



NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

Inaugurated 23rd March 1977

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER

October 2021

Looking Ahead

November 9th

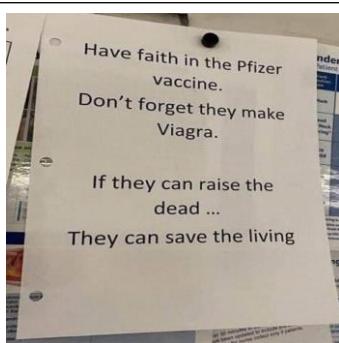
**1300 Years of
Gloucester
Cathedral – Peter
Petrie**

November 23rd

**Electricity
Distribution – an
inexact science –
John Slack**

December 14th

Christmas Lunch



October Diary

12th What's in a Place Name? – Lee Hines

What - apart from a winding country road - links Dymock and Oxenhall? Were horses bred at Stallion Hill? And which saint is commemorated at Sellack?

The answers will be found in this talk when Lee Hines explains the meanings behind these and the names of other local places.



26th Are We Alone in the Universe? – David Terry

David has been interested in the Search for Extra-terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) since graduating in maths from Oxford.

UFO sightings. Personal experiences. Explanations. SETI – What are we looking for? Where should we look? How is the search being conducted? Current knowledge of the universe and how we got it, Edwin Hubble. Reasons for thinking we are not alone. The Drake equation. The limits of science – what we (think) we know and what we definitely don't. Einstein and quantum theory. What is reality? A multiverse? Why are we searching anyway?

From the Chairman

Dear Members,

I write this after Tuesday's meeting in Gorsley Hall, our first face to face encounter for around 18 months. The committee did its best to make the Hall a safe environment and I was very pleased with the turnout. We also had a handful of members joining by Zoom as our default option, and the "broadcast" seemed to work reasonably well. Altogether we had a very good attendance and I hope that that will be the case in the future. We shall continue to take all the precautions at Gorsley listed in my and Fraser's recent letters and to run the Zoom facility for the time being. If any Zoom attendees wish to come in person next time you are very welcome, but it remains the personal decision of each member whether they attend in person (once a lawyer, always a lawyer).

I think we all agreed we had a very good speaker in Dr Katie Bellamy, which was a good way to return, almost, to normal business. Rest assured the Committee will keep its eye on the general situation regarding the pandemic and will be in touch if there are any proposed changes to the current routine.

With all good wishes,
John

World Water Movement

We were treated to an excellent and most entertaining talk by Nick Humphris at our 14th September meeting. It emphasises my contention that a dull title provides the best talks!

Nick started by emphasising that although the oceans around our shores look stable, the waters move in many different ways and affect all of our lives by the way the Cyclic Tides, Surface Wind and Deep currents move the waters around our world.

He commenced his talk with a clear explanation of the familiar pattern of the tides around our own shores. The daily rise and fall of the tides are well known to all of us at the seaside and also the rise and fall of estuarial waters of our rivers on a regular daily cycle. I'm sure we all knew that this was caused by the gravitational pull of the Moon and Sun on the water but perhaps not the complex patterns that affect the height of the tides each day and how, and why, the water levels appear to rise and fall at different times around our coast.

Local geographical features, many deep below the surface of the seas, also have dramatic effects on the tides and cause such events as the well-known Severn Bore which reaches up to Gloucester in our own local area, and which appears to flow at about 10mph up the river despite there being little actual movement of the water horizontally as shown by a log floating in middle of the river not moving very many yards as the bore passes.

Although, in deep waters far from the shore, the tides simply cause the water to rise and fall daily without moving any horizontal distance, once the tides react with the shoreline, and particularly the changes of the rocks below the sea close to the shore, the effect can be dramatic and cause major currents to flow back and forth each day. He showed how the currents in the English Channel can flow at a steady rate of a few knots around Dover but escalate to fast tidal races in areas such as the Channel Islands where the water speeds can rise to well over 10 knots on each tide.

The tides also cause whirlpools with some spectacular cases in evidence each day around the Scottish islands. These phenomena are found all around the world and Nick presented world maps showing the height of tides around the world and also the dramatic currents caused daily by the tides in many places.

Nick then explained that wind and sun also affected the seas and showed how the major oceans of the world all have currents, usually circulating around their edges. These are the result of surface water being heated by the sun, particularly in the tropics, interacting with cold waters from the polar regions and the Coriolis effect of the rotation of the world, to form major circular currents in all oceans. These currents have major effects on the climate of the world. One particular current is important to us in the UK which runs in a north easterly direction from The Caribbean past the UK and up towards Norway and keeps us relatively warmer than many areas of the world on a similar latitude to ourselves.

Nick explained that these currents are enhanced by other deep-water movements. He explained that the temperature of the surface water in the tropics was typically just below 30 °C whereas the waters flowing from the Poles is almost at freezing point and comes largely from Ice melt which is cold fresh water and therefore lighter than the salt water of the oceans. This causes vertical movements as the fresh water slips beneath warmer salt water and causes other deep currents which circulate the world unseen but affecting waters around the world. Nick showed how these deep currents affect even enclosed seas such as the Mediterranean Sea and illustrated this by commenting upon a shipwreck in 1990 that released nearly 30,000 plastic ducks into the North Pacific Ocean and these eventually 'swam' around the world eventually reaching the shores of the UK about 13 years later, probably via the North Pole frozen in the ice.

In answer to questions Nick commented that Global warming was highly likely to affect these currents, upon which the present climate of the world depends and could have significant effects on many parts of the world including our own. A sober thought on which to end a fascinating talk.

David Clowes



David's photo from Australia kindly reminds us what a beach and the ocean look like, in case we've all forgotten

Busting Brain Myths

It was a real treat to have such an excellent talk for our first face to face meeting in 18 months.

Doctor Katy Bellamy is a cognitive neuro scientist who examined the origin of a number of common myths about the way our brains work.

Speaking without notes she said that many of those who comment about brains in the media are wrong. Contrary to popular myth we use 100% of our brains all the time even when we are sleeping. The 10% myth arose when a man suffering headaches, but was otherwise normal (he was an accountant!), was examined in a body scanner. The doctors were stunned to find that he had only 10% of a normal brain present. It was discovered that he had suffered from hydrocephalus as a child. A stent introduced to drain his brain cavity had saved his life but until the scan it had not been appreciated that his brain had been compressed by the fluid build-up. Unfortunately Hollywood subsequently helped to create the myth that we only use 10% of our brains, which is nonsense.

Katy then dismissed the myth that the left and right halves of the brain carry out their functions independently. The two halves work together. Brain cells are not killed off by alcohol, but that does not mean that we can drink freely because of other damage to the body. Factors that cause damage are Anorexia, a vegan diet and anaemia. With pernicious amenia the body produces insufficient red blood cells due to a deficiency in vitamin B12.

There is no direct link between old age and dementia. Japan has the highest life expectancy in the world but ranks very low in dementia cases. This is, however starting to change as they adopt a western lifestyle, the real cause of rising dementia cases. It is now believed that the main cause of dementia is insufficient sleep. We need between 7 and 9 hours a night but the average in the UK has fallen from 7.5 to 6.5 hours. The alarming statistic demonstrating this is that the rate of heart attacks and strokes quadruples on the Monday after the clocks go forward and we lose an hour's sleep. Conversely, the rate of heart attacks and strokes drops fourfold the day after the clocks go back.

Katy delivered her engrossing talk as a true professional communicator. I suspect that she received some guidance in this from her famous uncle David.

Mike Warburton

LEXOPHILIA? WHO ON EARTH DREAMS THESE UP?

(A lexophile of course!)

Venison for dinner again. Oh deer!

How does Moses make tea? Hebrews it.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

I tried to catch some fog, but I mist.

They told me I had type-A blood, but it was a typo.

I changed my iPod's name to Titanic. It's syncing now.

Jokes about German sausage are the wurst.

I know a guy who's addicted to brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

This girl said she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd never met herbivore.



Probus Christmas Lunch
Tuesday December 14th Speech House Hotel
12:30 for 13:00

PROBUS Christmas Lunch – 14th December 2021	
Sprout and Chestnut Soup (v)	S1
Smoked Brioche Croutons	
Honey Roast Ham Hock Terrine	S2
Ale Chutney · Sour Dough	
Severn And Wye Smoked Salmon	S3
Spiced Pear and Fennel Salsa · Black Garlic Mayonnaise	
Deep Fried Goats Cheese (v)	S4
Pickled Red Onion · Smoked Cranberry Compote	
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Traditional Roast Turkey	M1
Served with all the trimmings	
Dry Cured Pork Chop	M2
Roast Garlic Mash · Root Vegetables · Baked Apple	
Herb Crusted Cod Loin	M3
Leek · Potato · Chive	
Stilton Glazed Celeriac (v)	M4
Roast Broccoli · Pickled Walnuts · Celery Shoots	
~	
Traditional Christmas Pudding (v)	D1
Brandy Crème Anglaise	
Mulled Berry Panna Cotta	D2
Liquorice Cream · Brown Butter Oat Clusters	
Warm Chocolate Brownie (v)	D3
Salted Caramel Sauce · Clotted Cream Ice Cream	
A Selection of Local Cheese (£2.50 supplement)	D4
Winter Chutney · Crackers · Grapes and Celery	
Tea, Coffee and Mince Pies	
Please speak to a member of staff regarding any allergies or dietary requirements, many of our dishes can easily be adapted. Food items may be prepared in areas where there are traces of allergens present.	

Since the last newsletter, the booking has been confirmed for our Christmas Lunch at the Speech House. Can you please let me have names and menu choices, by email if possible by Friday 23rd October, to johnandjillmartin@btinternet.com.

For convenience, I have annotated the menu with a simple code so that all I need are the relevant codes to identify your choices.

If you are unable to let me know by email, a phone call or answerphone message to 01452 760109 will suffice, but email will be preferred.

I'm looking forward receiving your replies and a good turnout.