



PROBUS

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

Issue No. 231

March 2009

Next Meeting: 10 am Tuesday March 17 at Beaumaris RSL

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Keynote Speaker: Jim Patton **Offshore Rigs**

Construction, installation and operation of offshore oil rigs around the world. There are many types of platforms but a typical oil production platform is self-sufficient in energy and water needs, housing electrical generation, water desalinators and all of the equipment necessary to process oil and gas such that it can be either delivered directly onshore by pipeline or to a Floating Storage Unit and/or tanker loading facility.

Investment Group: 9 am before the main Meeting. See Noticeboard (p4)

— Office Bearers, 2008 —

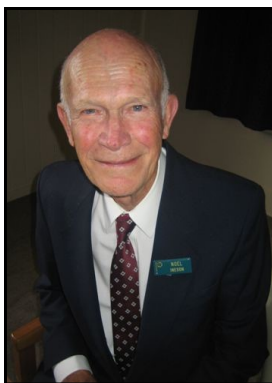
President:	Noel Ineson	9589 5263
Vice President:	Geoff Wade	9588 2593
Imm/Past Pres:	Bill Davis	9592 5982
Hon Secretary	Roy Petch	9589 5757
Hon Treasurer:	David Robertson	9551 1930
Functions Coord:	Alan Farmer	9598 2791
Functions Asst:	Robert Dun	9589 5456
Meeting Coord:	Don Lobb	9598 5546
Meetings Asst:	Eric Slater	9589 3526
Almoner:	Andrew Watson	9589 5913
Hon. Auditor:	Neil Jones	9598 3158
Newsletter:	Peter McGregor	9533 4760

Peter's email <peterb64@bigpond.net.au>

— Group Leaders —

Investment :	John Brimage	9584 6349
Music/Opera :	Barry Amond	9589 1143
Theatres :	Allan Taylor	9521 6180
"Grape vine" :	Keith Beyer	9888 3152
Bowls :	Ted Montfort	9589 5949
Prisms:	Bill Davis	9592 5982
Art:	Paul Crompton	9583 1310
Transport:	Roy Spalding	9589 5608
Speakers' Corner:	Alan Williams	9598 7550
Archivist:	Keith Beyer	9888 3152
President's Table:	Bill Green	9596 1548

FROM THE PRESIDENT



It has been particularly pleasing to me that my year has brought me into closer contact with so many of our Members.

We are most fortunate to have Jim Patton as our guest speaker. Jim has operated with many oil companies and governments around the world in an advisory and monitoring capacity regarding the planning, placement, engineering, offshore construction, and operation of these monumental structures. His talk will feature a fascinating video presentation.

My year as President will be completed with the hand over to Geoff Wade at our Annual General Meeting. It has been particularly pleasing to me that my year has brought me into closer contact with so many of our Members. I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking not only our capable and enthusiastic committee, group leaders and others who have assisted in the running of the club but also you, the Members, for your increasing support of our meetings and functions as the year has progressed.

Paul Crompton has produced an excellent video of the February talk by William Kininmonth on global warming. The graphs, which may have been difficult to view in detail at the meeting, are particularly clear. There are three copies available for viewing so, if you would like to borrow one, please contact me.

During February, there were two significant and successful club outings. Almost 60 people attended our first play at the Mordialloc Theatre Co to enjoy the comedy *Crimes of the Heart*. Then, Margaret and Barry Amond arranged what can only be described as a fantastic and exotic Christmas-cum-New Year's party for over 40 in the Music Group. After a very special meal - enhanced by Margaret's very own pavlovas— Barry entertained us with some breath-taking musical selections from outstanding international artists.

Thankyou to all leaders of interest groups and speakers who have made my year a success.

BLACK SATURDAY

These fires have changed forever the way we will think about the threat of bushfires in Australia



A black Saturday indeed. Not since the Ash Wednesday fires of 2003 had the people of Victoria seen the countryside and the forests alight and under such great threat as the early days of February. The anguish etched into the faces of families and individuals who ran for their lives to escape the encroaching fires is unforgettable and reverberated around the world. Can all that has been lost ever be replaced? Will those who have been driven from the bush with only the clothes they stood in be able to build again? Let us all keep these people in our thoughts in the coming months.

Geoff Wade



A member at Victoria for 10 years, Hugh lists golf as his main interest and plays three times a week

MONTHLY PROFILE

Hugh Stevens

Hugh Stevens is a Foundation Member of the Club. But, while he currently holds no official position, he is one of our regular 'posties', an 'old boy' network that ensures that hard copies of the newsletter are delivered far and wide. In earlier times, Hugh served as Secretary for the first 10 years - he says he didn't miss any of the outings in that time - and also produced the Newsletter from 1987–1998. Members still talk about the times when the Club depended on his critical involvement. Today, he sees his participation as more theoretical and only goes on an outing occasionally, but he values highly the good friendships he has made over the years. He was made a Life Member in 1998.

Looking back, he cites the visit to the Club of 'Weary' Dunlop in 1988 as the best experience he can remember. As Guest Speaker, this great Australian and veteran prisoner-of-war spoke about the wonderful people he had met over the years and those Australians he especially respected. In describing his own war experience, Hugh says he was drafted into the Intelligence Corps in England and spent his time in Graz, Austria, "interrogating Hitler's humbled and emaciated heroes as they arrived home from Stalin's PoW gulags."

Hugh lists golf as his main interest. He has been a member at Victoria Golf Club for 10 years and plays three times a week. "I love it," he says. "I like the company, I love the views on every hole and I manage to enjoy the occasional success." Wife, Rita, is also a member. His other major interest is the Internet because he has several friends in other countries (mainly Canada) with whom he 'chats' each week - mostly about the weather, there and here. Hugh has always had an interest in languages other than English - especially French and German - and still sometimes finds time to indulge his interest and read foreign texts. He was a teacher of languages at Melbourne High School - "He was quite a linguist," a friend said of him - retiring early after 21 years' service. At that point, he decided that the best thing for him was to spend the rest of his life playing golf; which is exactly what he has done.

Hugh admits to watching too much television, at the expense, he says, of uplifting reading matter, but his daily routine includes completing both *The Age* crosswords. His old XJ6 is the pride of his motoring life, handed to him when his father-in-law turned ninety. Hugh and Rita have three children and six grandchildren, one of whom is actress/singer, Holly Valance. His other claim to fame is that 1960s British comedian, Benny Hill, was his cousin.

Climate Change: A Natural Hazard

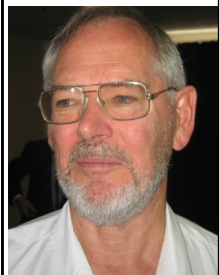
"These climate changes occurred long before the Industrial Revolution began pumping excessive amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere"

Our February Keynote Speaker, William Kininmonth, describes himself as a 'myth buster'. Controversial but well-credentialed, the former head of Australia's National Climate Centre attended the World Meteorological Commission for Climatology as the Australian representative from 1982 to 1998 and is the author of *Climate Change: A Natural Hazard*. His address, 'Global Warming by Humans - Fact or Fiction?' created plenty of interest amongst Members, indicated by the flood of stimulating questions and discussion at the end of his presentation.

In his authoritative way, Kininmonth refuted the 'alarmist' media reports alleging that our climate is deteriorating, the Earth has warmed to unprecedented levels and we are facing catastrophic and, possibly, irreversible climate change, as a result of human activity. He is one of a number who challenge the current orthodoxy that engulfs us everywhere we turn; for example, the former Chief Scientist in the UK, Sir David King, who has recently claimed that global warming by the end of the 21st century will be so extreme that Antarctica will be the only habitable continent on earth! Our speaker said he finds this an extraordinary statement and he reminded us that evidence from ice cores in Greenland and Antarctica show clearly quite extreme temperature changes have occurred over the past 500 000 years and that brief warming periods occur approximately every 100 000 years. History records several warmer periods - in mediaeval times, for example, when farming communities flourished in Greenland; and later in the 15th century, when the Little Ice Age froze the Thames and created havoc all over Europe. These climate changes occurred long before the Industrial Revolution began pumping excessive amounts of CO₂ into the atmosphere. Kininmonth is concerned that a lot of the computer modelling used in climate change forecasts has not taken into account the full extent of the cooling effects of evaporation coming from the oceans - that comprise 70% of the earth's surface. However, he believes that fossil fuels are a non-renewable source and, therefore, should be used judiciously, but he claims there are no theoretical grounds nor observational evidence to support the argument that changing concentrations of atmospheric CO₂ will have any significant impact on future climate or global temperatures.

Alan Williams

Mr Kininmonth provided a wealth of data to support his view that present climatic conditions are not unusual and that humans are not the source of the problem



FUNCTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Alan Farmer & Robert Dun



March

Wednesday 18: We have received an invitation from Ricketts Point Probus Club to join them on a Day Trip to Point Nepean National Park. The Bus leaves Beaumaris Community Centre at 9.45 am and Returns about 6 pm. The trip takes in Arthur's Seat before lunch at Dromana RSL, then on to Point Nepean. We appreciate this offer to our members - particularly those who have not been to Lord Howe Island the week before (I have no doubt they also will be welcome if they are up to it!) To book a place on this trip, please contact Ian Jones of Ricketts Point Probus Club (9589 1249).

April

Three-day trip planned for April 27 to April 29, based at the RACV Inverloch Resort, has been cancelled because of insufficient numbers.

May

A Day Trip, possibly to Eureka tower and Lunch/ Tour of Williamstown, is under discussion as a combined exercise with Ricketts Point. Negotiations are proceeding and we hope to have firm arrangements in the near future.

June

Candlelight dinner. Tuesday June 10, 7 pm for 7.30 pm at Furphies Restaurant, RSL, Beaumaris. This is a very popular event so your booking should be made as soon as possible. \$28 pp. Payment can be made at our next Meeting on March 17.

July

Visit to Port of Melbourne, Wed. July 29. This is said to be a fascinating tour, particularly for those of us living on the Bay which is currently being dredged to provide services to the Port of Melbourne.

August

Tour of wineries on Mornington Peninsula. Wed August 25. We are keen to have your suggestions about any peninsula wineries with which you are familiar that would be suitable for our group.

October

King Island Tour - three nights. Our planning indicates that this will be a delightful tour - by bus to Tullamarine, plane to King Island with bus coach tours of the Island. Visits and opportunities will be made to sample the world famous quality cheeses and dairy products as well as local breads, salads and other fresh foods. More details at our next Meeting. Cost: around \$1 200 pp.

Functions & Activities continued

November

OPTION ONE: Japan 'Autumn Leaves' Tour: 14 nights. We have had difficulty again in reaching required numbers for a long, expensive international tour. As planning must be made well in advance, we are seeking an indication at our next Meeting of the number of people who are very seriously interested in the Japan trip, to ensure that it is worth proceeding with planning and organising. The cost of our fully-escorted Autumn Gardens tour including air fares is approximately \$10 000.

Some have expressed concern that planned trips are too expensive, especially in these challenging financial times. Accordingly, we have been able to explore an alternative, less expensive tour of New Zealand for consideration by Members. (See gannet colony near Auckland, centre left.)

OPTION TWO: New Zealand Tour - 15 nights. This tour includes both islands, air fares and most dinners. On the same basis for costing as the Japan trip, it is expected to be approximately \$4 000 pp.

Please be prepared at our next Meeting to indicate whether you are seriously interested in joining one of these trips. We cannot do both NZ and Japan at this time, but if interest is sufficient in both, we can plan for the other at a future date. We will go ahead with organising on the basis of Members' indications of serious intent.

Lord Howe Island

An intrepid group of Probians set off for Lord Howe Island



as planned on March 2. A brief report from Alan Farmer has just been received:

"This is indeed a land of pristine beaches, perfect, but variable weather and welcoming locals. After travel to Sydney, we took a smallish plane for LHI. When we saw the size of the landing strip at LHI, we were not sure the plane was small enough. But the pilot was able to stop the plane before we ran into the lagoon - to the relief of us all. We later went for a most welcome and refreshing swim in the crystal clear waters of that same lagoon. Next day was packed with action and information and dramatic scenery, sheer cliff faces and cloud-engulfed mountain tops - all most spectacular. The ocean colours ranged from purple to blue to green to yellow and to the golden sands. Truly, an Island Paradise. The birds are many, varied and tame. The next day was spent picnicking, snorkelling, swimming and viewing turtles from a large glass-bottomed boat. Thank goodness today is a rest day, but some of us plan to play golf on the exquisitely beautiful golf course. Have enjoyed the trip immensely and have been well fed and 'watered' since our arrival."

Next month's Guest Speaker: Geoff Croker on Water

YOU'VE GOTTA LAUGH

We all know from school history that the Duke of Wellington defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. Trouble is, it's just not true. According to Peter McGregor's 10-minute talk on 'Myths, Scams and Hoaxes', many of the stories we take for granted are false; such as the gratitude shown by Randolph Churchill to the poor Scottish farmer who saved Churchill's son, Winston, from certain death in a bog. As a result, the legend says, the Churchills took the farmer's son, Alexander Fleming, and paid for his education through college and university where he studied medicine and later discovered the wonder drug, penicillin, which - wondrously - was used to save Winston from a near fatal attack of pneumonia in his later years. What goes around, comes around? Unfortunately not; this charming story is a myth. Another example of mythology is the widely-circulated Cancer Update from the John Hopkins Hospital in the USA on the danger of using plastic water bottles for drinking water and using plastic articles for food storage and food preparation. It began circulating the world in 1998. Alas, also not true! And the hospital is hopping mad that its name has been besmirched by such falsehoods. But misinformation comes in all shapes and sizes, including people closer to home advertising an 'ionising machine' to clear drinking water of its supposed harmful acid content - the cause of all major diseases, it says. The Byron Bay company claims this process could save us from the consequences of all diseases, from cancer to dandruff. Peter informed us that a Google search for 'ionised water' produces one site where a pharmacist describes such claims as 'snake oil on tap'. Others call it hocus-pocus. More information on myths, scams and hoaxes can be found on-line at www.urbanlegends.about.com and www.hoax.slayer.com. AW



TASTES



President Noel presents 20-year pins (L to R) to : Andy Watson, David O'Loughlin and Harold Warren. Recently re-signed, Bill Shepherd, qualified also. All Members joined in congratulating these worthy gentlemen.

This is an early advisory that our next *Tastes* night out will be the first Thursday in May. We have had several good suggestions and requests about venues and are currently exploring one or two local places. More information will be made available in the next Newsletter and you will be asked to pay the full amount at the April Meeting. Where possible, you will also receive an invitation by email.

John Howe will be our next Monthly Profile in the Newsletter in April

New Secretary, John Howe, at the February Committee Meeting, in the course of preparing to take the reins (as it were) from our current Secretary, Roy Petch.



NO-

TICEBOARD

CARERS

Our compassionate Almoner, Andy Watson, wants all and sundry to know the phone number for the Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres. So, here it is:

1800 059 059

These respite services, whose main task is to give carers a break, can be contacted 24 hours a day. Please pass this number on to anyone you know who is a carer in our community. See Andy for more details.

PRESIDENT'S LUNCH 2009

It has now been confirmed that this year's President's Lunch will be held at Southern Golf Club on Friday 11th December. Everyone (with partners) is/are invited.

VIDEO RECORD

Paul Crompton has offered to video each Guest Speaker's address in future, make three copies of the previous month's address and provide them for loan each month.

INVESTMENT GROUP

Review of the model portfolio to see if we may be over-invested. What we should reduce to take advantage of bargains arising in the latest market downturn? Also a video of interviews with key players in the credit crisis! JB

MUSIC & OPERA GROUPS

The next Music evening is on Wednesday March 25 at 7.30 pm. Please let me know if you wish to attend. The Opera Group will meet on Wednesday April 29. BA

THEATRE GROUP 2009

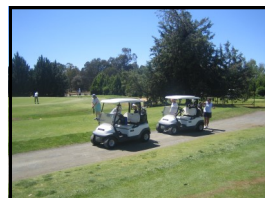
MORDIALLOC THEATRE COMPANY

The second play is on May 6, 8 pm, at 64 Parkers Road, Parkdale. Must pay at the March meeting. As we filled all 60 seats for the first play, it would be advisable for all Members to register their interest in the remaining three plays with me ASAP (and pay if you wish) so that I can reserve extra tickets if needed (\$14 per play).

MISS SAIGON

The Cheltenham Light Opera Company's first musical for 2009 is at the Alexander Theatre, Monash University, on Sunday afternoon, May 17, 2 pm. Only seven tickets left at \$35. Must pay at the March Meeting. Allan Taylor

GOLF IN SEPTEMBER



Howlong Country Club Annual Beaumaris Proboscis Golf Tournament, September 27-29. Please note the change this year to September from October in previous years. Anyone interested should contact Geoff Wade, who is the organiser of this activity each year. Deposit of \$70 per couple to be paid by this Meeting. We still have a couple of rooms available. If you have indicated you are going but haven't paid, please pay at this Meeting.