

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE AUDLEM & DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

Background

The Probus movement owes its origins to Rotary International Britain and Ireland but unlike Rotary, it has no central Governing Body and each club decides its own constitution and organisation - all within the concept of providing opportunity for fellowship for like minded retired professional people. Every Club is autonomous. The name PROBUS derived, of course, from PROfessional and BUSiness. PROBUS is a Latin word meaning virtuous / upright. Now there are clubs throughout Europe, the USA, India, Canada, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Audlem & District Probus Club

In June 1994 Derek Rooke was appointed President of the Rotary Club of Nantwich and had the idea of forming a new Probus Club. He approached Humphrey Parker, a fellow Rotarian and Audlem resident whom he had known for many years and asked him to get together a nucleus of interested people in the village. Eventually a core group of 15 or so people was established and agreement was reached with the landlord of the Lord Combermere to hold fortnightly meetings there.

Several initial meetings were held by Derek and Humphrey, but the most important was the inaugural meeting on the 27th April 1995 when Derek presented Humphrey, as Founding President, the Badge of Office which had been donated by the Rotary Club of Nantwich. **The Audlem and District Probus Club had been formed and was meeting regularly.**

Eventually the meeting place at the Lord Combermere which had served the Club well for several years was considered too small and so the Club moved to Brookfield Golf Club in 2005 where we were made very welcome by the owners. This location has been a major contributor to the continuing growth of the Club.

Brookfield was put up for sale in 2017 and the club was reluctantly forced to find a new location. Audlem Public Hall was chosen and although the transition was difficult it has worked out very well and the club is now happy and settled in its new location.

Our Programme

The club continues to meet fortnightly on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month. Members enjoy socialising with each other over coffee and biscuits on arrival, followed by a speaker chosen by our Speakers Secretary. The club is fortunate in being able to attract interesting speakers who address us over a wide variety of topics. Many members complete the morning by lunching locally in groups.

The club enjoys a varied social programme organised by our Social Secretary for the benefit of our members and their wives. It includes coach trips to interesting venues such as stately homes and gardens and conducted tours of local factories and manufacturing businesses, in addition to winter social evenings of games and quizzes and summer evening events such as BBQs and skittles.

In addition, the club organises an annual holiday by coach to a wide range of venues for its members and wives.

There is also an active walking group within the club which undertakes local walks of about 4 to 5 miles, usually followed by a pub lunch.

Plans were well advanced to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the club in April 2020 with a membership of slightly less than 80 members and a self imposed limit of 100. The club was one of the most vibrant Probus clubs in the area and enjoyed a critical mass large enough to attract the best speakers and to organise a wide range of social activities well supported by our members.

Then in March 2020 Covid struck. All meetings and social activities were suspended including the planned anniversary dinner, the 2020 holiday to the Chilterns and the 2021 holiday to Scotland. The club has not met since March 2020 and cannot resume activities until government restrictions are lifted.

There is though some reason to be hopeful that a return to some sort of normality may be possible in 2021 at which point we shall celebrate the rebirth of our club and redouble our efforts to get it back to its pre-pandemic dominant position. We all look forward to the challenge of making this happen.