

What the Prof Professes

Professor Peter Hills has taken over as Chairman of *The Wychwood*.

Peter has lived for most of his life in Oxfordshire, before retiring to the Wychwoods in the mid-1980s.

With no silver spoon in his mouth, Peter worked himself up to his professorship in Engineering Design at Coventry University via an apprenticeship with Pressed Steel, a postgraduate diploma from Imperial College London and an M Phil from Southampton University.



What is the best thing about the Wychwoods?

The sheer beauty of the stone houses and walls and the kindness of the people.

What is the best advice you would give anybody moving to the Wychwoods?
Get involved.

What do you feel are the defining differences between the Oxfordshire Cotswolds and the rest of the Cotswolds?

We are so fortunate in having such a variety of landscape through the Cotswolds within half an hour of driving. The landscape of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds is not as rugged as the escarpment but is more subtle and benefits from the lighting of big skies.

What is your favourite walk?

Through the Wild Gardens and then through Diggers Wood, returning along New Road.

And your favourite pub?
The Lamb in Shipton.
The Lamb is my favourite place too for a meal out.

And what would be your favourite Cotswold meal? Scallops as a starter followed by Gloucester Old Spot pork belly with roast potatoes and spinach. Summer pudding for dessert.

Who would you like to have that meal with?

Isambard Kingdom Brunel. He was so creative and known for his good conversation. As an engineer myself, I admire the way he designed an instrument to retrieve a coin wedged in his throat after one of his children's tricks went wrong.

What is your favourite view in the Wychwoods and the Cotswolds

It has to be the view down into the Evenlode Valley as you come over the Shipton Downs along the Swinbrook Road. More widely, the views on either side of the road from Burford to Cheltenham take some beating.

And your favourite building?

Our Cotswold churches in general. I feel strongly that if local communities including non-churchgoers do not support these magnificent buildings, so central to the character of our villages, then many will be under threat within twenty years.

Alan Vickers