

Edition No. 93 – June 2022

DENMARK RIVER PROBUS NEWSLETTER

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Greetings Probians

June – officially winter. When I first moved here, I felt like I had moved back to Ireland because of the weather, but I have been enjoying it lately. Irish spring or summer, maybe - not winter. It is a long time since I experienced an Irish winter and then I was safe in a lovely warm house.

In spring or summer we would be put out in our prams to get some fresh air and sunshine. It was very pleasant. However, I think that it was a practice that may have caused my mother some grief. Cats also like warm sunny places and I suspect that one may have joined her in her pram when she was a baby one day.

She always said that she was allergic to cats; but she did not start sneezing, get a rash or be in danger of anaphylactic shock. She was terrified of them. Her response was one of fear whenever there was a cat in the same room as her.

Joyce

Committee

President: Kevin Nayda president@denmarkriverprobus.org.au
Vice President: Don Hart
Secretary: Julie Nayda secretary@denmarkriverprobus.org.au
Treasurer: Don Hart treasurer@denmarkriverprobus.org.au
Activities: Vicki Lumia & Tracey Barton
events@denmarkriverprobus.org.au
Hospitality: Rosemary Thorn, Glenice Smith
hospitality@denmarkriverprobus.org.au
Membership: Linda Falls members@denmarkriverprobus.org.au
Guest Speakers: Julie Nayda
speakers@denmarkriverprobus.org.au
Media: Joyce Edmonds contact@denmarkriverprobus.org.au

NEXT MEETING

6 July 2022

At the Denmark Country Club

Guest Speaker: Patricia Gill from the Denmark Bulletin

Lunch: Tavern

BIRTHDAYS

Helena Wragg	Wed 22 June
Fran Pederick	Thursday 23 June
Wendy Lind	Wed 29 June
Neville Thorn	Wed 29 June
Barry Barton	Wed 29 June
Kevin Stone	Thursday 30 June
Anne Peterson	Sunday 17 July
Tracey Barton	Wednesday 20 July
Kevin Nayda	Monday 25 July
Bev Seeney	Monday 25 July
Susan Allan	Thursday 28 July



MEMBERSHIP

Two new members were welcomed in June - Moya and Kevin Ivanac. Please make them welcome.

There are 8 people on the waiting list 3 of whom have completed three visits.



Guest Speaker

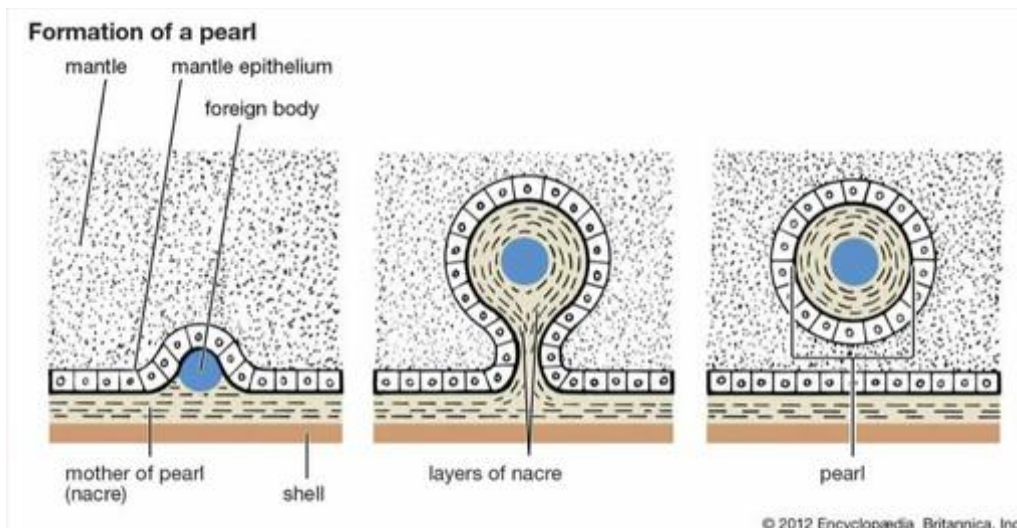
DACE VER BAKEL - PEARLING

Pearling, of course, has been around for hundreds of years, but that involved the harvesting of natural pearls. Broome was established as a pearling harbour in the 1880's to harvest the rich pearl beds off Broome's 80-mile beach. Broome has produced some of the best pearls in the world. By the turn of the century around 300 luggers plied the rich waters of Broome's Roebuck Bay. Their target was the prized *Pinctada Maxima*, the largest pearl shell in the world. The industry at that time was based mainly on what Dace called commercial pearling for mother of pearl, which was used to make buttons, buckles, fine cutlery, jewellery and as an inlay for furniture.



What Dace talked about was the cultured pearl industry, which is what he was involved in. The culturing of pearls was introduced by the Japanese soon after the war and the pearling industry in Broome was changed forever.

Put very simply, a cultured pearl is grown when an irritant is inserted into the oyster's gonad via an incision and the oyster that lives in the pearl shell covers the irritant over with nacre, or mother of pearl, to form the pearl and relieve the itch, so to speak. I found this neat diagram on the internet.



Natural pearls form in the same manner but the irritant is not put there by a human being, it occurs accidentally when sand or some other irritant finds its way into the flesh of the pearl oyster. The beads, or irritants, that humans put into the oysters are made from the shells of clam shells found in the Mississippi River in the United States. They come in various sizes to make different sized pearls and to suit different sized shells.

Divers collect the pearl shells from the seabed and Dace showed us how the shells were opened so that the irritant could be introduced. He described in detail how the shells were collected, brought back, and processed before being put back into the ocean on a rope to grow the pearls. The pearl shells were then actively farmed by being kept clean by special boats and turned over from time to time so that the irritant did not fall out. The process could be repeated two or three times with the same pearl shell depending on how healthy the oyster was. It is quite a complicated process involving various kinds of ships to do the various kinds of jobs.

He also described how the collecting of the shells took place. The boats would go out on the 10m tides and return on the tide. The diver was attached to the ship by a rope and air was supplied directly from the ship via a tube. The boat moved over the seabed with the diver following on behind. There was also a way of signalling to the boat how fast or slow to go. If the boat was going too fast the diver could signal to slow it down. Each boat “towed” eight divers. The divers carried a bag on their chests which they filled with the shells. When that was full, they emptied them into a larger one, and returned to fill their bag again. The divers got \$5 for each shell that they collected, and each diver could collect about 200 shells in a day. So a bit of simple maths and you can see the incentive for the men to dive. Dace said that it was a young man’s job though. They usually started at the age of 18 and by about 30 they had had enough. Each diver was kitted up with diving suits and in the winter, they had a special suit designed to keep them warm.

Dace also threw some mind-boggling statistics at us about the pearling industry. It was a very interesting talk and gave us a very good idea of how the pearling industry worked and what a complicated processes it was before we get to wear a beautiful pearl. Thank you, Dace.

HAPPENINGS:

TRUFFLE HUNT 15 & 16 JUNE

Upon arrival on the 15th we all wondered if we had come to the right place. There was no sign, and the gate was closed. However, it was the correct place, so we all drove in and found somewhere to park on what looked like an ordinary cattle farm, only to be told to turn around the go back to another gate. Then a trek across a paddock. Glad I did not have my car with me. But we ended up in the same place. Wrong gate. Try the next one. OK, there he is waiting for us. Across another paddock complete with cow pats to a small shed with a deck and a lot of chairs. So our adventure began.

It was really very interesting. I had never tasted a truffle before, and it was not at all like I imagined it would be. When you see the dark dirt covered ball that comes out of the earth, one imagines the smell of it to be rather musty and very earthy; but it was not like that at all. If I were to describe it, I would say it smelt like apples with a citrus overtone.

The truffles grow on the roots of oak trees. The farm has two groups of trees for truffles; one with trees that are 11 years old and the other 10 years old. In both groups two types of oak are present - the English oak and the evergreen Ilex oak. The roots of the seedlings are inoculated with the truffle spores before planting. This causes a change in the pattern of the roots causing the side roots to come out at right angles to the root they are branching off rather than the usual smaller angle. Not all the trees will go on to produce truffles. In fact one of the truffles we found on our hunt was a first for the tree that we found it attached to and the tree was one of the larger ones.

The dogs that locate the truffles are very cute, and very friendly. They have waterproof woolly curly coats like a poodle but are not poodles. They are a smaller Italian dog named Lagotto Romagnolo. The Lagotto first worked as a waterfowl retriever, but due to their exceptional sense of smell, they are known for being able to sniff out truffles. While they are not the only truffle dogs, they are considered one of the best.

When the dogs found a truffle, they would scratch the ground where it was, and Alan would locate the truffle. Of course, they got a treat for their efforts, so the dogs were very keen to oblige. We were offered the opportunity to dig them out ourselves. The ground was quite sandy but dark because of the fungus and they were easy to dig out with your fingers. We collected just over 2kg of truffles while we were out. Then we returned to the hut for lunch.

There we got to sample what the truffles tasted like. Again I was surprised. The flavour was almost wanting. I had expected something that had a strong taste, but that was not the case. As Claudia said, it was more aromatic than flavoursome. It did have a very interesting texture though and I liked it. The texture was very smooth, and nutty; again something that I did not expect. We had cauliflower soup with truffle grated over it along with crusty French bread and butter that had truffle through it. The soup and the bread were delicious. That was followed by



shortbread with flecks of truffle in it and cream with truffle through it. We could taste the truffle in the cream very well, but not so much in the shortbread. An interesting after effect was that on the way home, I felt as if I had been infused with truffle.



Look at the eagerness of the dog.



I would certainly like to eat truffle again, but I am not so sure I am prepared to pay the asking price for the pleasure. It is a luxury item, but I can see the attraction.

The hunt begins.

Go Millie - where is it?



Spot the truffle!





SOCIAL GROUPS



Wine Appreciation Group

Held every **4th Thursday** of the month at the Community resource Centre.

For more information contact Peter Lumia



Fran's Coffee Mornings

Meets at **10:00** every **3rd Tuesday** of the month at various venues.
Next: **21st June – Bibbulmun Café; 19th July – Mrs Jones.**



Kayaking

Kayaking –is held 2nd & 4th Fridays (weather permitting) **8:00am** in **the water**. Launching from the boat ramp at the Denmark River Mouth Caravan Park. Afterwards coffee at the Caravan Park's Reminisce Café.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

July 20th – Ten Pin Bowling.

10:00 am - \$21 per person for two games. 120 Stead Road, Albany. Please wear your own soft soled shoes. Carpooling to be organised by individuals.

Lunch -12 noon at the Earl of Spencer

Also keep the following Non-Probuss events in mind and support a local club.

DENMARK RIVERSIDE CLUB – QUIZ NIGHTS

Gather a table of 6 for our fun, winter quiz nights! Fun and Prizes!

We can help you make up a team if requested.

Dates Friday **24th June**

Friday **29th July**

Friday **26th August**

Bar opens at 5:30 pm. To 8 pm.

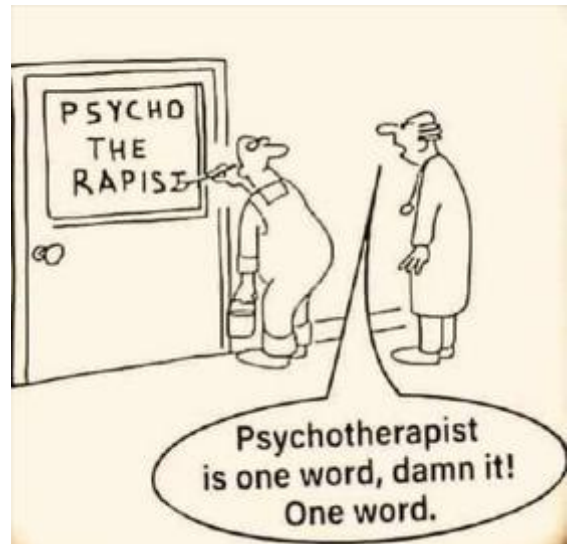
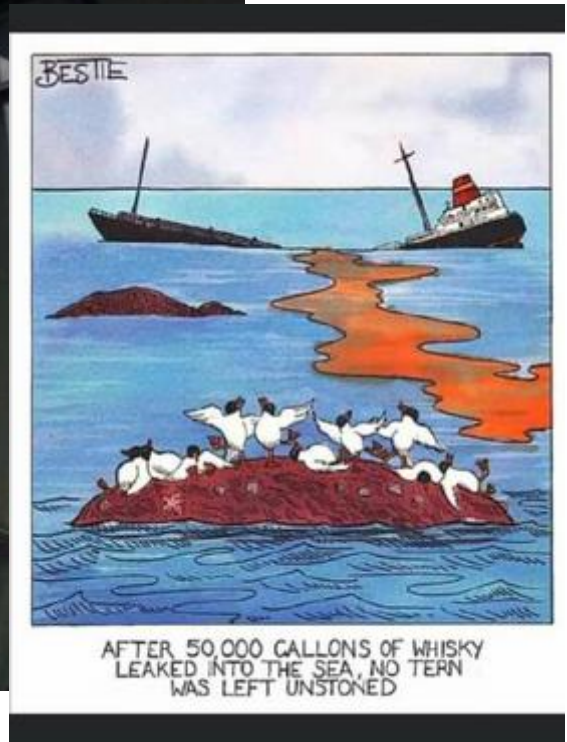
Bring along you own nibbles/supper to share on your table

Cost \$10.00 pp

To book, Email 1Riverside16@gmail.com or put your name on the list at the club as usual.

For any other queries please contact: Julie at secretary@denmarkriversideprobuss.org.au.





Thank you to all who contributed jokes for the newsletter.