

Probus Club of Kinumber Inc.
Minutes of General Meeting Number 286
held at Avoca Bowling Club on Tuesday 22 January 2008

President George Costigan opened the meeting at 9.35 am and welcomed members.

Minutes of previous meeting: Secretary Richard Collins reminded Members that the Minutes of the previous meeting had been made available, and that some parts of the Minutes are now routinely included in the News Sheet. The meeting agreed that the Minutes should be taken as read and accepted as a true record.

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

Correspondence: Secretary Richard advised that letters had been received from several local Probus Clubs (Newsletters); and operators of possible tours.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Kevin Finn advised the meeting that the details of the Club's finances over the past month were as shown in the News Sheet:

Balance at 30 Nov 2007	\$1841.82
Income	Nil
Expenditure	\$56.05
Interest	\$0.00
Balance at 30 Sept 2007	\$1785.77

Kevin's report was accepted.

President's Report: President George mentioned the new section in the News Sheet informing members about the outcomes of the last Committee meeting. George said that the Committee had done this because it believed in the principle of open governance. George particularly mentioned the "Ron Coleman hat band" which was given to Fred Leake by Ron and passed on to the Club by Fred. The hat band will be presented to each President at his inauguration, to be worn in memory of Ron at outdoor Probus activities that he attends during his year in office.

Membership Report: Membership Officer Tony Kelly informed members that 33 Members (70% of the current membership) were in attendance. There were 3 apologies.

Speaker Convenor's Report: Speaker Convenor Stan Roberts said the all was in order for presentations by Jim Connors at this meeting, and on the Sydney Harbour Bridge at the next.

Social Convenor's Report: Social Convenor David Dennison reported that the balance in the Social Account was \$616. The recovery lunch at Saratoga on 8 January 2008 had been well attended. On 14 February, there will be a combined bus trip to Tobruk sheep station. On 13 May there will be a Hawkesbury Valley Heritage bus trip. David remarked that the Christmas lunch on 11 December had broken even. President George thanked David for arranging an excellent function.

Editor's Report: Editor Wally Tuffs had nothing to report.

Welfare Report: President George advised the meeting that Nannette Smith was due home soon, but that she had been through a very difficult time.

Bushwalking Report: Bushwalking organiser Richard Collins said the bushwalking would recommence in March.

Golf Report: Golf Leader Mike Ryan advised that the Golf group would be presenting the Oral History of the Club in April.

Bowls Report: Bowls Leader Reg Davis had nothing to report

Theatre Report: Theatre Convenor David Dunbar mentioned performances of “Annie Get Your Gun” at the Laycock Street theatre, and “The Death Trap” at Woy Woy theatre on 9 March. He can get tickets to “Billy Elliott” on 25 May, but needs greater numbers. David also mentioned the Gala Concert at the Central Coast Leagues Club on 16 August, and the Seniors’ Gala Concert at the Entertainment Centre on 8 April.

History of the Club: Historian Fred Leake introduced Reg Davis who spoke about the Club’s bowling activities. Reg said that, when the Club was originally formed, a significant number of members came from the Avoca Beach Bowling Club. Avoca Beach Probus Club which was subsequently formed also had many bowlers from this Club. A challenge was therefore arranged between these Clubs very early on in their lives. Our Club’s bowling activities were arranged first by Ron Coleman and then Reg Davis who continues with this responsibility. The Club’s first bowls activity had 36 players. Reg always had problems catering for the food needed after the game. All of the funds to purchase the food were provided by raffles run by Mary Coleman. The bowlers from the two Clubs now play one game per year – the Jim Price memorial. Reg concluded his talk with some well-chosen humorous stories about bowls and bowlers.

General Business: President George introduced members to Roy Bird who is about to submit an application to join the Club.

Bruce Harris spoke about a U3A course on criminology that he is offering and suggested a possible future excursion to one of our gaols.

The meeting adjourned for morning tea at 10.10 am.

After morning tea, Stan Roberts introduced our speaker, Jim Connor. Jim gave a most moving account of his experiences as a prisoner of war in Malaya during the Second World War. He described how he was captured before the fall of Singapore. Poorly equipped, he was isolated from his unit by the advancing Japanese army. He survived for several days in the jungle before being betrayed by bounty hunters. After his capture he was brutally interrogated. The only act of kindness that he received from his captors during his whole time as a prisoner of war was when one of the guards gave him a banana leaf to hold his food because he had no bowl. Jim told two particularly poignant stories about his time as a prisoner. On one occasion he and a mate had been assigned to load bags of wheat. At the end of their day’s work, they were left to walk several miles back to the camp. They contemplated trying to escape, but abandoned this idea because previous recaptured escapees had been executed. On the way back to their prison camp, they were given food by natives and stall holders, and they completed their trip on a rickshaw. They then managed to smuggle the food into the camp to supplement the meagre rations that they received. Jim also told how after the surrender and weighing just 6 stone, he was reunited with some of his former mates. He described the distress of nurses and entertainers on seeing the condition of the prisoners. He contracted malaria and was among the first prisoners repatriated in a hospital ship. Jim had been reluctant to return to Australia because of uncertainty about how he would cope with the changes that his war experiences had wrought upon him. In thanking Jim for his talk, Richard Collins remarked that this had been the most moving talk that he had heard at our Club and that he was proud to be a fellow Australian with someone like Jim.

The lucky door prize was won by Len Fricker.

President George reminded members that the next meeting will be on 26 February. He thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 11.30 am.

Signed as a correct record: George Costigan, President