**3.0 PROGRAMME OF SOCIAL EVENTS**

**3.1 Day trips (2001-19)**

**Characteristics**

Day trip organisers have combined local excursions with more ambitious visits to venues throughout the South East of England. Trips have taken place at different times in the year and have included visits to prestigious University towns, cathedral cities, stately homes, museums and heritage sites. Day visits typically include more than one venue or site of cultural interest. Guided on-site tours are invariably combined with opportunities for members to “do their own thing(s)”.

The menu of day trips since 2001 has several key features, including:

* A variety of destinations selected by the organiser(s) and recommended by members
* Sites that focus on British cultural heritage and urban history
* Venues of industrial and maritime significance throughout South East England
* Shorter (half-day) visits negotiated with lunch-time speakers (e.g. Eton College; Kempton Park Pumping Station; Brooklands Motor Museum)
* Participation by Probus Ladies and guests to reduce the unit costs of coach hire

Since 2010, responsibility for the design and delivery of day trips has been shared by two organisers. Partnership working has enabled the development of an ambitious programme that is much appreciated by members. This model of sharing the responsibilities for administration has been adopted for theatre visits.

**Listing of trips**

***Probus Year Location Organiser***

**2001-2002**

28 June Wintershall (Bramley, Surrey) Norman Dixon

8 August Sandhurst Don Shimmield

1 November Cambridge Don Shimmield

**2002-2003**

15 May Longleat Don Shimmield

10 July Garden Party: St David’s School, Ashford Derek Smith

13 November Bath Don Shimmield

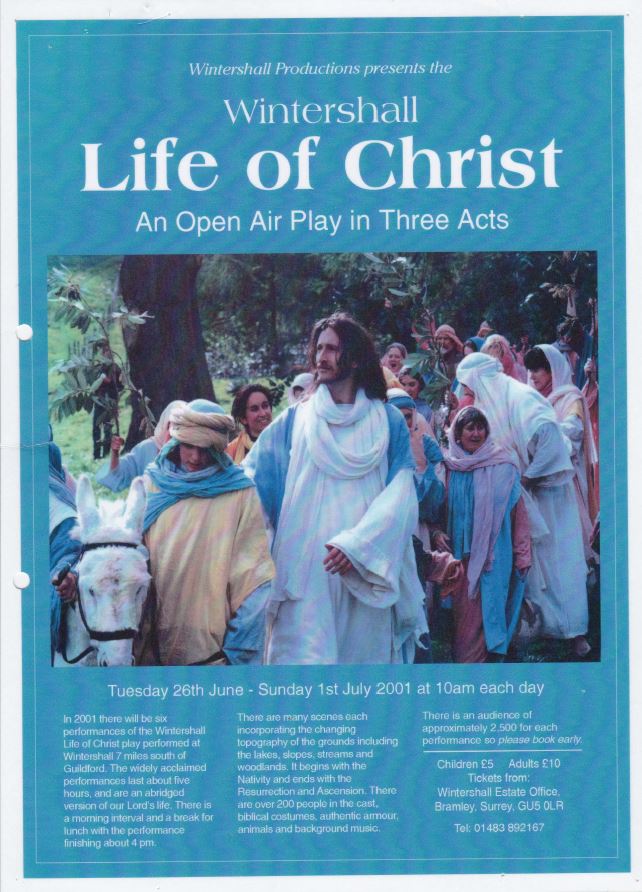
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Figure 20: *Programme for the performance ‘Life of Christ ‘at Wintershall (June 2001)*

**2003-2004**

26 March Beaulieu Don Shimmield

6 July New Forest and Hampshire County Fair Don Shimmield

29 October Greenwich Don Shimmield

****

Figure 21: *Brighton Day Trip (August 2005*)

(*Back, from left*)  *Arnold Bradshaw Don Shimmield*

*(Front, from left) Vera Bradshaw Barbara Ranger Audrey Shimmield Frank Brown*

**2004-2005**

26 May Chichester Don Shimmield

14 October Sussex tour Don Shimmield

**2005-2006**

26 May Legal London Don Shimmield

11 August Brighton Richard Gould

6 October Arundel Ken Pockett

**2006-2007**

9 May London Docklands Ken Pockett

18 October Portsmouth Pat Smith

**2007-2008**

27 March House of Commons/Cabinet War Rooms Mark Wilson

20 May Kempton Park Pumping Station Mark Wilson

30 May Wellington Barracks: Under the Bearskin Pat Smith

**2008-2009**

15 July Rochester/Chatham Mark Wilson

27 August Tutankhamen Exhibition (02 Arena) Mike Hesford

**2009-2010**

None

**2010-2011**

18 May Fishbourne/Chichester Mark Wilson

15 September Canterbury Mike Attias

12 January Olympic Park Stratford Mark Wilson

**2011-2012**

18 May Salisbury Mike Attias

21 September Brighton Mike Attias

7 December Winchester Xmas Fayre Mike Attias

**2012-2013**

13 June Oxford Mike Attias

28 November Bournemouth Xmas Market Mike Attias

20 February Brooklands Motor Museum Mike Attias

**2013-2014**

15 May Cambridge Mike Attias

17 September Bletchley Park Mike Attias

20 November Eton College Mike Attias

**2014-2015**

16 November Hampton Waterworks and Steam Museum Brian Barlow

**2015-2016**

3 June Waddesdon Manor Brian Barlow

**2016-2017**

18 March Beaulieu Motor Museum Brian Barlow

19 September Stratford upon Avon Terry Lawrence

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Figure 22:*In pole position? Edwin Genet (left) and Don Shimmield (right) at Beaulieu*

*Motor Museum (March 2016)*

**2017-2018**

15 June Parham House Terry Lawrence

**2018-2019**

14 June Mottisfont and Sir Harold Hillier Gardens Terry Lawrence

**Sample costings**

Costings for a representative sample of three one-day excursions are presented below.

13th November 2002 Longleat £20.00 (excl. lunch)

18th May 2011 Salisbury Cathedral £20.00 (excl. lunch)

15th June 2017 Parham House and Bignor £49.00 (incl. lunch)

**Representative Visit**

**Visit to the Tutankhamen Exhibition at the O2 Arena, 27th August 2008**

*A total of 48 members, relatives and friends boarded the Sureline coach at Sunbury Cricket Club at 8.30 a.m. to visit the Tutankhamen Exhibition at the O2 Arena and afterwards a City Cruises lunch from the O2 Pier to Westminster.*

*On a surprisingly traffic-free journey, we arrived at our destination at 10 a.m. in plenty of time to check-in and receive our audio equipment for our 10.30 Exhibition slot which was expected to take 90 minutes.*

*The Exhibition featured over 130 ancient Egyptian treasures coming from the tomb of the young king Tutankhamen, but also from other kings’ burial sites. It used innovative design and technology to demonstrate the life and times of the young king during his short reign and how it changed history. There were more than 70 objects from royal tombs dating from the 18th Dynasty (1555 BC – 1205 BC) which included two Pharaohs who reigned before Tutankhamen. It featured 50 major objects excavated from the Tutankhamen Tomb. They included the Royal Diadem, the gold crown encircling the head of the mummified body. We also saw the gold and precious stone inlaid canopied coffins that contained the King’s organs.*

*There were computer-generated images and constructions together with film footage of the golden age of the Pharaohs, all contained in 12 Exhibition Rooms featuring:*

1. *An introductory film 7. Tutankhamen – King of Egypt*
2. *Ancient Egypt before Tutankhamen 8. Causing his name to live*
3. *Traditional beliefs 9. The science of Tutankhamen*
4. *Death, burial and the after-life 10. The Tomb*
5. *Religious revolution 11. Howard Carter Gallery*
6. *The Boy King 12. Daily life in Tutankhamen’s world*

*The burial site was discovered by Howard Carter during his Egyptian tour in 1922. Many of the exhibits were brought to London in the 1970s and some of our members saw them then. One of our members was fortunate to have seen the burial site during his army service in 1946.*

*This is the last time the relics (so I’m told) will be allowed to leave Egypt and the Exhibition which opened in July 2007 closed 3 days after our visit. I felt that we were privileged to have been among the last few to see this wonderful show before it returned to its rightful home, particularly since it was set in the most controversial venue in London.*

*I received several very appreciative comments from our members who were, as I was myself, very impressed by the wonderful workmanship, the amazing quality and the way the antiquities had survived over the last three and a half thousand years incarcerated in the tomb.*

*The second half of the trip was a bit of a disaster. The Pier Master informed me, on enquiry, that no boat had been arranged to take us back to Westminster, nor had a meal been arranged, although printed schedules had been issued. After rapid consultation with senior members, it was decided to have lunch at the Dome and then take the river bus to Waterloo where our coach would meet us for the return to Sunbury.*

*Everyone had a satisfactory meal of their choice, and our ride on the water was quite exceptional by seeing London from the river. We arrived at Waterloo at just after 4p.m., leaving at 4.30p.m. for home. After a traffic-free journey we reached Sunbury at 5.30 p.m. Mike Hesford thanked Sureline driver, Steve, for his help in re-locating at short notice, presenting him with a token of the Club’s appreciation. The Chairman thanked Mike, on behalf of the party, for dealing with the difficulties. This, the fifth Probus outing in 2008, was a success. A rebate to members will be paid shortly.*

[Report prepared by Mike Hesford]

**3.2 5-day holidays (2001-19)**

***Characteristics***

Throughout the period, 5-day holidays have given members (and wives/partners/guests) an opportunity to visit different environments in the congenial company of Probus colleagues. Typically, two holidays have been organised each year. Venues have been selected either in different parts of the UK within a reasonable journey time by coach from Sunbury or in mainland Europe with travel by luxury coach, ferry or a flight from nearby airports. In September 2012 a Greek Islands cruise featured in the programme. The holiday listing confirms that since 2001 several Probus members have taken responsibility for background organisation and on-site leadership.

Highlights of the holiday programme since 2001 include:

* A balance between UK and mainland-Europe destinations
* The skills of organisers in liaising with service providers to secure high-quality hotel accommodation and a balanced programme of activities suited to the interests of party members
* The ingenuity and resourcefulness of organisers in dealing with unexpected on-site issues (e.g the local impacts of the Foot and Mouth epidemic in Bowness, 2002; adverse traffic conditions at points in several holiday itineraries; and the health circumstances of a participant)
* The value that Probus Ladies have attached to the holiday programme; in latter years their support has been crucial to the viability of several trips
* Successful outcomes to the challenges connected with the choice and planning of future holidays. However, due to small numbers of prospective participants, some proposed trips have been aborted despite the appreciable effort of organisers in planning and negotiating with providers. Increasingly, too, health issues have constrained participation by some (erstwhile) supportive members

***Listing of holidays***

***Probus year Location Organiser***

**2001-2002**

7-11 May Bowness Ray Knott

3-7 September Loire Valley Ray Knott

**2002-2003**

29 April-3 May Norwich Arthur Cryer

23-27 September Cork, Ireland Arthur Cryer

**2003-2004**

25-30 April Loch Long (Scotland) Mike Morgans

15-19 September Champagne (France) Mike Morgans

**2004-2005**

30 March-3 April Newcastle Pat Smith

20-25 September Liege Pat Smith

**2005-2006**

**1**8-23 April Jersey Ray Knott

22-26 September Spoleto (Umbria) John Mold

24-28 September Falmouth Ray Knott

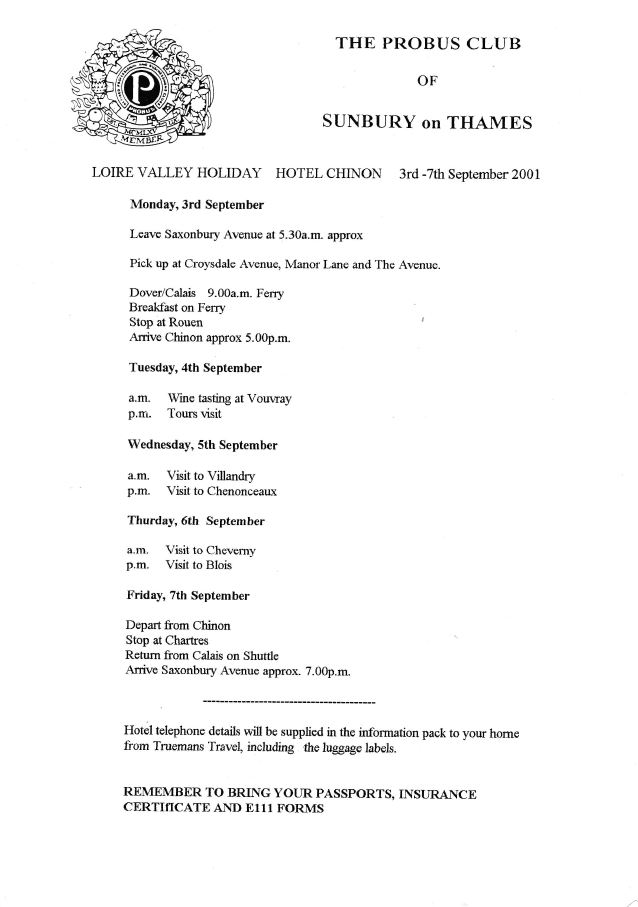
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Figure 23: *The Loire Valley 2001: tour programme*

**2006-2007**

24-28 April Nottingham George Powell

25-29 September Berlin Derek Smith

**2007-2008**

23-27 April Isle of White Don Shimmield

**2008-2009**

21-25 April Harrogate Derek Smith

**2009-2010**

21-25 September Bath/Bristol Charles Watkins

**2010-2011**

21-26 April Northumberland Charles Watkins

****

Figure 24: *Northumberland 2011: our guide at Durham Cathedral*

**2011-2012**

17-21 April Isle of Man Charles Watkins

**2012-2013**

22-29 September Greek Islands Cruise Don Shimmield

**2013-2014**

23--27 September Normandy Don Shimmield

****

Figure 25: *Normandy 2013: ready for action*

**2014-2015**

19-23 May Chester John Mold

**2015-2016**

27 April-1 May South Devon Don Shimmield

**2016-2017**

25-29 April Esposende, Portugal Don Shimmield

27-31 October Liverpool John Mold

**2017-2018**

15-19 October Chepstow Don Shimmield

**2018-2019**

24-28 September Lytham St Annes Don Shimmield

***Representative holiday***

**The Greek Isles from Venice, 22-29 September, 2012**

****

Figure 26: *On-board the Norwegian Jade*

An email from Don Shimmield, the Probus organiser, to Tailored Travel on return to the UK expresses the concern of the group with travel arrangements and highlights features of life on-board the cruise liner *Norwegian Jade*.

*“Dear Sandy*

*As promised, I now have a little time to send you a few comments regarding the Sunbury Probus Greek holiday.*

*Transportation:*

*The pick-up at Lower Sunbury went like clockwork. We left at 0430 and only required one other pick-up at St Ignatius Church at 0440. We were at Gatwick at 0530. Pity BA spoilt things with the plane being an hour late in taking off.*

*Katia was waiting for us and coached us to Venice and efficiently dealt with the embarkation procedures.*

*On the return, Sylvia met us and transferred us by boat to Venice to meet up with our guide Susanna. A most informative and amusing tour followed. Before transferring by boat/coach to Verona. BA spoilt things again with the flight taking off 1.5 hours late.*

*At Gatwick, the luggage arrival in the baggage hall was delayed another half hour. The instructions for picking up the coach were inapplicable as there were no coach marshalls around, but after several phone chats to the driver he was eventually located and drove us back to Sunbury by midnight.*

*Overall, the travel organisation and Banstead coaches were excellent.*

*Norwegian Jade:*

*Initial reactions on embarking were mixed, but after a few days a routine was generally adopted. There was a feeling that the boat was charging excessively. With probably 2000 passengers on board the free restaurants were pretty full. Where a cover charge was made we felt that the food did not warrant it. Wine was very expensive and even at the free eating places a charge was made for tea or coffee after the meal. A single photograph was costing just under £20 which meant that there were not many takers. The itinerary was good but often clashed with large ships from other cruise lines. The trips were often dear and it was often better to arrange something once off the boat (this is the case with most cruise ships).*

*One good thing about the Jade was a really good resident band that put on excellent traditional jazz and swing music concerts. On two evenings a group of four male singers called the 4Ever Group brought the house down.*

*On arrival in my cabin was a letter from Jade’s Group Services Coordinator, Lucille Seno, and an invite to the cocktail party for our group. This went down very well and phone contact with Lucille at a later date proved beneficial. This came about when following your instructions re. disembarkation. The Pursers Office did not wish to know about the early disembarkation arrangements. Lucille saw to it that we were one of the first groups off.*

*Finally, you can rest assured that our group had a very good time, but in hindsight would probably have favoured a smaller vessel.*

*I trust that these comments will be of some use. Our thanks to Tailored Travel, especially to yourself, for all the organising etc.*

*Very best wishes*

*Don”*

**3.3 Theatre visits (2001-19)**

**Characteristics**

Theatre and concert visits are popular events in the social calendar. The number of visits has varied from two to four each year. These have included a variety of performances: ever-popular pantomimes; light-hearted musicals; classical concerts; and stage productions. Venues have ranged from theatres in the West End to those located conveniently at Windsor, Woking, Guildford and Richmond. In recent years members have attended several Christmas concerts and orchestral performances at The Royal Albert Hall.

Key features in the programme have included:

* Popular matinee performances which organisers have (often) linked with a first class meal in a nearby restaurant
* Quick responses by organisers who secure early-bookings and group ticketing concessions to minimise total costs; and sufficient Probus funds ready to underwrite advanced booking arrangements
* Ever-present support from the Probus Ladies who subsidise the per capita cost of coach-hire and enable block-booking of tickets at favourable prices
* In recent years, the appointment of joint-organisers has delivered, through partnership working, a high quality series of theatre visits and concert performances

**Listing of visits**

***Probus Year Venue Performance Organiser***

**2001-2002**

20 June Woking Phantom of the Opera Stanley Wyles

23 October Hippodrome Friday Night is Music Night Stanley Wyles

10 January Woking Pantomime - Aladdin Stanley Wyles

13 February Drury Lane My Fair Lady Stanley Wyles

**2002-2003**

3 July Woking Whistle down the Wind Stanley Wyles

18 October Woking Chicago Stanley Wyles

2 November Magna Carta Pirates of Penzance Stanley Wyles

15 January Woking Pantomime - Cinderella Stanley Wyles

**2003-2004**

2 April Woking The Chalk Garden Stanley Wyles

11 September Woking My One and Only Stanley Wyles

24 October Festival Hall RAF Memorial Concert Stanley Wyles

15 January Woking Pantomime - Peter Pan Stanley Wyles

**2004-2005**

24 March Drury Lane Anything Goes Stanley Wyles

8 September Palladium Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang Richard Gould

4 November Strand Rat Pack Richard Gould

11 February Fairfield Halls Concert Richard Gould

**2005-2006**

24 March Windsor Sweet Revenge Richard Gould

**2006-2007**

11 October Woking Me and My Girl Richard Gould

8 March Windsor Spirit of the Musicals Richard Gould

**2007-2008**

16 January Lyceum The Lion King Mike Hesford

13 March Ambassadors Zorro Mike Hesford

**2008-2009**

20 May Woking Joseph and the Amazing Mike Hesford

Technicolour Dreamcoat

29 June Albert Hall Royal Philharmonic Mike Hesford

22 October Woking Carousel Mike Hesford

**2009-2010**

13 March Prince of Wales Mamma Mia Mike Hesford

4 June Albert Hall Gala Concert Mike Hesford

16 September Woking Chitty, Chitty Bang Bang Mike Hesford

4 February Shaftesbury Billy Elliot Mike Hesford

**2010-2011**

28 June Albert Hall Gala Concert Brian Barlow

**2011-2012**

26 June Albert Hall Carmina Burana Brian Barlow

18 October White Lodge Royal Ballet School Brian Barlow

****

Figure 27:*The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Concert, The Royal Albert Hall*

**2012-2013**

31 May Albert Hall Queen’s Jubilee Concert Mike Hesford

3 December Albert Hall John Rutter Xmas Concert Mike Hesford

**2013-2014**

16 April Palace Theatre Singing in the Rain David Leitch/Denis Scott

12 December Albert Hall John Rutter Xmas Concert David Leitch/Denis Scott

**2014-2015**

18 March Vaudeville The Duck House David Leitch/Denis Scott

10 September Woking Dreamboats and Mini-skirts David Leitch/Denis Scott

**2015-2016**

18 March Albert Hall Best of Broadway Concert David Leitch/Denis Scott

10 September Windsor Before the Party David Leitch/Denis Scott

7 December Albert Hall Xmas Concert David Leitch/Denis Scott

**2016-2017**

19 May Windsor Lotty’s War Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

16 November Sonning Blythe Spirit Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

17 February Woking Lord of the Dance Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

**2017-2018**

30 March Guildford Nell Gwynn Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

6 July Theatre Royal 42nd Street Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

6 December Albert Hall Xmas Concert Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

**2018-2019**

26 April Adelphi Kinky Boots Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

4 October Apollo Wicked Denis Scott/Alan Worrell

**Sample costings**

Costings for three events sampled across the period are given below.

20 June 2001 Woking (Matinee) Phantom of the Opera £10.50 (incl. coach)

13 March 2009 Prince of Wales Mamma Mia £47.00 (incl. coach)

6 December 2017 Royal Albert Hall Christmas Concert £80.00 (incl. dinner + coach)

There were some examples of outstanding value, as reported in the Luncheon Minutes on 11th April 2005:

*“…………Following the breakdown of the coach on returning from the Theatre Royal at Windsor, the operator had given a refund and had also offered a complimentary day trip. Richard proposed a day in Brighton on Thursday 11th August which would cost a mere £2.50. If oversubscribed, preference should be given to those who had been to Windsor, as a reward for their remarkable self-control in the absence of toilet facilitie*s.”

**Representative Event**

**Visit to the Lyceum Theatre to see The Lion King (16th January, 2008)**

*Forty-three members and wives with seven widows of former members departed Sunbury Sports Association at 12 noon sharp on their Sureline coach arriving at the Lyceum Theatre at 1.15 p.m. After a short walk around Covent Garden and a quick sandwich lunch, seats were taken for the 2 p.m. matinee performance.*

*All were entranced by the colour, the energy of the cast, the sound and content of this Disney production with music and lyrics by Elton John, assisted by Tim Rice. The portrayal of the African animals was particularly interesting, especially the elephants in the opening scene. The hyenas, gazelles and giraffes warranted mention but the humour provided by the rhino, the buzzard and the jackal was particularly well done. The stage sets were very smoothly effected and the changes of scenery were jointless.*

*A stunned and almost silent Club quietly sipped their interval drinks wondering what could possibly follow in the second half. They were not disappointed. One member commented how great it was for someone of limited hearing to hear every word.*

*After a two and three-quarter hour performance the coach was re-joined for what promised to be a difficult rush-hour journey home - with massive hold-ups in the Euston Road and Hammersmith Broadway - but with a stroke of genius our driver, Tony Woodhouse, solved the problem. We arrived back at HQ just over half an hour late. Thanks Tony. The Lion King was a top class show, brilliantly staged, very energetic and enjoyed by everyone.*

*The Chairman, Richard Gould, on behalf of the party thanked Sureline and driver Tony, handing him an envelope containing the club’s appreciation. He also thanked Mike Hesford for organising the trip.*

[Report prepared by Mike Hesford]

**3.4 Pub lunches (2001-19)**

**Characteristics**

Pub lunches take place on approximately nine occasions each year. These are held at intervals between the formal monthly luncheons and provide an opportunity for members, wives, partners and the Probus Ladies to mingle in an informal setting. In the early years, suitable venues were chosen across the Green Belt in Surrey; members were encouraged to share private transport. In latter years, more local pubs of character have featured in the near-monthly programme.

Several aspects of the programme justify comment:

* Organisers have sought to offer a variety of dining experience in different styles of pub or restaurant; moreover, they have tested the menu and appraised the environment beforehand
* Lunches have been organised on different days in the week to extend their appeal
* In latter years, a Christmas lunch and Summer lunch have been held on Sunbury Sports Association premises to benefit from the excellent cuisine of the (then) caterer
* Local pubs and restaurants have been favoured in recent years to minimise travel
* Probus Ladies consistently enjoy the ‘Probus experience’ and opportunity to meet friends and acquaintances over an informal lunch

It is anticipated that more Probus Ladies will attend pub lunches given the recent closure of the Sunbury Ladies Luncheon Club, attended each month by several of the Probus Ladies.

***Probus Year Location Organiser***

**2001-2002**

18 April Running Mare, Cobham Bill Peat

21 June Black Swan, Martyr’s Green James Johnson

25 July Onslow Arms, Clandon James Johnson

30 August not given (ref notice board) James Johnson

28 September not given (ref notice board) James Johnson

21 October Fox on the River, Thames Ditton James Johnson

22 November Rose and Crown, Thorpe Green James Johnson

30 January Old Crown, Weybridge Bill Peat

22 February Winning Post, Whitton James Johnson

**2002-2003**

21 March Woburn Arms, Addlestone James Johnson

24 April The Kingfisher, Chertsey Bridge James Johnson

13 September Running Mare, Cobham James Johnson

24 October Old Plough, Stoke D’Abernon James Johnson

21 November Rose and Crown, Thorpe Green James Johnson

23 January Old Crown, Weybridge James Johnson

27 February The Badgers Rest, Weybridge James Johnson

**2003-2004**

27 March The Goat, Upper Halliford James Johnson

22 April Union Inn, Old Windsor Charles Adams

21 May Wagon and Horses, Addlestone Charles Adams

26 June The Swan Inn, Staines Moor Charles Adams

21 August (*not specified*) Charles Adams

25 September Wagon and Horses, Addlestone Charles Adams

23 October Ashley Park Hotel, Walton Charles Adams

19 November Fairmile Hotel, Cobham Bill Peat

26 February Chef de China, Sunbury Charles Adams

**2004-2005**

25 March Silvermere Golf Club Charles Adams

26 August Fairmile Hotel, Cobham Charles Adams

29 September Hazelwood Golf Club Charles Adams

20 October Merit’s, Twickenham Charles Adams

25 November The Goat, Upper Hallliford Charles Adams

19 January Chef de China, Sunbury Charles Adams

22 February The Admiral Hawke, Sunbury Charles Adams

**2005-2006**

22 March The Tickled Trout (The Bugle) Charles Adams

28 April Ashley Park Hotel, Walton David Wilkinson

24 May The Castle, Ottershaw David Wilkinson

28 June The Old Crown, Weybridge David Wilkinson

28 July Rose and Olive Branch, Virg.Water David Wilkinson

22 August The Fairmile Hotel, Cobham David Wilkinson

29 September Rose and Crown, Thorpe Green David Wilkinson

26 October Chef de China, Sunbury David Wilkinson

25 November Marquess of Granby, Thames Ditton David Wilkinson

25 January Merit’s, Twickenham David Wilkinson

23 February The Running Mare, Cobham David Wilkinson

**2006-2007**

29 March The Swan, Moor Lane, Staines David Wilkinson

23 May (*ref notice board*) David Wilkinson

28 June The Castle, Ottershaw David Wilkinson

27 July The Old Crown, Weybridge David Wilkinson

22 August Fairmile Hotel, Cobham David Wilkinson

23 September Rose and Olive Branch, Virg. Water David Wilkinson

25 October The King’s Head, Ashford David Wilkinson

22 November Rose and Crown, Thorpe Green David Wilkinson

24 January Moon in Moon, Sunbury David Wilkinson

24 February The King’s Head, Ashford David Wilkinson

**2007-2008**

27 March Merit’s, Twickenham David Wilkinson

23 May Ashley Park Hotel, Walton Charles Adams

19 June Bridge Hotel, Chertsey Charles Adams

17 July Thames Court, Shepperton Charles Adams

20 September Three Horse Shoes, Laleham Charles Adams

17 October The Anglers Retreat (Lucan Arms) Charles Adams

5 December Ship Hotel, Shepperton Charles Adams

23 January The Running Horse, Sunbury Charles Adams

20 February Moon in Moon, Sunbury Charles Adams

**2008-2009**

26 March The Ashley Park Hotel, Walton Charles Adams

28 May The Flower Pot, Sunbury André D’Arbre

18 June SSA - Ladies Summer Lunch André D’Arbre

23 July Red Lion, Shepperton André D’Arbre

25 September Holly Tree, Addlestone André D’Arbre

2 December SSA - Ladies Christmas lunch André D’Arbre

21 January The Hungry Horse, Chertsey André D’Arbre

26 February The Boat House, Chertsey André D’Arbre

**2009-2010**

24 March Ashley Park Hotel, Walton André D’Arbre

22 April The Running Horse, Sunbury André D’Arbre

21 May Cole Court, Twickenham André D’Arbre

25 June SSA - Ladies Summer Lunch André D’Arbre

24 September The Bell, Hampton André D’Arbre

29 October The Winning Post André D’Arbre

1 December SSA- Ladies Christmas Lunch André D’Arbre

27 January The Flower Pot, Sunbury André D’Arbre

25 February Moon in Moon, Sunbury André D’Arbre

**2010-2011**

24 March Cole Court, Twickenham Les Messum

21 April The Goat, Halliford Les Messum

25 May Merit’s, Twickenham Les Messum

22 June SSA - Ladies Summer Lunch Les Messum

29 September Harrisons, Shepperton André D’Arbre

21 October Brooklands College André D’Arbre

7 December SSA - Ladies Lunch André D’Arbre

26 January Kingfisher, Chertsey André D’Arbre

24 February Premier Inn, Sunbury Cross André D’Arbre

**2011-2012**

23 March Hare and Hounds, Sunbury André D’Arbre

27 April Three Horseshoes, Laleham André D’Arbre

25 May The Winning Post, Sunbury André D’Arbre

21 June SSA - Summer Lunch André D’Arbre

23 November Merit’s Twickenham Les Messum

1 December SSA - Xmas Lunch Les Messum

24 January Angler’s Retreat, Laleham Les Messum

23 February Benwell Day Centre, Sunbury Les Messum

**2012-2013**

30 March Magpie Hotel, Sunbury Les Messum

1 May Ashley Park Hotel, Walton Les Messum

19 June SSA - Ladies Summer Lunch Les Messum

20 September Oatlands Chase, Weybridge Les Messum

4 December SSA - Ladies Xmas Lunch Les Messum

21 January Rose and Crown, Thorpe Les Messum

**2013-2014**

6 March Merit’s, Twickenham Les Messum

22 April The Kingfisher, Chertsey Les Messum

23 May Rose and Crown, Thorpe Les Messum

17 June SSA - Ladies Summer Lunch Les Messum

3 September Silvermere, Inn on the Lake Les Messum

4 October Ashley Park Hotel, Walton Les Messum

28 November Weir Hotel, Walton Les Messum

**2014-2015**

21 January SSA - Ladies Christmas Lunch Les Messum

20 March Merit’s, Twickenham Les Messum

25 April Crown Inn, Chertsey Les Messum

29 May The Goat, Halliford Les Messum

18 June SSA - Ladies Summer Lunch Les Messum

27 September The Golden Grove, Lyne Les Messum

23 October The Harrow, Charlton Les Messum

21 November The Admiral Hawke Les Messum

11 December SSA - Xmas Lunch Les Messum

**2015-2016**

17 February The Bell, Hampton Les Messum

30 March Anothai Restaurant, Hampton Hill John Atkinson

28 May The White Horse, Sunbury John Atkinson

25 June SSA - Ladies Summer Lunch John Atkinson

25 August King’s Fairway, Ashford John Atkinson

25 September The Red Lion, Thorpe John Atkinson

22 October The Feathers, Laleham John Atkinson

17 November The Minnow, Weybridge John Atkinson

**2016-2017**

24 February SSA - Ladies Winter Lunch John Atkinson

22 March The Flower Pot, Sunbury John Atkinson

12 May The Red Lion, Shepperton Les Messum

18 June SSA- Ladies Summer Lunch Les Messum

19 October Three Horse Shoes, Laleham Les Messum

22 November The Red Lion, Shepperton Les Messum

**2017-2018**

23 February SSA - Ladies Winter Lunch Les Messum

3 May Moon in Moon, Sunbury Tony L’Angellier

22 June The Retreat, Staines upon Thames Tony L’Angellier

19 September Meson Toby, Laleham Tony L’Angellier

**2018-2019**

22 March Thames Court Inn, Shepperton Tony L’Angellier

2 May Indian Zest, Sunbury Tony L’Angellier

19 June The Magpie, Sunbury Tony L’Angellier

5 September The Goat, Shepperton Tony L’Angellier

**A Representative Visit (Report prepared by Tony L’Angellier, Pub Lunch Organiser, 2017-)**

***Background planning***

The invitation to outline for readers the ways in which pub lunches are organised was an opportunity too good to miss! I’ll do this in two parts: firstly, an account of the background organisation; secondly, a brief report on a typical pub lunch event held at the Moon in Moon Chinese restaurant in Lower Sunbury.

For a food lover, becoming the joint-organiser of pub lunches was a gift! These events complement the formal monthly luncheons and provide an opportunity for members, their guests and Probus Ladies to meet in an informal setting. The lunch venues are varied and, in recent times, have included Indian, Chinese, Spanish and Greek cuisine. These appeal to different tastes and complement the choice of restaurants serving traditional British grills and roasts.

A straightforward checklist is used to organise a pub lunch. This entails:

* Visiting a potential venue some months in advance. The organiser (and sometimes his deputy) test out the various restaurants to check capacity (say 25-40 diners), availability, car parking arrangements, accessibility to tables and rest rooms (preferably not upstairs) and, importantly, the offering of a 2 or 3 course set menu option (to ensure prompt service if attendees have made choices in advance)
* Then the real work begins! A ‘board’ listing details of the venue, time and location (together with menu choices, if possible) is circulated at a monthly luncheon meeting. This is emailed to the Probus Ladies’ co-ordinator for information and action. Decisions on participation are collected under three headings: Yes/No/Maybe. The returns are collated and the restaurant informed on numbers and (if required) menu choices
* On the day, the organiser arrives ahead of time and liaises with the management. Guests are greeted on arrival. There is no formal seating plan. Guests purchase drinks and sit with other members. This arrangement stimulates conversation. When all guests are present the check orders and service commences. Experience suggests that it is easier for each table to organise and pay for the drinks taken
* Then it is time to relax, enjoy the meal and engage in good conversation. The final task is to check that everyone has settled their account and leaves for home having enjoyed a new dining experience with others of like mind

***The Moon in Moon (3rd May, 2017)***

On 3rd May 2017, a party of 35 Probus members, Probus Ladies and guests gathered at the Moon in Moon Chinese restaurant in The Avenue, Sunbury. For many, this location was within walking distance of home; for those who shared cars there was ample parking nearby.

The meal was fixed-price at £19-00 per head. For this modest sum, guests seated at large round tables were treated to an extensive selection of items from the standard menu and encouraged to share from the never-ending stream of dishes. Those who experimented with chop-sticks contributed a source of friendly amusement. Conversation bubbled. Many well-travelled guests recounted their holiday and employment experiences in regions of the Far East. This inclusion of Chinese cuisine in the programme of pub lunches was greatly appreciated. The lunch represented excellent value for money and the attentive service provided by friendly waiters added to the enjoyment of the event.

**3.5 The speakers’ programme (2001-19)**

***Introduction***

The after-lunch speakers’ programme has been an enduring feature of the Probus calendar in the period 2001-19. It is much appreciated by members, the majority of whom have expressed satisfaction with the choice of speakers.

Until 2010 the programme offered around six speakers in each year, the majority being members who spoke on career-related topics. The Summer (it is reliably reported) was a fallow period during which members were released after lunch to play bowls, golf or tend their gardens.

Since then the programme has become more structured. It has been extended to cover nine speakers, the majority of whom are invited from outside the club on the recommendation of members. The month of March is excluded to permit the AGM; and a recess of two Summer months allows our members to engage in alternative (outdoor) activities.

Several new features in presentation, style and delivery have been introduced. Talks in the programme, enhanced by visual aids and demonstrations, include:

* An address by the retiring Probus Chairman, normally in February
* Topics linked, subsequently, to half-day visits (e.g. Eton College; Brooklands Motor Museum; Hampton Steam Museum)
* Practical demonstrations e.g. model-building for RNLI; beekeeping; water dowsing
* Presentations by local charities (g. Sam Beare Trust; Princess Alice Hospice)
* Themes around global and local environmental issues (e.g. global warming; the Surrey Green Belt; The Thames Landscape Study)
* Lighter entertainment following the Christmas lunch (e.g. harp recital; a well-illustrated talk on massed male voice choirs)
* Attendance by Probus Ladies at selected talks (e.g. sourcing orchids for Kew; Christmas musicals; and the centenary birthday celebration for Ray Gaunt HLM)

In recent years the Speaker Organiser has been charged to deliver the annual programme within a budget of £500 (less than the cost of half a pint of beer per attending member per talk!). To sustain the programme, however, it is important to engage more members as future speakers on topics related to life interests, career or hobby experiences.

***Listing of Talks***

***Probus year Speaker Topic***

**2001-2002 [Organisers: Ron Forrester/John Hawkins]**

21 May Pauline Tregidgo *The* *Sunbury Millennium Embroidery*

8 October Peter Richards *The Flight Safety Committee*

12 November Jeff Jeffreys *Time in Relation to Navigation*

10 December John Hawkins *Reminiscences*

14 January Mandy Groves *Homestart*

14 January Brian Thorn *Aerial photographic slides of Surrey*

11 February Doug Rimmer *Early colonisation in Australia*

**2002-2003 [Organiser: Ron Forrester]**

19 October David Johnson *Incident Reporting Programmes*

11 November Monty Moss *Moss Bros*

9 December Harold Snoad *Directing and Producing for the BBC*

13 January Colin Kitt *Life as an Immigration Officer*

15 February Ron Forrester *Insights from a ‘flight box’*

**2003-2004 [Organiser: Allan Barnes]**

11 October Richard Worthington *The Blue Nile*

10 November Tom Stubbs *The War Graves Commission*

8 December Jeff Jeffries *The Calendar*

12 January Capt John Tye *Concorde: a pilot’s view*

9 February John Gardiner *The strategic role of the Pathfinders*

**2004-2005 [Organiser: Allan Barnes]**

10 May Geoff Barkway *Training as a glider pilot*

11 October Peter Crawshaw *History of St Paul’s Cathedral*

8 November Ken Ferguson *‘Editing Photoplay’*

11 December Eddy Lea *80 Years of Scouting*

10 January Ray Summerbee *The Driving Standards Agency*

14 February Allan Barnes *Passion for books*



Figure 28: *In December 2004 Eddy Lea, wearing full scout uniform (including shorts), gave his talk on “80 Years of Scouting”. [Eddy features in the back row of this photograph, on the extreme right].*

**2005-2006 [Organiser: Allan Barnes]**

10 October Janet Hendey *The work of the National Trust*

14 November Jack Maclaren *I.K. Brunel’s ‘Great Britain’*

12 December George March *Model Making and the RNLI*

9 January Mel Rees *An Amusing Interlude*

13 February Richard Worthington *The Art of the Goldsmith*

**2006-2007 [Organiser: Dick Nimmo]**

11 September Eric Champion *History of The Riverside Arts Centre*

9 October Ewan Larcombe *The Jubilee River Project*

13 November Kay Webb *Swan Lifeline*

11 December Michael Rimmer *Far North Queensland*

8 January Terry Pattinson *Experiences as a journalist*

12 February Ian Dow *Lights, Camera, Action! Ooops!*

**2007-2008 [Organisers: Dick Nimmo/Leo Pemberton]**

18 April Tom Stubbs *Ethiopia*

9 May Christopher Claxton *Our Amazing Heritage*

11 June Gabby Hablin *Personal Alarm Systems*

10 September E Collins *The Palace of Westminster*

8 October Dr David Cutler *Fuel for thought*

12 November John Chapman *We will not be ‘druv’*

10 December David Harrison *The Life of Sam Pepys*

14 January Wycliffe Noble *Famous People I’ve met*

11 February Dr Peter Brandham *Botany in the Horn of Africa*

**2008-2009 [Organiser: Leo Pemberton]**

12 May Gavin Stanley *African gold weights*

9 June Keith Harman *Dowsing*

8 September George Rushbrook *A Policeman’s Lot*

12 October Mike Rimmer *Turkestan*

10 November David Steed *Finchcocks Musical Museum*

8 December Vida Edwards *Knickers Through the Ages*

5 February Frank Barnes *Videos on 1990s 5-day holidays*

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Figure 29:*Two past Chairmen, Ray Knott and Mike Hesford, give*

*after lunch entertainment as Stan and Ollie in January 2011*

***2009-2010* [Organiser: Robert Gant]**

10 April Dr Robert Gant *Land use changes in the Green Belt*

11 May Dr Chris French *The “good life” in 19th century Surbiton*

8 June Avis Marshall *Bee keeping in suburbia*

14 September Jane Langley *TALK – we keep on talking*

12 October Peter Heims *The life of a private detective*

9 November Dr Trevor Kennea *Global climate change*

14 December Brian Thorne *I K Brunel*

14 January Ray Knott &

Mike Hesford *Camp Fire Yarns*

8 February Les Woods *The Sunbury Sports Association*

***2010-2011* [Organiser: Robert Gant]**

12 April Emma O’Hara *The work of the Princess Alice Hospice*

10 May Dr Haydn James *Music for massed voices*

14 June Dr Colin Ryall *The crow is a world traveller*

13 September John Annabell *Thames Water*

11 October Prof Peter Beck *No longer a pole apart – Antarctica today*

8 November Richard Worthington *A potted history of landscape and architecture*

13 December Prof Bryan Woodriff *Everyday life in Russia*

10 January Insp Steve Cheeseman *The Surrey Police Air Support Unit*

4 February Gavin Stanley *Living in Lusaka*

***2011-2012* [Organiser: Robert Gant]**

11 April Neal Adolphus *Japan: a personal view*

9 May Kwasi Kwarteng MP *Spelthorne through the ages*

13 June Dr Anne Rowe *The life and times of Iris Murdoch*

12 September Paul Whittle *Rock steady – the Gibraltar story*

10 October Rebecca Laws *The Thames Landscape Study*

11 November Frank Barnes *65 years of Avionics*

12 December Stephen Best *Mr Musicman (performance)*

9 January John Tye *Dreamflight*

13 February George March *George at the airport for 40 years*

***2012-2013* [Organiser: Robert Gant]**

16 April Alan Gallop *Buffalo Bill*

14 May Robert Skelton *History of Black Rod and Parliament*

11 June Jean Hayes *The life of a lady bailiff*

10 September Cliff Taylor *The sporting history of Hurst Park*

8 October Philip Littlejohn *The Titanic*

12 November Peter Bruckland *Brooklands Museum*

10 December Colin Gent *World War II Royal Navy Destroyers*

14 January Mike Davison *Friends of Richmond Park*

11 February Edwin Genet *88 years of ups and downs*

***2013-2014* [Organiser: Robert Gant]**

8 April John Glenister *The Surrey Air Ambulance*

13 May Rev Stephen Sizer *Israel, Palestine and the Middle East*

10 June Alan Craig *An A-Z of Indian experience*

9 September Bob Ogley *Doodlebugs and rockets: the V1/V2 campaign*

14 October Rebecca Hunkin *The history of Eton College*

11 November Margaret Watson *History of the harp*

9 December Robert Leadbetter *The Hampton and Sunbury Waterworks Railway*

13 January Gill Govier *Macmillan nursing*

12 February Rev Harold Nicholson *These boots were made for walking*

***2014-2015* [Organiser: Robert Gant]**

14 April Terry Johnson *The Great Train Robbery*

12 May Michael Croneen/ Mike Hesford/Don Shimmield/ KenThomas *Reminiscences of National Service: ‘Get some in’*

9 June Norman Dingermans *The South Downs National Park*

8 September Paul Whittle *Hill Stations of the Raj*

12 October Richard Day *The fire and restoration of Windsor Castle*

10 November Dr Phillip Cribb *Orchid hunting for Kew*

8 December Richard Poad *Grandma flew spitfires*

12 January Andy Thomas *Crop circles*

9 February Leo Pemberton *Up a gum tree*

***2015-2016* [Organiser: Robert Gant/John Lodge]**

13 April Peter Durrant *History and humour of Fleet Street*

11 May Monica Chard *Publishing in the local community*

8 June Jane Delay *Services provided by The Shooting Star Chase*

14 September Jo Mabbutt *The Livery Companies of London*

12 October Tony Eaton *Invasion 1940 – what if?*

9 November David Hassard W*orld class aircraft from Kingston upon Thames*

14 December Fr Simon Douglas-Lane *Travellers’ tales*

11 January Tom Stubbs OBE *The History of Ethiopia*

8 February Les Messum *Of Ships and Shoes and Submarines*

***2016-2017* [Organiser: John Lodge]**

11 April Nigel Harding *The Woking and Sam Beare Hospices*

9 May Colin Gent *Merlin engines*

13 June Dr Robert Gant *Inside out: reflections of a prison tutor*

12 September John Lyon *Secret classroom: a window on the Cold War*

10 October Rupert Matthews *The Battle of Hastings - 950th anniversary*

14 November Mel Rees *My family and other setbacks*

12 December Margaret Watson *Harp recital*

9 January Dr John Peaty *The Dambusters*

13 February Dr Robert Gant *Footprints in the sands of time*

***2017-2018* [Organiser: John Lodge]**

10 April Hugh Laurie *The work of Mary’s Meals*

8 May Adrienne Dines *The art of story-telling*

12 June Barry Buttenshaw *Prince Charles, Bombs and Barry*

11 September Alan Gallop *Children of the dark*

9 October Colin Gent *Singapore to Bangkok by car and train in 1962*

13 November Tom Stubbs OBE *The work of the War Graves Commission*

11 December Dr Haydn James *Music for massed voices*

8 January Eric Champion *The Riverside Arts Centre*

12 February Geoffrey Peach *The gardener’s life – a miscellany*

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Figure 30:*On her return visit in December 2017 Margaret Watson entertained members and guests with a recital and technical explanation on the harp*

***2018-19* [Organiser: John Lodge]**

9 April John Peaty *Wellington and Mapmakers in the Peninsula War*

14 May Mike Attias *A Life in Customs and Excise*

11 June Susan Purcell *Ups and Downs of Crossword Puzzles*

10 September Dennis Brock *WWII Experiences in the Army and as a P.O.W.*

8 October Steve Poole *Tall Ship Adventures for People of all Abilities*

12 November Brian Parsons *The Unknown Soldier*

10 December Vic Quayle *A Life of Grime*

14 January Sheila Willis *Poisonous plots*

11 February Alan Gallop *The Tolpuddle Martyrs*

*[The Chairman’s Address for 2018-19 was re-scheduled to 13 May, 2019]*

***Representative Events***

**12th January 2015: Andy Thomas - *The Crop Circle Mystery***

With a set of superb illustrations of crop circles and a relaxed but authoritative style of presentation, Andy presented the facts, history and theories behind the compelling mystery of crop circles. Based on detailed evidence, he addressed the central question: are crop circles a man-made art-form or are they the product of more mysterious, supernatural forces and a superior intelligence?

Framed thus for our consideration, he explored the spatial geometry of impressive examples from among the 10,000 photographed cases and tested forensic explanations based on plant physiology, geology, the mathematical sciences and human testimony to reach a conclusion. For us to reflect, he posed two chilling questions: firstly, should we believe what the popular press reports; and, secondly, what does this phenomenon mean for us and our civilisation?

Mike Attias proposed a vote of thanks. In this he drew members’ attention to the number of unanswered questions posed by the presentation, and the sense of personal unease that these might create for us in our daily lives.

*(Robert Gant, Speaker Organiser)*

**Summary of a talk by Frank Barnes HLM on 14th November 2011**

At intervals in the Speakers’ Programme, we have been privileged to have one of our members give an illustrated talk around their career and achievements. These presentations have been well-received. In November 2011 Frank Barnes, a distinguished avionics engineer and HLM, gave an address entitled “*65 Years of Avionics*”. This charted his 65-year career in the avionics industry.

We are fortunate that before his death in February 2016, Frank had given to Mike Hesford a copy of his prepared notes. Mike has now edited these and inserted an impressive set of illustrations. The full text is presented as Appendix E.

**3.6 Ladies’ night (2001-19)**

**Characteristics**

The Annual Ladies’ Night is one of the most attractive events in the Probus diary. The format has remained fairly constant over time and is illustrated by the specimen programme for 2009. Formal elements of welcome and address are complemented by fine-dining and dancing. The Chairman’s Charity is boosted by proceeds from a bumper raffle.

For several years Ladies’ Night was held at The Ashford Manor Golf Club. Numbers of guests often exceeded 100. However, as these numbers declined to around 65, in 2010 the event was re-located to The Sunbury Sports Association (SSA). In 2017 and 2018, following the removal of Probus Club activities to the Holiday Inn at Shepperton, Ladies’ Nights were held at that venue.

**Listing of Events**

***Probus Year Date Venue Organiser***

2001 23rd November Ashford Manor Golf Club Eddy Lea

2002 29th November Ashford Manor Golf Club Eddy Lea

2003 28th November Ashford Manor Golf Club Eddy Lea

2004 26th November Ashford Manor Golf Club Eddy Lea

2005 19th November Shepperton Moat House Eddy Lea

2006 10th November Ashford Manor Golf Club Derek Smith

2007 16th November Ashford Manor Golf Club Tony Stride

2008 20th November Ashford Manor Golf Club Don Shimmield

2009 20th November Ashford Manor Golf Club Don Shimmield

2010 20th November Sunbury Sports Association Don Shimmield

**Representative Programme**

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Figure 31: *Ladies’ Night programme 2009*

2011 19th November Sunbury Sports Association Don Shimmield

2012 19th October Sunbury Sports Association Don Shimmield

2013 8th November Sunbury Sports Association Don Shimmield

2014 16th January Sunbury Sports Association Don Shimmield

2015 15th January Sunbury Sports Association Don Shimmield

2016 20th January Sunbury Sports Association Don Shimmield

2017 10th November Shepperton Holiday Inn Don Shimmield

2018 16th November Shepperton Holiday Inn Don Shimmield

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Figure 32: *Chairman Mike Attias, and his lady Gerry, and Secretary Martin Moore, with*

*his lady Maggie, preside at Ladies’ Night 2017*

**3.7 Ray Gaunt (HLM): centenary birthday party**

This report is based on an edited account of the tea party organised to honour Ray Gaunt on his 100th birthday. It recounts key features of his distinguished career in aeronautical engineering and continues with an amusing set of reminiscences on National Service life provided by four club members (See page 92 for a photograph of Ray during his working life).

The text derives from reports on the birthday celebration filed by Mike Hesford, Club Secretary, and Robert Gant, Speaker Organiser (See the report published in *Sunbury Matters* on page 34).

**Introduction: the toast to Ray by Chairman Leo Pemberton**

*Ray Gaunt was born in Doncaster on 8th May, 1914. So far, Ray is the only member in the history of our club to have achieved his centennial year. The Club marked this landmark occasion with a celebratory tea party on 12th May 2014. Guests totalled 100 and included the widows of former members, wives of members, several of Ray’s close friends and Monica Chard, Editor of Sunbury Matters.*

*The Chairman, Leo Pemberton, presided and presented Ray with a bottle of champagne and signed card from Club members; a second bottle of champagne was presented by the Sunbury Sports Association. Jack and Sarah Phillips presented Ray with a massive 100th Birthday cake resplendent*

*with two large sparklers. The Chairman, Leo Pemberton, proposed a toast in sparkling Prosecco*

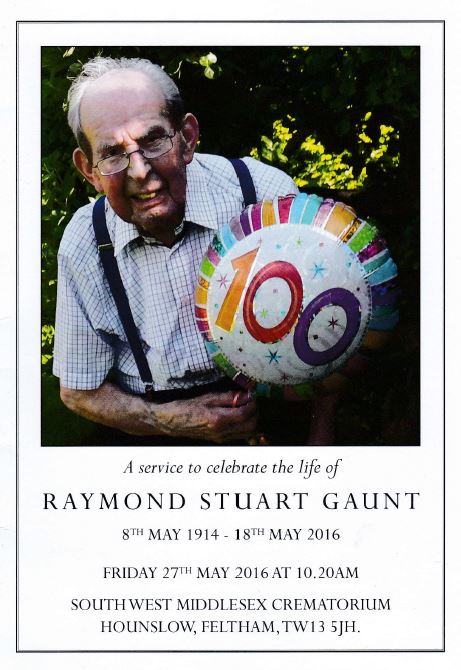
*to Ray, wishing him well for another hundred years!***

Figure 33: *Ray Gaunt HLM RIP*

**The life and times of Ray Gaunt**

*Leo Pemberton then presented a résumé of Ray’s life, career, interests and membership of Probus since 1981.*

*Ray was born in Doncaster in 1914. The family moved to Bristol where Ray was educated. He commenced his working life as a trainee motor engineer. In 1940 he worked for BOAC at Colerne assembling Mohawk, Tomahawk and Cherokee fighter aircraft which had been transported in packing cases from the US to Avonmouth Docks.*

*Subsequently, Ray transferred to Nuneaton to work on Ensign transport aircraft, preparing them to carry supplies to El Alamein from Dakar; and thence to Lyneham to service Liberator bombers. In 1945 he transferred to Hurn to maintain Hermes, Yorks and Lancastrians (a modified Lancaster). His career progressed from fitter (engine and airframe) to charge hand and foreman.*

*In 1951 Ray moved to Heathrow. Five years later he was seconded to Bristol Aircraft Ltd (later to become Bristol Aerospace) where he received a commendation from the chief test pilot, A.J. Pegg.*

*Returning to Heathrow he became supervisor in the Britannia maintenance dock where he*

*developed some ingenious and cost-saving solutions to maintenance issues. In 1966 he became*

*works superintendent for ground equipment. In 1972 Ray was promoted to Maintenance Manager Support Services covering Motor transport, Central Area, Hangers and Catering and Freight Buildings. Ray retired in 1976 after 36 years with BOAC and a few weeks before the Corporation was merged with British European Airways to form British Airways.*

*Ray met his future wife, Peggy, in 1931 and they were married in 1940. They have a son living in America and a daughter living locally. Ray joined Probus in 1981 and was Club Treasurer for 3*

*years from 1986. He regularly played bowls and led our Probus club team for many years. He*

*was nominated Sunbury Sportsman of the Year in 2009. In 2013 was inducted as an Honorary*

*Life Member.*

*Following the death of Peggy, he maintains an active presence in Probus life, cares*

*for himself and continues to play outdoor- and carpet bowls.*

*Ray is a role model for us all!*

**‘Get some in’. Reflections on National Service**

*Robert Gant, the Speaker Organiser, then introduced the entertainment. He explained that for*

*several years the Probus Magazine had featured (nostalgic?) accounts of National Service. The Committee had decided that we should present our own set of reminiscences. Four Probus speakers, representing the three armed services, had ‘volunteered’ to share their experiences of National Service with an appreciative audience.*

*Ken Thomas, spoke about his service with the Royal Navy and whilst drawing attention to the harshness of wintertime basic training in Devon confirmed that it had been a character building experience that proved ‘highly educative’ in so many ways!*

*From the perspective of service with The Royal Engineers, Mike Hesford demonstrated how it was possible to negotiate a successful pathway through military bureaucracy and benefit from high quality skills training that supported his later career.*

*Michael Croneen continued this theme. Trained as an air traffic controller, he admitted to a minor infringement of RAF regulations which, perversely, led to his designation as a much sought after sign-painter (having used his talents to decorate the guard house), culminating in a self-managed period when he had been assigned, alone, to repaint a World War II Bomber for a Battle of Britain fly-past!*

*Robert then read from a script prepared by Don Shimmield (who was unfortunately absent) which outlined his varied RAF career as an aviation meteorologist. Members were delighted to learn Don’s definition of a meteorologist: a person who can look into a girl’s eyes and see weather (whether)!*

*Proceedings were brought to a close by Derek Smith who proposed a vote of thanks to our speakers. Derek confessed to service as a ‘redcap’, motivated primarily by financial gain, and shared his reminiscences of tedious service in the Egyptian desert guarding a large and isolated military stores base from local villains who sometimes infringed the perimeter minefields!*

*In summary: all speakers referred to the importance of National Service in their personal development, especially the way it enabled them to mix with men from other walks of life. It had also funded a wealth of anecdotes drawn from the early period of ‘square bashing’.*

*In that context, the final word must go to Mike Hesford who reported on his first early morning session on the parade ground at Malvern. Here, the drill sergeant had caught him gazing at the distant Malvern Hills and bellowed: “Them ‘ills is not for looking at, them are for running over” – and so it came to pass………!*