



PROBUS RECORDER



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

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August 2025

Chairman's Notes

This latest newsletter is the first without a comprehensive record of last month's talks. This is obviously something of a sad and retrograde step owing to our long history of producing such a comprehensive monthly tome. We shall endeavour to produce a brief summary of the talks for the time being, in the hope that a member will offer to take on the role of 'scribe' in the future.

This month, I met with the Rugby club chairperson to discuss our future use of the clubhouse which, through some miscommunication, had seemed under threat. I am pleased to say that our normal practice is unaffected. However, as the club aims to increase usage by other groups, it is possible that we may have to make adjustments further down the line. We have agreed to increase our contribution for our use of the club from £25 per hour to £30 per hour. This is still at a discount cost for which we are grateful.

I have rearranged our Annual **Barbecue** to be held on **Wednesday 20th August** at The Crown, **Marnhull**. As this is one of our feature events it would be great to see as many members and their guests as possible. Details are on the website, and I would appreciate it if I could have all those who wish to come confirmed by Wednesday 13th August.

We have to thank Peter Grange for his efforts putting photos and details about our Club in local Facebook groups. We have also put a full-page advert in the Gillingham Guide, along with a quarter page advert which will appear for the next three months. As you can see, we are trying our best to address the membership issue.

By the time most of you will have read this piece, The British and Irish Lions will hopefully have given the Aussies their comeuppance and completed a clean sweep of victories 'Down Under'. I just wish I was as confident about the final test match against India! Fingers crossed we'll emerge victorious and then all we'll have to worry about is the Ryder Cup!!!

John

WELFARE & SOCIAL

Welfare

Very little of note was reported by Dave Hooker at the last meeting. He probably reflected our own thoughts when he stated that this feature was a happy observation of the situation rather than of anything not being reported.

Social - August Club Events

5 th August 2025	The Wainwright Coast to Coast Walk <i>Alastair Olver</i>
19 th August 2025	Alcohol Considered <i>Dr Charles Rees</i>
20 th August 2025	Club Summer BBQ <i>The Crown at Marnhull</i> <i>12.30 for 1pm</i>



JULY TALKS

AVIATION POOLE HARBOUR 1910-1976

Kevin Patience
8th July 2025



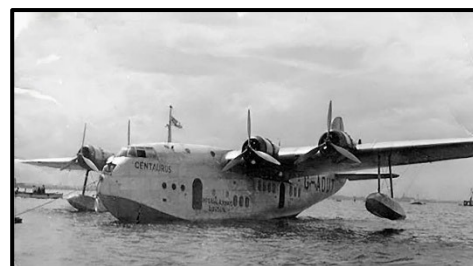
Kevin Patience delivered a well-researched presentation about the part that Poole Bay played in connection with aviation from 1910–1976. He had grown up in Kenya and served in the Royal Air Force.

Seaplanes operated from Poole during the First World War, and in 1939 the harbour was taken over by Imperial Airways as a base for the Empire Class flying boats. The Government nationalised Imperial Airways and its smaller rival British Airways and merged them as

British Overseas Airways Corporation, which set up its first operational HQ in January 1940 at 4 High Street, Poole, now the town's museum.

The Second World War saw Poole Harbour become one of the busiest airports in the world operating flying boats and seaplanes. It became Britain's only international civilian airport during the Second World War, and for three years afterwards.

Brownsea Island became a STARFISH decoy base and was part of the defences in the protection of the Royal Navy cordite factory at Holton Heath, between Wareham and Lytchett Minster.



STARFISH
decoy
system



RN Cordite
factory –
Holton
Heath

THE GEOLOGY & WINES OF MADEIRA & THE CANARIES

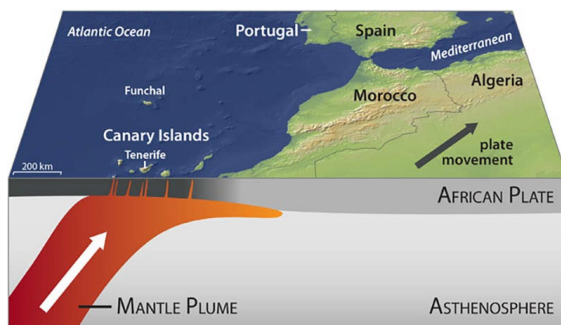
John Pett – 22nd July 2025



John Pett had spoken to us before. He is a geologist who used to work in the oil and gas industry. His interesting, informative and amusing talk began by focusing on the geological history of the Canary Islands. He then provided explanations as to why and how the current geological make-up of the individual islands provides the basis for the different wines grown on each one.

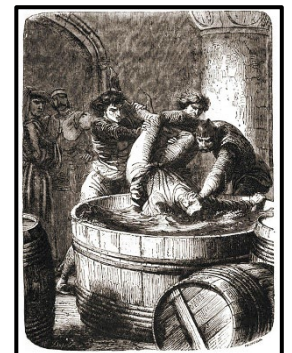
John began by positioning the Canaries in relation to the world and then explained their geological origins in terms of plumes forcing their way through the earth's mantle and relating this to similar areas in other parts of the world.

This was extremely interesting, especially for those of us who had attended his earlier geological talks, but the 'value-added' came when John moved to the wines produced in each of the islands.



In this respect he mentioned each in turn, taking in **Tenerife**, **Lanzarote**, famous for its unique black volcanic soil, **La Palma**, with similar wines also shaped by its volcanic landscape, and **El Hierro**, the smallest and westernmost Canary Island, known for its unique 'terroir'.

Americas and England and fetched high prices. Wine from the Canaries has evidently been around a long time, since the oldest winery in the Islands was established in 1775. In addition, there is a long history of producing fortified wines, not least of them 'malmsey', which in legend was used to kill the Duke of Clarence in 1476 (drowned in a butt of malmsey).



ENDPIECE (Editor)

We probably think of the youth of today as living on their mobile phones and consequently moan about the degrading of their educational skills, and the linked reduction in face-to-face social interactions, which are important for the development of social skills and emotional intelligence. HOWEVER, ... !!!

It may interest you to read the following genuine similes used by children in GCSE English essays before the turn of the last Century.

- *The plan was simple, like my brother Phil. But unlike Phil, this plan just might work.*
- *The young fighter had a hungry look, the kind you get from not eating for a while.*
- *Her hair glistened in the rain like nose hair after a sneeze.*
- *Her vocabulary was as bad as, like whatever.*
- *He was as tall as a six-foot-three-inch tree.*
- *His thoughts tumbled in his head, making and breaking alliances like underpants in a tumble dryer.*
- *She had a deep, throaty, genuine laugh, like that sound a dog makes just before it throws up.*
- *Shots rang out, as shots are wont to do.*
- *The politician was gone but unnoticed, like the full stop after the Dr on a Dr Pepper can.*
- *The ballerina rose gracefully en pointe and extended one slender leg behind her, like a dog at a lamppost.*
- *He was deeply in love. When she spoke, he thought he heard bells, as if she were dustcart reversing.*
- *She was as easy as the Daily Star crossword.*
- *She grew on him like she was a colony of E.coli and he was room-temperature British beef.*
- *She walked into my office like a centipede with 98 missing legs.*
- *It hurt the way your tongue hurts after you accidentally staple it to the wall.*