



# PROBUS

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

**Issue No. 226**

**September 2008**

**Next Meeting: 10 am Tuesday September 16 at Beaumaris RSL**

**Investment Group:** The group meets @ 9 am prior to the main monthly Meeting to discuss money and the state of the share market. Everyone welcome.

**Keynote Speaker: Jason Major** *Science, Application and Issues*

Jason is Manager of the Gene and Nano Technology Information Service (GNTIS) which provides balanced and factual information on gene and nano technology to help the public make more informed choices. It is funded by the Australian government and relevant research and government agency partners. His talk will stimulate informed discussion and debate relating to gene technology and at the same time increase our awareness of major issues such as GM crops, including the potential benefits and possible risks.

**10 Minute Speaker: Geoff Goodwin** **BITS ABOUT PLASTICS**

**— Office Bearers, 2008 —**

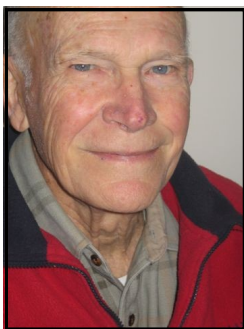
President:	<b>Noel Ineson</b>	9589 5263
Vice President:	<b>Geoff Wade</b>	9588 2593
Imm/Past Pres:	<b>Bill Davis</b>	9592 5982
Hon Secretary	<b>Roy Petch</b>	9589 5757
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Functions Asst:	<b>Robert Dun</b>	9589 5456
Meeting Co-ord:	<b>Don Lobb</b>	9598 5546
Meetings Asst:	<b>Eric Slater</b>	9589 3526
Almoner:	<b>Andrew Watson</b>	9589 5913
Hon. Auditor:	<b>Neil Jones</b>	9598 3158
Newsletter:	<b>Peter McGregor</b>	9533 4760

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

**— Group Leaders —**

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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



This month we are privileged to have as our guest speaker Jason Major, Manager of the Gene & Nano Technology Information Service (GNTIS), located at the University of Melbourne's Bio 21 Institute. Jason has a degree in Zoology and a Masters in Science Communication from ANU. He has been a science communicator for 10 years, initially with the CSIRO and the University of Melbourne, and is now Manager of GNTIS which was established to provide the public with reliable information on gene (and later nano) technology. His work ranges from a basic scientific explanation of genetic modification to significant community issues involving the regulation of products derived from gene technology, as well as testing for food safety. The subject of Jason's talk is *Science, Application and Issues* with specific reference to genetically modified crops, a hot topic for several years. Jason plans to allocate a large proportion of the talk getting us involved in a discussion on the ethics of GM crops. I am sure we will gain most from the session if we spend some time before the Meeting (Sept 16) putting together a few key questions for Jason to tackle.

\*

It would be remiss of me not to mention the feast of sport at the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing that we have witnessed over the past month. The amazing feats of commitment, determination and physical performance must surely inspire and challenge us in our own lives.

\*

Finally, at the time of writing this report, we have 23 members booked to visit the Australian Animal Health Laboratory at Geelong on September 24. This should prove to be a very worthwhile experience for Members and I encourage the other nine who have expressed interest to finalise their payment before (or at) our September Meeting.

### AUSTRALIAN ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY



*The AAHL is a national centre of excellence in diagnosis, research and policy advice in animal health. This national facility in Geelong plays a vital role in maintaining the health*

**Date: September 24**

Cost: \$40 pp includes luxury bus transport. Lunch and sing-a-long at Sphinx's venue in Geelong.

Departure: 9 am from Beaumaris Community Centre. Returns

## MONTHLY PROFILE

### Bill Davis



*Immediate Past President Bill Davis admiring one of the fine examples of early English drinking glasses in his collection*

With images of the Beijing Olympics only just receding, it is interesting to record the impressions of our Immediate Past President, Bill Davis, when he was working there for CRA in the early 80s. Bill says there was only one taxi in the whole place, few if any private cars, but government cars everywhere. The way in from the airport was so narrow it was difficult to pass the horses and carts that clogged the roads.

Bill worked for CRA companies for 38 years including 10 years in Broken Hill and 10 years, on and off, at the huge open-cut copper mine on Bougainville Island, PNG. A metallurgical engineer, which he describes as 'turning the science of metallurgy into practice', Bill was involved with Bougainville as project metallurgist from the start, leaving in the early years of the local uprising that eventually closed the mine. His work took him from China and Indonesia to Chile and Argentina, investigating copper, gold, nickel and mineral sands prospects, and also constructing mines. "I have travelled extensively all my life," Bill says, "though not much within Australia."

When he retired, at the urging of his wife, Judith - a long-time member at Victoria GC - Bill took up golf. "Too late," he now says. "Golf is a game you have to start when you are young." But he has other more absorbing interests. With a 'bent towards malts', he was a founding member of PRISMS; and he is also interested in music, attending concerts and operas several times a year with Judith. However, his primary hobby is collecting early English drinking glasses, not unrelated to his background in metallurgy. Bill tells us that glass-making up to the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century was dominated by the Venetians and the Germanic states, but in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, new English technology was responsible for the invention of lead crystal and for important developments in the design and decoration of hand-made glass. This dominance continued until the Industrial Revolution. Not surprisingly, Bill lectures on early glass to antique collector clubs and the Johnson Collection in East Melbourne.



### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jill Koolmees

Jill Koolmees' account of her first-hand experiences living in Saudi Arabia with her husband, Geoff - both Australian teachers - was, as she explained, not in any way similar to 'ex-pat' books such as the almost comic *A Year in Provence*. Her book, *My Desert Kingdom*, offers a unique insight into the most unusual and, at times, repressed lifestyle (to our eyes) of the women of Saudi Arabia, the birthplace of Islam. Her address included readings from her book, selected highlights of life behind closed doors in a male-governed society. The centre of world Islam, Saudi Arabia's religious culture is at the same time traditional and restrictive, defiantly resistant to liberal interpretations found in some other Muslim countries.

Ex-pats such as Jill and Geoff were required to live behind compound walls - where swimming pools, pubs and other western amenities are available - and they were not expected to have any contact or establish friendships with Saudi families. Everything came as a shock; for Jill, for example, to find that women such as herself were not encouraged to walk alone through the city; or that a smile or even acknowledgement to men was regarded as a sign of disrespect, or worse. But there were other jolts to her Western sensitivities.

Saudi women are obliged to marry into their own family, often a first or second cousin chosen by the father. They do not leave the house independently, but in cars driven by private drivers; women are not permitted to drive and taxis are not considered secure because drivers are usually not Saudis but itinerant workers. Also, women are often beaten by cane-wielding religious police (who are everywhere) if it is considered that their behaviour is inappropriate (that is, showing hair or skin). It is taken for granted that men own the public space and women stay at home with the children. If they do have to go out, they must be dressed according to the custom - totally covered by veils from head-to-toe including the face and hands - enclosed under a full-length black cloak called an *abaya*.

Some changes have occurred recently- in the education system, for example, where schools for girls have been established, but with a limited curriculum and male teachers are still not allowed in classrooms with female students. Jill Koolmees' absorbing address gave an informed glimpse of everyday life of women 'behind the veil' in the Saudi kingdom. Allan Williams

## A KIND OF VIKING ADVENTURE

John Ragas enjoys travelling – that's fortunate because his wife, Thelma, has a passion for genealogy which takes them to distant parts of the world including the Orkneys and some remote regions of Scandinavia. Thelma's main objective is to write the family social history and John's role is that of chauffeur and sounding-board.



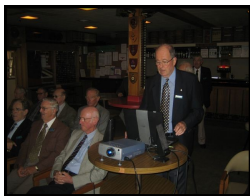
On a visit to Scandinavia, they stayed four weeks in Bergen and three weeks in Copenhagen, utilising the International Home Exchange for their accommodation. In both countries, they enjoyed living in the local environment, concentrating on Viking history and social structure; but they also saw all the tourist highlights.

However, eventually, 'payback time' came around and the Norwegian gentleman house owner from Bergen arrived in Australia. After travelling the outback in an old Toyota van, he came to Melbourne; and rather than take over the whole house, he moved in as John and Thelma's house-guest. For a change of pace, John took him to Tasmania where he volunteered for a relocation plan of a Britz campervan from Hobart back to Melbourne. As it turned out, it was an enjoyable trip for them both and a very economical way to tour Tasmania. The house owners from Copenhagen are arriving soon and will take over John's house and car for three weeks. He's thinking that he may have to try 'house sitting' next! Allan Williams

## RIB TICKLERS

- I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.
- Police were called to the daycare centre where a three-year-old was resisting a rest.
- To write with a broken pencil is pointless.
- When fish are in schools they sometimes take debate.
- The short fortune teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large.
- A thief who stole a calendar got twelve months.
- Thieves who steal corn from a garden could be charged with stalking.
- When the smog lifts in Los Angeles, U C L A  
*Courtesy of Mississauga Probus*

## Investment Group



*Worse to come?*

At 9.00 am prior to each monthly Probus Meeting, a small band of enthusiasts gathers to discuss the latest developments in finance news and the state of the share market - under the chairmanship of John Brimage, ably assisted by Barry Amond. At the August Meeting, there was lively discussion about the world credit crisis, the banks and the health of the Australian economy. Have the banks told us all they know about their exposure to bad debts associated with the US sub-prime meltdown, some asked. There was general agreement that there may be worse to come. To be continued at the September Meeting.

## FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

**AAHL Geelong**

**September 24**



Cost: \$40 pp includes luxury bus transport. Lunch and sing-a-long at Sphinx in Geelong.

Departure: 9 am from Beaumaris Community Centre. Returns about 4 pm. NOTE: Payment required at September Meeting.

**Corio Bay Cruise aboard MS Freedom and Geelong Tour**  
**November 19**



Luxury Bus travel to Geelong. Departs Beaumaris Community Centre 9 am. Return: 5 pm. Cost: \$56 pp.

**Lord Howe Island**

**March 2-9 2009**



The tour includes: Transport from Beaumaris to and from Tullamarine. Return economy class ex Melbourne, including pre-pay taxes (subject to airfare variations). Return airport transfers on Lord Howe Island. Seven nights in a studio room at Leanda-Lei. Full buffet breakfast daily at Coral Cafe. Six restaurant dinners at local establishments - including transfers and BBQ. Ronnie's Ramble guided walk. North Bay picnic lunch. Chase n' thyme tour. Guided nursery tour and scenic boat cruise around the island. Cost: \$3089 pp

Contacts:

**Music & Opera Groups**

See Noticeboard (p4)





## TASTES



We now think the dine-out group will go under the name of 'Tastes' - which describes perfectly the main reason for forming the group in the first place. The idea, first and foremost, is for Members to share some conviviality with good food and wine in pleasant surroundings. We hope to offer Members a special Wine & Food Experience each time we meet. Our first outing will be Thursday 2nd October @ 7 pm. Full details to be announced at the September Meeting. Also, at that time, we will require a financial commitment from all those interested.

**NOTE:** \$43 a head (includes food and corkage but *not* wine – to be supplied *at cost* at the restaurant.)

Contacts: Peter McGregor or Geoff Wade

## NOTICEBOARD

### Our Hobbies

A glance at the Members' Register illustrates what a wide variety of interests we have within the club.

**Warwick Andrews**, for example, has been interested in model-making most of his life. He began making model aeroplanes as a child - balsa and tissue construction - and has retained his interest all these years. In more recent times, he made small-scale models of WWI boats and planes for his grandchildren. These days, he prefers to paint ships, boats, buildings and marine life, an interest sparked by Paul Crompton. He sketches and uses water-colours but he prefers oils, he says, and gets pleasure from just being out in the open. He used to sell his works; now he stacks them away at home. "I probably have hundreds of half-finished paintings," he says.

**Allan Small's** interest in astronomy goes a long way back. But since the advent of computers, he can now spend a lot of his time on an internet site called *apod* which gives access every day to what he calls "beautiful big pictures" from the NASA site. Every day there is an Astronomy Picture of the Day with a commentary by a professional astronomer. "It's astronomy for everyone," he says. He can even see what happened a million years ago when two galaxies collided (or merged) and he begins to ponder deep questions about why we are all here.

Next month, the woodworking skills of **Noel Ineson** will be featured in our Monthly Profile.



*One of Noel's jewellery boxes*



### **Music & Opera Groups**

I am sorry but for various reasons it has again been necessary to defer the next meeting. The **Music Group** will now meet on Wednesday **22 October** at 7.30 pm. The Opera Group will meet on Wed 19 November. BA

### **Theatre: Hot Shoe Shuffle**

17 tickets sold for the performance on Oct 15 at the Alexander Theatre, Monash University. **NOTE:** All tickets will be available for collection at the September Meeting. AT

### **Howlong**

All is in readiness for our great three days at Howlong 27-29 Oct inclusive. We have a total of 43 attendees (including partners). Bookings have now closed and we have given back four rooms for the three nights Mon-Wed. Those who need a cart should book directly with the Professional, Anthony Hunter on (02) 6026 5822. Additional starters may still be able to be accommodated, depending on whether the motel has any vacant rooms. Full details of the program, tee times and room allocations will be distributed at the October 21 Meeting. GW

### **Sandringham Probus**

The reciprocal visit by three of our Committee Members to Sandringham Probus originally planned for August has had to be cancelled and is now due in October. NI

### **Directory Changes**

Brian Davey has a new email address: [bandlda-vey@optusnet.com.au](mailto:bandlda-vey@optusnet.com.au). Please update your directory. Ed.

### **Congratulations**

Our new sommelier is Bob Matthews. (Look it up!)

### **President's Lunch**

December 19: President's Christmas Lunch at Victoria Golf Club. Full details at the September Meeting.

### **VALE: Don Campbell**



We have been saddened by the recent death of Don Campbell. Don joined Probus in 1990 and we recall his regular attendance at our Meetings, using his trademark cushion to ease the hardness of those plastic chairs. A service for Don was held on Friday, 5th September, at the chapel of W D Rose, Cheltenham.