

THE PROBUS CLUB OF SEAFORTH INC

**A SHORT HISTORY
OF
THE THIRD TEN YEARS
YEAR 23**

April 2013 – March 2014

Compiled by **Warren Ogborne**
(Past President and Past Club Historian)

Produced by **Gavin Kerr**
(Past President – Club Historian)

**The Probus Club of Seaforth Inc
PO Box 679 Balgowlah 2093**

Year 23

(April 2013 – March 2014)



Office Bearers

President
Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

Ian Smith
Michael Calloway
Len Wilson
Stuart Sercombe

Committee Members

Immediate Past President
Newsletter Editor
Coordinator Guest Speakers
Recruitment
Overseas Travel

Ray Stallworthy
Ray Isaacs
Ron Barratt
Gavin Kerr
David Gulliford

Auditor

Kevin Zehnder

Activities Coordinators

Welfare Officer
Attendance
Club Historian
Birthdays
Membership Records
... Overseas Travel
... Getaways
... Discovery Tours
... Cultural Activities
Walking Group
Bowls
Golf
Luncheon Club
Snooker
Cards

Richard Whipp
John Higson
Warren Ogborne

Nicholas Guoth
David Gulliford
Neville Cleary
Ray Stallworthy
Trevor Wallin
Michael Draper
Lee Murrell
David Gulliford
Mike Calloway
Mike Calloway
Mike Calloway

Activities
(April 2013 – March 2014)

Coordinators

Trevor Wallin – Neville Cleary – David Gulliford – Ray Stallworthy
Mike Calloway

April 18	“Adams Family” - Capitol Theatre
April 15-18	Forster Getaway
April 30	Northern Beaches TAFE – luncheon
May 8	“Warhorse” - Lyric Theatre
June 12	President’s Gala Luncheon – Manly Golf Club
June 21	“Happiness” - Ensemble Theatre
July 16	Luncheon Group – newly formed: Balance Thai Restaurant, Seaforth
July 25	“The Glass Menagerie” - Ensemble
Aug 7	Luncheon Group – Forty Baskets – Club Totem – 2 nd outing
Aug. 14	Sydney Town Hall Tour & optional lunch afterwards
Aug. 30	Lunch at Doyle’s on the Beach
Sept. 15	“Gone with the Wind”
Sept. 18	“South Pacific”
Sept. 10	Luncheon Group – Sands Hotel, Narrabeen.
Oct. 2	Lake Macquarie / Dobell House
Oct. 9	“Grease”...movie, lunch, coffee
Oct. 13-18	Probus Rendezvous 2014 - Albury – Wodonga
Oct. 16	Luncheon Group – Belrose Hotel
Nov. 2	Brandenburg Orchestra – Sydney Recital Hall
Nov. 19	“Rapture, Blister, Burn” - Ensemble Theatre
Dec. 9	Xmas Luncheon – Long Reef Golf Club
Dec. 14/15/19	Metropolitan Opera – “Tosca” – Hayden Orpheum Theatre
Jan. 1 st	Luncheon Group – Madigan’s Restaurant – Harbord Diggers Club
Feb. 11	Luncheon Group – Balance Restaurant - Stocklands
Mar. 12	Luncheon Group – “Kingfisher” – Dee Why
Mar. 14/15/19	“Tosca” – Metropolitan Opera – Cremorne Theatre
Mar. 3/4/8	“La Boheme” (2014)
Feb.23-Mar.14	India Trip – “Palaces & Castles” in Rajasthan (2014)
Mar. 3-2014	Annual Autumn Picnic – Manly Dam (2014)
Mar. 12-2014	Getaway - Guide Dogs & Tanglin Lodge Alpacas (2014)
Mar. 19-22	Orange Getaway (2014)
Mar. 24	Annual Picnic – Manly Dam (2014)
Mar. 25	Annual General Meeting (2014)

Guest Speakers
(2013 – 2014)
Coordinator – Ron Barratt

- April Chester Porter QC. – “Conviction of the Innocent”
- May Phillip Nakad from Macquarie University Acoustic Laboratory spoke on
“Hearing Loss & Communication.”
- June Mary Bentley – “Keeping Australia Alive” ... Royal Flying Doctor
Service.
- July Philip Dulhunty – The Japanese Submarine Attack on Sydney Harbour
- Aug. Garry Blackler, Chairman of the Probus South Pacific Board – “The
Future of Probus” ... as a prelude to the club debating whether or not to
open membership to women & become a mixed club.
- Sept. Mike Calloway, David Gulliford, Warren Ogborne & Trevor Wallin on
the subject – “Should our Probus Club become a Mixed Gender Club?”
- Oct. A fascinating talk by Gordon Mar entitled “One Small Step Out of the
Village” ... expounding on the assimilation of the Chinese community that
migrated to Australia from the Gold Rush days up till the present...& its
contribution to Australian society.
- Nov. A brilliant talk by Greg de Moore who fascinated us with his account of
Tom Wills, one of Australia’s greatest sportsmen.
- Dec. No meeting.
- Jan. John Inglis, who runs a program for older drivers brought us up to date on
the road rules & the assessment conducted by the RMS, NRMA other
licensed bodies for older drivers.
- Feb. Donna Hendry – Macular Degeneration & its Early Detection.
- Mar. Rosemary McCulloch – University of the Third Age.

Bowls
(2013 – 2014)
Coordinator – Lee Murrell

- April** With 7.5 points to his credit, Rudi Hochstetter has an unassailable lead in the current competition & looks like returning from his trip overseas to find his name engraved on the Ric Clapp Trophy.
- Great bowls at the Forster Bowling Club during our Getaway in April. The greens were superb & club facilities excellent enjoyed by a group of sixteen...see photo.
- May** Rudi Hochstetter the clear winner of the Ric Clapp Trophy & now suffers the indignity of having his handicap dropped back like all previous winners.
- June** Our new series is underway with a close tussle at the top between the 3 & 4 pointers.
- July** Numbers down due to weather, sickness & a few travelling OS...but Don Elliot is holding a great lead after a list of wins ...
- Aug.** ... and takes out the trophy from his predecessor, Rudi Hochstetter.
- Sept.** What a turn around in the weather!! This month we've battled on in the heat...no rain for six weeks as I write & the rink dry & fast, but the competition undiminished in intensity & enthusiasm.
- Oct.** After an interesting few weeks, with varying numbers attending, Norrie Cleary took the prize with a score of 8.5 from Warren Ogborne on 7, when he was unable to make the final session a contest due to his participation in the Harbour Cruise courtesy of Asia Quest with the group heading for India in February next year.
- Nov.** Norrie Cleary was presented with the Rick Clapp Trophy & a new ten week competition is now under way. In Lee Murrell away, Nev Cleary & John Rose stepped in & ran our November competition.
- Dec.** This month we celebrated Christmas with a splendid luncheon at the club following the morning bowls on Dec.19th. with Norrie & Neville Cleary putting in a huge effort to ensure the celebration was such a happy occasion & a great success.

Jan. Keen competition continued with the Rick Clapp Trophy won by Warren Ogborne scoring 8.5 to beat Nancy Sercombe on 7... & Max Smythe 3rd.

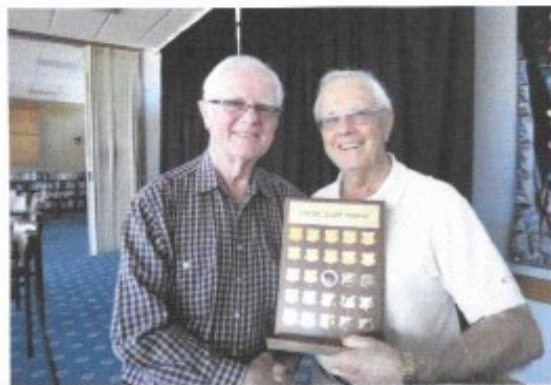
On Monday, Jan.27th, a large contingent of Probians joined the fray at Seaforth Bowling Club for the Annual "Australia-v-The Rest of the World" competition with a BBQ luncheon thrown for good measure. It was a splendid occasion with "Australia" scraping home by six points.

Feb. Good weather favours the group as numbers increase bringing recent participation up to 23 & 26 and keen competition resulting on several holding a score of 4 with six games to play.

Mar. It's happened again!!! Another tight contest with John Rose & Rudi Hochstetter tied as our winners of the Ric Clapp Trophy.



Our current Bowls competition winner Warren Ogborne being presented with the Ric Clapp Trophy by past winner Norrie Cleary



Receiving the Ric Clap Trophy from Rudi Hochstetter is our winner of the last competition, Dan Elliott.

Walking Group
(2013 – 2014)
Coordinator – Michael Draper

- April Dobroyd Head to North Harbour Reserve ... a small group with several Probians away travelling...but a delightful walk with spectacular views.
- May Bradley's Head Walk ...from Taronga Park Zoo...coffee at the Zoo Café. This was a magnificent walk on a sunny day.
- June Heavy rain prevented us walking the track originally proposed so we strolled across the Manly Dam instead & retired to Belaroma for our usual coffee.
- July Weather inclement but a good roll-up nevertheless for the Flat Rock Walking Track ... the old sewage maintenance track across the water from Seaforth Oval. Coffee at Killarney Heights Village.
- August Scenic Esplanade & coffee at cafe near Manly Art Gallery - glorious day and great company.
- Sept. From the North Head Coffee Shop near the National Artillery Museum along the Fort Road & back...enjoyed by a small group.
- Oct. Given a miss on the October Long Weekend...
- Nov. From Clontarf Reserve to Ogilvy Road, walking along the Manly to Spit Bridge track...with coffee at Clony's Kiosk.
- Dec. We ended our years walks with a stroll through the Garigal National Park under Roseville Bridge and a picnic in beautiful surroundings overlooking the water.
- Jan. On January 6th the group walked Killarney Heights along the Flat Rock Walking Track...the old sewerage maintenance track opposite Seaforth Oval...with coffee at Killarney Village.
- Feb/Mar Cancelled ... Annual Picnic March 3rd

Member Focus

April	Ron Barrett – “My Career in Journalism”
May	Bill Etheridge – “The Jeep”
June	Brian Cranch
July	Harry Watson – Service in Norwegian Merchant Navy -WWII
Aug.	Gavin Kerr – Phillips transition from Adelaide to Sydney
Sept.	Stuart Sercombe – A hilarious presentation on his experience as General Manager of Pearl Insurance in London plus a few travel anecdotes thrown in for good measure.
Oct.	Dr. Peter Kendall presented an interesting resume of his life & career in medicine.
Nov.	Reg. Whiteley – Atmosphere in American suburbs at time of JFK’s assassination.
Dec.	No meeting
Jan.	Mike Calloway – The role of “fate” in determining his life.
Feb.	David Gulliford – Family links with Scotland & Ram’s Head heirloom.
Mar.	Lee Murrell

Note: While the names of our members who addressed us & their topics as listed are correct, the sequence could well be inaccurate.

Golf
(2013 – 2014)
Coordinator - David Gulliford

- April 15–18 Eight of us enjoyed a round at Forster during the April Getaway plus four of the ladies...see Newsletter photo. We played a Bisque Par round in the club competition. This was won by John Higson with 8 points. John also won the George Mitchell Trophy with a Stableford Score of 40 and Lesley Paterson had a great round of 41.
- Sept. 20 Playing at Balgowlah Golf Club –v– Manly for the David Millard Trophy in which Manly fielded a team of very strong golfers & triumphed over us.

Luncheon Group

Cards & Snooker

Coordinator – Mike Calloway

Mindful of the relative paucity of local activities available to members during the weeks between our monthly meetings, Mike Calloway has resurrected our former Lunch Club run by the late Mike Slatter. The first luncheon was held at Balance Thai Restaurant in Seaforth. It was attended by sixteen members who had a sumptuous meal. The second outing was at Forty Baskets Restaurant at Club Totem and was attended by twenty nine enthusiastic diners. The ambience was delightful as was the food and fellowship.

Encouraged by such strong support, Mike arranged his 3rd luncheon for Tuesday, September 10th at the Sands Hotel, Narrabeen and is also pushing for the establishment of a Cards Group to meet at the Balgowlah RSL & a Snooker Group to meet at Harbord Diggers Club (Mounties) Freshwater & finish in time for lunch at Madigan's Restaurant in the club. Barry Ryan is proving himself to be a real "card-sharp" by crushing victories at 500 in the Groups' first two meetings. The Group has decided to meet on the Monday of each month prior to the Probus meeting on the Tuesday.

Wednesday October 16th saw a happy group enjoying lunch at Belrose Hotel in Hews Pd; Belrose. Subsequent outings will be gazetted to members by email.

We started 2014 with an excellent & happy luncheon at Madigans Restaurant in Harbord Diggers Club on January 15th. & plan our next outing at Balance Thai Restaurant at the Stockland Centre at Balgowlah.

Our twenty third year has been one of enormous interest and activity. Our President, Ian Smith, was blessed with a vigorous and dedicated group of leaders whose contribution to the club was extraordinary and included eight past-presidents, whose efforts remain undiminished. He also inherited the enormous challenge of a diminishing membership, a problem now facing many clubs and organisations.

In the process of compiling this, the 3rd year's brief history of our twenty third year, I have been greatly assisted by the excellent Newsletter produced monthly by Ray Isaacs. The clarity and layout of its compilation is a tribute to Ray's skill & dedication. As I scanned its contents several issues impressed me deeply...

Firstly...the significant impact of Mike Calloway. What a year we can look forward to under his leadership as our Twenty Fourth President. This year he resurrected Mike Slatter's Luncheon Club and introduced us to a Cards Club & Snooker Club, all of which meet regularly and enjoy enthusiastic participation. Reports of their activities appear in our monthly Newsletter.



Happy diners at two of our regular Luncheon Club outings.

Secondly... the extraordinary commitment of those organising our activity programmes... Trevor Wallin, David Gulliford, Lee Murrell, John Higson, Neville (& Norrie) Cleary, Ron Barratt, Michael Draper, Stuart Sercombe, Ross Buckton, Brian Cranch, Reg Green, Ray Stallworthy & Richard Whipp, whose care of our Welfare portfolio & monthly tips for maintaining better health have breathed new life into what could be a dismal and & depressing exercise ... Ian Smith has paid special tribute to these and many others in his Presidents Report.

... which brings me to my **Third** observation ... compiling this phase of the third decade of our club's history, I am reminded that we have experienced a "generation shift." Our second decade saw our membership one of predominantly seventy- plus year olds. In our third decade we have entered the "Eighty Plus Brigade" and our Welfare reports mirror this rather graphically. I have before me a list of over thirty members who, during 2013 & early 2014, have suffered various health problems, some life threatening & therefore very serious..... In addition our twenty third year saw the death of George & Peggy Mitchell, Gordon James, Bob Stapleton & our dear friend, Meg Bower.

And **Finally** ... Ian hands on to Mike Calloway the challenge of recruiting new members, especially from the younger generation. The club's awakening to this issue began back in 2008 during Warren Ogborne's presidency when Ray Stallworthy assumed the task of recruitment & inaugurated a vigorous programme which was pursued by all subsequent presidents. Our plight, like that of so many other organisations, was highlighted by our August guest speaker, Garry Blackler, Chairman of the South Pacific Probus Board, who spoke on The Future of Probus. This prompted debate on the prospect of becoming a mixed gender club and resulted in the September meeting featuring Mike Calloway, David Gulliford, Trevor Wallin & Warren Ogborne speaking for & against the proposal. Copy of Trevor & Warren's input is attached as appendices A,B,C.& D.....They did not however, represent the views of 66% of members when the matter was put to the vote. As President, Ian Smith, points out in his report, the matter may well be revisited under Mike Calloway's leadership.

Having compiled the Brief History of our 2nd decade and the first three years of our 3rd, I am delighted to hand the baton on to Gavin Kerr who now assumes the role of Probus Club Historian.

Warren Ogborne

Post script: A very special outing & here Warren Ogborne had the thrill of playing the Dobell grand piano.



Dobell House.

2013/14 PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

In preparing this report I came across Past President David Gulliford's 2010/11 annual report, in which David stated that "I feel that 2010/11 has been the start of the 'winds of change'". Those winds have strengthened in 2013/14. Our 66 members are getting older and we are finding it harder to attract new members. Despite the "greying" of our members, we have had an active year, with many highlights.

This past year we enjoyed two getaways: the first to Forster in April 2013 and the second to Orange in March 2014. Thanks are extended to Norrie and Nev Cleary for organising the Forster getaway with Forrest Coach Lines and to Ray Stallworthy for arranging the trip to Orange with Oncourse Tours. Over the past two years the number attending these getaways has dropped from 72 who went to Mollymook in 2012, to 48 who went to Forster in 2013, and to 25 who joined us recently to Orange. Your Committee will be evaluating the reasons for this drop in numbers and would appreciate your feedback about how we can attract more members and their partners to join us for future getaways.

Reg Green passed the responsibility for organising the day tours over to Ray Stallworthy at the March AGM. Thanks, Reg, for your sterling efforts in arranging interesting day trips and thanks also to Ray for taking on this task.

Trevor Wallin organised an active program of cultural events, one of the highlights being a performance of South Pacific at the Sydney Opera House. Brian Cranch offered to assist Trevor in organising the cultural events and thanks go to both these active members.

Our Vice-President, Mike Calloway, has also been active in arranging three regular interest groups. The monthly luncheon group has visited different local restaurants, with numbers ranging from a dozen to more than 20 members and partners. He has also organised a snooker group and a cards group, both of which meet monthly. Well done, Mike!

Stuart Sercombe passed over the responsibility for organising the annual picnic to Ross Buckton. The committee decided to move the picnic from Clontarf Reserve to Manly Dam, after we were informed that the Manly Council charge for using Clontarf had been raised to \$200, whereas Warringah Council charged the Club only \$50 for use of Manly Dam's facilities. Unfortunately, only 29 members and partners attended this year's picnic, compared with 60 last year. Thanks, Ross, for organising a very pleasant picnic and let's hope more members support next year's picnic.

Stuart Sercombe took over the role of treasurer from Maurie Tye at the 2013 AGM and handled the Club's financial affairs very efficiently. Thanks Stuart and Maurie! Stuart has been ably assisted by our Assistant Treasurer, Terry Osborne, who willingly agreed to help Stuart.

Unfortunately, several members (George Mitchell, Gordon James and Bob Stapleton), a wife (Peggy Mitchell) and a dear friend of Probus (Meg Bower) passed away during the year. George was the foundation Vice-President and second President of our Club and is sorely missed by all his friends in the Club. Gordon was also a popular member of the Club. Bob was a new member who joined the Club in the past year. George's wife, Peggy, passed away only a short time before George. Finally, Meg Bower was a staunch supporter of our Club, making marmalade jams and donating all monies raised to worthy charities.

Our bowls group continues to thrive, with about 20 members regularly attending each Thursday morning. Thanks to Lee Murrell for organising this popular activity.

The walking group goes for interesting walks around the district on a Monday once a month, followed by coffee in a pleasant environment. Michael Draper does a great job in arranging this activity.

Our speaker organiser, Ron Barratt, has made a point of arranging speakers with a special interest to members, often on topics relevant to our health and welfare. We have listened to speakers on hearing issues, macular diseases of the eye and other interesting topics. One of the speakers we invited to address us in August 2013 was Gary Blackler, Chairman of the Probus South Pacific Board, on the topic, "The Future of Probus". Gary outlined several alternative futures and urged us to consider where we would like to be in 5 years' time. This was followed at the September meeting by brief presentations by four members, Mike Calloway, David Gulliford, Warren Ogborne and Trevor Wallin, on the topic, "Should Our Club Become a Mixed Gender Club?". At our October meeting a vote of members on this issue was taken and two thirds of members voted in favour of becoming a mixed gender club. Unfortunately, the required 75% majority was not reached and the motion to change the membership By-Law of our constitution was lost. I urge members to re-visit this issue in the near future.

An approach to the Club was made during the year by Balgowlah Probus Club to amalgamate with them, but this proved not to be popular with our members, with only 7 of 31 members present at the February 2014 voting in favour of changing our meeting day each month to a Friday to accommodate Balgowlah's request for this meeting day. The meeting did vote unanimously, however, to invite members of the Balgowlah Probus Club to join our Club.

Kevin Zehnder has announced that he will stand down as the Club's honorary auditor and a replacement is being sought. Thanks, Kevin, for doing this task for the past seven years.

Gavin Kerr has stood down as chair of the recruitment committee and from membership of the Club's committee, but has agreed to take over the role of Club historian from Warren Ogborne, who compiled the second ten year history of the Club and the first three years of the Club's third decade. Warren has agreed to take over the role of welfare officer from Richard Whipp, whose entertaining tips on keeping healthy have been much appreciated. Thanks are extended to these three former Presidents for their active service to the Club in several positions over the years.

Len Wilson, our Secretary, has given great service to the Club over the past five years, and we wish him well with his health issues that have prevented him from being here today for our AGM.

In conclusion, I want to thank all members of our committee for their tireless support and hard work over the past year in promoting the interests of the Club and wish the new President, Mike Calloway, and his Vice-President, Brian Cranch, best wishes for a successful 2014/15.

Ian Smith

THE PROBUS CLUB OF SEAFORTH INC

Profit and Loss Account for the Year Ended 31 January 2014

Income	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Subscriptions	2338.00	2020.00
Interest received	35.24	34.97
Surplus from Morning Teas	2508.00	539.55
Surplus from Activities		690.43
Donation		5.00
Reimbursement for lost Badges	146.25	40.00
	<u>5027.49</u>	<u>3329.95</u>
Expenditure		
Newsletter	195.63	291.21
Admin Expenses	156.21	344.35
Guest Speakers	168.18	194.16
Probus Magazine and Handbooks	320.00	344.00
Affiliation Fee and Insurance	469.00	518.00
General Expenses		415.44
Recruitment Flyers		137.00
Post office Box	146.00	27.00
Probus Pins and Badges	71.40	
Morning teas	1925.00	
Loss from Activities	127.10	1137.53
Annual Statements	75.00	49.00
Club History		
	<u>3653.52</u>	<u>3457.69</u>
Operating Surplus (Loss)	<u>\$1,373.97</u>	<u>-\$127.74</u>

THE PROBUS CLUB OF SEAFORTH INC.

Assets

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
Cash at Bank	24517.68	26393.01
Less Unpresented cheque 120		-12.00
Less Unpresented cheque 175	24222.68	
Plus Returned Cheque		144.00
Add Outstanding Deposit		5.00
	<u>24222.68</u>	<u>26530.01</u>

Liabilities

Advance Receipts	20321.00	23937.30
Less Advance Deposit	<u>-65.00</u>	<u>20256.00</u>
	<u>\$3,966.68</u>	<u>\$2,592.71</u>

Balance brought Forward	2592.71	2720.45
Add Surplus (Deficit) for Year	1373.97	-127.74

Members' Funds	<u>\$3,966.68</u>	<u>\$2,592.71</u>
----------------	-------------------	-------------------

Signed Stuart Sercombe (Hon. Treasurer)



Auditor's Report

I have audited the above accounts comprising the Statement of Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet of The Probus Club of Seaforth Inc for the year ended 31 January 2014. In my opinion the accounts present a true record and fair view of the state of affairs of The Probus Club of Seaforth Inc and the results for the year ended that date.

Signed Kevin Zehnder (Hon. Auditor)



The Probus Club of Seaforth Inc
Minutes of Members' Meeting
Tuesday, March 25 2014 — Meeting commenced 10.20 am.

Apologies

Forty-four members and two ladies were present. There were 7 apologies – Len Wilson, John Daly, Ray Stallworthy, John Wippell, Reg Green, Peter Kendall and Alec Wickenden.

Minutes

Moved Bruce Fisk, seconded Reg Whiteley, Minutes for meeting February 25, 2014 be accepted as true record. Passed.

Address given by Phil Thompson, who has a chronic health condition, reflecting on his membership, activities and club management during his time as member of Seaforth Probus.

President's Report

President Ian Smith gave his report which and it is attached at end of these and the AGM minutes.

Vice-President's Report

Vice President Michael Calloway reported on various activities which were instigated during the past year, namely the Luncheon, Cards and Snooker Groups. All groups are travelling well but members are encouraged to join in these activities. Other activities are down in numbers, causing some concern. Mention was made of our Facebook and web sites.

Financial Report

Treasurer Stuart Sercombe presented his report and this is attached.

Welfare Report

Richard Whipp gave his report and health tip for the month. Members reported as causing concern with health problems were Phil Thompson, Bruce Fisk, Ric Clapp, Dick Sansom, Warren Ogborne, Kevin Zendher and Len Wilson. Ladies mentioned were Lois Ryan and Shirley Wickenden. Richard announced that this was his final welfare report and that Warren Ogborne would be replacing him in this position.

Correspondence

Incoming

Belrose Probian Newsletter March 2014;
Maurie Tye — resignation due to ill health;
Aust Post Office — Annual mailbox account;
Leura Garden Festival — tour information to Ray Stallworthy;
Membership cheques — Dick Sansom and Doug Law.

Outgoing

PSPL — Query regarding Constitution changes;
David Gulliford — voting queries

Guest Speaker

Our Guest Speaker for the month was Rosemary McCulloch, and she, aided by member Mick Greig, spoke about University of the Third Age. At the conclusion of this address, the customary draw for two bottles of wine was held.

Meeting closed approximately 11.45 am

Signed as a complete record Date.....

Chairman of meeting

MEETING ATTENDANCES – SEAFORTH PROBUS – 2011-2013

<u>MONTH</u>				<u>2012 V 2013</u>	
	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Per Cent</u>
January		53	54	+ 1	1.8
February		47	44	- 3	-6
March		44	40	-4	-9
April		56	46*	- 10	-18
May		44	40*	- 4	-9
June		49	43	-6	-2
July		58	51	-7	-12
August	52	50	51	+1	1.8
September	56	40			
October	46	50			
November	57	54			
December					
AVERAGE	53	50	46		

- * About 5 members were on overseas holiday.

Source – Club Secretary from Club Records

SOLVING THE CLUB'S AGING MEMBERSHIP PROBLEM

The following statistics and comments are offered as my contribution to the debate upon the Management Committee proposal that Seaforth Probus becomes a mixed gender club.

SEAFORTH PROBUS STATISTICS:

AGEING: As at August 2013 — 14 members are under 75; 53 are 75 plus
 MEMBERSHIP: Total was 75 at some stage but is now 66 (65 — ed)₂
 LOST: We have lost a Net 6 members over the past 3 years
 NEED: We need a minimum 12 men on Management Committee etc. each year
 MEETING ATTENDANCES: The 2012 Average was 50 members. In 2013 the Average was 46
 SOCIAL ACTIVITIES: Are well attended but a slight downward numbers trend is evident.

MANLY PROBUS STATISTICS —

Membership as at March 2005 was 99 men.
 Membership as at April 2009 was 80 men — a loss of 19 over 4 years.
 Decided to go Mixed in 2009-2010 AGM
 Membership as at June 2010 was men 77, women 47 — Total 124
 Membership as at August 2013, was men 66, women 64 — Total 130
 Since 2009-2010 AGM Manly has lost a further NET 14 men over 3 years.
 Gender Balance as at August 2013 was 51%:49%, Men to Women.
 Recently passed a Resolution to have maximum of 60% of any one gender.

DELROSE PROBUS STATISTICS —

Has 2 Mixed Clubs, plus 1 Men's Club and 1 Women's Club.
 Mixed Clubs have a 130 members ceiling.
 Gender balance is 70/30 Men to Women and growing.
 They were trying for a 60/40 gender balance.

A WAY FORWARD —

Our ladies whom I interviewed don't want to become members.
 We need to start another recruiting programme for more young men.
 Past letterbox drops have yielded good numbers of inquirers.
 Our conversion of Inquirers to Applicants for Membership can be improved.
 We must set up our own www Website and reach 60-70 olds through that.

Trevor Wallin,
 September 2013

CLUB MEMBERSHIP – THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE

THE ISSUE: Club Membership is Aging.

The following table confirms Club Membership is aging to the point that, with only 14 members under the age of 75, it is important we recruit YOUNGER people who can take on future Management Committee and Activity Co-ordinator roles.

NAM	64	65	70	75	80	85
	and	to	to	to	to	and
	<u>under</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>over</u>
	2	1	2	11	16	15
						22

In 2011-2013 (to date) we have seen 16 men cease membership and 10 men were inducted.

Source- Seaforth Probus Club records.

To run this club effectively, we depend upon a minimum of 12 men standing for Management Committee and co-ordinating club activities.

We continue to 'burn' new members in Management Committee or organising activities within 1-2 years of joining. This has been the norm for many, many years.

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PROPOSAL:

TO OPEN CLUB MEMBERSHIP TO BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.

The committee seeks to emulate Manly Probus Club which has increased its membership from 80 men to 130 mixed gender-- 66 men: 64 women. (August 2013). (The Manly Blueprint)

Mixed gender is strongly advocated by Probus South Pacific limited (PSPL) as a solution to aging membership.

THE OBVIOUS ALTERNATIVES:

1. To follow the Manly Blueprint, with the support/guidance of PSPL; or
2. To not change but actively recruit younger male members; or as a last resort,
3. If we fear an imminent, significant slide in member numbers, appoint presidents and committee for 2 years (or reappoint past presidents for another year as per the Constitution) and continue the current policy of members introducing their friends on a more informal recruiting basis.

THE MANLY PROBUS BLUEPRINT:

The primary source of the following information is the Club's website.

PRIOR TO THE CHANGE-

1. MANLY HAD 80 MALE MEMBERS PLUS 10 TO 20 LADIES WHO REGULARLY ATTENDED MEETINGS, SITTING AT THE BACK OF THE ROOM;
2. MEMBERSHIP DECLINED FROM 99 MALES IN MARCH 2005 TO 80 IN APRIL 2009;
3. MEMBERS WERE ASKED TO VOTE AT THE 2009-2010 AGM ON BECOMING A MIXED GENDER CLUB AND THE CHANGE WAS MADE IN THE 2010-2011 PROBUS YEAR;
4. INITIALLY 5 MEMBERS WERE IN DOUBT BUT ONLY 1 ACTUALLY RESIGNED IN FAVOUR OF ANOTHER CLUB.

POST CHANGE-

1. ABOUT 47 WOMEN JOINED AT CHANGE-OVER TIME; GENDER BALANCE 62%M :38%F;
2. IN JUNE 2010 MALES WERE 77, WOMEN 47; GENDER BALANCE 62:38%;
3. BY AUGUST 2013 MEN REDUCED TO 66, WOMEN INCREASED TO 64- TOTAL 130;
4. GENDER BALANCE WAS THEN -51%:49%;
5. NOTE-THE ORIGINAL MALE MEMBERSHIP OF 80 IN APRIL 2009 HAD DECLINED TO 66 IN 2013--A FALL OF 17.5%;
6. THE CLUB PASSED A STANDING ORDER IN 2012-2013 'The Management Committee shall endeavour to maintain not more than 60% of any one gender';
7. CURRENT MEMBERSHIP FEES ARE \$32 FOR MEN, \$ 48 FOR COUPLES;
8. I AM TOLD MOST OF THE OVERALL INCREASE HAS COME THROUGH INTERNET ENQUIRIES;
9. BEVERLY BULL IS THE CURRENT PRESIDENT. (WIFE OF THE IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT);
10. A MALE HAS AGREED TO STAND AS PRESIDENT NEXT YEAR.

So while Manly has increased its membership to 130, it lost 19 men in the lead up and a further 14 men since they went mixed. Female membership has taken off from Nil to 64 in three years.

OUR CURRENT MEMBERSHIP:

1. Registered Members--Our membership ceiling is currently 75. When I joined it was about 60, then it was increased to 66 and later it went to 75 when we decided to admit all men then on the waiting list. Currently we have 66 registered members.
2. Membership Lost--WE LOST A NET 6 MEMBERS OVER 2011-2013. See attachment for details.
3. Meeting Attendances--In calendar year 2012 the average was 50. Since January 2013 we have averaged 46. See attachment for details.
4. Our social activities listed in the attachment 'Summary of Probus Activity Attendances' 2011 - 2013 continue to be well attended, but here too there is a small down trend.
5. Management Committee--To the best of my knowledge, from the time I joined the Club, filling Management Committee and Co-ordinator positions has been readily achieved, but without ballot.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

What is the reason for the proposed change?

Our club currently provides a great deal of satisfaction to both the members and their wives/partners mainly through our activities, most of which continue to attract healthy numbers- as shown in the attached spreadsheet 'Summary of Probus Activity Attendances'.

I believe therefore there needs to be a strong, compelling reason if that is to change. A net drop in membership of 6 men over 2011-2013 does not provide a compelling reason. Even if we project into the future and say our losses will escalate as members go through their 80's, that is not a compelling reason to change our modus operandi. We should fix the aging membership problem rather than change and duplicate the sad result for males in Manly Probus. Perhaps some may just prefer a mixed gender club, regardless??

A number of our ladies I spoke to want to see the club retain its male only membership status. I asked each of the 16 ladies who attended the 'Doyle's Winter Special' \$ 2.50 day in August whether she would join Seaforth Probus if it became a mixed gender club. All but one said, no. A variety of reasons were given, but one theme was pronounced...they, the women, already have an active social life; they would actually prefer their men to have a social club life separate from them (similar to a Men's Shed). If that kind of percentage of our ladies don't join, a mixed club would start with a handicap.

Regardless of the gender issue, fundamentally, we just need to recruit more people.

Recruiting:

If we as a club have a failing, it is that our efforts to increase membership numbers via letterbox drops have produced many enquirers but few new members. Compounding that, many of us have simply run out of friends to introduce! The first thing we need to do, whether we become a mixed gender or remain a men's club, is to actively recruit and most importantly, we need to seriously review how we welcome and nurture inquirers. Our conversion rate, enquirers-to-applicants, needs to improve. Sure, we lost 2 or 3 couples because we are a men only membership, but we also lost men for other reasons.

I note from our record of member inductions supplied by the club Secretary, that on the two occasions we had a letterbox drop we saw an increase in member numbers. That shows we can potentially solve our problem of declining numbers by improving both our advertising, our recruiting and our first contact with inquirers.

We need to have a detailed plan for interacting with inquirers. Our members need to be selected, motivated and trained in what to do and say. Motivated, enthusiastic people are of paramount importance. They need to be rostered on, to work in pairs, for a specific meeting so they are on hand ready to go if an enquirer shows up. Each pair allocated to an enquirer must be given the responsibility to nurture and shepherd him (or her if we go mixed) right through the process until a decision is made. An overseer must supervise the progress and ensure the contact is kept right through to the induction stage at least. We need to start this programme now. If we don't, the very group we are targeting will see an increasingly aging, inactive group of men with not a lot to offer them.

A Better Way of Attracting New Members:

I suggest the next thing we could do is bring our advertising into the 21st century. When you think about it, the people we are endeavouring to contact are most likely to be at least 15-20 years younger than our average age; they are likely to be retired businessmen who have used the Internet and the latest mobile phones for many years. If they want to find a restaurant, buy something or get directions, where would they look?

I searched the Internet for PROBUS South Pacific, manlyprobusclub.org.au, Probus Sydney.ask.com, Epping & District Probus Club Inc., Probus Sydney and Probus Club of North Sydney. These web sites not only offer quite a lot of news and information but their primary purpose is clearly to invite the inquirer to contact them and visit. I particularly commend to members the Probus Club of Sydney web site.

I recommend we create a separate Seaforth NSW Probus club www website. PSPL probably has a template but I recommend we pay someone to create one and we learn how to maintain it with up to date information, news and photographs etc.

We should not dispense with member word-of-mouth advertising but members must be made aware that the older the potential applicant, the less likely he/she will want to fill Management Committee positions. I advocate that even greater pressure be placed upon applicants to agree in writing to make themselves available for Management Committee duty. Once admitted to membership, it is too late to confront them.

An Alternative Membership Status:

We don't necessarily have to go 'mixed gender' to benefit from these two proposals. By classifying all of our ladies, current and new, as 'Friends of Probus' on the website we can provide full benefits at a single membership price as we do now. In a mixed club, pressure may be applied to members to adopt the Couples Membership status. Otherwise, the voting members may question the fairness of people being repeatedly involved in outings as 'Friends of Probus' without paying an annual subscription. Can we investigate a two tiered membership such as Class 'A' voting and Class 'B' non-voting. Men are class 'A', Couples and Friends of Probus are Class 'B'. Could present problems so we should take advice.

DOES SEAFORTH PROBUS NEED TO CHANGE? My personal opinion-

I believe that there is no reasonable reason for having gender bias in a new Probus club. Equally, I see no reason why an existing healthy Probus club which is fortunate to have a great group of wives/partners should change its membership bias simply because it has a small membership numbers problem. We need to hear a much more compelling reason for change.

I ask myself the question--are we adopting the mixed gender status because we want women in the club or is it because we need more men to fill positions?

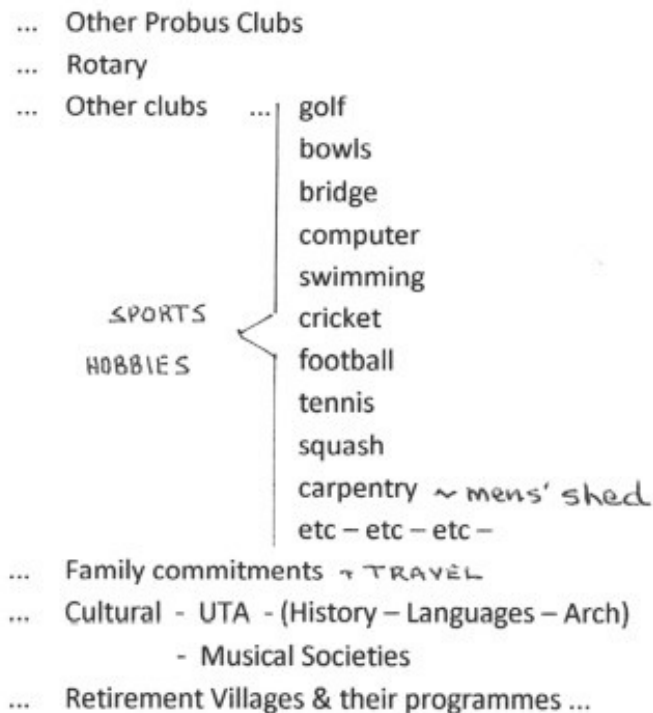
I advocate that before a vote is taken, members be given more time to consider the facts and to t

Tre

The Future of Seaforth Probus Club & its Membership

Declining Membership

- Natural attrition
- Competition



Declining memberships is experienced by ALL clubs & societies ...

Each operates in its own special "niche" which means its appeal is limited ... a reality that must be accepted.

So ...

1. Must identify & define that "niche" ...
2. Promote it ...
3. Define the "critical mass" of membership that enables the club or society to function effectively & fulfil its mission.

2.

The "Critical Mass" varies from club to club ... due to changing local geography
... local circumstances

- Maximises job sharing
 - Facilitates good deals for activities
 - Promotes better support for activities
- { Ceiling membership
practical
impractical

If membership falls below "Critical Mass" ...

Options ?

1. Amalgamate with another club or society -----> numbers ↑
risks a. Compounding the "sickness" causing the demise of each.
b. Conflict of interests
c. Change in club ethos & character.
2. Going "Mixed Gender" -----> numbers ↑
risks a. Change in club ethos
b. Move towards female dominance
c. Females are by nature & life patterns ... volunteers
d. Change in club's interests
3. Recruitment
 - a. Recruitment of the young by new young members
 - b. Recruitment Committee ...
 - # personal contact ... social contacts
 - ... local clubs & societies
 - ... local Retirement Villages
 - ... target local Rotary Clubs

3.

... Newsletter distribution

... Emails

... Website

... Mentors / pot. Members

Achieve & maintain the club's "Critical Mass"

Preserve its ethos & character as determined by the particular "niche" it occupies in society

Contrary to the pronouncement of PSPL, mixed gender is **NOT** the solution to aging membership ... it is simply an ~~expedient~~ **expedient** & is guaranteed to ~~change~~ change the existing character & ethos of the club, qualities that are for more important than mere numbers.

Warren Ogborne

21.09.2013