



PROBUS

PROBUS CLUB OF BEAUMARIS Inc.
Reg No. A 001-6598G
Correspondence to Box 57, PO Black Rock, 3193

Issue No. 235

July 2009

Next Meeting: 10 am Tuesday July 21 at Beaumaris RSL

Investment Group 9 am each month.
No 10 -Minute Speaker this month: Three inductees instead



Keynote Speaker: Michael Thurston US Consul-General
Topic: US-Australia Relations Under President Obama

The Consul-General maintains contact with senior Australian officials, both state and federal, and keeps the Embassy and Washington informed of any important political or economic developments affecting US interests. Michael will address some of the key issues affecting both countries; in particular, President Obama's first 100 days, impacts of the global financial crisis, Afghanistan and 'Iraq: A Perspective From the Front.' He will also take questions.

Office Bearers 2009

President:	Geoff Wade	9588 2593
Vice President:	Eric Slater	9589 3526
Imm/Past Pres:	Noel Ineson	9589 5263
Hon Secretary	John Howe	9598 2429
Hon Treasurer:	David Robertson	9551 1930
Functions:	Alan Farmer	9598 2791
Functions Asst:	Robert Dun	9589 5456
Meetings Coord:	Bill Green	9596 1548
Meetings Asst:	Duncan Gibson	9585 3547
Almoner:	Andrew Watson	9589 5913
Hon. Auditor:	Neil Jones	9583 9315
Newsletter:	Peter McGregor	9533 4760

Group Leaders 2009

Investment :	John Brimage	9584 6349
Music/Opera :	Barry Amond	9589 1143
Theatres :	Allan Taylor	9521 6180
"Grape vine" :	Roy Petch	9589 5757
Bowls :	Ted Montfort	9589 5949
Prisms:	Bill Davis	9592 5982
Art:	Paul Crompton	9583 1310
Transport:	Roy Spalding	9589 5608
Recorder:	Alan Williams	9598 7550
Archivist:	Roy Petch	9589 5757
President's Table:	Ken Lucas	9584 5545

FROM THE PRESIDENT



"If you have any friends who may be interested in joining Probus, this would be an excellent opportunity to invite them to illustrate the calibre of the speakers they can expect"

This month should be an exciting one for the Probus Club of Beaumaris. We expect to induct three new members, have a new catering team providing lunch for us and have an important person, the Consul-General for the United States as our guest speaker. It will be very interesting to hear what Mr Michael Thurston says we can expect in US-Australia relations under the Presidency of Barack Obama.

Of interest to many will be what we can expect from the change in catering duties at the RSL club. Secretary John Howe, our Meeting Co-ordinator, Bill Green, and I met with Tionie from Black Mussel Catering. The purpose of the meeting was to find out what they can offer us and to let them know what we would like. See **Catering p4** for more.

Secretary, John Howe, and I attended the 25th anniversary meeting of the Brighton Men's Probus Club on Wednesday, July 8. Guest Speaker at the meeting was Bayside Mayor, Cr James Long. A Past President, Richard Gilmour, gave a talk on the history of the club; of particular interest was the announcement at the meeting that as from July 1, the club had changed its name from the Probus Club of Brighton to Brighton Men's Probus Club in recognition of the belief that the community more and more associates Probus as an organisation for ladies - an image problem members believe must be addressed.

Finally, as we will induct three new Members at this Meeting, we will not be having a 10-minute speaker. This will allow inductees to give their two-minute biography as usual and for the business session to finish before our guest speaker arrives. If you have any friends who you think may be interested in Probus, this is an excellent opportunity to invite them to illustrate the calibre of speakers they can expect. I look forward to seeing you all on July 21.

Geoff Wade

1999-2009

Right: George Fabiny being presented with his 10-year pin by President Geoff at the June Meeting. What happened in 1999? The Euro was established; in Russia, Yeltsin resigned to make way for Putin as President; a 5.9 earthquake rocked Athens and one in Colombia killed 1 000; Falun Gong was banned in China; King Hussein of Jordan died; the Dow Jones closed at 11 000 pts for the first time; Helen Clark became the first female PM in NZ.



Rice-growing and Water

Allan Williams



Les Gordon talks to President Geoff about why there has been no rice grown in NSW's Riverina for the past three years

These farms produce some of the highest yields of rice in the world, despite increasingly using less water and with less comparable land under cultivation.

Keynote Speaker for June was Les Gordon, President of the Rice-growers Association. In addition to running a family farm, plus membership of numerous other related committees - including the National Farmers Federation Water Committee - Les has involved himself in a number of environmental issues relating to water allocations, land care and irrigation efficiency.

His talk related to the rise and current difficulties often encountered by rice-growers in the Murray Valley area of NSW known as the Riverina, predominately flat country with high salt levels and a clay base. After laser levelling and/or sloping to aid the flow of irrigated water, coupled with an ideal climate, the conditions for the cultivation of quality medium grain rice is excellent. Farms are mainly

family-run operations comprising approximately five small soldier settlement holdings combined into one viable property. These farms produce some of the highest yields of rice in the world, despite increasingly using less water and with less comparable land under cultivation. It is a hi-tech business with seed spread across the fields by aircraft in September and harvested when the land dries in March. A typical 4-5 hectare property can be worked effectively by three family members - a more efficient use of labour than Asian rice-paddies. Not only is the yield world class but the quality of the rice is also ranked amongst the highest in the world, aided by the use of advanced quality testing technology which photographs every grain of rice in the mill before packaging. Poor quality grains are rejected by the machine and hived off for use as stock feed. Rice crops in the Riverina normally achieve 8-10 tonnes per hectare compared with about 3-4 tonnes around Lake Argyle in the northwest Australia.

Listening to Les Gordon's explanation of the complexities of the water allocation scheme and how priority is given, first, to human needs - that is, industry and intensive farming such as grapes, fruit trees and others - and then environmental river flows, followed by pastures, crops and rice - 'last cab off the rank' (provided any water remains) - it was obvious to all of us why there has been no rice grown in the Riverina for the past three years !

Alan Williams.

How much water? A single slice of bread takes 40 litres of water to produce. A cup of coffee from plantation to cup uses an equivalent of 140 litres. An egg: 135. Glass of milk: 200. A 200g steak: 5 000 litres. Rice: 69 litres.

Monthly Profile

Alan Nash

All rugged up for the local footy

Alan began his maritime career as an Engineer Cadet in 1953 with Shell Tankers in the UK.

On completion, he sailed for four years on various oil tankers until he decided to go to Hong Kong, working for Jardine Mathieson. He replaced an engineer - 'luckily his shoes fitted me perfectly', he says - which dropped him into a golfing quartet playing on some of the top courses in Australia, and on the private golf-course of the Sultan of Selangor in Malaysia! (Which helps to explain, perhaps, why he was able to run the Howlong Golf trip so successfully for a number of years.) His final 33 years were with Howard Smith, 30 of those as Chief Engineer.

Alan has been a prolific worker for Beaumaris Probus since he joined in 1999. He was first invited to join by an acquaintance, Jack Warburton, whom he knew casually at Southern Golf Club. One day, after showing him and his grandson over his tug, berthed at Stony Point jetty, Jack invited him to attend a Probus meeting where he was impressed by the warm hospitality. He soon joined the club and by March that year was Assistant Functions Co-ordinator - not long after which he was appointed Functions Co-ordinator, which saw him leading groups to a variety of exotic locations including the South Island of New Zealand, China, Norfolk Island, Vietnam, Cambo-



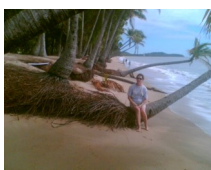
dia, Thailand and Italy; not to mention Australia.

All his life, he has been interested in horse racing, and attends races whenever possible - 'I do enjoy a day at the races' - but he is notorious for wagering no more than a one dollar place bet each time. "I just like looking at horses," Alan says. Doesn't matter how far he has to travel - he even attended the centenary of the Birdsville Cup in 1982. He is a past member of the VATC and once had a starter in the Caulfield Cup as a member of a racing syndicate. Football is another of his passions (a loyal St Kilda, follower) but he loves nothing better than to watch the Beaumaris Sharks and support Amateur Football. His other lifelong interests include jazz - modern, big bands, traditional - and theatre, regularly attending the MTC, the Brighton and Mordialloc theatre groups. "I do enjoy live theatre," he says, but admits that he and wife Margaret recently walked out of an MTC production halfway through because it was so bad. He is particularly proud of his long involvement with Legacy - thanks to Ralph Butcher - where he is currently Contact Secretary/Welfare Officer for the Sandringham/Mordialloc branch, helping widows fill out the paperwork necessary to access their pensions and entitlements.

What he loves about Probus Beaumaris is the opportunity to mix with wonderful people from diverse backgrounds. "I love it," he says.

FUNCTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Alan Farmer & Robert Dun



July

Visit to the **Port of Melbourne**, Tuesday July 28.

The Port of Melbourne is the largest container port in Australia and handles more than two million containers per year, both imports and exports. It is responsible for the current dredging of the Bay to sustain and enlarge trade. There is still time to attend this fascinating event by making payment at our July Meeting. **Cost: \$46 pp**

August



Bushfire Area, Kinglake District

This is a combined tour with members of the Probus Club of Beaumaris Bay to a bushfire-ravaged area. It 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 Quinces to a local area of need.) Lunch will be at the local hotel. **Cost: \$42 pp.**

Pick up at Community Centre 9.30 am; return: 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 to be made at July Meeting.

September

Howlong Golf Tournament See p4

October

Tour of Wineries on the Mornington Peninsula.

A comprehensive tour of peninsula wineries— including wine tastings and lunch at selected wineries – is in the process of being organised. The majority of the region's vineyards - a unique maritime wine region where vines thrive in a cool climate - are small family operations.

Mainly pinot noir, char-



donnay; also pinot grigio, shiraz.

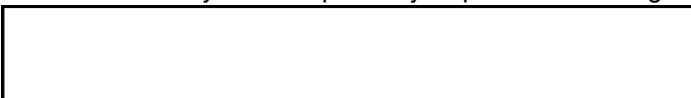
November

King Island Tour - three nights from November 30 to December 3. Time is running out to book this delightful tour - by coach to Tullamarine, plane to King Island with bus tours of the island.

Cost: \$1055 pp twin share for 15 or more, or \$ 1080 for 10-14 people. Maximum places available: 26 people. This tour will definitely proceed now with our numbers boosted by 12 Beaumaris Bay members occupying 7 of the 13 rooms available.

Deposit: \$150 pp. Due to the number of applications for rooms, our Members should pay their deposit by our July Meeting. There may still be several rooms available for Members who wish to participate.

NOTE: Final Payment: required by September Meeting.



2010

New Zealand Trip in March or April

Whether this trip proceeds will depend on the level of Members' interest. Robert has contacted all those who indicated their interest at our previous meetings.

and will report at our July Meeting. Tentative date: just before or after Easter.



Straw Poll

We plan to conduct a straw poll on 2010 trips at our July Meeting to establish your interest in:

1 A Trip to **Turkey**. Robert has recently returned from a 15-day 'Treasures of Turkey' tour. He reports that it was

a very good tour and excellent value for money.

2 A full or part trip on 'the Ghan' to Darwin.



Dinner by Candlelight

Some 67 Probians and partners enjoyed the Candlelight Dinner at the Beaumaris RSL Club on Wednesday June 10. It was cold outside, but inside the atmosphere and friendship were warm. This was to be the last evening function for our Club with Scott, the RSL chef. There were some five or six main courses and four desserts to choose from, and they were served efficiently and to the normal good standard. Scott was requested to come into the dining room after dinner where we thanked him for his culinary expertise in his time with the RSL. At this point, we were somewhat surprised to be informed that one of the famous three tenors was available to entertain us! We were not to be disappointed with the entertainment, even though there appeared to be a last-minute cancellation by the noted tenor and Rod Murrell stepped in to fill the

■ **TRAVEL QUIZ:** List the top seven destinations for people leaving from Melbourne airport. Answer: see p4

True Confessions of a Newsagent



Living in Richmond as a young lad, Stan started his career in a Swan St sub-agency selling the Herald every night on the footpath

Stan Bernhard's talk related to his achievements in the newsagency industry - beginning with his first job as a junior in a sub-agency to his retirement some 45 years later from his own newsagency in Beaumaris. Living in Richmond as a young lad, he started his career in a Swan Street sub-agency selling the *Herald* every night on the footpath and the very popular *Sporting Globe* on Saturday nights. This included visits to the famous Riverside Inn where he was obliged to wear a collar-and-tie to enter the dining room to sell his newspapers. The newsagent also had a franchise to import English toys, including famous names of the era - Hornby, Meccano and Dinky toys. Other products stocked by the sub-agent included 78 rpm records which were in great demand, particularly in the late 40s and 50s. Stan's entrepreneurial skills came to the fore when he set up a kiosk outside Richmond Station, not just with newspapers, but such items as chocolates and sweets he had purchased from supermarkets to sell to the 20 000 or 30 000 football fans who flowed through the station every Saturday. Greetings cards were also a good seller with sales of perhaps 1 000 per day. Today, competition from \$2 shops and the like has impacted on sales of those products quite severely. For a change of pace, Stan spent three months long service leave working in a Foodland warehouse but, despite being offered a good permanent position, he was happy to return to his favourite occupation where he enjoyed every day of work and ultimately retired with great memories of the newsagency industry. Allan Williams

New Catering Arrangements



As a result of a meeting between Geoff Wade, John Howe and Bill Green - with Tionie from Black Mussel Catering - we have been able to retain the cost of our lunches at \$15.00. BMC have stated their intention to improve the quality of meals at the current cost. Choices will be very similar to the past, although there may be a slight reduction in quantity. The possibility of an option for a light lunch, as well as the full lunch as at present, is being discussed and may be introduced in the future. Importantly, your Committee welcomes comments from Members regarding lunches under the new caterers.

QUICK QUIZ:

- Q: What percentage of China's population is communist?
A: 17.5
Q: Why has Tegucigalpa been in the news lately?
A: The capital of Honduras
Q: Population of the United States?
A: 303 853 000 (July 2009)



NOTICEBOARD

Opera and Music Groups

Barry



Amond

The next Opera Evening will be on Wednesday August 26 at 7 pm - details in August Newsletter. The Music Group will next meet on Wednesday September 23 at 7 pm. At the recent Music Evening, 31 people enjoyed an excerpt from *Singing in the Rain*, some Mozart, Borodin, Rodrigo and Chopin. Not to mention a stunning performance by the great and lovely Russian soprano Anna Netrebko.

Theatre Group

MORDIALLOC THEATRE COMPANY

The fourth play for the year, *Minefields & Miniskirts* will be on Wednesday evening, September 16. Tickets at \$14 must be paid at July Meeting.

CHICAGO

We have 24 starters- Wednesday September 9 at 1 pm. At Her Majesty's. Tickets available at July Meeting.

HIGH SOCIETY

The Cheltenham Light Opera Company's production of the Cole Porter musical will be in October. I hope to have details at July Meeting. Allan Taylor

Howlong Golf: September 27-30

This meeting will be the last meeting that we will be able to take bookings for the annual Howlong golf trip. We must advise firm numbers by middle of August, (before our August Meeting), so this is the last chance to join us for a great three days of golf and fellowship. Contact me before or at this July Meeting if you would like to be in it. **Cost: \$80 pp per night for 4 nights** - which includes golf, continental breakfast, accommodation, and vouchers for evening meal in the bistro. Great value! Competition fee: \$10 (for great prizes and trophies). Geoff Wade

TASTES: Special Winter Wine & Food Experience

Sumptuous Thai Banquet: Thursday August 6 (curries and chillies mild only). Our tireless Tastes research team has been and checked out Thai Rani in Bluff Road, near the Sandy Hospital. **At the reasonable price of \$35 a head.** Just think hot and sour soup, Thai spring rolls, minced pork and ginger, Penang lamb, stir-fried prawns, Asian vegetables and jasmine rice. The really 'hot' news is that our very own Barry Amond has agreed to be our Cellarmaster for this unique experience. Wine for purchase. NOTE: To be part of this Thai action, **you need to pay us in full at the July Meeting.**



Contacts: Geoff Wade & Peter McGregor

Next Month: Our own Bill Davis will be the Keynote Speaker on the subject of 18th Century Drinking Glasses

Melbourne Airport's Top 7 Destinations:

Singapore, Bangkok, Auckland, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Christchurch and LA—in that order. (from p3)