

PROBING THE BRIDGE

September 2026

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Combined Probus Club of
Northbridge Inc

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From the President

It was disappointing that the August meeting had to be cancelled due to the meeting room becoming a building site. We were informed on the Thursday before that the necessary insurance clearance for the works had come through and work would commence immediately – in fairness, the club had been waiting for some time to finish repairs and was anxious to expedite things.

We tried to contact everyone by email or phone and hope no-one was inconvenienced. Committee members who organised events were busy on the phones and all seems to be OK, or will be sorted out at the September meeting. The August visiting speaker, Greg de Moore, has been booked for next year.

All this made me think of the club that has been a significant part of my life. Northbridge is a public golf course, leasing the Crown land on which it was built in the 1930s during the Depression. It was built largely by unemployed people working for the dole. Being extremely hilly terrain, much of the course required fairways to be terraced. A number of large sandstone retaining walls was built and are a triumph of construction and ingenuity.

The clubhouse was also built by Willoughby Council and the club was formed in 1935. A modest building originally, it has been extended over the years. I remember the pro shop was a tiny room about where the toilets are now.

I am a Northbridge boy, grew up overlooking the course and spent my formative years playing on it. The virgin bush was a paradise for climbing trees, looking for cicadas, playing Cowboys and Indians or just exploring. I was given my first golf club, a hickory-shafted 5 iron, by the club pro, Mick Gaffney. I loved that club and could manipulate my way round the course for a respectable score just with it. It was always a bit scary because I would sneak on for a few holes without paying and the course manager, the ubiquitous Mr Powter, was ever on the prowl for interlopers. Fortunately, our young legs were faster than his.

I have been either a full-playing member or social member of this club for much of my life. My happiest game was in 1970 when, on a golf blind-date, I met my wife Ros and golf partners became life partners.

You may notice the caricatures on the passage near the kitchen. They were drawn by Jim Merrilees, a member, and feature club leaders over the years. One is of Allan Dunstan, a former Captain and President who later married our Vice President, Judith.

I will never grow tired of enjoying the view from the clubhouse over the course, Long Bay, Wreck Bay and beyond and appreciate we have our meetings here.

President Gordon

Our next meeting will be held at Northbridge Golf Club on Monday, September 21 starting at 10am sharp. If you can't attend, please phone or text Judy Smith 0422 537 044 before the meeting.



Out and about

There was lots of choice for outings last month. Peter McNair led a group which travelled to Balmain on ferry and bus, using their Opal cards. They enjoyed lunch (left) at the quaint London Hotel.

A group of 15 gathered for Just Lunch's latest venture, to Antica Dining in North Sydney. The beautiful old building was a perfect setting for an Italian meal (below).

It was far from perfect weather for the trip to see the cherry blossoms at the Auburn Botanic Gardens, but lunch at the interesting Depot Brewery and Café at Artarmon cheered the spirits of those who had been hardy enough to brave the rain (left, bottom).



Dates for your diary

Monday, October 5

Coffee catchup, 2.30pm

Join an informal gathering of members for coffee at Inner Cravings at Northbridge Plaza. It's hosted by Kerrie Williams and there is no need to book.

Wednesday, October 14

Just Lunch +JAZZ, Freeway Hotel, Reserve Rd, Artarmon, 12 noon

This is a special lunch with live music from the Sydney Jazz Club. Entrance to the venue is \$20 cash payable at the door on the day. Lunch at own expense with specials from \$15. Please book at the September meeting.

Thursday, October 15

\$2.50 outing to Bondi Beach

We will meet at 11am outside Wharf 2 at Circular Quay and catch a 333 bus to Bondi Beach. This "bendy bus" will travel through Bondi Junction to Bondi Beach. We will lunch at the Bondi Beach Hotel, then wander over to the Bondi Pavilion and the beach before returning by the 333 bus, which runs every 10 minutes, to Circular Quay or the Metro at Martin Place for the journey home. Please register with Peter McNair.

Tour of the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden postponed until Friday, October 23, \$25

The flowers should be coming out by then. The \$25 cost includes morning tea – scones with wildflower jam. We may also hear the chap who plays the didgeridoo. Lunch will be at Tastebuds Nursery, Terrey Hills (own cost). Our coach will leave the Golf Club at 9.45am, back about 2.30pm.

October 31 – November 10

Probus anniversary cruise with Trade Travel

Departing Sydney on the Celebrity Solstice, visiting Eden, Melbourne, Hobart, Adelaide, Kangaroo Island (Penneshaw). Nine Northbridge Probus members have registered to do the cruise. The tour is now fully booked.

Friday, November 20

Visit to new fish market, \$50

Our coach will leave the Golf Club at 9.30am, with a tour of the fish markets beginning at

10.30am. Lunch is at own expense; there are lots of food outlets to choose from.

November 22– 25

On Course coach tour Newcastle, Port Stephens, Hunter Valley, Christmas lights

Travelling to Newcastle, accommodation Rydges Newcastle City. Hunter River launch cruise. Afternoon free time to explore the foreshore area. After breakfast we travel to Nelson Bay and Port Stephens, then back to Rydges Newcastle. Next day will be spent travelling to the Hunter Valley visiting local places of interest. Our accommodation is the Mercure Hunter Gardens. After dinner the tour will visit the spectacular light show in the gardens. Eight members have registered and single and double rooms have been selected. Register at the meeting if you are interested in attending and Carol will try to get single/double rooms. Cost per person \$1819, twin share \$1495 per person.

Monday, December 7

Christmas lunch at Northbridge Golf Club.

Sunday, December 13

Spirit of Christmas, Willoughby Symphony Choir, The Concourse, 2pm

All tickets have been taken. Payment is now due \$70 either by cash at this meeting or by direct transfer into the Probus Tours Account. Make your own way to the Concourse Concert Hall, Chatswood. Parking underneath.

Wednesday, January 13

A Beautiful Noise - Neil Diamond Musical - Sydney Lyric Theatre, 1pm

All tickets have been taken. The cost is \$110 and includes transport to and from the theatre. Payment is **now due** either by cash at the September meeting or by direct transfer into the Probus Tours Account by **SEPTEMBER 30 as we have to pay the theatre by this date.**

Online payments may be made to Probus Tours Account BSB 062 215, AC 10073196. You still need to register at the desk.

Who will be talking to us?



In September, our speaker will be **Dr Garry Lowder** (left), on the subject: “Alfred Russel Wallace – the other Charles Darwin”. Dr Lowder is a geologist who spent a career in several countries exploring for new mineral deposits. He will be explaining to us that, when it comes to the theory of evolution, Charles Darwin gets all the attention and recognition, but Alfred Russel Wallace may well be the more deserving. Wallace was of one of the 19th century’s most important but perhaps most underrated natural scientists. Garry Lowder will tell us about the man and what he achieved.

Our speaker in October will be **Norm Webb**, an apiarist since 1985 and an award-winning honey maker. Norm will give an entertaining and informative talk about the remarkable honeybee and his experiences as a beekeeper in the Sydney district. We have asked him to bring samples of his championship honey for sale to members.

Our last speaker for the year will be **Hans Kunnen**, speaking in November about his experiences in New York where, on September 11, 2001, he happened to be staying in a hotel located between the World Trade Centre Twin Towers. Hans has a graphic and moving presentation about the extraordinary event that he lived through. His talk is entitled “The Kindness of Strangers”.

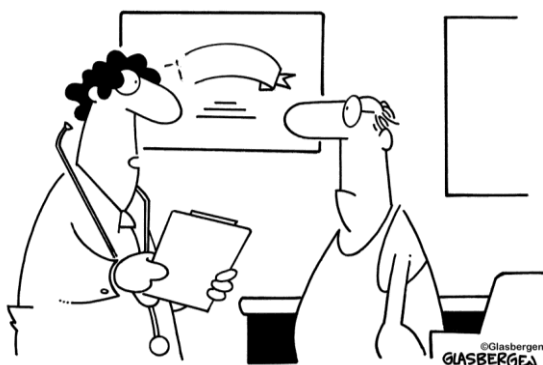
PS Unfortunately we needed to cancel our August speaker **Greg de Moore** who was to have spoken about his book on the early Australian sporting hero Thomas Wentworth Wills. Luckily, Greg has agreed to give his talk at our March 2027 meeting.

Meet a member

Judith Dunstan: My short story

- I am country born and city educated, then worked as a laboratory technician.
- Then married and had a family, after which I retrained to become an accountant and worked in that field until I retired.
- I have three daughters and am very fortunate that two are living close to me: Denise lives in Cammeray, Kirsten in Lane Cove. The third daughter, Samantha lives in Canberra with her husband, Andrew, and their children. Andrew is a keen golfer, as was Allan, my husband, both playing here at Northbridge. Allan was Captain and President of the Golf Club and there is a drawing of him at the end of the hall near the kitchen. He passed away some 20 years ago, and we still miss him.
- I joined Probus because I heard it was interesting and fun. Living alone one needs company and fun things to do. I have found this with Probus, going to the theatre and away on trips, with interesting speakers and lovely people to mingle with.

And just for a giggle...



“At your age, good health is pretty much a thing of the past. My advice is, find an illness you enjoy.”



“If I don’t go to the doctor, he can’t find anything wrong with me. That’s how I stay healthy.”

PS Remember to bring your books for the book table.