



PROBUS RECORDER



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

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Chairman's Notes

*"Bore Da Pawb"*¹, - or to the unenlightened,
"Good Morning everyone".



I must start my first Chairman's report by thanking Andrew Tinsley for his Chairmanship this past year. He has worked tirelessly on behalf of the membership with less than a full committee and we all owe him a vote of thanks.

I am in the fortunate position of having a full committee and I must thank Dave Hooker for reprising his role of Welfare officer after overcoming his own period of ill health. As is often said, the committee do an excellent job fulfilling their various roles, but new blood is always called for to keep things fresh as the club dynamics invariably change with time. I have previously mentioned the difficulty our Lunch organiser has had since Covid in finding suitable venues on Tuesdays and with this in mind, Colin has organised the June lunch for a Wednesday at the Stapleton Arms in Buckhorn Weston. As this does not follow a meeting and the need to make a dash to pick up wives/partners etc, we are hoping for a more relaxed event where we can mix with all participants, other than just the people on our table.

An increasingly important issue we face is the need to recruit more members. I have asked Paul Hooley to oversee the advertising of the club and use his expertise to grow numbers. That said, I cannot understate the role all members can play in this. So please play your part. Attendance is generally consistent at meetings but non-attendance seems to be haphazardly recorded as apologies for absence are not always given. So please, if you cannot make a meeting, add your apology on the website with a simple click.

Finally, we have had an invitation to join Yeovil Probus for a Ladies Lunch on 22nd July. Unfortunately, this is one of our own meeting/lunch dates, but if anyone wishes to attend, please let me know by the end of June.



John

"Lechyd da"

¹ For those who like to sound authentic – [try this](#). Ed.



WELFARE & SOCIAL

Welfare

It is wonderful that Dave Hooker has stepped into the breach, and once again provides us with relevant information about our members who are unable to live 'normally' – or whatever epithet is appropriate for we 'of a certain age'! At our last meeting, he provided the following.

- **Harry Allan.** Harry has a bad back and is taking strong pain killers but was back with us for the AGM - and also managed to attend the last meeting.
- **Robin Lloyd Williams.** Robin has fallen down the stairs and fractured his spine. Despite this, he remains cheerful and hopes to be back at meetings as soon as practicable.
- **John Adams.** John and Hazel have had a stair lift installed in their house, and it has been successful in allowing John to retain his mobility. He hopes to return to meetings as soon as he feels able.
- **Ron Walker.** Ron continues to have to look after Linda, who has blood pressure issues. They are waiting for a specialist appointment, and it is difficult to make any decisions until this has taken place and a diagnosis is made.

Social - June Club Events

10 th June 2025	Tales from the Mid Dorset Coast <i>Mike Spencer</i>
24 th June 2025	Over 80 Years in Milton – a Trip Down Memory Lane <i>Sam Woodcock</i>
	Members' Lunch <i>The Stapleton Arms (Buckhorn Weston)</i> Wednesday 25th June - 12.00 for 1pm



MAY TALKS

POP MUSIC OF THE 1960s

Les Yates

12th May 2025



Probus Club member Les Yeates gave a fascinating talk on the pop music of his youth. Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s with two elder brothers, Les developed a passion for buying and selling vinyl records which remains with him to this day.

In the late 1950s the dominant sounds of popular culture were American crooners and Rock and Roll. American artists such as *Elvis Presley*, *Del Shannon* and the *Everly Brothers* ruled the roost. Home-grown artists such as *Lonnie Donegan*, *Tommy Steele* and *Cliff Richard* were popular “also rans”. From about 1963, and for the rest of the decade, British groups took the world by storm, led by an assortment of Liverpudlian talent.

The key breakthrough for the British pop industry was winning



recognition in America. The *Beatles* were in the vanguard. In 1964 they had six no.1 singles in the US. *Herman's Hermits* were also surprisingly popular in America. Other British groups developed a world-wide fan base. Whereas the Beatles initially cultivated a clean-cut image, which appealed



across the generations, groups such as the *Rolling Stones* represented an edgier, more rebellious facet of youth culture. A number of other groups cultivated a reputation for drugs, alcohol and smashing up hotel rooms.

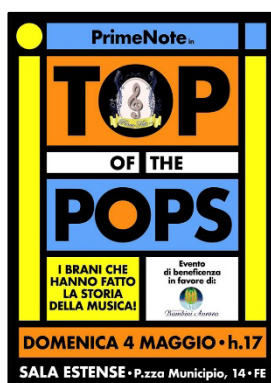
Here at home, increasing affluence and technological improvements (e.g. smaller and cheaper record players and vinyl records) meant that there was a growing market for “45s”. Record shops sprung up in every high street, each with a curiously ineffective sound-proofed listening booth, where you could sample before you splurged your pocket money.

Young people listened to *Radio Luxembourg*, with its irritating fading reception. The BBC was definitely behind the curve. At the beginning of the 1960s the BBC's Light Programme devoted

only 45 minutes a week to pop music. On television there was *Juke Box Jury* hosted by David



Jacobs with the wonderful Janice Nicholls (“*Oi'll give eet foive*”). Times were, however, changing. *Thank Your Lucky Stars* and *Ready Steady Go* were launched. On New Year's Day 1964 there was the first broadcast of *Top of the Pops*. This programme lasted until 2006 and show-cased just about everyone who was anyone in pop music. It boasted huge audiences in 120 countries.



In the mid-1960s “pirate” radio stations, which operated offshore to avoid broadcasting regulations, were hugely popular. *Radio Caroline*, launched by an Irish businessman, is said to have had 25 million listeners a day. *Radio London* had a stronger transmitter, and one of its claims to fame is that it introduced Tamla Motown to British audiences. The government’s response to this explosion of commercial broadcasting was the 1967 Marine Offences Act to outlaw it. However, the blow that killed the pirates was the launch in August 1967 of *BBC Radio One*, which aped the format and jingles of the commercial stations and poached most of their presenters. However, the BBC retained the mantle of moral guardian for the nation’s listening habits, liberally banning songs that mentioned death or sex.



At the beginning of the 1960s the explosion of the music industry was driven by the sale



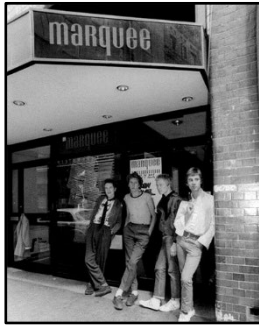
of singles. Three ‘45s’ could be bought for a pound. The market for albums developed on the back of the sale of singles. The best-selling albums of the mid-1960s were by the *Beatles*, the *Rolling Stones* and *Bob Dylan*. LPs were regarded as a more serious sector of the market, reflecting an artificial line between pop which was thought of as frivolous and ephemeral, and rock - which was for the ‘real’ fans. Some groups, such as *Led Zeppelin* never produced a single.

The music industry did not develop solely because of the popularity of the artists. There was a flowering of song-writing talent – *Lennon and McCartney*, *Bob Dylan*, *Jerry Geffen* and *Carole King*, *Holland*, *Dozier and Holland* – to name but a few. In addition, it should be acknowledged that the industry was driven not by a love for catchy tunes, but by hard-nosed commercial interests. *Elvis Presley* starred in a number of popular but forgettable films. *Cliff Richard* had fun on a London bus in *Summer Holiday*. The launch of the *Monkees* in 1966,



a group manufactured for television and marketed aggressively, was a huge commercial success, generating 75 million record sales. Other artists jumped on the bandwagon, notably the *Beatles* in *A Hard Day’s Night* and *Help* (their two later films *Magical Mystery Tour* and *Yellow Submarine* were not the finest products of their oeuvre). The films *Easy Rider* and *Woodstock* were hugely influential hits, aimed at a readymade audience of music fans.





Les recalled that in his youth he was an avid attendee at the *Marquee* in Wardour Street and the *Toby Jug Blues Club* in Tolworth, rubbing shoulders with the likes of Eric Clapton. He also went to the *Isle of Wight Festival* with 600,000 others in 1970, where he had a great time, but was mightily unimpressed by *Frank Zapper* and the *Mothers of Invention*. The list of performers playing at pop festivals in the 1960's reads like a Who's Who of pop legends. Festivals such as *Monterey* in 1967 and *Hyde Park* in 1968 and '69 attracted huge crowds with minimal levels of organisation. Glastonbury, starting in a field on a dairy farm was a far cry from the vast logistical undertaking it has subsequently become.



For most of us listening to the talk, the popular music of the time provided the cultural backdrop to our formative years. Les's talk provoked both instant recognition and a sense of nostalgia for times past.

The Chairman thanked Les for his interesting talk. After inviting questions, he closed the meeting.

Steve Baines

THE HISTORY OF COFFEE

Mike Rendall – 28th May 2025



Mike Rendall had spoken to us a number of times before on very different topics. He is a published author, writing on topics inked to the 18th Century. When not writing he blogs and gives talks about aspects of living in the 18th Century, with lectures in the UK, in Spain and in the United States. He has lectured on cruise ships in the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Caribbean and in the China Seas and is keen to develop his interest in all-things-Georgian. However, this talk covered a very wide historical span, from pre-Christian days to the present.

The population of the World consumes 2.25 billion cups of coffee each day. It is not clear how accurate this statement is or how this figure has been calculated, but suffice to say, a lot of coffee is consumed. It is also not clear when this all started. Legend has it that 1,200 years ago a goatherd in Ethiopia called Kaldi noticed that his goats become frisky after eating red berries from a particular bush. Quite how this prompted a train of events that led humans to gather the beans, wash, roast and crush them and then add hot water is a mystery.



It is likely that coffee production and consumption did originate in Ethiopia. An elaborate and time-consuming coffee ceremony survives there to this day. Coffee consumption spread from there to the Arabian Peninsula, but probably somewhat earlier than legend would have us believe. There is some evidence to suggest that the Arabs in Yemen were drinking coffee some three centuries before Kaldi was supposed to have had his lightbulb moment watching his goats.

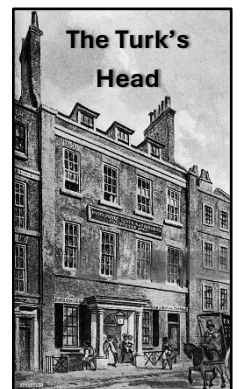


for drinking coffee in public.

Coffee drinking was popular in the Arab world partly because of the Muslim prohibition on the consumption of alcohol. It spread with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. The first coffee house in Istanbul was established in 1555 and coffee drinking was a popular pastime. Meeting to drink coffee was, however, frequently disapproved of by the authorities, who were wary of seditious gatherings. In 1632, for instance, Sultan Murad IV introduced some particularly brutal punishments

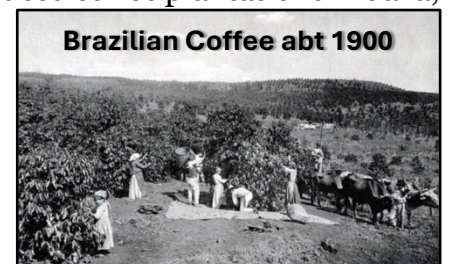
Coffee drinking spread to Europe in the Sixteenth Century. Francis Bacon is said to have experimented with the medicinal and stimulant effects of coffee. The drink was not, however, without its detractors. Pope Clement VIII labelled it “*Satan’s drink*”, although it is not clear whether this was because of its association with Islam or because he did not like it. Various rulers down the ages have disapproved of coffee and have tried to ban it. Charles II of England tried to promote beer drinking instead, from which, coincidentally he derived excise duty. Frederick the Great of Prussia employed specialist coffee sniffers to police the streets and enforce a ban. A ban on coffee drinking in Sweden was not lifted until 1823. Today, Swedes are amongst the world’s biggest per capita coffee consumers.

In the UK, the coffee habit took off from the middle of the Seventeenth Century, helped by restrictions on the sale of alcohol during the Cromwellian period. The *Angel Coffee House* in Oxford opened in 1650 and is thought to have been the first such establishment in England, quickly followed by the *Queen’s Lane Coffee House*, the site of which is appropriately enough, occupied today by a Starbucks. The first coffee house in London is thought to have been *Pasque Rosee’s* or the *Turk’s Head*, which was destroyed, along with most of the city in the Great Fire of 1666.



The association of coffee shops with specialist trades seems to have happened spontaneously, through merchants gathering together to talk shop and drink coffee. *Lloyd’s Coffee House*, which opened in 1676 became a centre for insurance business and *Jonathan’s Coffee House*, opening in 1680, developed in time into the stock exchange.

The production of coffee spread from north-eastern Africa largely through the activities of Arab traders, but others got involved. In 1670 an Indian prince returning from the Haj, smuggled coffee beans home to Mysore. The Dutch introduced coffee plantations in Java, Sulawesi and Sumatra. A gift of a coffee plant to the French king, Louis XIV, was the ancestor of coffee plants in Martinique. These spread to Haiti and Suriname. In 1727 the theft of coffee plants by Francisco de Mello Palheta was the basis of the Brazilian coffee industry.



Today, coffee, after oil and gas, is the World’s biggest export product. Brazil and Vietnam head the list of coffee producers, but coffee can be grown anywhere that has a tropical climate and the right hilly topography. There are basically two types – Arabica, which is finer tasting but

less prolific and thus more expensive, and Robusta, which is stronger and higher yielding. The United States is the largest consumer by volume, but on a per capita basis, the Scandinavians, headed by Finland, are the global leaders.

As any coffee snob will tell you, there is “proper” coffee made from ground and roasted beans, and there is “Instant”. Instant coffee makes up at least 75% of UK coffee sales and is also popular in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. The history of instant coffee goes back a surprisingly long way. In 1771 someone had the notion of brewing coffee, drying it and later using the resultant powder. This idea was taken up and patented in the 1890s in New Zealand. A tinned version of this concoction was included in the rations of allied servicemen in the First World War. The commercial production of instant coffee dates from 1938 when *Nescafe* appeared. *Maxwell House* introduced freeze drying to the production process in the 1960s and in 1986 the first decaffeinated coffee was made commercially available. The process of decaffeination usually involves washing the beans with the chemical solvents - methylene chloride and ethyl acetate. For the brave, enhanced caffeine coffee is also available. One brand is appropriately named *Death Wish*.



While the basic processes of collecting, roasting and grinding coffee beans have not changed much since the days of the Ethiopian coffee ritual, there are an array of variations on a theme. Quite apart from the confusing names coffee shops give to their products, some of the more exotic variations involve an intermediary. In parts of Africa, **Black Ivory** coffee is extracted from elephant dung. In Brazil, beans excreted by the Jacu bird are collected. In Indonesia, **Kopi Luwak** has passed through the gut of a palm civet. Additions to coffee range from cheese or eggs in Sweden to chicory in France. Chicory is also the main ingredient of **Camp Coffee**, which is, surprisingly, still on sale. Anyone who has tasted chicory “coffee” will have had great difficulty relating it to the real thing.



The Chairman thanked Mike for his interesting and informative talk. After inviting questions, he closed the meeting.

Steve Baines



ENDPIECE (Editor)

Holy Inspiration

(with apologies to Pope Leo XIV)

A new priest at his first mass was so nervous that he could hardly speak. After mass he asked the monsignor how he had done. The monsignor replied, *"When I am worried about getting nervous on the pulpit, I put a glass of vodka next to the water glass. If I start to get nervous, I take a sip."*

So next Sunday he took the monsignor's advice. At the beginning of the sermon, he got nervous and took a drink. He proceeded to talk up a storm, but upon his return to his office after the mass, he found the following note on the door:

- 1) Sip the vodka, don't gulp.
- 2) There are 10 commandments, not 12.
- 3) There are 12 disciples, not 10.
- 4) Jesus was consecrated, not constipated.
- 5) Jacob wagered his donkey; he did not *"bet his ass"*.
- 6) We do not refer to Jesus Christ as the late J.C.
- 7) The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are not referred to as Daddy, Junior and the spook.
- 8) David slew Goliath, he did not *"kick the sh*t out of him"*.
- 9) When David was hit by a rock and was knocked off his donkey, don't say he was *"stoned off his ass"*.
- 10) We do not refer to the cross as the *"Big T."*
- 11) When Jesus broke the bread at the last supper he said, *"Take this and eat it for it is my body."* He did not say *"Eat me"*.
- 12) The Virgin Mary is not called *"Mary with the Cherry"*.
- 13) The recommended grace before a meal is not: *"Rub-A-Dub-Dub, thanks for the grub, Yeah God."*
- 14) Next Sunday there will be a taffy pulling contest at St. Peter's not a peter pulling contest at St. Taffy's.

