

Welcome to the December edition of our Probus newsletter.

So much has happened since the June publication with our 'Hidden Gems' monthly notelets proving both popular and surprising. Quite a few visitors to the club have really been impressed by such a novel idea and have asked for copies to share with, and introduce to, their clubs.

We have now reached our magical sixty capacity membership with a current waiting list of five. Our new members have fitted into the club very well and have, in chatting, commented what a pleasure it is to belong to a club where they feel so welcome.

Since June, our social events have included a very interesting visit to the Eling Tide Mill near Southampton, followed by afternoon tea. Understanding how the working mill operates was really informative, albeit that some members, including yours truly, did suffer from headaches due to the low beams!

In August we had one of the best attendances of the year with a coffee morning held at Willow Barns in New Milton. It was a warm, sunny day so we were able to enjoy the morning both inside and outside in their courtyard. An outdoor performance of *Pride & Prejudice* entertained Jane Austen fans at the Outdoor Amphitheatre, Holme Nurseries, near Wareham.

In September we held our very well supported annual Quiz Night where our brains were well and truly tested by our own 'Bradley Walsh' (Robin) and even if you didn't win there was always the fish supper to enjoy.

Our busy September continued with our weekend away in Cheltenham which was a great success with thirty-three of us enjoying the delights of the Cotswolds and surrounding areas. The evenings were relaxed and entertaining with everyone joining in quizzes and games. They were hosted by our appointed 'taskmaster' Cliff, building up to the last night 'piece de resistance', who took over the mind of our trusted secretary David! Who said that Jane was the only one able to do that!

An afternoon on the local steam railway across the Cotswolds was most enjoyable even if someone drove his car right onto the station platform! Guess who?

In October we were lucky to have a guided tour of Highcliffe Castle followed by afternoon tea. The guides were very personable and informative and, as the castle becomes increasingly renovated with lottery funding, it allows it to become a popular visitors' attraction.

The 'Simply Red' tribute concert was a great evening out, as it wasn't just another tribute band, they were a top rate band. If some of us didn't know all of the songs we went away with purpose to download and enjoy them again.

Our relationship flourishes with the Christchurch Harbour Hotel where the staff really appreciate our business and try to accommodate our needs, sometimes at short notice.

I'm very proud to have awarded three Life Memberships during my year as President. These awards went to Maurice Reynolds, Alan Deakin and Mike Penn, all of whom are Past Presidents of our Club. They have all served on the committee in a variety of posts and I'm pleased the Club was able to acknowledge their contribution.

My year as President has been personally very satisfying and as we are now at the Christmas period, it means that within a couple of months my year in office will be coming to a close. I must thank all of the committee members for their support during the year. Without them it would not have been the success it has been.

I hope to see you all at my President's Lunch on Valentine's Day (14 Feb) but most of all I wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and hope that the New Year makes all your wishes come true.

Best wishes *Ken Heap* President