

NEWENT AND DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2026

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

In my chairman's piece for the June newsletter, I noted the record-breaking temperatures for late May, asserting that 'Flaming June' had come early. Well, here we are again as we have had in the last week or so record-breaking temperatures now for June. As I write there has been some welcome moderation in the heat, but we are warned that July may well bring another heatwave.

Whilst heatwaves have always happened (remember 1976?) the Met Office tells us that while you can never attribute any particular weather event to global warming the greater frequency of warm spells and higher peaks is clear evidence of global warming. It is a shame that the issue has become a political football. But then again 'real' football has never been politics free (as a current competition in North America amply demonstrates).

Our Summer Party is on Tuesday 28th July and let us hope for clement weather – warm but not too hot and also dry. I think the perfect weather might just be 'odds on' (I am ever the optimist). So please do seriously consider inviting non-Probos friends, family and acquaintances to the party. At £16 per head, including food and entertainment, it is exceptional value and inflation beating (three years ago the cost was £15 a head with no entertainment).

Inviting guests brings the fellowship provided by Probus to the broader attention of others, whether or not potential future members – and with the 50th anniversary of our Probus Club occurring next year we do want to raise awareness generally. In his email of 22nd June Kelvin included a PDF invitation that you can re-use for any potential guests. Please just remember to let Kelvin know as soon as possible of your and any guest attendance so that the numbers for catering provision can be finalised.

Nigel

DUB LUNCH
TUESDAY 7 JULY



The White Hart
Broadoak,
Newnham
GL14 1JB

parked.lentil.waiters

Mine host: Paul Dodd

14 JULY 2026

SPEAKER: PHILIP BOWEN

“Richard Nixon, Crook, Statesman”

Richard Milhous Nixon was the 37th president of the United States, serving from 1969 until his resignation in 1974. A member of the Republican Party, he represented California in both houses of the United States Congress before serving as the 36th vice president under President Dwight D. Eisenhower from 1953 to 1961.

Richard Nixon, is best known for his sweeping diplomatic breakthroughs and the Watergate scandal. He was the first—and only—U.S. president to resign from office.

- Became the first U.S. president to visit the People's Republic of China, ending decades of diplomatic isolation and shifting the dynamics of the Cold War.
- Detente with the Soviet Union: Eased Cold War tensions by visiting Moscow and signing the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the SALT I strategic arms limitation agreement.
- Vietnam War: Ended direct U.S. combat involvement in Vietnam in 1973 (through the Paris Peace Accords) and abolished the military draft.
- Nixon's administration attempted to cover up its involvement in a 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Complex in Washington, D.C.

TUESDAY 28 JULY

**GORSLEY
VILLAGE
HALL**

**GARDEN
PARTY**

12.30 - 16.00

BBQ



MUSIC

Pills, People & Pollution – Sue Hickman



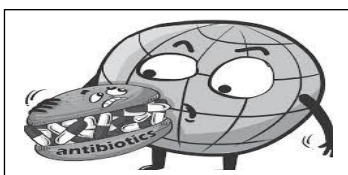
A very illuminating and thought-provoking talk was given by Sue Hickman on the 9th June. Sue has been a pharmacist professionally, now retired, and her interest in the wider topic of her talk started with noticing a decline in wildlife in streams local to her home. Talking with others she volunteered for Hereford WI Science week a few years ago and then became a citizen scientist, monitoring water quality in local streams and watercourses.

We learnt that even in small brooks high phosphate residues have been found caused by sewage outlets. While that is a subject in itself, the issue at hand is that increasing populations and the increasing volume of medications and pills being prescribed, are contributing to what is in our waste water. Although agriculture, microplastics and road run-off all contribute to water pollution, it is clear that Pharmaceuticals are also to blame. Drug residues are a major environmental issue worldwide with APIs (active pharmaceutical ingredients) having been found in water systems on every continent.



Sue set out to illustrate how and why this occurs, understand if it really causes a problem and what we can do to reduce the harm caused.

Many of us found it remarkable that between 15% and 70% of antibiotics' active elements are not completely metabolised by our bodies and are therefore excreted via urine, to be treated in sewage treatment plants. Inevitably, some of this sewage finds it's way into streams, rivers and ultimately the oceans.

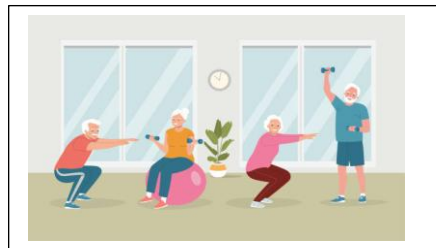


A further contributing factor to pollution is the inappropriate disposal of un-used pills, especially antibiotics. Sue urged everyone to dispose of all unused pills and liquids by returning them to a doctors' surgery or pharmacy. We later learnt these were then incinerated at extremely high temperatures to minimise residues being released into the air. Sue digressed into the subject of over use of antibiotics and reminded us that it is the bugs which gain resistance, not us, so that when we take antibiotics they simply don't work anymore. It is now estimated that antibiotic resistance is responsible for 25,000 deaths in Europe annually.

The same issues and potential pollution occur from drugs prescribed for our farm and domesticated animals.

The problems of pill residues are real enough with effects on fish reproduction and consequently less fish (both varieties and quantities) for us and other species to eat in the long term. Seaweed & other marine species are also affected.

So, can we do anything? Yes. Sue's experience as a pharmacist indicates that many illnesses are self-limiting – meaning that we'll get better anyway. Examples would be ear ache and sore throats which often get better in 7 or 8 days and coughs and colds within a fortnight. So, the tendency to reach for pills should be resisted in mild cases. However, if antibiotics are prescribed you should always take them as indicated and for the full course. And of course, severe and unusual symptoms should be checked by a doctor.



How can we improve our health without resorting to medications? Well - and you knew this! - it turns out Diet, Exercise and “everything in moderation” really can contribute to general wellbeing. As well as the simple action of drinking more water. Thankfully our tap water is still deemed to have very low harmful residues and in Sue's opinion is better than bottled water with its attendant concerns of micro-plastics, pollution from manufacture & transportation and sustainability. Oh, what a complicated world we now live in!

should reduce – and thus the conclusion of Sue's argument: what's good for us as individuals will be good for our rivers, oceans and biodiversity.

In summary, a good diet and appropriate exercise are conducive to stronger cardio-vascular and gastro-intestinal systems, the avoidance and control of type 2 diabetes as well as weight control and good bone density. With all these in the bank, so to speak, our need for pills

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There were many questions after the talk which I think showed the thought- provoking nature of our speaker's topic and John Weeden gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the 22 members and 1 prospective member present.

Paul Squires

Out of the mouths of babes



Broadcaster Justin Webbs daughter rang him whilst taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Challenge. “Hi dad, I am calling you from something called a phone box”!!



Congratulations to B&Q on celebrating Pride Week with not having a single straight piece of timber in the store.



The Glosters at Waterloo

Our speaker Andy Meller commenced his excellent talk by setting out the early history of the Gloucestershire Regiment. One of the earliest records is a reference to the North Gloucestershire regiment of the 28th Foot in 1694.



At this time Regiments were usually run by local men of wealth and men would be sought to make up the Regiment, usually paid for by the persons who led the regiment. The Glosters, as the regiment became to be known, was soon well known and played a part in a number of battles.

Wellington became one of the leaders of the regiment soon after its formation. He soon became well known and was admired by his men well before the wars with the French during the 18th Century.

The regiment was one of the only regiments in the English army to be allowed the honour of wearing two cap badges, one on the front and the second on the back. This was because in one battle the Glosters were able to fight off cavalry who charged at their Square Formation from both the front and rear of the battlefield.



By the time of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, England had formed an alliance with Netherlands, Hanover, Brunswick and Nassau and, a British led force was formed under Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington to fight the French. At the battle of Waterloo, the Glosters were part of this force, and they were joined by the Prussian Army under Field Marshal Blucher.



Napoleon had been very active during the early part of the Century and by 1812 was almost at Moscow, but this was too far from France, and he was pushed back to France and ultimately sent into exile on the French island of Elba. However, in 1815, the king and his army had become weak, and Napoleon decided to escape from Elba and by the spring of that year had entered Paris in triumph. He had formed an army some 125,000 men strong and began a campaign to regain his previous lands. This was partially successful but again he went too far away and was forced back towards France. By the late spring he was close to the Netherlands.

At the start of the year, 1815, the Glosters were tired from a number of battles and were to be sent for recuperation to Bermuda. However, this was cancelled in the face of the French activities and were sent to Brussels to assist the Netherlands.



On the 16th June Napoleon attacked the Prussian Army and at the same time the French contested a Battle at Quatre Bras some 20 miles south of Brussels.

The scene was set for what was to become the Battle of Waterloo. Wellington in Brussels had an army of about 90,000 men, and the Prussian Army, led by Blucher, had a force of some 120,000 men, but had been fighting Napoleon in the east of the Netherlands. On 17th June, Wellington ordered his force to march south towards Quatre Bras, to join up with The Prussian Army. However, The Prussian army was slow to react and did not arrive when expected early on 18th June. Nevertheless, Wellington had reports that the Prussians should arrive later that day. Wellington's force had reached a small ridge close to the battlefield and when the French attacked in the afternoon the battle went back and forth across this ridge and at around 4pm some 9000 French cavalries charged at the British lines but they managed to keep the French at bay.

By 7pm, the Prussian army had begun to arrive, and the Battle was won when Napoleon was forced to retreat.

Andy had several helpful maps showing to locations of the 28th Foot, as they were then known, and his presentation concluded with a replica of the medals presented to the army and photographs of various memorials of the battle to be found in Belgium.

Waterloo remains known as the effective end of the wars between the British and the French during the 18th and 19th centuries.



Arthur Wellesley
1st Duke of Wellington
Known as the "Iron Duke" on his famous horse Copenhagen



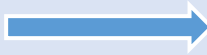
Home of Dukes of Wellington
Stratfield Saye House,
Hampshire.
(Just outside Reading)

David Clowes

A LINK WITH THE PAST



Opened in 1891 - 2013



Opened 2017 as NEW DAWN INN

I wonder if those attending this month's pub lunch know of the one-time intense rivalry, even enmity, between the former King's Yud [head] at "top of hill", now, of course, The New Dawn and the Red Lion (bottom of t'hill) – the hill being the precipitous Wainlode's where many a speeding cyclist has come to grief in days past.

The King's Head was a busy pub in a prime position on the A38 in pre -M5 days where the volume of traffic had to be experienced to be believed. However, its fare, such as it was, did not match up to its potential customer base. At best, a solitary pickled egg might peer disconsolately from its jar of vinegar or brine. On a good day, and providing the landlord was sober a bag of crisps (Smiths of course - what else- with that elusive blue wrap of salt) might be offered to favoured customers. The predominantly male customer base would stand shoulder to shoulder at a packed bar with beer and perhaps a homemade cider the only drinks on offer.

Down below, on the banks of the Severn, the Lion was under the management of a fearsome landlady named Joan Mitchell or, behind her back, the Black Widow. She ruled her pub with the proverbial rod of iron; in fact, I often wonder if it is more than a coincidence that her namesake in the TV soap EastEnders was Peggy Mitchell (of 'Git outa mah pub' fame") from the Queen Vic pub

If the King's head had the passing trade, then the Lion had another unique attraction, namely Gloucester's answer to Weston-Super-Mare. Nestling on the banks of the Severn, a mere hop, skip and a jump from the Lion was a tiny beach, almost sand like in its composition where literally hordes of Gloucesterians, maybe too cash strapped to afford a day trip to Weston, would cycle the half dozen miles from home and spend the day frolicking in the muddy river waters. If we were flush then perhaps a half pint of home brewed cider or a bottle of Corona pop would wash down the doorstep sized jam "butties" that our Mums had lovingly prepared, while the intrepid would venture into the Severn.

At going home time, we would all mount our trusty if not rusty, single geared bikes and pedal wearily home. All that remains of the pub's ancestry today is a faded oil painting of a long-forgotten King in the bar which at one time flapped in the wind on the New Dawn' busy forecourt and not a pickled egg insight.

Nowadays of course Probus members, enroute to their ever-popular pub lunches, arrive in rather more style and so it proved on this occasion. Numbers were down slightly with many members no doubt tacking a couple of days on to the Bank Holiday and taking a welcome break. Instead, members tucked in to a variety of dishes ranging from Venison bouillabaisse, Guinea Fowl and Pork Belly, which I am sure has the crackliest crackling this side of London, to the humble fish and chips but with that special King's Head touch.

Those who had room enjoyed a range of desserts. It only remained for us to thanks to Stephen Wheeler under whose genial organisation made the afternoon yet another success. If you have never sampled the gastronomic delights and great company of our pub lunches, why not give us a try. No great mystique, when Kelvin, our secretary, sends details around of our next one, just give your name to the organiser and turn up and enjoy.

Our very own Galloping Gourmet Historian Peter

Always respect the countryside code



A man was driving along a road when he noticed a traffic camera flash. He figured his picture had been taken even though he knew he wasn't speeding. Just to check, he turned around and drove past again, driving even slower. Again, the camera flashed. Now he thought there was something wrong so he drove past again even slower, again the camera flashed. Laughing he drove past for a fourth and fifth time at a snail's pace each time the camera flashed.

Two weeks later he received a summons in the post with five tickets for Driving without a Seatbelt

You just know you can't fix Stupid?



An artist asked the gallery owner if there had been any interest in his paintings, the gallery owner

Said "Well there is good news and bad news, the good news is a gentleman asked if your paintings would be worth more after your death. I said "yes, he then purchased all 15 of your paintings". The artist said "That's amazing, but what's the bad news?" The gallery owner said "*He was your doctor*"

A Lawyer woke up in hospital after surgery and asked the nurse why all the blinds were drawn. The nurse replied "The building opposite is on fire and we didn't want you to wake up and think the operation had been a failure!!"

I remember the corned beef of my Childhood,
And the bread that we cut with a knife,
When the Children helped with the housework,
And the men went to work not the wife.
The cheese never needed a fridge,
And the bread was so crusty and hot,
The Children were seldom unhappy.
And the Wife was content with her lot.

I remember the milk from the bottle.
With the yummy cream on the top,
Our dinner came hot from the oven,
And not from a freezer: or shop.
The kids were a lot more contented,
They didn't need money for kicks,
Just a game with their friends in the road.
And sometimes the Saturday flicks.

...
I remember the slap on my backside,
And the taste of soap if I swore
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of
And we hadn't much choice what we wore.

Do you think that bruised our ego?
Or our initiative was destroyed?
We ate what was put on the table
And I think life was better enjoyed.

Author Unknown



A man ordered a bouquet of flowers for a friend who was moving to a new shop. When he visited the shop, he was horrified to see the message with the flowers "**Rest in Peace**". He was so angry that he went to the florists to complain. The florist said "Don't get too upset, just think that someone being buried today received a bouquet with the inscription "**Good luck in your new location**"!!

Q: What is your sexual orientation if you are attracted to both men and women, but they are not attracted to you

A: Bi-Yourself

A woman goes to the doctor and says "Whenever someone gives me a compliment, I want to make love to them at once, no matter who they are or where I am. What do I have"
The doctor *replies* "*You have beautiful blue eyes*"



Going into IKEA is like going into a teenager's bedroom. You go in for one thing and come out with 6 mugs, a cake tin and a set of cutlery!!

What analysts in America have failed to articulate



The Iranian Navy which has been destroyed 8 times, has apparently closed the Straits of Hormuz again, because the US, for the 7th time, won the war that wasn't a war, so now the US has to open the Straits of Hormuz that was already open before the not-war started!

Careful today lads, the met office have issued a red weather warning

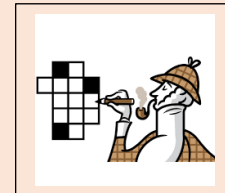


Might take my jumper off.

What heat wave? 50c today - 4c tonight



A father is on his death bed surrounded by his family. From the kitchen comes wafting the sweet smell of his favourite cake, cherry cake. He says to his son "This is my final wish; would you bring me one last piece of cake". His son comes back from the kitchen and says "No", the man says "Why not?" His son says "Mum says it's for after the funeral"



ANSWER TO PETER HAYES CROSSWORD PUZZLE

PUZZLE CLUE:

"Two girls, one on each knee". (7 letters)

PUZZLE SOLUTION:

The solution to the puzzle set in our previous edition was **PATELLA**

Pat and Ella being the two girls, while Patella is the medical name for a kneecap. Easy, wasn't it?

When I said we need to cool off, I didn't mean the car as well!!





Where have I been 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
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