



# Probus Club of Sydney

www.sydneyprobus.org

## Newsletter

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NOVEMBER 2024

Issue 470

### MEETING DATES

NOVEMBER 12

SIMON PERROTT

The Wayside Chapel

DECEMBER 3

NICK BRYANT

America and the Election Result

### ACTIVITIES

NOVEMBER 18

NextSense Tour

DECEMBER 9

Christmas Lunch

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

***Gentlemen,***

Thanks to all of you who contributed to the survey, which will provide a very useful summary of members' opinions about the various components of our club, and ideas to help guide planning to further enhance our enjoyment for the future. The results will be collated for discussion at the next committee meeting, and then a summary report will be promptly circulated to all members.

It is good to see our numbers have gradually increased this year, now at 135. There is room for more, so don't hesitate to invite a suitable friend as a guest so he can see if he wishes to join.

At the last meeting, Ian Westmoreland told us of the splendid work being done by a group of volunteers, who mentor and help men who have problems navigating some of life's challenges. If you are interested in offering your time, feel free to approach our fellow member Neil Martin, who has been a volunteer mentee with Ian's programme since 2020.

It was great to see keen attendance, including many wives, at the SCG (where we all saw and learnt such a lot about this Sydney icon), and booked for the Barangaroo tour (which was so quickly filled that the architect our fellow member Adrian Pilton agreed to hold a 2nd tour in November, already waitlisted).

On 12th November (note 2nd Tuesday to avoid Melbourne Cup) we look forward to celebrating the 60th anniversary of another Sydney icon, the Wayside Chapel with our guest speaker, chairman Simon Perrot.

Best wishes,

***Peter James***

President

**Note**

**To Register to attend the November meeting at the Union, University and Schools Club - [click here](#)**

## FUTURE GUEST SPEAKERS

**NOVEMBER 12. (NB: NOT THE 1<sup>ST</sup> TUESDAY)**

### **Simon Perrott**

**The Wayside Chapel: It's History and Contribution to Sydney**



Simon is the Chairman of The Wayside Chapel, a charity and parish mission in Sydney. He has been a non executive director for 10 years, the last two as Chairman.

He has over 35 years investment banking experience in Australia and the UK. He was Chairman of CIMB Bank Australia from 2012 to 2014 and Chairman of investment banking for RSB Australia from 2009 to 2012. Prior to that he held various roles for Merrill Lynch and ABN AMRO, where his last role was Co-

Head of Banking.

Simon is currently Chairman and non-executive director of Lendlease Real Estate Investments Limited, a subsidiary of Lendlease Corporation. He is also a non/executive director of Global Commercial REIT(Singapore).

Simon holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Melbourne and a Master of Business Administration from the University of New South Wales.

He is married to Pru and has three sons and one grandson.

## SEPTEMBER MEETING REPORT

President Peter James welcomed two guests. He also thanked Bill Cheshire for his great contribution to the club. Bill has been a member of the club for almost 12 years and has been a member of the management committee for years with specific responsibility for IT matters. He also acted as club photographer at meetings and events. Bill is moving to New Zealand to be closer to family.

There were committee reports from Geoff McWilliam about the speakers programme for the next few months and from Ted Brogan who spoke about a recent events and the events planned for the next few months.

President Peter announced that there will be a survey of members soon to gain feedback from members on the club's meetings.

## INDUCTIONS



*President Peter, John O'Connor and Sven Banton*

### Sven Banton

John O'Connor introduced Sven Banton as a new member. John started life in Freetown, on the west coast of Africa, where his academic father was researching a book. From there the family moved northwards to Edinburgh and Boston where Sven's father was a professor at MIT.

Sven did a Bachelor degree in Political Economy at the University of Warwick followed by a move to Australia where he worked for James Hardie constructing and mapping of lung capacity tests. He later moved to the Department of Social Security where he constructed the largest database in the southern hemisphere. He did an MNA at UNSW. He then worked at NRMA Insurance and at HIH where he integrated the computer systems with those of FAI Insurance. This was followed by employment at the Department of Corrective Services before retiring after some years on compliance at Westpac.

Sven is married to Maggie. He enjoys 'a good yarn and a good red'. He was inducted by the President.

## LIFE BEFORE PROBUS

### Geoff Symonds



Geoff's story started in Grenfell where his father was a GP (where the poet Henry Lawson was also born). He went to school at The Scots College before studying medicine at Sydney University. His clinical training was at Sydney Hospital and his first placement was at Balmain Hospital. He was lucky to be selected for the one position in anaesthetics and he subsequently followed a career in the field. He was accepted into the Sydney Hospital anaesthetics training scheme where he started in 1978. After only four weeks he was called into the hospital in the middle of the night because a bomb

had gone off in the middle of the city and there were multiple trauma patients in casualty. He first thought it was a prank since nothing major ever happened at Sydney Hospital! It wasn't. It was the Hilton bombing.

He met his first wife who was a radiographer at Sydney Hospital. They had three children. Sadly the marriage ended after about 20 years. A fellow medical divorcee encouraged him to join the Paris International Cooking School at Stanmore. His 'practical work' at the school was brought home and he fed his children on the dishes. After 20 years they still won't let him forget it!

He joined a syndicate which aimed to set up a large vineyard. Some of the syndicate were trained viticulturalists and the rest, mainly doctors, were passive investors. They developed a 500 acre winery west of Orange called The Monument. It ran for about 10 years but regrettably didn't make a profit despite the great experience.

After living by himself for a year he joined a singles group which organized restaurant dinners for 3 men and 3 women. There he was lucky to meet his second wife Janet. His wife suffered from systic fibrosis. Despite this they had a very full life. His wife eventually had a lung transplant which enabled them to have another 10 years together. Geoff made a plea for the general population to register as organ donors.

Geoff has been retired for 6 years and enjoys walking, spending time at the men's shed and playing bridge. He has 3 children and 6 grandchildren.

## Peter White



Peter grew up in a farming community in the central west of NSW. He initially attended a small 2 teacher primary school and subsequently a large Marist Brothers boarding school in Forbes for his secondary education where he developed an interest in mathematics (as well as rugby). He then went to Teachers Training College before completing his Bachelor's degree in Pure and Applied Mathematics at UNE followed by a Masters in Pure Mathematics at UNSW. He went on to teach 4 unit maths at high school.

After a few years of teaching he was appointed as Vice Principal at a new and developing college in the Hills District where he had the challenge of growing the school to an enrolment of 1400 students. He was appointed Principal of the school in 1985 and stayed in that role until 1998. One of the initiatives that he introduced was implementing vocational courses for the less academically inclined students.

In the mid 1990's he was offered the role of supervising and overseeing about 12 senior colleges and secondary schools in north west Sydney. One of his significant achievements was to be involved in the implementation of an educational precinct on the site of the former Nirimba Naval Base in Quakers Hill in partnership with the University of Western Sydney, NSW Tafe, a senior state high school and a senior Catholic high school. He was able to undertake sabbatical studies during these years in England, Spain, Ireland, Japan and China as well as studies at the University of Louvain in Belgium.

He was married in 1968 and has a son and daughter in New Zealand and Sydney respectively. Sadly his wife passed away last year after 55 years of marriage. He has 4 grandchildren. He retired in 2007 and travel and his grandchildren are now his priorities. He is a member of the Australian Turf Club and enjoys walking, golf, theatre and music.

## **Ian Westmoreland OAM**

### **The Never Ending Story of Adversity and Healing**



Introduced by Neil Martin, Ian Westmoreland spoke of his moving in 2014 from a senior executive career to pursue his interest in philanthropy and in particular to found Mentoring Men that seeks to provide an environment “where no man walks alone” and Kintsugi Heroes aimed at creating “a world filled with meaningful personal connections”. Both organisations are focused on supporting men and boys.

Ian pointed to the statistics that act as a catalyst – suicide is the number 1 cause of death of men and boys aged 15 to 44, with 1 in 4 feeling isolated, 1 in 5 suffering anxiety and 1 in 8 experiencing depression.

Reflecting on his own life, Ian commented that there came a time when he felt his own need for a mentor. This led to recognition of the benefits of a 1 to 1 mentoring relationship with the mentor a trained volunteer rather than an employed professional.

Ian spoke of the free training provided for mentors (including listening, offering unconditional positive regard and empathy) and of the informal and formal processes adopted to make the mentoring both effective and enjoyable. He aspires for the Mentoring Men concept to go global through the training of many thousands of mentors

Kintsugi Heroes uses the power of stories to effect social change. He pointed to the Native American proverb – “Tell me the facts and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. Tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever”

Kintsugi Heroes focuses on a range of themes including natural disasters, mental and physical conditions, violence and addictions, establishes projects related to these themes e.g. Alpine Black Summer Bushfire Recovery, People in Social Housing, Connecting Seniors, then publishing and communicating the results via podcasts, workshops, books and events.

Ian concluded with some personal philosophy especially the importance of using one’s talents and experiences to positively impact the world around you, then offered some memorable and challenging quotes “ The two most important days in

your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why”, “Some people are so poor, all they have is money” and “I would rather have a Purpose than a Porsche!”

Finally, he introduced the Mentoring Men CEO, Filipe Gama e Silva who spoke about the critical importance of fundraising from Government, Corporations and Individuals.

Following questions including on how Mentoring Men interacts with other organisations like lifeline Geoff McWilliam thanked Ian for his informative and encouraging address.

Mentoring Men can be contacted at “mentoringmen.org.au”

*Alan Locke*

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM



On 10th October 22 members and guests had a guided tour of the Sydney Cricket Ground.

We were fortunate to have the lady who runs all the tours as our Guide and with 10 years in the position and an avid interest in sport, particular cricket and AFL.

We were able to walk, briefly, on the Oval itself under the watchful eye of the Curator and were shown the Sydney Swans’ training area and gym under the stands, the statue of the legendary barracker Yabba where the Hill used to be, the changing rooms of the home and away teams (including the traditional graffiti on the back of cupboard doors from test cricketers after they had made a century or a duck), the

team dining rooms and the magnificent Bar in the Members Stand. Some details of the foibles and superstitions of individual players were revealed.

Most members stayed for Lunch at a nearby restaurant in the Entertainment Quarter.

Even for those with a casual interest in sporting events this was a very interesting tour of a most historic precinct of Sydney.

**Future events** (please see the website for details)

NextSense (Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November) On site Lunch provided

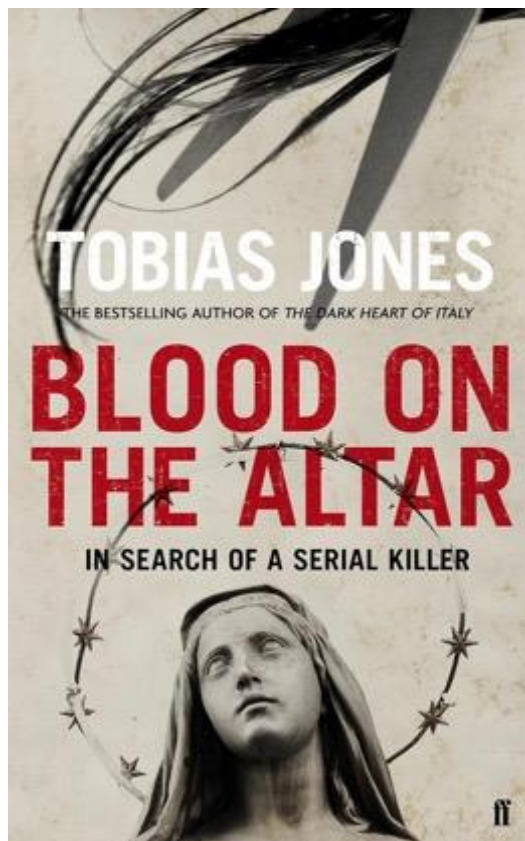
The Christmas Lunch (Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December) at Royal Sydney Golf Club

***Ted Brogan***

***Events Coordinator***

## BOOK REVIEW

### Blood on the Altar by Tobias Jones (306 Pages) – 2012 – Fact



Fancy a change of scene, country and genre? If so, you will like this murder mystery set in the Basilicata region of Italy. So read it for the writing, region and mystery.

In 1993 a 16-year-old girl mysteriously disappeared. The murder was not solved for 18 years. Apart from the murderer, who was to blame – the church, inhabitants or the region?

None of the above are spared and the region, between Calabria in the south, Campagna in the West and Puglia in the north is described in great detail.

“Basilicata is the forgotten land of Italy. My dog-eared 20-year-old guidebook to the peninsula has only 6 pages out of over 800, on the region. When I stop at a service station to buy a map of the area, the man behind the counter looks at me with surprise.”

Thus, the scene is set. Once started, it is hard to put down. You also get an interesting comparison between British justice and what passes for justice in Basilicata.



So an interesting and compelling read for those interested in any of the above topics.

*David Castle*

## A TOUCH OF HUMOUR!

### **The 16 commandments of growing old**

#1 - Talk to yourself, because there are times you need expert advice.

#2 - Consider "In Style" to be the clothes that still fit.

#3 - You don't need anger management. You need people to stop pissing you off.

#4 - Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.

#5 - The biggest lie you tell yourself is, "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it."

#6 - You have days when your life is just a tent away from a circus.

#7 - These days, "on time" is when you get there.

#8 - Even duct tape can't fix stupid - but it sure does muffle the sound.

#9 - Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller ?

#10 - Lately, You've noticed people your age are so much older than you.

#11 - "Getting lucky" means walking into a room and remembering why you're there.

#12 - When you were a child, you thought nap time was punishment. Now it feels like a mini vacation.

#13 - Some days you have no idea what you're doing out of bed.

#14 - You thought growing old would take longer.

#15 - Aging sure has slowed you down, but it hasn't shut you up.

#16 - You still haven't learned to act your age, and hope you never will.



## HOW TO CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER

To contact any committee member [Click here](#)  
Please use email where possible or telephone if you require urgent contact.