

## **Christchurch Probus Club 2025 Archive**

### **Committee**

President	Graham Newton
Vice President and Welfare officer:	David Dunsmore
Secretary:	James Wheildon
Treasurer:	James Robertson
Programme Secretary	Robin Haggett
Social Secretary:	Richard Porter
Social Secretary:	Peter Warren
Dining Secretary:	Cliff Putterford
Press and Media Secretary:	Graeme Gibson
Webmaster:	Roy Townshend
Immediate Past President:	Cliff Putterford

### **Outgoing President's Address at AGM 3.3.26**

It has been a joy and a privilege to serve as your president for a second term. It began inauspiciously with a bout of illness, but once that was under control I hope I have served the club as you would have hoped and expected. I am grateful to my colleagues on the committee for their commitment to their roles in the workings of the Club. Once again, your committee has served us very well.

I joined the club in 2012 and the committee in 2013. Since then, I have only had 6 months without a role on the Committee (This despite proclaiming to the churches congregations that I was leaving on retirement that after almost 50 years in church leadership that I would never sit on another committee!!) I know that I have one more year to go on the committee here, in the ex-officio role as Immediate Past President and then I can retire to "the back benches" – or here the back row – making room for fresh ideas. It is for that reason that sometimes it is as important to stand down as it is to continue to serve.

The positives for this presidential year are that we have had good meetings with interesting speakers and good food and also a rich variety of social events. We have continued to be well supported by you, the members, so thanks go to all of you. I believe that we sometimes under-sell ourselves, so I would like to affirm here that Christchurch Probus Club offers us a good way to meet and make friends and at least twice a month an entertaining day out sometimes just us men, and sometimes with our wives/partners. We have a good story to tell, though at the moment, maybe, we are not so good at telling it. So, thank you to all of you for making our Club something worth selling to our friends, family and neighbours.

But – and isn't there always a but in life?? – I regret that we remain in a vulnerable position. Once or twice this year we have got near to dropping below the minimum number of members attending the meeting (this is the agreement we have with the hotel for the minimum number of meals we will pay for each month). With the recent and sad demise of our friend Don, our membership stands at 39. We do have a couple of new members hopefully joining us next month, but to be in a comfortable and safe position our membership needs to be in the high forties or low fifties.

It is a disappointment to me that, in my presidential year, and despite banging on about it over the year, between us all we have only invited 3 or 4 guests to experience our Club. I hope, in David's year a President we can do far more to encourage new members. To that end, in the pack given to you this morning you have 2 copies of a new glossy leaflet for us to give to someone while sharing our enthusiasm for the club.

This year we have dipped our toes into the controversial pool of raffles. I do not think these have proved to be as controversial as we had feared. They provide a bit of amusement for those who participate without putting pressure on those who would rather not and they have enabled us to start a pot of money to subsidise our celebration in 2027 of the 50th year since our inaugural meeting in April 1977. The Club was the joint initiative of the Christ Church Rotary and New Forest Rotary Clubs.

The President in April 2027 and for the rest of that year will be our friend Maurice, who will be rejoining the Committee this year as Vice-President, but the plans will be largely laid this year under David's presidency. I am sure we will hear more in the coming months as plans and preparations are made to make 2027 a big year for us all.

Earlier I paid tribute to the Committee as a whole, but I want to give particular mention to the contribution made in committee and to the club by our friend Robin. He was secretary when I joined in 2012 and has been a member all that time. I could make a bad joke about that, but I leave bad jokes to the master!!! Robin, we do thank you for the great contribution you have made and hope we will be able to enjoy your company – and, yes, your jokes!! – for many years to come.

It only remains for me to thank you all for your support for the Club, for the Committee, and for me personally; and to wish David every success in his presidency. I am sure we all hope that you will enjoy it as much as I have – both times.

Graham Newton

## **Speakers at monthly meetings**

January 2025	Phil Broomfield – Merton's Dream Garden – the story of the Russell-Cotes garden
February 2025	Steve Roberts – When Dorset made History
March 2025	Cliff Putterford – My life as a Football Referee
April 2025	Ian Schulz – Slow Down and take a Closer Look
May 2025	David Bickerton – Parents at War
June 2025	Brian and Jacqueline Sutton – the Charles Dickens Story
July 2025	James Porter – The German Occupation of the Channel Islands in WW2
August 2025	Kevin Patience – The Bridge over the River Kwai and the Death Railway
September 2025	Richard Hutley – Who shot JFK?
October 2025	Robin Harley – Conservation in the Christchurch Area
November 2025	Nick French – Heroes and Villains of the Titanic
December 2025	Neil Dunnet – The BT Global Challenge Round the World Yacht Race

For more detail, please see the 2025/6 newsletters

## Social Events

Jan 31: Lunch at Brockenhurst Catering College was a sell out and the club took all 40 places. An excellent meal was provided served by smartly dressed and very capable if slightly nervous students under the watchful eye of their Supervisor. Something that would be well worth doing again.

Feb 20: The Presidents Lunch was held again at The Lord Bute. 53 attended meaning we could have the dining room to ourselves. An excellent meal was served as usual and the first raffle under the new regime was held raising £130.00. This money to be ring fenced for our 50th Anniversary celebrations.

Mar 20 We had a very enjoyable afternoon at the Cliff House Hotel for coffee and a bun. The weather was perfect with the venue offering superb views of the Isle of Wight. A successful raffle was held raising £48.00 contributing to our plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our club in 2027.

Apr 21: Perfect weather for April D-Day outing to Southsea.

On a gloriously sunny April 11, Christchurch Probus revisited The D-Day museum in Southsea. A Herringtons coach was hired for the occasion.

Fifteen of our group signed up for a guided tour of the Overlord Embroidery that tells the story of both D-Day itself and the Battle of Normandy in 34 hand-stitched panels that together make a total length of 83 metres. Sandra Lawrence, only 22 years old when she was commissioned over half a century ago to undertake the project of designing the embroidery painted a life-sized version of every panel ahead of the stitching. Imagine being 22 and having to answer to a high powered advisory committee of very senior military and civilian monitors!

Our visit began on board Landing Craft Tank 7074 – the last surviving LCT from D-Day. We also toured various galleries, to learn more about the planning that went into the huge WWII operation. On such a beautiful day no one opted to take the coach to Southsea's clutch of pubs and restaurants on Palmerston Road, and instead chose to stroll along the promenade, eat at whatever food outlet took their fancy, or picnicked in the Tudor castle grounds right beside the museum.

Our party of 28 included two associate members Kate Taylor and Sheila Jacob, who both attend numerous social events and it is always good to see them. On arrival we split into two groups to avoid crowding out other visitors — and the perfect weather and school holidays meant there were plenty of them. On such a beautiful day no one opted to take the coach to Southsea's clutch of pubs and restaurants on Palmerston Road, and instead chose to stroll along the promenade, eat at whatever food outlet took their fancy, or picnicked in the Tudor castle grounds right beside the museum. Cliff Putterford thanked our tapestry guide

Andrew Whitmarsh, who is also the museum's curator, and Vice President David Dunsmore thanked James Wheildon and his wife Mila for organising the outing as well as Graham, our coach driver, who made our visit a very calm and relaxing travelling experience.

This was the first club coach trip since Covid and there was general agreement that it had proved to be a successful and timely experiment to spread our wings further afield and shake off the pandemic and subsequent tendency to go local for monthly social events.

This was the last event organised by outgoing social secretary James, now the club secretary, and it was the first return to the museum since 1984 when 45 members and wives attended the 40th anniversary of the Normandy landings.

May 19: A re-run of last years Coffee, Cakes and Crazy Golf at The Boathouse. 34 attended, the weather remained fine and we all had an enjoyable if occasionally frustrating round of "golf". The overall winner of the Crazy Golf Cup was Carol Rutherford. Mila Wheildon won the best performing lady,(after Carol). June 3: The club meeting and Ladies Lunch this year was again at the Bridge House Hotel, Longham. The meeting began with Coffee and Conversation, followed by an entertaining talk/performance by Brian and Jacqueline Sutton on the life of Charles Dickens. An excellent lunch followed served by table rather than course as promised by the management. A raffle was held which raised £154.50.

July 24<sup>th</sup>: Setley Ridge Vineyard, Brockenhurst, Visit and Tasting.

August 21<sup>st</sup>: Coffee and Cake at Baskets and Blooms Garden Centre plus Bournemouth Aviation Museum.

September 24<sup>th</sup>: The Red House Museum followed by lunch at The Kings Arms

October 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. President's weekend away at Belgrave Sands Hotel, Torquay.

November 20<sup>th</sup>:Quiz night at the Masonic Hall.

December 18<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Lunch at The Retreat.'

#### Membership

Membership 2025 AGM: 41 Active + 1 Life = 42

Associate Members 2025 AGM: 11

3.3.26 membership: 38 Active + 1 Life = 39

Associate Members: 11