



PROBUS

PROBUS CLUB OF BEAUMARIS Inc.
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— Office Bearers, 2009—

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Issue No. 234

June 2009

Next Meeting: 10 am Tuesday June 16 at Beaumaris RSL

Investment Group: As usual, 9 am before the main Meeting

10-Minute Speaker: Stan Bernhard A Life in the Media

Keynote Speaker: Les Gordon Ricegrowers' Association
Topic: Rice-growing and Water

The Australian rice industry recognises that water is a valuable asset of our country. In the past ten years, it says, rice farmers have improved their water use efficiency by as much as 60% , growing more rice and using much less water. Les Gordon runs a family farm and has been very active in land care, irrigation efficiency, water trade and other environmental issues for several years.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



It seems as though the problems currently associated with swine 'flu have taken over in the media from the financial problems of the world

Geoff Wade

What a great meeting we had in May! We had more Members present (93) than for quite some time and we were also graced with eight guests, which meant a total of 101 - the first time in years that we had achieved over 100 at a meeting. Not only was the attendance excellent, but we were also privileged to hear two excellent speakers. Ron Hunter delighted us with his presentation on cruising around the Bay of Islands in New Zealand complete with some excellent photography. Our Keynote Speaker, Dr Harvey Stern, from the National Climate Centre, gave us the scientists' view of climate change and spoke as a scientist, but in layman's terms. I trust that we can have more meetings of this calibre.

It seems as though the problems currently associated with swine 'flu have taken over in the media from the financial problems of the world and it is likely that we will all have some knowledge of the effects before it is all over. Our eldest daughter has recently returned with her family from a three-week holiday in the United States and they were unfortunate enough to return on the Qantas flight with the nine-year old boy who tested positive. They were not aware of that until after they had reached their home at RAAF Tindal in the Northern Territory. As a result, they were placed in quarantine in their home for seven days - even though they have not shown any symptoms. I wonder if you can imagine what it would be like to be confined to your home for a week when you felt perfectly well and you were sharing the home with a very active 11-year old child?

I look forward to seeing you again for another excellent meeting on June 16. GW

Virus a bother, but not a beast

Swine flu has been mild in most of the 48 countries that have reported the 13 398 known cases, World Health Organisation experts conclude. WHO's weekly epidemiological record says there are 'no reports of severe disease in most affected countries'. The WHO analysis confirms that swine flu is most likely to infect young people, and those with underlying medical problems, including asthma and obesity. Only limited cases of 'severe disease' had been reported in patients older than 65, it says.
The Australian, 30/5/09

What We Know About Climate Change

The annual global rainfall trend is little changed but considerable changes have occurred in rainfall patterns in Australia

Keynote Speaker for May, Dr Harvey Stern - a meteorologist with the Australian Bureau of Meteorology - heads the Climate Change and Consultancy Office. His presentation titled '*Climate Change: What The Scientists Say*' brought another perspective to the Climate Change debate. The wealth of information he presented was sourced from historical climate records combined with computer modelling and its predictions of future changes. Much of his material came from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC) and highlighted trends occurring in global temperature and rainfall over the past 150 years.

Dr Stern suggested that there are indications of a gradual increase in mean temperature of approximately 1 degree Celsius during this period. The annual global rainfall trend is little changed but considerable changes have occurred in rainfall patterns in Australia. The north-west of Australia, for example, is experiencing increased annual rainfall but the south-west and south-eastern areas are suffering considerable decreases - as we are all aware! Dr. Stern agreed with those comments by a former guest speaker that rainbands across Victoria, formerly filling our catchments, have now moved further south to north-west Tasmania. But in contrast to some of our earlier speakers, he is of the opinion that the increase in gases in the atmosphere from human activity is making a significant impact on the world's climate and also in Australia. Dr. Stern and the IPCC are very confident that carbon dioxide, although it represents only 3% of gases in the atmosphere, is the major factor creating an enhanced greenhouse effect.

However, he was critical of the complexities in establishing and managing a Carbon Trading Scheme and felt that a carbon tax would be simpler to operate and more effective. Accepting the fact that Australia's contribution to CO₂ emissions was small indeed when compared to the major global polluters, Dr Stern insisted that a global agreement to substantially curb emissions, which would be binding on all countries, had to occur in the near future despite the economic uncertainty and the difficulties in bringing countries such as China and India to the table. Alan Williams



Dr Harvey Stern (right) talks with Ken Reed (left) and Brian Sawford, visitor.

Climate Change Skepticism

There is a very useful website for those interested in the subject of climate change: www.skepticalscience.com.

The website lists every known argument from climate change skeptics (54 in all) and how often each is used. There is also a scientific response to each argument.

Monthly Profile

Allan Taylor

Alan's winning ways: Howlong Golf Trip 2008 - it looks like he scooped the pool



One thing we can say with certainty is that Allan has always been very sporting. Brought up in Essendon, he played both football and cricket (until he was 42) at a high level in the area. He made it as far as rover for the Essendon Reserves, mixing with the likes of John

Coleman and Bill Hutchison, to mention only two of many 'greats' around at the time.

From high school, he went to RMIT to study metallurgy and joined General Motors-Holden in 1956; but along the way, the computer age intervened in his career. "In 1958, GMH was one of the very first companies to introduce computers into business applications," he says. Before that, they were only found in universities. Allan found he had an aptitude for computer programming and systems development, joining a new Data Processing Department that worked with departments in the company that wanted to adopt computerisation. He was still involved in computer systems development when he retired late in 1987. These days, Allan spends a lot of his spare time on his computer, monitoring his allocated pension fund and controlling his investments; and, no doubt, watching the market anxiously like the rest of us.

Living in Glenroy after he was married, and a member of Northern Golf Club, Allan was transferred to Dandenong in the 1970s and decided that work was too far from home so he built in Dingley. As a result, he joined the Southern Golf Club and later was on the Committee for eight years as Treasurer. He still plays 18 holes twice a week. From a young age, philately has been an interest - he describes himself as a mere hobby collector, no more; not a serious collector like Garth Epstein, for example. He has most Australian stamps and subscribes to Australia Post so as to obtain all the new issues. He is not in any way a gardener and says that he and Margaret describe themselves as having 'brown thumbs'. "Looking after the nature strip keeps me busy," he chuckles. Margaret and Allan have three children and eight grandchildren.

Allan was Treasurer of Beaumaris Probus in 1997, Vice-President in 1998 and elevated to President in 1999. He has always enjoyed being an active participant in the Club. "So has my wife who has made a lot of good friends," he says. They have been on many day trips, and overseas holidays such as to China and Vietnam. He says it's been great. Today, he is co-ordinator of the Theatre Group, though he has no special interest in the theatre—originally, he volunteered only to relieve Alan Nash of some of his many Probus responsibilities. Now he and Margaret enjoy the nights out every so often. "You get good shows and some not-so-good," he says. "That's all part of the experience."

FUNCTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Alan Farmer & Robert Dun



June

Candlelight dinner. Tuesday June 9, 7 pm for 7.30 pm @ Furphies Restaurant, RSL, Beaumaris. There are a few places left for the quick, but booking must be made soon. Cost: \$28 pp. Payment to be made to Alan Farmer. Cheque payable to Beaumaris Probus.

July

Visit to the **Port of Melbourne**, Tuesday July 28. The Port of Melbourne is a vital dynamic operation. The



largest container port in Australia, it handles the shipment of more than two million containers per year – imports and exports. It has also been responsible for the current dredging of the Bay to sustain and enlarge trade. Payment for this fascinating and educational event to be made by our June Meeting. Cost: \$46 pp

August

Bushfire Area Visit, Kinglake District, Wed August 26

"Anything that brings back tourists is welcomed"

Following a most successful combined trip to Eureka



Tower in May, we have arranged a combined tour with the Probus Clubs of Beaumaris Bay and Ricketts' Point to this bushfire-ravaged area. This has been arranged at the request of local residents who are keen to have tourists back visiting their towns. The tour will have a commentary from a local guide (who will be donating his payment from Quince's to a local area of need.)

Lunch will be at the local hotel, which is still standing.

Cost: \$42.50 pp. Pick up at Community Centre 9.30 am; returning at 3.30 pm. As this is a combined event, places may be limited, so a waiting list may be needed for late entries. First in, best dressed applies. Payments will be taken at our June Meeting.

September

Howlong Golf—See Noticeboard (p4)

October

Wineries on Mornington Peninsula

A comprehensive tour of selected cool climate wineries on the peninsula is in the process of being prepared.



November

King Island Tour Cost: \$1055 pp twin share for 15 or more, or \$1080 for 10-14 people. See May Newsletter. Maximum places available: 26 people. Deposit : \$150 pp must be paid by July Meeting. Final payment required by September Meeting.

2010

New Zealand

Tentative date: just before or after Easter.

The Grand Pacific tour includes both islands, air fares and most dinners. Typical cost is around \$5000 pp. Probus-preferred and highly recommended, it provides an additional night's DB&B free. However, an alternative itinerary of 17 days is available for approximately \$4300

NOTE: We will plan this trip in accordance with the wishes of Members. If you are interested, please put your name on the sheet provided at the June Meeting, so that we may contact you for your ideas and requirements.

EUREKA TOWER/ SPOTSWOOD PUMPING STATION

by Allan Small

On a beautiful Melbourne autumn Wednesday, a group of Probians from Beaumaris and sister clubs went on tour, hosted by a friendly Quince's coach captain. He took us via Port Melbourne to the Eureka Tower - the change to Port Melbourne from the way most of us remembered it was mind bending - and then to the tallest residential building in the world. The view from the 88th floor was breath taking and it brought us up-to-date with the ever-changing landscape of our great city. A few adventurous souls went out on 'the edge' but none showed the abject terror one might expect. Next, on to Williamstown with a satisfying lunch at the Victoria Inn Hotel and the chance to fraternise with members of the other two clubs.

To complete the tour, we all went on to the Spotswood Pumping Station and learnt of the problems associated with ridding Smelbourne of its stormwater and sewage. This was achieved in 1891 by building pumping facilities to get it under the Yarra and uphill to Brooklyn. From these, it flowed in an open channel to a place which was deemed suitable for disposal and where people would not be affected: Werribee. The whole system of coal bunkers, straining for debris, steam engines and pumps was built in a most effective manner. It is safe to assume that for most of the 41 visitors in our group, it was their first sight of a triple expansion steam engine in operation (known in marine engineering terms as an 'up and downer' not to be confused with the golf expression.) In all, it was a most enjoyable day and emphasised the importance of these trips to enhance the benefits of Probus membership.

See picture (p4)

Kia Ora, E Koro Ma, Tena Koutou



Ron Hunter, our 10-minute speaker for May, opened his address with these words in Maori. (Translation: "Hello, elderly men, greetings to you".) He presented a slide show of photos from his and wife Fay's January holiday in New Zealand, of the Bay of Islands and surrounding districts. Having lived there for 20 years, and being involved in the Life Assurance and Superannuation business, Ron was well-equipped

with local knowledge to plan the trip which included a visit to daughter, Susan, and her family's sheep and cattle property in Taihape. Their itinerary included a 5-day cruise on the 63 m *Oceanic Discoverer*, a ship with 72 passengers and 23 crew. It was fitted with an *Xplorer* landing craft on a stern hoist which enabled passengers to go ashore to the many small bays, villages and beaches that abound in the area and, in particular, to sample the local rock lobsters. Probus Members were treated to a series of photos of unusual rock formations, superb beaches, and picturesque old towns with charming houses, churches and hotels. On an historic note, Ron informed us that New Zealand was the very last land mass to be settled by human colonists; and, contrary to previous opinion, these people were Maori from the Cook Islands who arrived about 1200 AD. With a Probus trip to New Zealand planned for next year, his talk could whet some of our travellers' appetites to visit the shaky isles of Aotearoa.

Allan Williams

New Members



"...I would like to set a target of 10 new Members in the next 12 months to ensure that we remain strong..."
The President, April 2009

Eureka Tower

Tony Bowles and visitors: Professor Brian Sawford; (Back) Lindsay Jackson, Jack Cooper and Norman Griffiths

"A few ad-

venturous souls went out on 'the edge' but none showed the abject terror one might expect", writes Allan Small in his report on the visit to the world's tallest residential building. More p3.

Interesting Facts

What are Australia's most valu-

Margaret Wade, Jennie Bowles and Margaret Hirsh - at Eureka

able exports? Copper, wool, wheat, or wine? Actually, none of the above. Coal is our most valuable export by far— followed a way back by iron ore. Next is, perhaps, a bit of surprise: who would have thought of education services; then, travel? Hard to believe but true: people who come to Australia are an export. After that, non-monetary gold, petroleum, alumina, aluminium and natural gas. In that order.

NOTICEBOARD

Music & Opera Groups

Next meeting of the Music Group is Wednesday June 24 at 7 pm (N.B. 7 pm). As usual, please let me know if you would like to attend. We would be delighted to see some of our newer members and their wives. The average number attending exceeds 30. The next Opera night will be on Wednesday 26 August.



Barry Amond

Theatre Group

MORDIALLOC THEATRE COMPANY

The third play for the year, *Murdered to Death*, is on Wednesday evening July 8 at 8 pm. All tickets will be available at the June meeting for the 48 starters. The fourth play, *Minefields & Miniskirts*, will be Wednesday September 16 at 8 pm. Tickets at \$14 must be paid for by the July meeting.

CHICAGO

20 tickets have been reserved in the Dress Circle and five in the Stalls for the spectacular musical, *Chicago*, at Her Majesty's Theatre, featuring Caroline O'Connor, Sharon Millerchip, Gina Riley and Craig McLachlan. Wednesday matinee at 1 pm September 9. A few tickets still available at \$61. As Ticketek requires payment by July 9, Members need to pay me at the June meeting.

HIGH SOCIETY

The Cheltenham Light Opera Company's production of the Cole Porter musical, *High Society*, will be in October. I hope to be able to reserve 30 tickets for a Sunday afternoon performance at the Alexander Theatre, Monash University, as soon as bookings open in July. Allan Taylor

Howlong Golf

As a result of some recent cancellations, we now have some vacancies for the annual Howlong golf trip, from September 27-30. As we are not fully subscribed with Members attending, we are now able to accommodate friends of Members attending. If you have any friends who would like an enjoyable few days at Howlong, they would be most welcome to join us. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to take advantage of this offer.

Geoff Wade

Tastes

Those who have shared these special evenings with us might like to note that our next outing is planned for Thursday August 6. One or two have already indicated that they are heading for warmer climes at this time. If this applies to you, please speak to either Geoff Wade or Peter McGregor - which could influence the planning of our next night out together. Any takers for Thai food for next time?



Did You Know?

That the British invented champagne—not the French.

That 70% of water for human use in France is groundwater; and in Germany, it's 80% .