

Probus Club 2022 – 2023

Report at AGM by President Robert Littlejohn

1. Subscription and coffee morning fee

The annual subscription remained unchanged but the charge at coffee mornings was increased to £3, with the additional £1 going to club funds.

2. Members who passed away this year

Eric Anderson

Greig Harrison

Douglas Orr

William Pollock

John Williamson

3. Winners of Bowling and Golf competitions

The Bowling competition was not held, but the Golf competition went ahead at Buchanan Castle. The winner was Ewen Smith.

4. List of talks for the season

Rob Littlejohn: Aspects of my RAF Career

Larry MacDougall: 150 years of Glasgow Trams

Gordon Michie: PoppyScotland

John Moore: Mapping Glasgow and Milngavie

Nigel Raby: Use of X-Rays and Scans

Jennie Turnbull: Shakespeare in Opera

Roddy MacPherson: The Court of the Lord Lyon

Carol Parry & Elaine Morrison: The Scottish Women's Hospital (Girton & Newnham Unit) during WW1

Iain Macleod: Truth is elusive but uncertainty can be managed.

Grant Carstairs: Cultybraggan Camp

Club Members: My Favourite Music

5. Outings

A trip on the Forth and Clyde Canal and a visit to the Panopticon in Glasgow.

6. President's report

The session 2022 - 2023 saw the Club gradually recovering from the worst effects of the Covid pandemic, as restrictions were eased. During the summer break it had been possible to arrange a barge trip on the Forth and Clyde Canal, followed by lunch at the Stables Restaurant. When meetings started, they were held in the large hall at Cairns Church. Importantly, it was also possible to resume tea/coffee breaks.

The President put together a programme of talks for the year which reflected his interests. He had been advised by his predecessor to prepare a talk which he could give himself, in the event that a booked speaker had to call off. That proved invaluable. Not long after arrangements had been made – but unbeknown to us - the first booked speaker had died. In his place, the President gave a talk on aspects of his own RAF career.

In another in-house talk, Larry MacDougall celebrated the 150th anniversary of Glasgow's trams. He illuminated his account with tales from the days of horse-drawn vehicles to the demise of trams in the 1960s.

A second planned speaker had to call off because of ill health but a colleague, Gordon Michie, stepped into the breach to talk about Poppy Scotland from its formation as the Earl Haig Fund after the First World War. Each year veterans at the Edinburgh factory make 3 million of them, raising around £6m to fund support for veterans.

John Moore presented a history of map making from 1596 to the present day. Originally, measurements relied on a compass and chain, but theodolites, drones and satnav had enabled greater precision. John illustrated his talk with maps from our local area.

Nigel Raby, a retired consultant radiographer, gave a talk on the development and use of medical scanners from X-rays to CAT and MRI scanners. He made a potentially complex topic understandable to a lay audience.

The President's daughter, Jennie Turnbull, talked about operatic interpretations over the years of Shakespeare's plays. She illustrated her talk with extracts from versions by different composers.

The third call-off of the season came when Dr Joe Morrow, Lord Lyon King of Arms had to attend a planning meeting for the Coronation of King Charles. Roddy MacPherson, Unicorn Pursuivant of Arms deputised for him, giving a fascinating presentation about the Lyon court. He explained the arcane terms, and advised how to petition the Lord Lyon to be granted one's own Arms.

Carol Parry and Elaine Morrison gave an account of the Scottish Women's Hospital during World War I. Formed by Dr Elsie Inglis, it operated in Troyes, France, and north of Salonika in Greece.

Iain Macleod talked on the intriguing subject, 'Truth is elusive but uncertainty can be managed'. He put forward a convincing case for better decision-making at all levels, but particularly government.

Grant Carstairs outlined the history of Cultybraggan Camp at Comrie, which several of our members had experienced during CCF or OTC service in their younger days.

Finally, we made our own entertainment when club members introduced and played their favourite pieces of music, assisted by William Ho, who had unearthed video of each selection.

Alongside the programme of talks, informal gatherings for coffee continued in the Beefeater Restaurant in Milngavie on other Thursdays when members put the world to rights. A Christmas Lunch was enjoyed with wives at Douglas Park Golf Club when, as had become a custom, the Club entertained the President of the Antonine Probus Club, Maher Mansouri, and his wife.

In January, the Club held its Burns Lunch, masterminded by Ken Wallace. Andy Quinn addressed the haggis, and also proposed the toast to the Immortal Memory of Robert Burns. There were songs from John MacMillan, Jean Maughan and Ken Wallace, and our piper was Peter Maxwell.

Visits were curtailed by Covid restrictions but, in May 2022 members and guests had a barge trip on the Forth & Clyde Canal. In March 2023, there was a visit to the Panopticon in Glasgow.

During the year, the Club suffered a sad loss with the death of Douglas Orr, a Past President who masterminded its audio-visual support and edited the Bulletin for many years. He was a friend to so many people and a stalwart of the Probus Club of Allander.

On a brighter note, one of Rob Littlejohn's last duties as President was also one of the most enjoyable. He, with Vice-President William Ho, Hon Secretary Frank Cruickshank, and Hon Treasurer Gil Harrison visited Morton Fyfe (Senior Past President 2004 – 2005) to present him with a gift from the Club to mark his 100th birthday.

In August 22, our golfers met at Buchanan Castle to contest for the Club's Golf Trophy. (Ken Wallace was able to join them for 9 holes, but other commitments meant that he couldn't complete the round.) The winner was Ewen Smith.