



From the President

First, I want to express my gratitude to the dedicated volunteers and coordinators who continue to help Probus Global grow and thrive. Thanks to your efforts, we've now reached an exciting milestone—approaching 1,500 members across 23 countries! This is an outstanding achievement, and it speaks to the value and reach of our global community.

At the meeting, I formally invited any member who feels inspired to step forward to take on the role of President. As we look ahead, Probus Global will benefit from fresh ideas and leadership to explore new paths.

One of those paths is the creation of a Probus International Virtual Club—a place for Probians who live in remote areas or prefer to meet online. We invite interested members to explore the opportunity by emailing virtualclub@probusglobal.org.

Our discussion also touched on translation tools for Zoom meetings, improving handheld readability of the newsletter, and ways to better promote Probus Global. A short promotional slide presentation will soon be made available for members to use when introducing PG to others.

While we face some regional engagement challenges, particularly in South Africa, and must navigate website security requirements, we remain focused on strengthening Probus Global's visibility and relevance.

Together, let's continue building a connected, inclusive, and forward-thinking Probus community.

Warm regards,

Richard Furlong

Contact PG [Here](#)

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Contributions welcome (200-500 words) for September issue. Deadline: August 15, 2025.

newsletter@probusglobal.org



Editorial

I am not ashamed of writing a gendered editorial because I have been watching many men in our world, either incapable or unwilling to turn the climate crisis around. Photos illustrate that very few women were involved in the recent world biodiversity and climate change summits in Mexico and the UAE, which ended, disappointingly, with very few positive outcomes. Policymakers recognise that the destruction of the environment exacerbates gendered inequalities. However, the male-dominated decision-makers (such as President Trump) fail to take note. Caring for and about the environment is often seen as weak and not macho. 'Real men' regularly distance themselves from their emotions, and climate is perceived as associated with femininity and nature, and is emotive. This leads to a perception that the

natural world consists of resources that can be endlessly exploited or extracted. Third World women suffer the most. They bear responsibility for food production, water collection and, as agricultural workers and carers, are also impacted by low incomes. Social inequality, lack of education and isolation make them more vulnerable. They are responsible for their children's health, and climate change can have serious health effects. Worldwide, during natural disasters, women and girls are often more vulnerable. Of course, not all men have destructive views, and many have consciences, so some progress has been made. I'm not against men per se, and as harsh as this editorial sounds, the men in combined Probus Clubs enrich the clubs and make them immeasurably more interesting than the all-female ones.

Mary

A Marketing Idea

Richard's comments in the last issue talked about marketing Probus. As a result, he received a note from **Dave Elms** from the Men's Probus Club of Newmarket in Canada. Dave's club contacted *Newmarket Today*, an online newsletter and part of a stable of 41 newsletters overseen by Village Media. The club contracted with Village Media to supply several articles each year, and had its first one published recently. (View it [here](#).) Three of Village Media's newsletters will carry the item. Other countries may have similar stables of appropriate newsletters looking for content and may give clubs free space and publicity. Remember, all articles submitted must pass the "so what?" test and be newsworthy, otherwise, they will not be accepted.

Probus Belgium has new President.

Gauthier De Brabandere PG Coordinator, Belgium

It is a well-appreciated tradition to organise a formal transfer of responsibilities amongst the members of the Probus Belgium national board. Eight were transferred early this year in Melle near Gent. The main transfer was the presidency of Probus Belgium, being handed over from **Mr Jean Paul Pannekoek** to **Mrs Annie Goddaer**.

Probus Belgium was founded in 1984 and steadily grew to reach (post-COVID) a membership of over 4,100 spread over 116 Probus clubs in 2025. Probus is well represented in the two main language areas - Dutch and French - and both languages are intertwined on such occasions, creating the convenience of inviting friends from Probus Netherlands and Probus France.

Jean Paul Pannekoek, a member of Probus Ronse, expressed his great appreciation and satisfaction for the opportunity of serving as the president of Probus Belgium during the past three years, and thanked the entire team that supported him during the post-COVID period. Together, they made it possible to replenish the loss of members during COVID and stop the decline. Jean Paul is proud to have chartered five new clubs.

For the second time in its history, the presidency of Probus Belgium is handed over to a lady. Following the example of Mrs Claudine Higuët (Probus Soignies Braîne-le-Comte), president 2014-2015. Mrs. Annie Goddaer (Probus Kortrijk Gulden Sporen or “Golden Spurs”) is the new president. She is backed by six regional Probus coordinators, of whom four have accepted to take over from their predecessors on this transfer day. Before accepting to be the tenth president of Probus Belgium, Annie Goddaer completed a three-year term as regional coordinator of the largest Probus area in Belgium.

The whole Probus community is grateful to Jean Paul Pannekoek and wishes Annie and her team all the best in keeping up the Probus spirit!

Hybrid meetings prove popular

Debbie MacDonald Moynes, President, Probus Club of Prince Edward County

The PROBUS Club of Prince Edward County, Ontario, Canada, chartered in August 2018, now has a membership of 248, with no cap on numbers. We have embraced a hybrid meeting format, offering in-person and Zoom options to ensure accessibility for all. This flexibility has been particularly beneficial for those travelling, feeling unwell, or dealing with inclement weather, allowing everyone to stay connected and engaged.

Looking ahead to the balance of 2025, we will continue to grow with activities of walking, hiking, cycling, Apps & Bevies, Pub Night, intro to knitting, three book groups, a current event discussion group, and a lineup of special events. These include live performances, a mini golf and pizza outing and the ever-popular South Shore Walk. Plans are also underway for a fall Car Rally and winery visits.

We are using ClubRunner software to support the work of the Management Committee and group leaders. This includes an online calendar, which members can check regularly to stay informed. We welcome visitors from other countries to our meetings. Just email us at countyprobus@gmail.com . For more information, visit our website at www.countyprobus.ca or our [Facebook page](#).

Has your club moved with the times?

Too many clubs still have a “wedding table” format at meetings, where Office Bearers sit facing members. Committee members should mix and mingle so members and, particularly visitors, can easily give feedback or ask questions.



Sustainable chocolate

Most people like chocolate, and most people also care about sustainability. However, until recently, it was well-known that the chocolate industry was fraught with unsustainable practices. So, has anything changed? Transparency has increased, with 82% of companies now fully disclosing child labour data, which has markedly declined. However, deforestation is still high, and 84% of cocoa farmers in most supply chains are not earning a living income, or their income is unknown. A company called Tony's Chocolonely won the award in the large company category for being the most sustainable. The runner up was Beyond Good because it buys beans directly from farmers in Madagascar and Uganda, ensuring traceability and fair trade practices. The Gender award for equal opportunity went to Mars Wrigley, but Nestle did not score well on most criteria. Multinational chocolate manufacturer Mondelez, producers of Cadbury, Toblerone, Green & Black's, Oreo and Daim, refused to give data and was therefore voted as the least transparent and accountable. All other large chocolate companies supplied statistics. Despite the transparency, and the price of chocolate rising, the increases are often not passed on, leaving many cocoa farmers in extreme poverty. This is in addition to the struggles with the impacts of [climate change](#).



Each year, between 20,000 and 30,000 of the 1,200,000 Rotarians gather for a Rotary Convention in different countries around our Global Village. Australia in 2023 and Singapore in 2024.

This year, the [Rotary International Convention](#) will be held at the BMO Centre and other venues across Calgary, Canada, from June 21 to June 25.

Joe Fras, President of the Rotary Club of Downtown Calgary, said that the programming for the convention was being planned by over 70 different Rotary clubs across southern Alberta.

As part of the festivities, attendees will get to take in a smaller preview version of the Calgary Stampede's Grandstand Show and

The Rotary Connection

Merv Richens – PG Australian coordinator

get to take in cultural events that speak to Calgary's beginning as an agricultural centre, to its growth into a world-class modern city.

"We will don the white hats and welcome them as they come in through the airport. That'll be the start of it. Our clubs will host hospitality events. We've organised many local hospitality dinners in our homes - that is a standard part of the Rotary International Convention, whether it's in Singapore, Berlin or New Delhi. That's what we're looking forward to."

So maybe this is an opportunity for local Probus club members to offer to assist local Rotary clubs in welcoming visitors?

Much of the value for Rotarians attending these conventions is in the exchange of ideas, forming new friendships and networking with people from over 300 countries where Rotarians meet.

These Conventions also have a “House of Friendship” where attendees can socialise and learn more about projects that are taking place around the world.

The most successful and sustainable projects and activities tend to fall within the following areas:

- Promoting peace
- Fighting disease

- Providing clean water
- Saving mothers and children
- Supporting education

If any members of our Probus Global Community have a Rotary Club near them, please make contact and learn more about our Rotary Connection!

Cameo talks by members for five to 10 minutes - about hobbies, travel or other interests - add entertainment and involvement to meetings. Does your club do it?

Probus Clubs - single gender or mixed

Barbara Penkman - Probus Club of Gananoque, Ontario, Canada

I belong to a thriving mixed gender Probus Club in Gananoque, Ontario, Canada. We have almost 200 members and a waiting list.

Gananoque is a beautiful small town on the St. Lawrence River in the heart of the 1000 Islands. While it would be difficult to find a more beautiful location, I am frequently drawn back to the UK, where I was born. I thought, maybe on my next visit, I could visit a Probus Club in a town of similar size and see if there was an interest in becoming a sister club – joining in meetings via Zoom, sharing ideas and eventually, visiting.

I searched for the perfect town and found one with Probus listed on its website. However, it was not one Probus Club but two - a Men’s Club and a Ladies' Club. Which one could my husband and I visit together? Would we be welcomed at either or both? I had no idea. Of course, that got me pondering the rationale for separate clubs. What are the Pros and Cons?

Gananoque Probus being mixed adds to the vibrancy of our club. We enjoy many of the same activities as other clubs, such as Line Dancing, where we have both men and women participating. Fun and exercise for the body and the brain!

I can only speak for my club, but it would not be as vibrant as it is if it were restricted to one gender. I would be interested in hearing from other Probus Clubs about the unique value of restricting membership to either men or women. No politically correct intentions here, I’m just genuinely interested. In the meantime, I’ll have to search for another small town that has a mixed club where my husband and I can visit together.

The table on the right lists the statistics PG has for Men’s, Women’s and Combined clubs around the world.

	MEN	WOMEN	COMBINED
GLOBAL	67%	10%	18%
AUSTRALIA	7%	11%	82%
NEW ZEALAND	10%	11%	79%
CANADA	13%	16%	71%
SOUTH AFRICA	36%	10%	54%
IRELAND	67%	25%	7%
GREAT BRITAIN	78%	11%	11%
FRANCE	98%	0%	2%



*Travels of
a Donkey*



*From the pen of the NEWBURGH
(incorporating International)
Correspondent of the PG
Newsletter (Reuters Syndicated)*

Episode Twelve – “X11 – Still Travelling”

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

I’m penning this quarter’s missive from a monsoon season in Singapore. Second time in Singapore since my last report. The rain is incredible, hardly see your hand in front of you but at least it’s warm but humidity eugh!!

March had me travelling from Esbjerg to Flekkefjord in Norway and then doing a volte face and down to Rotterdam to play with a couple of Heavy Lift Cargo Ships.

The frustrations of being an International Jetsetter abound and get worse. Travel costs, particularly flights from Aberdeen to Amsterdam, are obscene. Fortunately, I get to do this at someone else’s expense, but even so, the costs are crazy, and every flight I’m on is fully booked. They say travel broadens your mind – one thing’s for sure, it reduces your bank balance.

Back to Singapore and Changi Airport – for anyone who’s been there, you’ll agree it has to be one of the best airports in the world for Immigration Clearance, general facilities and is famous for its butterfly garden, movie theatre, and swimming pool. It has been rated the World’s Best Airport for the 8th consecutive year.

The Changi International Airport is one of the busiest airports in Asia and the seventh busiest airport in the world. Downside - it’s really expensive.

There you go now, some actual information from me rather than the usual ramblings of a deranged Brocher. I may have mentioned in the past that folk who come from Fraserburgh (my hometown in the North East of Scotland) are referred to as Brochers. Broch may be considered a variation of the word 'burgh', but is more likely to stem from the old Scots word for “fort”.

I’m heading back to the UK, where I believe it’s a Bank Holiday – incredible - there are no Banks still in existence in the Rural North East – I guess the ATMs need a break.

I have a quick turnaround in the UK, then back to Singapore.

It’s heading for Holiday Season so commuting will be chaotic, however, at Changi they’ve got it down to a fine art – believe it or not no queuing like cattle in a selling mart no obvious Immigration Officers at Passport Control – just present Passport at machine after completing an on line application submission of the Singapore Arrival Card (SGAC) to the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and you’re clear.

Don’t know how they do it, but it’s very efficient and relatively painless. The rest of the World could learn a thing or two from them.

My contributions of late seem to be somewhat staid, so... a quote from my favourite writer whose scribblings led to this column:

"Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

So, until my next communication...

“Lang may yer lum reek”. Sliante

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



Photos

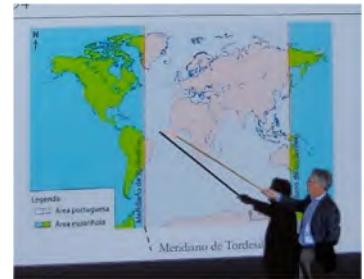
<https://probusglobal.org/Photos/>

The Editor's pick of recent photos posted on the PG website is from our webmaster, **Peter Jennings**. It depicts Canada's geese as they emerge in spring. (Note the goslings).

Conversely, the photo below, by **Merv Richens**, one of our Australian coordinators, is not at all remarkable. However, Merv has

an interesting little story to go with it:

On a recent cruise, we learned that way back in 1494, the Portuguese and Spaniards agreed to split the known world between them, which is why Brazilians speak Portuguese and the rest of South America speaks Spanish. Equally, people in Timor near Australia, and in the Philippines speak Spanish.



PG Management Meeting

Probus Global had a Zoom management meeting early in May.

Among the salient points were: President Richard calling for a volunteer to take up the Presidency and, perhaps, steer Probus Global in a different direction. He also called upon those PG co-ordinators who have become inactive to take more interest in PG and help promote it, while thanking those who are active. PG has grown to almost 1500 members and needs "new blood" to steer it to further success.

Richard also lamented that while many thought virtual meetings, especially for prospective Probians living in remote areas, were well supported, a co-ordinator with the necessary computer skills has not come forward.

Other subjects discussed were the availability of software to translate Zoom meetings live, or other meetings, perhaps inter-country ones as well as intra-country ones where meetings are bilingual.

PG's Webmaster reported some statistics about membership and our newsletter (see below), and mentioned that fairly soon, the newsletter will need to be in a format that is easily read on a handheld device. Currently, about 50% access it on a desktop, and the rest by phone or a tablet. The suggestion of rebranding Probus for better marketing was dismissed as outside the purview of PG. It was agreed that Probus per se, and PG in particular, has a low visibility problem. Our webmaster acceded to the suggestion that he compile a short slide presentation for members to use to promote PG.

It was agreed that password protection and firewalls on Probus websites were a nuisance but often necessary. (See Editor's article below.)

South African clubs were reportedly not interested in interclub activities or PG, but tended to be isolationist. Most Probians in the 54 clubs are older, having an average age of around 75 to 82, making recruitment difficult.

We were advised that Probus Canada will support the formation of combined clubs, but not single gender clubs.

Password Protection

From the Editor



Password protection on Probus websites is necessary for privacy and confidentiality. However, it can be a negative because websites are there not only to inform members, but also for promotional purposes. Websites and newsletters are excellent for promoting clubs and membership, as is a rich offering of events and other activities. However, password protection can stymie those wishing to check these out. Here are ways around some privacy issues. When publishing a newsletter, make it openly available, but publish only first names (and add an initial if there is more than one member by that name). Many include minutes and financials in their newsletters. These are generally dry reports that should be separated from the newsletter and made available in a password-protected area. Others publish office bearers' contact details. That list definitely needs password protection and it needs to be left off the newsletter. However, one contact has to be listed. Usually either the President or the Editor, in case the newsletter gets into the hands of a prospective member who wishes to communicate with someone. Future activities can be listed in the newsletters with dates and the organisers' first names. Although not mandated, it is often wise to have the expanded list in a protected site, including the financial requirements, address details, times, and other relevant information such as travel arrangements. **A newsletter demonstrating a friendly, active club is a powerful marketing tool and should be made widely available.** But for many existing and prospective members, privacy is paramount and needs to be respected, so make your newsletter work for you, albeit appropriately.

Thanks Linda

Linda Metcalfe, who has been PG's Administrator for three years, is giving up the job due to family commitments. She will continue to help in a minor way.

Initially, she volunteered to keep club and member information updated, but that job gradually grew into a fully-fledged administrative position, from designing certificates to assisting with PowerPoint presentations and minute-taking.

Thanks, Linda, for taking on a smallish job which grew exponentially. PG has been privileged to work with you.

Why People Join PG

We ask every person applying to join PROBUS Global why they want to join us. At the recent management meeting, we reviewed the reasons people give for joining:

Reason Category	Approximate % of Responses	Example Phrases
Social Connection & Friendship	55%	Make new friends, socialize, fellowship, meet people, expand network
Information & Updates	40%	Keep abreast of events, receive news, stay informed, newsletters
Learning, Speakers & Activities	20%	Guest speakers, interesting activities, talks, events
International Networking & Travel	18%	Connect globally, travel, international contacts, learn about clubs
Club Leadership & Best Practices	10%	Club admin, promote PROBUS, update register, best practice
Curiosity & General Interest	10%	Potential interest, curiosity, learn more, could be interesting
Community Service & Contribution	5%	Contribute, community service, help others

The most common themes revolve around social connection, expanding knowledge, and enjoying fellowship. Many members value the international aspect of PROBUS Global, reflecting a desire for a worldwide community and travel. Roles within local clubs motivate some members to join for administrative or leadership support.

Retirement is a key life stage for many members, emphasising social engagement and active lifestyles.

It is noteworthy that despite 55% of new members being interested in friendship and social interaction, we get very little follow-up from members on our private, members-only [Facebook page](#), [groups.io](#) chat, or activity pages. Perhaps you can tell us why. What can we do to make PROBUS Global a bigger part of your online social life?

We have much information on promoting and managing clubs on our [Club Management page](#). If you haven't checked it out lately, take a look. You are sure to find some ideas for your own club.

Has your club, or one of your members, done anything out of the ordinary which is of International interest? Why not share it with us? Let's hear from you with an item of 300-500 words. Don't worry if it is not well written, we'll polish it.

newsletter@probusglobal.org

SMILE

When one door closes and another door opens, you are probably in prison.

To me, "drink responsibly" means don't spill it.

Age 60 might be the new 40, but 9:00 pm is the new midnight.

It's the start of a brand new day, and I'm off like a herd of turtles.

The older I get, the earlier it gets late.

When I say, "The other day," I could be referring to any time between yesterday and 15 years ago.

I remember being able to get up without making sound effects.

I had my patience tested. I'm negative.

Don't bother walking a mile in my shoes. That would be boring. Spend 30 seconds in my head. That'll freak you right out.

If you're sitting in public and a stranger takes the seat next to you, just stare straight ahead and say, "Did you bring the money?"

When you ask me what I am doing today, and I say "nothing," it does not mean I am free. It means I am doing nothing.

I finally got eight hours of sleep. It took me three days, but whatever.

I run like the winded.

I hate when a couple argues in public, and I missed the beginning and don't know whose side I'm on.

When someone asks what I did over the weekend, I squint and ask, "Why, what did you hear?"

When you do squats, are your knees supposed to sound like a goat chewing on an aluminium can stuffed with celery?

Church Notices



Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.
Just so everyone is clear, I'm going to put my glasses on.
I lost my job as a stage designer. I left without making a scene.
Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c? Because you can't "c" in the dark.
When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, I was given blank stares.
Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, and the result was staggering.
I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. I won't lie, it was a rocky road.