



PROBE

Bulletin of the Probud Club of Bendigo



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PROBUD CLUB OF BENDIGO

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Meets 3rd Wednesday each month - 10am at Bendigo Club.

All correspondence to the Secretary, 16 William Drive, Kangaroo Flat.

IMPORTANT!

VISIT TO RAILWAY WORKSHOPS:

DETAILS INSIDE.

THOSE OF US who regularly read the excellent Saturday edition of the Bendigo Advertiser (and don't we all?) enjoy the contributions of DORIS LEADBETTER whose humorous views on life in general brighten our week-end. A talented writer, Ms. Leadbetter is equally at home with the spoken word, and has been known to 'lay them in the aisles' with her ready wit.

We can look forward with pleasure to her appearance as Guest Speaker at the meeting today. We welcome yet another excellent speaker to our gallery of entertaining orators.

AT OUR LAST MEETING historian FELICITY KINGERLEE added her personal charm to a comprehensive account of a forgotten act of heroism on the Bendigo goldfield.

It was in 1907 when Joseph Davis saw his mate, John Allen unconscious at the bottom of a shaft in the Goldfields Consolidated mine. Charges had been set to go off and the firing could not be stopped - it was a point of no return. Descending the 56 ft. ladder fast (his feet did not touch the rungs) Davis dragged his mate to an area furthest from the explosive and, shielding him with his own body awaited the inevitable explosion. Miraculously, Davis escaped serious injury

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NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 15th JANUARY at 10.00 a.m.

whilst Allen survived with only severely damaged feet.

In the understatement of the year the Bendigo Advertiser of the day described the incident as 'An heroic deed' and Joseph Davis was showered with awards and citations culminating with the grant of the King Edward VII Medal for bravery.

Such was the fervor of the day that the Ballarat newspaper thought that he should get the Victoria Cross - overlooking the fact that this is a Military award, applicable only to deeds done in battle!

A very valuable and comprehensive collection of relics of the deed came to the hands of Ms. Kingerlee from descendents of the hero, Mr. & Mrs. Davis of Williamstown who had preserved them intact for 78 years.

We are indebted to Ms. Kingerlee for this absorbing insight into a noteworthy item of Bendigo history.

Introduced by Cyril Michelsen, our speaker was thanked by Don Kerr.

BENDIGO RAILWAY WORKSHOPS is our next venue for a visit.

DATE: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5th.

TIME: 10 a.m.

MEET at the carpark at main entrance to workshops.

ARTHUR EATON assures us that this will be an 'eye opener' to many of us. Having seen it I agree entirely with him. THIS IS A VISIT NOT TO BE MISSED. LADIES ARE INCLUDED IN THIS INVITATION.

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER

It must be considered as somewhat of a feat to organise an event which does not draw some criticism! Yet, such was the nature of our Christmas dinner that the Executive so far have received only words of praise.

Devoid of the all-too familiar artificial and sometimes childish trappings usually considered necessary for such an event, the dinner relied on three factors for its success - good food, good music and the opportunity for stimulating conversation; all the elements of true fellowship.

Highlights were the quiet but effective jokes of President Ray, the superb music from the electronic organ played by Frank McNiece and the efforts of Gordon Glover, called in at short notice to lead the community singing - a simple but effective means of providing entertainment. There was dancing for those with the dexterity to perform.

Maybe we turned the clock back a little to enjoy the simpler things of life without the doubtful benefit of lashings of grog (it was there if you wanted it) the ear-splitting trauma of grossly-amplified Rock 'Music' and the (sometimes) doubtful talents of expensive entertainers. These are the elements usually considered necessary for a function such as this.

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A MAN WHO spent a lifetime in the Victorian Railways, serving for his entire working life of 45 years, first surrounded by steam and then, metaphorically, plunging into diesel oil became one of the most experienced railway-men in the State. He is

ARTHUR MAXWELL EATON

and his family story covers almost the entire history of locomotion.

The railways must have been in their infancy when Arthur's grandfather, in his youth, started his working life as a 'ganger' on track maintenance. Steam was in the blood, for he handed the tradition to his son. He became a Train Operator as a Guard and Yard Foreman.

In turn, his son, Arthur, started his career at the age of 15 after completing his education at the Seymour Higher Elementary School. He began by peering into the intestines of giant locomotives at the Seymour Depot. He selected the Rolling Stock Branch responsible for the building and maintenance of locos, carriages, wagons and the crews who operated them.

As an Apprentice Fitter and Turner he transferred to Newport Workshops. There was a war on then and he found himself plunged into a 'hive of activity' not only concerned with matters locomotive but also with such un-Railway things as Beaufort Aircraft, Bren Gun Carriages, ocean-going Tugboats, Munitions and even Medical Surgical Instruments! His further education at Railway Technical College and Footscray Tech. School helped him cope with such diverse matters.

The war over he returned to Seymour Loco Depot qualified as Foreman Fitter and Turner, and over the next twenty years gained a wealth of experience and expert knowledge of all things appertaining to his work. This resulted in him working in many locations throughout the State and his position as Loco Depot Supervisor turned him into a veritable 'trouble shooter'. He was on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week coping with loco failures, major train derailments and mishaps of varying magnitude - many occurring in the middle of the night. The necessity to stay sober at all times meant that he never acquired a real taste for the Amber Brew!

In 1952 came the Revolution. Mainline Diesel Electric Locos arrived - and steam was doomed. Arthur was the first Steam foreman to do a course of training in diesels in Sydney and became one of the first

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THE CHRISTMAS DINNER (Continued from Page 2)

If this, our first Christmas dinner is to set the pattern for future events then we can look forward with pleasure to our next one - even though it is a year away!

Congratulations to all concerned for a job well done.

ARTHUR MAXWELL EATON (Continued from Page 3)

three servicing foremen appointed, operating out of the old North Melbourne steam depot. This was superceded by the brand-new D.E. Loco workshops where Arthur was Diesel foreman for 6 years.

After duty at Traralgon as OIC Gippsland District, he came to Bendigo, in 1969, as second-in-charge and Senior Supervisor at the Railway Workshops.

It is a matter of personal satisfaction to Arthur that, as a departmental officer he was constantly involved with youth and young men, particularly apprentices. He values greatly the opportunities he had to guide them through their formative working life. Employee welfare was another most rewarding experience, giving him the satisfaction of helping people in need.

Outside the railways he has found much to occupy his time. Lawn Bowls is his sporting obsession and for many years he has been active on the administrating side as well as playing pennant. He is a Past President and current Secretary of Bendigo East Bowls Club.

A third generation Freemason, as a Past Master of the Lodge on occasions, he proudly wears his grandfather's Jewel, now a relic of great intrinsic value.

He recognises the debt he owes to his wife, Kathy, whom he met when she was a member of the Australian Womens' Army Service. She subsequently became an Auxiliary Policewoman. They have two children, Michele (Bendigo) and Douglas (Sydney).

Most importantly, Arthur is now an Executive member of the Probuc Club of Bendigo!

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WE APPRECIATE an invitation from the Probus Club of Kerang to attend their Christmas party; unfortunately we were unable to arrange for someone to attend. However, we have made a useful contact for future activities.

REGRETTABLY several members have not received their Bulletin. We can only quote from the County Cork Examiner,

"If you do not receive this paper and are therefore unable to read this notice please advise the editor and he will put you on the mailing list."
Apologies!