



**A HISTORY
OF
THE PROBUS CLUB
OF
BEAUMARIS**

1991 - 1993

The first fifteen years



Probud Club of Beaumaris Inc.



A basic history of Beaumaris Probud Club since its formation in 1987 — taken from Club newsletters and minutes.

*With special thanks to editors:
Hugh Stevens, David Davis and John Hamann,
for freely providing their articles.*

- *Speakers and their chosen subjects.*
- *Club tours and outings.*
- *Membership details and lists.*
- *Past office bearers.*
- *Index.*

The new year's program began on 6 February when a coach load of Beaumaris Probians embarked on a triumphal tour of Pakenham and its environs. "First the members and ladies examined the museum dedicated to the history of the area and peered at the many artifacts lovingly assembled to commemorate skills, needs and vanities long since superseded. Morning tea was provided by the local ladies, then off to the Weatherhead property to sample the hospitality of the home farm. The barbecue was splendid and complemented the lush setting which had been nurtured for four generations by the host's family.

"On the way home an interesting visit was made to the Pakenham museum of military vehicles. With 'tanks for the memory' the tourists were homeward bound in the customary afterglow of a shared joy".

At the February meeting Wilbur Robbins and Jack Cooke were welcomed to the Club and members looked forward to hear Stan Hawken speak about his experiences in WW2. As reported later:

"In an earlier karman Stan was the Sparks of a Lancaster on his eighteenth mission over occupied France when the trip was rudely curtailed by fluky flak. He was one of a small band of fliers to parachute behind enemy lines and survive the war without being captured, so his story of derring-do and intrigue in the Resistance and the Maquis would have done justice to the Boys' Own. We were enthralled by his vivid description of the disposal of the parachute, the tentative approach to the villagers, the contact with friendly patriots, the risks taken by his hosts, the sight of the Gestapo doing a house to house search, the exploits to carry out sabotage against the enemy communications and the savagery of the Maquis towards suspected collaborators.

"Despite the language barrier which taxed his manual dexterity in the early stages, the friendships which he forged with his French hosts have survived and mellowed with the years. Our freedom owes much to the sacrifices made by Stan and his comrades in time of war, his contribution to local government in time of peace was recognised by the awarding of the OBE, but our society can never repay its debt to a man of his calibre. All we can do is thank our lucky stars that Stan Hawken was and is there when needed.

Golfers again to the fore

"To celebrate the hottest March day in fifty years a hardy handful of harebrained hackhounds and swingeing Poms went out in the noonday sun to defy the laws of physics on the inclined planes of Beacon Hills. The sisyphic course has vertiginous fairways flanked by deep and meaningful rough, it was hot enough to vulcanize the balls off the proverbial

brassy yet naked talent overcame the pitfalls contrived by man and Nature. After nine holes we trooped into the dining room for a lunch which was convivial but gastronomically sub par.

"Spherical spoils of victory were awarded to Pat Matthews, Glenda Gasson, Bill Varcoe and John Crozier for their Stablefordability; Pat and Bob Matthews kept the longest drives all in the family; Bill Varcoe and Val Crozier were nearest the pin; Frida Patience and George Hoult received a singular encouragement award in the hope that it would not follow its deviant predecessors into leafy limbo. The outing was further proof that it is the company which makes the day and that incidental fun is a bonus."

The Club's fourth AGM

On 19 March the AGM resulted in a 'landslide victory' for the official nominees. George Hoult was thanked for his helmsmanship in the past year and Bruce McAllister was invested with the Presidential collar. Al Gasson was installed as vice president, Hugh Stevens secretary and editor, Max Parsons treasurer assisted by Allan Glenn, Les Hall functions assisted by Ralph Butcher, Brian Hambleton meeting coordinator assisted by Hugh Gowers, Alex Steinfort almoner assisted by Jack Nolan and Colin Meade auditor. Retiring committee members were thanked for their past contribution.

Before the AGM members stood for a minute's silent tribute to John Charlesworth and after the meeting, which eighty members attended, the usual 35 stayed for lunch.

The speaker was Brigadier Mac Grant who gave an eloquent address on the history and anatomy of Hong Kong. Mac's military, diplomatic and business interests in the island have given him a rare insight into the dynamics of the Crown Colony and his rapid fire coverage of the acquisition by Palmerston in 1841 of the 'fragrant harbour', its development into a bastion of Empire, the 99 year lease in 1898, the post war prosperity and his prognosis kept the members in rapt awe.

On 3 April members embarked upon a mystery tour of Cannons Creek, Warneet, Hastings and environs and as always, Hugh says it best:

"The weather was shirtsleeveish and the company therinogenic as we wended our way to Westernport. There was an unscheduled detour as we approached Mornington, and we all alighted for a stroll and browse through the streets broad and narrow. Several of our number, in expansive mood, exchanged their hard currency for exotic flora which now grace the Beaumarian streetscape as a perishable memorial to our peninsular excursion.

"At the new Hastings Marina we cast a languid eye over the serried ranks of costly craft chafing at the painter while the vessels' vassals bailed feverishly over some distant desk to keep themselves afloat. But we, content with our terrene tenor, moved on to view the temperate mangrove fringe until it was time for lunch. Full of little but expectation we surged into the Tooradin Hotel where we were teased by a splendid exemplar of the signwriter's art, whose cute curlicues and voluted vignettes gave promise of a banquet fit for the genteel gastronomes who jostled for preprandial libations within its purview.

"The chef wielded his well deserved wooden spoon on the culinary table and produced a flash in the pan of epic proportions. The soup of the day was a miscellany of its forebears, parading under the banner of minestrone and veiled with an abundant suffusion of herbs. The area near the hotel is renowned for its fish and it proved to be the catch of the day. The feast was crowned by a choice of reconstituted chocolate mousse or Pavlova, the latter scraping home on points as the nut cracker sweet. The overall distinction of the meal owed much to the quality of the diners, which once again proved that the value of our outings is the fellowship they engender; the occasional glimpse of beauty and taste of ambrosia are a bonus to be remembered. Thanks Ralph."

At the 16 April meeting members were pleased to welcome as new members Harry Allan, Terry Partleton and Les Colechin. Attendance was consistent – again 80 members with 35 remaining for lunch.

Once again we steal from Hugh's newsletter to describe Bob Elliott's keynote address:

"A mighty moot of multiple masters in maritime mood mused at their moorings while our resident reefer, Bob Elliott, led us on a voyage of rediscovery across the oceans and the ages. He took up the shipman's tale at the time when Australia's shores were first glimpsed by Dutch sailors almost two hundred years before Cook. He described the technological evolution of ocean going craft from their squat mediaeval form up to the hydrodynamic beauties of sleek proportions which plied the seven seas until steam power supplanted the graceful billowing sails which towered above the decks of the nineteenth century clippers, taunting the tempest. Bob gave perspective to his nautical narrative when he told us that the eleven ships of the First Fleet could easily have been stowed in the hold of the Abel Tasman, and our respect expanded for those who challenged the elements in their flimsy craft, often with fatal consequences after months of privation.

"We were given a grim description of the conditions which prevailed on board the prison ships, the huddled mass of wretched humanity below decks, storm tossed, fried, frozen, drenched and oppressed by degenerate guards while the mariners manned the bridge over troubled warders. And it is a wonder that this hapless handful of Pommie recidivists and opportunist lowlife in just eight generations have metamorphosed so imperceptibly into the antipodal thoroughbreds of burnished bronze who proclaim their chaste culture from the terraces.

"Many thanks for your finely researched and illustrated epic, Bob."

Luxury coaches can be uncomfortable

On 8 May the trip was oversold by one and Hugh Stevens kindly, but rather jarringly, sat on a stool at the rear of Quince's coach during the whole journey. Nevertheless he later took up his pen and spoke well of the outing.

"The day developed into a most delightful excursion. As we crossed Westgate James Waters took up the mike and gave a detailed commentary on the area, for as Town Clerk of Altona for many years he had been party to the development of that borough into Victoria's richest municipality after the City of Melbourne. He had arranged for us to be entertained for morning tea in the municipal offices while the current Town Clerk surprised us with the opulence of the council chamber and civic theatre. We saw the Waters name doubly immortalised on the plaques which commemorate the dedication of the complex and we were proud to call him our friend.

"From there we drove to Werribee Park and wandered through the stately rooms where the Chirnside family allowed themselves to be pampered by a host of servants whose incomes and ceilings were considerably lower and free of guilt. The noble pile is valiantly staving off the ravages of entropy under the care of the National Trust and it is a comfort to know that the property is accessible to ordinary folk at a reasonable price.

"The rose garden, after a shower of rain, would in its own right have justified the trip, for its beauty in the autumn flush is of world class and an inspiration to those who wonder at the range of colour, the perfection of form and fragrance.

"We were to have had a sausage sizzle for lunch but Les was in time to persuade the bus company that the weather forecast was not propitious and the venue was transferred to the Commercial Hotel in Werribee.

"All agreed that for \$10 it was one of the best counter lunches we have encountered; the beef was abundant and succulent, the fish was fresh and white, the apple pie deep and crusty, the service cheerful and swift, but best of all was the fellowship we enjoyed thanks to the efforts of Ralph Butcher, Les Hall and James Waters."

Acting upon a suggestion by Allan Glenn, the committee decided that, at future meetings, a table would be set up at the entrance to the main room to 'sell' forthcoming events. This proved successful and is carried on to this day.

During the 21 May meeting Garth Epstein, Mac Grant, Ralph Le Grand and Charles Oakley were welcomed to the Club. The members were saddened to hear of the deaths of John Fagan and original treasurer and past president Jack Montgomery.

Victims of Crime

"Lady speaker, Trish Rhodes, spoke on behalf of the victims of crime. VOCAL is an organization of volunteers which sets out to redress the imbalance prevailing in our legal system and to give succour and counsel to the aggrieved. Trish did not claim to be a glaring case of the victim rampant, but her experiences in court after her house had been fire-bombed to erase the evidence of a burglary and on another occasion when her car had been stolen for use in a bank holdup, gave her the distinct impression that her part in the proceedings was that of a police exhibit. The litigation was a mock battle in clinical style between adversarial mouthpieces, which took no account of the harm done to the innocent prey of criminal activity or of the impact upon dependent family and friends of the victim. Much was made by the defence counsel of the extenuating circumstances leading to the indiscretions of his client, but there was no room in the equation of justice for the trauma borne by the target of his peccadilloes.

"Another cause of Vocal's wintry discontent is the retention in Victoria of the unsworn statement from the floor of the court by the accused. Trish saw that as a travesty of justice which had been rescinded in most comparable judiciaries in the western world, and its persistence here is high on the Trish hit list. In the best of possible worlds an impact statement would be admissible before sentencing, appropriate compensation would be assessed and payable out of fines imposed for criminal activity. As things stand, the Government appears grudgingly to tolerate the organization and awards a tiny grant to keep them in penurious fettle, but maintains the tradition that mammon is more inviolable than mankind."

The treasurer's report of 17 June 1991 showed that the Club had 126 financial members and had a healthy balance at Bank.

The June outing was held on the forty-seventh anniversary of D-Day so Hugh was inspired to an exercise in alliteration:

"A delicate detachment of dedicated delegates departed for a delightful dejeuner at the Bull 'N' Bush in Hawthorn. As we entered the amphitheatre's crimson confines we were struck by the sea of silvertops already ensconced to initiate a levity led recovery. The antediluvian assemblage was graced by several droves of Probosaurus Rex and flanked by flocks of great skirted Dodo Lawn-bowlus in search of meridian mirth and midday manna, The lunch was better than expected, the roast being closely contested between Little Bo Peep and Mary Adder-Liddel, but copious and well supported by roots and leaves. Mousse au chocolat was the quick, sure kickshaw and was greeted with great familiarity.

"After lunch the entertainment got underway with a session of sentimental singalong in which tonsillar tonicity was severely tested while the brachial oscillations put Jane Fonda to shame. The comedy of Terry Gill was very mild and well received, but the highlight of the show was the singing of Carole Aylett and Shirley Carr. Their operatic spoof indicated very substantial talent which deserved to be heard in a more serious context. The homeward journey was leavened by the banter of the beau monde in blithesome mood, thanks to the good offices of Les Hall."

Up, up and away

At the 19 June meeting an address about 'Aspects of Aviation Safety' was given by Robert Bowring, a former RAF aerobatician, novelist and pilot tester.

"Chocks were away when Robert made the whimsical observation that, being well endowed by nature, he relished a microphone about as much as the average cow pines for artificial insemination and thus began the chairborne sortie into the slipstream of his illustrious career. Robert started his working life as a Trenchard Brat and contemporary of Frank Whittle at the RAF engineering school in 1936 and made a name for himself as a gifted specialist in air-frame and engine stress management.

"When the war came he insisted on his constitutional right to be considered for aircrew training and overcame the opposition of his superiors. He was trained in the USA on secondment to the USAAC and was more taken with the quality of the equipment and training than with the depth of the bovine substance which incrustated them. He graduated with distinction and served as an operational pilot for the remainder of the war.

"After the war he was appointed as examiner at the Central Flying School he survived to become not only a pilot tester and aerobatics specialist but test pilot and among the first to land during the Berlin Airlift. His experiences in that operation gave him a lasting interest in air safety which has been the central theme of his service to humanity in the years between. His standing in this field was such that he was asked to become one of the two-man committee working from HQ of ICAO in Montreal, answerable to the United Nations for the drawing up of regulations to cover every aspect of international flight — from the syllabus of pilot training to baggage inspection at the airports of every signatory nation. This mammoth task will be accomplished and implemented in January 1992; so it is largely due to Robert and his American colleague that a seat on an international airliner will continue to be the least peril-prone pozzie for peregrinators to park a precious peripatetic posterior. Good reason to thank him again."

President's Luncheon

The mid-year luncheon on 16 July was a great success; the members were entertained with songs by Vic Proposch and Lorna Trainor accompanied at the pianoforte by Lil Allen.

"Keith Deutsher told the tale of Josiah Wedgwood. Keith is recognised throughout the world as an authority on the work of the dynasty which started in Burslem in the 1760's and set standards envied by the potters of continental Europe. Keith set up a display of samples from his own large collection of choice pieces and his address was accompanied by slides which illustrated the art and technology for which the name is revered. We heard how the young Josiah overcame the disadvantages of negligible education, sibling rivalry, smallpox and a wooden leg to become one of the trailblazers of the industrial revolution.

"We found out about his practical skills as a potter, his business flair which brought the canal to his factory door and brought tableware which was fit for a queen within the reach of the middle classes, about his inventive genius which devised the pyrometer still in use today, his persistence which resulted in the basalts and jasper ware so loved to this day, and we heard about his ability to meld the arts and sciences into a profitable enterprise. The talk was followed by a video depicting the state of the potter's art 230 years on."

At a very early hour on 7 August, members and ladies embarked upon the Club's first far-flung foray. The 3-day tour first called at the Hindlander deer farm at Eildon which proved to be a fascinating

experience. A light lunch for \$4 proved good value before moving on to Wangaratta airport where those interested in flying machines saw a great collection of planes, most in working order. The display included the tiny machine built by Clive Canning for his round trip to England.

Time of arrival at Howlong Country Club allowed for a shower before a first-class dinner, followed by fellowship. Hearty breakfasts were served in rooms and we left on the Thursday to inspect Albury and Wodonga from the warm comfort of the coach. A visit to the Anzac Memorial and Bandianna military museum was followed by lunch at the Ettamogah Pub. The afternoon was filled with visits to the pioneer museum at Jindera and Dan Morgan's lookout where the hardier members clambered up the rocky outcrop, but their descent was less triumphant as they scampered for shelter from a sudden shower of hail.

On Friday the coach set off for Rutherglen, then to Shepparton where lunch was served and bargain hunters swooped upon the factory sales of SPC before returning home to Beaumaris.

The meeting on wintry 20 August attracted 67 of the then 127 financial members and President Bruce inducted Percy Baxter into the Club. Recognising Percy's advanced age of 94 years the members gave him an especially rousing welcome.

Laurie Baster who admitted to devoting a lifetime to the pursuit of gold, was the keynote speaker.

"Laurie took us back to his childhood in Kalgoorlie where his father was a mine manager and where the young Laurie developed his enduring passion for the noble substance. He gave perspective to the subject by telling us that the room where we were seated would hold about two years' production from the world's mines, he said that South Africa was capable of producing about two thirds of the annual thousand tonnes mined, but that her current political problems gave Australia a wonderful opportunity to take up the slack and supply the growing demand for gold in the electronic and jewellery areas.

"The Federal Government did not seem keen to exploit the vast resources which lie along the 700 km of ancient river systems which drained the ranges and converged on Melbourne before they were buried by volcanic activity. These leads are waiting for men of vision and initiative to restore Australia to its former eminence in the world market and Laurie, with much practical and theoretical experience in the field, has devised a means of raising the metal from its current bed without the use of cyanide. Laurie's environmentally sound approach requires the sinking of two vertical tubular shafts through the watery gravel and into the bedrock some two hundred feet below.

"Water is pumped at high pressure down one casing and its only escape is via the second casing some metres distant. High pressure air is introduced at the base of the exit shaft, the suspended auriferous gravel rushes to the surface where it passes over a separator and yields up its precious burden. The gravel is of value in road making, the soil is rich enough in nutrients to be used as fertiliser and the water can be recycled within the system. Laurie has a small bore pilot plant at Maldon and is waiting for the backing necessary to implement large scale operations which will restore Australia to the forefront of the industry and will make Baster a name to conjure with. We were privileged to share his dream for a fleeting hour."

The First trip to Yarra Burn

"On 4 September a galaxy of gastronomes set out on a golden journey to the Yarra Burn Winery where we were met by host, David Fyffe. David and Christine left the cozy security of Beaumaris in 1975 to embark on a project which required great courage. They planted their vines where nothing but the odd pumpkin had grown before and set about the task of producing small quantities of high class wines. We were given the chance to taste each of the five wines produced on the estate, then we heard and saw how the vinaceous humour is pampered on its itinerary from tendrils to tonsils, constricted by Archimedes, escorted by inert gas, coddled in casks of exotic fumed oak, swaddled in sterile tanks of stainless steel, embraced by French glass and chaperoned by Spanish cork, each playing its expensive part in protecting the delicate decoction from the ravages of galling air. But the exercise bore fruit when David won the 1986 best Victorian wine trophy.

"We then adjourned to the rustic refectory where a hind leg of yearling beef had been performing a slow solo pirouette on the broach over a log fire since daybreak. The meal met with unanimous approval and we indulged ourselves with largo sociality before our radiant recessional to suburbia. Our thanks to Ralph Butcher who suggested the trip in the first place and who took over the reins in the absence of Les Hall"

Several new ideas were introduced by the committee. Bruce McAllister suggested that members be asked to 'give a short anecdote from their past' as part of the formalities. This was eventually adopted as the regular "Ten-minute Speaker" segment.

Les Hall sold tickets [8 months in advance] for *The Phantom of the Opera* scheduled for May 1992. The Club's membership reached 127 and it was agreed not to increase that number to accommodate those on the waiting list.

Clandestine operations

At the September meeting, members were impressed by the cloak and dagger actions of Charles Tice in operations mounted by the SOE during WW2. This is part of Hugh's description of his talk:

"Charles was born in Townsville but was shipped off to school in England at a tender age ... he survived and joined the Royal Welsh Fusiliers in September 1939, was commissioned and in 1941 answered a call for volunteers who could speak Spanish. He was interviewed and accepted and spent the rest of the war in the Special Operations Executive, rising to the rank of Major and receiving his hush-hush money in the form of crisp white £5 notes.

"His first posting was to Scotland where he trained as a commando, he was trained in parachute jumping and was chosen to be an instructor, teaching agents of various nationalities to infiltrate Nazi occupied Europe. Among his first students were the couple of young Czechs who assassinated Gauleiter Heydrich, with the tragic consequence that their native village of Lidice was razed to the ground by the SS. In 1942 Charles injured his leg in a jump and was sent to become air liaison officer at an operational station in Bedfordshire. Halifaxes were able to penetrate as far as Poland and to work even on moonless nights once reception committees had been established in the occupied territories. As many as 20 flights a night set out to drop agents to organise resistance and wreak havoc behind enemy lines, and it was Charles' job to brief the pilots on the details of the drop, to make sure that the agents were free of incriminating evidence and to await the return of the aircraft to hear of their successes or failures. When an operation was particularly important he went along to ensure that his boys and girls had the best possible sendoff.

"After VE Day Charles was sent to India where he organised clandestine operations in Burma, Thailand, Malaya and Indo-China until the war ended and he was free to join the staff of BP, which he served until his retirement. It was an honour to hear this tale of high adventure from a man whose contribution to victory over oppression was beyond the call of duty, and we salute him in awe and gratitude."

The Club outing on 2 October took the members to Trawool. In the morning the coach toured through Lilydale and Yea. After lunch they pressed on the few kilometers to Capalba Park where Geoff and Nancy Halpin escorted them through their splendid display. The Halpins decided to diversify from sheep and angora goats in 1988 and imported the first of their forty alpacas, exactly a century after the first attempt to husband them in Australia. The alpaca is a beautiful creature with many advantages over the

sheep, having environmentally friendly feet, being an efficient producer of large quantities of fine wool and free from the parasites which blight the sheep population. The Halpin flock is watched over by maramma shepherd dogs which adopt their charges and will defend them against all comers.

Seventy-seven members and several guests attended the meeting on 15 October. The speaker was retired Detective Sergeant Brian Thompson and he was reported in the newsletter like this:

"An eager school of stool pigeons assembled to hear Brian Thompson lift the lid on a life devoted to crime prevention. Brian came down from Shepparton at the age of eighteen and although under the prescribed age was inducted into the training school in St Kilda Road. After his year's probation at Russell Street he did a stint in West Melbourne before being transferred to St Kilda where the notorious thugs hung out scavenging on the illicit earnings of prostitutes and SP bookmakers. He found the ladies of the night to be quite reasonable if treated respectfully but their pimps were ugly customers.

"After that he was selected for the crime car squad which in those days consisted of five vehicles, two of which patrolled by day and three by night covering the whole metropolitan area. After five years Brian was promoted to the CIB and spent the rest of his professional life in plain clothes culminating in the leadership of an elite squad dedicated to the elimination of organised crime. Brian was unable to name the shadowy figure who featured so prominently in his discourse but we received a clear picture of the Mafia don who spread his family's pesky tentacles into extortion, drugs and arson. The image which we received of Brian's personal Moriarty was liberally interspersed with the humour of incompetence and naivety in the higher reaches of crime and we thank him for sharing with us his memories of a life spent in the service of the law abiding citizenry."

The humble spud

On 6 November the organised trip was to Toolangi Plant Research establishment where members were treated to an illustrated talk by the director of the Institute of Plant Sciences, Tony Kellock, on the subject of the humble potato. We saw the room in which new varieties were tested for their performance in a standard frying vessel, rated for colour, form and texture and given the taste test. We also saw the greenhouses where hybrids are nurtured in pursuit of the perfect potato.

From there we moved on to the Glenburn Hotel where we enjoyed one of the best lunches ever. The roast beef was a credit to the lush green pastures which surrounded that beautiful spot and the treatment we received was faultless.

The next port of call was the Glenwaters Native Fish Hatchery and resort. John Main welcomed us and gave an absorbing talk about the challenge of producing, Murray cod, redfin, silver and gold perch in commercial quantities. The day out was yet another delight and Cliff Thomas was thanked for his efforts.

The beginning of the 10-minute talks

The program for the 19 November meeting scheduled a "Ten Minute Speaker" and President Bruce McAllister gave the short talk.

The keynote address entitled: 'Hung, Drawn and Quartered' was given by John Wallace.

"John spoke of his experiences as a magistrate on circuit in the Northern Territory. His dealings with Aboriginal offenders gave him a clear insight into the tribal structures of the clans and of the distinct racial types which constitute the indigenous population. John had a high regard for the original Australians and regretted the disintegration of the system by which elders used to maintain discipline among the troublesome. He pointed out that not all Aborigines were victims of the vintner.

"One aspect of life among our more colourful brethren was the trend towards a predilection for late model cars which afforded a comfortable and convenient mode of transport back to the reserves after a sojourn in town, an event which often culminated in a sacrificial cleansing of the vehicle by invocation of the Redhead totem. We learned that the sitdown money provided by the taxpayer was regularly supplemented by the inadvertent donation of handbags by ladies with a handle to their name and that the ritual Koori pilgrimages to licensed sacred sites for bootfuls of spirituality were subsidised by taxi fares from the public purse.

"The overall impression was that Australia's prior tenant was coming to grips quite well with the trials of contemporary existence and that the synthesis of tribal nomadism and western consumerism was not without its advantages."

On 4 December the Christmas luncheon with the ladies was a most enjoyable affair. Bob Young told the diners all about the workings of the Arts Council of Victoria and liberally interspersed his address with a series of anecdotes which raised the spirits of the throng. He described how the available funds are allocated to troupes of artists, actors and musicians who take their skills out into the country for the benefit of those who rarely have the opportunity to see metropolitan quality shows. After desserts the assembly set about the task of identifying the authors of a few quotations and the winners received appropriate prizes for their skills.

Another year had rolled on — the membership list reflected changes due to the sad loss of respected friends and the enrolment of new members:

Membership list at end of 1991.

J W Allen, W H Allan, K J Anderson, G C Appleby, L G Armstrong, A B Avery, K A Ball, F W Barry-Brown, L R Baster, R G Bathols, P Baxter, C M Berry, F K Beyer, F Biencourt, J Brimage, T F Brown, J E Burgesson, R D Butcher, D M Campbell, N Caris, I T Carne, S G Carpenter, E J Carruthers, N K Christie, L M Colechin, J Cooke, D O Cranch, N W Crane, R J Crawford, D N Crook, J H Crozier, W N Cust, R Davey, M J Davidson, E K Dawson, K E Deller, K M Deutsher, J Doeg, R G Donovan, H J Dunn, G Dunscombe, J B Eden, J W Elischer, R H Elliott, F S Elson, G L Epstein, P J Epstein, M W Etccl, E G Field, L G Fox, A H Gasson, H J F Gerand, E J Glenn, C S Gloe, M B Gotz, H F Gowers, W H Grant, R H Gregory, L Hall, J B Hamann, B Hambleton, M Hancock, B W Hart, R L Hart, D Hensher, J C Hillman, W R Hogarth, G K Holdsworth, G Hoult, A E Jackson, W H Johnson, D C Keating, G W Kirton, J Knott, H K Kruse, R H Laughlin, R F Le Grand, P J Mahon, G H Mason, R S Matthews, W M Maunder, B McAllister, I McDonald, C R Meade, J A Montgomery, J Nolan, C R Oakley, D T O'Loughlin, M C Parsons, T E Partleton, A Penaluna, L M Powell, V A Proposch, B E Reaby, J A Reith, R Relf, K C Reynolds, T F Richards, G Ristrom, H W Robbins, W D Roberts, A G Robertson, E P Rogan, B Rogers, L P Ross, G W Royston, J L Sercombe, W Shepherd, A W Small, P M Smith, A W Steinfort, H A Stevens, E W Sunderland, R J Taylor, C M Thomas, K T Tinkler, R B Trimmer, S F Varcoe, C A Walker, J E Wallace, J D Warburton, H S Warren, J W Waters, R L Waters, A J Watson, R G Webb, M Williams and J B Yelland.

At the first meeting of 1992 on 8 February members heard Jack Warburton's absorbing story of his life with the SEC. Jack was demobbed from the RAAF where he had been an instrument technician and was offered a job as an electrical fitter at the Richmond power station. After a while he applied for a staff position as an operator and was trained for the task which carried twice his previous salary.

His duties included isolating equipment so that it could be safely worked on by maintenance crews who were not keen to handle 132,000 volts. Jack explained the system which supplies our locality with the power we need for our daily round. He traced the origins of the energy in the grid which now links Victoria with the adjacent states and which will shortly embrace Tasmania via a submarine cable carrying 300 megawatts of DC current.

Jack went on to become a roving operator working from home to deal with emergencies as they arose and then became the officer in charge of the SEC operational training centre in Richmond. We enjoyed a fine insight into the workings of the Commission.

On 4 March members boarded the usual Mercedes to be guests of the Quince transport company. At Oakleigh they were given a brief insight into Quince's history which had developed from a truck service to Robinvale into a fleet which numbered ninety coaches, mainly Mercedes. After seeing the servicing centre and paint shop a fine lunch of soup and roast lamb awaited the guests at the Oakleigh Hotel.

Bowls and Golf

Don Hensher skippered our bowlers at the Probus bowling tournament in Edithvale on 11 March. Meanwhile at Victoria Golf Club a band of members and guests swung into action — the games were arranged by Bruce McAllister.

The meeting on 17 March opened with a minute's silent tribute to Les Powell. The AGM saw the appointments of Al Gasson as president, Brian Hambleton vice president, Hugh Stevens secretary with Don Hensher assistant, Allan Glenn treasurer with Max Parsons assistant, Les Hall functions with Ralph Butcher assistant, Alan Penaluna meeting coordinator, Mervyn Berry almoner and Colin Meade auditor.

Bruce McAllister welcomed new members Bill Schulz, Jim Jamieson, John West and Don Skinner before handing over the presidency to Al Gasson.

The main speaker, Paul Haar, was introduced by Doug Keating as one of the top guns in the Telecom organisation, having the management of the Geelong district and control of a thousand personnel.

Members heard how the merging of Telecom and OTC had produced the largest business entity in the Commonwealth with assets of 25 billion dollars and an operating profit of 1.6 billion dollars, 1.5 of which was then fed into Government coffers. Paul spoke about Deregulation which would bring about a decrease in the workforce and a healthy profit for both Telecom and Optus — even with a dramatic fall in the price of phone calls.

Three days 'with' Mary-Lyn

Commencing on April Fools Day members enjoyed a three-day trip to Mary-Lyn. The tourists reported that the excursion was a great success. The rooms were comfortable and most had splendid views. The food was abundant and beautifully presented; the management was kindness itself and the facilities beyond reproach. After lunch on the first day there was a trip to Camberville, a deserted town on the Woods Point road set among giant trees of many varieties. After a sumptuous dinner there were competitions in carpet bowls, table tennis, snooker, darts and Scrabble won respectively by Ralph Butcher, Jack Warburton, Garth Epstein, Dorothy Crawford and Wally Elischer.

On the Thursday there was an outing to the Snobs Creek fish hatchery and the Hindlander deer farm where several people took an interest in the powdered antler velvet which is claimed to have aphrodisiac properties. They were advised to swallow it quickly to avoid a stiff neck. After a picnic lunch the coach went to Mt Pillinger overlooking Eildon, then on almost to Jamieson before returning to Marysville. In the evening there was some delightful music at the piano played by Val Epstein and later the group indulged in community singing. On the third day there was a visit to the local sawmill and to Steavenson's Falls before the happy bunch said a fond and grateful farewell to their hosts.

The meeting of 21 April was also opened with a silent tribute – this time to Ken Ball. Four new members were inducted – Ron Freer, Jim Jeffries, Allan Taylor and Ty Power. The ten-minute address was given by Laurie Baster.

A Gifted Speaker

Bill Shepherd, without notes but with complete aplomb, spoke for an hour about "*Bits and Pieces in Science*". We hand over to Hugh Stevens to describe his talk:

"A classy clan of clever country members sat agog while our living treasure, Bill Shepherd, cast four pearls of great price for their perspicuous consumption. Bill's first intriguing topic was the 'green flash', a phenomenon which lucky viewers may witness if they are watching the western horizon just after sundown when the conditions are just right. There is a critical moment which may last a few seconds while the sun's rays are divided into their component wavelengths by the curvature of the atmosphere, the mid section of the spectrum being refracted down towards the observer, so that his world is momentarily imbued with an emerald cast. The impression is enhanced if he has been toasting the curfew with chartreuse or creme de menthe, but even the abstemious are invited to keep an eye out for this fleeting flourish of chrysoprase crepuscularity.

"The second part of Bill's address featured the physiological marvels which allow the camel to survive the searing heat and withering chill of the desert. We heard how its body temperature may rise several degrees without loss of sweat, how its nasal passages have sufficient temperature gradation to condense and recycle moisture, how it can go several days without water and then ingest sixty litres in one draught, and how its hump is a store of fatty and fibrous tissue which protects its vital organs from the vertical fervour of Phoebus.

"Then Bill told us about the connection between a shortage of fish in South America and a shortage of water in Australia. We learned how the normal

system of trade winds sweeps across the Pacific and Indian oceans gathering moisture which falls as rain when it condenses over our wide, brown land. The wind also pushes the sea up against the west coast of Australia but gravity prevents the water from piling up, so it sinks and forms a current which circles the Indian ocean anti-clockwise then sweeps back south of our continent and surfaces off the coast of Chile and Peru, taking with it the nutrients necessary for the breeding cycle of the fish. The most prolific catches are made around Christmas time and the term 'el nino', denoting 'boy child', is the fishermen's harvest festival; but about twice per decade the trade winds are not strong enough to promote the massive stirring of the oceans and we suffer drought while the peons experience deficiencies of fish in seas off South America.

"The last of Bill's topics was the phenomenon of the harvest moon, which appears to be so much larger than its alter ego higher in the sky. We learned that the cause of this apparent magnification was an optical illusion brought about by the frame of reference and that it is the failure of the brain to assess the relative size and distance of the intervening markers which causes the anomaly.

"A splendid dissertation; Bill's eloquence and mastery were an inspiration to us all."

Members enjoy a short trip

On 6 May the outing was a low key excursion to Mornington and at the Post office, which dates from the 1860's, members were treated to a short history of the area by a conservator of the building. It has been lovingly preserved and embellished by the addition of artifacts, photos and geological specimens collected in the neighbourhood. Mornington was once a fashionable destination for the paddle steamers which brought holiday makers from the City for a sojourn at the numerous private hotels, but as the township spread inland the need grew for a new post office closer to the centre of things. After a leisurely stroll up the main street, browsing in the balmy sunshine, it was time for lunch at the Grand Hotel. The meal was well prepared, good value for money and presented with cheerful hospitality.

On 19 May it was reported that the Club had 125 financial members. The 10-minute address was given by Jim Waters and the major speaker was Eric Mitchell — his subject was "*Friends of the Zoo*."

Eric Mitchell, a voluntary guide and lecturer, takes parties of visitors, mainly from overseas, on tours to those exhibits which are peculiar to our island continent. He explained how becoming a family member of the "Friends of the Zoo" entitles any member to visit Melbourne, Werribee and Healesville as frequently as they wished.

He gave a potted history of Australia's oldest zoo which dates from 1857. It started in Richmond Pad-dock, across the Yarra from the Botanical Gardens on land granted by the Government and it was initiated by Baron Von Muller and Edward Wilson, editor of the Argus, but the site proved too cold and swampy and the animals were shifted to the Botanical Gardens until 1861, when the Government gave a grant of £5,500 and fifty-five acres in Royal Park for the establishment of the present facility.

The Fabulous Phantom

On 27 May members went to the *Phantom of the Opera* and the event was described by Hugh thus:

"a light footed clique of footlight freaks set off to listen to the music of the afternoon in the magnificently restored Princess. Lloyd-Webber is said to be this century's successor to Puccini, so it was fitting that the Phantom should follow where Mimi, notwithstanding her digital frigidity, enjoyed a warm hand on her opening ninety years ago, at the time when Madam Butterfly was but a rittle chlysis, pupating in the wings."

"Thanks to the forethought of Les Hall so many months ago, we were ushered to the best seats in the house, were all overwhelmed by the spectacle and our ardour as Phantom fans was further fanned by the slipstream of the chandelier. The Guest appearance and Prior engagement provoked applause like thunder, which prompted the heavens to open as we emerged from the theatre and vainly hailed a gondola."

The June outing was to Victoria's Farm Shed at Tynong. The outward trip through Dandenong and Pakenham absorbed an hour of a grey and chilly day and when the group arrived, the huge log fire was a welcome sight. Seated in a large amphitheatre the members were told much of what there is to know about the sheep population and entertained by a very skilful sheep shearing demonstration. This was followed by a viewing of the primest of beef on the hoof but there were no takers to try their hand at milking the cows. After watching a kelpie marshalling a quintet of wethers, members and ladies drifted towards the splendid dining room for soup and damper, sandwiches and scones. Then it was back home to Beaumaris.

At their next meeting the Committee decided that the contents of the fines collection tin should be devoted to a fine cause, so the \$67-65 was donated to the Red Shield appeal.

At the 16 June meeting, Doug Keating gave the 10-minute talk and Paul Steinfort, son of Alex, spoke about the building of the Great Southern Stand of the MCG. It was an excellent address warmly applauded.

On 21 July the ordinary general meeting was replaced by the President's Lunch with the Ladies. The newsletter reported –

"Nello excelled himself once more and the bonds of friendship were reaffirmed to the protean cadence of knife and fork. After the first course we were privileged to hear an address from Daryl Gallagher, whose 42-year association with skiing culminated in his appointment as manager of the Australian Olympic Alpine team. Daryl's introduction to snow sports was through friends who used to meet at the old St Moritz skating rink; he was invited to partake in the building of a lodge at Buller in 1949.

"His first reminiscence was of the Innsbruck games of 1968 when the temperatures were so high that snow had to be carted in from Switzerland by the Austrian army before the games could commence. As a result of that experience the Olympic committee has insisted that the host resort must be able to manufacture enough snow for the events if nature is not cooperative. So far the Aussies have competed in every winter Olympics without winning a medal, but Daryl has high hopes for Kirsti Marshall in Norway in the next games [1996], and if she is successful it will be partly due to his dedication."

A gallivanting gallant globetrotter

On 18 August the 10-minute address was by Maurie Etccl who spoke on the origins of Beaumaris RSL. The major speaker was Graham Dunscombe.

Hugh reported that "an eager throng of armchair travellers sat spellbound while Graham escorted them on a world safari to places far from the madding crowd. For 30 years Graham and Peg have made an art form of budget travel to out of the way places, with a special emphasis on long rivers, high mountains, great deserts and archaeological sites. To set the tone of the tour Graham pointed out that the style of accommodation which he favoured was often off the bottom of the amenities scale, with twin share prices starting at 50 cents a night in a sherpa's hut on the lower slopes of Everest.

"But recently, under the influence of his better half, they had been pampering themselves with the outlay of \$30 for bed and breakfast. They avoid travel agents but rely on their character judgment when choosing a place to stay, and are rarely disappointed.

"Their first destination was the mighty Amazon, where they rubbed shoulders with the local tribes, feasting on manioc and sleeping in hammocks under the leafy canopy of the open-sided longhouse. We heard how the diminutive Jaguar tribesmen prepare the deadly darts which they fire from long blowpipes, sawing a piranha tooth so that its tip will break off if

the prey grabs the dart before the curare has done its lethal labour. Then Graham gave us a demo with a child's pipe, much smaller than the seven-foot adult model, but capable of piercing several thickness of paper at a range of several feet. Graham kept us amused with his tales of huge hairy spiders, alligator hunting, oppressive heat and the curibu trouser fish.

"From there we were transported up the Rajang to Kapit in Sarawak, where they stayed in a genuine Iban longhouse with Dayak headhunters. Then it was up the Nile in a felucca to view the Valley of the Kings, down the Irrawaddy from Mandalay to Rangoon, the Tigris and Euphrates which encompass the birthplace of civilisation, the Zambezi and the Indus. Next we did a swift tour of the great mountains, starting with the hair-raising flight into the airstrip near the base camp of Everest, the high Andes, Kinabalu in Sabah and Mount Ararat. Then Graham showed us in swift succession, three magazines of superb slides illustrating all the places and people he had mentioned in his talk. It was a memorable morning and we are much indebted to him for sharing his vast experience with us."

Proposed outings to Anakie in August and Ashcombe Maze in September were cancelled due to lack of support and this led to much discussion at committee level. Membership was then 125 with seven on the waiting list yet it was difficult to attract 40-45 members and partners to attend outings.

On 15 September Max Parsons gave the short talk about his experiences as a 'nine-mile sniper'. The keynote address was by Wilma Anastasiu – public relations person for Melbourne Water. She had undertaken a recent survey into the question of the public perception of water quality in the Metropolitan area and found that most of the public have an image of a steep decline in standards since the good old days when Melbourne enjoyed the world's purest drinking water. Suspicions are not justified, however, for scientific analysis shows that the Melbourne supply is generally better than the mineral water sold in supermarkets at many times the price.

A frequent cause of trouble was the practice of mixing steel and copper pipes in one household, for ionisation is increased by the potential difference of the two metals. Beaumaris folk are lucky that their supply comes from Cardinia, for that storage is the purest of all, and Wilma regarded water filters as a waste of money.

Andy Watson reported that the trip to Canberra (October 5-9) was a great success and good value for money. Beaumaris Probus representatives were compatible with the other groups who shared the coach, nothing was too much trouble for the driver and the accommodation was excellent.

Parliament House impressed the visitors as being an elegant setting for the two Labor and three Coalition members in attendance, and our friends were much taken with the High Court, the Film Archives, the Floriade, the War Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial and Cockington Village.

John Stone impressed his listeners

At the meeting on 20 October, 93 members and guests heard 10-minute speaker Bob Matthews speak about petrol distribution in the outback. The keynote speaker was none other than John Stone, one time Rhodes Scholar and formerly a Director of the IMF and the World Bank, Secretary to the Treasury, Professor of Policy Studies at Monash University, Consultant to Potter Partners and National Party Senator for Queensland and at the time a Senior Fellow of the Institute of Public Affairs and writer for the Australian Financial Review.

"He began with an analysis of our national debt, which measures almost 200 billion dollars, and the fact that growth in exports is unlikely when the US, Japan and Germany are heading into recession. Having established the current state of affairs John turned his attention to the process by which Australia had sunk into such a morass when our history was so golden and our potential so favourable. He laid the blame at the feet of a succession of incompetent federal administrations since Menzies and state regimes since the retirement of Bolte. According to John, our decline has been caused by a cosy labour relations club which cossets unions, business and government at the expense of the national interest and which dates from the victory of Clarrie O'Shea over the penal sanctions imposed.

"He apportioned blame in equal measure to shoddy management of business, the universities and the media for our relative decline in the world scene and implied that the professions and schools had been subtly subverted by leftist infiltration. John then turned to the outlook for Victoria and said the new government had only four years in which to stop the rot, restore confidence and attract capital. He pinned his hopes on the fact that New Zealand was effectively a part of Australia as far as trade was concerned. Industrial reform was already giving New Zealand a strong competitive edge and Australian unions would be obliged to follow suit to avoid investment being drawn across the Tasman."

The last outing for 1992 was the Puffing Billy trip from Belgrave followed by lunch at the Koalas' Paradise Hotel, Clematis.

Members were advised that Les Hall was expecting to move to Coffs Harbour and Ralph Butcher would take over the functions portfolio with Ralph Le Grand as assistant.

At the 17 November meeting two new members, Ken Armstrong and Noel Ineson, were welcomed and the 10-minute address was given by Mac Grant.

"Reverend Denis Oakley talked about his work with Family Focus, which he founded some twenty years earlier, and which cared for 280 young folk in need of care and protection. His workers cover an area from St Kilda to Wonthaggi via Berwick and are on call round the clock and can place victims of neglect or cruelty into safe homes when police or Social Services call upon them. His five homes also care for seriously disabled children who require more attention than parents can provide.

"It was a shock to learn that in the four municipalities which surround our Club there are at any given time about sixty child victims of abuse who need to be fostered with families which have love to spare. The total number of children dealt with per year is about 250, and Denis recognised the great contribution made by the local Rotary clubs which provided the premises in South Road. He also paid tribute to the private benefactors who have enabled his organisation to provide accommodation for the care and rehabilitation of families in crisis. Denis, in his wonderfully warm and laid back manner, regaled us with yarns about some of the characters who have come under his aegis over the years, and we were overwhelmed by the compassion and dedication of this man."

On 2 December the resident chef, Alain, provided an excellent menu at the Christmas lunch for members and ladies at the RSL. It was a highly successful event, thanks to the organisation of Ralph Butcher.

And so ended another great year in the history of Beaumaris Probus.

During the long summer break Percy Baxter, honorary member, scored his century and became a living treasure. Hearty best wishes and congratulations were sent to Percy from all his friends at Beaumaris Probus.

First meeting of 1993

The meeting of 16 February commenced with a silent tribute to Mac Crane. Ninety members and guests came to enjoy the meeting and hear the main speaker who, due to sickness, did not arrive.

This eventuality is always the fear of chairmen of meetings and in the newsletter Hugh describes the way President Al recruited volunteers who turned a potential disaster into a triumph.

"A refulgent reflux of refreshed roisterers emerged from their estivation to be greeted with the news that the advertised speaker had succumbed to a

bout of laryngitis at the eleventh hour. Such a contretemps would have caused a lesser club to wilt and wail, but our esteemed President was neither fazed nor flustered, he neither blazed nor blustered; not amazed, he mustered the hidden strengths of our membership and before you could say antidisestablishmentarianism he had a team of home grown speakers ready to roll.

"Before tea we were treated to the scheduled ten minute address by Garth Epstein, who regaled us with tales about the Epstein tailoring business which has been a landmark in the City for so many years, then came our own masterly mining mogul, Laurie Baster, who treated us to an update on an address he had delivered previously concerning gold. Laurie was recently in the greatest South African mines and assured us that they were a source of great wealth to that country. He observed that Victoria was in a position to exploit its vast gold reserves if it had the will to do so, but he feared that there would instead be an exodus of venturesome youth to Western Australia, as happened in the last comparable recession in the 1890's. He felt that the West was poised to make the sort of gains which could pull our country out of the doldrums, while Victoria wasted its chance to lead the rush and exploit the largest known alluvial gold deposit in the world..

Membership list at end of 1992.

J W Allen, W H Allan, K J Anderson, G C Appleby, K M Armstrong, L G Armstrong, A B Avery, K A Ball, F W Barry-Brown, L R Baster, R G Bathols, P Baxter, C M Berry, F K Beyer, F Biencourt, J Brimage, T F Brown, J E Burgesson, R D Butcher, D M Campbell, N Caris, I T Carne, S G Carpenter, E J Carruthers, N K Christie, L M Colechin, J Cooke, D O Cranch, N W Crane, R J Crawford, D N Crook, J H Crozier, W N Cust, R Davey, M J Davidson, E K Dawson, K E Deller, K M Deutsher, J Doeg, R G Donovan, H J Dunn, G Dunscombe, J B Eden, J W Elischer, R H Elliott, F S Elson, G L Epstein, P J Epstein, M W Etcell, E G Field, L G Fox, J R Freer, A H Gasson, H J F Gerrand, E J Glenn, C S Gloc, M B Gotz, H F Gowers, W H Grant, R H Gregory, L Hall, J B Hamann, B Hambleton, M Hancock, B W Hart, R L Hart, D Hensher, J C Hillman, W R Hogarth, G Hout, N H Ineson, E J Jamieson, J H Jeffries, W H Johnson, D C Keating, G W Kirton, J Knott, H K Kruse, R H Laughlin, R F Le Grand, P J Mahon, G H Mason, R S Matthews, B McAllister, I McDonald, C R Meade, J Nolan, C R Oakley, D T O'Loughlin, M C Parsons, T E Partleton, A Penaluna, T Power, V A Proposch, B E Reaby, J A Reith, K C Reynolds, T F Richards, G Ristrom, H W Robbins, W D Roberts, A G Robertson, E P Rogan, B Rogers, L P Ross, G W Royston, J L Sercombe, J W Schulz, W Shepherd, D N Skinner, A W Small, P M Smith, A W Steinfort, H A Stevens, E W Sunderland, A L Taylor, R J Taylor, C M Thomas, K T Tinkler, R B Trimmer, S F Varcoe, C A Walker, J E Wallace, J D Warburton, H S Warren, J W Waters, R L Waters, A J Watson, J P West, M Williams and J B Yelland.

"The second speaker was Bill Shepherd who gave a coruscating allocution on the origins of our calendar. He started by noting that our ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth months are derived from the Latin numbers seven to ten. Then he drew our attention to the fact that in the first half of our year all the odd months have an odd number of days while all the even months have an even number of days. But from August onwards the reverse is the case. Bill referred to the calendars of the earliest civilisations but restricted himself to the details of our debt to the Romans, and traced the growing sophistication of our calendar, as measurements became more accurate.

"By 500 BC the year consisted of ten months of 30 days, and the last four bore names similar to our September to December. There was also a period of 55 days in the winter which did not rate a guernsey because nothing much happened in agriculture or warfare. The total number of days was 355, exactly 12 lunar months of 29.56 days. We heard how succeeding cultures came to grips with the disparity between 12 lunar months and one solar year, and heard tales of court intrigue, growing mathematical refinement and scientific skill until our present Gregorian calendar which is almost without flaw.

"The last of our intrepid speakers was Trevor Richards who told us that his father had been a friend of Sir Keith Murdoch during his career with the Herald and Weekly Times. At the engagement party prior to Sir Keith's marriage to Dame Elizabeth, the ten-year-old Trevor was patted on the head and told that he would soon be welcomed into the publishing fold. Five years later he received a letter inviting him to join the firm when he left school, which he duly did. Trevor became a compositor and remained so until the outbreak of war. He joined the Artillery in 1939, was commissioned and some time after was promoted to CO of a unit in Lae."

On 10 March twelve members represented the Club at the annual bowls tournament but did not advance to the second round; and on 15 March a group of golfers played at Southern as guests of its Probian members. After lunch, Mac Grant, Stan Carpenter and Allan Taylor were presented with 'suitable trophies'. Alan Penaluna was the man who organised that event.

1993 Annual General Meeting

After the usual reports Al Gasson invested Brian Hambleton with the President's Collar, Max Parsons was installed as vice president, Hugh Stevens secretary with Don Hensher assistant, Allan Glenn treasurer, Alan Penaluna meeting coordinator, Ralph Butcher functions director and Ralph Le Grand assistant, Mervyn Berry almoner, Colin Meade auditor.

Certificates were presented to Past Presidents in attendance at the meeting. Members were advised of the death of Bruce Gotz.

The keynote speaker was Bill Schulz who spoke about his early years at home and abroad. His talk was reported by Hugh:

"First Bill delineated his ancestry, saying that his great grandfather had fled persecution in Prussia on account of his Lutheran leanings and arrived at Port Adelaide in 1838. Several of Bill's uncles had been on active service in WW1, so by the outbreak of WW2 the Schulz loyalty to Australia was questioned only by the rash or myopic. Bill's desire to study medicine was spiked by lack of funds and he had to settle for a job with the PMG. He also joined the militia but hankered after a life at sea, and in 1939 he gained a special entry cadetship on the strength of his scientific matric, being one of the four successful applicants out of six hundred.

"Bill arrived at Tilbury on 3 September 1939, and soon found himself at Dartmouth for his naval training. The cadets all became extremely fit through sport and highly skilled, they carried out rescue work during the air raids on Plymouth and Devonport and Bill's life was spared when a 500-lb bomb landed a few yards away but failed to explode. It was spared again when a planned trip to the Cafe de Paris was thwarted by an order from a senior officer, for on that night the club was destroyed in a raid. We then heard Bill's absorbing tale of battles on the high seas, narrow escapes from kamikaze attacks and the final victory over the Axis.

Dried arrangements

On 7 April the tour destination was Drum Drum flower farm at Arthurs Seat. The members were greeted by Jill Sanders, who is the mother figure of a talented family which has developed a thriving business. She and her husband built a fine house using mud bricks and recycled timber, powered by windmill. They grow flowers which are then dried and made into artistic arrangements for sale in the extensive showroom. The daughter of the house is a fine potter and she gave an interesting talk about her technique, then Jill demonstrated the creation of a dried arrangement, using one of her daughter's pots as the base. [Andy W went for a quiet stroll during the flower arranging saying it was 'girls stuff'.] After a very good lunch at Arthurs Bistro everyone returned home pleased with the day.

The ten-minute address at the meeting of 20 April was given by John Wallace on 'the view from the Bench'.

Brian Thompson and Joel Harris were welcomed as new members.

The keynote speaker was Ron Hunter and his talk, entitled 'A stroll through the actuarial countryside', was reviewed by Hugh:

"A valid sample of valetudinary superannuants lent their ageing ears to Ron Hunter, an internationally acclaimed actuary who has the knack of making statistics sound like profitable fun. After a few witty references to his Scottish heritage, Ron told us that Australia has about 7,000 practising actuaries whose skill is employed by large concerns to establish equitable contributions and benefits to offset the vagaries of fickle fortune. He traced the origins of his profession to the gaming tables of renaissance France, where an appreciation of mathematical odds was helpful to the aristocrats who risked their fortunes on the turn of a card. From there the principles of probability were applied to life insurance so that entrepreneurs could spread the financial risk of misfortune among a large number of potential victims.

"In the 1770's an act of parliament was tabled in London to restrict the practice of coffeehouse book-makers insuring the lives of sea captains at such inflated sums as to make their death a windfall for unscrupulous policyholders who had a vested interest in such a consummation. At that time a crude table of mortality was used by insurers which consisted of a straight line graph running from birth to the universal terminus at the age of 110, so that candidates were assumed to have a 50/50 chance of living to the age of 55. As mathematical skills became more refined and sociologists became more astute, the graph was modified to accommodate the swings and roundabouts of sex, age group and lifestyle.

"But just when the wrinkly wranglers wrest a formula which encapsulates every snake and every ladder in the game of life, Mother Nature devises a new lubricant which is equally at home on rung or scale, waiting to snare computer assisted underwriters who fail to foresee the ramifications of the HI virus, the asbestos fibre and the resistant tubercular bacillus. Ron's fine address shed a clear light upon the actuary's contribution to man's ongoing struggle, but we hope to maintain an association with him when he qualifies for our level of otium cum dignitate."

On 5 May, club fun seekers set out for a day at Daylesford. First stop was Bacchus Marsh and the Convent Gallery. From the first encounter with the old building it was obvious that the restoration had been carried out with great sensitivity and imagination, for it synthesized the austerity of Victorian Gothic and the lightness of modern latitudinarianism, an elegant milieu for the display of art and craft.

There was poignancy in the retention of the celibate cell where chastity was the order of the night,

and the reverence of its former life imbued the gallery with a patina of respect for the act of creation. The lunch was light but sufficient, then the coach drove through the fine botanical gardens to the crest of the extinct volcano which dominates the town. While enjoying the beauty of the begonias the caprines climbed the 100 spiral stairs to the lookout for a view across the vast volcanic plateau before the coach returned home.

The meeting of 18 May started with a silent tribute to Jack Nolan. Four new members were inducted – Bill Parry, Ted Montfort, Bob McKinnon and Allan Cox. The 10-minute speaker was Don Skinner who spoke about the impact of engineering on the environment.

Those men in their flying machines

The keynote speaker, Gordon Appleby, had spent forty-seven years of his life dedicated to the production of military aircraft in Melbourne. He told how Australia had been represented in the evolution of flying machines by Hargraves' box kite and by John Duigan, who designed and built a powered aeroplane in 1910. But it was not until the mid-thirties that the Australian government decided events in Europe indicated a need for an airforce which could rely on machines produced locally. BHP and General Motors formed a consortium and sent Lawrence Whackett on a fact-finding mission to Europe and America.

The mission was most impressed by the goings-on in California and recommended the building of an aircraft factory at Fishermans Bend in 1936, which became the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. It was a private enterprise working on a cost plus basis, which meant that the taxpayer covered any losses made. The first project was the construction under licence of the NA 33, known here as the Wirraway, and regarded by Gordon as the ultimate in aerodynamic grace and power. The first of these was handed over to the RAAF in 1939 just before the outbreak of WW2, and 400 were ultimately built. The CAC later designed and built the Whackett trainer and the Boomerang fighter, which metamorphosed from sketch to reality in eleven months. Later the Government Aircraft Commission, which was next door to the CAC, was responsible for the building of bomber aircraft. The first of these was the Beaufort, of which 750 were completed. When jet propulsion came along it was necessary to build Avalon airfield; otherwise the Sabres taking off from Fishermans Bend would have interfered with the traffic from Essendon. Gordon kept everyone amused and amazed with tales of ingenuity and courage, he rounded off his address with a series of slides depicting the evolution of manufacture from fabric to carbon fibre.

There is no need to introduce the writer of this:

"On 2 June a wild bunch of wine bibbers went by wonderbus to taste the fruits of friendship and fancy fare along the Yarra Valley. The first port of call was St Hubert's, where they anointed their tonsils with costly concoctions of the vintner's art; one precocious young cabernet sauvignon was on offer at \$21, a price suggesting that it had already come of age. Once more aboard the coach the party was captivated by the sight of the Yarra Glen Hunt in full cry, unspeakably pursuing the uneatable's undoing, while the minds of the esurient company turned to thoughts of the promised estimable comestibles.

"At Dixon's Creek the bus pulled in to De Bortoli's winery in time for a preprandial aperitif and the party was then ushered into an elegant dining room for a most agreeable lunch in an ambience of damask napery and civility of service. Thanks to Ralph Butcher's determined dealings and Quinces' compliance, the change of plan turned out to be an advantage to all who attended, and Ralph's halo took on a laudable lustre."

Nor this:—

Television in Jeopardy

"On 8 June a classy crop of hard boiled couch potatoes went, under their own steam, to the studios of Channel Ten to witness a taping of "Jeopardy". We were ushered into the cavernous auditorium and directed to our section of the spartan seating while a small army of technocrats prepared the set. The audience was composed in equal plethoric parts of pesky prepubescent primary protopersons and a profusion of pruinose Probophytes, whose contrasting ages were a source of continuous banter by the young comedian who was engaged to warm us up before the substantialization of Tony Barber in his non-reflective form. The electronic wizardry of the set, the urbanity of the host, the generosity of the prizes and the skill of the contestants were not enough to save the commercial skin of the enterprise and it has sunk from view."

The mid-year meeting on 15 June saw the induction of Chris Henry and Lew Patten. The ten-minute address by Darrell Cranch was on the topic of St Helena Island.

The members were then privileged to welcome a remarkable woman who entitled her most moving address *'The Destiny of One Life'*. Her name is Masha Gintel, and she came courageously forth to counter first-hand the rantings of David Irving, who would have the world believe that the holocaust is a fiction concocted by international Zionists to further their hidden agenda.

No pin would have dared to drop as Masha began her life story at the outbreak of WW2 when she was the twelve-year-old daughter of a successful family which had built up a thriving department store in the provincial town of Czechow near Krakow.

By a quirk of fortune Masha's cousin, who had been forced out of Germany in 1935, was used for administrative purposes in the Ghetto by the Gestapo, because of his fluent German, and he happened to be responsible for drawing up the daily list of street sweepers, who were escorted under armed guard to be humiliated for their inexpedient ethnicity. The cousin made sure that young Masha was always part of that detail. The locals were mixed in their attitude towards the persecution, for anti-Semitism was widespread, but some Samaritans risked their lives to place food where the sweepers could find it, and one day the food was accompanied by a note which offered a chance of rescue from the Ghetto.

The plan worked and Masha was spirited through the electrified fence, given a Catholic prayer book to clutch and led on foot overland to a railway station where she would not be recognised by any hostile natives. After a train journey and more trekking she was taken into hiding in the roof space of a stable, at great risk to the farmer who fed and watered his eleven guests through the bleakest days of the war. When the stable was hit by a Russian bomb two of her companions were killed, but Masha was unscathed and destined to escape the scourge which robbed the world of 47 members of her family.

Mid-year President's Luncheon

There was no meeting in July but instead, a sociable selection from the Club's 125 members enjoyed the annual President's luncheon in the company of their partners and friends. The catering by Alain was excellent and the festivity was rounded off by a competition between the tables, in which photographic likenesses of a host of celebrities had to be identified and named.

Science and Sewage

"On 4 August members visited Scienceworks, the museum of technology. This splendid facility enables the curious to participate in demonstrations of the laws which bind us and to wonder at man's ingenuity at turning those laws to his own advantage. Models and exhibits have been so skilfully presented that the speed of our technological evolution comes into sharp focus. But there was no under representation by those young enough to see Earth from Mars, as Spotswood is a purpose built Mecca for scads of lads and masses of lasses from myriad classes, all armed with notepads and tooth-pocked pencils as they wage a ceaseless war against their native innocence.

"Then followed a guided tour of the pumping station whose superseded purlicus provide the site for Scienceworks. It was commenced in 1893 as part of the grand sewage disposal system for Melbourne, which was to cost no less than £5m and relieve the City of the ecological and health problems accumulated since its inception 55 years before. The quality of its architecture was inversely proportional to the standing of its throughput, for it was built in the style of Versailles and is justly classified as a gem by the National Trust.

"The original ten-foot diameter brick sewer was excavated at enormous cost, since it claimed a life for every mile of its construction. To this day the trunk sewer flows under the old pumping station and a glass panel allows those of an incurably romantic bent to catch a parting glimpse of their Cartier watch that they inadvertently flushed four hours earlier.

The meeting on 17 August commenced with a silent tribute to Don Hensher who had been assistant secretary and as calligrapher produced beautifully lettered member name tags. Ron Hunter was inducted into the Club and Don Campbell delivered the ten-minute talk about financial advice.

We hollered for a Marshall

The main speaker was Marshall Wilson, editor of Australia's international business magazine *Overseas Trading*. This is part of the newsletter report:

"Marshall is South African by birth, a journalist by training and a financial expert by experience. He worked in Canada and the UK before coming to Australia in 1980 as an investigative journalist on the *Age* and on the *Australian*.

"Marshall reminded us that a successful export drive was the only solution to the desperate woes which currently beset Australia, whose deficit is in the region of 160 billion dollars, as compared with the manageable 18 gigabucks a decade ago. ...

"He agreed with Senators Walsh and Button that the parlous predicament of Australia was the result of our having clung to the belief that we could maintain our standard of living by relying on our primary producers to save our bacon. Although the restructuring process was now well in train and some goods were being made at close to world's best practice, until recently manufacturers had been content to view exports as an inconvenient way to offload surplus and substandard goods produced for the domestic market. The delay in learning the lesson saw Australia flooded with the exports of more efficient overseas producers and governments prepared to allow us to maintain our lifestyle on the never never. ...

"The top ten trading partners in order of importance are currently: Japan, USA, Singapore, South

Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong, UK, China and Indonesia. It is apparent that South East Asia is the fastest growing trade area of the world, but exports to Britain in the last year grew faster than those in any other market (33%) and Marshall urged us not to turn our backs on our traditional friends for reasons of philosophical expediency. And yet he maintained that there was no such thing as a traditional market; the US was entitled to sell wheat wherever it could, and it was up to us to find and exploit more buyers for our goods without relying on demarcation or favoured status."

Forty-second Street

Hugh enjoyed the musical outing in September and again we quote:

"On a rainy 8 September a musical score was conducted to seats in the dress circle of Her Majesty's to enjoy a matinee performance of 42nd Street. From that vantage point we could look down upon a sea of 'silver threads among the bald' bobbing in time to the tunes which had set their young feet tapping sixty years before.

"The production was crisp, the dancing accurate, the acting reasonable and the orchestra first rate, so it was a chattersome and animated chorus of nostalgics who bounced down the graceful staircase into the fading light of a damp city afternoon, wondering where those 60 years had gone."

Members attending the meeting on 21 September approved the appearance of the curtains after they had been cleaned, repaired and re-hung for \$350. John Kelly was welcomed into the Club

September Speakers excelled

At this meeting 73 members enjoyed one of those robust Probus times which make the Club so worthwhile. Before tea the members heard Andrew Watson talk about the Court Network to which he is so committed. Andy pointed out that lawcourts are a daunting theatre for those of us unfamiliar with their workings, so the volunteers who participate in his organization help the uninitiated offender, plaintiff or witness to do justice to their respective roles in the drastic drama about to unfurl. He said there was a small percentage of the constabulary who exceed their warrant and he advised us all to be aware of our rights as well as our obligations as citizens.

After refreshments Mac Grant delivered a spectacular address about our relations with Indonesia. He began with a reference to Alan Renouf's assertion that Australia's external affairs had been dominated by a succession of concerns about the difficulty of maintaining a sparsely populated British outpost in south east Asia. Our resources had been marshalled to defend these shores in turn against possible

invasion by the Russians, Chinese, Germans, Japanese and more recently the Indonesians. Mac felt that the fear of Jakarta's intentions had been greatly exacerbated by a hostile press and he set about the task of bringing the question into perspective, drawing on his deep understanding of that country gained as a resident diplomat. He pointed out that our northern neighbour had the fifth largest population in the world, was the largest Moslem country and consisted of thirteen thousand islands, many ethnic groups, cultures and a variety of population densities.

The country had been given a sense of unity by Soekano, who made the teaching of Bahasa compulsory throughout. It was some consolation to the Indonesiaphobe that attempts to redistribute the population from Java, which has 90 million people, to less densely populated areas have failed because of their sense of identity with the island.

Mac gave a compact history of the country, from the discovery of the Spice Islands in the 15th century, through the colonial occupation, the uprising against the Dutch after WW2, the shift from the Marxism of Soekano to the right wing policies of Suharto, and rounded off his fascinating talk with his appraisal of the East Timor situation.

Blooming Rhodendrons

As usual Hugh reported the outing of 6 October:

"Nearly forty really naughty clearly haughty culture vultures went per Ventura to view the Rhododendron Garden at Olinda. On arrival we devotees of Devon teas were led into the refreshment area and thirty-something breakfasts somewhat grudgingly made room for the interloping scones and cream. Then a lady volunteer took us under her botanic wing and guided us through a dazzling array of phanerogams, explaining the origins of the display.

"The Rhododendron Society approached Henry Bolte in 1960 for help in setting up a permanent attraction in the hills and he granted them a convenient buffer zone between two forests which would, in theory, act as a firebreak. The fledgling project was destroyed by fire thirty years ago, but has since gone from strength to strength.

Then it was time to descend into the pristine precincts of the Silvan Dam for lunch. Coachman Ken swiftly changed hats and in two shakes of a lamb's loin chop the spring sunshine was awaft with that blue haze which speaks so clearly to the inner man. We set the world to rights over wine or water, then many hands made light work of the dishes. This was a day to remember and we are grateful to both the Ralphs.

Seventy-seven members attended the meeting on 19 October and stood for a silent tribute to Jim Knott.

The 10-minute man was Ken Tinkler, who gave the brief address about his passion for miniature railways. Ken took us back to his childhood in Wonthaggi, where he first came under the spell of the steam engines which supplied power to the local mines. He has devoted much of his life to developing the range of skills necessary to produce the working models which now offer a permanent attraction at the site in Rowans Road, Moorabbin. Ken showed us some samples of the tiny scale models which are factory made and imported from Germany, but his major interest is in the larger hand-made versions, and he has offered us the opportunity to view the display as a Club activity at a time to be arranged.

The wonder of Optical Fibre

After the break Graeme Watson spoke on behalf of Telecom and revealed some of the wonders which are in the communications pipeline. He started by indicating the scale of Telecom's operations, which involve the expenditure of \$3 bn annually to give our country one of the most advanced systems in the world. Sixty-five million is spent on R & D and among the technical advances pioneered in this country is the use of optical fibre for the transmission of information. He described the pyramidal structure of the network, grouping the discrete copper wiring from the individual houses into ever heavier tributary looms until they reach the trunk lines which link our cities.

Traditionally these trunk lines were of copper and caused great engineering problems because of their sensitivity to static interference induced by electromagnetic activity and their attraction to lightning strike. The resistance of the metal was such that booster stations had to be introduced at four and a half-kilometer intervals to keep the analog message audible at its intended destination. Now that the major cities are linked by the sort of lightweight optical fibre cable which Graeme passed around for inspection, many of the expensive problems have been obviated; the digital laser pulse coursing along the glass thread is impervious to outside interference other than the gross physical, and the resistance of the glass is so low that the signal can be cheaply restored to its original form by the intervention of solar powered repeater stations at fifty kilometer intervals. Multiplexing, which means condensing numbers of messages into one circuit, was possible in the analog system, but the maximum number of conversations that could be packed into the four copper wires necessary for communication was 120, whereas with optical fibre 30,000 calls can use the same single fibre simultaneously.

On November 8 an eclectic sect of effectual intellectuals sallied forth on a three-day ecotour through Gippsland. Our first major stop was Walhalla, where we descended unexpected upon the hapless sole purveyor of snappy snacks, and whose anticipation of a quiet day had prompted him to face it single handed. He coped admirably while we mused in the sunshine about the lives of the miners who had eviscerated the surrounding hills in a flurry of oresome pickwork.

Then we wended our way to Yarram where the Tarra Motel turned out to be lean, comfortable and diner friendly. That evening, while the wholesome set set about their devotions, the wanton repaired to the local poky-torium and squandered their substance upon the insatiable foramen.

Next morning we took in the Port Albert maritime museum, then ascended to Tarra-Bulga in a white-knuckle ride up a winding track which had been excavated from the mountainside by minimalist engineers. On several occasions the mighty Merc had to back and fill with its rump overhanging the sheer and crumbling shoulder, as Lindsay negotiated meanders. The recent rains had dislodged a rock fall not far from our goal and we all had to walk past the obstruction while heavy equipment cleared a path for the bus. But we lived to tell the tale, picnicked at Bulga and returned to Yarram via the Grand Ridge. On the Wednesday we explored Wilsons Prom and the coach arrived home full of hasbeens full of beans.

The last meeting of the year

On 16 November the 10 minute address was given by Howard Dunn, his subject was the history of the Wesley Mission. We heard how the 'serving church' established a congregation in Lonsdale St, in 1858, and built the current Mission premises in 1893, during the depression which brought undesirables to

that part of the city. Sunday afternoon concerts were arranged, training and employment opportunities were organised and a tradition was established for service to those in need.

Today 35,000 members of the public call 'Lifeline' annually and the 'Do Care' program provides assistance, advice and transport through a network of affiliated churches. Georgina House provides shelter to disadvantaged girls, Arden House tends 90 men who would otherwise be homeless.

Tally Ho, the Princess Mary Club and Moreland House all provide services to the disadvantaged and are staffed mainly by volunteers.

Patently law abiding

The major speaker was Wayne Slater, a South African recently settled here who spoke about the laws covering patents. The law protects the interests of the creator of intellectual property and limits the use which others may make of it, enabling the creator to profit from the time and effort invested in the product.

The philosophy underlying the law is that it is in the public interest for improvements to be made in design or technique and that such improvements will be encouraged by exclusivity until the concept goes into the public domain after sixteen years of protection.

Wayne pointed out that innovation fell into four categories each of which could be protected by a separate law; patents protected inventions like kitchen gadgets, copyright covered artistic creativity, the Designs Act protected registered products like chairs

from being copied for their aesthetic appeal, and lastly, the Trademarks Act protects a business from freeloaders.

Geoff Kirton agreed to assist Ralph Butcher with the functions portfolio after the resignation of Ralph Le Grand from that post. The Christmas luncheon on 1 December was their first joint effort and proved to be a most enjoyable day.

And so 1993 ended with the following members "on a roll":

J W Allen, W H Allan, K J Anderson, G C Appleby, K M Armstrong, L G Armstrong, A B Avery, F W Barry-Brown, L R Baster, R G Bathols, P Baxter, C M Berry, F K Beyer, F Biencourt, J Brimage, T F Brown, J E Burgeson, R D Butcher, D M Campbell, N Caris, I T Carne, S G Carpenter, N K Christie, L M Colechin, A P Cox, D O Cranch, R J Crawford, D N Crook, J H Crozier, W N Cust, R Davey, M J Davidson, E K Dawson, K E Deller, K M Deutsher, J Doeg, R G Donovan, H J Dunn, G Dunscombe, J B Eden, J W Elischer, R H Elliott, F S Elson, G L Epstein, P J Epstein, M W Etccl, E G Field, L G Fox, J R Freer, A H Gasson, H J F Gerrand, E J Glenn, C S Gloe, H F Gowers, W H Grant, R H Gregory, J B Hamann, B Hambleton, M Hancock, J Harper, J Harris, B W Hart, C Henry, J C Hillman, W R Hogarth, J R Hunter, N H Ineson, E J Jamieson, W H Johnson, D C Keating, J J Kelly, G W Kirton, J Knott, H K Kruse, R F Le Grand, P J Mahon, G H Mason, R S Matthews, B McAllister, I McDonald, R K McKinnon, C R Meade, E B Montfort, C R Oakley, D T O'Loughlin, D W Parry, M C Parsons, T E Partleton, L J Patten, A K Penaluna, T Power, V A Proposch, B E Reaby, J A Reith, K C Reynolds, T F Richards, G Ristrom, H W Robbins, W D Roberts, E P Rogan, L P Ross, G W Royston, J W Schulz, J L Sercombe, W Shepherd, D N Skinner, A W Small, P M Smith, A W Steinfort, H A Stevens, E W Sunderland, A L Taylor, R J Taylor, C M Thomas, B Thompson, K T Tinkler, R B Trimmer, S F Varcoe, C A Walker, J E Wallace, J D Warburton, H S Warren, J W Waters, R L Waters, A J Watson, J P West, M Williams and J B Yelland.