

# NEWSLETTER



## NEWENT & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB



# AUGUST 2023

### From our Chairman

As I write this letter, we are nearly into August, the Summer is going really fast, with the nights starting to draw in. The recent rain has done good in the garden, runner beans almost ready, the lawns and flowers looking really good. Many members attended Lee Hines' funeral on Wednesday 12th July at The Forest of Dean Crematorium, we wish Peter our best wishes and thoughts at this very sad time. Another sad occasion was that Colin Chave passed away, after a rather prolonged illness. His funeral was again at The Forest of Dean Crematorium on Tuesday 18th July. We wish Jan and her family our best wishes and thoughts at this very sad time. John Slack is still in The Dilke Hospital and is very frail. I spoke to Yvonne and passed on our best wishes to him. We had a good pub lunch, organised by Paul Dodd at The Duke of York, Berrow, although, I was unable to attend. Club members' wives, partners and late club members' wives were invited to the talk this month being given by Dr Katy Bellamy – Sleep Perchance to Dream: "The Neuroscience of Snoozing". It was a very fascinating and interesting talk and afterwards Katy took loads of questions. We had three potential new members attend this meeting, Jeff Thomas, Mike Askew and Barry Freeman. I was pleased to see that Geoff Thomas has become a member. Our Summer Party on the 20th July, was a great success. The weather was a little cool and one or two spots of rain, we decided to hold inside the hall. My thanks to the wives and partners who did a great job with all the extra bits and thanks to Anne for helping too. A very successful raffle was held. Our latest new member Geoff Thomas attended, and he is in his 99th year!!

As part of my Parish Council duties, In August I have The Probation Service, Community Payback Team, working in Northwood Green, painting the telephone box, which is used as a book exchange and painting the inside of the bus shelter. Let's hope they do a good job?

Enjoy the rest of the Summer.

Best wishes

Mike

**CLUB SPEAKER**

**TUESDAY 8 AUGUST 2023**



**Sheila Pugh: The work of the Mercy Ships**

Mercy Ships is an international charity based on Christian values that operates the largest non-governmental hospital ships in the world, providing hope and healing to Africa's most needy, community development projects, community health education, mental health programs, agriculture projects, and palliative care for terminally ill patients.

**CLUB SPEAKER**

**TUESDAY 22 AUGUST 2023**



**John Heathcott –The work of the Cotswold Volunteer Wardens**

The Cotswold Voluntary Wardens were established in 1968 and have continued to grow into the 400-strong membership of today. The wardens are a network of dedicated, skilled, and enthusiastic volunteers – helping to work across the Cotswolds National Landscape.

## OBITUARY



**Colin William Chave**

**1934 -2023**

**Treasurer 2006-2010, Chairman 2012-2013**

Colin Chave sadly died on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023 aged 89. He was a very well liked, highly respected and important member of Newent and District Probus Club, having been Treasurer and Chairman, he was also our Almoner, taking over from Mel Jones.

Colin was born in Hereford in 1934. His Mother was a receptionist in the radiography department at Hereford General Hospital where his Father was the Chief Engineer. He was an only child, and they lived in the old lodge within the hospital grounds. During the war many WW2 troops filled the beds and his father used to entertain them, playing in a brass band.

Colin went to school in Hereford and met Jan at Cheltenham College where they were doing their teacher training together. He had a motorbike and they used to court up on Bredon Hill. Apparently meeting Jan's parents for the first time was something he never forgot, he was introduced into a typical industrial Yorkshire mining town family and for their evening meal was given tripe and piccalilli and a pint of Guinness!

They married in 1958 and settled in Abbots Langley, near Watford. Colin's first job was teaching in a rough secondary boys' school. He then moved on to a mixed secondary modern school in Kings Langley, where none of the children left school with any qualifications. He was one of the first teachers to set up a working farm, where the children were taught how to care for animals and knowledge about crops, also learning respect, loyalty, and important life skills. It was a very successful endeavour and whilst working there he persuaded the Forestry Commission to allow him and the children to renovate a large, ramshackle hut in the Brecon Beacons which was eventually used for field trips. Jan and Colin ran a sports club each weekend with the children – Colin would oversee cricket and Jan managed the rounders! Whilst at Kings Langley, he also took a year's unpaid secondment in order to complete a Master's degree in rural studies at Reading University.

Beverley was born in 1962, Helen in 1964 and Sarah in 1968. Six months after Sarah was born, they moved to Alsager on the Staffordshire/Cheshire border. Colin became a lecturer in Rural Studies at Crewe and Alsager College, which eventually became part of Manchester University. He also lectured for the Open University for many years and taught Population and Food Poverty, Environment and Energy, and Economics. He really enjoyed teaching mature students who were as enthusiastic as he was.

He practically ran the farm on the Alsager site – known as Heathfields, Jan always used to say that Colin was a ‘frustrated farmer’ – being happiest in this environment.

Colin was always very sporty, playing a lot of rugby; he also enjoyed cricket and running.

Colin was a very keen gardener and conservationist, knowing the Latin names for his many plants, teaching his daughters about growing flowers, fruit and vegetables and how to care for the land. He cross-pollinated many flowers in his greenhouse to create new species and spent nearly every day amongst his plants and garden; I remember particularly well, the sight of tomatoes growing out of the vents in the roof of his greenhouse and whenever they came to visit, they were accompanied by wonderful examples of whatever was in season or bloom; Colin also had a huge book collection.

The family’s long Summer holidays were nearly always spent in France. Colin was really knowledgeable about French wines and the family were taken to see numerous vineyards all over France. When they initially retired, they were away travelling on every continent for over a year.

In 1989, Colin and Jan both took early retirement, Colin retiring as principal lecturer after 29 years in education, settling in Kempley. They were so happy to become grandparents and then great grandparents. Colin developed other hobbies in retirement. He took up wood turning and made some beautiful pieces. He supported the development of Sheppard House and spent a lot of time with Trudie Sheppard, driving one of the community buses and approaching many organisations to raise money for all their ambitious plans. Colin also researched his family history and the name ‘Chave’, discovering that he originated from the Huguenots in Southern Europe, and he contacted a Chave family in New Zealand, a very distant relative; they were lucky enough to meet each other in New Zealand.

He always enjoyed ‘intelligent conversation’ and loved an argument about politics.

PROBUS was also a big part of his life in retirement and he would often mention the interesting and of course, educational talks and his presence will be greatly missed by the Club,

John Martin

**Teacher: Why have you got cotton wool in your ears boy? Do you have an infection?**

**Boy: Well Sir, you keep saying that things go in one ear and out the other, so I am trying to keep them all in.**

**Teacher: What is the longest sentence you can think of?**

**Boy: A life sentence !!**

**A degree in agriculture is great to have.**

It allows you to work in a variety of fields!





## **PROBUS (NLHS) outing to Woodchester Mansion, Nympsfield, Stonehouse**

Bright and breezy on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July a jolly band of travellers looked skywards and hoped that the clouds would disappear once we got beyond Gloucester. Happily they did disappear, and we had a gloriously sunny day, if a little chilly by our Australian standards. But then Australia has nothing like the sight that greeted us as we drove, in our coach, slowly down a very long and rough track to Woodchester Mansion.

We were met by a very knowledgeable lady from the charitable trust that now owns and maintains the Mansion. It is a large house in the Victorian Gothic Revival style which stands on the site of much older dwellings that were demolished to enable the present large house to be built. The house was designed and built for its owner William Leigh between 1856 and 1870, but he never got to live in his house, as he died before it was finished. Indeed, for many reasons, mainly centred around the Roman Catholic faith, and his desire to build a Roman Catholic church in Nympsfield, the project floundered on a lack of money to complete the work.



So it was that the house became a shell, albeit with a completed roof and fine stone exterior walls, but few interior finishings save for staircases and a few interior walls. The house is now a grade 1 listed building but has never been lived in and remains largely as it was left at William's death. The exterior walls are built with very well finished dressed blocks of Oolitic Limestone from quarries in the Forest of Dean and even the gutters and many gargoyles are completed in stone, and at a cursory glance, the house appears complete from the outside. But inside it is a very different scene that greets the visitor. We saw few interior floors, with most rooms rising three or more stories directly to the roof timbers which are clad with Cotswold stone tiles. Inside you can see the way the house was being built with stone arches and vaulted roofs, most in an unfinished state. It was just as the builders had left it about 150 years ago.



The house was essentially weatherproof and was used by the American forces during WW2 but suffered a gradual decline afterwards and at the end of the war, passed into the ownership of the Local Authority who after some years, set up a charitable trust to maintain the building as a monument to the Victorian builders and their skills. It was designed as a large country mansion for a wealthy entrepreneur, including a Chapel. It was designed to accommodate many up-to-date Victorian fittings, only a few of which had been installed when William died. One such item is a magnificent stone bath in one of the many bathrooms, reputed to weigh over a ton complete with a cold-water shower. I doubt anyone has ever used it although the water pipes are still in place together with a bell pull for the occupant to order drinks in the bath.

In short, a fascinating visit and a pity that only a very few from PROBUS availed themselves of the opportunity to join the Newent Local History Society in their outing. The Society has offered us places on any future outings and it is to be hoped that we can take advantage of this very kind offer in the future.

David Clowes



A group of professors from an aircraft engineering college are about to fly out to an international conference.

Just as the plane is preparing for take-off, they are informed that this particular plane had been designed and built by their students.

All of a sudden the professors leapt out of their seats and made a frantic dash for the exit in an attempt to leave the aircraft.

However, one professor just sat calmly in his seat and made no attempt to leave.

He was asked, "Are you not worried like the others?"

He said " **No, it's never going to get off the ground**"



## OUR SUMMER PARTY

Unfortunately, the “Gorgeous Summers Day” that was ordered for this year’s Summer Party didn’t arrive, but it didn’t stop the 39 people who attended from enjoying the good food and good company.

We were able to sit outside before the food was available, but as the weather forecast was poor the tables were set out inside the hall. Jon Gurney supplied and served excellent roast pork and together with quiche and various salads there was plenty of choice on offer. Thanks again to those members & partners who supplied a wide range of desserts which completed the menu.

All in all, a really enjoyable event with plenty of opportunities for everyone to socialise.



## The neuroscience of snoozing



### ***HE THAT SLEEPS FEELS NOT THE TOOTHACHE\****

*“Good night, good night! Parting is such sweet sorrow,  
That I shall say good night till it be morrow”.\*\**

Our speaker, Katy Bellamy, making a welcome return as a speaker to a large and appreciative audience, mainly due to the inclusion of members' wives and partners;, would surely have known Shakespeare's words. She shared her knowledge of the mysteries of sleep in a talk that touched on such diverse subjects as snoring to sleepwalking and dreams to recreational drugs, she kept her audience attentive for over an hour, leaving members wishing for more, judging by the volume of questions she received at its conclusion.

In a move guaranteed to gain members' attention, she kicked off by offering her insights on a wonder drug which, in her opinion, is the nearest thing to Nature's "cure all". After being suitably baffled as to its identity, she disclosed that, of course, she was referring to *sleep*. and that without it we would be at greater risk, for instance to diabetes, cancer, dementia, mental illness and many others that are the scourge of 21<sup>st</sup> C living – and dying!,

Sleep, she explained is Nature's way of cleaning our brains; the shorter your sleep, the shorter your life span and it is the most effective thing we can do to reset our brain and body health each day.

Of necessity, she could only devote a short time to each constituent part of the thesis but she did manage to give a definitive answer to the thorny question of "just how many hours of sleep do we need each night"? 7 to 9 hours is what we need but the quality is as important as the quantity; however she did reassure us that it was quite acceptable for this amount to be split say 6 hours at night and another 1 hour doze in the middle of the day.

She did, however, have strict rules on enforcing the sleep quality. Utter darkness in the bedroom, because receptors in the brain take this as a signal to shut down cycle.



This means, ideally, no looking at screens, not even a bedside clock; certainly no blue lights showing as the brain is programmed to take this as an instruction to wake up. She then introduced us to Circadian rhythms which are 24-hour cycles that are part of the body's internal clock, running in the background to carry out essential functions and processes. One of the most important and well-known circadian rhythm is the sleep-wake cycle.

When properly aligned, a circadian rhythm can promote consistent and **restorative sleep**. But when this circadian rhythm is thrown off, it can create significant sleep problems, including **insomnia**. Research is also revealing that circadian rhythms play an integral role in diverse aspects of physical and mental health.

We were also told to avoid caffeine for at least five hours before bedtime and this just not only means coffee but also certain types of tea.

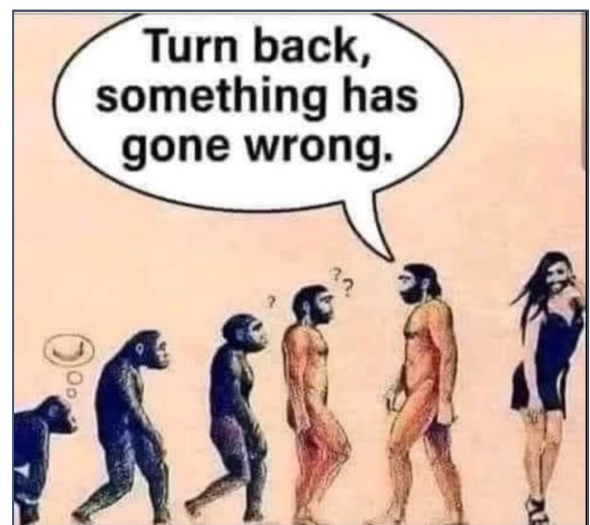
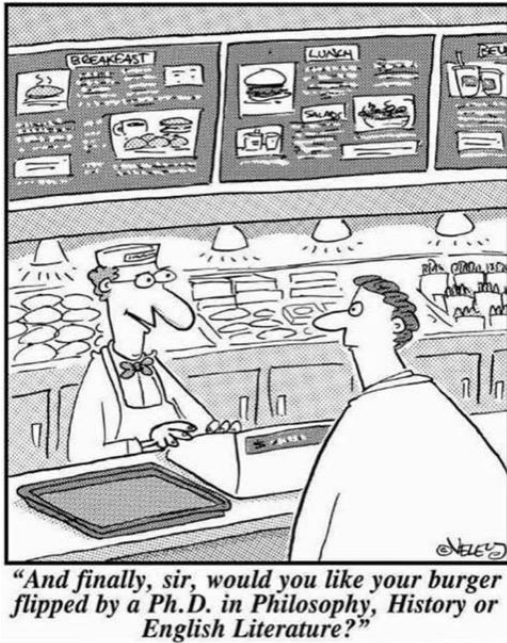
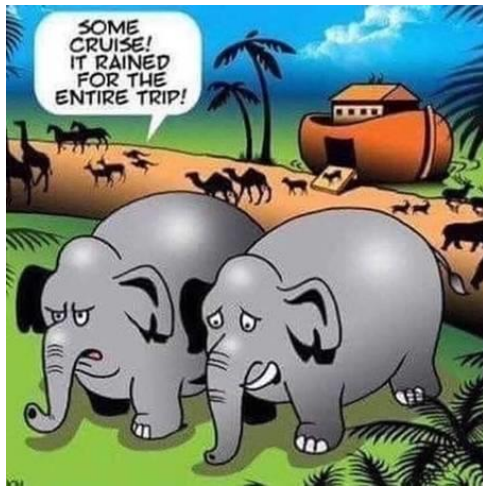
Diet too is important and we should adopt the Continental way of eating with our main meal at midday and just snacks in the evening if at all, with any alcohol drunk with the meal and not in the evening down at the pub.

All in all, a both useful and informative talk given by a person on top of her profession. She was warmly thanked and applauded.

*“Cymbeline\* and “Romeo and Juliet*

*Peter Hayes*





A young boy asks his dad how people come to exist. His dad says " Adam and Eve made babies, then they became adult and made more babies and so on".

He then asked his mother how people came about. His mother said "We were monkeys, then we evolved to what we are now".

Totally confused, the young boy went back to his father and said "You lied to me, Mum said we came from monkeys". "No son" he said "Mum was talking about her side of the family"



Passengers travelling first class on British Airways Boeing 747's are worried about a re-design, which means some toilets have windows.

A woman travelling to New York complained there were no blinds. She was told by the stewardess "Madam, if some pervert is clinging to the side of this aircraft at 35,000ft, they deserve to see everything"!



If you think you are smarter than the previous generation, 50 years ago, the owner's manual of a car showed you how to adjust the valves. Today, it warns you not to drink the contents of the battery!



My wife turned 95 yesterday and still doesn't use glasses. She drinks straight from the bottle.

A surgeon, a farmer, an engineer, and a lawyer are arguing over whose career is the best.

"I think **surgery** is the best career because it's the oldest!" said the surgeon.

"What makes you say that?" asked the farmer.

"Well," said the surgeon, "God removed a rib from Adam and turned it into Eve."

"You are forgetting one thing," said the farmer. "Before God even created Adam, he planted a garden for Adam to live in. That makes **agriculture** the oldest career."

"Both of you are wrong," said the engineer. "**Engineering** is the oldest career because God created an entire universe out of nothing but pure chaos."

"Ha! I win!" taunted the lawyer.

"What makes you say that?" asked the surgeon.

"Well," said the lawyer, "someone had to create that pure chaos."



**Thanks to all those who  
submitted articles and helped  
with the publication  
Ed**

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