



PROBUS CLUB OF GREENWAY INC.

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A Few Words From Our Acting President

Dear Members

What interesting and challenging times we live in! I must admit that when Chief Minister Barr announced that we would be in lockdown for another month my heart dropped as I suppose like most people I was expecting the lockdown to be extended for another fortnight but not a month. When I thought about it, I'd rather that than risk losing any family member or friends to Covid.

I have been looking backwards and thinking a lot about our wonderful club and the decision that Peter and I made fourteen years ago to attend the first meeting held to discuss the formation of the Greenway PROBUS Club. We had no idea what PROBUS was but as we had recently retired we were looking at what other activities we could become involved in. Little did we know that the club would become such a large part of our lives and the many friends that we have made.

We were still motorhoming at the time which meant that we would be away on our travels for large periods each year. In discussions with the Committee at the time, we were told that this wouldn't be a problem as long as we advised them of when we would be absent. This was our first example of how flexible our club was prepared to be. Over our years of travelling and being "grey nomads" we received such a warm welcome from members each time on our return and we're treated like long lost relatives. This response meant a lot to us, so much so that we didn't feel like we had been away at all.

I have talked to many members over the years and discussed the reasons why they chose to join our club. Many said that they had visited other PROBUS clubs but were very impressed with how friendly Greenway was. I want to thank all of our club members for helping to create such a truly inclusive and friendly environment for new and old members.

Over the years I have watched the club grow and develop. Numbers fluctuate from time to time but remain fairly stable. Recently we have had a few resignations such as Barb Manning, Louise and Charlie Samuel, Joan Miller and Pat Bondietti. We wish them well in their new endeavours and thank them for their contributions to the club.

Although we haven't been able to meet, your Committee has been busy looking at ways that we can make our club even better than what it is now. This will be based on the survey of members that we recently conducted. Clubs need to evolve to keep meeting the needs of their members and we will endeavour to do this.

I welcome any feedback from members and I am more than happy to take your phone calls and have a chat. Until we can get back together, take care, stay safe and keep smiling.

Sandra Barker

Upcoming Events

The current Covid-19 lockdown in the ACT is due to end on the 16th of October! However, it is due to be reviewed halfway through the current 4 week period which will be sometime around the end of September.

Unfortunately, our “Crystal Ball” has become very dark and cloudy so we have no way of predicting when, if and how things might change. So the best guess is that not much will change before 16th October, if then!

This leaves: -

December	Christmas Party details to be advised
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Guest Speakers

Date	Speaker	Talking About
November 9 th	Amanda Heal	“Looking at life through Courage-Coloured Glasses”
December	Christmas Party	Details Pending – see below
11 th January 2022	The Return of Two Truths and a Lie!	

Organising our annual Christmas Party Lunch

Gail and Noela are looking at options for our club’s annual Christmas Party Lunch due to be held on 14th December. The ACT Chief Minister’s messaging around opening Canberra back up following lockdown is that it will be done in measured steps. Andrew Barr suggested we won’t necessarily be able to go back to the way things were pre-Covid19. We don’t know exactly what this means for us and whether things will be back on a ‘business as usual’ footing by December. As a result, they have decided to plan for two eventualities.

Plan A will see us lunching indoors at a club or restaurant if it is safe to do so.

Plan B, an outdoor picnic or BBQ, will be our fallback plan.

If you have any constructive suggestions on venues or event minutiae now is the time to reach out to **Gail or Noela**. We will provide more information about the event once the path out of lockdown is clearer.

We will keep you informed as things change, so: -

“WATCH THIS SPACE”

For more up to date information and other news go to the Greenway Probus Web Site by just clicking here -> [Greenway Probus](#)

Welfare

Members with ongoing health problems or other issues that prevent them from attending meetings are not forgotten and we send them our positive thoughts and best wishes.



October Birthdays

We have already covered the September Birthdays so despite it being a bit early here are our October Birthday Members: -

Roger Bean, Jan Buchanan, Don Sans and Jim Turner.

A very Happy Birthday to you all.



Glands Quote of the Week

Since the Covid-19 lockdown, my going out clothes have missed me so much that when I put them on yesterday they hugged me so tightly I couldn't move!

Having dealt with the normal Newsletter items; off we go a different tack. We will all remember the impact of September 11th 20 years ago. I was not aware until a few weeks ago that Tom Anderson was working at the Australian Embassy in Washington on that day.

Tom has written two pieces about that day, one is how the Bell of the USS Canberra was given to Australia. In addition, Tom has written a fascinating first-hand account of 9/11 as it affected him in Washington DC. In addition, Paul Varsanyi has given me a personal account of meeting his favourite Author, George Mikes.

The Bell of the USS Canberra

I was working in Washington from late 1999 to early 2003 at our Embassy as the Senior Australian Customs Representative (Counsellor Customs).



John Howard accepting the Bell of the USS Canberra from George W Bush

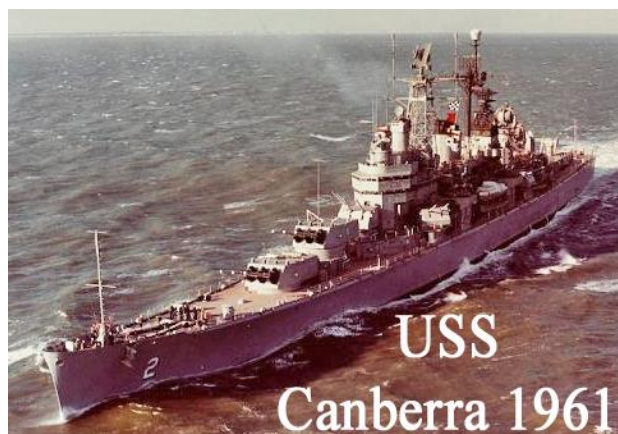
Prime Minister Howard had come to Washington and on September 10 was to appear at a ceremony with President George W Bush at the Naval Dockyard where President Bush was to hand over the bell of the USS Canberra to him.

Margaret and I had been invited to the Ceremony but let me go back in time and tell the story of how a US ship came to bear the name of Canberra.

In 1942 HMAS Canberra was part of a group of ships off Savo Island in the Solomon Islands when they encountered a group of Japanese warships.

HMAS Canberra was sunk by the Japanese during a fierce fight. The Officer of the watch that night was a young 20-year-old Australian who survived the sinking.

The Americans were so impressed by the fight put up by HMAS Canberra that they decided to name a ship after it. My understanding is that this ship was the only ship named after a non-American place. This



ship served from 1943 in World War II and later served in the Vietnam War before being decommissioned in 1970.

We were up early as we went by bus and had to go through Security. We had a great seat 6 rows from the front with only one old man sitting 3 rows in front. I said to Margaret that we would probably not get any closer to the US President than this.

The Ceremony went well and at the end, the President and the Prime Minister approached the old man sitting in front of us. It turned out that he was the same man who had been the Officer of the watch when the HMAS Canberra was sunk.

So, what was he to do next? He said that he was due to fly out of Washington on American Airlines Flight 77 the next day, September 11 and the flight was the one that was crashed into the Pentagon.

Our Defence colleagues told him that Mrs Howard was due to plant a tree at the site of the only Australian buried in Arlington Cemetery the next day and he should also come along to that. So, he changed his flight and the rest as you say is good fortune and history.

Tom Anderson's view of September 11

I was living and working in the United States in the Australian Embassy in Washington at the time. I held the position of “Counsellor Customs” or as we called it within Customs, the “Senior Australian Customs Representative Washington”.

This is my story of the Washington experience of that day, not one of seeing the twin towers of the World Trade Centre hit and then collapse with the tremendous loss of life.

This time of the year in the US – late August, early September, is beautiful if not the best time of year. The days are lovely and clear, and the heat and humidity are usually gone by early September and then you are in the “Fall”.

I had been in New York in August undertaking a visit to a facial Technology Company in New Jersey as Australian Customs was looking at this technology to introduce a new processing system and a more confident system for passengers travelling to and from Australia. I had taken Margaret for the trip as I drove up to New York. She had taken the ferry across to Manhattan that day to the base of the World Trade Centre and I had gone over after our meeting and met with her and walked around that area. Little did we know that the Towers would not be there in 3 weeks.



But let's move now to Washington.

Our Prime Minister of the time, John Howard, was in town to meet with US President George W Bush. He was staying at the Willard Hotel which was located quite close to the White House.

On Monday, September the 10th, President Bush was at the Naval Yard in Washington to present the Bell of the USS Canberra to Prime Minister Howard. I have a separate note on this.

Tuesday, September 11 dawned as another beautiful autumn day with a clear blue sky and quite a lovely day.

I was due to fly that afternoon down to Auburn University in Alabama to conduct a visit as part of our Detector Dog Program assistance that we were providing to the United States Government on the breeding program that they established, based on the successful Australian model.

Margaret phoned me at about 8.50 am to tell me that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Centre in New York. I said that it was probably foggy, and a light plane had lost its way. Recalling one that had crashed into the Empire State Building some years before.

Margaret's second phone call came 10 or so minutes later (about 9.10 am) telling me that another plane had crashed into the World Trade Centre, and I realized it was time to act.

I asked Justin Wickes to cancel our trip as I wasn't comfortable with the situation. Justin was the new Australian Customs Rep – he had only arrived in August, and this was to be his first trip away!

We didn't have a TV in our office, so I walked down the hall to the Public Affairs area to watch

Around 9.45 am We heard of the great decision to ground the 4,500 aircraft flying over the United States and all had landed within an hour.

Around 10 am we watched, as many did, the first tower collapsing.

At the same time, there were rumors about missing planes and where they were.

The Ambassador, Michael Thawley, ordered everyone down from the 7th and 6th floors as the Embassy is on 16th Street in a direct line to the White House some 10 blocks away. The Embassy is one of the taller buildings on 16th street.

The rumours continued: - The West Wing is on fire, the Capitol Building is on fire!

People were running everywhere. This is from around 10.15 to 10.30 am. People were walking down Massachusetts Avenue streaming away from their work as the Federal Government has closed most of its offices. Unfortunately, nobody told the District of Columbia Government which runs the public transport

and which was still on its normal day timetable that could not cope with the numbers wanting get home.

I watched all of this from the window of my office and sirens were sounding all the time.

It's the unknown that was the issue now!

The second tower of the World Trade Centre collapsed around 10.30 am.

Around 11 am the Ambassador called a meeting of Heads of Agencies at the Embassy.

He wanted to account for everyone at the Embassy. He asked the travel people who were due to travel that day. Of course, I was, and all eyes turn to me, and I felt that they were saying to themselves "Anderson you are lucky".

Normally I travelled on average 10 days a month while I was there or as Margaret would say 365 days in my time there over 3 years.

We heard that some of the Defence staff were working on exchange in the Pentagon and not all could be accounted for. Eventually, we heard that the one officer who was missing was working in the part of the Pentagon where the 3rd plane crashed. He was eventually found after about 5 hours of wandering around suffering from shock. Later we hear that he had led a group of staff from the area out of the building safely.

Our son phoned his mother trying to find out if we are ok. He could not contact me as I was not in the office. He asked his mother if she was ok, and she asked why? A plane had crashed into the Pentagon he and she replied, "Oh yes I can see the smoke from here". That finishes him!!

He eventually reached me, and I was quite calm saying all is well but I am not sure what will happen next.

There was the constant sound of Fire Engine alarms running around the city.

I then turned my attention to looking after Australian Customs staff in the US

- John Vandelloo from the Dog Detector Group was in San Antonio, Texas – at **Lackland Air Force Base** checking on the Dog Training Centre there and then due to visit Auburn University in Alabama where Justin and I were to join him and then onto Washington. He would stay there behind the safety of being secure on the Air Force Base.

- Melanie Challis was in Los Angeles on her way to visit New York. I spoke with her and said to sit tight.
- Paul Benussi was in London and getting ready to visit JFK Airport and US Customs in New York and DC. He was also to sit tight.

Meanwhile, John Howard was scheduled to speak to a group of senior Australian Business Chiefs at lunchtime. The Secret Service arrived at the Willard Hotel and bundled up the Prime Minister and his entourage and delivered them to the Embassy saying, "you can look after them while we will guard the front!!" His group was taken to the 2nd Basement as this was the safest location in the Embassy.

Mr Howard needed to phone Australia but all the phone lines were been disrupted on the east coast. There was a direct tie line between the Property Group at the Embassy – they were from the Private Sector.

Well poor "Irish Jim", who ran the Property area phoned his mate in Melbourne to say that the Prime Minister was in the basement and needed to make some phone calls. You can imagine the reception from his "mate". However, after about 5 minutes we heard, the Prime Minister did get to make his phone calls.

As well, we had the Australian Business CEO's who were also brought to the Embassy and the media as well. The leaders were taken to the "Happy Hour" room and the Media were taken to the Theatre.

Then some locals were tasked to find some food, however, there were few places open. Eventually, sandwiches were provided to all 3 groups.

It was clear that much was not known, and it was the "what next" that concerned everyone!

I contacted Customs in Canberra to let everyone know we were safe – we only have a small window to be in contact with Australia during their Office Hours. 5 or 6 pm Washington is 8 am the next morning in Canberra.

The US Federal Government had said it would be closed on Wednesday but then changed their minds and opened on Wednesday to give a look of business as usual. Our ambassador said that we would be the same.

I decided around 3.30 pm that I would leave the Office and Head home and I took one of the locals – an Australian – who lived in Ballston (where we lived).

I thought that if I was a terrorist ready to cause as much chaos as I could, I would have blown up the various

bridges over the Potomac River. There are a number, and that would have virtually paralyzed the city.

So, as I drove over the Key Bridge that goes from Georgetown on the DC side to Rosslyn in Virginia I went very quickly. There was very little traffic on the road at this time and then I was home. It was a very strange feeling still trying to come to terms with what had happened.

All we could hear at night was sirens broken by the sound of helicopters and later high flying military aircraft.

The next morning driving into work there was an increasing National Guard presence as we moved towards the Embassy and 16th Street. Hummer vehicles started appearing and by the time we were close to the Embassy, there were Guards on each corner with at least a couple of Humvees.

The airports remained closed.

We heard later that day that the Prime Minister had relocated to the Ambassador's Residence to stay until he could return to Australia.

It was a long and apprehensive day.

Photos from September 11



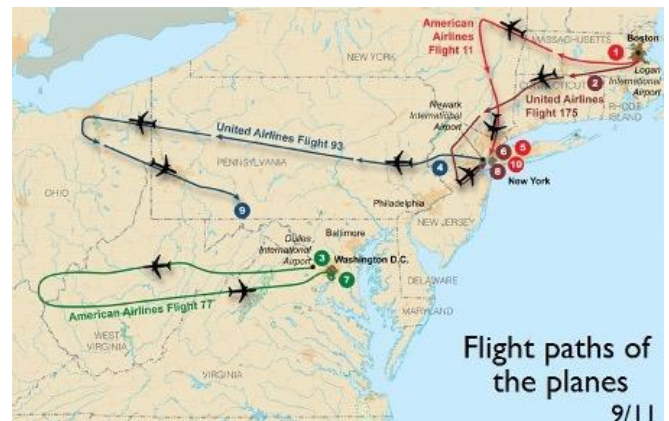
Twin Towers after the Attack



NBC News



The Pentagon after Impact



The Paths of the Planes

Stories Courtesy of Tom Anderson

Meeting a Favourite Author

By Paul Varsanyi



George Mikes was a Jewish Hungarian journalist and humourist. He was based in London reporting for two Hungarian newspapers when, in 1938, he observed the disturbing anti-Semitic developments in Central Europe. He elected to stay in London where, during the war, he reported for the

BBC, and subsequently lived out his life in England writing books and articles.

An early work, and perhaps his most famous, was “How to be an Alien”, a satiric work which poked gentle fun at the British, from the point of view of a bemused Central European foreigner. His one-line chapter on English sex reads: “Continental people have sex lives; the English have hot-water bottles”. He went on to write 40 books in all, satirising many nationalities.

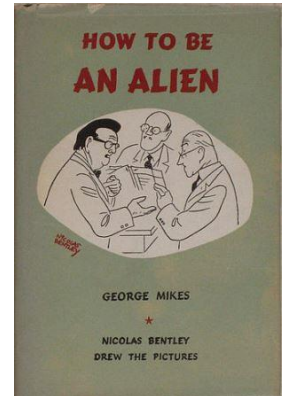
In 1971 I found myself on a disco cruise boat on the Danube in Budapest with my then-girlfriend, Marti. The boat was filled with youngsters dancing and having a good time, as we passed by the spectacularly lit up shoreline replete with palaces and other beautiful buildings.

Suddenly there was an announcement on the PA system. There was a BBC TV team on board, and they were looking to interview young people on life in Hungary. Could youngsters who spoke some English come forward?

I figured I fitted that description and fronted the mike with four others. I didn’t know it at the time, but the interviewer was George Mikes. Pretty soon I became aware that most of the questions were directed to me, presumably because I was the only interviewee fluent in English. But I unashamedly gave forth on how young Hungarians related to their parents, their fondness for Western pop music, hopes for the future and the rest.

Later that week I read in the press that a BBC team led by George Mikes had been ordered to leave the country, due to a “national security breach”

Eventually, the northern Winter found me in London. Wanting to find out more about Mikes’ adventures in Hungary, I located him through his publisher and managed to call him. He said there was a long story to tell regarding his time in Hungary. Would I care to visit him at the Garrick Club in Central London?



The Garrick Club is one of the oldest gentlemen’s clubs in the world, catering mainly to members of the literary and visual arts.

So I turned up at the club at the appointed time and joined my host for a few drinks in the members’ lounge. I couldn’t believe my luck, both at meeting a favourite author, and at being inside an English gentlemen’s club.

He explained his expulsion from Hungary. He and the BBC team had been there filming an item on life in Hungary, as part of the BBC’s “One Pair of Eyes” series. While out on the Great Hungarian Plain they found themselves filming a series of large haystacks, when they were quickly pulled up. “How were we to know there was a Soviet tank hidden inside each haystack?”

I asked him about the interview on the disco cruise boat: “Didn’t you suspect I was not a local? There was my broad Australian accent!” He replied: “Of course I knew. But you were providing great material – we used it all”. He advised me his program had already aired, about a week before I arrived in England. I have never seen it.

I asked him for some advice for a budding author, which he generously gave. I thanked him profusely, and we parted our ways

Courtesy