



Chichester & District Probus Club

JULY 2025 NEWSLETTER

To all Members

1 PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS

Tony writes:

Your Committee met on Thursday 26th June to plan the Annual General Meeting. This will be held just before our August lunch at 1240pm on August 10th at Crouchers.

The committee will be proposing that David Thornley will succeed me as President.

Chris Fuller has agreed to continue as our Secretary and has recruited a new member, Richard Worsley as Assistant Secretary.

Frank Griffiths continues as our long-serving Treasurer and Eve Fuller as Press Officer

Brian French is standing down as Events Officer and we will be asking the AGM to select a small, three person Sub Committee to plan and implement events going forward.

Peter Heydenrych is also standing down as Welfare officer. A volunteer will be sought at the AGM to take on this important role.

We thank both Brian and Peter for their service.

The Committee is recommending that we continue with the £14/£10 system where the basic membership fee is £14 per month and members pay £10 for each individual lunch attended. These rates are subject to Crouchers not increasing their charges to us.

The speaker for the July lunch will be Peter Varnish OBE, FREng. and his subject is the very topical one: "*Artificial Intelligence – Friend or Foe?*".

Peter is founder and CEO of Geopolitical Solutions Ltd. After four decades in Government specialising in defence and security, he now advises corporates and governments on the latest threats and resilience.

He was awarded the OBE in 1982 for his contribution to the Falklands war.

In 1995 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, recognising his research on radar and leadership of electronic warfare in the UK.

The July lunch menu will be:

Main

Chicken breast and dauphinoise potatoes with kale and creamed wild mushroom sauce.

Vegetarian

Miso and sesame glazed aubergine with caper and almond beans, lemon cashew butter and kale crisps.

Dessert

Apple and mixed berry crumble tart with cinnamon ice cream and berry compote.

2. SECRETARIAL SCRIBBLES

Please note that the July meeting will be on the **THIRD THURSDAY OF JULY**

2.0 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The club's AGM will be held at 1240pm in Crouchers dining room immediately before the 1pm lunch on Thursday 14 August 2025.

All relevant documentation will be sent to members prior to this meeting.

2.1 RAFFLE:

Peter Heydenrych will choose the two "rafflers" for the July meeting

2.3 PROGRAMME OF FUTURE SPEAKERS

2025:

August 14: Frank Pattison – *"Bewitching - a journey through the Harz Mountains."*

September 11: David Bickerton: *"The pursuit and sinking of the BISMARCK in WW2"*.

October 9; Father Peter Bustin – Art Appreciation

November 13: Brian French – *"Egyptology"*

December 11: Frank Griffiths – *"Frank's Christmas Gala"*

2026:

January 8: Ian Worley: *"Charles Darwin"*

February 12: TBA

March 12: TBA

April 9: TBA

May 14: Judi Darley: *"Chichester Oyster Boats"*

Chris Fuller

Secretary (pre-AGM)

3 TREASURER'S REPORT

There is nothing specific to report.
The Finances are in order.

Frank Griffiths,
Treasurer

4 MEMBERS WELFARE

David Childs Hopkins is, at present in St Richard's Hospital. There will be an imminent move to in Glebe House Care Home, Southbourne. (01243 468 686}

Please keep the club informed of any health issues and other help you may feel the club can offer you personally. This also applies to any needs of fellow club members you may be aware of.

As previously stated: Peter Heydenrych is also standing down as Welfare officer. A volunteer will be sought at the AGM to take on this important role.

Thanks go to Peter for his work in the role of club almoner.

5 SOCIAL ITEMS

5.1 Coffee Morning Thursday, 3 June at 10:30 am.

Thursday's Coffee Morning will be held at **The Boston Tea Party in Baffins Lane**

5.2 Probus Walks Report

We still have a vacancy for a Walks Coordinator.

5.3 Social Visits

Proposed dates for three outings during the summer:

b) Thursday 3rd July - Joint outing with Bognor Regis and Arundel for Chichester Harbour Cruise and lunch at Itchenor Sailing Club We have 11 people for this event.

b) Thursday 18th September - Fishbourne Roman Palace informative group tour (discounted admission for 10+). Further details will follow.

As previously stated: Brian French is standing down as Events Officer and we will be asking the AGM to select a small, three person Sub Committee to plan and implement events going forward

Thanks go to Brian for his work in the role of social visit coordinator

6 PRESS REPORT

Swallows and Amazons and the Russian Revolution

Arthur Ransome was not only the well-known children's author on the adventures of the Swallows and the Amazons but also wrote well-informed books about the Russian Revolution.

This was the tale told to members of Chichester Probus Club by Dr Martin Radford at their recent monthly lunch meeting at Crouchers.

Martin said that Ransome, born in 1884, was an unremarkable child who was a disappointment to his father, but he did earn his respect by secretly learning how to swim.

He would go on family holidays to Coniston Water in the Lake District where he met the Collingwoods who were later to play an important role in his life after his father died while he was still at prep school.

Although now in straightened circumstances, he did go on to Rugby School, but abandoned a chemistry degree to become a freelance writer. He found a job as an office boy in a publishers and the contacts he made came in useful on redundancy.

Martin said Ransome adopted a bohemian lifestyle, liked girls but had no success with them. After meeting Ivy, a manipulative woman, he proceeded unhappily to marriage. However his contemporaries saw him as a serious man of letters.

He had interviewed Oscar Wilde, who was married but having scandalous homosexual affairs and his publisher asked him to write Wilde's biography. Ransome wanted to write of Wilde's literary work, but his publisher insisted he included some of the scandal.

Wilde was convicted of gross indecency and, a broken man, went to Paris where died in 1900.

Ransome was sued for libel but wealthy friends financed legal help and he was found not guilty. His wife loved being in the spotlight.

Humiliated, he fled the country - and his wife - with a new passport at first to Stockholm where he took a much-needed break; then went to Finland, controlled by Russia, with a letter of introduction to a family. For six months he worked hard, learning the language, visiting places in Russia, writing notes and writing books

It was there, said Martin, that he wrote his first convincing success: Old Peter's Russian Tales, still in print.

In 1914, WW1 broke out and Germany and Russian were at war a few days later, Ransome

became war correspondent for the Daily News and was financially secure for the first time,

There was unrest because Tsar Nicholas was ineffective and his wife was a German princess with forthright opinions. Soon after the bread riots broke out in March 1917; Tsar Nicholas abdicated and Ransome wrote Russia's Day of Joy.

The second stage of the revolution was in October with the storming of the winter palace.

Ransome secured an interview with Trotsky, head of propaganda, for the News. There he met secretary Eugenie and began a passionate affair, However Russia had become a dangerous place and they decided to leave.

By chance the propaganda department had decided to open a unit in Sweden. Ransome was given a soldier's uniform and strolled across No Man's Land smoking a pipe, said Martin.

Eventually he returned to Britain with Eugenie in 1924 when his wife agreed to a divorce. He was interrogated when they reached Britain but cleared as a well-informed correspondent with good contacts.

They went to live at Coniston Water and an old friend, Dora Collingwood, gave them a small boat called Swallow. That gave Ransome an idea. He could write about four children and their adventures in it.

**Eve Fuller
Press Officer**

CJF 30.06.2025