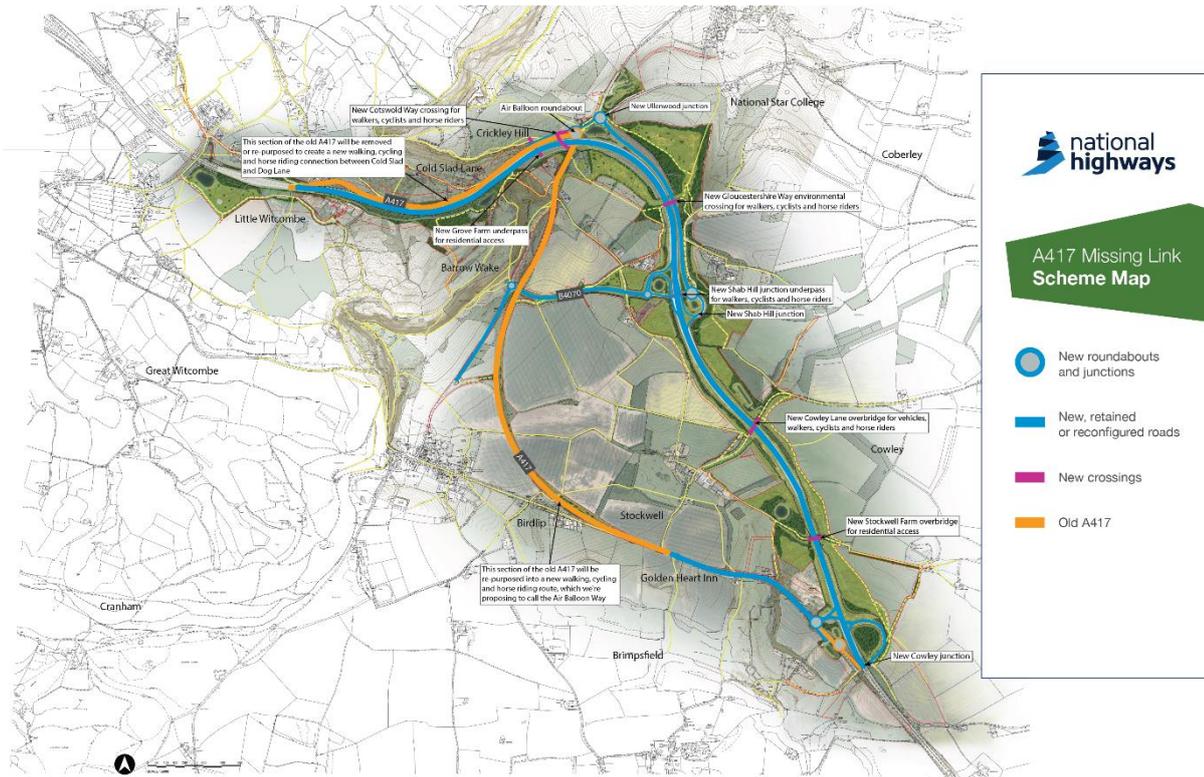
I just can't take that chance!

### An army officer is having a heartfelt conversation with his wife in the kitchen before heading off for another long deployment

"Sweetheart, I'm about to be away for another year." "Oh, I'll miss you terribly!"

"I'll miss you too," he says with a mischievous glance at her chest, "And these lovely ladies of yours." Blushing, she suggests, "Why not give them a little attention now to make up for the coming year?" His face lights up, "Absolutely! I'll dedicate a squeeze for every month I'll be away." He begins, "May," squeeze, "June," squeeze, "July," and so on, naming every month. Suddenly, he notices their 10-year-old son, Michael, standing beside them. Hastily retracting his hands, the wife exclaims, "Oh my goodness, Michael, when did you get here?" After a moment of thoughtful silence, he responds, "umm... Mid-September?"

# The A417 Missing Link



The route of the A417 between Gloucester and Swindon has long suffered from serious congestion at the junction known locally as the Air Balloon. After a long gestation period, designs for a new route for some 7 Kilometres were approved construction of the new route was commenced during 2024.

Luke Geraghty from the Kier Civil Engineering group gave an excellent presentation to explain the works, now well under construction, on Tuesday 23 September.

The road had suffered from severe congestion for many years and a new alignment, is now underway and should be completed early in 2027. Luke explained that at present the route typically carries some 43,000 vehicles each day and the new route is designed to cater for up to 63,000 vehicles, eliminating delays and radically reducing both accidents on the section, one of the worse accident records on the main English Highways network, and pollution by queuing vehicles around the area.

The design will provide a continuous dual 2 lane carriageway road between the two existing dual carriageway sections across the Cotswold Escarpment, with 3 lanes provided on the rise up Crickley Hill.

Luke also explained the extensive provisions for walkers across the area with specific facilities for the Cotswold and Gloucestershire long distance paths. The wildlife has not been neglected and facilities for almost 1000 Lizards and other wildlife are featured across the whole site. In addition, over 16,000 trees will be planted towards the end of the construction project. Also, solar panels are being provided to power street lighting and the very necessary operation infrastructure.

Luke ended his talk with a few comments about the help that the project had been able to provide for the Air Ambulance service and other local charities, including a sponsored Cycle ride from the sire to Paris during 2025 for the annual Poppy Appeal.

An excellent talk about a long awaited improvement to our local infrastructure

*David Clowes*



I just joined a support group for procrastinators, but they haven't organised a meeting yet!



Where am I this month?

**Thanks to all those who submitted articles and assisted with production.**  
**Ed**



Can I remind readers that the Newsletter is for the enjoyment and information of Newent Probus Club members & partners and should not be reproduced or passed to third parties