

# THE PROBUS CLUB OF CHRISTCHURCH (FOUNDED 1977)



## NEWSLETTER December 2019

### PRESIDENT'S JOTTINGS

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the Christmas 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

### **For Your Diary:**

#### **CHRISTMAS LUNCH**

Christchurch Harbour Hotel  
**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

#### **PRESIDENT'S LUNCH**

Dudsbury Golf Club  
**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February**  
Full details to be distributed

#### **Hidden Gems**

As mentioned in our President's Jottings, the Hidden Gems monthly notelets have proved extremely popular. We have published 17 members 'Gems' so far, and they have uncovered some amazing stories.

So far members have disclosed living with Buddhist Monks; being a First Responder; taking a 'comfort break' with Michael Caine; being in the Army Jeep Display Team at the Royal Tournament; running the New York Marathon; being a Green Badge Guide in Winchester; a political campaigner in Mallorca and a GO game expert.

If you want to know which member did what, get your Hidden Gem notelets out and have a read.

*Thanks to Roy Townsend for input to this article - Ed*

#### **Website**

Our Clubs website address is:

[www.probuschristchurch.org.uk](http://www.probuschristchurch.org.uk)

Please do take the opportunity to visit the site and give us your views.

#### **Membership**

We have been very pleased to welcome seven new members since our last Newsletter was issued:

##### **John Davis**

Wife: Pauline  
Army Officer (Captain)  
Hobbies: Stamp Collecting, Snooker.

##### **Laurence Feast**

Wife: Ann  
Managing Director (Civil Engineering Group)  
Hobbies: 7 1/4 in. Gauge Railway owner, Ancient History Studies.

##### **Clifford King**

Wife: Maureen  
Civil Engineer  
Hobbies: Walking, Cycling, Table Tennis, Theatre.

##### **David Walker**

Bank Manager  
Hobbies: Chair of Bank Pensioners Social Group.

##### **Ken Edwards**

Wife: Maureen (known as Mo)  
Captain (Merchant Navy)  
Hobbies: Gardening, Cricket, Football, Reading.

##### **Frank House**

Wife: Nina  
Senior Building Estimator  
Hobbies: Swimming, Reading, ex Walker.

##### **John Batchelor**

Wife: Valerie  
Fisherman.

**A very warm welcome to all.**

#### **Obituary**

It is with great regret that we record the recent passing of **David Wilkie** (member since June 1994).

The Funeral Service for David is being held at 12.00 noon on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December at Highcliffe Methodist Church.

From 1pm there will be a Funeral Tea in the State Dining Room at Highcliffe Castle.

Club members should contact Secretary David Dunsmore if they wish to attend.

## What is it like to be a New Member of Christchurch Probus Club?

### New Member Observations

Well now we know. Joining Christchurch Probus Club is a piece of cake, at least according to half a dozen press-ganged folk who shared their experiences for this article.

Name plates win universal approval for breaking the ice, the natives are friendly though one or two have yet to master that discreet sidelong glance to note a newcomer's name before immediately throwing it into conversation.

Meanwhile one correspondent envisages 'meet and greeter' Les Denmead swathed in a pink tutu while carrying out the Big Welcome ahead of each monthly meeting. I exaggerate slightly, but even our club president has to tread warily with one member, renowned for a fearsome bone-crunching handshake.

Here's what our correspondents report:

#### **Terry Reed:**

On arrival for my first meeting, the club could not have been more welcoming. My daughter appears at social occasions and is very impressed with the atmosphere and tells me I've arrived.

Name badges are important for new members arriving to a now 60-strong club and even after two years I still struggle with remembering names of some quieter members.

Colin Dobson does a brilliant job keeping members moving tables each month, which stops cliques forming. Long queues at the bar? I think that a pre-order and payment system before meetings can work.

#### **Eddie Best**

My principal experience on joining Probus was one of delight at the opportunity of meeting a diverse group of like-minded people.

All members seem to take on the commendable task of welcoming new members/guests; name badges help those of us with reluctant memories. The warm welcoming of spouses to combined events is good, and The Harbour Hotel is an excellent venue, good food (parking and drinks queue not too bad.)

The growing club membership can be seen as a tribute to the managing committee and club members.

#### **Andrew Harris**

Having just moved from near Royal Wootton Bassett and knowing no-one, I decided to join various clubs quickly.

The advert for a retired gentleman's lunch club sounded interesting. Visions of lap dancers, pole dancers and topless waitresses was quickly dispelled when I met Les Denmead, in fact if he had been wearing a pink sequined tutu I would probably have run away!

But we have a great club. The initial welcome is excellent, meeting other gentleman from a variety of interesting backgrounds is invigorating. The general friendship in our club is good as is the quality and variation of speakers.

I particularly like the involvement of the ladies, a critical factor in me joining. Well done the committee, keep it up.

#### **Brian Hollowell**

I was invited to join by a long-standing member with whom I regularly played golf, along with three other golfing members. That helped me to fit in and mix a little easier, but it soon became apparent that if one is prepared to just chat with others either in the bar or during the meal, generally some common interests will arise and form a basis for discussion.

Attending social events with my wife was a major help and we soon began to recognise familiar friendly faces. After only a year, and with some reservation about it being too soon, I agreed to take on the second social secretary role. I've now moved up a place and Richard Smith has come on board as second social secretary.

We try to arrange a variety of social events with our guests and partners, usually once per month. We hope that we can cater for everyone's interests and abilities so as to be as inclusive as possible. Not sure if we have achieved that yet, so all suggestions are welcome.

#### **Cliff Putterford**

I joined in 2018 having recently moved to the area. While I knew a couple of people already, I was pleasantly surprised that many others introduced themselves to me and I quickly felt I was part of "the family".

In addition, my wife was welcomed by the ladies and enjoys both the mixed social events and the ladies monthly lunch get-together. This was all helped considerably by the convention of wearing name badges, which make for an easy process of introduction. All in all it was a really warm welcome and the club continues to be a most enjoyable social group.

### **James Robertson**

You might say my membership was divinely ordained, as I met then-president the Reverend Graham Newton in church, who promptly invited me along to Probus.

As Barbara and I retired and moved to Christchurch three years ago, I had already thought about joining Probus.

Many years ago, my father, finding himself bereaved was welcomed into a Probus group in Woodbridge, Suffolk. He often spoke fondly of the meetings and tasty lunches. So I was delighted to receive a similar warm welcome at Christchurch Probus, and enjoy friendly chats over a good lunch. Everything's well organised, with website, newsletter, member list etc, helping us to keep in touch. The name badges are a great help, as long as we remember to wear them.

*And from the other side of the officiating table peering each month across a full capacity membership, not all of them joining from Barton on Sea, and with his dedicated club secretary sitting alongside, our president gives us a few insights, too.*

### **Ken Heap**

I think that people left to their own devices will generally revert to the "clique mentality" so I have introduced different seating arrangements each month and from new member feedback, this has been very welcomed.

However, on the smaller social events where seating has not been organised, many members seem to revert to their favoured friends, leaving newer members sitting on their own or forcing new members to sit together.

It is important that the committee members in particular show leadership by mingling and involving members in events and conversations.

The "Hidden Gem" project has generally been very well received, not just by members but also visitors and speakers. Even those shy members who are

reticent in writing a gem, all seem to enjoy reading and talking about them with members they might not normally chat to.

Regarding the wearing of badges, I think that this is essential, particularly for new members and, of course, with our partners as they meet many members so infrequently. Generally speaking, I am a proponent of the firm handshake when meeting someone. However, when meeting a new member recently, he nearly broke my hand. It has now become a monthly joke between us as we greet each other in a more courteous and gentle way!

### **James Wheildon**

In conclusion, I echo all the praise. It's a friendly club to join. The speakers have all been interesting, so far at least. The hotel responded well to dining supremo Colin Dobson's nudges on the more vegetables front, though the bar queue can sometimes be a horror show.

If last September's Cheltenham trip was typical, the away events are well worth signing up for.

And finally, members, one and all, should be grateful for small mercies received. A Cheltenham Probus official was telling us that at his club, all members are expected to step in as guest speakers on a regular basis.

Now that may just be a step too far for Christchurch Probus Club.

*Thanks to all who contributed to this article, and special thanks to James Wheildon who organised and wrote the article while on holiday in the Philippines – Ed.*

### **Visit to Highcliffe Castle Tuesday 15th October '19**

A good crowd of Probus members and their partners arrived at Highcliffe Castle to be met by blazing sunshine after several days rain. An omen we thought, and so it turned out to be. We had an excellent talk on the history of the Castle and then were split into two groups for the tour. The tour took us 'behind the scenes' of the latest restoration work in the Penleaze wing. The newly installed showcases, full of furniture from the Castle, really brought the place to life. Along with the kitchen we were also taken to the Cloisters and the wine cellar which are not normally open to the public.

We ended our visit with an excellent cream tea at the café.

## Simply Re-Red at the Tivoli Theatre, Friday 8th November '19

A small, if select, band of members assembled in the splendid Art Deco foyer of the Tivoli, Wimborne, on a cold, blustery November night. We took our seats and were soon warmed up by the music of Simply Red superbly re-created on stage by Re-Red, one of the best Simply Red tribute bands around. We were soon singing away to familiar hits such as 'Stars', 'Somethings Got Me Started', 'Money's Too Tight to Mention', et al. The band accompanying the excellent Mick Hucknall soundalike were brilliant. After an interval consuming ice cream (very rock' n' roll) part two continued with more hits. A good evening thoroughly enjoyed by all.

*Thanks to Richard Smith for the event reports – Ed.*



**Christmas Cooperisms:** I bought my little boy one of those unbreakable toys. It cost me a fortune. He broke every other toy in the house with it!

## Recent Speakers

We have been greatly entertained at our monthly meetings by some very interesting talks.

In **June**, 83 members, wives and partners were treated to an excellent talk by **Mike Webber** entitled **Cruising Down the Danube**, which was illustrated with some superb photographs from his river cruise journey. At the **July** meeting our President congratulated Club member Cliff Putterford on winning the Club's annual Golf Tournament before **David Beardsley** gave an informative talk on the **History of the Bankes Family**. The Bankes family owned Corfe Castle and then Kingston Lacy before Ralph Bankes bequeathed both properties and land to the National Trust in 1981.

In **August** we had a very interesting and informative talk by **Ron Taylor** entitled **Sweet and Sour**. Ron covered the history of sugar from 8000BC to the present day. **September's** speaker was **Robin Miller** who's subject, **The Normandy Campaign**, was particularly poignant as the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 was the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of World War II. Robin took us from the D-Day Deception Plan, named Operation Fortitude, to the bloody battles on the beaches of Sword, Juno, Gold, Omaha and Utah.

In **October**, **John Ellis** covered **The Making of a Museum: Beaulieu**. John told us about the various exhibits on display, and how the Palace House was used by the Special Operations Executive for training purposes during the second World War. The talk at our **November** meeting was **Charles Rolls and Britain's First International Aviation Meeting**, delivered by **Stephen Robson**, who is Chairman of the Charles Rolls Memorial Trust. With the aid of maps, photographs and very old video footage, Stephen told us the fascinating story behind one of Britain's most famous early aviators.

*Full reports of our meetings and Speakers appear regularly in the New Milton Advertiser.*

## Meeting Procedures

Committee meetings will continue to be held at 9.30am, with the general meetings starting at 10.45am, and coffee being served from 10.15am.

## A Reminder of the Attendance Rules

Members unable to attend any of the following meetings must inform the Dining Secretary (Colin Dobson – Telephone 01425-271953 or e-mail colin@goblins.plus.com) **at the latest by the Saturday noon preceding the meeting**. Additionally, if any member has dietary problems with the meal specified, please speak to Colin (again, by the preceding Saturday) about a possible alternative being provided.

## Future Speakers and Menus

*Every month there is a Fish or Chicken dish followed by Fruit Salad or Ice Cream as an alternative to the Menus shown below. All main courses are served with Fresh Seasonal Vegetables.*

### 7<sup>th</sup> January – **John Lewis** – **Coastal Ways**

Pork Fillet, Dauphinoise Potatoes, Grilled Courgettes and Aubergine  
Treacle Sponge Pudding with Clotted Cream

### 4<sup>th</sup> February – **John Smith** – **Battle of Britain over Christchurch**

Fillet of Bream, Truffle Mash, Cabbage, Bacon and Vegetable Panache  
Baked Stuffed Apples with Custard

### 3<sup>rd</sup> March – **AGM** – **Speaker TBC (member)**

Roast Chicken Leg, New Potatoes with a Mushroom Sauce, Pot Roast Vegetable Creamed Spinach  
Brandy Prune and Walnut Bake with Cream

**7<sup>th</sup> April – Colin van Geffen – Lawrence of Arabia**  
Fillet of Salmon, Potato Cake with Tofu, Pesto and Green Beans  
Marmalade Bread Pudding with Custard

**5<sup>th</sup> May – Chris Munns – Submarines of WWI**  
Rump of Lamb with Minted Peas and Ricotta  
Risotto  
Crème Brulee with Shortbread

**2<sup>nd</sup> June – Ian Schulz – Computer Scams**  
Fillet of Smoked Haddock with Welsh Rarebit, New Potatoes and Broccoli  
Strawberry Parfait with Compote and Biscuits

### Ladies Group

I am pleased to report that our Ladies lunch group has increased in size over the past few months, consequently we have had to find a permanent venue that can accommodate us! We made the decision to meet every month at the Carpenters Arms in Bransgore where we have our own private room. The menu is excellent and the staff very friendly and helpful.

We meet on the second Wednesday of every month at 12 noon. If you would like to join us, you will be very welcome. Give me a ring on 01202 420501 or 07857 618071 for more information.

So that we can get to know our new members names, (and they ours!) we have to say a very big thank you to a very kind benefactor who has supplied badges for us.

Our coffee mornings take place at the Lord Bute, Highcliffe on the 4th Wednesday of every month at 10a.m till 11.30a.m. All are welcome, just turn up on the day! Details of the two events are available in the address list supplied to Probus members.

Happy Christmas everyone.

*Thanks to Rosemary Warren for this report – Ed*

**Christmas Cooperisms:** One Christmas I got a job as Santa Claus in a department store. One little girl sat on my knee and said, “Guess what I’ve got?”, I said, “A doll?” She said “No.” I said, “A Christmas list?” She said, “No”. I said, “I give up. What have you got?” She said, “Chickenpox!”



### Irish Medical Terminology

**Artery** – The study of paintings  
**Bacteria** – Back door to cafeteria  
**Barium** – What doctors do when patients die  
**Benign** – What you be, after you be eight  
**Caesarean Section** – A neighbourhood in Rome  
**Cat scan** – Searching for Kitty  
**Cauterize** – Made eye contact with her  
**Colic** – A sheep dog  
**Coma** – A punctuation mark  
**Dilate** – To live long  
**Enema** – Not a friend  
**Fester** – Quicker than someone else  
**Fibula** – A small lie  
**Impotent** – Distinguished, well known  
**Labour Pain** – Getting hurt at work  
**Medical Staff** – A Doctor’s cane  
**Morbid** – A higher offer  
**Nitrates** – Rates of pay for working at night  
**Node** – I knew it  
**Outpatient** – A person who has fainted  
**Pelvis** – Second cousin to Elvis  
**Post Operative** – A letter carrier  
**Recovery Room** – Place to do upholstery  
**Secretion** – Hiding something  
**Seizure** – Roman Emperor  
**Tablet** – A small table  
**Terminal Illness** – Getting sick at the airport  
**Tumour** – One plus one more  
**Urine** – Opposite of you’re out  
*Apologies if I’ve offended anyone - Ed*

### Under the Christmas mistletoe

Ladies: before you find your handsome Prince, there’s a lot of frogs to be kissed under the mistletoe first!

Gentlemen: always ask the prettiest girl for a kiss under the mistletoe – she may just say ‘yes’!

One tiny kiss under the mistletoe burns up 3 calories. Therefore, the longer the kiss, the better the exercise - just saying!

**A VERY HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS TO ALL  
CLUB MEMBERS AND  
THEIR FAMILIES**