



THE PROBUS CLUB OF CHRISTCHURCH

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024

President's Jottings



President 2024/5 The only one way to start this newsletter is to show my greatest respect to Colin Dobson, who has sadly passed away since my last report. Of course, we offer our condolences to the wives and families of other members we have lost, but I feel Colin deserves a special mention. Many of you will be aware he served this club for many years in various roles. In the last year he worked tirelessly to organise many of the social events that we have enjoyed and continue to look forward to. Personally, he supported me in everything I asked and was actively involved in the organisation for the Presidents weekend away. Colin was a thoroughly lovely chap, a friend to all and he will be sadly missed.

I am extremely fortunate to have such a supportive Committee, all of whom offer their skills and give up their time to make this Probud club the success it is.

Others will undoubtedly report on events and speakers we have been lucky enough to enjoy so I will just say thank you to James W and Robin for their efforts and commitment to make these happen.

As ever, we get excellent coverage from the local press, particularly the New Milton Advertiser who seem to print Graeme G's reports verbatim. On a similar note, our webmaster (Roy) continues to produce not only comprehensive web updates but is also working on an excellent (I've seen it 😊) updated version of membership handbook for 2025.

You will have seen the members' letter regarding the need for volunteers for next and future years to ensure the continuance of our Probud club. I am particularly pleased to see David Dunsmore has accepted the role of Vice President for the next year. The letter also highlights the debt of gratitude we all owe James R for his unstinting work as Past President, Treasurer and Dining Secretary this year.

The Presidents weekend away at St. Annes Manor in Wokingham was, I believe, enjoyed by all who attended. The weather was good for the weekend and during the majority of the scenic cruise on the Thames from Windsor. As you may be aware, for differing reasons Colin and Janet, James and Barbara, and Keith and Maggie and Robin and May had to withdraw post booking; Consequently, all were missed along with those of you who chose not to come.

A quick advert for 2025. I recommend you join Graham's Presidents weekend next time away, once it's advertised as they are always good events. They are relaxing, very social, and offer great companionship to be had by all.

I look forward to the rest of my year as President and then passing the baton to Graham N. who I thank for his support as my VP.

Finally, thank you to you the members, whos' support, and encouragement during my time as President has been invaluable.

Best Wishes Cliff Putterford

Social Secretary Report July 2024 to June 2025.

July 2, 2024



Ladies Lunch The Bridge House Hotel, Longham
49 members and partners attended. A main course and dessert were served, with coffee before and after the meal. The speakers Brian and Jacqueline Sutton (their subject “Jonny Remember me – Joe Meek and his influence”) were entertaining and well received.

July 16, 2024

A superb coffee and cake morning at The Boathouse Restaurant, Christchurch Quay, along with a round of Crazy Golf with prizes, Cliff Putterford won the men’s golf, and Susan Dowling and Valerie Shimmings won the ladies’ golf. The sun came out too. As well as cake, there were plenty of croissants, sandwiches and biscuits as well as an endless supply of tea and coffee. A well-attended and very successful event.



August 22, 2024



Singalong and lunch, The Oaks Highcliffe. This double social event was held jointly with Twynham Probus (whose members also joined us last August for the Poole-Wareham boat trip). Sixty-four people (33 from Christchurch Probus) braved the rain and wind to listen to our singer, Stephen Christopher, perform the hits from yesteryear for an hour and a half. His efforts were much appreciated especially as he sang numerous requests across a wide range of music. The performance, held in the garden marquee, was followed by lunch inside, with the chicken terrine for those who had it proving a big hit, although the trout salad wasn’t so well regarded.

September 13, 2024

An unlucky date for some but not for Christchurch Probus. Another double event, starting with a guided tour of Stanpit Marsh led by BCP’s countryside area manager Robin Harley (who will be giving the club a talk next year) and Zena, a member of the Friends of Stanpit Marsh. Unlike last month, the shone for the 19 of us attending plus Lemonade, Peter and Coleen Warren’s dog. We also saw lots of ponies and other wildlife on this beautiful marsh, mentioned in the 1086 Domesday Book and saved in the 1970s from being built on by former Christchurch mayor Dorothy Baker. After refreshments at the Marsh centre, we dined at Mr Poon’s restaurant in The Rising Sun, Purewell, with 35 attending. Delicious food and we had the pub’s conservatory area to ourselves.



October 4-7, 2024



The President's Weekend Away We stayed at the Hilton Doubletree hotel in St Anne's Manor,

Wokingham, Royal Berkshire. Our number was reduced to 22 from 28 for various reasons but those who came enjoyed a pretty much rain-free three days and an excellent Thames cruise from Windsor with a cream tea on board as the boat, which we had to ourselves. The boat turned round at the halfway stage after passing through a lock. If you didn't know Eton College is one wealthy institution, we cruised past their land for an

hour and were told we had barely seen half of it. Our hotel produced very good meals albeit from a limited menu to keep costs down. We had a quiz that was won in a close finish by the Mosleys and the Newtons, who shared their chocolates winnings. President Cliff Putterford paid tribute at our first dinner at the hotel to our social secretary, Colin Dobson, who died two weeks before the event, which he and Cliff had organised.

November 14, 2024



Afternoon tea at the Otter Nursery, Lymington, and a Christmas display. The occasion was much enjoyed and well attended, with 38 of us having sandwiches, scones with jam and clotted cream, and a choice of cakes. We were looked after by two ladies, who served us a pot of tea or a cup of filter coffee – and who provided takeaway boxes as there was plenty of food left over. The club also went to the nursery for afternoon tea in November 2023 and many of those who attended then came back this month

December 12, 2024

Christmas lunch Booked for the 4th year running at The Miramar Hotel on the Bournemouth Sea front, with a performance after the dinner from The Land Girls, singing us the hits from the 1940's.

And,... Some dates for your diary,

January 31, 2025

MJ's restaurant at the Brockenhurst Catering College, where we have block booked the restaurant after a waiting a year to do so as it's such a popular venue. The students, all smartly dressed, prepare and cook the food as well as waiting on the tables. Professional maitre'd Cathy MacArthur keeps them up to scratch and it should be a really memorable lunch. The restaurant capacity is 40 and members are advised to book this delightful gourmet experience as soon as the flyer comes out. Even an individual booking here can take weeks.

March 2025

Skittles and lunch at New Milton Conservative Club. Prizes are offered at this popular annual event.



May 2025

A visit to Parley, with a coffee morning at the Baskets and Blooms Plant garden centre, followed by lunch at the Pear restaurant in Parley. May should prove an ideal month for the garden centre visit to enjoy the locally grown plants

June 20, 2025

Bransgore Cricket Club for a croquet and afternoon tea event. Note capacity is limited to only 16 people and those applying to attend who will be drawn out of a hat. We are asking for a second visit, but this is unlikely to be offered as there is a high demand for these afternoons, but we won't know if this can be done until after the cricket club's annual meeting in March.

February 20, 2025

President's Lunch at the Lord Bute, Highcliffe. The restaurant has relatively new owners and now takes food orders in advance, which should greatly improve the waiting times for large groups to be served when orders were taken on the day by the previous management.

April 11, 2025

This visit to the D-Day Museum, Southsea, Portsmouth, is already booked, along with a 35-seater coach – and we already have 33 seats reserved and deposits paid by members -- to take us there and back via Herrington Coaches. We are planning a picnic in the grounds of a castle adjacent to the museum if the sun shines. If it doesn't there is a café at the museum, a restaurant at the castle and assorted local eateries in the town. The coach will pick us up at Highcliffe, Mudeford, Christchurch and Purewell. For those driving, it is a 100-mile round trip

June 3, 2025

The Ladies Lunch, which returns to its traditional June date. Venue: The Bridge House Hotel, Longham, Ferndown Graeme, Robin can supply more detail on this event

Speakers, January to July 2025

January 2025

Phil Broomfield – Merton's Dream Garden – The Story of the Russell-Cotes Garden

Phil delivers five different talks, all about local gardens and country parks. Members may recall that we have in the past had a talk about the Russell-Cotes Museum, and this talk about the impressive garden there seemed to make a nice follow-up.

The development of the garden is quite a story, and Phil's talk includes archive photographs, timeline of history, garden design, a virtual tour of the grounds, and plants of interest - with plenty of digital photographs.

February 2025

Steve Roberts – When Dorset Made History

Local historian Steve Roberts is of course well known to us, having delivered several talks over recent years.

This is his latest talk, and he tells me that 'it will be a fast-paced romp through Dorset's history from prehistoric times to today' with all major events featured in chronological order.

He asks us to think of it as a colourful, fun and action-packed rampage through the occasions when Dorset made headlines. Although there will be some familiar stories, there will also be many unexpected gems, which Steve hopes will leave you with a better appreciation of this county's rich history.

March 2025 (AGM)

Keith Puttick – Musicals of the 1970's and 1980's

This is the third talk that Keith will have given at our AGMs – members may recall 'the New York Marathon' and 'Musicals of the 1950's and 1960's'. Keith first came to our club as a speaker, and his talks never fail to impress.

This one will include musicals such as Grease, Blood Brothers, Phantom of the Opera, Mamma Mia and Les Misérables. Music selected from the shows will be enhanced by 'stills' of the musical in question.

April 2025

Ian Schulz – Slow Down and Take a Closer Look

We welcome back another old friend, and this was Ian's first ever talk when he started public speaking around 18 years ago. It covers local wildlife and creatures that you can find in the local area, and even in your own garden.

Since that time Ian says that both his cameras and his knowledge have advanced considerably and he has therefore been updating his talk with 'all new images and information on a wide range of the incredible diversity we can see around us, if only we look closely enough'.

May 2025

David Bickerton – Parents at War

Members may recall the superb talk that David gave last February about the Pursuit and Sinking of Bismarck – the feedback received was really positive. During this talk David mentioned that his father was a crewman aboard HMS Dorsetshire which was present in the final showdown. Later he was sent to the hostile waters of the Mediterranean where he commanded a minesweeper and was involved in six invasions.

But his mother was also actively involved in the war effort – she was a radar operator in the WAAF and served at five RAF radar stations, finding herself tracking enemy aircraft on their bombing missions.

The title of his talk thus requires no further explanation!

June 2025

Brian and Jacqueline Sutton – It was the best of times; it was the worst of times – The Charles Dickens story

We have our wives and partners with us on this occasion, so an ideal opportunity to ask Brian and Jacqui to deliver another of their talks, after their hugely successful performance at a similar occasion last year.

This time it's the Charles Dickens story, and as usual it will be a joint presentation from the two of them, with no scripts or reminders – everything is memorised. They both love to 'get into' the parts that they are playing and will appear dressed as.....no, no – that would be a 'spoiler alert' – you'll have to hear the talk to find out!

They tell us that it will be 'the Charles Dickens you never knew', going through the life of the great author and campaigner, his books and stories, his wisdom, characters and humour, not forgetting his controversial love life.

Robin Haggett Programme Secretary



The password remains the same for 2025 Pr0bus

You will have noticed the main image on the Website was changed earlier in the year. This was due to a copyright issue. We now own the copyright to the new image.

The Links page is not accessed that often, but it does have some useful information on Probud Global activities. The March and September 2024 editions contain some interesting facts, they are worth a read.

The reason we split up the pictures in the Photo Gallery into sections is to avoid large files that take time to download on some laptops. For 2025 each event will have its own Picture Gallery which hopefully will make access much easier. Hit on the thumbs up icon to view the pictures.

If you require any changes to the members directory then it would be appreciated if you could advise before Jan 1st, 2025.

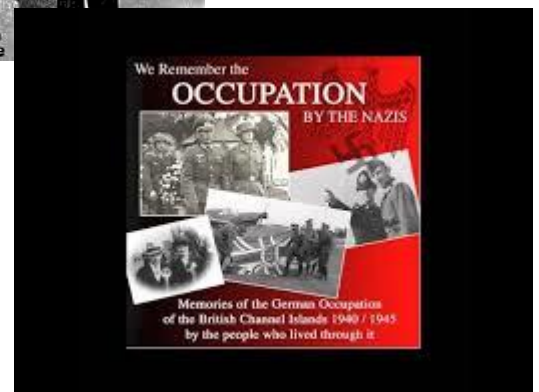
We have tried very hard to get some pages of the Web Site accessible on mobile phones. Unfortunately, it remains unreliable, so at this time right now it is not an option.

We are still open to add any new "Hidden Gems" on the Members page. Graeme G or I would be pleased to assist if required.

We are planning to shoot a short video at the Dec. Xmas lunch. It will likely be just the groupings around the tables and some general shots. Since this video may be presented along with other slides outside the password protected members page it would be appreciated if any member/partner who would rather NOT have their picture recorded to let me know (rtownuk@gmail.com) before the event on the 12th December. Roy

July

The German Occupation of the Channel Islands in WW2



And a little light relief.....

Two elderly ladies were talking together:

Do you remember those wild parties we used to go to in the 1960's?

Do I remember them? – do I remember them? – I've still got the Tupperware.

As one door closes, another opens. As one door closes, another opens. As one door closes, another opens.

Oh sorry – it's just me, eating through a chocolate advent calendar.

Have you tried blindfold archery?

You don't know what you're missing.

Most people have heard of Karl Marx, but few know his sister Onya – an Olympic runner. Her name is still mentioned at the start of every race.....

Sorry !!

In case you missed it

The report of the July 2024 meeting at Longham.

The speakers at the meeting were Brian and Jacqueline Sutton who gave a presentation illustrated with music and film clips remembering life in the “Swinging Sixties” and particularly “The Story of Joe Meek”.

They first set the scene of the late 50's, the second Elizabethan Age where footballers were paid £25 a week, children played outside, and television was in its infancy.

Joe Meek was born in Gloucestershire in 1929, his mother had wanted a girl and dressed him in girls clothes until he went to school. He was fascinated by radio and all things electrical. He set up speakers in his father's cherry orchard to scare off the birds and built a very early working television set.

He joined the RAF for his National Service and worked as a radar technician; it was clear he was going to make sound engineering his career. He worked on the “Black and White Minstrel Show” and for singers such as Petula Clark and Anne Shelton and was sound engineer on Humphrey Lyttleton's “Bad Penny Blues” where he compressed the piano sound, much to Lyttletons irritation.

Joe's attitude made him unpopular in recording studios and with financial backing from Major Wilfred Alonso Banks he took the lease on a three storey flat above a leather goods store in Holloway Road where he built his own recording studio, pioneering the use of the recording equipment as a creative instrument, not simply equipment for recording accurate sound.

He was not averse to putting microphones in dustbins or ovens or using gravel in a biscuit tin to make the sound of marching feet. The echoing girls voices in John Leyton's 1961 hit “Johnny Remember Me” were recorded in the bathroom in the flat. Two other notable hits from the Holloway Road studio were “Telstar” and “Have I the Right” by the Honeycombs.

But there was a darker side to Joe's life, he was bipolar and schizophrenic and was addicted to barbiturates and amphetamines. He was also homosexual at a time when homosexuality was illegal, and he was prosecuted for importuning and fined. He also had a fixation with the occult and set up microphones in graveyards to record sound from beyond the grave.

By 1967 Meek was broke, facing a court case for plagiarism of the Telstar melody, and facing a police interview about the death of a "Rentboy". He had an argument with his Landlady and as she left he shot and killed her then turned the gun on himself. A sombre end to an excellent talk.

In Memoriam.....

The Newsletter is sad to record the deaths of three members of the club.

Brian Learmount

Joined Probus January 2023.

18 January 1935 - 11 July 2024

Colin Dobson

Joined Probus January 2013 and served on the committee as Social Secretary and Dining Secretary

12 November 1937 - 23 September 2024

John Enstone

Joined Probus May 2014.

2 June 1935 - 19 November 2024