



PROBUS Global Newsletter



June 2024



From the President

Welcome to the 2024 Second Quarter PROBUS Global Newsletter.

We are excited to announce that we have just welcomed our 1,300th member! Our growth from the initial 35 members less than five years ago has been beyond expectations.

At our recent General Meeting, there was much enthusiasm for the idea of a Virtual Club. This club would be open to both Probus members and non-members, expanding our community further (more information included in Newsletter).

As our membership and programs continue to grow, adding more members to our management team is important. This will help us maintain our focus on growth and communication, ensuring that all Probus members can benefit from our international scope.

A number of clubs in Canada have adopted a new policy: when a membership application is submitted, there will be an option to join Probus Global. This will make new members aware of PROBUS Global and encourage wider participation.

You recently received a PROBUS Global update, which was very well received by our members. We plan to make these updates a regular feature to keep everyone informed and engaged.

My three-year term concludes in May 2024, but I will continue to serve until a new team is in place. Reflecting on our journey from founding PROBUS Global, developing a strategic plan with our mission, vision, and goals—most of which we have met—it's time to review our achievements and chart our future course. We are planning a management session soon to discuss our path forward, and your input would be appreciated. Information will be made available prior to the meeting

Did you know that our Club Directory contains information about 2,563 clubs worldwide? Probus Global has members from 654 different clubs. We are only 25% of the way to our goal of welcoming a member from every club!

Of these 654 clubs with PROBUS Global members, 415 have their own websites. If you're interested in exploring these club web pages, visit <https://probusglobal.org/Clubs/show.php> at PROBUS Global to find them.

Contact PG [here](#)

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Contributions welcome (200-500 words) for September issue. Deadline August 15, 2024

newsletter@probusglobal.org

Richard Furlong

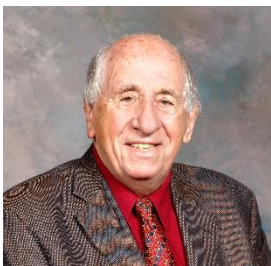


Editorial

Different Languages are essential components of diplomatic and intelligence toolkits. A decline in their teaching and learning has repercussions beyond university campuses. The trend since COVID has been for universities worldwide, to discontinue and stop promoting many of their language courses. The cuts are coming despite the outbreak of new wars and soaring geopolitical tensions. For example, the Modern Language Association's figures showed, in 2022, US university enrolments in Arabic, Chinese and Russian fell significantly. In the UK enrolments in Chinese did the same. In Australia and New Zealand, several universities have discontinued numerous European languages.

Russian, Chinese, and Indonesian among others, are facing funding insecurities. Studying a language inevitably involves gaining insight into another culture and history. Cultural and political dimensions should not be seen as entirely separate. While AI technology is improving in leaps and bounds, machine translation will never substitute for the crucial human role foreign language learning plays in understanding other worldviews. In stormy geopolitical times, this ability is more valuable than ever. For us, the good thing is, that the language of friendship is universal and doesn't change. Organisations such as PROBUS Global reach across political divides, foster understanding of others and extend the hand of goodwill and friendship.

Mary Wilson



Letter from a Scottish Laird

Barrie Morgan, Probus Club of Guildwood, Ontario, Canada.

I have been an active member of my local PROBUS club for several years and have had the honour of serving in several positions including the Chair of our monthly lunches, arranging guest speakers, webmaster and culminating as the 2023 President. Most members understandably tend to focus on our domestic activities, but I have tried to widen their horizons by publishing newsletter articles on other issues. I write about my international travels when teaching with a Community College, and on road safety issues such as roundabouts and the Seniors Road Safety bi-annual tests that we have to undergo here from age 80 onwards.

Since joining PROBUS Global after meeting President Richard Furlong, it has been satisfying to continue my interest in what goes on outside Canada, and joining the Zoom presentations with PG has heightened my involvement. The most recent ones from South Africa and New Zealand were exceptionally successful in capturing my interest.

Several years ago, I made another visit to the UK, the land of my birth in Northumberland (yes, I am a proud Geordie). The occasion was my brother's 80th birthday so the problem was what do you get

for someone that age who no longer requires more "stuff"? My wife and I settled on buying him a plot of land in Scotland. I did this a few years back for myself - it is a small Estate (as the plots are known) overlooking Loch Ness and I adopted (yes, legally!!) the title of Laird Balfour of Guildwood. Balfour is my paternal Scottish grandmother's maiden name and I currently live in the village of Guildwood in Ontario, Canada. Lady Balfour and I joined in at a family gathering (19 of us) in Tain in northern Scotland (past Inverness) in full highland



dress. I surprised my brother by having him kneel. I tapped him on the shoulders with my sword and said “Arise Lord Ashton of Whitley”, and presented him with the official papers for his land ownership and adoption of his title. Since then, we have expanded these customs to include our son, daughter, and later my sister in England. I sometimes wonder if other countries offer similar opportunities. It could be an idea for our members to offer a unique gift to a family member or friend living abroad, and provide so much fun, rather than a crystal vase that will just gather dust, and break in transit. Lovingly submitted (with tears in my eyes) **Barrie Morgan**.

A Probus visit across the world

Gauthier De Brabandere PG European coordinator



Bea and Gauthier

When planning our trip to visit our son and grandchildren who live in Melbourne, Australia, we decided to accept an invitation issued last year by past president (2019 - 2020) John Metcalf and Robert Erbacher, of the Probus Club of Heidelberg, to attend, for the third time, their club meeting. John arranged for us to be guest speakers at its February meeting and it was like a homecoming to see again members with whom we had made friends before.

Despite their efforts Technical problems prevented us from showing the pictures on our PowerPoint presentation, only the text showed. However, the following week members managed to record the presentation and the club was kind enough to put it on its well-kept website. Following the usual club proceedings and a fascinating presentation of “*The Man from Snowy River*” - a poem by A.B. “Banjo” Paterson, President John Doherty introduced us to the club members and Bea talked about the establishment, structure and functioning of the 15-year-old mixed gender club “Kortrijk Manten & Kalle”. As one of the club’s founders, Bea has served as vice president (2 yrs.) and president (2 yrs.) and is currently club secretary.

Gauthier, who is a past president of Probus Belgium (2019 – 2021), congratulated the club members for celebrating their 40th anniversary in 2023, and then focused on presenting a talk about Belgium, and Probus in Belgium and Europe. He completed the presentation by explaining the international approach of PROBUS Global, to build relationships between Probus members all over the world. Together with a French Probus friend, Gauthier is representing the continental European Probus clubs on the PROBUS Global Committee.

The Probus Heidelberg members reacted with questions and enthusiasm, proving how open they are to explore relations across the nation’s boundaries. During lunch, a further exchange of ideas and experiences completed the memorable day for both of us.

This was the Australian “friendship, fellowship and fun” in practice. Many thanks to you all in Probus Heidelberg, and welcome to Belgium if good fortune brings you our way!

Too much Outsourcing

In 2009, an Air France jet crashed into the ocean, leaving no survivors. The plane’s autopilot system shut down and the pilots, having become reliant on their computerised assistant, were unable to correct the situation manually. In 2015, a bus driver in Europe typed the wrong destination into his GPS device and cheerfully took a group of Belgian tourists on a 1,200-kilometre detour in the wrong direction. In 2017, in a decision later overturned on appeal, US prosecutors who had agreed to release a teenager on probation abruptly changed their minds because an algorithm ruled the defendant “high risk”. These are dramatic examples, but they are far from isolated. So what happens when we outsource cognitive tasks to computers and we lose the ability to perform the task

ourselves? The risk of skills erosion is growing exponentially. Efficiency gains overshadow abstract concerns about expertise until problems ensue. Fortunately, PROBUS clubs, while using computers for banking and record-keeping, are purely social and promote human interaction. Friendship, fellowship, fun and food require only social skills, a sense of humour and the ability to enjoy ourselves. These human traits cannot be outsourced and we are far removed from having our *raison d'être* overtaken by machines.



Reinventing the Wheel

When there is an influx of new volunteers willing to serve on the management committee, it

happens too often that they overrule the few long-time, experienced members. The change-over of committee membership is encouraged in PROBUS because it invigorates the club. However, past minutes of successful decisions are rarely consulted, and there is the risk that newer committee members will reinvent the wheel. Another danger is when past members of other PROBUS clubs become influential on their current club's committee. Importing new and enriching ideas from other clubs is fine, but when they try to force the mores of their past clubs on the new one, which has a different ethos, alarm bells should ring. One example is a club that did away with tedious minute reading and detailed financial reports

at general meetings, to concentrate on fun, friendship and fellowship. Past members of other clubs on the committee influenced the reintroduction of boring reports, in the spirit of transparency. These days, transparency can be achieved by loading reports on a club's website (maybe on a members-only page), emailing them to members, or distributing them with newsletters. Meeting times can be filled with fun activities instead; cameo speakers, icebreakers, humour, short quizzes, etc., in addition to the speaker. Another example is when it is decided to cut out a variety of presenters at a meeting and have the same person (who may be somewhat incoherent, or like the sound of their voice) drone on as presenter, meeting after meeting. Variety is good in many ways. It involves more members and adds interest for the audience. Sometimes, "new" ideas can be old ones that have been discarded as unsuccessful, or old ideas can be regressive. So committees should consider carefully and consult, before making strategic changes.

The Rotary Connection

Merv Richens, PG Australian coordinator

In previous articles I have mentioned that Rotary clubs have Five Avenues of Service as a "Service Club". The 5th Avenue of service is Youth Service.

Youth Service: recognises the importance of empowering youth and young professionals through leadership development programs such as Interact, Rotary Youth Leadership Awards and Rotary Youth Exchange. I have previously mentioned RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Award). This program originated in Queensland, Australia – but has now been adopted by Rotary International and is being run in many countries around the world. It is a weeklong program for young people between the ages of 20 and 28 who have shown some leadership potential and the program helps develop these skills and draw out the full potential of these young people.

As with sponsoring Probus Clubs for us older folks, Rotary Clubs are involved in forming, sponsoring or supporting clubs for younger people.

Rotaract: When formed in 1968 in Charlotte, North Carolina USA, it was a club for young people – basically university students or young business and professional people up to 30 years old. More recently the age limit has been removed and Rotaract Clubs are now considered part of the “Family of Rotary” and serviced by Rotary International based in Chicago. Rotaract clubs are still mainly for younger people, what with the average of Rotary club members, at least in Australia and New Zealand, being 77 years old and therefore less attractive to younger people.

Rotaract is now classed as a major organisation with over 11,000 clubs spread around the world. There are nearly 200,000 members in 189 countries and geographical areas. Rotaract is also classed as a service club, does fundraising and runs projects similar to Rotary Clubs and often in association with them.

Interact: This is a club for teenagers – mostly senior school students between the ages of 12 and 18 with clubs based in schools. Mostly of a social nature, encouraging young people to develop leadership skills, make new friends and help improve our world community and become better global citizens. There are over 15,000 Interact clubs worldwide, with around 350,000 members.

So once again, a reminder that a connection with a local Rotary club can help you keep in touch with programs such as these and if you have grandchildren, encourage them to become involved and help make our global village a better place for us all.

March PG Zoom meeting



While there were no guest speakers at PG’s general meeting late in March, many of the 45 members attending participated with suggestions, questions, and reports. The following were the principal points made, but the whole meeting is available for viewing at <https://probusglobal.org/Meetings/>

President Richard advised that his three-year term of office ends in May and we need to appoint a new President. He outlined all that PG has achieved in its short life, but noted that It is time to reconsider PG’s mission.

-It was suggested that PG could form a virtual Probus club

that meets by Zoom from time to time and communicates by email. A virtual club would welcome new members who do not have a local club they can join.

- UK has no central structure to support clubs, so sharing is more difficult.
- New member marketing was discussed and members were reminded to start looking internally first. The more activities to keep members engaged, the better. Facebook marketing has been successfully used but the cost is prohibitive for some clubs. Also, some clubs find the cost of having and maintaining a website too high.
- The question “What do young retirees want?” needs to be determined and addressed.
- Some men’s clubs can’t advertise for members because of anti-discrimination laws.
- Generally, rural membership of Probus is growing faster than city membership.
- PROBUS Canada supports the formation of new clubs with a one-year loan to cover the costs associated with their establishment. PSPL in Australia and NZ has funds to support new clubs.

- The newsletter was discussed. It was opened 7,900 times last month, which includes those who received it by forwarding from a subscriber and a few who read it in parts online. There are now 1,710 subscribers, including our 1,300 members from 20 countries. We are happy to report that paid subscribers and donations have covered the cost of the website hosting this year, for the first time.
- Members are frequently using the PG website to locate and contact Probus clubs to visit while travelling.

Lentune Probus Club Automates Administration

Bill Basham, Lentune Club, UK

Most Probus clubs now have a website to promote their club and keep members informed of club activities. Lentune Probus Club (www.lentuneprobust.co.uk) has a website, launched in 2019, that also **automates most of the administration** involved in running the club and maintains club records securely. In addition, their website features a database of local speakers, together with details of the talks they offer and have already given.

Visitors to the site have access to information about the club, upcoming meetings and social events, plus details of how to contact the club. The homepage also features a Breaking News section, drawing attention to recent and upcoming club activities, while (hopefully) positioning the club as a lively, fun organisation.

The website also has a secure Members Area, containing members' contact details, members' news, club rules and bank details, the club's privacy, health & safety statements, and the minutes of club meetings.

Members book their attendance at club meetings and social events in this Members Area and choose what they will eat when catering is involved. The website then prepares a consolidated food order and it automatically emails it to the club's caterers on a pre-determined date. It also prepares a seating plan for each meeting, plus individual place cards showing what each diner ordered.

The website also contains a database of local speakers, listing the talks already given and still available, plus a rating of each speaker awarded by the appropriate club committee.

A series of management reports are available, showing the age profile of members, their participation in meetings and social events, and the positions they have held within the club.

The website was developed in partnership with Silkstream, a web development and digital marketing company, and is based on Silkstream's proprietary contact management system. Club members each contributed towards the development costs, which were limited to "the cost of a decent lunch" in 2019 economics. (Bill Basham can be contacted at morangie38@hotmail.com)

Working with local Colleges

Heather Jones, Probus Club of Southeastern New Brunswick, Canada

Our club has achieved great things through partnering agreements with local private colleges. It has been a win-win for both parties because the students get to learn and practice skills using real-life materials and cases, and the club can get work done at a minimal cost because it is a non-profit organization. In our

case, an agreement has been made where our club provides the class with an honorarium.

We are an all-women's club of 218 members located in Southeastern New Brunswick, Canada. Like other clubs, our membership numbers dwindled during COVID, but we are recovering nicely. We recently established an Ad Hoc Committee to look at marketing and

recruiting strategies to help grow our membership. For this project, our club is working with a class in a Graphic Design program at McKenzie College, a private college in Moncton, NB.

The committee met with the class, and discussed our needs, and the students are now developing strategies and materials as they study and progress through a plan for us. We have a deadline for them to present three marketing options they designed for our selection. The committee will work with the students who designed the one we select, to make final edits.

These students are using their skills in real-life situations, and we will have leading-edge resources. How exciting is that?

Our second partnership is with the Medical Office Program at Oulton College, another private college in Moncton. As part of the curriculum in this course, students learn the

skills to organize, categorize, and digitize information used in medical record keeping. Our club has over 20 years of hard copies of materials. (Minutes, financial records, pictures, reports, membership lists, etc.). We decided our Management Committee to go paperless and everything is done by computers now, so we can share materials easily. This is why we were so excited to partner with this class at Oulton College. The students sorted, organized, scanned, and saved all our resources on a USB stick. We placed the original resource materials in banker boxes, and they are now securely stored in the archives in the capital city of our province.

The best learning takes place when students use real-life experiences and materials and their learning has been a huge plus for our club. We are fortunate to be working with these young folks in our community.



Greetings Dear Reader “Fit like foo’re ye a’ deein?”

A special “Alreet kidda” to Barrie Morgan - Geordie extraordinaire, for his lovely feedback.

To such an extent that I’ve embarked on a course of “Larn yersel Geordie”.

In reality, there’s not a big difference between the Buchan Dialect and Geordie, apart from the accents, which are singularly unique. It’s the way that you tell it.

So, folks what’s been happening since my last ramblings?

I’m writing this contribution from Ijmuiden which straddles the mouth of the North Sea Canal and a direct link to Amsterdam – and yes the Tulips are starting to come out. Colours are inspiring, weather less so.

I’ve been dossing down in a pretty tasty Hotel on the Seafront. Word to the wise – should you ever find yourself in similar circumstances, make sure your room is not adjacent to the Hotel’s recycling centre. The dawn chorus of marauding scurries (Seagulls) overwhelms the pathetic chirrups of your Mickey Mouse Alarm Clock and makes The Ride of the Valkyries sound like Weightless by the band Marconi Union.

My previous grumblings and comments on travel haven’t changed – if anything they’re more critical. I won’t go there – thankfully I hear you say – unless I come across an improvement. I am though, a fan of the Dutch Train System, which compared with the UK is in the private limousine class – at least they run, and if their employees do strike they keep it pretty well hidden.

I've not long returned from a trip to Baku in Azerbaijan on the Caspian Sea. I was working on a Pipelay Barge there, and on my way to and from the shipyard, I kept passing all those "Nodding Donkeys" – no relation to yours truly - but in reality Land Oil Rigs or Pumpjacks as our American Cousins refer to them. Very unexpected sight, fully functional, all slowly nodding up and down; could have been a doppelganger of Texas and the Southern States.

I thought I'd take a couple of hours out to do a bit of sightseeing - sod's law whole place was covered in really thick Haar so I had a beer instead – well what would you do in my stead? Tomorrow I'm heading out to Trondheim.

At least the coldness in Norway is clean and crisp, and not the soul-destroying, bone-chilling dampness we substitute for climate in Bonnie Scotland.

Am now in a place called Orkanger which is next to Hell – no seriously folks, there is actually a quaint town in Norway called Hell. Been here a few times and it's lovely apart from the townsfolk who dress up like rejects from an AC/ DC Concert – horns n forked tails. They don't actually but who ever credited the Scandinavians with a sense of humour? I can confirm that I've bin there when Hell Freezes Over.

So, until my next communication...“Lang may yer lum reek”. Sliante

Any comments – I'd love to hear from you – graham@mmsgam.co.uk

Connectedness under the Ocean



The internet powers almost every aspect of our modern life and is key for governments, intelligence agencies, and banks – and there's a worldwide struggle for control happening under the radar and under the waves. There is a global web of nearly 500 cables that lace the contours of the ocean floor. Every viral meme, every email, every Facebook post, every chart-topping hit, every internet site, every online banking transaction ... they all rely on this network, not satellites. The US is expanding its cable links from Singapore to France, with almost 20,000 kilometres of fibre running

along the ocean floor connecting dozens of countries along the way. China is not quite there in its attempt to replicate The US Cables but is working on it. Thaiwam has had an unprecedented 27 cable breaks in the past five years, officially blamed on China. It takes weeks to fix each break. China has essentially blocked off the South China Sea from US companies so they can no longer run cables through there. These cables are an information gold mine, and both the US and China have accused each other of spying on the enormous amounts of data that travel through every second. Both Washington and Beijing are now working on the uncomfortable assumption that cables are susceptible to espionage. The Pacific Islands are caught between the US and China, and they often have to make a choice, which is not easy. In an increasingly connected world, the smallest cable connection – or the lack thereof – can dramatically affect the lives of millions.

A Virtual PROBUS Global club ?

PG has a **vision** for a Virtual Probus Global Club. It is outlined below, and if any reader would like to participate in its establishment and management, or join it if it is established, please advise the PG Administrator at linda@probusglobal.org

The PROBUS Global Virtual Club will aim to create a worldwide community for both PG members and non-members, emphasizing social connections, lifelong learning, and meaningful activities.



Quarterly communication meetings would be held and recorded for distribution via the PG newsletter. A structured management system will need to be established, with applications on the PG

website. Various activities and programs, including guest speakers, virtual tours, discussion groups, and hobby workshops, would cater to members' interests.

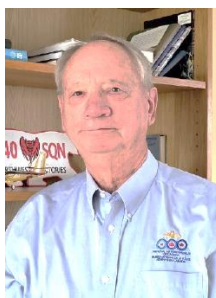
Active participation and collaboration would be encouraged to foster a sense of community. Effective communication channels such as email newsletters, social media groups, and online forums would keep members informed and facilitate networking opportunities.

Letter re Zoom Meetings

Rogan Montgomery-Smith – Probus Club of Broadstairs, Kent, UK

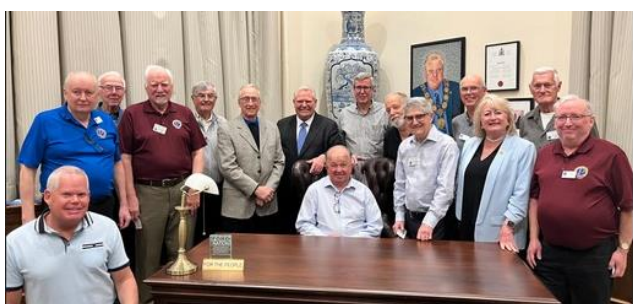
We have started regular Zoom meetings with those members who cannot attend either the coffee mornings or lunches. They are housebound so Zooming keeps them in touch with what is going on and, of course, can have a good chat with their friends. This "service" is much appreciated by those who cannot attend. We kept the club going through Covid by Zooming, which I am sure is why we have survived.

21st Anniversary



Congratulations to the Brighton Probus Club of Ontario, Canada. It celebrated its 21st anniversary in April, with a special speaker, Lt Col (Ret'd) Christopher Colton (pictured left) who gave a fascinating talk about the 100-year history of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). The celebrations included 11 inductions, and many 20-year, 15-year and 10-year pins presented to long-time members. There were also two huge cakes, one for the club's birthday, and one with an RCAF logo.

Learn more about local Governance



Many cities open their seats of government for groups, such as Probus, to tour. It is an exciting and educational outing as the **Newmarket Men's Probus Club in Ontario, Canada** found out last month. Members toured Queens Park, and attended an engaging observation of Question Period, offering a firsthand glimpse into the legislative proceedings of Ontario. Hosted by one of the MPs, they enjoyed

lunch in the Members' Lounge and had the opportunity to meet with Premier Ford. As one of the visiting Probians said, "This unforgettable experience not only deepened our understanding of governance but also fostered enduring connections with Ontario's esteemed leaders." Pictured left are Probians in Premier Ford's office.

Do you have a story you wish to share that is of international interest? Has your club had a speaker whose address was eccentric or unusual? Do you have an uncommon hobby? The Editor welcomes short items that are of worldwide appeal. Contact:

newsletter@probusglobal.org

SMILE:



The more you weigh, the harder it is to kidnap you. Stay safe. Eat cake.

Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.



How much did the pirate pay to get his ears pierced? A Buccaneer.

Prison is just one word to you, but for some people, it's a whole sentence.

I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.



On the way back from a Cub Scout meeting, my grandson innocently said to my son, "Dad, I know a baby comes from a mummy's tummy but how does it get there in the first place?" After my son hemmed and hawed awhile, my grandson finally spoke up in disgust, "You don't have to make up something, Dad. It's okay if you don't know the answer."