



# The PROBIAN ~ May 2015 Edition

~ Editors: Max Wood and Colin Stephenson ~



## THE PROBUS CLUB OF PERTH

P. O. Box 20131,  
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[www.probusperth.ca](http://www.probusperth.ca)

Probus meets the first  
Wednesday of each month,  
Sept. to June.

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## Apropos ....

Life on the high seas in the age of sail was by all accounts lonely, precarious and full of drudgery. Yet men were willing to live it for the simple security of “three squares a day” in spite of the fact that the quality of the food provided often left a great deal to be desired. And it was not just sailors who had a hard life. Before the industrial revolution everyone in this part of the world had just 3 or 4 unpredictable months to grow enough food to get them through the rest of the year. The capricious wind has now been substantially mastered by the power of fossil fuel. Food production has become big business dependent on agricultural chemicals and complicated power equipment. And three squares a day are currently taken for granted by almost everyone in the first world. We have in fact become so accustomed to abundance and availability that many are not even aware of where their food, clothing, and other consumer goods come from or what it takes to produce them. But all of this convenience comes at a price. Our bodies evolved in a time when physical labor and exercise were mandatory. Absent them, the body begins to collapse. Thankfully, spring is finally upon us so let’s get out there and move! Who knows, you might even become inspired to grow a few vegetables and reconnect with the origins of your three squares a day.

*(Apropos reflects the views of the Editors but not necessarily those of the Club.)*

## Cheryl Cooper on “The Seasons of War”



Although her presentation to Probus Perth was Cheryl Cooper’s 65<sup>th</sup> presentation at a Probus meeting, there was nothing stale or worn about it and she deftly held the attention of a large crowd on an absolutely beautiful spring morning that beckoned all to be outdoors enjoying the sunshine.

Cheryl got her start as an author at an early age and began writing fiction at 9! Admittedly her early work lacked character, yet her 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher mimeographed the 40 page novella that Cheryl wrote and put it in the Bayview Glen Public School library in Thornhill where it survived until it was literally worn out by interested readers!

Nonetheless, in high school her interest in writing succumbed to friends, parties and boys. She obtained a degree in English and education from

Queens University but studying other people’s work depressed her and she became a teacher of hearing-impaired children. After university her interest in writing resurfaced and at 27 she completed the first draft of a novel that she presented to the writer-in-residence at the Richmond Hill Library, fully expecting a glowing review. To her horror, the writer told her the novel “was horrible and boring”. Naturally, Cheryl was devastated and decided to give up writing altogether, but eventually found she just could not put down the pen and began to rethink her writing with a much more critical eye.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Season of War.....continued

She finally found her true direction when she saw the box-office hit "[Master and Commander](#)" starring Russell Crowe, which came to the theatres in 2003. Her fascination with that movie sparked a strong interest in the history of the age of sail, which eventually led her to the largely forgotten War of 1812 and a literal ocean of unexplored and unexploited material that she finds endlessly fascinating and a bountiful source of inspiration. Of course, none of this came easily and required extensive library and literature searches, voluminous reading of fiction and non-fiction about the period, the sea, the sailing ships and the hardy men that sailed them; as well as trips to Halifax, Charleston, San Diego and Portsmouth to tour "tall ships" and learn first-hand about their structure and their scale.

Cheryl now knows a great deal about the War of 1812 and why it has been forgotten in spite of the fact that it resulted in the burning of the White House, composition of the Star Spangled Banner, and setting the stage for Canadian independence. Although few can remember what the war was about or who started it, we learned that the United States declared war on June 18, 1812 for several reasons including trade restrictions brought about by the British [war with France](#), the [impressment](#) of American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy, British support of Indian tribes against American expansion into their Canadian territories, outrage over insults to American national honor after humiliations on the high seas by British war ships, and American interest in annexing at least part of the British territories that eventually became Canada. We also learned that the War of 1812 has been largely forgotten because there were no great leaders on either side, Madison was president of the United States and George III was king of England; no territory was gained or lost as a result of the war; there was little, if any, patriotic zeal for the war in the United States; and the British saw it as a nuisance and a distraction from their endless war with France which had emptied their coffers and depleted their human resources.

Cheryl also has extensive knowledge about the history of the age of sail and how it has contributed significantly to modern slang. She explained how expressions such as "son of a gun", "scuttlebutt", "doldrums", and "slush fund" now so deeply ingrained in our language originated as nautical terms with completely different meanings from

those we understand today. For example, "son of a gun" originally designated a child born on a war ship, or fathered by a sailor; "scuttlebutt" was a cask from which drinking water was served onboard sailing vessels, so sailors would gather around it to gossip; "doldrums" was originally a nautical term referring to parts of the equatorial ocean where the prevailing winds are calm, and came to be used for any period of time when a ship was becalmed; and "slush fund" designated the money a ship's cook was permitted to collect for selling "slush", which was the fat that rose to the surface of a stew pot when salted meat was boiled. Sailors were willing to buy slush to make the insect infested bread they were forced to eat more palatable.

Cheryl has now authored two novels about the War of 1812 ("[Come Looking For Me](#)", and "[Second Summer Of War](#)" available in paper or electronic copy from Dundurn Press or Amazon.ca) and is working on a third in the series. We thank her for a most interesting and informative presentation.

## Management Team Notes

- Our club membership has been steadily increasing over the past year and currently stands at 144. As our numbers approach the 150 mark, the Management Team has been debating the question of whether we should increase the ceiling on total membership in our [club bylaws](#), which currently stands at 150.
- Treasurer Don Sherwin reports that the club bank balance at May 11<sup>th</sup> was \$2,063. He predicts a small deficit this year, with no fee increase likely.



## Speakers' Corner

Our presentation on June 3rd will be on the Basic Income Guarantee (BIG) concept. Our three speakers will be: 1. Toni Pickard (Co-founder, Kingston Action Group on BIG; retired Professor, Queen's University Faculty of Law); 2. James Leake (Chair, Social Justice and Outreach Committee, Sydenham United Church; retired Professor, University of Toronto Faculty of Dentistry); 3. Bill Cooper (Professor Queen's School of Business). To read more about this subject, please go to the [resource kit on our website](#).

Have an idea for a speaker ~ contact [Dave Farquharson](#)

## Quote for the Month

**"Everything you want in life has a price connected to it. There's a price to pay if you want to make things better, a price to pay just for leaving things as they are, a price for everything."**

~ Harry Browne

## Personal Profile ~ Jack Tannett ~ Engineer / Project Manager



A beautiful spring day was made even lovelier, and livelier, by a spirited recount of the exciting life of engineer/project manager Jack Tannett. Jack was born in the Derbyshire hills of Northern England, very near the steel city of Sheffield, where his father worked. He was one of 5 children, and enjoyed a very happy childhood. He knew from an early age that he wanted to follow his father's footsteps and become an engineer, thus continuing a long line of engineers in the Tannett family that stretched back to the early days of the Industrial Revolution. So he took a four year bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, which included well-structured periods of time in industry that afforded him early experience.

His most exciting early working experience was in the north of Scotland, where he was sent as a young engineer to a major fabrication yard north of Inverness during the "North Sea oil boom" of the early 1970's when Britain was desperate to become self-sufficient in oil. The yard was run by a US/UK joint venture that built the very first North Sea oil platforms. Those were gigantic steel structures designed provide footing for a "topside" supported over water that was more than 400 feet deep. They were built on their sides in a vast dry dock and floated out to the North Sea where they were upended and anchored to the sea-bed before the topsides were installed for drilling and production. Nothing of this magnitude and complexity had been done before, so young Jack was in the right place at the right time and confessed that his boss, a colorful Texan, gave him considerably more responsibility than he believed he deserved.

In 1977 he broadened his career into project management, a discipline responsible for the overall execution of projects, and spent a couple of years in the Central London home office of a large UK engineering /construction company. However, he soon again found himself back in Scotland during the construction phase of the expansion of a major oil refinery near Edinburgh.

While in Scotland in 1981 Jack met his wife Loree, a young shop teacher and Highland dancer, who had flown over from Colorado to visit friends and bike around Scotland. They met one rainy weekend at a friend's house in a remote corner of the Northern Highlands.

1981 was coincidentally a great year for UK engineers looking to immigrate to Canada, so Jack flew over that fall with job offers in Montreal, Edmonton and Calgary. He soon decided to join Calgary based Fluor Canada (perhaps because it was closest to Colorado?). Fluor is a large US owned multinational company with offices in 25 countries providing engineering, construction and project management services. That turned out to be the right decision, and Jack spent the next 32 years working for Fluor Canada on many different and challenging projects before he retired last June.

Soon after he arrived in Calgary, he and Loree were married and were blessed with two beautiful girls, just 15 months apart. In his 32 years with Fluor Canada, his family spent only half their time living in Calgary. They also lived in many other wonderful places, including here in Eastern Ontario, Australia and New Brunswick. Fortunately, all of his postings were family assignments, which was so important to his family.

In the late '80's, they spent four years in Kingston where Jack provided engineering services to Du Pont for their various plants in Southern Ontario. Then it was off to Australia, which came as a total surprise. Jack's boss, a man of few words, called him into his office one day and said simply: "I want you in Melbourne by Monday." This led to two years in Perth, Australia, which is the centre for Western Australia's mining and offshore natural gas businesses and has a large engineering community servicing those markets.

From Perth they were moved to Saint John, NB, where Jack spent six years developing a long term relationship with Irving Oil at their refinery. Then it was back to Calgary where Jack concentrated on the development of Fluor's next leaders. It was obvious that baby boomer retirement would leave Fluor with a large talent gap unless everyone worked hard to fill it. Jack helped to provide a framework for leadership development and worked closely with many of Fluor's next generation of project managers.

*(continued....page 4)*



## Jack Tannett....continued

When Jack retired last year he and Loree knew that they wanted to return to Eastern Ontario. They feel blessed to have come to Perth, where they have bought a house in town and have no plans to move again. Loree is a talented seamstress and has already started building her own dress and costume design business here in Perth, while Jack has always been a passionate hiker and has found wonderful new friends in the Rideau Trail Association.

He and Loree love it here, and we are most fortunate to have them as members of the community and Probus.



Jean and David Crowley at Spring Fling  
Sponsored by Probus Club of North Grenville

## Special Events

- **May 27** – Our annual trip to the Thousand Island Playhouse, 185 South Street in Gananoque ([map](#)) to see “[CLOSER THAN EVER](#)” which is an award-winning “how-to” manual for the middle aged – told entirely through song! Mary has made reservations for the 22 confirmed participants for lunch at 12:00 noon at [Musky Jake’s](#) in the Gananoque Inn, 550 Stone Street South, followed by the Matinee performance at 2:30pm.
- **June 3** – Closing lunch at the Legion after the meeting. Choice of Lasagna & Caesar salad or Wraps and veggies- \$10 each. A tip jar will be available for the Legion caterers, placed at our initiative. If you have not already signed up, please contact Mary by May 27<sup>th</sup>.
- **September 29** - Mary has been working hard on our Fall trip. It will start out by going to [Lavender Ridge Winery and Vineyards](#) which is located along the picturesque highway 148 in Luskville and situated along the ridge between the Ottawa River and the Gatineau hills. We will lunch at [Norway Bay Golf Course](#) and then enjoy apple desserts as we visit [Coronation Hall Cider Mills](#). Owner Norma Graham says “there’s lots of pie and tasting of our alcoholic ciders and sweet cider”. The last stop is at [Log’s End](#) where owner Gordie Black will share with us how he gets the rare river-reclaimed wood that make exquisite flooring. Check out all of these places on their websites. We will travel back to Ontario on the new [Quyong Ferry](#). The Echo Tour bus holds 55 people. The price for this event including transportation, admission and lunch will be \$50 / person (desserts and wine tastings extra), with payment payable to Probus Perth made at the June meeting if possible, as a deposit has to be made on the trip. Probus members get first dibs on the seats but after June 10th seats will be offered to other interested people.
- **December 4** – Mark your calendars now for our Christmas party at the Lion’s Hall.



## Famous Last Words

- I can pass this guy.....
- My brakes are fine.....
- No, he doesn’t bite.....



Jean Crowley (L) & Don McDiarmid (R) welcome new member Duncan Meikle