

Coleraine Probus Club

Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 29th January 2013

Secretary's Report

Mr. President, Members and Guests, I have pleasure in presenting my report for the 2012 - 2013 Probus year.

At present we have an active membership of 58 and two additional honorary members. I am very sorry to record that members Will Ferguson and Dan McLaughlin passed away since my last report. However, I am pleased to report that Des Johnson, Ken Parkes and Des Moore joined the club in the last 12 months, and hopefully we will gain further members in the new Probus year.

During 2012 - 2013 we have held 25 members meetings and six lunches (including our Christmas special). The highest meeting attendance was 44, and the lowest 31, but average attendance was 39 members.

John McHenry together with John White, Robert Campbell, John Dobson, Tony Smyth, Ross Torrens and members of the club committee have provided a full programme of extraordinarily good speakers on a wide range of topics. Twenty four talks were by visitors to the club and one by a club member. We also had a club quiz with our final club lunch before the summer break.

Sincere thanks are due to the speakers' co-ordinator John McHenry and the sub committee, along with other regular club committee members, led by our President, Ross Torrens, for all the work managing club affairs.

The 2012 Probus Rally in May was held in Belfast. Three members of the club attended. There was a civic reception for delegates in the City Hall on the Wednesday evening before the rally itself. We were treated to a tour of the redecorated building, a highly enjoyable concert by the Percy French Society singers and then a fine buffet. The rally proper has held at The Culloden Hotel, with around 420 delegates (plus accompanying partners) from all over Ireland. I'm sorry to report that there should have been good opportunities to meet members for many different clubs, but the format of the rally this year didn't lend itself to that. Also, the guest speaker gave a very fast presentation of a quite academic topic (Sociological break down of the workforce in the HW shipyard in the early 1900s), which didn't lend itself to much humour! However, the formal rally business was interesting, with reports of Probus progress both north and south of the border. We also learnt that the 2013 rally would be held in Athlone, Co. Westmeath.

Our two Charity collections for 2012 -2013 raised £229.00p for the SANDS charity in February and £306.00p for the SMILES Foundation. A truly splendid achievement and congratulations to all club members are called for here!

There were five lunches held during the year, plus our Christmas event. Very special thanks must go Jim Gordon and Sam Barr, supported by Ivan Gough and additional help from Jim Foote, for their work on the Social and Catering sub-committee and doing their utmost to achieve the impossible task of trying to please everybody all of the time!

In a sort of extension to the 'Social and Catering' remit, Jim Gordon has also volunteered to head a special sub-committee which is looking into the possibility of hosting the 2014 Probus Rally. This could be a big extra task, and we'll be reporting to club members over the coming year.

The Christmas event was another great success, with 79 members and guests enjoying the musical talents of Fr. Rory Sheehan, as well as Leslie Brennan's Christmas Carol Sing-Along (which in turn was thanks to the splendid 'Probus Carol Booklet' put together by Ivan Gough) and the show was all organised, once again, by Reggie Patterson. The entertainment was followed, as noted, by an excellent Christmas lunch.

Once more we have been fortunate to be accommodated by Portstewart Golf Club throughout the year, at a relatively low cost. Thanks are due not only for allowing us the use of the room, but also in doing everything possible to look after our needs - I think a special mention should also go to the Catering side of things, for their particular help setting out the room, organising the coffee and enabling us to feel 'at home'.

In addition to the members already mentioned, I must also express thanks to Nigel Semple and Graham Kane for keeping, and checking, that our finances are in good order; to Ian Murray and Tony Smyth for seeing to the welfare of our members; to John Dobson for keeping our meetings in the eye of the local newspapers; to Jim Hillis for the help with members records and producing the greatly valued membership cards, and also Peter Fitzgerald, our Rotary Club Liaison Officer, for his continued interest in the affairs of the club.

Further thanks are also due to all the members who were willing to step in and help with all those little tasks that are so important to keep things running.

Finally, I would like to express my particular thanks to our outgoing president, Ross, for all his help, good humour and support throughout the year - especially for the initial discussions he had with John McHenry, that got us all thinking about the possibility of hosting the All-Ireland Probus Rally (and making a better job of things in the process?) Thank you Ross, and thank you members all for listening to my minutes each week.

Mike Turner
Hon Secretary

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____