



PROBE

Bulletin of the Probus Club of Bendigo Inc.



Published Monthly

Issue No. 144

20th. May 1998

Editor: ALEX. WILSON (Phone 5443 9994)

Annual Subscription \$20 Print Post Publication No. PP 3491 06/00007

President: Kevin Houlahan

Secretary: Arthur Cowling

Phone : 5443 3666

Phone : 5443 3788

A Special General Meeting is held every 3rd Wednesday each month at 10.00 am at the Masonic Centre, McIvor Road, Bendigo.

All correspondence to be addressed to The Secretary, P.O. Box 1217, Bendigo, 3552.



The guest speaker for today's meeting is Mrs. Greta Balsillie who will speak on "Bendigo Mothers of the Past". As a change to our normal format we welcome the partners of members who would be interested in attending our morning tea and talk.

For our April meeting three of our members were invited to speak to us about their experiences during the 1939 - 1945 war. These were Jack Watts - Army, Alex Reid - Navy (who stood in for Wal Spicer) and Ern Waterworth - Air Force.

Jack Watts was first cab off the rank and spoke of when he volunteered for service. His recollections commenced on Christmas Day, 1940 prior to issue of tropical uniform and embarkation to Malaya. This issue included the infamous Bombay Bloomers.

In November 1941 Jack, now with the 8th Battalion, was moved close to Singapore Island. In December 1941 the Japanese struck Singapore, sinking the British battleships

Prince of Wales and Repulse. Two months later Singapore fell and about 30,000 British and Australian troops, Jack included, were taken prisoner and marched out to Changi about 20 miles away. There was no water, electricity or sewerage in the camp and meal allowance was 1 lb of rice a day that reduced to 1/2 lb later. He spoke of the illnesses suffered by the P.O.W.'s. in the terrible conditions, the attempts by the cooks to make the rice palatable and the working parties sent into Singapore to clear the docks and streets. The Japanese changed the name of Singapore, altered the time to coincide with Tokyo time and changed the Gregorian calendar from 1942 to their own calendar of 2602.

In about May 1942 the first parties were sent into Burma to construct airfields and in early April 1943 the Japs sent 7000 P.O.W. troops to the Burma-Siam railway. Of the 7000 who went 2000 did not return. They were subjected to all manner of inhumane treatment.

The men saw nothing of the Red Cross parcels except for a few cigarettes.

Alex Read joined the Navy in 1942 and trained as a Naval Artificer on the maintenance and repair of Naval armament from the 8" turrets of the Australia down to rifles and pistols. He joined the Australia, the flagship of the Australian navy, and moved from the Borneo area to the Philippines taking part in landings along the way. Alex was involved in Operation Musketeer, the taking of the Philippines, with a massive convoy of 700 ships. His next area of operations was the invasion of Leyte Gulf when the Japanese kamikaze aircraft came on the scene. Not many troops were lost as a result of these attacks as the Japs concentrated on the heavily armed battleships, cruisers, destroyers and aircraft carriers. The Australia, a ship of about 17,000 tons, was built in Scotland around 1928 and was heavily armed with 8" guns which fired around 4 rounds a minute. An attacking aircraft had to run the gauntlet of 8" guns, 4" guns then 40 mm Pompoms before they could ram the ship. The first kamikaze aircraft hit the Australia at Leyte behind the bridge, killing the captain, wounding the Commodore and killing a number of personnel.


The Australia was hit by 5 successive suicide aircraft that resulted in many casualties and considerable damage to guns and the hull, particularly at the waterline. As a result she was sent to England for major repairs.

There were many acts of gallantry as a result of these actions.

Alex finished his talk with two amusing incidents relative to the "Heads".

INDUCTIONS


James Forsyth was introduced to the members by Peter Goodrich, supported by Ray Downey and inducted by President Kevin Houlahan.



ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Len and Phyllis McCracken who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on March 27th, 1998, and also to Bob and Alison Arundell who have also celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary.

Apologies to Clark Jeffrey for the premature announcement of his 50th wedding anniversary. Information given to the editor was not correct.



ACTIVITIES

BOWLS NOTES

I am pleased to report that Bendigo Probus were victorious in the annual challenge match against Sandhurst held at Woodbury Bowling Club on Thursday, 16th April. The final scores were - Bendigo 83, Sandhurst 61; a resounding victory and congratulations to all concerned. If we are successful next year, it would be 3 in a row. Keep practicing bowlers.

The top rink on the day was Jack Rose, Alex Wilson, Ray Fitzgerald, Bill Clemens(s). This match completes our bowls season and I would like to thank all members who made themselves available when selected and performed so well during the season.

Bill Clemens



The pessimists view of life - "Beware the light at the end of the tunnel, it may be another train".

The final talk was given by Ern Waterworth and related to his time in the RAAF. Ern's first efforts in aviation were the construction, flying and repair of model aircraft. When war was declared Ern tried to join the Air Force but was rejected because of the very high standards set. He was then called up by the army, trained as a signaller and denied a transfer to the Air Force as he was then considered to be indispensable due to his training. It took him another 11 months to be transferred to his preferred service.

His training then consisted of drill instruction at Shepparton, initial training school at Somers, flying school at Benalla where he was introduced to the Tiger Moth before being posted to Mallala in South Australia and the Avro Anson bomber.

Ern was then posted overseas, travelling across the Pacific in 5 star comfort on an American hospital ship, across America by troop train, billeted in New York and then by boat across the Atlantic to Liverpool. Once in England he was moved to hotel accommodation in Brighton where, at a dance, he met his future wife, Audrey.

By this stage the war in Europe was being won and the loss rate of aircrew was down from 12 1/2% to barely 1%. After further training at an Advanced Flying Unit in Scotland, where the main problem was trying to get enough dark-time for night flying exercises, Ern was drafted to a Central Flying School as an instructor. He then spent the rest of the war in England and Wales as an instructor.

The speakers were introduced by Kevin Houlahan and thanked by Bill Jacka.



VALE

It is with regret that we note the passing of our esteemed member, Alan Michelsen, and we extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Dorothy, and family.



SICK LIST

Bob Hollow has not been well lately, has had a stay in hospital and is now home. We wish him well.



TRIPS INFORMATION

TUES. JUNE 23rd, 1998. 7.00 pm to 10.30.pm "CHRISTMAS DINNER OUTING IN JUNE" at B.R.I.T. Hospitality Centre, McCrae St. Bendigo. Cliff Binks has been fortunate to obtain a booking at BRIT Hospitality Restaurant. A traditional Christmas dinner will be served. Entertainment has been arranged. Will be a first class night out at a reasonable cost. COST: \$18.50/person. Maximum 70, Current 67. PAYMENTS: **May 20th meeting.**



THUR. JULY 16TH, 1998. 7.00 pm to 10.45 pm. "DINNER AND CONCERT" (C.B)
The venue will be the Uniting Church Hall, Forest Street. A caterer has been engaged to provide the dinner.

CONCERT: Caledonian Society has arranged for twenty artists.

FORMAT: Sit at tables - buffet. Nibbles/fruit punch on tables. Part concert - main course - concert - sweets - concert - coffee and after dinner mints. COST: \$17.50/person approx.

LIST: May 20th meeting. PAYMENTS: June 17th meeting. Max. 80 approx. Current 38



SUN. AUG. 23RD, 1998. 2.00 pm to 6.00 pm. Maximum (156) (C.Binks)
"FILM AFTERNOON AT CAMPBELL THEATRETTE".

Due to the popularity of the previous film night at the Campbell Theatre, another excellent program is being prepared for this Film Afternoon. Excellent program - Feature film "Road to Nhill".

Other Probuss Clubs will be offered specific ticket allocations. Nibbles, finger food, etc will be provided at interval.

COST: \$7.00/person. LIST at May 20th May meeting. PAY: July 15th meeting.

TRIP OF THE YEAR



MON. SEPT. 28TH TO FRI. OCT. 2ND. Incl.

5 day/4 night staying at PINNACLE VALLEY RESORT. (Mansfield area).

Max 48 Current 53. ***EMERGENCIES REQUIRED***

"A first class trip" - you will enjoy this one, I recommend it. (AE)

COST: \$420/person. Include: Coach (5 star), Accommodation (4 star) twin share, all meals, morning and afternoon teas, tours, entry fees.

NOTE: M/tea, lunch commence from day 1 and cease after lunch on day 5.



BALANCE OF PAYMENTS: (\$420 - \$50 Deposit.)

Payment = \$370/person due for payment at **August 19th meeting**.

*** If going north, please ensure arrangements made for payment.

*** To assist collectors, please tender correct money. If payment by cheque, please ensure details written on back of cheque.

