



PROBUS RECORDER



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PROBUS CLUB OF GILLINGHAM, DORSET
(www.probus-gillingham-dorset.org.uk)

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Chairman's Notes

We had an enjoyable Barbecue at the Rugby Club and were very pleased to have the company of Yeovil members and their wives. It has been suggested that we might look at some other possible places for next year's event, and I am sure that over the coming months the Committee will be investigating all possible venues.

It was good to welcome new member Paul Martin at our last meeting, and I hope we can continue to increase our membership.

It was great to see Team GB do so well at the Olympics, although Margaret and I were rather disappointed with the opening and closing ceremonies!!

Our outing to the Army Flying Museum at Middle Wallop was both informative and enjoyable.

You may be interested to learn that I have received quite a number of comments regarding the possibilities for wives and partners attending our meetings. One idea may be that all meetings on lunch days might become ladies-invitation events, and in this respect, it would be appropriate if our talks on such days were female-friendly (if I'm allowed to use such an expression!).

As far as summer is concerned, and with this year's experiences fresh in our memories, we have now begun to focus on 2025!! Associated with this trend, our recent talk on Climate Change was most informative - and pretty thought provoking too.

As always, my thanks to the Committee for their ongoing support and encouragement.

Andrew

WELFARE & SOCIAL

Welfare

No relevant or appropriate information is available at the time of publication. Once more we hope that a 'local hero' can be found from within our ranks to take on the appointment of Welfare Officer.

Editor

Social - September Club Events (& just into October)

- Editor

3 September 2024	Posted in the Past <i>Helen Baggott</i> <i>(Men only)</i>
17 th September 2024	Musical Satire of the 20th Century <i>Peter Gill</i> <i>(Men only)</i>
	Lunch Udder Farm Shop Restaurant <i>12:30 for 1pm</i> <i>(Wives/Partners)</i>
1 st October 2024	Cunard History and Glamorous Stars <i>Steve Herra</i> <i>(Men only)</i>



OUR AUGUST TALK

Climate Change – a Geologist's viewpoint

John Pett
20th August 2024

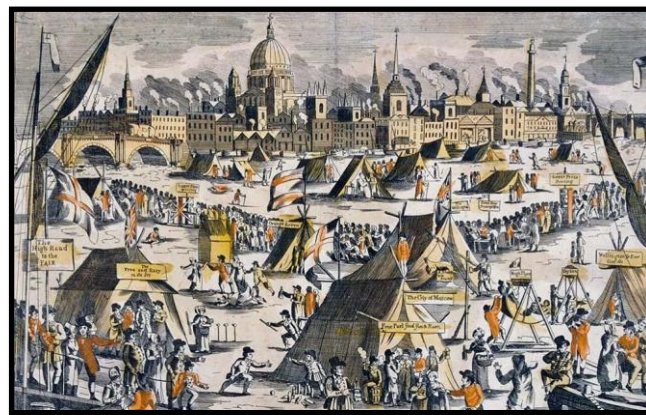


John Pett is a geologist who used to work in the oil and gas industry. His interesting talk focused on the cyclical nature of climate change over very long time frames. He challenged the current orthodoxy which holds that global warming since 1850 has been caused by industrialisation. He argued that climate change is inevitable and uncontrollable, and that efforts should be aimed at mitigating its effects rather than trying to stop it.

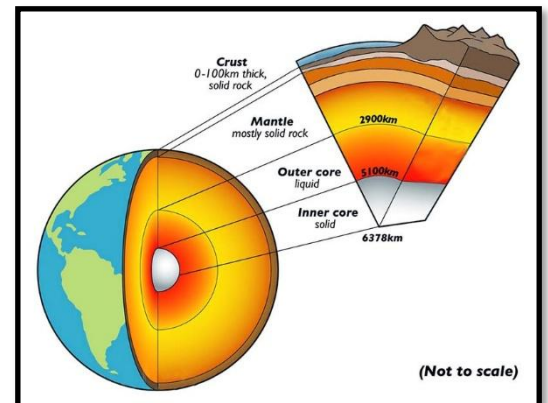
John began his talk with a video of an experiment conducted by an American academic, in which he asked students to observe male and female subjects passing basket balls amongst themselves with particular attention to the number of passes and the gender differences in performance. Most observers counted the number of passes correctly, but all of them failed to notice a man dressed in a gorilla suit, who walked through the proceedings. The point of the exercise was that the observers had been primed to concentrate on specific aspects of the exercise and were blind to the unexpected. They

failed to see “the bigger picture”.

This illustrative exercise provided his introduction to a rapid gallop through the last 4.6 billion years of the Earth’s existence. For most of this time, planet Earth was a barren place of rock and desert. Global temperatures were alternately very hot and very cold. Sea levels rose and fell dramatically. Life forms appeared only relatively recently. Human history is a mere blink of the eye in this perspective. Even in “recent” history, the world warmed between 250BC and 450AD. It was then cold between AD450 to 900. In AD829 the Black sea and the Nile froze. A warm period between AD1000-1300 was followed by a “*little ice age*” between AD1300-1850, a period in which frost fairs took place on the river Thames. Since 1850 temperatures have generally risen, a trend that appears to be accelerating.



A cross section of the Earth shows that the solid ground on which we live is a relatively thin crust, below which the viscous mantle flows because of convection currents. This conveyor-belt affects the geology of the planet, causing continental drift and thus earthquakes and volcanos where tectonic plates meet. Volcanic eruptions have dramatic and immediate effects on the global climate. The fissure eruption in 1783 affected 200 square miles in Iceland and spewed so much debris into the atmosphere that global temperatures plummeted. The resultant six years of crop failures in Europe was a contributing factor in the French Revolution in 1789.



The gigantic eruption of Krakatoa, Indonesia in 1883 not only killed 35,000 people in Indonesia, but it also produced haze and dramatic sunsets thousands of miles away in London.

John then ran through the salient facts affecting our Climate. The intensity of energy emitted by the sun is cyclical. The rotation of the earth, its revolution around the sun, and its tilt all affect Earth’s climate. Furthermore the Earth ‘wobbles’ on its axis - also affecting

our climate, even though this only takes place every 26,000 years. Greenhouse gasses in the Earth's atmosphere include CO₂ and methane and affect the climate, but by far the largest constituent having an effect is water vapour in the form of clouds. These trap the warmth from solar energy. In turn, warming sea temperatures reduce the polar ice and raise sea levels. The warming of the arctic tundra is also releasing carbon and methane, which in turn increase the greenhouse effect.

The fact that the world is warming is not in doubt. However, the scientific consensus in recent years has been that humans are responsible for this. John's view is that the correlation of warming temperatures and increased industrialisation does not necessarily prove causation. He is dismissive of the political responses, notably in the form of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) set up by the UN in 1988; he suggested that their frequent repetition of the proposition of 'man-made' global warming does not necessarily guarantee the truth.

Certainly, there is much that can be criticised in the bureaucratic mechanisms set up to discuss the subject, such as the regular "Conference of the Parties"(COP). In this respect John referred to the 'jamboree' in Glasgow (COP26) in 2021 which attracted 40,000 delegates, and COP28 in Dubai in December 2023 which drew 86,000 delegates! How many will attend the next one in Azerbaijan, he mused.



John went on to say that whatever one's view of the political or emotional responses to global warming, there is no doubt that climate change is real. Even if the causes are mostly natural and out of our control, at least some of the emissions of greenhouse gasses do seem to originate from human activity, and these may be making matters worse. As he suggested – "When in a hole it is a good idea to stop digging".



While our continued reliance on the burning of fossil fuels may be inevitable, there seems little harm in developing alternative renewable sources of energy. What is incontrovertible, he explained, is the need for focusing on measures to **mitigate the effects** of climate change. This is not simply a concern to far-away Pacific nations facing inundation. It is a concern for all of us and our future generations.

The Chairman thanked John for a highly interesting and thought-provoking talk that challenged many of our assumptions. The meeting closed following questions from the audience.

Steve Baines



ENDPIECE – Editor

Some Strange Things to take your mind off politics (or whatever else!)

- A rat can last longer without water than a camel.
- Your stomach has to produce a new layer of mucus every two weeks - or it will digest itself.
- The dot over the letter "i" is called a 'tittle'.
- A raisin dropped in a glass of fresh champagne will bounce up and down continuously from the bottom of the glass to the top.
- A female ferret will die if it goes into heat and cannot find a mate.
- A duck's quack doesn't echo. No one knows why.
- During the chariot race scene in "Ben Hur," a small red car can be seen in the distance (and Heston's also wearing a wristwatch).
- On average, 12 newborns will be given to the wrong parents daily! (That explains a few mysteries ..!)
- Donald Duck comics were banned from Finland because he doesn't wear pants.
- Because metal was scarce, the Oscars given out during World War II were made of wood.
- The number of possible ways of playing the first four moves per side in a game of chess is 318,979,564,000.
- There are no words in the dictionary that rhyme with 'orange', 'purple', or 'silver'.
- The name Wendy was made up for the book Peter Pan. There was never a recorded Wendy before that.
- The very first bomb dropped by the Allies on Berlin in World War II killed the only elephant in the Berlin Zoo.
- If one places a tiny amount of liquor on a scorpion, it will instantly go mad and sting itself to death. (*Which sadist discovered this??*)
- Some of Bruce Lee's moves were so fast that they actually had to s-l-o-w film down so you could see them.
- The first CD pressed in the US was Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the USA."
- The original name for butterfly was 'flutter-by'.
- The phrase "rule of thumb" is derived from an old English law that stated that you couldn't beat your wife with anything wider than your thumb. (*Ed – probably inaccurate. There is also a plausible theory that it is based on French/Spanish/Italian in each of which the words 'thumb' and 'inch' are the same.*)

- The first product Motorola started to develop was a record player for automobiles. They called themselves Motorola because the most-known player on the market was Victrola - hence 'Motorola'.
- Roses may be red, but violets are indeed violet.
- By lying on your back and raising your legs slowly, you cannot sink into quicksand.
- Celery has negative calories. It takes more calories to eat a piece of celery than the celery has in it to begin with.
- Charlie Chaplin once won third prize in a Charlie Chaplin look-a-like contest.
- Chewing gum while peeling onions will keep you from crying.
- Sherlock Holmes NEVER said, "*Elementary, my dear Watson.*"
- The glue on Israeli postage is certified kosher.
- The Guinness Book of Records holds the record for being the book most often stolen from public libraries.
- Astronauts are not allowed to eat beans before they go into space because passing wind in a spacesuit damages them.
- Bats always turn left when exiting a cave.

Now Wasn't That Pleasant For A Change?

(and non-political and non-sectarian ... as called for in our Constitution!)

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And just for good measure, I happened on this term and its explanation by chance and thought it might help to raise blood pressures again

'LGBTQQIP2SA'

"Any combination of letters attempting to represent all the identities in the queer community, this near-exhaustive one (but not exhaustive) represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, pansexual, two-spirited, and asexual."

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And finally



To our most 'Senior' member!!

Happy Birthday!!