

THE PROBUS CLUB OF CHRISTCHURCH



NEWSLETTER

December 2016

President's remarks

As I sit at my computer to write this it seems incredible that I am over halfway through my year as the club's President. Being President of this club is an easy task – we have such a competent and dedicated team as the committee. During the summer months we have had a successful and varied programme of visits in addition to the regular meetings at the East Close Hotel.

The committee has spent a lot of time and effort in trying to increase the club's membership – we have, for a goodly while, hovered in the mid-forties. We would feel more comfortable about the long term future of the club if the membership was nearer sixty. We have tried, as you know, several publicity initiatives and in recent times our website has had around ten "hits" each week over and above our members checking in on it. But, whether it is hits on our website, manning a stall at Christchurch market, putting up posters in post offices or uploading items onto local community websites, interest has failed to convert into new members. In the end, there is no substitute for members – that's each and every one of us - telling friends and neighbours who are retired that our Probust Club is a really good place to make friendships and is a great way to spend time each month.

Time is passing in my presidency and I would be so pleased if the membership could top fifty by the time Robin starts his year as our President. So, come on friends – is there someone you could interest in giving us a try? Maurice has some excellent leaflets about us to help us and, remember, we do offer a free invitation to come and try us (and our lunches). You will be receiving this newsletter as we head into December. So may I wish you, your wives and partners, and our associate members a very happy Christmas and may 2017 be a year blessed with good health and enjoyable times together.

Graham Newton

Monthly Meetings – 2016

Once again we have been fortunate to have had some extremely interesting speakers at our monthly meetings.

Since the last Newsletter we have been wonderfully entertained by **Paul Barrett** with 'Mantaovani, King of Strings', by **Michael Andrews** with 'Christchurch: a Smuggling Town', by **Pat Taylor** with 'Secrets of Cunard', by **Robin Miller** with 'Volcanoes', by **Peter Roberts** with 'The New Forest from Conqueror to National Park', by **Dave Goldsmith** with 'The Andean Medical Mission' – at literally zero hours notice after our booked speaker failed to turn up – by **Harold Jones** with 'My Experiences in the Royal Airforce', and by **Ron Taylor** with 'Stourhead to Stanpits'.

A very mixed bag of speakers who we all enjoyed.

Future Speakers and Menus – Early 2017

3rd January – John Smith – 'The Battle of Britain'.
Braised Lamb Shoulder, Mash Potato, Minted Jus
(Mushroom Stroganoff, Braised Rice) Apple
Crumble, Crème Anglaise

7th February – Steve Roberts – 'The London Underground'.

Fish Pie, Parsley Crust (Winter Vegetable Hotpot)
Sticky Toffee Pudding, Honeycomb Ice-Cream

24th February- Presidents Lunch

South Lawn Hotel

With our Ladies - Patsy Taylor – 'Memories of Fleet Street

Menu Details to be supplied later

7th March – Annual General Meeting

John Umfreville – 'Probian Humour'.

Chicken & Mushroom Pie, New Potatoes
(Wild Mushroom Risotto, Rocket & Truffle Oil)
Baked White Chocolate Cheesecake, Raspberry
Compote

4th April – Kathy McNally – ‘Spying: The Great Game’.

Pork & Leek Sausages, Herb Mash Potato, Onion Jus (Quorn & Butternut Squash Lasagne)
Spotted Dick, Crème Anglaise

All main courses are served with Fresh Seasonal Vegetables

A vegetarian option is now being offered by the hotel, which is shown in brackets.

If any member has dietary problems with the meal specified, please speak to Mike (by the preceding Friday) about a possible alternative being provided. Also if you are unable to attend any of these meetings, please inform the Dining Secretary (**Mike Harrold** on 01425-271860 or mike.harrold@btinternet.com) **at the latest by the Friday preceding the meeting.**

Votes of Thanks

Volunteers required please for the January, February March April, May and June meetings **Ken Heap** will be delighted to hear from you!

Membership

It is with great regret that we have to record the passing in June of **Ray Talbot**, aged 93. Ray was the oldest member of the Club and was president in 2008. He was a founder member of Christchurch Rotary Club. In his previous profession he qualified with the Associate Chartered Institute of Secretaries and Administrators. He was also a keen bowls player.

It is also with great regret that we had to record the passing in July of **Arthur May**, aged 82. He was in The Motor Trade for most of his life and was a Fellow of the Institute of the Motor Industry. Later on he was involved with property/letting. His hobbies included boating and classic cars. Our own President **Graham Newton** conducted Arthur's funeral.

The number of members attending both funerals bore testimony to the highest regard with which both were held.

Mike Collard resigned due to moving to Cheltenham for family reasons, we all wish him well.

We have been delighted to welcome a new member **John Umfreville**, who was a former member of Bournemouth Probus. In his working days John was a Petrochemical Strategist, and lists his hobbies as family history, gardening, and Thorium University. We also welcomed **John Jordan** who is new to Probus. In his working days John was a Director/Manager of a Pneumatics and Vacuum

Company based in South Africa, and lists his hobbies as Freemasons, motorcycles and quizzes.

Social Events

With thanks to our two Social Secretaries, **Colin Dobson** and **Graham Smith** we have continued to enjoy an extremely busy social programme, with events in recent months having included a Christchurch Priory Tour, tour of Hall and Woodhouse Brewery, tour of Minterne House and Gardens, Coffee Morning at The Avon Causeway, BBQ at The Woolpack Inn, Visit to Athelhampton House, Waverley Paddle Steamer, Coffee Morning at the Cliff House Hotel, Past Presidents Lunch at the House Martin, and last but not least President's Weekend away in Torquay.

Skittles Match – Thursday 19th January

Last year we had our skittles in Hoburne Park which was a new venue for us. This year we have another new venue. Please make a note in your diary please it will be held at The Huntsman, Brockenhurst on 19th January 2017 11.30am– further details to follow.

President's Lunch – Friday 24th February

This is due to take place at the South Lawn Hotel, and full details will be distributed in due course. The speaker will be – Patsy Taylor with ‘Memories of Fleet Street’.

Website

Just a reminder that our Website can now be found at www.probuschristchurch.org.uk

I have posted an array of photographs in the Gallery, taken at recent events – so take a look – you may well be featured! Also older photographs can still be found in the photograph archive page.

Ladies Group

Rosemary Warren has been organising a group of our ladies, who meet informally – for lunch on the 2nd Wednesday monthly, and for coffee at the Lord Bute Hotel, Highcliffe on the 4th Wednesday monthly.

Dates for **January** are:

11th – Lunch, venue to be advised

25th – Coffee at the Lord Bute, Lymington Road

Any ladies who have not so far attended will be made very welcome – please contact **Rosemary Warren** for further details.

Recruitment

During recent years our total membership has remained fairly consistent at around 43/45, although it has been a long held ambition to increase this to 50. See the president's remarks.

So if you have any friends or neighbours who may be interested in joining, please do invite them along – as you may know, no charge is made to a potential new member attending for the first time.

With that in mind, we asked **John Umfreville**, who has been a member now for just seven months, to describe his personal experience of the Club since joining. This is what John had to say:

'The announcement of a local Probus Club on the notice board at Stewarts Garden centre caught my eye as I passed by earlier in the year at a time when I was ready to move from the Bournemouth Club where I had been a member for 15 years but which my wife and I found increasingly more difficult to attend for health reasons, acerbated by worse and worse traffic conditions. Membership of a Club closer to our new home seemed to be an answer to our problems.

A phone call to the secretary, an invitation to a trial lunch (for both sides I guess), a quick CV outline talk for the members, and I was voted into Christchurch Probus Club. I followed this with a request to Bournemouth PC to transfer to 'Associate Membership' with a more relaxed attendance. Since then I have been made very welcome at all the Christchurch monthly Lunches I have attended and my wife Jan and I have also enjoyed the social events. Each time our feelings of being awkward as newcomers has been eased by the friendly approach of Committee members and all with whom we have come into contact. It has been a warm friendly experience for us both. Thank you All for this. I must say that I have enjoyed the food at the lunches but my rear end is still trying to get accustomed to the chairs in the meeting room! Now I am looking forward to another year of friendship and fellowship with you all in this welcoming Club'.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas, and the best of health for the New Year

Joke Corner

Car Keys

Several days ago as I left a meeting I desperately gave myself a personal search. I was looking for my keys.

They were not in my pockets. A quick search in the meeting room revealed nothing. Suddenly I realized I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the car park.

My husband has scolded me many times for leaving the keys in the ignition.

My theory is the ignition is the best place not to lose them.

His theory is that the car will be stolen. As I scanned the car park I came to a terrifying conclusion!

His theory was right. The car park was empty.

I immediately called the police.

I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen.

Then I made the most difficult call of all.

"Hello My Love", I stammered; I always call him "My Love" in times like these.

I left my keys in the car, and it has been stolen. There was a period of silence. I thought the call had disconnected, but then I heard his voice. He barked, "I dropped you off!"

Now it was my time to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "Oh well, can you come and get me please?"

He retorted, "I was on my way, and will continue as soon as I convince this policeman I haven't stolen your bloody car."

Christmas Cracker Jokes

Why don't you ever see Father Christmas in hospital?

Because he has private elf care!

How do snowmen travel?

By icicle.

Why was Santa's little helper feeling sad?

He had low elf-esteem.

What do you call a blind reindeer?

No eye deer.

Who stole my Christmas baking recipes?

A mince spy.

What does Father Christmas do with troublesome elves?

He gives them the sack.

What motorbike does Santa ride?

A Holly Davidson

What happened to the man who stole an advent calendar?

He got 25 days

What's the best Christmas present?

A broken drum – you just can't beat it.

What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?

Frostbite!

What carol is heard in the desert?

O camel ye faithful!

Why did no one bid for Rudolph and Blitzen at the auction?

Because they were two deer!