



# Pro-Biz



Web site - <http://www.probus-teddington-hampton.org.uk>

**Issue No 248 News from Teddington and Hampton Probus**

**October 2019**

## **PRO-BIZ update**

This is the first issue since August. Robert Leadbetter was scheduled to talk about the Kempton Park Steam Railway at the August luncheon, but was unfortunately unable to make it at the last moment. September was scheduled as a 'No Speaker' event as many Club members were on holiday in the Loire. However, Robert stepped in to give those members present an update on the six planning procedures required for the restoration of the railway along its original length from the Pumping House at Kempton to Lower Hampton.

## **WALK FROM THE CYDER HOUSE, SHACKLEFORD, 3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER**

Luck was with the 9 Probus walkers plus Pepper the dog for our September walk as the sun was being very kind and shining down upon us. With only minor satnav trouble we set off almost on time. The usual factoids were read out about the area, the most notable being that Aldro school, a boarding school in the village, has a single night stay charge of £452. Nice work if you can get it. The school caters mainly for overseas students, who must consist of various Sheiks sons. On passing the school we could admire the beautiful 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings of the old manor house and estate. We then passed the picturesque Cobblers cottage and were off into the Surrey hills (just gentle slopes really) with Pepper in full sheepdog mode, as he seems to skuttle from one end of the group to the other in a desperate attempt to keep us all in order. Views of the area in the early autumn sunshine were magnificent, as were the properties in various converted farm buildings. Not sure where the farmers are nowadays, maybe there is just one for the whole area with his enormous tractor parked in a warehouse somewhere. No trouble with navigation this time, as the paths were clearly marked and detours into various corn fields were avoided. We did have to leave a narrow bridle path to allow the horse riders through, but Pepper behaved and didn't cause any upsets there. Coming to the top of a long rise we could see Shackleford nestling in the distance, so it was therefore a downhill run to the Cyder House where we met 8 Probus diners, and yet again a superb meal was enjoyed. As I have said for other venues, this was an excellent pub and well worth a visit.



(Keith McArthur)

## **MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

It is with regret that have to report the death of Peter Gray. He joined the Club in September 2013, but has suffered ill-health for some time. Our sincere condolences go to Katie and members of the family.

On a brighter note, we are able to welcome a new member – Bill Kane a retired Police Officer and previously was in the Royal Air Force. He is married to Sally and lives in Addlestone, Surrey. We trust he will enjoy his membership of Teddington & Hampton Probus.

## PROBUS HOLIDAY TO THE LOIRE

On 13<sup>th</sup> September, our group of 22 set forth from Hampton for France by coach. Under the kindly stewardship of our treasurer, Keith Willcocks, his wife Doreen, and our driver, John, we reached the ancient town of Saumur at sunset. Our comfortable hotel, the four star Anne d'Anjou, is on the bank of the River Loire overlooked by the 14<sup>th</sup> c Château of Saumur, and is a "monument historique". It has massive wood beams forming the structure, and a pleasant courtyard garden containing Les Menestrels Restaurant, where we later dined in style on the Saturday night. Soon after checking in, we walked to "Le Pot de Lapin," where a long table was made available for our party, all of whom were more than ready for dinner. There is something about a well-run French bistro that cannot be reproduced elsewhere. Next morning, Saumur's marketplace, the Place St Pierre, was very busy. It was market day, and under the shadow of the huge old church of St Pierre, delicious-looking lettuces, tomatoes and bread competed for attention with slices of pork, langoustines and cut flowers. There were inviting-looking cafés around the square where a coffee, beer or déjeuner could be taken al fresco. In the afternoon, we visited the Rochemenier Troglodyte Village. Its dwellings were carved out of the soft sedimentary rock of a quarry, and were occupied until 1962 by people who farmed the land up above, an unusual way of life. Sunday saw us exploring the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Château of Chenonceau, built across the river Cher as if it were a bridge and surrounded by most beautiful gardens. The interiors were very grand, the sun shone and we enjoyed all there was to see, including a magnificent collection of majolica apothecaries' jars. In the evening, we gathered at the Café Grand Bleu in Saumur for a delicious onglet steak and the local wine, and celebrated, amongst other things, Keith and Doreen's 51<sup>st</sup> wedding anniversary. Unfortunately, the following day one of our group was taken ill with pneumonia but is now understood to be recovering. On Monday, we visited the Château of Villandry, built in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Its enormous vegetable garden is laid out in the parterre style, very French. It has leeks, cabbages and beetroot, colour-co-ordinated in elaborate lines and patterns, seemingly undamaged by anyone cutting something for their lunch. The grounds included an ornamental water and sun garden, as well as a maze and a herb garden, so there was much for us to look at, as well as the inside of the Château, which was fully furnished and had many fine pictures and furniture. Returning to base, we toured the Saumur caves of Gratien and Meyer, well-known for its sparkling white wines. Our guide told us all about the way the wine is made, explaining the meanings of "cru" and "cuvée" and then providing a wine tasting to enable us to choose which we wanted to buy. The following morning, we drove home, stopping for lunch near Rouen Cathedral, and reaching Hampton at about half past eight in the evening. Apart from the illness of one of our members, it was a most enjoyable break. (Nick Waters)



Chenonceau Chateau gardens



Chenonceau Chateau gardens



Saumur Chateau

Photos

Keith Willcocks



Our Gourmet Dinner



Villandry Chateau



The Hotel Courtyard



## **WALK FROM THE BAILIWICK, ENGLEFIELD GREEN, 1<sup>st</sup> OCTOBER**

The morning started with bright sunshine, but being England it was just to fool us, as dead on 10 o'clock when the walk started down came the rain. Our drive up Egham Hill showed all the students from Holloway College off to their lectures, no early start for them, as it was around 9.45 am when we passed them. 7 walkers met outside the pub for their factoids lecture, which included the fact that the pub was converted from a shop in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, it must have been the original Weatherspoons idea of converting shops into pubs. With umbrellas hoisted and rainwear on, we set off first for the totem pole at the edge of Virginia Water. It looked like the totem pole has had a makeover as the paint work is all bright and new. From there it was a soggy stroll through the Valley Gardens and then up the hill to Smith's Lawn. Although the rain was quite persistent the groundsmen were out mowing the polo field, so it may have been that a match was imminent. We broke off the path for a quick visit to an equestrian statue by the side of Smith's Lawn, which featured Prince Albert and the notice-boards inform you that he was a park ranger and did many good works in the park. We then cut across towards Savill Gardens, and then down the hill back towards The Bailiwick arriving dead on 12.00 noon for a change. By then the rain had stopped and the sun was out, so we were all steaming slightly before entering the pub, beating several of the diners by a few minutes. Our dining members drifted in a little bit later, bringing the total number for lunch to 20. A fine meal ensued, and the staff were helpful in looking after us as they took the orders from the tables.



*(Keith McArthur)*

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## **ANOTHER EXCELLENT CONCERT AT THE CADOGAN HALL!**

Very many thanks to Chris Oprey for organising yet another extremely successful return visit to the Cadogan Hall, Sloane Square on Thursday 3rd October, with 36 members and guests attending another of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's Concerts. The title of this concert was 'Portraits in Music' with conductor for the evening Jiří Rožeň. The concert featured works by Smetana, Elgar and Dvořák. In appreciation of the composers and music, the Cadogan was virtually a sell-out. The first piece was Smetana's *Má Vlast* (My Homeland) a well known work based on Bohemia's folk music. This was followed by Elgar's Cello Concerto played by Kian Soltani a remarkable performer who had begun playing at the age of four. The instrument he was playing was the 'London ex Boccherini 1694' Stradivarius, a truly wonderful instrument. After the interval we were treated to Dvořák's Symphony No.8.

The winner of the customary 'free' raffle - a CD of music from the evening was Phil Walker. Unfortunately no prize was available on the night, but Chris faithfully promised that an appropriate CD would be given to Phil as soon as possible.

Finally, we were all very sad to hear that this year's concert may be Chris's last. We do understand Chris, and would like to thank you very much once again for the organisation and effort that you and Pauline have put in to make these events so enjoyable.

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### **FUTURE EVENTS:**

- Tuesday 5 Nov:** Pub Lunch and Walk –The Express Tavern, Kew Bridge. Organiser Keith McArthur
- Tuesday 19 Nov:** Club Luncheon – Speaker – Dr Huw Jones ' Life as a country GP'
- Tuesday 26 Nov:** Lunch at 'The Clink' Sutton. Organiser Hywel Thomas