

1987 – 1996

1987-88

The Committee elected to serve for the year during which the Club would celebrate its 10th. Anniversary was:

Vice-President: Bill Hale, Hon. Secretary: Geoff Montague, Hon. Treasurer: George Hillier, Programme Sec: Ken Coleman, Social Sec: Frank Cooper and Committee Member: Frank Coombes. Harry Sharland assumed office as President under the provisions of Rule 7(b) and Ken Eames continued as Auditor.

The 10th. Anniversary was duly recognised at the Annual General Meeting and afterwards members were served a complimentary glass of wine with lunch.

Notwithstanding the competition arising from the formation of other Probus Clubs in the Christchurch area membership numbers remained high (65) and so it was decided to restrict any new applications to local residents. This interest was amply reflected in the excellent attendances at monthly meetings which averaged in excess of 75% and more than 100 members/ladies attended the December lunch.

An excellent financial position, with £500 in hand to start the year, gave the Social Secretary the confidence to arrange a very interesting programme that was generally well supported and included outings to the R.N.L.I. Museum at Poole taking in lunch at Wareham and followed by a visit to the Eldridge Pope Brewery, and to Kingston Lacey. In April a Cavalcade of Historical Costumes at the Hoburne complex raised £356 for the Leukaemia Unit of Poole General Hospital.

The golfers had a torrid time after their previous outstanding successes in the Inter-Probus Club League finishing last on this occasion but Syd Ward had some reason to smile on winning the Cooper Cup. A friendly match played at Knighton Heath Golf Club against Poole Probus Club provided a welcome new venue.

The bowl's team continued with their usual annual fixtures against Bournemouth and Barton Probus Clubs, the Masonics and the Ladies. These matches were, without exception closely contested with an even distribution of victories. The Club's star player, Bill Cotton, was the winner yet again of the Leslie Taylor Trophy.

In July the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the local Probus Clubs met at the invitation of the Rotary Liaison Officer to consider whether there was any scope for joint ventures but nothing actionable emerged.

1988-89

The highlight of the 1988 A.G.M. was the election of 2 new Life Members, Lesley Taylor and Bert Leech. One of the vacancies for Life Membership had arisen due to the recent untimely death of Jack Rogers.

Bill Hale, having received the Presidential Chain from his predecessor, was pleased to welcome the new Committee:

Vice-President: Frank Coombes, Hon. Secretary: Peter Goodfellow, Hon. Treasurer: George Hillier, Programme Sec: Ken Coleman, Social Sec: Bernard Judkins and Committee Mem: Len Reynolds. Harry Sharland was to serve Ex-Officio under Rule 7(c) and Ken Eames once again elected Auditor.

Concern had been expressed at the continuing difficulty in limiting membership to the ceiling specified in the Club's Constitution (60). This led to a list of criteria being drawn up by the Committee to be applied in future in arriving at the optimum desirable number of members from time to time. At this time membership stood at 65 with a further 6 potential new members on the Waiting List.

Monthly meetings continued to be very well attended and members were able to welcome Presidents of other local Probus Clubs as guests on a number of occasions.

In spite of this very healthy situation support for the Social programme fell away to a disappointing level and some events had to be cancelled for lack of support. On a couple of occasions the President felt obliged to called upon members to reverse this trend and in another attempt to improve the situation and, to also reduce the heavy workload on the Social Secretary, it was decided to limit the programme in future to 6 events only each year.

The golfers returned to their winning ways after the dismal results of the previous season and took the John Rogers Cup for the fourth time.

Bob Broach won the Club's individual title which rounded off a fine year for him as, together with his wife Joan, he had triumphed in the Bridge competition.

At Bowls Bill Cotton suffered a rare defeat in the Leslie Taylor Trophy final to Eric Mundy.

A welcome new initiative saw the winners of the Club's sporting competitions being presented with a medallion.

1989-90

On taking up the office of President, Frank Coombes was severely handicapped in his stewardship of the Club's affairs by the absence of any member prepared to take on the role of Social Secretary. Fortunately, Alan Bunting agreed to serve in the slightly less demanding capacity of Social Programme Co-ordinator and chaired a sub-committee that assisted him in organising a somewhat restricted number of events.

The remainder of the committee was elected as follows: Vice-President: Ken Coleman, Hon. Secretary: Peter Goodfellow, Hon. Treasurer: Len Reynolds, Programme Sec: Ben Parker and Committee Member: George Hillier. In accordance with Rule 7(b) the retiring President, Bill Hale, served Ex-Officio and Ken Eames was re-elected Auditor.

As the Club's year opened, membership stood at 65 with 4 potential new members on the Waiting List. In view of this continuing embarrassment of riches, and the difficulty experienced in filling all the committee vacancies, it was decided that future applicants for membership would be obliged to signify their willingness

to serve if required. In arriving at this conclusion a statement on behalf of the Committee noted, that of the 65 current Club members no more than 40 had held office in one form or another, and there was no obvious reason why it should not be possible to recruit at least 2 new members to the Committee each year.

The support for monthly meetings remained at a high level although a review of individual members revealed that 10 had failed to attend the number required by the Club's Rules and whose membership was, therefore, subject to termination. In the event one membership was allowed to lapse whilst the Committee utilised its power of discretion in respect of the remainder and allowed them to continue.

In June, after a considerable amount of research, a Public Address System was acquired at a cost of £67 to increase the comfort of both members and future speakers.

In the sporting field members remained active with Leslie Taylor and William Williams winning the Club's individual championships for Bowls and Golf respectively.

The year ended with a more optimistic outlook for social matters.

1990-91

In his report to the members at the Club's A.G.M. in

March 1991 the outgoing President, Frank Coombes, expressed his disappointment that although the total number of members was at its permitted maximum no one had been prepared to take on the role of Social Secretary. He pointed out that the Club could only thrive providing that a sufficient number of members was prepared to come forward to run it and he felt that the Club had reached a critical point in its history.

Unfortunately for his successor, Ken Coleman, this office remained unfilled after the elections for the year ahead but the following did accept the nomination of their fellow members for the offices shown: Vice-President: George Hillier, Hon. Secretary: Peter Goodfellow, Hon. Treasurer: Len Reynolds, Programme Sec: Ben Parker and Committee Member: Donald Elliker. Ken Eames was re-elected Auditor.

Ben Parker was particularly committed serving as both Bridge Co-ordinator and Programme Secretary.

The social programme continued to be managed by a small sub-committee and, although some interesting events were arranged, these were rather poorly supported and a proposed outing to Stourhead had to be cancelled.

This malaise was not confined to our Club. At the annual meeting of Presidents of Clubs in the Christchurch area all but one reported similar difficulties and the possibility of arranging joint social events was mooted although not subsequently followed up. The President of the newly formed Waterford Club was in attendance at this meeting. Our Club had been pleased to donate £25 to the new Club to help their members to get it up and running.

At the Ladies' Lunch in December the President presented medallions to the winners of the Club's championships in Bowls, Bridge and Golf namely Leslie Young, Alan and Eileen Deakin, and Eric Evans respectively.

Regrettably the results of any team matches played at either Bowls or Golf were not recorded in Club Minutes.

In October the significant contribution made by past Presidents of the Club was recognised by the presentation to each of a special tie.

1991-92

The election of members in March 1991 to serve on Committee resulted in four new faces appearing. George Hillier, the incoming President, was no doubt relieved that Alan Bunting was willing to take on the busy role of Social Secretary. Somewhat unusually, the Vice-Presidency did not pass to a member serving on the Committee during the previous year but to Bernard Judkins who was returning after a break of 2 years. The remainder of the Committee was made up of the following members: Hon. Secretary: Ron Marsden, Hon. Treasurer: Donald Elliker, Programme Sec: Ben Parker and Committee Member: Neville Edwards. Ken Coleman took his place as Ex-Officio and Ken Eames was again elected Auditor.

Unfortunately, the amount of information recorded in the Minutes of the various meetings during this period was rather sparse and it was frequently necessary to read between the lines.

Membership stood at the very satisfactory level of 63 (with 3 on the waiting list) as the year opened. However, the deaths of no less than 6 members occurred before the 1992 A.G.M. was to be reached. Although a number of new members were enrolled, and the waiting list was eliminated, only 60 remained at the year end. Concern was expressed within the Committee at the fall in numbers, but it was resolved to take no specific action at this stage to try and correct the situation as attendances at meetings remained very satisfactory at about 80% on average. More competition emerged for the Club in attracting new members locally when Bure Probus Club was inaugurated in April.

It appears that the Club had been experiencing some difficulties with the services provided by the King's Arms Hotel for the monthly meetings as two possible alternative venues were investigated. Neither was considered however, to be suitable.

With a Social Secretary now in place a number of the more popular type of events were arranged e.g. Coffee Mornings and a Skittles Evening but it is obvious that members no longer had a great appetite for outings to more distant destinations.

Ken and Betty Coleman were Bridge champions and Eric Evans won the golf cup for the second year running.

1992-93

The Committee elected to work under the incoming President Bernard Judkins saw Alan Bunting hand over the heavy responsibilities of Social Secretary to Alan Deakin whilst he would continue just as the Committee Member. Only one other would join the Committee, John Addicott as Programme Secretary, whilst there was a minor reshuffle of the remainder with Ben Parker fully meriting his elevation to Vice-President. Hon. Secretary: Ron Marsden and Hon. Treasurer: Donald Elliker. George Hillier was to serve Ex-Officio and Ken Eames once again extended his long service as Auditor. Charitable donations occasioned by the high number of deaths of members in the previous year had a severe impact on the Club's financial position reducing funds in hand to a level that gave some cause for concern. Nevertheless, it was decided to continue with the practice for the time being as other methods of funding such donations had been explored in previous years but none had been considered to be wholly satisfactory.

Although total membership fell by 4 during the year attendances held up well with apologies for absence averaging only a dozen or so each month.

The social programme under the management of Alan Deakin was revitalised with the usual popular events being organised as well as imaginative proposed visits to the Coastguard Training School, the Southern Electric Museum, Stapehill, and the Royal Tournament. Unfortunately the Minutes say little about the success or otherwise of these proposals apart from the Royal

Tournament outing which had to be cancelled when insufficient interest was expressed.

Dissatisfaction with the standard of service provided by the Kings Arms Hotel continued and a meeting was held with new incoming management to try and resolve the problems.

Members remained very committed to the Club's sporting activities and in October the Club's golf team was handily placed at second in the Inter-Probus League. Unfortunately, the final placing was not recorded. Bob Broach won the Frank Cooper Cup for Golf and John Irons won the Leslie Taylor Trophy for bowls.

Ken and Betty Coleman repeated their success of the previous winter in winning the Butler Cup for Bridge.

1993-94

As nominations for the Committee to serve in 1993-94 were finalized, not for the first time was an incoming President, on this occasion Ben Parker, seriously handicapped by the failure to find a member willing to take on the duties of Social Secretary.

Alan Deakin, who had worked extremely hard the previous year to produce an interesting list of social events, now took over the responsibility of managing the Club's finances as Hon. Treasurer from Donald Elliker who was elevated to Vice-President. Ron Marsden and

John Addicott were to continue as Hon. Secretary and Programme Secretary respectively. The outgoing President, Bernard Judkins, would serve Ex-Officio. The only change in personnel saw Jack Grimshaw become the Ordinary Committee Member. Ken Eames continued to lend his support as Auditor.

At the year's end membership remained below the permitted maximum of 60 but unchanged at 57. The average number of apologies for non-attendance of the Monthly Meetings was 12, representing 20% of the membership. Clearly, for a number of reasons including the formation of other Probus Clubs in the locality, it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit new members to maintain the very strong position that had existed earlier in the life of the Club. Interest was, perhaps, on the wane as the average age of the membership rose.

There was also the difficulty of parking in the town on meeting days due to the Monday Market and the Committee was asked to consider changing to another day. However, although the manager of the King's Arms Hotel was approached in this respect he was unable to accommodate the request.

The social programme appears to have been very limited due to the absence of an organizer - a situation that would not have been conducive to motivating members. It was hoped that attendances would be boosted when it was very sensibly agreed to permit Honorary Associate Members (members' widows) to attend Club social functions in future in their own right instead of, as previously, by invitation only.

The Minutes continued to be sparsely kept and neither

the Golf nor Bowls results were entered although it was recorded that Brian and Edna Lipscombe had won the Brian Butler Bowl for Bridge.

1994-95

The Committee elected to serve for the year under the direction of the incoming President Donald Elliker contained a healthy sprinkling of new faces and only Alan Deakin and John Addicott continued in their offices of Hon. Treasurer and Programme Secretary respectively. Alan Bunting returned as Vice-President after a year's break from committee work and John Harrison became the new Hon. Secretary. Pat Millett filled the position of Committee Member. Ben Parker relinquished the role of President in accordance with the Constitution to serve Ex-Officio for the year and Ken Eames continued his sterling work as Club Auditor.

It was a great disappointment that, yet again, no member was prepared to take on the role of Social Secretary casting doubt over the Club's ability to produce a satisfactory and cohesive series of social functions. In the event two Coffee Mornings and a Social Evening at Greystones appear to have been pretty much all that could be achieved but they seem to have been well attended. Furthermore, a welcome innovation was a Coffee Morning arranged for, and by, the Ladies at the home of Mrs Joan Hillier.

Membership at the commencement of this year stood at

57 and, in spite of the untimely deaths of no less than five members during the year and resignations, new recruits restricted the net loss to two.

Many members must have been deterred by the parking problems associated with meeting at the King's Arms Hotel on Mondays - a dilemma that had already been the subject of some debate and had been addressed when Club representatives met with the hotel Manager. A ballot of members was subsequently held to ascertain whether a change of the usual meeting day would be acceptable but this revealed overwhelming opposition to the proposal. The current situation was patently unsatisfactory and a possible change of venue was discussed by the Committee in October.

It was at about this time that some Speakers were beginning to demand fees for their services as well as hospitality. There was also a steep decline in the number of our members who were prepared to deliver talks and both of these factors had obvious implications for the Club's finances.

Happily the Minutes were now recording more comprehensive details of the Club's activities especially in the field of sporting endeavour.

We are able to note, therefore, that Mr & Mrs Harrison were successful in a somewhat delayed Bridge final against Mr & Mrs John Clayton.

The Bowlers had an active season playing several matches including one against the Ladies who were victorious by 7 to 5! John Irons, not for the first time, was the winner of the Leslie Taylor Trophy as Club champion.

The golfers competed, as usual, in the Inter-Probus Club

League but on this occasion had to be content with 3rd place. John Clayton's disappointment in falling at the last hurdle in the Bridge competition was somewhat assuaged when he became the Club's Golf champion for the year by winning the Frank Cooper Cup.

As the year drew to a close, and in the run-up to the A.G.M., it is clear that it was still difficult to persuade members to volunteer for service on the Committee and the President elect, Alan Bunting, was obliged to appeal for nominations for a number of offices including that of Vice-President.

1995-96

The appeal to members for Committee Nominations made by Alan Bunting, the incoming President, prior to the 1995 A.G.M. produced a full complement apart from the problem office of Social Secretary that, to the great detriment of the Club, was to remain unfilled for the 3rd consecutive year. Three new faces appeared, Bob Harbord, Ken Cain and Peter Sheppard who took office respectively as Hon. Secretary, Programme Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. Alan Deakin was elected Vice-President and Pat Millett continued in his previous role as Committee member. Sadly, Pat died shortly thereafter and Maurice Reynolds was co-opted in April to take his place on Committee. Donald Elliker, the

retiring President, would serve Ex-Officio and Ken Eames, having acted as the Club's Auditor since it was founded, stood down to be replaced by Frank Coombes.

In May Ken Eames was elected an Honorary Member in recognition of the significant contribution he had made to the Club particularly as its Auditor for 18 years.

Notwithstanding the lack of a Social Secretary the efforts of some members, particularly David Wilkie, resulted in a reasonable programme, the highlight of which was probably a very successful social evening held at Greystones in November. Members had Joan Reynolds to thank for gamely taking on the difficult task of organising the catering for the evening and she was ably supported in this by a number of the other ladies.

Members were also privileged to be able to enjoy, in September, a Dorset Cream Tea hosted at their home by David and Kathleen Wilkie.

Earlier in the year members had been asked to give an indication of the number and type of social events that they would be prepared to support. The response was that they were generally happy with the existing level but would appreciate the occasional outing to a place of interest. David Wilkie undertook to liaise with the other local Probus Clubs to see if they had any interesting ideas for social events that could be copied by our Club or whether some degree of co-operation in joint functions could be established. Regrettably no progress could be made with regards to the latter proposition.

The deaths of 3 members during the year meant that it was something of a struggle to maintain membership numbers and a net loss of 2 was suffered. The average attendances at meetings was also falling with apologies

for absence reaching 30% on a number of occasions. Continued dissatisfaction with the King's Arms Hotel could have had a lot to do with this and during the summer serious efforts were made to find a satisfactory alternative. In the event, an approach was made to the management of the Avonmouth Hotel who, having rejected such advances on more than one previous occasion, were now happy to negotiate. The resulting arrangements protected the members' preferred meeting day, the 2nd Monday monthly, and they voted overwhelmingly in favour of moving to the new venue commencing with the January 1996 meeting.

A good proportion of the membership continued to support the Club's activities in Bridge, Bowls and Golf.

Brenda & Geoff Montague had won the Butler Cup competition for Bridge played during the winter months.

John Addicott, the new Organiser for Bowls, arranged matches during the summer which finished with mixed results for our players. The annual match against the Ladies was an extremely exciting encounter with the fairer sex winning by the slenderest possible margin of 1 shot!

The Club's golfers could not repeat their previous successes in the Inter-Probus League which was, on this occasion, won by Barton Probus Club. Unfortunately, both the Barton and Ferndown Clubs announced that they would not be able to raise teams for this competition the following year but it was hoped that replacements teams would be found with the Bure and Waterford Clubs as possibilities.

The Club championship for the Frank Cooper Cup was won for the second year running by John Clayton.

1996-97

On taking up office as the Club's President for the year Alan Deakin must have been relieved that Ken Lee had accepted nomination to join the Committee in the role of Social Secretary a position that had not been formally occupied during any of the 3 preceding years. David Wilkie, who had contributed much to the social programme during the previous year, became Hon. Secretary in place of Bob Harbord who was elected Vice-President. Maurice Reynolds, who had been co-opted last year, replaced Ken Cain as Programme Secretary while Peter Sheppard was to serve a second year as Hon. Treasurer. A further change in personnel was the introduction of Jack Woollven as Committee Member. Alan Bunting was to remain on Committee to serve Ex-Officio under Rule 7(c) but, in the event, he resigned his membership in June. Frank Coombes was, again, elected Club Auditor.

The proposed social programme for the year ahead was not over-ambitious the highlight being a Dorset Cream Tea hosted for the second year by Kathleen and David Wilkie.

Total membership numbers remained static at 55

although, naturally, there were a few leavers and joiners. Apologies for absence averaged in excess of 20%, which was somewhat disappointing as it had been hoped that the change of venue to the Avonmouth Hotel would boost attendances.

The Committee, anxious to promote the Probus ethos of fellowship, recommended in September that a system of allocated seating should be introduced and, although the proposal was rejected by the members at this time, in February 1997 the decision was overturned and it was agreed to introduce the system on a trial basis for 3 months.

The general weakening in membership numbers was reflected in the support for the Club's programme of sporting activities. The Bridge Organiser was obliged to ask for additional entries for the next Winter's competition and Maurice Reynolds, who had taken over as Golf Organiser, reported that teams competing next Summer in the Inter-Probus League would be reduced from 8 players to 6 per match.

Bob & Meryl Harbord were victors in the Bridge Competition and John Irons at Bowls. Norman Wheeler won the Cooper Cup as golf champion and the golf team had an excellent year as the Inter-Probus League winners.

