

Denbigh and District Probus Club – precis of meeting – 4/9/23

by John Barr, President

I welcomed all and commented on the glorious weather.

This meeting we had 29 Members present out of 40.

We also had 1 members' guest - – and a Club guest a prospective member from whom we will hear later. Welcome to both and our new Member.

We had apologies from 10 Members. Plus, one who was not present for medical reasons, so we wished him well. It was good to see with us this month our Member who has recently become too familiar with hospital interiors.

I noted that after the meal, we would be having a talk from Meirick.

I then gave an “offering of thanks” ...

*For the meal we are about to eat,
for those that made it possible,
and for those with whom we are about to share it,
we are thankful.*

After the excellent meal, we gave the traditional toast to the King.

I then made a few more remarks:

- We gave our thanks to Joanne and all the hotel staff.
- Once more thanks too to Steve for all the organising.
- Birthdays. This month we toasted two.
- On a similar – but slightly different – vein; I have been informed that 50 years and 17 days ago, a certain gentleman in our midst was married. This gentleman was a cricketer and his bride a hockey player ... so we can only imagine what sort of games they played together!! I owe a huge apology to this gentleman for not mentioning this event – as he had asked - at our last meeting when his wife was also present. Who was this distinguished sportsman? None other than our Many congratulations.

Next was Club Business.

- Firstly, I repeated my welcome to our New Member. He had introduced himself at our July meeting and it's good to see him here today. We presented him with a magnificent welcoming gift - - - - a Probus lapel badge.
- Regarding next year's Committee which will be elected at the AGM in November I mentioned last month that we have candidates for all but one position. We are short of someone to take over as Membership Officer. Anyone interested in being Membership Officer, please make themselves known to any Committee Member sooner rather than later.

- As you all know, Keith is stepping down from his Programme Officer role and so we have a new Programme Officer. They have already put together a programme for next year and I include it at the end of this newsletter and Steve will put it on the website. Any comments will be welcome.
- Now - thanks to our Finance Officer and his assistants for squeezing the readies from you today.
- Last month – I'm sure you recall – we held a raffle to raise funds for new presidential regalia. Apparently after I've worn it ... nobody else wants to touch it! We raised the magnificent sum of £210 and our Regalia Officer is in the process of obtaining the shiny new medallion and ribbon.
I mentioned that after much debate, the Committee has decided that in a change to tradition, we should obtain new Presidential regalia that is sugar pink with lots of diamante.
However, our Vice President seemed doubtful that this was a good idea so we'll not pursue it!

We then had a short break followed by an item I had somehow (grey cells being boiled?) managed to omit earlier – for which I apologised.

I called upon our Prospective Member to introduce himself to the Club, which he did, most ably.

(Note: He has subsequently confirmed his desire to join the Club and our Membership Officer has sent out his Voting Request – please do vote.)

Then we heard from Meirick about Denbighshire County Council. See Julia's synopsis below.

There were lots of interesting question, well fielded by Meirick and we had a Vote of Thanks.

That was all– except to say that our next meeting is on 2nd of October and the speaker will be Gwenno Jones, Denbighshire's Designated Landscapes Dark Skies Officer telling us about the Dark Skies initiative.

So, we closed with the Toast To The Club.

Thank you all.

See you in October!!!

{Note: All names have been removed except for those of prominent Committee Members and Speakers.}

DRAFT PROBUS PROGRAMME FOR 2024

**by Programme Officer Fay Corfe
Assisted by Michael Corfe**

8th January	Celia Drew “Canadians at Kimmel Bay Camp”
5th February	Rufus Adams “From Vancouver to Toronto”
4th March	Tony Griffiths “Back to the 1950s”
8th April	Brian Gresty “Iron Mad Jack aka John Wilkinson”
13th May	Chanel Jones “We’ve got you framed”
3rd June	Helen Papworth “H.M. Stanley the Scramble for Africa”
1st July	Wendy Grey-Lloyd “Thomas Howell – The legend & the legacy”
12th August	“Conversazione and/or 50th Anniversary celebration” ?
2nd September	Chris Jones “Blood Bikes”
7th October	Brian Lewis “Rodgers & Hammerstein”
4th November	AGM
2nd December	Adrian Hughes “39-45 War in North Wales”

The history and work of Denbighshire County Council – a talk for Denbigh and District Probus Club

At the August meeting of the Denbigh and District Probus Club, members were delighted to welcome club member Meirick Lloyd Davies who gave a talk about the history and work of Denbighshire County Council and his involvement.

Meirick gave members an overview of his history as an elected member over the years including how in the 60's he was interested in his parish council and local history and how he and a friend stood for the council and were elected in 1968 and Meirick is still serving his local community of Cefn Meiriadog as a councillor 55 years later!

He began his working life as a skilled joiner and went on to be an occupational therapist in the North Wales Hospital helping people learn and practice woodworking skills to aid their recovery. He moved to Rhyl Urban District Council, then on reorganisation of local government in 1974 to Rhuddlan Borough Council at Prestatyn. He moved to Glyndŵr District Council 1977-1994 and he was Principal Building Control Officer between 1994 and 1996. He was a Borough councillor with Colwyn from 1993-1996.

In 1995, Wales changed completely to a system of unitary authorities and he became one of the councillors in the new shadow Denbighshire County Council and in 1996 when the changeover was complete, he retired early and became a full-time councillor on the new Denbighshire County Council Unitary Authority and served until May 2022 – some 27 years of service!

During that period, he served as County Chairman on 3 occasions 2004-2005, 2010-2011 and 2019-2021 (a year on each occasion apart from his final term which was 2 years due to the Covid period).

During his 27 years as a County Councillor, he represented the council on other bodies, boards and committees and he also chaired various Denbighshire committees and participated with small groups of councillors in many task and finish groups focusing on specific projects.

Meirick expanded on some of the key responsibilities as Chair and also on additional activities such as going in person to meet with people in the county who had reached the age of 100, delivering cards and flowers, visiting people celebrating special wedding anniversaries and also going to local shows in the county to meet people. During the Covid period, these activities were curtailed because of the restrictions but people were still contacted by telephone to ensure they were aware that they had not been forgotten and flowers and a card were sent.

Meirick also outlined the history of the development of Denbighshire pre 1995 for members.

The original old Sir Ddinbych/Denbighshire which covered north east Wales, was one of 13 counties in Wales – a maritime county created by King Henry VIII out of various local lordships as part of the Laws in Wales Acts 1535-1542. The area was previously The Marches.

It was formed from the cantrefi (an early Welsh administrative district, roughly similar in function to the English 'hundred'), Rhos, Dyffryn Clwyd, Rhufoniog, Iâl, Maelor Gymraeg, Nanheudwy and Cynllaeth.

Following the Local Government Act of 1888, an administrative county of Denbighshire was created governed by an elected county council who took over the roles and responsibilities of the quarter session courts (which were traditionally held on set occasions 4 times a year). This council was based at County Hall in Ruthin!! The county was divided into boroughs and urban and rural districts with reforms to these in 1894, 1897, 1926, 1934 and 1935 illustrating how boundaries, groupings and name changes have been a continuous feature in local government reorganisation.

The Local Government Act 1972 ended the use of Denbighshire for local government and ceremonial purposes in 1974 with the creation of the new county of Clwyd and the area was split into new districts including Colwyn, Wrexham Maelor and Glyndŵr. Clwyd County Council with its headquarters in Shire Hall, Mold ran from 1974-1996.

A county called Sir Ddinbych (Denbighshire), a unitary authority, and part of 22 such authorities formed throughout Wales, was created in 1996 for modern local government purposes, with 48 councillors initially, covering a substantially different area from the previous historic Denbighshire counties.

After 2000, Cabinet and scrutiny committees were introduced (by law) but were service headed such as Environment, Health, Highways etc. and in 2011 further changes were introduced with Sir Ddinbych (Denbighshire) introducing themed scrutiny Committees, such as Performance, Partnerships, etc

Following the talk, members engaged the speaker in a question-and-answer session where many topics were explored including the new 20 miles per hour speed limit, conversions and new builds, arm's length companies, cross county working etc