

DENMARK RIVER PROBUS NEWSLETTER

May 2026 - Edition 141



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Hello everyone!

Welcome to the May edition of Denmark River Probus newsletter.

Sadly, we lost our dear friend and member Rob Norcross this month. Rob and Margaret have been a valued and active part of our club for the past nine years. He will be deeply missed.

At our last meeting, we welcomed new members Leanne Mifflin, Peter Kelly and Terry Duke, who were inducted into the club. Each entertained us with an interesting and engaging introduction to their lives and experiences. With Martine away enjoying the sunshine up north, Joy kindly stepped in to assist the hospitality team, and her help was greatly appreciated.

Wishing you a happy and enjoyable month ahead.

Warmly,

Susan



*Now that's what you call a catch, Peter!
A 15kg dhufish and one very happy fisherman.*

Vale Rob Norcross



We were so very sad to hear of the passing of our very dear friend Rob Norcross on Sunday 24 May, aged 85. Our heartfelt condolences go to Margaret and the family.

Rob was a devoted Dockers supporter who loved cruising, golf, bowling and ham radio. He was also part of our small circle of Wordle players, delighting in the occasions when he could gently boast about solving the puzzle in just two turns.

For 63 years, Rob shared a loving marriage with his “gorgeous Margaret,” as he so fondly called her. In true Rumpole style, he would also jokingly refer to her as “She who must be obeyed.”

Rob’s remarkable 39 year military career began with the British Army, serving in both the UK and Africa as a Telegraphist with the Royal Signals, where he mastered high speed Morse code and radio communications. Army life took him from the bitter winters of Northern Ireland to the heat of Kenya, the political tensions of Cyprus and the dusty outpost of Aden. Throughout his life, he maintained close friendships with his fellow servicemen, who often signed off their correspondence with the Royal Corps of Signals motto, *Certa cito* ~ “Swiftly and Surely.”



In 1966, Rob and Margaret sailed to Australia when he accepted a position with the Royal Australian Air Force. Over the next 22 years, his postings included Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth and two stints in Hong Kong. Working in telecommunications and signals intelligence, he carried out highly specialised duties that he modestly described as something he “couldn’t talk about,” though work that undoubtedly contributed greatly to national security.

Rob will be deeply missed and warmly remembered for his gentle smile, quick wit and warm, easy company. One last time, with love for you, Rob ~ *Certa cito*.

Guest Speaker ~ Dace Verbakel, Broome Pearls

Convenors: Lyell Edmonds, Ed Wierobie



Members enjoyed a fascinating presentation this month from Dace Verbakel, who shared stories from his long career in the pearling industry of Broome and the northwest coast of WA.

Dace began pearling in the 1980s after a brief attempt at selling vacuum cleaners, when an unexpected job opportunity arose in Broome. Ten years later he had become Fleet Master for six diving boats operating along 80 Mile Beach.

Dace explained the demanding work undertaken by pearl divers, who need to be extremely fit and young, in their twenties and thirties, completing up to ten dives a day during the short two to three month diving season. Using long air hoses extending up to 200 metres, divers drift beneath the boats in lines collecting wild pearl shells, with the skipper and head diver communicating through a series of signals. We learnt about the detailed harvesting process, the role of tides, specialised harvest ships and Japanese technicians, and the enormous amount of labour required to produce a single South Sea pearl.



The talk also explored the life cycle of pearls and the delicate process of pearl cultivation using the *Pinctada maxima* oyster, famous for producing some of the world's largest and finest South Sea pearls. Dace described the painstaking seeding process, the years required for each shell to produce quality pearls and the many factors affecting a pearl's value, including size, lustre, shape, colour and clarity. We were interested to learn that the only reliable way to distinguish a natural pearl from a cultured pearl is by xray.

Event ~ Long table lunch and wine tasting at Poachers Ridge, Narrikup

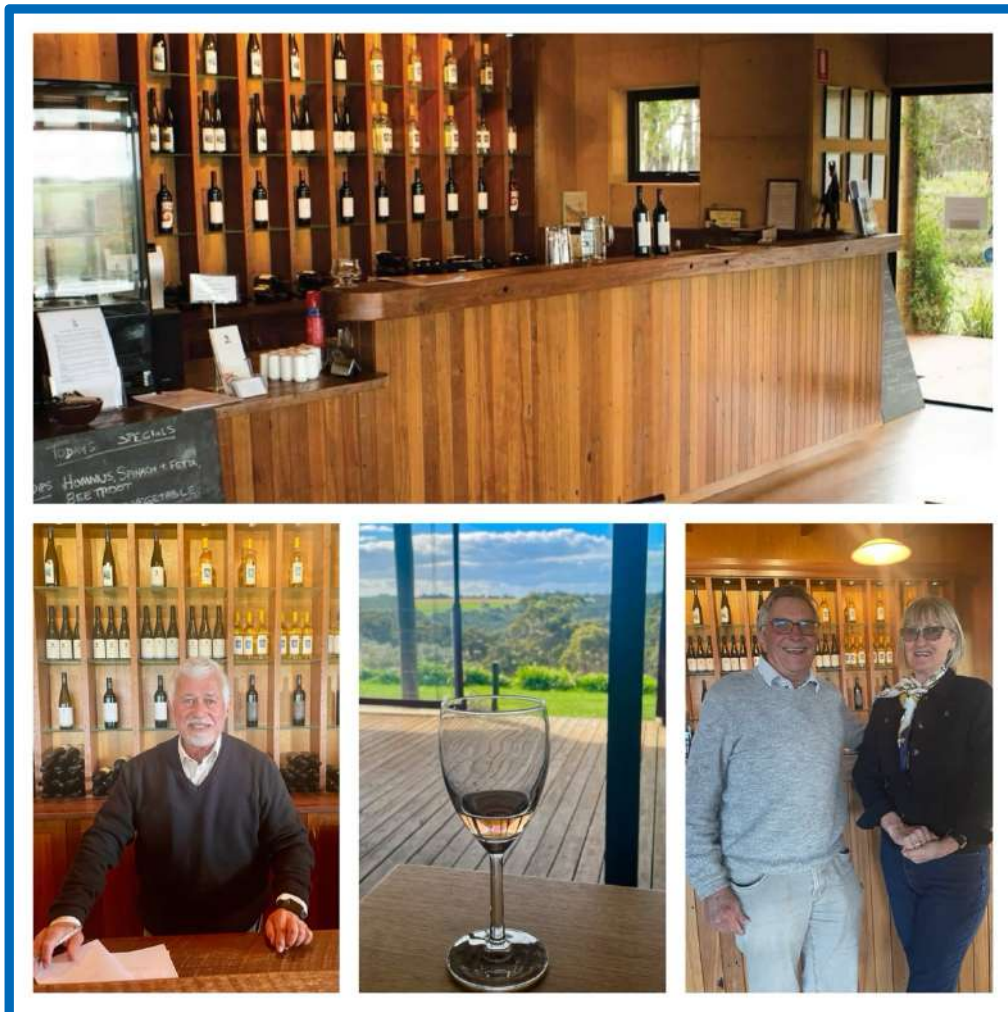
Convenors: Malcolm Dickie, Brian Levet

Twenty one members of our Probus Club enjoyed a long table BYO picnic and wine tasting at Poacher's Ridge, the smallest 5 Star vineyard in WA. Although having only 20 acres under vine, the winery produces exceptional cool climate wines and has won many awards.

Our host Alex Taylor was welcoming, informative and passionate about both the vineyard and its wines. He and his wife Janet purchased the former cattle grazing property in 1999 and transformed it into the boutique vineyard it is today, growing varieties including Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Riesling and Malbec. Two varieties that sparked our curiosity were Marsanne and Viognier, as very little of either is grown in WA.

Members enjoyed hearing about the vineyard's small batch approach being hand picked and tasting unique wines such as the Ashari white blend, named after their grandchildren Ash and Ari.

The setting high on the ridge was beautiful, with stunning countryside views and a warm, relaxed atmosphere enjoyed by all.



Wine Appreciation Group ~ Presentation by Rachael from The Lake House

Convenor: Peter Lumia



This month we welcomed Lorraine into the Wine Club, and she seemed to enjoy herself immensely.

Rachael presented seven bottles from the Postcard Series, the Lake House signature label of cool climate wines for us to taste. My personal favourites included the 2024 Riesling described as “reminiscent of lime and fresh honeysuckle” and the Premium Reserve 2022 Frankland River Clone 174 Syrah “with its inky red purple hue.”

We learnt some fascinating wine industry insights. Apparently, people are less likely to buy white wine that appears yellow in a clear bottle, so winemakers often add a touch of blue to the bottle to create a fresher greener tint. We always enjoy expanding our wine vocabulary, with the Merlot described as being “jammy” and the Semi Sauvignon Blanc featuring “notes of pea and asparagus.”

Be sure to read the Probus South Pacific newsletter you would have received earlier this week, which features our very own wine making venture.

Wine Club meets from 5.00 to 7.00 pm on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Denmark Men’s Shed.

Mahjong Club

Convenor: Val Ball



Our Mahjong group meets on Mondays at 1.15pm in the Amaroo clubhouse, 34 Hardy Street.

Diary Dates

Wed 10 June (NOT 3 June)	General meeting Guest speaker ~ Ian Osborne, local history Inhouse lunch ~ a variety of soups & dessert
Wed 17 June	Whale watching, Cheynes Beach

Extras

Membership ~ There are currently 66 members in the club and 8 on the waiting list.

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.



Happy Birthday

Ruth Rushton	5 June
Bruce Grieve	11 June
Carmel Stott	15 June
Malcolm Dickie	19 June
Brian Rushton	19 June
Helena Wragg	22 June
Barry Barton	29 June
Wendy Lind	29 June
Neville Thorn	29 June
Kevin Stone	30 June

HAVE A GREAT DAY!

Wishing you a wonderful year ahead!

"What's your address?"
Me: "You'll know"



Note to self:

Do not kneel in the garden without a plan to get up.



Actual footage of me leaving the botanical gardens with the cuttings I "found on the ground"



Is there anything more satisfying as a gardener when you pull a weed and the entire root comes out?



Me every single time my plants do literally anything



Me at social gatherings
So these are my plants...



My wife can't decide what
to have for dinner,
but she can plan a trip
anywhere in the world in
less than 3 hours.



Out of all my body parts, my
eyeballs are in the best shape,
because I roll them like
342 times a day.



We DO NOT throw
perfectly good food away in this
house.
We put leftovers in a Tupperware &
let it go bad,
THEN throw it out.



My ability to remember song
lyrics from the 80s far exceeds
my ability to remember why I
walked into the kitchen.



If we're drinking and I say
I can do a backflip
stop me because
No I can not



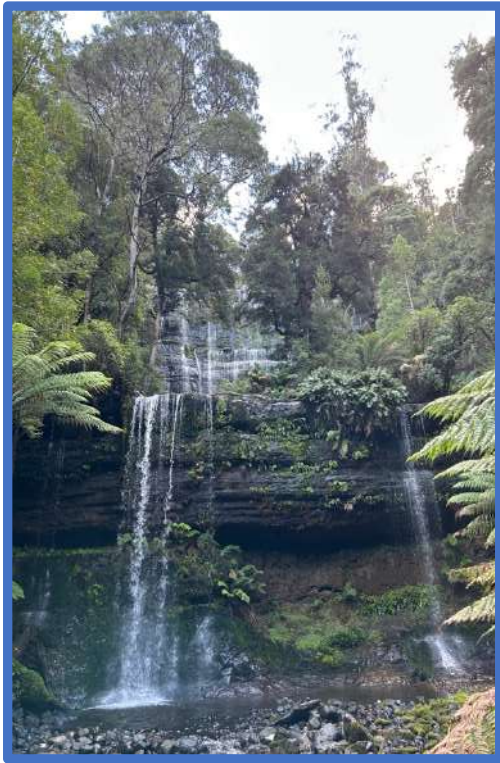
Rabbits jump and they
live for 8 years.
Dogs run and they live
for 15 years.
Turtles do nothing and they
live for 150 years.

Lesson learned.



Spotlight on Kerry and Steve

Kerry and Steve took a direct flight to Hobart to spend 12 days in Tasmania. They hired a car and stayed in airbnbs, finding that spending a couple of nights in each location worked well, with minimal packing and unpacking along the way.



Russell Falls, a three tiered cascade surrounded by lush rainforest and tall tree ferns



Kerry and Steve at Richmond Bridge, Australia's oldest bridge, built by convicts 1823 to 1825



A cheeky Tasmanian Devil



Steve toasting the view over Otago Bay



MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) - Fat Car Convertible

Recipe of the month

JOYCE'S FIG CAKE



3/4 cup (150g) dried figs, finely chopped
3/4 cup (115g) dried dates, finely chopped
1 cup (250ml) boiling water
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
125g butter, chopped
3/4 cup (165g) brown sugar
1 1/2 cups (225g) self-raising flour
3 eggs

Butterscotch icing

1/2 cup brown sugar (110g) brown sugar
50g butter
2 tbsp thickened cream
2/3 cup (110g) icing sugar mixture
1/2 tsp sea salt flakes

Preheat oven to 180C. Grease a 20cm (top measurement) bundt or fluted ring cake pan well with melted butter and dust with plain flour.

Bring fig, date, water and bicarbonate of soda to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Set aside for 10 mins to soak. Add the butter and sugar and stir to combine. Add the flour and stir to combine.

Add the eggs, 1 at a time, stirring well after each addition.

Pour into the prepared pan. Smooth the surface. Bake for 45 mins or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Turn onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Meanwhile, to make the butterscotch icing, combine the sugar, butter and cream in a medium saucepan over medium heat.

Cook, stirring, for 2 mins or until butter melts and sugar dissolves.

Remove from heat. Add the icing sugar and salt and stir to combine. Set aside for 10 mins or until icing forms a spreadable syrupy consistency.

Pour the butterscotch icing over the cooled cake. Cut into wedges to serve.

YOUR 2026 COMMITTEE

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

Hospitality: Martine Hennig, Peta Gornall - hospitality@denmarkriverprobus.org.au



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