**Rodgers and Hammerstein in St Asaph!!**

Members of the Denbigh and District Probus Club enjoyed another wonderful lunch at their meeting on Monday 7th October.  The speaker after lunch was Brian Lewis who gave a talk titled The Rodgers & Hammerstein Story.

Born in Old Colwyn and after qualifying as an accountant he moved to London and became the internal auditor of a large retailing organization.  After marriage, he and his wife moved back to North Wales where he joined a firm of Chartered Accountants.  He became a partner and remained there until retirement.

Oscar Hammerstein II was born in New York in 1895, but spent many summers in the countryside which would find expression in many of his lyrics.  He collaborated with Jerome Kern aged 32 which resulted in “Show Boat” which included the famous song “’Ol’ Man River”.

Richard Rodgers was born on Long Island in 1902.  At sixteen he teamed up with Larry Hart and this resulted in many film adaptations such as “Rose Marie” and “The Desert Song.”  The period 1936 to 1940 could be considered to be the Golden Age of Rodgers & Hart.  The latter lost interest in his work and suggested that Hammerstein should work with Richard Rodgers – so began their famous partnership that was to create Oklahoma! (which made the partners millionaires); Carousel and South Pacific.  In that show when Nellie the American Navy nurse sings “I’m Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair” Mary Martin, as Nellie washed her hair eight times a week for three and a half years and lived every minute of it!  Probus member Donald Hanby remembered being in the audience at one of the performances and seeing her singing and washing her hair!

This show was followed by The King & I; Me & Juliet; Flower Drum Song and finally The Sound of Music.

In 1959 Hammerstein was diagnosed with inoperable cancer.  After his death, Times Square in New York turned off all lights and neon signs for three minutes at 8.57 pm - the first time it had been blacked out since WW2. 5000 people stood with heads bowed.

Rodgers never worked again with one specific collaborator.  He died in 1979 aged 76.

There the story of the brilliant partnership came to an end.

New members are always warmly welcomed to the Denbigh and District Probus Club meetings.

For further information have a look at the club web site [**denbighprobus.com**](about:blank) or contact **stevetootell@gmail.com**