



Newsletter

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



Issue No. 242

March 2010

Next Meeting: 10 am Tuesday March 16 at Beaumaris RSL

Investment Group: The Prospects for Telstra: Time To Sell? 9 am before the main meeting.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Keynote Speaker: Dr David Smith

Former Victorian Director General of Agriculture

Topic: Green Myths About Farming Agriculture has a bad name in Australia, but some statements are made, and repeated, when a little deeper thought shows them to be quite meaningless. How many of these assertions are loose talk? What is myth? What is the evidence? [More information about David on p.3]

FROM THE PRESIDENT



As this is my final message before handing over to Eric Slater, I thought it appropriate that I reflect on the activities of the club over the past 12 months.

In March last year, I set a challenge to the club of introducing 10 new members during the year to ensure our club remained vibrant and strong. I congratulate the club on achieving that target with 11 new members being inducted and another new member approved at the last Committee Meeting. Due to the AGM taking up quite a bit of our time in March, John Pound will be inducted at the April meeting. Thankyou to all members who introduced new members to the club over the past year and I would like to encourage you all to continue to be on the lookout in the future for any suitable prospects.

Throughout the year, we have enjoyed a good range of guest speakers covering a wide range of topics - from piping water from Tasmania, Test cricket scoring, and old-English drinking glasses to James Tomkins' remarkable experiences as a six-time Olympic rower and gold medallist.

Also, our outings and trips have been varied and

interesting and, significantly, we have been able to successfully combine with several other clubs on some of our activities.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my term as President and I express my sincere thanks to a very able Committee and the team of group organisers. I congratulate Eric Slater on his appointment as your President and look forward to assisting him in any way I can.

Geoff Wade

Significantly, we have been able to successfully combine with several other clubs on some of our activities

BELOW: Retrospective of a Presidential year



Office Bearers, 2009-10

President: **Geoff Wade** 9588 2593
Vice President: **Eric Slater** 9589 3526
Past Pres: **Noel Ineson** 9589 5263
Secretary: **John Howe** 9598 2429
Treasurer: **David Robertson** 9551 1930
Functions: **Alan Farmer** 9598 2791
Functions Asst: **Robert Dun** 9589 5456
Meetings Co-ord: **Bill Green** 9596 1548

Meetgs Asst: **Duncan Gibson** 9585 3547
Almoner: **Andrew Watson** 9589 5913
Hon. Auditor: **Neil Jones** 9583 9315
Newsletter: **Peter McGregor** 9533 4760
Recorder: **Alan Williams** 9598 7550
Archivist: **Roy Petch** 9589 5757
Pres's Table: **Ken Lucas** 9584 5545

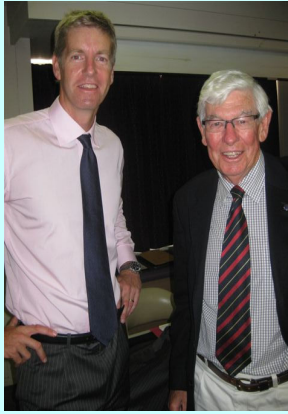
Group Leaders 2009-10

Investment: **John Brimage** 9584 6349
Music/Opera: **Barry Amond** 9589 1143
Theatre: **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

From Failure to Flag-Bearer

James and Probus member, father Bruce

Our Guest Speaker for February, James Tomkins, gave members an entertaining address in the form of a synopsis of his quite remarkable career in competitive rowing. He learned to row at Carey Grammar School and then continued his passion for the sport in his post-school years, gaining a place in the Victorian Kings Cup crew in 1985. He went on to row in many more regattas, eventually amassing 15 Kings Cup victories over the ensuing years. Throughout his career, he often rowed in different crews - from pairs to eights - winning world championships in them all, the only man in the world to achieve such a distinction.



James made the decision to change to coxless fours where the rowers themselves could be more involved in pre-race planning and strategies

James told us of his disappointment in failing to gain a medal in his first Olympics at Seoul in 1988 in the eights after they had won the World Championship two years prior. Because of the lack of flexibility of both the training regime and tactical approaches in the eights, James made the decision to change to coxless fours where the rowers themselves could be more involved in pre-race planning and strategies. As a result, the group developed into the famous 'Oarsome Foursome', winning both the world championships and then a gold medal in Barcelona in

1992. Although they went into the race as favourites, their warm-up routine was poor, which, coupled with heightened expectations from the rowing community, unsettled James' nerves. He confessed to always being edgy before a race. However, they did win a close finish for Gold - but, he said, "more with a feeling of relief than euphoria".

There was only one change in the crew before the Atlanta Olympics in 1996 but the team again won Gold. In 1999, James switched again, this time into coxless pairs and, with Drew Ginn, won the world championship - a total of seven. During planning for the Sydney 2000 Games, Ginn injured his back and a replacement had to be found quickly. In spite of the setback, the pair finished third for a bronze medal, only 1.3 seconds behind the winners. Back with Drew Ginn again in Athens 2004, the pair won Gold again, this time by such a considerable margin, as they glided down the last 250 metres, James was looking for his family in the crowd .

They did win a close finish for Gold - but, he said, "more with a feeling of relief than euphoria".

Finally, his huge disappointment in failing to win medals in Beijing was tempered by his appointment as Australia's flag-bearer. He described it as a very proud and emotional time for him leading a team of elite Australian athletes into the Games. After the closing ceremony, a large barbecue was held in the Australian area of the Olympic Village which was attended by dozens of international Olympians enjoying the aussie hospitality. As James explained, France and Australia were the only countries allowed to have alcohol in the village. Apparently this was considered by officials to be part of their culture!! Alan Williams

MONTHLY PROFILE Alan Williams

Alan likes nothing better than to sit at his piano and conjure up some of his favourite pop and jazz tunes for himself and others



We don't usually think of Australia as a producer of ladies' high-grade fashion shoes, but that was Alan's destiny when he left school in 1949 to join his father's shoe factory, where he quickly learnt the trade of pattern cutting. "What's not generally known," he says, "is that there are at least 74 operations in the making of a shoe." With the deterioration of his father's health in 1963, he was forced to find another job, "because I had a family and a mortgage." As a result, he joined another shoe company and became a director, travelling to the United States where he saw the future of shoe manufacturing: importing. Even though the US made good shoes, its local factories were beginning to feel the impact of imports from Europe, especially Italy and France. He set up a program to import quality leather from Italy and France so as to be able to compete and travelled back and forth to Europe at least 60 times. When his wife, Gwyn, joined him, she saw a unique opportunity to make matching leather handbags from the same materials. "It was perfect co-ordination," Alan says and worked very well for the

company. Later, he became President of the Footwear Manufacturers of Australia, and began a losing battle with the government on behalf of local manufacturers - all of which have now disappeared. "Where once Australia's shoe industry employed 100 000 people, today it all comes from China." He retired in 1999, after working for 50 years .

These days, he spends his time playing golf at Yarra Yarra twice a week, playing bridge - to keep his mind alert, he says - travelling and reading. He also plays piano, having studied classical piano as a child, although today it is mostly his version of pop and jazz - especially when friends call in and, after a few drinks around his bar, feel moved to sing. Like many others, he reads books on investing - "trying to make my superannuation spin out as long as I can" - but also crime and historical fiction. He has a list of about 40 writers whose books he seeks out when he goes to the library. He once had a power boat moored in the Mordialloc Creek but he says the Bay isn't suited to such activities. After 20 years, he realised that a boat was a hole in the water into which one pours money.

Alan really enjoys Beaumaris Probus and says the club has a reputation for being well-organised. The best part is the fellowship, he says, especially meeting other people who have 'gone through the mill' as he has. As our Recorder, he makes his special contribution each month by taking notes and writing summaries of the talks by members and visitors for the newsletter. [And does a very good job. Ed.]

FUNCTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Alan Farmer & Robert Dun

April

Melbourne Zoo and lunch at Moonee Valley Racecourse. Wednesday April 21



See Mali, the baby elephant and other unique residents of Melbourne's fabulous Zoo.

This should be a great trip! Bus departs at 8.45 am from the Community Centre, arriving at the Zoo around 10.00. There will be a guided Friends of the Zoo tour for one hour after which we are free to visit animals of our choice or just wander in the beautiful gardens.

THE ZOO

The zoo is set among flower gardens and picnic areas. Many of the animals are now organised in bio-climatic zones: African rainforest featuring gorillas, mandrills, pigmy hippos and parrots; Asian Rainforest with tigers and otters; and the Australian Bush with kangaroos, emus, koalas, echidnas and endangered hairy-nosed wombats. Some of the most popular exhibits also include the Butterfly House, the great flight aviary and the Trail of the Elephants.

At around 12.45 pm, the bus departs for a two-course lunch at Moonee Valley racecourse - and back to Beaumaris at approximately 4.00 pm.

Cost: \$54.00 (\$32 plus Zoo entrance \$22.00) NOTE: free entry for Friends of Zoo. Places are filling rapidly, so please book now! Final Payment at our next meeting.

May

Bright . Monday, May 17 - 20

Based at the Best Western High Country Motor Inn. Pack your bags!!



We have 35 participants at this stage. 12 participants from this Club, 15 from Beaumaris Bay and Ricketts Point, and 12 probables from Sandy Bay Probus Club.

Cost: As a result of the larger-than-expected numbers, the price is likely to be as low as \$510 pp with \$120 for a single supplement. The outstanding balance is to be paid at our March Meeting (\$410 pp, \$120 single supplement where applicable). See February newsletter for full details.

Departure is Monday May 17 from the Community Centre at 8.30 am, returning at about 5 pm Thursday May 20.

Also in May, Beaumaris Bay Probus has asked if any of our members would like to join them on an excursion to Puffing Billy - Thursday May 6. Train ride plus a 'Steam Cuisine Luncheon' served on the train (3 hours).

Normally it costs \$95.00 for such an experience - but only \$50.00 for us! Please note: The trip leaves from Belgrave so members must arrange travel themselves either by train to Belgrave, car or car pool. See the relevant brochure on our Functions table. If you are at all interested, tell us and Christine Preston will make contact with you direct. Absolute latest payment to Beaumaris Bay by April 20 - sooner preferred

June

Our Famous Mid-year Candlelight Dinner Wednesday June 23 7.00 pm



One of the NOT TO BE MISSED events of the year! The date is set so put it in your diary as we want a big roll up! Location and cost - to be announced.

July

A visit to the new special Titanic Exhibition at the Museum is being explored. Your interest in this unique exhibition will be requested at our next meeting. Please discuss with those you may like to take and inform us in a show of hands at the March Meeting.



August

How about a day-trip in that famous Floating Tramcar on the Maribyrnong River?

September

Vietnam Veterans' Museum and sections of Phillip Island.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DAVID SMITH

David is an elder of the agricultural science profession with a consuming passion for agriculture and the needs of rural people. He has filled just about every conceivable role in rural life, across sectors, at all levels, internationally and locally: first as boy on a dairy farm in the Adelaide Hills, an agriculture teacher on Eyre Peninsula; district agronomist in southeast SA; staff member, University of Melbourne; Chair, Rural Research & Development Corporations; then a farmer, Shire councillor, a member of Landcare and the Victorian Farmers Federation. He has travelled and worked widely in developing countries.

The Tribulations of a Travelling Salesman

Some members found the title for Alan Steven's address, Enjoying Going to Work, a little puzzling until he informed us with details of what his work entailed. Employed by Repco and PBR as an International Marketing Executive, he was obliged to travel extensively worldwide to service and expand the customer base for his company's many products. As a keen cricket fan, he could lighten the load by attending cricket matches and discussions on cricket within diverse countries such as India, Zimbabwe and even New Zealand - where, unfortunately, he arrived soon after the Trevor Chappell under-arm bowling incident which created a somewhat difficult atmosphere. However, another cricket 'hot spot', the Caribbean, turned out to be a good place to be because at the time he was there, the Windies Team was at its peak. On one occasion, he was quite fascinated by a recital of classical music played by a 13 year-old boy - on a steel drum! He found travelling through Asia a unique experience. On one occasion, he had to negotiate with a customer wearing grubby singlets, shorts and thongs - poor fellow - bargaining over prices and terms he claimed he could not afford. Only to meet the same individual in the evening for dinner, dressed in smart clothing, driving the latest Mercedes and drinking XO Cognac like beer. Alan also told us of the strange items selected from menus for him to try in China and the Philippines; for example, deep-fried scorpions and other disgusting dishes too impolite to mention here. His itinerary included many countries in South America, USA, and Canada, also Kenya, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and other countries in Africa. It was obvious to all of us that Alan enjoyed his work, especially the many and varied adventures he had along the way. Alan Williams



Alan Stevens (below) and a selection of his tasty deep-fried scorpions (left)



NEXT MONTH:

Indian Consul General, Ms Anita Naya, will speak about relations between India and Australia; and Stan Ryding will speak on, 'How I Became a Living Treasure'.

A PLEA FOR HELP

I have just uncovered seven small reels of film and would appreciate speaking with someone to help determine if they are 8 mm or super-8- someone who might advise me of the best way to check the contents of them. I did have a super-8 projector but gave it to the op-shop!

Rod Kelly

More Interesting Facts

Average size in square metres of new homes: UK 76.2, Italy 81.5, Greece 126, New Zealand 196.2, USA 201.5, AUSTRALIA 214.6.

Food for thought.



NOTICEBOARD

Howlong Golf 2010



Geoff Wade

Our annual golf trip to Howlong this year will take place from Sunday to Wednesday October 10-13. A deposit of \$40 per couple is required to confirm the booking - \$20 room deposit and 2 x \$10 competition costs.

Competitions will be conducted for both men and ladies. The program will be as in the past - play from 1:00 pm Monday, Howlong Country Club Trophy (Stableford); Tuesday from 11:00 am; and Warburton Heirloom Trophy (Par) from 8:00 am Wednesday. The putting competition will be conducted Wednesday from 2:00 pm followed by presentations. Non-golfing partners are very welcome and there will be two excursions organised for Tuesday pm and Wednesday morning.

The motel is fully booked for the four nights and the cost, payable to the motel on arrival is \$87 per room per night which covers accommodation, golf, continental breakfast, and meal voucher for the bistro in the club each night.

More details will be issued closer to the event.

Time is Running Out

David Robertson

New subscriptions for 2010 are \$60—with a reduction to \$55, if paid before March 31. Joining fee remains \$30. Payment can be made by direct debit. Account details as follows: BSB 063-144 Acc No 10121288, or at our monthly meetings. Please include your name and record that it is for Probus subscription.

Theatre

Allan Taylor

Mordialloc Theatre Company

The second play for 2010, a comedy, *Chaim's Love Song*, will be on Wednesday, May 5 at 8 pm. Tickets at \$16 must be paid by the March meeting.

Mamma Mia

30 tickets have been reserved for the return season at Her Majesty's Theatre, Wednesday May 19 at 1 pm.

Tickets @ \$59 must be paid by the March meeting.

Mary Poppins

30 tickets have been reserved for Wednesday afternoon, Sept 8 at 1 pm at Her Majesty's Theatre. Tickets \$60.

West Side Story

30 tickets @ \$65 have been reserved for Wednesday, Sept.22 at 1 pm at the Regent Theatre.

Music Group

Barry Amond

The Music Group will meet on Wednesday March 24 at 7 at 25 Third St, Black Rock. Please let me know if you would like to attend. The Opera Group will meet on Wednesday April 28 - further details next month.

Investment Group

John Brimage

At 9.00 am - that is, before the meeting - on March 16, the Investment Group will examine the likely future prospects for Telstra. Also, Noel Ineson will present his research on Select Harvests to the group.