

## **Coleraine Probus Club**

### **Annual General Meeting, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014**

#### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. President, Members and Guests, I have pleasure in presenting my report for the 2013 - 2014 Probus year.

At present we have an active membership of 61 and two additional honorary members. I am very sorry to record that honorary member Jack Donaldson has passed away since my last report. However, I am pleased to report that Jim Dinsmore, Peter FitzGerald, Paddy Fitzpatrick, Eric Fulton and Norman Gallagher joined the club in the last 12 months, and we may gain further members in the new Probus year, when everyone sees what a fine club we have on 29<sup>th</sup> May!!

During 2013 - 2014 we have held 25 members meetings and five members lunches as well as a special 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meal. The highest meeting attendance was 44, and the lowest 28, but average attendance was 39 members.

John McHenry together with several heard working and imaginative thinking club members have provided a full programme of extraordinarily good speakers on a wide range of topics. Twenty three talks were by visitors to the club, one was a dual visitor and club member talk, and another a member solo - whom I believe is our oldest, regular attending member, just where does Norman get the energy from?

I should like to give my sincere thanks to speakers' co-ordinator John McHenry and the 'team' for a memorable year, and also add a special 'thank you' to Ken Parks, without whom we wouldn't have been able to hear or see such a great range of talks. And here, I would like to share with you my personal nomination for the outstanding surreal moment of the year, when a couple of weeks ago the speaker got a spontaneous rendition, from a choir of 40+ gentlemen, many well into their retirement years, singing 'The Teddy Bears Picnic' AND enjoying it!

The 2013 Probus Rally in May was held in Athlone. Five members of the club attended, with their partners. There was a civic reception for delegates in the Council Hall on the Wednesday evening. Afterwards that there was a splendid variety concert in a local hotel for everyone. The rally proper has held at Athlone Radisson Blu, with around 300 delegates (plus accompanying partners) from all over Ireland. Needless to say, the highlight of the Rally was the splendid, and indeed convincing presentation by Jim Gordon and our President, extolling the virtues of Coleraine and how it would make an idea rally venue for 2014. This time next year, our Rally Secretaries will be reporting on just how well we lived up to (and I'm confident 'bettered') that presentation.

Our Charity collection for 2013 -2014 produced a generous sum for the Foyle Hospice (details form our Treasurer to follow), but a splendid achievement and congratulations to all club members are called for here!

As mentioned previously, there were five lunches held during the year, plus our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. Very special thanks must go Jim Gordon, 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! And didn't we have a lovely time at the Anniversary lunch, an extra special 'special' occasion.

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 Cecil Spotten and Tony Smyth for seeing to the welfare of our members; to John Dobson and Ken 'the camera' Parks 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 retiring Rotary Club Liaison Officer, for his continued interest in the affairs of the club - all 25 years worth!, and now joining the club just to make sure we continue on the straight and narrow it seems. And while mentioning Rotary, I'd like to add that we are very pleased that Wesley has agreed to take over the liaison role, and look forward to welcoming him many times in the future to our meetings.

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 - if I haven't mentioned you by name, it's only because this is getting a bit too long, and next years rally role of honour will have you all clearly mentioned.

Two final points. 1. The club web site is beginning to fill up and look a little more like a real web site. With the generous help from some members - Ken, Norman, Des, Billy, to name but four, I'd like to be able to include a lot more archive material and better 'talks' coverage. This will take time, and means that I will be stepping back a little in the Secretary role as time goes on.

And 2. I would like to express my particular thanks to our outgoing president, Graham for all the help and support throughout the year - especially for taking on the role of Rally Treasurer - and to Jim Gordon who has taken on the role as Rally Chairman, such a task most of us wouldn't dream of approaching - more of a 'nightmare' than a 'dream' in my opinion. However, Jim has managed to pull together a large and hard working team, and under his leadership and Graham's financial guidance, I'm confident that Coleraine will be 'the Toast of the North Coast' when May 2014 draws to a close. That concludes my report for this year.

Mike Turner  
Hon Secretary

**SIGNED:** Graham Kane (outgoing President)

**DATE:** 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014