The Collective Spirit

Brought to you by the Members of George's Hall Probus Club.
Issue 81 - December 2025



A look back at 2025

We had another good year in 1925. We ended the year with 82 members (including two life members). It was with sadness that we learned of the deaths of two of our members, Mavis Burgess and Darrell Drew. They will be sadly missed. However, we continue to encourage new members, and welcomed ten new members in 2025.

Our newsletter, "The Collective Spirit" continues to be enjoyed by all our members. The newsletter is for all of us, by all of us and during 2025, more than thirty of our members contributed to the newsletters. This included stories, jokes, photographs, recipes and more. Thank you to everyone who contributed and keep those stories rolling in during 2026.

Jan Brown continues to work tirelessly to find functions and activities for us to enjoy, with assistance from Marg Golder. Thanks to them, there were many opportunities for us to come together, including trips to the Science Centre and Planetarium, Fairground Follies, Warragamba Dam and Western Sydney airport, Barefoot Bowls at Picnic Point Bowling Club and lunch at The Little Snail. Jan and Bill once again hosted the Biggest Morning Tea, raising much needed funds for the Cancer Council.

But the highlight of the year was again being able to go away on tours. We enjoyed wonderful trips to Ballina, Lightning Ridge and the Hunter Valley and are looking forward to more in 2026.

In between our trips, we enjoyed our morning teas and lunches at Diggers and Club Condell Park, as well as lunches at Club Menai, Club Rivers, The Mill, Picnic Point Bowling Club, and Riverhigh Restaurant. Our special events were held at Club Condell Park (with wonderful help and input from Craig). These included celebrating Christmas in July, a Melbourne Cup lunch and our recent Christmas Party.

Members attended theatre parties at the Globe Theatre at Rockdale, "Night Must Fall" and "Tons of Money".

And we added a new activity this year. Thanks to Bill Brown and Dave Lupton for organising "Dash and Willy's Wandering Walkers" with walks around Circular Quay.

Thank You



As usual, a successful year doesn't just happen, it needs the support of lots of people. Thank you to:

- All our members for their positive attitude and friendliness.
- The committee who continue to do their jobs with a smile on their faces. The committee looked different this year. Ray Cook continued as Treasurer, with Sue Brown taking on the role of President and Gai Cavanaugh, Secretary.
- Special mention to our Treasurer Ray Cook who has the unenviable (and enormous) job of looking after all our finances.
- Heather Wicks, our Vice President who fills in when committee members are away.
- Our Tours Co-ordinator, Jan Brown and her assistant, Marg Golder who work hard to find activities and functions. And Bill, for his support.
- Margaret Cousins for organising our theatre outings and her beautiful jams.
- Ray Cook who took on the role of finalising the organisation of our trips to Ballina and Lightning Ridge.
- Cathy Dice who ran our trivia nights while we were away. And for her amazing photographs.
- Denise Ericsson who arranges great speakers at our meetings.
- Barbara, Colleen, Margaret, Heather and Heather (and their helpers) for greeting our members at meetings and looking after the money.
- Jan Brown, Sandra Cohen and friends who make our beautiful cards. And Barbara Doust for ensuring that birthday cards are sent to all our members.
- Jan and Bill for hosting the Biggest Morning Tea
- Dash and Willy for organising and hosting the Wandering Walkers.
- Jan Brown and her "elves" for making all our novelty gifts for Christmas, etc.
- Andrea and Robert Best for looking after our book sales.
- Andrea, our Welfare Officer who keeps in contact with our members who are not well.
- Sandra Cohen who worked tirelessly to organise a trip to Tasmania which unfortunately did not go ahead.
- Sue Brown, Elizabeth Rea and Dave Lupton for producing the newsletter and all those members who have contributed to the newsletter.
- Club Condell Park for printing hard copies of the newsletter and Barbara and Owen Doust who post them to members who don't have email access.
- Everyone who has donated raffle prizes for our various activities or who has knitted squares and blankets for Wrapped with Love.
- Not forgetting all our unsung heroes. People who provide the morning teas on our trips out, the ones who help clear up after meetings, and all the others who silently make everything work smoothly.
- Club Condell Park (especially Craig) for continuing to support us

Hunter Valley Lights and Port Stephens Tour

Photos by Cathy Dice, Sandra Baker and Sue Brown



Forty four intrepid travellers were up bright and early for our two day trip to the Hunter Valley. We started off with morning tea at Mooney Mooney on the Hawkesbury River. Followed by a wine tasting at the beautiful Gartelmann Winery in Lovedale and lunch at the Deck Café.









Time to shop at the Hunter Valley Shopping Village before checking in to our accommodation at the Mercure Resort Hunter Gardens. Where we had a beautiful meal before setting off for the Christmas Lights in the Gardens.













The lights in the Gardens were amazing and we were told that they get bigger and better each year.















On Thursday, we finished our adventure with a cruise from Port Stephens where we watched dolphins at play.





Our Christmas Party

Photos by Denise Ericsson, Ray Cook and Sue Brown.





Once again we had a fun Christmas lunch at Club Condell Park. Thanks to Craig for all his hard work and the for the beautiful table decorations. Thanks also to Jan and Bill and their helpers (including Marg Golder, Ray and Colleen, Heather McGuckin, I hope I haven't left anyone out) for all their efforts. Thanks also to Jan, Sandra Cohen, Judith Wilson and Andrea Best for their donations for our prize table.

And as usual, our winners were grinners.





We ended the year by giving our first ever "Super Hero" award. We have many unsung heroes in our club who are always there to help with anything that needs doing. Albert Ham is one such person and we thanked him for all his efforts and kindness over the year.



We tried bowling with a difference. I heard lots of comments later, about why were so many people leaving the club with a toilet roll under their arm?

















What do you get if you cross Santa with a duck?
A Christmas Quacker


Some Christmas Quackers

What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney? Claustrophobia!

Why didn't Mary and Joseph make it to Bethlehem? All Virgin flights were cancelled.

Did you hear that production was down at Santa's workshop during Covid?
Many of his workers have had to Elf isolate!

Why couldn't Mary and Joseph join their work conference call?
Because there was no Zoom at the inn.

At Christmas

Thanks Denise Ericsson



I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book;
And every year, when Christmas comes, I go and take a look

And this is when I realise, that these names are a part
Not of the book they're written in, but of my very heart.

For every name stands for someone who has crossed my path some time
And in that meeting, they've become the rhythm in each rhyme.

And while it sounds fantastic, for me to make this claim,
I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered name.

And while you may not be aware of any special link,
Just remember you have changed my life a lot more than you think.



For, once I've met somebody, the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word, or of a friendly face.

So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere routine
Of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between

For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you
It's because you're on the list of folks I've met
And you happen to be one of those, I'd prefer not to forget.

(Author Unknown)

Looking forward to seeing you all in the new year. Our meeting dates for 2026 are:

28 January 2026	22 July 2026
25 February 2026	26 August 2026
25 March 2026	23 September 2026
22 April 2026	28 October 2026
27 May 2026	25 November 2026
24 June 2026	No meeting is held in December



We are always looking for contributions to our newsletters. Remember, the newsletter is for all of us, by all of us.

If you would like to contribute to our newsletter, email or phone Dave on d.tourgossip@gmail.com or 0417 490 740

Compiled and designed by Sue Brown, Elizabeth Rea and Dave Lupton

Thanks to Club Condell Park for printing copies of our newsletter for members.