



Probuss Club of Sydney

www.sydneyprobuss.org

Newsletter

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December 2025

Issue 482

MEETING DATES

2 December 2025

Lindsay May OAM – Sailor
Sydney to Hobart x 50

3 February 2026

Tony Shepherd AO - Australia
from a Business Perspective

ACTIVITIES

26 November – Tour of *Lindesay*,
Darling Point

8 December – Christmas Lunch,
Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron

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A Touch of Humour

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gentlemen,

Several of this year's President's letters have been very kindly attended to by Rod Binsted, Vice-President, who stood in for me when I was elsewhere, not by choice, rather by necessity. Rod's application of presidential processes has been much appreciated.

Our 11th November meeting date, the second Tuesday in November, brought the calendar for our Sydney Probuss meeting into alignment with the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Armistice Day, the Day of Remembrance when, in Prince Harry's words: "The world, for a moment, grows quieter, remembering the lives that changed forever and the lessons paid for, through unimaginable sacrifice".

At 11:00 am Members and their guests, reflected for 1 minute on the sacrifice paid by those who have lost their lives in serving our country in all wars. The reflection included 'The Last Post' as it is sounded at commemorative Remembrance Days throughout the British Commonwealth.

The Extraordinary General Meeting to consider two special resolutions to amend the current Club's Standing Resolutions in order to provide for an increase in the maximum Club membership from 150 to 160. The Special Resolution was strongly supported and reinforces the strength of our Club.

To keep matters in perspective whilst the electronic world whizzes by, it can be stated that this letter, is not a scam. Then there is the age restraint being introduced by eSensors. This latter process should surely be opposed by aged persons. Already our children cannot help with 'fixing' WORD or PAGES, or COPILOT, whereas our grandchildren can without needing to Google the answers!

Yours sincerely,

John Doherty

President

Note: To Register to attend the 2nd December Probuss Meeting at the Union, University and Schools Club, along with any male guest you plan to host - [click here](#)

FUTURE GUEST SPEAKER

2 December 2025

Lindsay May OAM



Lindsay May OAM will be the guest speaker at our 2nd December meeting. Lindsay is one of Australia's most accomplished offshore sailors and a legendary figure in the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race, having achieved what no one else has, namely 50 consecutive races, completed from 1973 to 2023. He will share behind-the-scenes stories, remarkable experiences, and insights gained over five decades at sea.

Lindsay is widely respected in the international sailing community, known for his skill as a skipper and navigator, his leadership, and his deep commitment to the sport. Not only is he the first person to complete 50 Hobart

races, an extraordinary milestone reached in 2023. He has won the race three times, earning line honours in 1997 and handicap victories in 1984, 1991, and 2006, including skippering the classic wooden hulled yacht *Love & War* to its celebrated overall win in 2006. In the 1993 race, he was also instrumental in the successful rescue of sailor John Quinn, who survived nearly six hours in the Tasman Sea after being washed overboard.

Beyond the Sydney to Hobart, Lindsay has competed in major international events such as the Fastnet Race (UK), Admirals Cup, Newport to Bermuda Race, and the Transpac Race. Off the water, he is an active and longstanding member of the Lane Cove Rotary Club and has served as a Past District Governor of District 9685. He is well regarded as a media and public speaker and has frequently shared his experiences in interviews and articles. Following skin cancer surgery in late 2024, he has also become an advocate for sun safety.

Geoffrey McWilliam
Speaker Co-ordinator

NOVEMBER MEETING REPORT

President John Doherty commenced formalities opening an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Club with the purpose of increasing the Club membership limit. By way of introduction, this year there has been a steady increase in membership, with new and outstanding applicants being elected who will contribute to and ensure the ongoing strength and quality of our Club. This has been accompanied by an increased interest in attendance at the monthly meetings (a credit to the fine speakers we have), and pleasingly to the associated lunch, as well as very good support for our events.

The increase has taken our membership to approach the 150 limit permitted under the Standing Resolutions of the Club. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that the

limit be increased to 160, which is still comfortably within the capacity of the beautiful dining room we enjoy at the UUSC. The change required approval by an Extraordinary General Meeting. The two Special Resolutions to implement this change were carried by a very large majority.

It was noted there were a few abstentions, some of whom were most likely concerned about the future size and intimacy of the club. It was appreciated those members may have expressed their concern by abstention rather than opposing the Committee's recommendation. Their concern will be taken into account in future considerations on such matters.

The President then opened the General Meeting welcoming members and three guests.

Geoff McWilliam advised the forthcoming speakers, including today's speaker, Patricia Skehan, the author of *The Secrets of Anzac Ridge Flanders 1917*. In December, the speaker will be Lindsay May OAM, the first sailor to compete in 50 consecutive Sydney to Hobart yacht races. Planning for next year is well advanced starting with member Tony Shepherd AO in February. The Club will continue to provide an interesting and diverse program. Geoff remains very happy to receive suggestions.

Kim Oates reported on future activities including the postponed private tour of the North Head Quarantine Station on 19 November, followed on 26 November by a private tour of the historic house Lindesay at Darling Point with scones, jam and cream. Vacancies remain for both tours. Our Christmas Lunch will be held on Monday 8 December at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron in Kirribilli. Bookings are filling fast. In February there will be a private tour of the Chau Chak Wing Museum at Sydney University.

INDUCTIONS



L to R: President John Doherty, Ross Jarvis, Adrian Pilton, Don Maxwell

Don Maxwell

Don Maxwell was introduced by Adrian Pilton, who has known Don for about 15 to 20 years having met at the Mosman Beef and Burgundy Club and sharing a common love of wine. Don has a long history in wine having planted Hunter vineyards 68 years ago which are now part of the Brokenwood Estate. During his working life Don was an anaesthetist working mostly at St Vincents, retiring in 2000. His sporting interests include tennis, sailing a J24 with the CYC and a member of Royal Sydney Golf Club.

Don has a lovely wife, Jan, a large family comprising 7 children, 16 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

Adrian takes great pleasure in nominating Don to be a member of the Club.

Ross Jarvis

Ross Jarvis was introduced by President John Doherty, having known each other for about 25 years. Ross, is a most interesting man, was originally a dentist, lectured in dentistry, became an orthodontist, studied at Sydney University and the University of London, becoming specialist consultant and then retiring a few years ago. He has continued to be a farmer and grazier at Cudgewa in Victoria, has a very large tinny on Lake Macquarie (300 hp?). Ross was an active aviator with 2500 hours in VFR and IFR conditions. Ross has a lovely wife, children and grandchildren.

John is proud to call Ross a good friend and is very glad that he has joined the Club.

LIFE BEFORE PROBUS

Peter Moll



The undoubted highlight of Peter Moll's career was working with Villeroy & Boch (V&B), the world's largest ceramic manufacturer, for 29 years from 1981. V&B started life in 1748 when Francois Boch set up a pottery with his three sons in the Lorraine district of France. Following a marriage in the 19th century, the combined business is controlled by the 10th generation of Bochs and the ninth generation of Villeroyes. V&B continues to move with the times, an example being a cup of asymmetric shape with an integrated handle (see photo) – won the German industrial award for innovation in the 1970s.

Peter was born in 1948 at Thames Ditton near Hampton Court, England. He was packed off to boarding school at the age of 7. At school his sporting ability was encouraged more than the academic. He failed to achieve the necessary marks for the public school he was meant to attend, so he was sent to school in Wales, 350 miles from home. He had quite a tough time until he was able to show his rugby tackling skills.

After leaving school where he was quite good at English, he took up a journalism indentureship with a newspaper group at a Nuneaton north of Coventry and then moved south and finished his indentureship with a much larger newspaper in Northampton.

In 1971, in his early twenties he decided to go to Australia becoming a ten pound pom and travelling by sea. The journey took four and a half weeks, the sea was calm and

women outnumbered the men by three to one! A memorable journey! On arrival in Australia, three good job offers immediately presented themselves. In addition, he married within a year of arriving to a lady of English parents who had lived here since she was six. A son and then daughter were born in the early 1980s.

Peter's first job was with the news bureau AAP Reuters. In 1972 he was reading the news for 2GB Macquarie in the very early hours of the morning. His accent was far too pommy, so he was only allowed to read during the hours when no one was listening! Next, a reporter for ATN 7. On a return trip to England in 1973, he accepted the role of deputy editor of Tableware International magazine.

On return to Australia, Peter initially worked for Royal Doulton, subsequently joining V&B in 1981 as marketing manager for the first 8 years and then managing director. Sales increased from a few hundred thousand to a significant sum. A great company to work for!

In the 1990s Peter's first marriage ended and then he developed a relationship with a fellow employee. They lived happily together for 7 years till she moved to Queensland to be with her daughter and take on the role of grandmother. In 2010 the relationship was rekindled and they were married in 2011. Peter and his wife divide their lives between Stanthorpe, in southern Queensland where she is close to her daughter and granddaughters, and Sydney where Peter has five granddaughters. Peter has been a proud member of the Killara Golf Club for 47 years, the Australian Club and is a committed Christian.

REMEMBRANCE DAY – 11 November 2025



In honour of Remembrance Day 2025, at 11:00am the Last Post was played with passion by Frank Cheok on his harmonica. Thank you, Frank.



Menin Gate at Midnight – Will Longstaff

THE SECRETS OF ANZAC RIDGE

Patricia Skehan



Following Geoff McWilliam's introduction, Patricia Skehan traced her tenacious search for detailed knowledge about Australian's Anzac experiences on the Western Front, including particularly at Anzac Ridge in Belgium. Motivated by her keen interest in military history, Patricia's research was aided by her gaining access to the diaries of James Armitage, one of six Sydney Grammar School classmates who enlisted in 1917 and survived. Another key event was gaining access (no mean effort!) to the writings of General Sir John Monash.

The course of Patricia's subsequent research depended on the new contacts she made, the insights she gained and the stories she heard along the way. Of the many that Patricia recounted, some were:

- It was following a much earlier experience supporting the work of Frank Harley, the first President of the Australian Commando Association that she was invited to a formal Commando Dinner in Canberra, and a conversation with his niece led to her receiving the offer to review the diary of James Armitage.
- Patricia's efforts to corroborate some of the points made in the Armitage diary led to her requesting and ultimately gaining access to the papers General Monash had retained in spite of receiving a specific instruction to destroy them before leaving Gallipoli!
- Armitage and his fellow infantrymen fought in horrendous conditions with horses used to drag heavy guns through deep mud. The toll on horses meant that donkeys and mules needed to be brought into service.
- A proposal to drop the word ANZAC was promulgated but not enacted because of strong resistance from the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who had fought side by side.
- According to Patricia, every book needs a love story and she recounted the story of "Paddy and Colleen" who met in a field hospital, were separated, and, to their delight, a couple of years later reconnected by chance on a ship to New Zealand!
- She then recounted brief stories that highlighted some of the practical realities of WW1 warfare - a demountable bridge that could be used at night to cross a river in darkness then, by dawn, disassembled and stored in a building called "Circular Quay" so it couldn't be used or attacked by the Germans; using former beer vats as much needed hot baths for soldiers; the importance of "mail days" and the possibility that

letters and parcels might not reach their intended recipients; the challenges in managing injured horses that were accustomed to working in teams; General Monash ordering the bombing of his own French Chateau to deny the Germans access to the important papers and equipment within; James Armitage living to 100 years and commenting when the French Consul-General in Australia presented him with the country's Chevalier Medal of Honour, "Mate, you're 80 years late!"

In conclusion, Patricia and Geoff McWilliam jointly read a section of her book that focused on the familiar Tipperary. It explained that the French, Irish and English, as well as Australians have a town by this name and, for all of us, it is a long way to go!

John Rawson thanked Patricia on behalf of the members, commenting particularly on the knowledge and enthusiasm she displayed.

Alan Locke

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES PROGRAM

Recent Events

Quarantine Station Private Tour - 19 November 2025



On the 19th of November, a group of 15 toured the Quarantine Station precinct located at North Head, Manly. The weather couldn't have been better. We were led through selected parts of the precinct by our local guide (with Portuguese accent!) Arthur, who provided us with a comprehensive description of the history and functions of the site. The station was active from 1828 to 1984 and was successful in limiting the spread of diseases such as cholera, smallpox, and the plague. The success of the station is indicated by the fact that of over 13,000 people and 580 vessels quarantined, "only" 572 people are recorded as having died.

We started our tour adjacent to the wharf where the patients disembarked, and moved from building to building, observing the processes used to decontaminate the passengers and their belongings. Healthy people were subsequently accommodated

according to their economic and racial status, and were typically kept for 40 days (the origin of the word quarantine).

Sick patients were moved uphill to the hospital, which had a classic 19th century layout. There were memorials to several nurses who died of the flu while providing care during the outbreak of Spanish influenza during World War I. Here we enjoyed spectacular views across the harbour.

We then moved back to the wharf area and were shown some of the many inscriptions carved in the sandstone rock by the internees (frequently artistic, and some in Chinese and Arabic).

At the conclusion, we had a light buffet lunch in the gorgeous setting of this historic site. Although we saw a limited proportion of what is an extensive area of bushland, beach and historic buildings, we came away with a very good idea of this remarkable area's significance. A good description of the site and its history can be found on Wikipedia.

Future Events (please see the website and emails for further details)

Tour of Lindesay, Darling Point – 26 November 2025



A hidden gem overlooking Sydney harbour, Lindesay is an atmospheric 19th century mansion with restored Georgian interiors and a glorious garden to explore. Now administered by the National Trust, Lindesay built in 1834 was the first house in Darling Point and the first in Australia in the Gothic Revival style.

The guided tour on **26 November 2025** will explore the original rooms decorated with English and colonial furniture, the statue-filled parterre garden, and the downstairs servants' quarters with stone kitchen and freshwater well. The tour will include time to explore the gardens with magnificent views of Sydney Harbour.

At the conclusion of the tour a morning tea of scones, jam and cream will be provided, taken in the gardens, under a marquee. The guided tour duration is about one hour, with the further opportunity to wander through the gardens afterwards.

Christmas Lunch with a Water View – 8 December 2025



The Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron is one of the Australia's most prestigious clubs nestled along the picturesque shores of Sydney Harbour and steeped in sailing history, providing a welcoming atmosphere for all, our venue for the always popular Christmas Lunch on **Monday 8 December 2025**.

After pre-luncheon drinks on the front lawn overlooking the Harbour, we will move to the Carabella Room for an extensive buffet, including the Squadron's famous freshly shucked oysters. Wines and coffee are included, as well as a lucky door prize and our traditional Christmas quiz. All inclusive cost is \$145 per person.

The Squadron will allocate seating, a great way to meet other members. However, if you really have a preferred table group, contact Kim Oates (who will try, but no promises) 0433 050 448.

Parking is limited at the Squadron as members have priority. It is a 12–15-minute walk from Milson's Point station and bus stop. The ferry to Kirribilli wharf is one block from the Squadron. If coming by taxi or Uber, ask the driver to go into the underground car park and drop you off at the internal stairs. Otherwise, the pedestrian gate is on Peel St, buzz the intercom to gain entry.

Visit to Chau Chak Wing Museum



A visit to the Chau Chak Wing Museum, located on the grounds of Sydney University will take place in February 2026. Further details to follow.

The Chau Chak Wing Museum brings the University of Sydney's Nicholson, Macleay and Art collections under one roof. It invites audiences to get up close to some of Australia's oldest natural history specimens and see the country through the eyes of world-renowned

artists and First Nation Peoples, walk in the footsteps of an Ancient Roman, Greek or Cypriot and disappear into the tombs of Ancient Egypt.

FOOD Train Weekend in Orange, NSW – 27-29 March 2026 – FULLY BOOKED



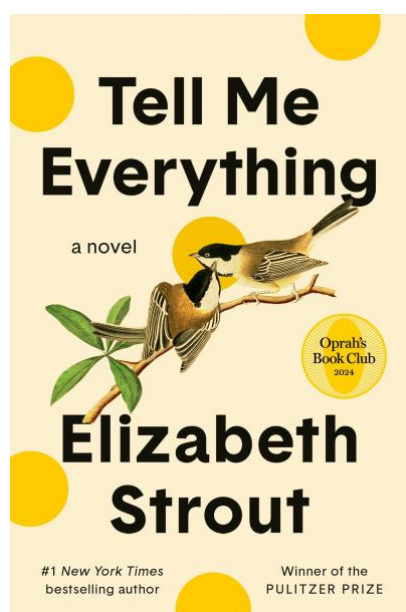
Enjoy exclusive local tours, selected FOOD Week events, and dining at some of the region's best restaurants and wineries. Only 30 places are available and are now **FULLY BOOKED**.

Kim Oates & Bob Eckstein
Events Coordinators

The FOOD Train weekend package is the perfect getaway for food lovers. Hosted by local foodies, this 3-day guided trip on **27-29 March 2026** showcases some of the Orange region's best food and wine experiences and includes tickets to FOOD Week's most sought-after event - Forage.

BOOK REVIEW

Tell Me Everything by Elizabeth Strout (2024) – 326 pages – Fiction



Small-town America seethes with secrets. Ordinary people with ordinary lives hide so many stories.

The author is an expert in this genre, having uncovered the secret lives of these people since 1998. In the process she has picked up a Pulitzer Prize and been recognised as the Number 1 New York Times bestselling author. This book fully supports her reputation and is unbelievably good for those who like fiction of this nature.

From Olive at 90 through to Bob and Lucy at 65 and their parents, siblings, children, friends and enemies – all is laid bare through their stories. This book is about ordinary people, who have survived COVID and seem to have extraordinary stories and back stories.

The book unfolds through the stories they tell each other, so that very little happens – except for one major incident which is not really the central feature.

So read it if you like this author who writes brilliantly about the people she knows, the settings in which they live and the stories they tell. Not a word is wasted and the omissions and silences speak volumes.

David Castle

SHOPPING SCAMS

During the sales season, be aware of scams including fake shopping websites, dodgy posts and deals too good to be true.

Look out for these **warning signs** on the shopping sites you visit:

- prices much lower than anywhere else
- spelling mistakes and poor grammar
- no refund or return policy page
- vague or minimal contact information.

It takes **10 minutes to learn** how to grab bargains more safely. Do the **free online shopping course** from ID Support NSW.

A TOUCH OF HUMOUR!

A Vow of Silence

A young man joins a monastery and takes a vow of silence: he's allowed to say two words every seven years. After the first seven years, the elders bring him in and ask for his two words. "Cold floors," he says. They nod and send him away. Seven more years pass. They bring him back in and ask for his two words. He clears his throats and says, "Bad food." They nod and send him away. Seven more years pass. They bring him in for his two words. "I quit," he says. "That's not surprising," the elders say. "You've done nothing but complain since you got here."

Time to Spare??



"Please hold while we bring you the complete works of Johann Sebastian Bach."

Sharp Advertising (Scam??)



Engineering in the Home

BENEFITS OF A GOOD VOCABULARY!
I RECENTLY CALLED AN OLD ENGINEERING BUDDY OF MINE AND ASKED WHAT HE WAS WORKING ON THESE DAYS.
HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS WORKING ON "AQUA-THERMAL TREATMENT OF CERAMICS, ALUMINUM AND STEEL UNDER A CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT."
I WAS IMPRESSED UNTIL, UPON FURTHER INQUIRY, I LEARNED THAT HE WAS WASHING DISHES WITH HOT WATER UNDER HIS WIFE'S SUPERVISION.

HOW TO CONTACT A COMMITTEE MEMBER

To contact any committee member [Click here](#)

Please use email where possible or telephone if you require urgent contact.