



Wilmington Axstane Probus Club

NEWSLETTER - January 2026

*Our speaker on 29th January will be Karen Emery and her subject is Lancelot "Capability" Brown—The Capability of the English Landscape. (see Page 4)
Lunch will be Braised Steak with Mustard Mash and Roasted Root vegetables or Fish and Chips followed by a choice of puddings.*

Chairman's Welcome

Welcome to our January meeting, I hope that you all enjoyed the Festive Season and have now settled down to the routines that dominate life. Today we will be celebrating the 35 years of the club's existence with the issue of unique commemorative lapel badges to all members.

November's speaker reminded us of the needs and running costs of one of my charities; today's will describe the work of a famous Georgian landscaper. This apparent dichotomy perhaps highlights one of the purposes of the club.

We lunch monthly to socialise and hear talks that may be informative, entertaining or thought provoking. We have social events to which we invite our partners and short breaks which perhaps "get us out of a rut" and may relieve isolation or loneliness. Certainly when Fred Purvis introduced me to the club, following my wife's death, I found it "a sure place in time of trouble." In addition to which we raise money for, mostly, local charities.

The events and the atmosphere of the club do not however "just happen". For most of my year the club committee has been short of its full complement, we have lacked the "many hands that make light work". We will soon be coming up to nominations for next year's committee, if you have thoughts for promoting the club, enhancing its activities or assisting with its running please advise our Secretary that you would like to be

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Welcome Continued

nominated for the committee. Your input will be gratefully received.

My thanks to Steve Brown for organising the Club Christmas card and successful Christmas Lunch both of which made significant contributions to charity. To Phil Burt for arranging a very enjoyable visit to Top Hat and to Colin Verry who whipped in a good attendance for our Pub Lunch on January 7th. My special thanks to Roy Freeman for "coming out of retirement" to organise this year's Spring Break.

Enjoy your lunch and my best wishes for a Healthy and solvent New Year.

David



Social Committee Report

Christmas Lunch - 46 sat down to dine at a very festive Dartford Golf Club and we all enjoyed the lunch and the company.

Top Hat - This was enjoyed by all. Perhaps we will do it again this year, more to follow.

Social Lunch - 19 arrived at the Plough on the 7th January. Had a great chinwag and good food

Bouncing Bunnies - On Friday, 20 February 2026, we will be holding our usual Race Night. This year our menu is Chicken or Fish Goujons with chips, ticket price is £15.pp. So far we do not have a great response from you all. It is a great night you will enjoy. Please contact Steve Brown on 07810 186827 or email steveb41@sky.com if you would like to come along and if so give him your menu choices.

Chairman's Dinner - This year it will be held on Saturday, 18 April 2026 at Princes Park. The menu flyer has been sent to you all. Please let Keith Cass know whether you will be coming and send him your menu choices on 07711 640068 or email keith.cass@me.com

Spring Break - Our break this year is to Warners at Littlecote Manor. All those booked will receive final instructions in due course. Roy Freeman has given many more details in his report.

Future Planning - I have sent to you all our plan for 2026 to whet your appetite, if anyone didn't receive it please let me know.

A very Happy New Year to you all.

Colin

A Home for the Mentally Infirm

A man is looking round a care home for the mentally infirm. He asks the Director, "How do you decide if a person should be committed here?"

"Well", says the Director, "we fill a bathtub full of water and offer the person a teaspoon, a tea cup or a bucket and ask them to empty the tub".

"Oh I see", says the man. "A normal person would choose the bucket because it carries more water."

"No", says the Director, "a normal person would pull the plug out! So do you want a bed near the window or the door?"

A Man under the Seats

A group of people in a cinema are trying to watch a film but are being distracted by an old man crawling around under the seats.

"What are you doing?" asks a woman. "I'm trying to find the toffee I dropped," says the man.

"Can't you just leave it?" says the woman. "Not really," says the man. "It's got my false teeth stuck in it."

Bunny Racing Night

We have our annual night of fun, frivolity as well as Phil's jokes on February 20th at the Bunnies Racing Night!

The Bunnies are all raring to be let loose on the track and the meal of chicken or fish goujons and chips has been organised by our new caterer Anthony. Steve has the paperwork in hand so all we need is you to come along and have fun with the Bunnies!

If you haven't paid your £15 per head please do so in the normal way before the evening by sending Ian your payment and letting Phil know if you would like chicken or fish.

We also need a couple of people to help out with the tote and course marshal - please let Steve know if you do this.

It's a great night when we have fun and raise a goodly amount for the Chairman's Charities.

Please note - there is no Probus walk this month.

Phil

Birthdays

A Happy Birthday to everyone with a Special day in January and February

Ron Armstrong, Paddy Cavanagh, David Cooper,
Tony Duffield, Andrew Dunk, Phil Elliman, Bernard Nash,
Ron Searle, Jack Swift and Colin Verry



The Club's Finances

The current financial position is as follows:

Chairman's Charity (1)	£ 2,362.22
Race Night	£ 75.00
Spring Break (2)	£ 6,505.00
Contingency Fund	£ 1,700.00
General Fund	£ 771.35
Amount in Bank	£11,413.57

(1) £2,731 less expenses of £368.78

(2) Spring break: £20,462 less Warners (total) £13,917 less refund of £40

Ian

SPRING BREAK 2026—UPDATE

Firstly, thank you to all for paying the balance promptly. Ian has now paid the full amount for the holiday to Warners for 38 members and partners. Unfortunately three have been forced to drop out.

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET RETURNED THE EMERGENCY CONTACT FORM, PLEASE DO SO ASAP.

The arrangement of the programme of visits during our time at Littlecote House Hotel, is progressing well and we hope to have all bookings secured in the next month or so. The visits include a pretty village encompassing a World Heritage Site, Manor House & gardens with an archaeological museum, a market town, a boat trip, a textile mill and a distillery - all coupled with Warners hospitality and entertainment.

Although we are booked, there is still the opportunity for any other member who wishes to come to join us. Please speak with me or email, details in the membership booklet.

Roy Freeman

Lunch on 29th January will be Braised Steak with Mustard Mash and Roasted Root vegetables or Fish and Chips followed by a choice of puddings.

The next Lunch will be on Thursday 26th February and the menu is to be confirmed.

Speaker's Report

Our Speaker in January will be Karen Emery speaking on the subject of Lancelot Brown— and the Capability of the English Landscape. The well known, yet enigmatic 17th Century landscape designer known as 'Capability' Brown was involved in over 200 garden projects, leaving a legacy described as typical English landscape. The story of the development of his style as well as the controversies surrounding it are described, no doubt arousing much discussion - was he a Visionary or a Vandal?

Our Speaker in February will be Pete Allen and his subject is "Through the Stage Door: A Dramatic History of London's Theatres. Whose play was staged in the West End before he took up post at the Vatican? Which theatre keeps two seats free each performance for any ghostly members of the audience? This talk explores extraordinary tales on-stage, back-stage and front of house across 500 years of London Theatres.

I hope you can join us for both talks.

Steve