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Issue No 306 News from Teddington and Hampton Probus July 2026

WALK AND PUB LUNCH, THE JOLLY COOPERS, HAMPTON, 7th JULY 2026



The July Probus Walk started off in a different manner to all the previous walks as the nine walkers met at the Hampton Ferry in very warm and humid weather and took the ferry to the Hurst Park side of the River Thames. As the ferry could only take a maximum of eight passengers, two crossings were necessary. Once all assembled, we headed towards Hampton Court keeping to the towpath.

We passed Taggs Island and numerous house boats, one of which is Astoria, built in 1911 for Fred Karno and which is now the recording studio of Dave Gilmour of Pink Floyd fame. As a large part of the walk is tree-lined, shelter from the heat of the sun made the walk more bearable.
On reaching Hampton Court and over the bridge, we headed towards Bushy Park where we came across a large group of schoolchildren from a Kingston Academy who were enjoying the park facilities. We then headed into Woodland Gardens by which time the heat was starting to tell on us all, so we decided on the shortest route back to the Jolly Coopers pub where we were joined by Ann and the two Phils for an excellent lunch in very pleasant and cool conditions.

LUNCH TALK, "MOLECULES AND MURDER" by JOHN NICHOLSON, 16th JUNE 2026



Professor Nicholson spoke to us on the history and control of poisons from the 1850s onwards.

Poisonings are now rare in the UK, typically one case per year (although Dr Harold Shipman murdered maybe 250 patients by poisoning). However, by1850, arsenic was a common poison, used at home as a rat killer. To seek to limit its criminal or accidental misuse, the 1852 Arsenic Act required white arsenic to be mixed with soot. In more recent times a case in Feltham involved the addition of poisonous monksfoot root to a curry, and in 2018

Russian FSB agents used the nerve agent Novichok in Salisbury.

The 1856 case of strychnine poisoning by the impecunious Dr Palmer relied on evidence from doctors who had observed the symptoms of poisoning, even the strychnine had been absorbed in the upper intestinal tract. The case of Dr Crippen involved an American homeopath (he wasn't a medical doctor) whose wife disappeared from their London home after a dinner party. He claimed she'd returned to the USA, and then later that she'd died. Eventually, a police search found his wife's remains at home. Crippen fled to USA by boat, a manhunt ensued, and he was recognized on the voyage. The captain messaged ahead to port by wireless and Crippen was arrested and hanged after trial.

Graham Young used the poison thallium, which the victim's body would mistake for potassium. He killed his stepmother using thallium and also poisoned his father sister and best friend. Released in 1971 after nine years in Broadmoor, he got a job and poisoned his new workmates with thallium, killing two. Evidence against Young relied on thallium traces in the cremated ashes of one of his victims. After the Young case, Parliament passed the Poisons Act 1972.

Keith Willcocks gave the vote of thanks for what he rightly described as an absolutely fascinating talk.

SUMMER PARTY, TAMESIS CLUB, TEDDINGTON, 23rd JUNE 2026





On the 23rd June, towards the end of a heatwave that had produced record breaking temperatures, over sixty people spent a very pleasant relaxing afternoon wining and dining beside the Thames, courtesy of the Tamesis Club. Members and their guests were also joined by members from Ladies Probus Club.

Once again, we were served a wonderful buffet lunch provided by Sarah and Gary of Hampton Hampers. There was enough cooling breeze throughout to make for a very enjoyable afternoon.

FUTURE EVENTS

TUESDAY 4th AUGUST: WALK & PUB LUNCH, Venue TBC

TUESDAY 18th AUGUST: CLUB LUNCH, no speaker.

WEDNESDAY 9th SEPTEMBER: Twickenham Brewery tour