

NEWSLETTER



NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



2023

MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW CHAIRMAN

This is my first message to you as your new chairman and I hope I can continue to carry on the good work as our previous chairmen have.

Firstly, we have recently lost two of our past members. Fred Passant, his memorial service was held at St Marys Church, Newent, just recently with several club members attending. We send our condolences and sympathy to Brenda and family. Secondly, Jack Porteous, who sadly lost his battle with ill health, passed away just recently in Hereford Hospital. Jack was chairman in 2002-03. His funeral service was at Aston Ingham Church, Friday 26th May. We send our condolences and sympathy to Rita and family.

On a happier note I hope you all enjoyed the Coronation Celebrations; it was such a shame about the weather.

As I write this letter it is almost a week without any amount of rain, enabling me and I guess many of you as well to catch up with the gardening. Courgettes planted out, runner bean seeds planted, and runner beans sticks erected, new potatoes in a couple of weeks, all looking good. We have had good attendances for the last couple of meetings and a very interesting talk by Dr Bob King – The Magic of Glass – Concorde to Flat Screen TVs

He mentioned that he is also a member of the Magic Circle and said he would be delighted to come back and talk on the subject and give us a short show.

Chris Witts gave a very interesting presentation on his life working on the River Severn and The Mighty Severn Bore. He showed a couple of film clips, which I enjoyed, being a Severn-sider.

The next pub lunch is at The Weston Cross, Weston under Penyard, on Tuesday 6th June, which I am looking forward to, I have never been to this pub, but have passed it many a time.

Best wishes to you all and enjoy the better weather of late.

Mikø

JUNE SPEAKERS



13 JUNE – Dr Brian Witcombe

The Science and effects of Sword Swallowing



27 JUNE – Chris Lathan

**Isaac Newton – Scientist, Theologian
Magician or Crime Fighter**



PUB LUNCH

6TH JUNE 2023

The Weston Cross Inn

Weston–under–Penyard

**You know you're
getting old, when
you're at an antiques
auction and 3 people
bid on you.**

**What do you call
a Magician who's
lost his magic?
Ian.**

OBITUARY



FRED PASSANT

1943 – 2023

NEWENT PROBUS MEMBER 1988 -2023

(Our longest serving member)

Fred was born in **Leigh, Lancashire**, After Grammar School, the family moved to the New Forest, where his father became verger at a village church.

Fred studied ONC and HNC in Bournemouth, then worked in radiology at the local hospital. From there, he went to Berkeley Power Station, then on to the CEGB in London where he met and married Brenda, they had been badminton partners when Brenda was with Millbank Electrical Council.

Their first son Steven was born in London, and when CEGB moved to Gloucester the family moved to Tuffley in Gloucester, where their second son Martin was born. Fred was going to London twice a week with work and this later extended to trips to Europe. A need for a bigger house to accommodate visiting parents brought the family to Newent in 1978.

After taking early retirement, Fred served as a **Magistrate in Gloucester** for some 23 years, and got involved in Newent life.

He was involved with **Newent Initiative Trust** winning a lottery grant to convert the building in Broad Street, which is now the **Chillout Zone**, and also joined the **Town Council**, being **Mayor** for two terms. Holidays and travel were also an important part of life for Fred.

There are few people these days, perhaps it has always been the case, of whom you could say, you are proud to have known them, this was such a man. He was **Church Warden** and then **Treasurer at St Marys Church** here in Newent. In this last role, and in remembrance of his links with Newent Wine Circle, on his retirement as church treasurer, he was presented with a bottle of red of a vintage equal in years to his length of service.

His wise counsel and caring approach have been known and valued by all. To say we will miss him cannot do him justice.

Fred was also a **Trustee of Shepard House** and he remained **President** of the **Friends of St Mary's** on his passing.

Here are a few comments from colleagues: -

“In my earliest involvement with NIT, Fred was one of the founding members. He clearly had a passion for the work of the Trust and he gave clear, calm and sage advices at meetings.”

“The word ‘nice’ is bandied about to mean less today, but if there was a person that deserved the true meaning of the word, it was Fred – calm, thoughtful and generous with his time to the Chill Out Zone children and liked by all.”

“His opinions were always balanced and thought through, displaying a levelheadedness no doubt honed during his many years as a senior figure in the utility infrastructure business.”

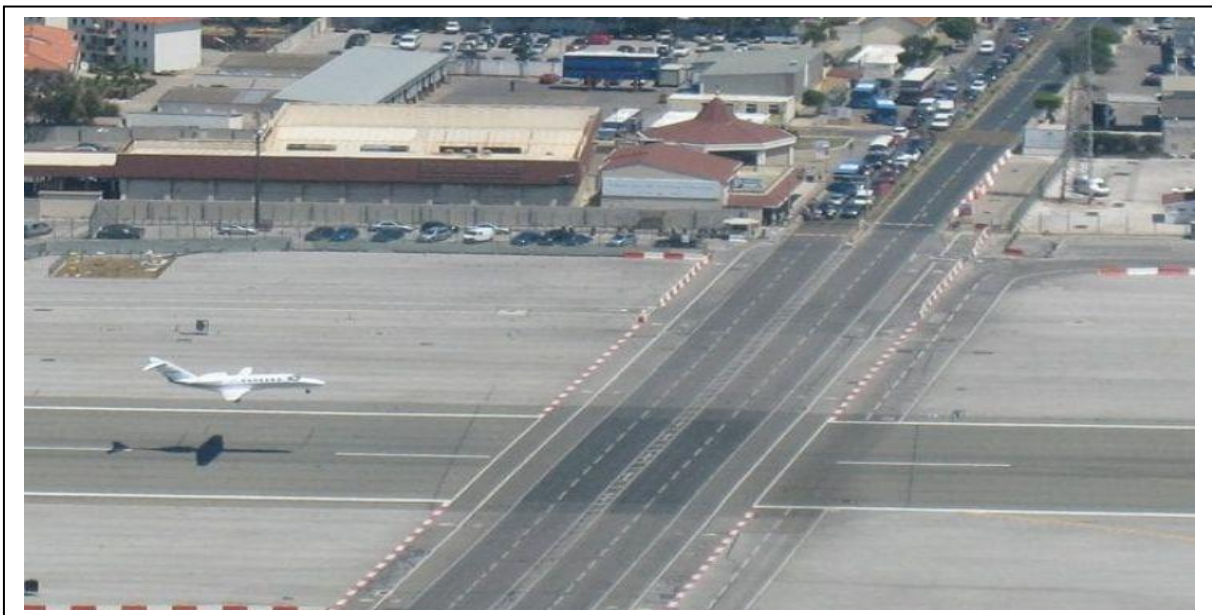
“Fred had a keen eye for Finance and his skills and help in this sphere were invaluable over so many years of balancing the books for the Trust, where every penny always counted.”

“Fred had an empathy for the youth of Newent, wanting to help those less fortunate to have help and some fun. He was patient when his work was not always appreciated.”

“Fred never gave up on the Trust. I believe he only stood down once his health prevented him from performing his role.”

“Fred seemed to me to be a quiet, considering chap. I never saw him utter an angry word and I think that sums up his dedicated, heartfelt sense of duty and service to the community of Newent.”

He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.



A new take on Shared Space



THE MAGIC OF GLASS – CONCORDE TO FLAT SCREEN TVs

On Tuesday 9 May, Bob King, a Retired Aeronautical Engineer and member of the Magic Circle, gave us a “Magic Carpet” tour around a major part of his career in the Specialist Glass industry.

He commenced with a very clear exposition of the trials and tribulations of providing special glass for the windscreens of aircraft and, in particular, Concorde, and the Boeing 747 Jumbo Jet.

When Concorde was first designed in the 1960's, with the move into Supersonic Passenger aircraft, it was recognised that the stresses placed upon the whole airframe, and particularly the front of the plane, including the windscreens were very much greater than those for subsonic flight. Indeed the heating of the outer skin of Concorde goes up to well over 100 °C at the front of the aircraft at supersonic speeds. This induces severe stresses in the outer skin of the aircraft including all the windscreens which must be able to withstand these temperatures as well as the likely stress of heavy bird strikes during the take-off and landing of the flight. Not merely that, but subsonic speeds need to use a delta type wing to enable stability during supersonic speeds, and this requires a high angle of attack with the nose pointing skywards at lower speeds which necessitates a fundamental redesign of the front of the aircraft to enable the pilot to be able to see the runways during take-off and landing. This difficulty was solved by having a droop mechanism for the nose as it was not possible to see the runways through the normal supersonic front windscreen during the lower speeds necessary at take-off and landing. Of course that led to a second, outer windscreen, with the glass of both windscreens being able to withstand the stresses at any time during the flight including any emergency situations.

In addition to this, the whole aircraft was required to be both as strong as needed to endure the stresses of the temperature changes in flight and be able to expand as the skin temperature rose. This requirement obviously had to be applied to all components including the windscreens which also needed to be as light as possible to enable a higher payload (i.e. more passengers) to be carried. It was to the credit of all the engineers concerned in the design of Concorde that these conflicting design aims were successfully overcome leading to Concorde being the only successful supersonic passenger aircraft to enter service with commercial airlines in the last Century.

Dr King showed us a recording of the Pilot's view of a Concorde lift-off and initial steep climb to show the need for the “Droop Nose” so successfully operated by the aircraft in commercial service. The design resulted in a triple layered screen with very high visibility including an electronic shield made of gold only of only a few atoms thickness applied to the outer surface of the screens.

Subsequently this radically new design led to significant changes to conventional aircraft windscreens so that they could be produced at much lower weight with superior stress capability. Indeed it led to a contract to supply the designs for a redesigned windscreen which was subsequently installed in all 747 Jumbo Jets supplied by Boeing. Bob revealed that the cost of any replacement screen for Concorde which may have been required during a service was in the order of \$30K at 1970 prices! Not a cheap cost following a bird strike.

Later in Bob's career, the skills developed by the British designers at Pilkington for the Concorde windscreen, were to lead to a very different application for the development of flatscreen Colour TVs, an illustration of how much the world has changed since Concorde first flew. At the time of its first flight all televisions were Black & White with very bulky Cathode Ray Tubes used almost universally in the late 1960's. The Royal Radar Establishment in Malvern had been working on the development of Colour Televisions for many years and this work led to the development of the Flat screen, Liquid Crystal display we are all familiar with today. Each Pixel of the screen requires a liquid crystal for each of the three primary colours of red, green and blue to be activated at different levels of brightness to produce any colour of any strength that may be needed for every pixel of a TV screen. This requires the use of an electronic matrix sandwiched between glass sheets so that the High-Definition pictures that we see every day on our TV screens can be produced. Again the need for highly specialist glass technology was developed by a consortium led by RRE Malvern, Hull University and Pilkington's Glass. Another "Magic" of Modern Technology requiring specialist glass to be designed and produced, in this case in very large quantities.

A fascinating insight into the development of two examples of the use of specialist technology being brought to bear on a need found in very different modern products to enable everyday products, to make use of glass, first developed many thousands of years ago, for use into our modern day technology that we all take for granted.

David Clowes



Sadly, the days of people using proper English are went.

**90% of people are idiots.
I'm glad I'm in the other 20%.**

THE MIGHTY SEVERN BORE



On 23 May we were given a fascinating insight into the famous “Severn Bore”

Chris Witts, having spent a lifetime on the waterways, lately as a skipper on a grain barge plying between Avonmouth to Worcester, has had to contend with the vagaries of the River Severn on a daily basis. He shared this experience with us in his talk, telling anecdotes of his daily work.

The Severn Bore is one of Britain’s few truly spectacular natural phenomena.

“A tidal bore, often simply given as bore in context, is a tidal phenomenon in which the leading edge of the incoming tide forms a wave (or waves) of water that travels up a river or narrow bay, reversing the direction of the river or bay's current. It is a strong tide that pushes up the river, against the current”

This large surge wave can be seen in the estuary of the River Severn. The river Severn has the third highest tidal range in the world, only the bay of Fundy (north America) and Ungava bay (Hudson straits) are bigger. The tidal range on the Severn can be as much as 15m (49ft).

“The Qiantang River Bore in China is the largest tidal river bore in the world. It can be 9m high, 3km wide and travel at speeds in excess of 24kmh”

The shape of the Severn estuary is such that the water surge is funnelled into an increasingly narrow channel as the tide rises, thus forming the large wave. The rivers course takes it past Avonmouth where it is approximately 8 km wide, then past Beachley and Aust, then Lydney and Sharpness where it is approximately 1.5km, by the time the surge reaches Minsterworth it is less than 90m wide, it maintains this width all the way to Gloucester.

As well as the width of the river decreasing rapidly, so does the depth of the river, thereby forming a funnel shape. As the incoming tide travels up the estuary it is routed into an ever decreasing channel. Consequently the surge wave or bore is formed. Increasingly so, it has become a tourist attraction with spectators coming from not only parts of the UK, but also the world to watch it.

Chris recalled that because of his experience working on the river and his books he has written on the subject has led to him being consulted by the media. On one occasion, when reporting for Sky News at Minsterworth, the tidal surge caused the river to overtop the bank and the extremely expensive camera equipment had a narrow escape.

Nowadays, surfing the bore creates one of longest rideable waves in the world. It has become a popular pastime, with surfers staying upright on their boards for several kms as the bore pushes them along. It now appears in the Guinness Book of Records. It is now a competitive sport with dozens of surfers vying to record the longest ride, which at present is held local surfer Steve King, he holds the record of 15km of stand up surfing. Breaking the record is extremely difficult as the waves moves around from side to side reaching speeds of 15kmh.

This pastime is not without controversy however with “die hard spectators” claiming that the increased activity by surfers and their accompanying safety boats reduces the height of the bore.

Chris ended his talk to include many anecdotes of his time as skipper plus several snippets on Severn lore and a fascinating aside on fishing for both salmon and elvers; species which are now sadly depleted owing to over fishing.

Chris’s talk continued beyond our usual length but no one seemed to mind as it held members interest throughout.

Peter Hayes



PROTECTION AGAINST EVERYTHING



**MY GRANDAD WAS RESPONSIBLE
FOR 25 DOWNED GERMAN
PLANES IN WW2**



**STILL TO THIS DAY HE IS KNOWN
AS THE WORST MECHANIC THE
LUFTWAFFE EVER HAD**

There is a **St Probus**. He, along with two of his mates, fell out with the Emperor Diocletian around 300 AD and met an untimely and gruesome end. He was thrashed with whips, was pierced with red hot spits and finally cut up into little pieces

His crime? Sorry a mystery but, before his sticky end, he did become Bishop of Reiti in central Italy. No one seems to have wished him to become their patron though.

The feast of St Probus is celebrated by the Catholic Church on 11 October.

**Scientists have
discovered that
The first two people
on earth
were
Cockneys....."Would
you Adam & Eve it"**

**I think it's a disgrace on society and our education system
when after 50 years, most people have no idea who Neil
Armstrong is.**

Or what kind of trumpet he played!



DRAMA AT PROBUS



It is quite an achievement to knock off the front pages other events that were happening in Westminster on a certain weekend in May; so all credit due to Probus. Not, I hasten to add, your eponymous club or even one of the thousand or so fraternal organisations bearing that name.

No, this happened in an otherwise unremarkable village in Cornwall which shares our organisation's name and where, to quote a local..."... nothing much happens, not at least since D Day back in June 1944"

As part of its Coronation celebrations the village of Probus (population 2500) opened the tower of its 15th century church- 38.35m (The tallest Parish Church Tower in Cornwall) in aid of charity. It was while exploring this that a local woman rather over exerted herself and suffered a cardiac arrest, which prompted the calling out of what seems like most of the county's emergency services .

The emergency services were alerted and it appears to have been treated as a multi-agency incident.

- Falmouth Coastguard Rescue Team responded with Portscatho Coastguard Rescue Team,
- Senior Coastal Operations Officer
- Line Rescue Team from Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service
- Devon & Cornwall Police
- Cornwall Air Ambulance Royal Cornwall Hospitals with Major Trauma Doctor
- Coastguard Rescue Helicopter from St Athan, South Wales

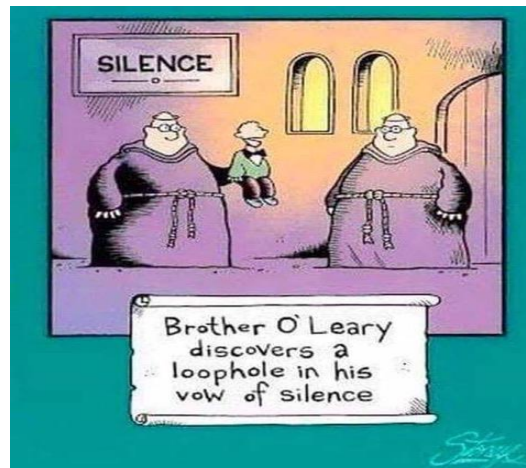
The only other rescue service, the RNLI, weren't called in as the village is some 7 miles inland.

After treatment, the woman was pronounced fit and well and the coronation celebrations resumed

In a way, I suppose the whole incident was a microcosm of what Probus clubs are about: teamwork and a willingness to help out as and when needed

Your roving West Country reporter Peter Hayes

WHERE AM I ?



Mahatma Gandhi said If there is an idiot in power, it means those who elected him are well represented.

A LOOK FORWARD TO JULY

PUB LUNCH

TUESDAY 4 JULY



THE DUKE OF YORK at BERROW

Mine Host Paul Dodd will be sending out details later



PROBUS SUMMER PARTY

Change of date

THURSDAY 20 JULY 2023

12.00 - 1530

This is due to problems with obtaining caterers



**Thanks to all contributors and those for helping to produce the
newsletter. Ed**

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