

DENMARK RIVER PROBUS NEWSLETTER

February 2026 - Edition 138



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Hello friends,

Our February meeting was well attended and enjoyed by all.

After the guest speaker Jon Doust, we were treated to a BBQ of marinated chicken pieces, sausages and the ever popular beef and beetroot burgers, accompanied by a colourful selection of salads and followed by a generous dessert table. Thanks to Kevin for organising the meat and to Peter for assisting with the BBQ. The hospitality team greatly appreciated Lyell and Jamie's help on clean up.



We were once again delighted to welcome Andrew Green, Senior Researcher and Lecturer at Hertfordshire University and former BBC presenter, who returned to share his insights into a lesser known aspect of Agatha Christie's life, her interest in classical music and the subtle way it is woven into many of her novels. Andrew spoke to a full house at The Men's Shed, including eleven members of Denmark Probus Club.

With our AGM fast approaching this March, we are preparing to form our new committee. A huge thank you to those wonderful members, some quite new to the club, who have already stepped forward to fill most of the roles. Your commitment and enthusiasm are what keep our club thriving, and we are so grateful for your support.

We can't wait to see who will take on the roles of President and Guest Speaker convenor. If you are looking for a way to get more involved and give back to our community, we would love to see you complete the team.

See you all soon!

Warmly,
Susan

Guest Speaker ~ Jon Doust, 4000 Years of History: The Middle Eas



Jon Doust - author and comedian - introduced himself as Garry Muir's cousin. Born in Bridgetown and now based in Albany, Jon delivered a well-researched presentation on the ancient empires of the Middle East in a nutshell, woven together with some of his family history and his own firsthand experiences in Israel.

Jon shared fond memories of growing up on a farm in Bridgetown, where he developed a lasting appreciation for apples, with a particular fondness for Pink Ladies, especially those grown by another cousin in Manjimup.

He added light touches of humour throughout his presentation, but the laughter wasn't limited to our guest speaker. A couple of members matched him in the comedy stakes. When Jon asked, "Who brought the Walers to Western Australia?" during his discussion of World War I and the Tenth Light Horse Regiment, Kevin Stone quipped, "Horse thieves," beating Jon to the punch. Rob Norcross also drew laughs when we were asked if we knew who Arthur Olden was, responding without hesitation, "A cousin!"

In the 1970s, Jon spent time working on a kibbutz in Israel. His first marriage, to an Argentinian girl he met there, was short lived. Later, while working on another kibbutz, he met his lifelong partner.

In closing, Jon reflected on the contrast between his Western Australian upbringing and the complex realities of life in Israel, where he has friends on different sides of the conflict who care about each other.

These experiences form the foundation of his trilogy of novels – Boy on a Wire, To the Highlands and Return Ticket.



Events ~

Andrew Green, *The Twin Passions of Agatha Christie: Mystery and Music*



Members of both our club and Denmark Probus Club enjoyed a presentation at the Men's Shed, when Andrew Green, accompanied by his wife Diana on their return visit from Hertfordshire, explored the twin passions of Agatha Christie, mystery and music. While we know her as the brilliant creator of detectives such as Poirot and Miss Marple, Andrew revealed her passion for classical music that threads its way through her novels.

As a young woman, she dreamed of becoming an opera singer. Piano and singing lessons in Paris and an early encounter with Wagner's *Die Walküre*, sparked a lifelong love of opera, especially Wagner. Though she was told her voice was not strong enough for a professional career, and she turned instead to writing, music never left her life. Indeed, Andrew suggested that if she had become an opera singer, the literary world might have lost its Queen of Crime.

Her novels are sprinkled with brief musical references. Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words* appears in *Hercule Poirot's Christmas*, Debussy features in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, and operatic works such as *Faust*, *Tosca*, and *Siegfried* are woven into stories including *Cat Among the Pigeons* and *Passenger to Frankfurt*. In *The Pale Horse*, a character adores opera, while *The Sittaford Mystery* carries a surprising number of operatic allusions. Andrew also highlighted *Giant's Bread*, written under her pseudonym Mary Westmacott, where music forms the heart of the narrative.

Agatha Christie particularly loved the works of Grieg, Schumann, Debussy and Ravel, and she continued to play her Steinway piano at her Devon home. Remarkably, it survived a direct wartime hit. Even later in life, publishing *Passenger to Frankfurt* at the age of eighty, her affection for opera is clear. When she died in 1976, Bach and Elgar's *Nimrod* were played at her funeral.



Audience participation with Marge from Denmark Probus



Agatha Christie fans Ros and Val, and Diana being presented with Stephanie's silk tissue scarf

Coming soon

Wed 4 March	Annual General meeting 9.30am start (NOT 10.00am) Morning tea ~ sandwiches and slices
Fri 13 March	Albany Sound and Light Show & dinner at Due South The bus will leave the Visitors Centre at 5.00pm sharp and will leave Albany at approximately 9.00 - 9.30pm

Extras

Membership ~ There are now 71 members in the club and 9 on the waiting list. The waiting list has just been capped to 10.

Please remember to wear your name badge, so everyone can get to know you. Let's keep our club friendly and inclusive.

Welfare



If you know a member who could use a card or friendly call, please let Vicki Lumia know.

YOUR 2025 COMMITTEE

President: Helena Wragg – helenajo@westnet.com.au

Secretary: Val Ball - secretary@denmarkriverprobus.org.au

Treasurer: Ros Gates - treasurer@denmarkriverprobus.org.au

Events: Robin Levet, Malcolm Dickie - events@denmarkriverprobus.org.au

Membership: Stephanie Wierobiej - members@denmarkriverprobus.org.au

Guest Speakers: Lyell Edmonds, Jamie Falls - speakers@denmarkriverprobus.org.au

Media: Susan Lane - media@denmarkriverprobus.org.au

Hospitality: Lorraine Cotton, Kaye White - hospitality@denmarkriverprobus.org.au



Check our website <https://www.denmarkriverprobus.org.au> for more news, events, outings, photos, recipes and lots more.

Kayak Club ~



Our kayaking group meets at 7.15am every Monday and Friday, weather permitting, at the boat ramp by the Denmark Rivermouth Caravan Park. They enjoy coffee and a chat afterwards at Reminisce Café.

New paddlers are always welcome! Please contact Ed, Warrick or Neville.

Wine Appreciation Group ~



Our first meeting of the year took the form of a planning evening. Over drinks and nibbles, Peter guided a good-humoured discussion, with members enthusiastically contributing ideas for the year ahead. Suggestions ranged from a premium wine tasting to a presentation on Chilean wines, along with the prospect of a Japanese-themed night.

Wine Club meets from 5.00 to 7.00 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Denmark Men's Shed. If you are interested in joining, please contact Peter Lumia to be added to the waiting list.

Riverside Corporate Bowls ~



Probus v Probus on the bowling green last week ~ The Rat Pack (Peter, Brian, Kevin, Vicki) v The Odd Bowls (Glenice, Ros, Warrick, Neville). After a competitive afternoon of play, the match ended in a draw.



Thanks to Vicki and Kevin S for these jokes



Spotlight on Susan & Harley ~ On our trip to Morocco last year, we spent a few days in the magical blue mountain city of Chefchaouen! It was icy cold and drizzly, but we had fun exploring every little laneway of the medina, and hiked up to the Spanish Mosque for a panoramic view of the Rif Mountains and the famous blue-washed town. Barely any tourists, but lots of little cats. The tiny cafes were a highlight with a fragrant blend of Mediterranean, Arab and African cuisine.



Charming maze of streets



A little bedraggled but happy in the rain



Us exploring



Uphill hike to the Spanish Mosque for a view of all the shades of blue



Bird's eye view of the medina from the Spanish mosque



Different shades of blue all over town



Up 5 flights of a narrow spiral staircase to the rooftop terrace of Café Aladdin for tagine and couscous



Vibrant doorways

Recipe of the month

PETA'S GREEK LAMB SKEWERS



Sprig of rosemary
1 lemon
3 medium potatoes
1 shallot or red onion
1 zucchini
1 red capsicum
250 grams diced lamb
1 packet Greek feta
Olive oil
Salt & pepper
Ground paprika
Wooden skewers soaked in water

Set oven to 250c or 230c if fan forced

Remove rosemary leaves from woody stalk and finely chop them to yield 1 tbsp of chopped leaves. Combine in a large bowl with 1/2 tbsp paprika, 2 tbsp olive oil, salt and pepper.

Thinly slice peeled potatoes (1/2 cm thick) and place them on baking paper in an oven tray, toss with oil, salt and ground pepper. Roast in oven until golden and crispy (20 - 25 minutes)

Cut shallot/onion, zucchini and capsicum into even size pieces, toss with diced lamb in rosemary and paprika oil marinade. Thread vegetables and lamb onto skewers.

Cook the skewers on a griddle pan or BBQ with a little of the marinade oil over medium high heat for 8 to 12 minutes, turning skewers so they are evenly cooked to your liking. Blend crumbled feta with juice from 1/2 lemon, 1/2 tbsp olive oil and 3 tbsp water with a stick mixer or blender until smooth. Season with pepper.

Serve skewers with crispy potatoes, whipped feta sauce and wedged lemon.

Any leftover feta sauce can be used as a dip for veggie sticks or poured over roasted veggies.

~ serves 2 ~