

**2007 – 2016**

2007-08



*Geoff Wilson  
Receives the  
Presidential  
collarette  
From Retiring  
President  
Malcolm  
Burton-Smith.*

The incoming President welcomed the following members who had been elected as his Committee for the year ahead:- Ray Talbot (Vice-President), David Marris (Hon. Secretary), Michael Fay (Hon. Treasurer), John Prater (Programme Secretary), Barry Johnson (Social Secretary), Jim Cloggie & Frank Abercrombie (Committee Members).

In December the President pointed out that no new members had joined since April and he called upon current members to redouble their efforts to enhance recruitment. With illness and old age taking their toll on numbers, a continuing failure to replace those leaving the Club risked the stage being reached when its future viability was placed in jeopardy.

The new Social Secretary had to work with skill and imagination to arrange a full and attractive programme for the members.

A letter had been sent to The Queen and Prince Philip with the congratulations and best wishes of our members on the occasion of their Diamond Wedding

Anniversary. This communication was gratefully acknowledged on her Majesty's behalf by her Private Secretary.

Two coffee mornings held at the Captain's Club, two skittles matches with lunch and a lunch at Bournemouth University Catering College were all very well supported. Unquestionably, the highlight of this programme was a tour of Setley Ridge Vineyard incorporating an excellent lunch served at a long table set up al fresco.

John Prater had arranged an interesting series of talks and one of these was delivered by Club member David Wilkie. David illustrated his talk with many wonderful photographs taken whilst trekking in the Himalayas.

The well-known local historian, Michael Hodges, gave a very interesting account of Ghosts of Christchurch.

Andrew Cook, a financial consultant, on the occasion of his second visit to the Club, advised the members: "If you cannot predict you should prepare". Another very interesting talk was, "Nursing over the Years". It transpired that one of the audience, Ann the wife of Club member Mike Penn, was coincidentally a contemporary of the speaker whilst training at Westminster Hospital in 1960. The two ladies had a most enjoyable time over lunch reminiscing about old times!

The prestigious President's Lunch, which was held at the Burley Manor Hotel, was attended by 50 members/guests. Geoff Wilson had managed to attract Alina Jenkins, the former BBC Weather Girl, as his guest speaker. Alina performed most professionally, as you might expect, in relating some of the highlights of her broadcasting career. The audience was also treated to an extremely interesting insight into the workings of the

national broadcaster. It was also very nice of Alina, during her radio programme the next morning, to thank the Club and its members for their hospitality and the funds raised by them for her charity Naam House.

The golfers were delighted to beat the Bournemouth 1 Team at home in their John Roger's Cup match played at Highcliffe Castle Golf Club.

In January 2008 the Committee delivered a report to the members entitled The Way Ahead. The report expressed concern regarding the long-term future of the Club and made several suggestions as to possible courses of action to reverse the past slow decline. It was intended to seek the views of the members at the forthcoming AGM.

#### 2008-09



*Geoff Wilson  
passes the  
presidency  
collarette to  
Ray Talbot.*

The Committee elected for this year was as follows:

Ray Talbot (President), Douglas Blunden (Vice-President), David Marris (Hon. Secretary), Rodney Simpson (Acting Secretary), Michael Fay (Hon. Treasurer ), Ken Goodman (Social Secretary), John Prater (Programme Secretary) and Frank Abercrombie, Jim Cloggie and Barry Johnson (Committee Members). The Retiring President, Geoff Wilson, would serve ex-officio and be Club Liaison Officer with Associate Members and those Members unable to attend meetings due to illness. John Maton was re-elected as Club Auditor.

The three options contained in The Way Ahead Report, (drawn up by the committee and published early in 2008 following complaints from some members regarding the standard of service provided by the hotel management) were discussed. Members voted in favour of the first option – to continue as at present for 12 months with review at the 2009 AGM. Nevertheless, it was also recommended that there should be an increased level of promotional activity ahead of that event.

An alternative motion submitted by six members to the effect that the Committee should seek to amalgamate the Club with one of the other local Probus Club was withdrawn subsequent to that vote.

There was also something of a hiatus over the resignations, for various reasons, from the committee of the Vice-President, Programme Secretary, Social Secretary and a Committee Member. The situation was alleviated by the recruitment of Don Warren as a

Committee Member and by Ken Goodman additionally taking on the role of Programme Secretary.

At the commencement of this New Year the membership totalled 42.

It had emerged that we were not the only Probus Club concerned about our future viability when it was learnt that Bure Probus Club had appointed a steering committee to examine their own difficulties of a similar nature.

The average monthly attendance remained at the previous level-65%.

The Social Programme included some very attractive events. Perhaps the most evocative of which was a boat trip round Christchurch Harbour accompanied by local historian Mike Andrews. There were two very well supported lunches at the Escoffier Restaurant of Bournemouth University, an evening meal with entertainment at Highcliffe Castle Golf Club and a number of coffee mornings. Barry Johnson was congratulated by the President for his excellent work in this respect.

The final social event of the year was the prestigious President's Lunch held, once again, at the Burley Manor Hotel. Club member, John Spinks, entertained those present with an illustrated talk about his recent motor cycle tour of India.

A programme of particularly interesting talks was laid on throughout the year by John Prater and for his work on this he was thanked by the President on behalf of the Members. Members were given guidance on Tracing Your Ancestors and learned about The Salvage of Sea Vessels. They were also entertained by a talk about

Trinity House Pilots and local historian, Michael Hodges, making a return visit to the Club, lectured the members about Smuggling in Christchurch.

### **GROUP PHOTO OF MEMBERS 2008**



**BACK ROW** Rodney Simpson, Michael Penn, John Maton, Alan Deakin, Brian Skelt, Victor Tarry, Malcom Burton-Smith, Don Richardson, Des Long, Les Newey, Tony Jacob, Mike Collard, Donald Warren, Eric Evans, David Wilkie, Eric Chamberlain.

**FRONT ROW** Frank Abercrombie, Jim Cloggie, Barry Johnson, John Prater, Ray Talbot (President), Geoff Wilson, Michael Fay, Douglas Blunden, Unknown.

Ken Goodman was presented with the Cooper Cup as the Club's Champion Golfer for the year. Otherwise the Golf Organiser, Harold Jones, had little to report currently but a greatly enhanced programmed was planned for the year ahead.

## 2009-10



Retiring President  
Ray Talbot Passes  
on the President's  
collarette to his  
successor, David  
Marshall

On taking up the role of President, David Marshall became only the second member, after founder President Bill Cotton, to serve a second term in that office. This situation evolved from the resignation of the Vice-President the previous year, Douglas Blunden, who had been elected to be elevated to President at the close of Ray Talbot's term of office

. The committee elected to assist David for the duration of his term in the office of President was as follows:- Michael Fay (Vice-President and Hon. Treasurer), Malcolm Burton-Smith (Hon. Secretary), Ken Goodman (Programme Sec.), Tony Jacob & Geoff Wilson (Joint Social Secretaries), Frank Abercrombie, David Marris and Don Warren (Committee Members). Ray Talbot to serve ex-officio with responsibility for Sick and Associate Members. John Maton was re-elected Club Accounts Inspector.



With two members now working together on the social programme it was anticipated that a more extensive and varied list of events was likely to be the outcome. It had been undeniably demonstrated since the Club's formation that it was expecting too much of a member working alone to be able to adequately cover the role.

As the year got under way, the Committee decided to reduce the number of their meetings from monthly to bi—monthly. In addition minutes would not be recorded for general meetings but, instead, just a record of activities would be announced by the President. This was intended to streamline the process of meetings. Furthermore, it was also felt that the Club's business should not be discussed in the presence of the Speaker of the day as was previously the case.

There was some concern that membership had fallen to only 38 which included 2 elderly Life Members who were not likely to be able attend any future meetings or events. Clearly the future of the Club was in some jeopardy unless a solution to reverse the downward trend could be found.

The Club was required by hotel management to enter into a 12 month contract to continue to use their facilities and the opportunity was taken at this stage to sound out the current status of Waterford Lodge Probus Club who also appeared to be struggling to maintain a viable level of members. In the event it was revealed that a new committee had recently been elected who were looking into various possibilities to improve their own prospects.

It was very pleasing that two former Members, Chris Jones (a Past President) and Rodney Simpson re-joined the Club.

The newly elected Social Team was soon in action organising potentially very interesting events such as lunch at the Royal Southampton Yacht Club to be served in the Clubhouse with its lovely Beaulieu River setting. There was a visit to Arundells in Salisbury, the former home of the late Sir Edward Heath, and an evening meal with entertainment at Highcliffe Castle Golf Club.

There were two coffee mornings at the Station House, Holmsley and the usual sell-out lunch at the highly rated Bournemouth University Escoffier Restaurant.

The usual summer and Christmas Lunches with the Ladies remained very popular and well supported. At the latter The Twynham School Choir was engaged to entertain with some Christmas Carols which were very well received.

There was a very good attendance for the President's Dinner held at the Tyrell's Ford Hotel. The audience was looking forward to a talk by Lt. Colonel Malcolm Torrent entitled Trumpets Shall Blow, but he withdrew at short notice due to ill health. The situation was rescued when Madeleine Simpson, the wife of our member Rodney, stepped in to deliver a talk with the intriguing title Four Weddings and a F.....!

Fortunately for the members, however, Col. Torrent was well enough to fulfil this engagement later in the year. The Programme Secretary also excelled in the quality of other talks organised although it should not be overlooked that much of the groundwork had been put in by his predecessor, John Prater, before he was obliged

to resign from that office due to health problems. Without doubt the most exhilarating and inspirational talk was delivered by the young British explorer James Hooper. This mostly covered his ascent, in 2005, of Mt. Everest but he also described other adventures past and planned for the future. Without doubt the greatest adventure he had planned was for a 180 degree, 26000 mile trek between the north and south geomagnetic poles, all to be achieved without the aid of motorised power.

Another inspiring story, In the Wake of the Cockleshell Heroes, recounted by Roger and Sandra Downton described how, having learnt to handle a kayak by practising in Poole Harbour, they followed the same perilous route as the six wartime heroes who launched a successful attack on Axis shipping moored in the harbour of Bordeaux. Sadly, only two of the original crew survived the even more perilous journey back to England.

The effort expended on arranging these excellent events was well rewarded with an increase in the average monthly attendance to 75%.

On the sporting front John Irons continued to stay involved with other local Probus Clubs in arranging joint events during the summer months. However there was little appetite amongst the members to join him.

The golfers were fairly active and Barry Johnson was the Club's Champion Golfer for 2010 taking home the Cooper Cup following his victory at Highcliffe Castle Golf Club. The Golf Organiser revealed that the John Roger's Cup, presented to the Club by our past member, was

made of solid silver and valued at about £500! This trophy is presented to the winning Probus Club amongst those against whom we compete on a yearly basis. Hopefully, the Club's insurance policy had been kept up to date!

### 2010-11



*Retiring President  
David Marshall  
congratulates Mike  
Fay*

The Committee elected for the year ahead was as follows:- Mike Fay (President), Mike Penn (Vice-President), Robin Haggett (Hon. Secretary), Don Warren (Hon. Treasurer), Ken Goodman (Programme Secretary), Tony Jacob & Chris Taylor (Joint Social Secretaries), Mike Harrold & David Marris (Committee

Members), David Marshall (The Retiring President) to serve Ex-Officio with responsibility for Associate Members and Sick Members. John Maton was re-elected as Accounts Inspector

The incoming President advised his committee that he wished to revert to holding committee meetings on a monthly basis instead of the bi-monthly arrangement favoured by his predecessor.

He also pointed out that the Presidential chain of office was nearing the stage when no more office holders' name badges could be added as space was running out. He charged the task of resolving this issue to his Vice-President. Subsequently the new ribbon was sourced and the existing ribbon bearing the name badges of Presidents since the formation of the club in 1977 was removed and framed for retention in the Club's archives.

The number of members as Mike Fay took office stood at 41 (including 2 Life Members). He advised current members that we should try to increase our numbers to at least 45-50 and asked that they all make further efforts towards achieving this target. In response, the Vice-President increased the number of reports on the Clubs' Activities submitted to the New Milton Advertiser, the Bournemouth Echo and similar local publications.

In a further effort to increase the Club's profile the entries on the Dorset for You website were updated.

A complaint had been aired by some members regarding the non-publication of Committee Meeting Minutes and it was agreed in future to make these available in a ring binder for members to read at General Meetings.

The usual annual meetings of local Probus Club Presidents seemed to have been discontinued which was probably due to the recent death of the Rotary Club Liaison Officer, Lester Watts, who had previously arranged and chaired these meetings.

Following the disastrous earthquakes in New Zealand it was decided to attempt to communicate with the Christchurch Probus Club there to offer the condolences and best wishes of our members.

The responsible officers had worked extremely hard throughout this year to arrange very interesting and attractive programmes of talks and social events. It will have been extremely pleasing to Tony, Chris and Ken that their hard work resulted in an average attendance at meetings of 75% of the membership. Sadly, however, this was not reflected in the attendance at the Summer Ladies' Lunch which was very disappointing.

Excellent talks such as The Spice of Life, The Sinking of Kursk K141, Memories of the BBC (Hilary Warner had made another return visit), Flood Risk Assessment by local expert Frank Tilehurst and, to the delight of members and their partners attending the Christmas Ladies' Lunch, The Experiences of a Lady Brewer delivered by Mrs. Boswell were very much enjoyed. This last event was celebrated at the Miramar Hotel Bournemouth and enjoyed so much by our members and partners that there was popular demand for returning to the same venue next year.

Lunches at Brockenhurst College, Bournemouth University Catering College, and particularly, The Royal Lymington Yacht Club, were very well supported and enjoyed.

There was a well-supported visit to Houghton Lodge House and new venues for coffee mornings at Holmsley Station Tea Rooms and Brokenhurst Golf Club.

The golfers were very active with matches producing some wins and some losses. Ken Johnson followed his brother Barry as the Club Champion Golfer and had his name engraved on the Cooper Cup.

John Irons kept the flame burning for the bowls players but he received little support for his efforts.

## 2011-12

Upon taking up the office of President of our Club for the year ahead, Mike Fay became only the third member to serve more than one term in the office, following on from the Founder President, Bill Cotton, and more recently, David Marshall. This situation arose due to the withdrawal through ill health of Mike Penn who had been elected to the role at the 2010 AGM. The Committee thus lined up as follows:- Ken Goodman (Vice-President and Programme Secretary), Robin Haggett (Hon. Secretary), Don Warren (Hon. Treasurer), Chris Taylor and Tony Jacob (Joint Social Secretaries) and Jim Cloggie and Arthur May (Committee Members). Mike Harrold took up the newly created role of Dining Secretary. Geoff Wilson took on the vacancy for a Social Secretary created by the tragic and untimely death

of Tony Jacob. John Maton was re-elected Accounts Inspector

As the year got underway the total membership amounted to only 40.

During the autumn our Club Leadership was approached by the President of Waterford Lodge Probus Club to discuss the possibility of a merger of the two clubs. It appeared that the membership of his club had fallen to 20 members only and was in serious danger of folding. This appeared to offer our Club a good opportunity to boost numbers and to ensure its own survival. However, after a number of meetings and communications the Waterford Lodge members declined to proceed on the terms offered.

At the same time the future of The Waterford Lodge Hotel as a venue was cast in doubt when it went in to Administration. It thus became necessary for a search to be launched for a suitable alternative venue. Meanwhile, The President removed the Club Plaque for safe keeping pending the outcome.

An excellent programme of talks had been laid on for members and, although average attendances had fallen compared with the previous year it was, nevertheless quite healthy at 70%. Perhaps one of the best was given by Club member David Wilkie following the conclusion of the AGM. David served as an RAF Navigator during the last war and related some his experiences on bombing raids to Germany as part of the crew of a Halifax bomber. The speaker at the Summer Lunch who appeared in full regalia was a retired Beefeater and was very well received, particularly by the Ladies. Other very interesting talks were: The Korean



War 1950/3, Admiral Lord Nelson, Crime Stoppers and Anaesthetics. Tim Tremlett, Director of Cricket for Hampshire C.C.C., talked to members about the development of the new Rose Bowl and offered them a guided tour of the ground including lunch and the opportunity to watch a Second XI game.

The Social Programme that had been organised offered very interesting and attractive options including a Southampton River Cruise supported by 30 members/guests. Skittles were played at the Cottonwood Hotel, Bournemouth and Shorefields Holiday Park and proved to be very popular. Coffee Mornings held at Dudsbury Golf Club, Milton Barns and the Cliffhanger Café also proved to be the sort of activity wanted by our members.

The Miramar Hotel in Bournemouth was once again the venue for the December Ladies' Lunch and was, once again, very well supported. Another quality lunch was enjoyed at the Brockenhurst College Catering Restaurant recently rebranded as MJ's.

The premier event of the year, the President's Lunch, was enjoyed by members/guests at The Royal Motor Yacht Club, Poole. After an excellent lunch Bonny Sartin, a member of The Yetties folk group, gave a very nostalgic talk about his experiences with the band over many years. Club member, Arthur May, received grateful thanks from all those present for sponsoring and organising the event at such a wonderful venue.

Although there was little activity for the bowls players during the year the golfers were well served by the efforts of Harold Jones who arranged home and away

fixtures against Bournemouth Probus. Unfortunately, both matches ended in defeat.

Things were somewhat brighter for Ken Goodman who became Club Champion Golfer and received the Cooper Cup to hold for a year.

### 2012-13

When taking up the office of President at the AGM Ken Goodman modestly admitted that he was most surprised to have been elected to that prestigious role but would do his very best to live up to the confidence shown in him by the members. The following were elected to serve with him on the committee:- Chris Taylor (Vice-President), Robin Haggett (Hon. Secretary), Don Warren (Hon. Treasurer), Jim Cloggie (Programme Secretary), Chris Taylor and David Sutcliffe (Joint Social Secretaries), Mike Harrold (Dining Secretary), Arthur May (Committee Member). The retiring President, Mike Fay, to serve Ex Officio with responsibility for Associate Members and Members absent through illness.

Concern remained at the reduced number of members, still only 38, although attendances throughout the year were a very satisfactory 75% which evidenced the members' commitment to the Club and their satisfaction in the leadership provided by the committee. By the end

of the year membership had risen 42, a very encouraging trend.

Doubts also remained about the future of the hotel as the venue for our meetings which were heightened when it was disclosed later in the year that the hotel had a buyer. The Administrator continued to oversee the hotel's business until such time as the sale was completed.

It was still proving impossible to access the Club's section on the Dorset C.C.C. website and so it was decided to proceed with the establishment of our own independent site. In the absence of a member of our Club with the technical ability to complete such a task it was fortunate that Alan Flower, a member of Bournemouth 2 Probus Club, agreed to do this for us.

Chris Taylor was a regular contributor to the New Milton Advertiser promoting our Club and his wife, Kate, was thanked for her excellent work in raising funds by organising raffles at social functions.

2012 was truly a golden year with wonderful summer weather and, of course, the superbly organised Olympic Games in London. It felt very good to be British that year.

It was almost impossible to obtain seats for most of the Olympic Games venues but most of the population were engaged in the excitement generated by this wonderful event by being able to watch the Olympic Flame being carried round the nation by a relay of runners nominated for their good works and/or courage. One such person was Michael Clifford, son-in-law of our member Mike Penn. Michael, a master at Ballard School New Milton.

He was nominated for the honour by a parent of one of his pupils. The parent likened his civilizing influence on the education of her son to that of John Keating on his pupils. John Keating was portrayed in a movie based on his life by the actor Robin Williams entitled *The Dead Poet's Society*. Michael had carried the torch through the village of Wilton where he was acclaimed by a huge crowd of spectators. He said later that it was one of the most inspiring and exhilarating experiences of his life. Michael accompanied his father-in-law as his guest to the August meeting and brought the Olympic Torch with him to display to the members and so that any member who wished to could have a photograph taken with it.



*Ken Goodman  
and Arthur May  
with Michael  
Clifford and his  
Olympic Torch*

The Programmes of Talks and Social Events also lived up to the high expectations raised by the general feelings nationwide of pride, excitement and contentment. It was a very happy time. There were a number of talks on military subjects such as New Forest Airfields, Special Operations in Colditz and Men of the New Forest (which told the story of local territorial units sent to fight in France during the First World War). Talks of a practical nature covered the subjects The Work of Magistrates and The Internet.

Skittles events and coffee mornings (at South Lawns Hotel and Holmsley Tea Rooms) retained their popularity amongst the members and their ladies. A BBQ at South Lawns Hotel, on a very lovely summer's day, was very much enjoyed as was The Magic of the Musicals performed at Bashley Park. David Sutcliffe, newly elected to a Social Secretary role was to use his contacts to good effect to arrange a superb trip to The Rose Bowl the home of Hampshire C.C.C. The tour of the facilities included an excellent lunch, a session with the Club archivist in the museum and a chance to watch Hampshire 2nd.XI playing a match against M.C.C. Young Cricketers. 51 members and guests enjoyed Christmas Lunch again at the Miramar Hotel in Bournemouth. 45 members/guests enjoyed lunch at Brockenhurst College's MJ'S Restaurant and the Social Programme finished on a very high note with the President's Farewell Lunch celebrated by 55 members/guest at the beautifully located Captain's Club in Christchurch.

At the February general meeting the Club was visited by Anna Drury a TV Reporter from Channel 4. She was carrying out research for a documentary programme about the activities available to retired people.

The golf organiser, Harold Jones, had managed to arrange 2 matches against other Probus Club's but both were lost. Other matches were arranged subsequently but could not go ahead as insufficient golfers remained available to make up teams.

Similarly, John Irons was unable to find bowls players to join him in events involving the Bournemouth Probus Clubs.

## 2013-14

The incoming President, Chris Taylor, would soon find himself facing a number of difficult challenges, particularly in relation to the Club's meeting venue. He was very glad, therefore, that the members had elected a keen and experienced committee to support him as follows:- Don Warren (Vice-President and Hon. Treasurer), Robin Haggett (Hon. Secretary), Ken Goodman (Programme Secretary), Mike Fay and David Sutcliffe (Joint Social Secretaries), Mike Harold (Dining Secretary) and Les Denmead (Committee Member). Tony Garland took on the newly created office of Webmaster Liaison. The retiring President would serve Ex-Officio in the role of Welfare Officer. John Maton was re-elected Accounts Inspector but upon moving away from the area later in the term the committee decided that in the future the role should be carried out by someone from outside the Club. It was felt that to employ a firm of accountants would prove to be too costly but David Howell, a committee member of RNLI Highcliffe Branch well known to several of our members and experienced in this type of work, was recruited. In exchange for his services an annual donation of £30 would be made to the RNLI.

At the start of the Club year the membership stood at 42 but there was a relatively high turnover of members during the remainder of the year so that by the date of the 2014 AGM the numbers at 46 were looking much

more healthy and on the way to reaching the aspirational figure of 50 sought by the committee. These gentlemen were from a wide range of professions and included a retired parish priest.

Attendances were slightly down on the previous couple of years but were still averaging slightly less than 70%.

A greater range of free local publications were available than previously to advertise the Club and these were utilised heavily by the Secretary.

In March the sale of Waterford Lodge Hotel was finalised, obliging the committee to begin a search for an alternative venue. Four possibilities were identified and each was engaged for a single occasion on a trial basis. Subsequently the members were balloted for their preferred future venue from which emerged, after a very close vote, the East Close Hotel. This hotel became our new home in August 2013.

This all somewhat disrupted the Club's affairs and the normal date for the Ladies Lunch was put back until October but it was well supported by 55 members/guests.

The policy of having two Social Secretaries was paying good dividends as Mike Fay and David Sutcliffe laid on a very high quality programme for 2013/2014. Always popular coffee mornings were held at Sway Manor Hotel, the Old Vicarage Hotel and the Cliff House Hotel and all were very well supported. However, the last of the three was slightly disappointing in terms of the attitude of the hotel staff which members felt was not exactly welcoming. A new innovation was afternoon tea at Moorhill House Hotel, Burley which turned out extremely well.

The lunchtime BBQ at South Lawns Hotel, as in previous years, was also much enjoyed by members/guests in attendance. The usual Skittles match with lunch was again arranged at Shorefields Holiday Park and was much enjoyed.

The Christmas Lunch with our Ladies was once again celebrated at the Miramar Hotel in Bournemouth and well supported whilst the President's Lunch was on this occasion held at the Bentley Restaurant, Dudsbury Golf Club, with an excellent attendance of 56 members/guests.

In addition to these dining based events the Social Secretaries had laid on several really interesting outings including a guided tour and lunch at the Museum of Army Flying and a tour and ploughman's lunch at the Hall & Woodhouse Brewery in Blandford.

Ken Goodman, as Programme Secretary, had also excelled with the programme of talks he had organised for members to enjoy. They had ranged widely over such subjects as The History of Playing Cards, Glider Operations in WW2, Modern Smuggling Techniques and Christchurch - Ice Age to Space Age (delivered by well-known local historian Mike Andrews). There were also the very helpful Living with the Financial Crisis and the very sobering The Real Bridge over the River Kwai. Another very interesting talk, delivered by our Club member Geoff Wilson, Around the World in 80 Months, described experiences from the early days of his career in the travel industry.

There was little happening for the Club's bowlers but the Golf Organiser, Harold Jones, was extremely pleased to



be able to announce that his team had defeated the Bournemouth 2 Probus Team in their match by 2-1. Ken Goodman was extremely pleased to retain the title of Club Champion winning this year's competition for the Cooper held at Highcliffe Castle Golf Club.

### 2014-15



*Retiring  
President Chris  
Taylor (Left)  
Congratulates  
His Successor,  
Don Warren*

There were a couple of new nominees for election to the 2014/15 Committee which formed as followed:- Len Denmead (Vice-President), Graham Newton (Programme Secretary), Robin Haggett (Hon.Secretary), Mike Fay (Hon. Treasurer), David Sutcliffe and Colin Dobson (Joint Social Secretaries), Mike Harrold (Dining Secretary) and Tony Garland (Webmaster Liaison and Steward). The Retiring President, Chris Taylor, would serve Ex-Officio with the role of Welfare Officer.

David Howell was re-appointed Accounts Inspector. Later in the year Les Denmead stood down from the office of Vice-President due to health problems but, fortunately, David Sutcliffe agreed to take his place.

Malcolm Burton-Smith who was shortly to be leaving the country to live close to family members abroad was elected a Life Member in recognition of long and diligent service to the Club as a Past President and Hon. Secretary.

Membership currently stood at 44.

In the July of the previous year Graham Newton had established a line of communication with the Probus Club of Christchurch New Zealand. Although intermittent, interesting information was being received from their Secretary and in return Graham was submitting information about our Club to them that was hoped might prove to be of interest.

The Club website was not being maintained regularly due to the ill-health of Alan Flower of Bournemouth 2 Probus Club who was acting as Webmaster on our behalf. In due course the Committee decided that it would be better for the Club to establish its own independent website and our member Mike Collard volunteered to look after this with the assistance of Alan Flower. Mike was thus appointed Webmaster Liaison in place of Tony Garland. The anticipated cost would be no greater than under the current arrangement. After some tuition Mike Collard took full control of the website and his title was amended to Honorary Webmaster. It was quickly appreciated that finding a backup for Mike would be sensible and so Maurice Dowling was co-opted to the

committee for this purpose and also to assist with the social programme.

The social programme was once again both attractive and comprehensive. Coffee mornings were organised at the Old Vicarage Hotel and the Old Station House, Homesley, both of which were well supported. Following the popularity last year of an afternoon tea, on this occasion the location was Bournemouth Flying Club. An excellent attendance of 44 amply demonstrated that this had been very successful. Members and partners enjoyed another Sunday Lunch at the MJ's Restaurant of Brockenhurst College for which there was a full turn out. A number of extremely attractive visits had been organised one of which was to the cruise ship The Emerald Princess docked at Southampton. This involved an extensive guided tour of the vessel and a complimentary light lunch. The visit was somewhat spoilt by the fact that it was a change-over day so that there were very many passengers coming and going which considerably delayed access to and egress from the ship. Security was very tight.

Another excellent event was a boat trip on the River Stour (37) followed by a BBQ at a local riverside tea garden. Other interesting tours were of the Brookland's Museum and Highcliffe Castle.

The Programme Secretary had also worked hard to provide an interesting series of monthly talks such as: What you don't know about Dorset, Music of the 50's and 60's, The Mary Rose, Concorde-The Aircraft and The Power of Humour in Everyday Life. A particularly enjoyable talk was delivered by Mrs Ethel Dodswell

which resonated with many of her audience who were of a similar mind entitled Camping Holidays Which I Hate!.

It was decided that this year the Christmas Lunch with our Ladies should be held at our normal venue, The East Close Hotel, but the President had arranged for his farewell lunch to be celebrated at Balmer Lawn Hotel.

Both events were well supported.

It was pleasing to note that our Ladies had shown great initiative in starting their own group for regular coffee mornings.

The members were obviously satisfied with the programmes described above as evidenced by an average monthly attendance maintained from the previous year at 75% of the membership.

In November it became known that Highcliffe Probus Club had been disbanded due to a falling number of members. This was a stark warning to ourselves that we must continue to strive to maintain our membership at a level sufficient for our Club not to suffer a similar fate.

Ken Goodman, the new golf organiser, reported that two matches had been played against Bournemouth 2 Probus Club one of which was halved but the other lost.

2015-16

David Sutcliffe, who had assumed the role of Vice-President earlier in the year after Les Denmead had been obliged to stand down due to health issues, duly took on the duties of Club President at the AGM in March 2015.



*Retiring President,  
Don Warren,  
congratulates his  
successor David  
Sutcliffe*

David was able to welcome the following members who had been elected to form his Committee:- Graham Newton (Vice-President and Programme Secretary), Robin Haggett (Hon. Secretary), Mike Fay (Hon. Treasurer), Colin Dobson and Maurice Dowling (Joint Social Secretaries), Mike Harrold (Dining Secretary), Mike Collard (Webmaster) and Tony Garland (Steward).

Membership stood at 46 to start the year which included 1 Life Member (Malcolm Burton-Smith) and monthly attendances were at a creditably high level with an average in the region of 75%-78%.

Nevertheless, the committee continued to work hard on publicity, launching new initiatives aimed at increasing this membership up to and, perhaps, beyond an aspired to total of 50. These involved posters being hung in six locations about the town, including the local post office,

and a listing on the Streetlife (Walkford) Website courtesy of Maurice Dowling.

Additionally, after some difficulties in setting up the Club's new website were overcome, it finally went live under the capable management of Mike Collard. The initial cost to the Club amounted to £259 and thereafter a regular ongoing charge would have to be paid to the domain provider. The members seemed to acknowledge that the facility was a necessity in current times. Mike pointed out to members that for this cost to be justified the website needed to be kept up to date and he asked for relevant material to be submitted to him.

In June 2015 there was another attempt to launch a Forum for Probus Clubs within East Dorset but this failed to gather any traction.

Prompted by Graham Newton information began to flow regularly between our Club and The Probus Club of Christchurch, New Zealand. We were to hear from them tragic stories of the horrors that had to be endured by the population of that city following a series of massive earthquakes. These spoke of an extensive loss of life and huge damage to buildings and essential infrastructure.

The Social and Programmes Secretaries, as usual, served the members well in organising many very interesting social functions, trips and talks.

Well attended outings were made to Upton House, Bournemouth Water Company, and the Regent Centre in Christchurch, where the party of members on a behind the scenes tour were told about impressive plans for the future of the theatre. A particularly attractive trip was by

boat on the Lymington River to Buckler's Hard where a guided tour was provided. Theatre themed outings, taking in a dinner at a nearby restaurant, were made to The Mayflower, Southampton for Dirty Rotten Scoundrels and to the Regent Centre for a streamed performance of the Nutcracker Suite. The foodies were able to enjoy a Sunday Lunch at Drusilla's Inn Horton, a BBQ at the Manor Hotel, Burton and a coffee morning at Milton Barns.

The establishment of the Club Website now allowed photos taken at these various outings to be uploaded and made available for members to view.

The Past President's Lunch was reintroduced and, organised by Don Warren the Retiring President, enjoyed at The Amberwood.

The programme of talks provided was quite excellent and covered subjects such as the Battle of Britain over Christchurch, The Russell Coates Museum, Tools for Self-reliance, A ramble round the County and Maritime Moments. The latter was delivered by Anthony Holt, a published author, who had a selection of his books for sale.

The Ladies were very well catered for at the Summer Lunch when Mr. Alan White delivered a talk on his life as a Poole Potter. This was very hands on as he demonstrated how he created various types of pottery. The very courageous, Kate Taylor, agreed to become his student for the morning and made an extremely good fist of her first ever attempt at such an activity. The 58 members/guests present went on to enjoy an excellent lunch provided by the catering staff of the East Close Hotel. At the Ladies Christmas Lunch, also celebrated

at the East Close Hotel, the speaker, Mr. Dale Johnson, delivered a talk entitled The Real Dad's Army. This talk was superbly well illustrated with uniforms, equipment, and weapons used by those serving in the home guard. Mr Johnson also arrived in his little camouflaged van which bore typical marks and recognition symbols of the era. For many of those present this talk was particularly evocative of a bygone era.

The President's Lunch was celebrated at the Burley Manor Hotel where the 66 members/guests were entertained again by their favourite Beefeater, Tony Strafford.

Also on a military note the speaker for March was our member Harold Jones who related his experiences during the Suez campaign. At that time Harold was the navigator of an RAF Valiant nuclear deterrent bomber an extremely serious predicament to be in. One cannot imagine the huge weight of responsibility upon those



brave airmen who could so easily have been ordered, effectively, to spark a nuclear confrontation.

Fellow members of our long standing member, Don Richardson, were delighted to learn that he had been created Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur by the people of France for his part in the liberation of their country



following Operation Overlord in 1944. It was a pity that it had taken more than 70 years after the event to so!

## 2016-17



*The year began with David Sutcliffe passing on the Presidency to Graham Newton.*

The officers elected for this year were Robin Haggett (standing down as Hon, Secretary to become Vice President), Maurice Dowling (standing down as a Social Secretary to become Hon. Secretary), Ken Heap (replacing Graham Newton as Programme Secretary), Mike Harrold, Mike Fay, Mike Collard and Colin Dobson (remaining in post as Dining Secretary, Hon Treasurer, Webmaster and Social Secretary respectively and Graham Smith (Social Secretary). Don Warren was also elected (and would serve as assistant to the treasurer). David Sutcliffe, as Immediate Past President was ex-officio a member of the Committee and served as Welfare Officer. During the year Mike Collard moved away and the role of Webmaster was covered until the AGM by Maurice Dowling. David Howell was re-elected to provide independent verification of our

accounts at the year-end.

The membership of the club at year end was 48.

The President and Tony Garland represented the Club at the Local Probus Clubs Forum (for clubs in East Dorset and West Hampshire). During the year the Forum looked at possible areas of co-operation in publicity and shared activities but in the end none of these came to fruition and by the end of the year the Forum had discontinued.

The Committee spent a great deal of time and energy in looking for ways to promote the club and add to its membership. We continued to place reports in the New Milton Advertiser, adverts in the Christchurch Eye and Highcliffe Eye publications and we ran 2 promotional stalls – one in Druitt Hall and one in the High Street on market day. We also produced promotional leaflets for use at such events and for members to give to likely contacts. From time to time we placed posters in a variety of local venues. The Committee also put a lot of effort into the planning for the year ahead, 2017-18, which will be the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the club.

We continued our link with the Probus Club in Christchurch, New Zealand - receiving their monthly newsletter and sending them a monthly report on what our club is getting up to. They have a radically different structure with a central organisation for Australia and New Zealand and we were able to watch from afar, through their newsletter, as parts of New Zealand Probus broke away, amid much acrimony such that the break-away clubs were threatened with court action if they used the name Probus. We felt suitably

grateful that there is no such structure here in the UK. The regular meetings were well attended and members continued to feel well cared for by the staff of the East Close Hotel (though there were back-felt murmurings about the chairs we were obliged to use!). The speakers for the year covered a wide range of subjects – three talks relating to the military, three talks about local history from the history of Christchurch as a haven for smugglers to a fascinating talk about how the New Forest had been used and abused down the ages to become what it is today. The others were too varied to categorise but we heard and saw pictures of volcanoes, we heard about and listened to the music of Mantovani and we enjoyed hearing about some of the secrets of Cunard.

As is our custom we invited our wives/partners and Associate Members to join us for two of our meetings – in May and December. Both these meetings were very well attended.

The social calendar for the club was equally varied with the highlight being a weekend away (the first in the history of the club) in Torquay in October with 36 members and wives/partners enjoying the time away together – good food, good accommodation and good company made for an excellent event. Other notable excursions were to Athelhampton House, Blandford Brewery, Christchurch Priory, Minterne Estate, a trip from Bournemouth to Portsmouth on the Paddle Steamer Waverley. As usual we had a skittles tournament, a Sunday lunch and coffee mornings as well. We even managed to fit in an afternoon tea before Christmas.

The President's Lunch this year was held in the South



Lawn Hotel in Lymington. The

meal was very well attended and the

hotel looked after us very well. Our

speaker was Patsy Taylor who gave us a

fascinating insight

with her talk entitled, Memories of Fleet Street.

This year our golfers were not able to attempt more than one tournament which was ruined by the weather!