

By nightfall, the enemy had reached the Vitiaz Strait, which meant that in the morning it would be within range of the entire AAF strike force. If the coordinated attack were to succeed the precise location of the convoy had to be known at daybreak. Consequently, throughout the night, it was tracked by an RAAF Catalina from No. 11 Squadron, which occasionally dropped bombs to keep the Japanese in a state of anxiety. Also during the night, eight RAAF Beaufort torpedo bombers from No. 100 Squadron took-off from Milne Bay to use the darkness to their advantage. Heavy weather made navigation hazardous and only two aircraft found the convoy. Neither scored a hit.

The moment the AAF had been waiting for came on the morning of 3 March 1943, when the Japanese rounded the Huon Peninsula. For much of the time adverse weather had helped the Enemy avoid detection but now clear conditions favoured the Allies. Over 90 aircraft took off from Port Moresby and headed for Cape Ward Hunt. While the strike force was en route, Bostons from No.22 Squadron bombed the airfield at Lae.

By 0930, the AAF formations had assembled over Cape Ward Hunt, and by 10 o'clock the **Battle of the Bismarck Sea** had started. The allies attacked in three waves and from three levels, only seconds apart.

First, 13 USAAF Flying Fortresses bombed from medium altitude. In addition to the obvious objective of sinking ships, those attacks were intended to disperse the convoy by forcing vessels to break station to avoid being hit. Then 13 RAAF Beaufighters from No. 30 Squadron hit the enemy from very low level, lining up on their targets as the bombs from the Flying Fortresses were exploding. With four cannons in its nose and six machine guns in its wings the Beaufighter was the most heavily armed fighter in the world. The Australian's job was twofold—to suppress anti-aircraft fire; and to kill the captains and officers of the ships on their bridges.

The Beaufighters initially approached at 150 metres in line astern formation. The pilots then dived to mast-level height, set full power on their engines, changed into line abreast formation, and approached their targets at 420 km/h. It seems that some of the Japanese captains thought the Beaufighters were going to make a torpedo attack because they altered course to meet the Australians head-on, to present a smaller profile. Instead, they made themselves better targets for strafing. Beaufighters were now in a position to rake the ships from bow to stern, which they did, subjecting the enemy to a withering storm of cannon and machine gun fire.

The Battle of the Bismarck Sea stands as one of the most stunning victories won in any theatre in World War 11, and as a crucial episode in the Battle for Australia.

*Epping Probus acknowledges the author Dr Alan Stephens. It is reproduced with permission from Wings, the official journal of the RAAF Association.*

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## MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well the end of my 2<sup>nd</sup> one-year stint as your President has arrived and I am delighted that another Past President has put up his hand to be the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the Club. As well, a past Secretary has agreed to be recycled for 2023–24. On behalf of the Club, I wish to very sincerely thank Ross and Wal for their service to the Club over many years as Secretary and Tours & Special Events Co-Ordinator respectively.

Special mention needs to be made of retiring Immediate Past President Michael for the manner in which he led the Club over the extremely difficult 2 years of the Covid-19 pandemic. The fact that the Club did not fold is a tribute to his leadership and our Management Committee of the time.

Certainly our numbers have declined dramatically and the new Management Committee will be addressing the direction of our future, with a decision most likely put to members before the end of this years. Several options are on the table for a way forward.

It must be every person, who joins our Club, to make it his number one priority to at some early stage to put forward his nomination for the Committee. The time span of President is one year, and office bearers three years. Many of our current Committee, thankfully, have gone beyond the normally allocated time. Perhaps new members might volunteer to assist the members of the Committee for 12 months with the idea of assuming the role in 2024–25. Think about it. However, one position needs to be filled at the AGM and that is Tours Organiser. No Tours Organiser then no tours, full stop.

### MEETINGS

#### February

Michelle Sharkey OAM was our guest speaker last month, when her topic was “Stroke—Awareness, Treatment and Recovery”. Michelle began by outlining the difference between a heart attack and a stroke. The former relates to the heart which is a mechanical pump, while the latter relates to blockages

in the brain. There is a stroke incidence every 9 minutes resulting in 60,000 strokes each year. Of these, 70 per cent are the first ever, 50 per cent are persons over 75 and 20 per cent have a chronic disability.

The most common form of a Stroke is the result of a sudden disruption of the flow of blood to parts of the brain. When blood cannot reach parts of the brain, the oxygen supply to those areas is cut off and the brain cells die (*infarct*). Less frequently, blood vessels burst and blood spreads into nearby brain areas (*haemorrhage*). Functions normally controlled by these damaged brain areas are affected. In many cases, unconsciousness and/or partial paralysis may occur. This is often the immediate outward sign that a Stroke has occurred. There are two different types of Stroke—Ischaemic and Haemorrhagic.

**Ischaemic Stroke**—in everyday life, blood-clotting is beneficial. When you are bleeding from a wound, blood clots work to slow and eventually stop the bleeding. However, in the case of Stroke clots are dangerous because they can block arteries and cut off blood flow. Ischaemic Stroke is the most common type of Stroke (80%–85% of Strokes are ischaemic). An Ischaemic Stroke is caused when a clot blocks or ‘plugs’ a blood vessel in the brain. There are two ways that a clot Stroke can occur.

1. An embolic Stroke occurs when a blood clot forms somewhere in the body and travels through the blood stream to the brain.
2. A thrombotic Stroke occurs when blood vessels narrow as a result of blood fat, cholesterol or calcium, which grow to completely block the blood vessel.

**Haemorrhagic Stroke**—a haemorrhagic Stroke is caused when a blood vessel in the brain breaks or ‘erupts’. There are two types of Haemorrhagic Stroke—a subarachnoid haemorrhage and an intracerebral haemorrhage.

1. An intracerebral haemorrhage, which is the more common form, involves bleeding within the brain tissue itself.
2. With a subarachnoid haemorrhage bleeding occurs in the space around the brain. Often this is due to an aneurysm—a weak or thin spot on a blood vessel wall.

Sometimes called a mini Stroke, a Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) has similar symptoms to a Stroke but the person appears to recover very quickly. The medical definition for TIA is: Transient—symptoms disappear in less than one day (24 hours); Ischaemic—failure of blood flow to part of the brain or eye and Attack—sudden onset of symptoms that may vary from person to person, depending on which part of the brain or eye is starved of blood.

What is a Transient Ischaemic Attack? TIA symptoms depend on which blood vessel to the brain is blocked and so which part of the brain is starved of blood. Common symptoms include brief attacks of weakness, clumsiness,

Bostons—an all-out attack would be mounted from medium, low and very low altitudes.

RAAF units assigned to the operation came from No. 9 Operational Group headed by Air Commodore Joe Hewitt. However, he had only recently assumed command, so the main Australian planning contribution came from his predecessor, the ebullient and aggressive Group Captain W.H. “Bull” Garing, whose leadership had been crucial to the RAAF’s contribution to victory at Milne Bay. This time, Garing’s expertise in maritime warfare, which he had gained flying Sunderlands with No. 10 Squadron in Europe in 1939–40, was to prove decisive.

It was Garing who convinced Kenney of the need for a massive, coordinated attack. Garing envisaged large numbers of aircraft striking the convoy from different directions and altitudes, with precise timing. Knowing that inexperienced crews would find the task difficult, Garing suggested to Kenney’s Forward-Echelon Commander, Brigadier General Ennis Whitehead, that a full-scale dress rehearsal should be held.

Because Allied planners expected the battle to take place in the Huon Gulf, they selected Cape Ward Hunt, 140 km to the south-east, as the strike force’s rendezvous point. Each formation would have to overfly Cape Ward Hunt at precisely the right time if the desired degree of concentration were to be achieved. For the dress rehearsal, Garing briefed the crews to rendezvous at Cape Rodney, 140 km south-east of Port Moresby, and to carry out a simulated strike against a wrecked ship in Port Moresby harbour. He and General Whitehead then observed the exercise from a nearby hill.

The dress rehearsal was invaluable as potentially disastrous mistakes were made, with some aircraft arriving over the wreck 20 minutes late. Thorough debriefings were held and the problems resolved. During the waiting period crews honed their bombing and gunnery skills.

Some 6,400 Japanese troops embarked at Rabaul between 23 and 27 February and the convoy of eight merchant ships and eight destroyers sailed just before midnight on the 28<sup>th</sup>, planning to arrive at Lae on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March. Air cover was provided by about 100 fighters flying out of bases in New Ireland, New Britain and New Guinea.

The convoy was initially favoured by poor weather, which hampered Allied reconnaissance. It was not until mid-morning on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March that USAAF B-24 Liberators sighted the ships. Brigadier Whitehead immediately launched eight B-17s, followed shortly afterwards by 20 more. The B-17s attacked from an altitude of 2000 metres with 450 kg demolition bombs. Later in the day another strike was made by 11 B-17s, whose crews claimed large numbers of hits and reported that vessels were “burning and exploding, smoking and burning amidships” and “left sinking”. Up to three merchant ships may have been sunk.

🚩 Day 6—Journey home with morning tea and lunch provided. The tour price is \$1295 per person twin share with a single supplement of \$300, and includes all meals and accommodation.

It is important that Wal have names as soon as possible to confirm our booking. Deposits of \$100 per person will then be payable to the Probus account at or before the May meeting. Brochures with a detailed itinerary are available from Wal (or the new Tours Co-Ordinator should someone volunteer).

## HISTORY IN THE MAKING

On Saturday, 18 March and Sunday, 19 March 2023 railway history in NSW will be made during the Thirlmere Festival of Steam. The final trip on those two days we see a train operating between Thirlmere and Picton hauled by the Victorian steam locomotive converted to standard gauge R 766 double heading with NSW's premier steam locomotive 3801 for the very first time. Bringing up the rear will be NSW's 3642. In its broad gauge days the R class ran parallel between Melbourne and Seymour with both 3801 and 3642 (on separate occasions). Now it is on the same train. Visit the Transport Heritage web site for further information.

## WE PAUSE TO REMEMBER 80 YEARS ON

In the first week of March 1943, a force of land-based Australian and American warplanes won one of the most devastating victories of World War II. Described by General Douglas MacArthur as “the decisive aerial engagement of the war in the Southwest Pacific”, the brilliantly planned and conducted **Battle of the Bismarck Sea** smashed Japanese hopes of regaining the initiative in New Guinea and eliminated any possibility that Australia might be invaded.

Intercepted radio messages indicated that a powerful enemy convoy was likely to sail from the enemy stronghold at Rabaul with reinforcements for the vital garrison at Lae in late-February. It would be the task of the Royal Australian Air Force and the United States Army Air Force to prevent those reinforcements from reaching their destination.

The Commander of the Allied Air Forces, the dynamic and innovative Major General George Kenney, began preparing a major assault. He would rely on reconnaissance aircraft to detect the convoy, which would then be attacked by long-range USAAF heavy bombers. Once the enemy convoy was within range of the Allies's potent anti-shipping aircraft—RAAF Beaufighters, Bostons and Beauforts together with USAAF Mitchells and

numbness or pins and needles of the face, arm or leg on one side of the body, slurring of speech or difficulty in finding words or blurred vision in one or both eyes. TIAs do not usually cause “blackout” fainting or loss of consciousness. A person who has had a TIA has an increased risk of having a Stroke. The risk of having a Stroke in the first year after a TIA is about 10% but then falls by about 5% each year.

There are several illnesses which may give very similar symptoms to those of a TIA and require different treatments. These include migraine, epileptic fits or a seizure, a low blood sugar level, fainting and changes in the heart rhythm. So it is important that people with any of the TIA symptoms should go to see their doctor to find out whether they have had a TIA or some other kind of attack.

How does one recognising a Stroke? By using the “FAST” (Face, Arm, Speech, Time) formula.

1. Ask the individual to SMILE
2. Ask the person to: RAISE BOTH ARMS
3. Ask the person to: SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE

If they have trouble with ANY of these tasks, call 000 immediately and describe the symptoms.

Michelle then covered the aspects of treating strokes by going immediately to a public hospital with a stroke recovery unit by ambulance and how one recovers from a stroke.

We very sincerely thank Micelle for coming and very thoroughly taking us through the structure, treatment and recovery of strokes.

## March

Today's meeting is OUR ANNUAL important event—the AGM, with extra time to get to know your fellow members (important part of Probus is friendship and fellowship). There is no guest speaker.

## April

Arthur Pearce from the Australian National Maritime Museum is our guest speaker next month on Monday, 3 April 2023, when his topic will be “RAAF Catalinas in WW2”. Most people will have heard of the wartime exploits of the Dam Busters, or the RAF Bomber Command, or the crucial role played by the Spitfire and Hurricane squadrons in the Battle of Britain, but fewer people will be aware of the many exploits of the humble PBY Catalina.

Although in many ways obsolete at the start of the war Catalinas were deployed by most Allied Air Forces, including the RAAF, right through to the end of the war and beyond. The “Cat” was a very different aircraft in speed



and design to most others of the time, but it has often been claimed that the Catalina was as vital in the battle for Australia as the Spitfire was in the Battle for Britain.

This presentation will describe the history of the aircraft, and the many roles the Catalinas played in WW2. Their roles included air-sea rescue, convoy escort, supplying coast watchers and Z Force, behind enemy lines, as well as the strategic mine-laying operations by the Black Cats. At the end of the war Catalinas were involved in repatriating POWs from Japanese concentration camps.



RAAF Catalina  
"The Black Cat"  
"The Black Cat" was a Catalina flying boat used by the RAAF during the war.

Because many of the operations of the RAAF Catalina squadrons were conducted in secrecy, and at night, many of their exploits have never been told, while others are only just coming to light. It is important that the stories of the often-unsung heroes of the crews that flew and maintained these machines be told before their memory fades with the passing of these veterans of the skies.

**Please Note** that this meeting is on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday and not the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday due to Easter.

## DAY OUTINGS

### March

This month's outing will be on Monday, 20 March 2023, and will be a guided tour of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct, at 5 Fleet Street, North Parramatta. Dating back to 1821, this national heritage precinct covers an area of 7.3 hectares where the adjacent historic institutions of the Roman Catholic Orphan School and later Parramatta Girls Home and the convict built Parramatta Female Factory and later Parramatta Invalid & Lunatic Asylum are situated. The cost of the tour will be \$10 per person. A table will be booked for lunch at the Parramatta Leagues Club Bistro for 12 noon.

Please note that there is no parking on site—we are requested to park in Fleet Street. Closed-in walking shoes must be worn. There are no toilet facilities open on the site and there is no shelter if it rains. We will meet at the low white Female Factory wall at 10.00 a.m. The map shows the location of the "low white Female Factory wall". Please note that there is a free Parramatta shuttle bus (No. 900) from Parramatta Station to the Parramatta Leagues Club which is a short walk from the Female Factory site.

McDonald literally twisted my arms to get me out of that role and to become Club Secretary. After five years, I am stepping down as Secretary at this A.G.M. Thank you all for putting up with me for so long; you have been far too tolerant.

† There are valid reasons to add small amounts of sodium bicarbonate,

## MORNING TEA ROSTER

Wayne Steele is happy to do the pre-Meeting set up, so rostered members are only currently needed should be at the hall for serving and tidy-up. If you are unable to be present as rostered, please arrange a swap with another member and inform the Secretary.

### March

Vince Bignell  
Brian Carlin

Geoff Brothers  
Javerchand Christie



### April

Rick Collins

John Connell

Joseph Corte

## TOUR NEWS

### Parkes—5–10 November 2023

A tour to the 'Golden West', based on Parkes, has been organised for November. Twenty seats have been secured on a coach we will be sharing with Oakhill Dural Probus Club. Accommodation will be at the North Parkes Motel and we are assured of exceptional friendly country hospitality.

Parkes is named after Sir Henry Parkes, the 'father of federation' and the tour involves visits to the Parkes Centre, the Dish and the collection of Elvis memorabilia in Parkes; and visits to surrounding towns.

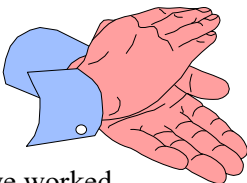
- Day 1—Journey to Parkes with stops in the Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Bathurst and Orange to the North Parkes Motel for five nights.
- Day 2—a town tour of Forbes, Ben Hall, Aussie Biscuits and McFeeter's Motor Museum.
- Day 3—Parkes and the Dish (Parkes Radio Telescope & CSIRO Visitors Centre).
- Day 4—Canowindra, Eugowra, Cowra and Grenfell, including a stop at the Japanese Gardens and the WW2 Prison Camp site.
- Day 5—Dubbo, the Western Plains Zoo and the Dubbo Flying Doctors Visitors Centre.

I made contact with the following Non-Active Members and all say they are Ok at present: Milton Bartlett, Dennis Druce, Bruce Frost, John Goodman, Owen Harrison, Alan Herron, Frank Johnson, Tony Malin, Dick Nicholson, Ray Thorpe and Paul Woodward. No contact was made with Wal Williams.

Alf McDermott had a fall during the month but his mouth cancers are contained at present. John Steele-Smith is comfortable. Tony Chaine and Yew Cheah have now become Non-Active Members. Doug Sneddon is to undergo Innumo therapy on his legs and he really misses the involvement in the Club.

## APPRECIATION TO OUR OUTGOING COMMITTEE

The members all join together in thanking our outgoing Committee—Col Short, Col Jones, Ross Beattie, Godfrey Abel, Leo Hart, Russell Gough, Ray Finch, Ray Palmer, Wal Gallagher and Michael Brinsden—for guiding the Club through a very successful and enjoyable year. We also would like to thank Frank Hanlon/Wayne Steele and the team in the kitchen as well as the other members who have worked behind the scenes to assist the Club in various spheres over the past year.



## SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Committee proposes that the subscription for 2023–24 be forty dollars. Members are reminded that their subscriptions become due following the decision of the members at the Annual General Meeting and the Treasurer would be pleased to receive your subscription as soon as possible. The Club's direct deposit details are Bendigo Bank BSB 633000 Account No. 182681668 Account Name Epping and District Probus Club Inc. If paying by cash he would appreciate if you could pay the exact amount.



## MEETING DAY LADIES COFFEE

Some ladies, who regularly like to join us to hear our guest speaker at 11.00 a.m., meet at 10 o'clock at the Darcy Street Project Coffee shop. They are more than happy for other ladies to join them. The shop is located on the edge of Boronia Park and access is from the northern end of Victoria Street (the short section between Bridge Street and the Park) or the bottom of the Coles Car Park.

## SECRETARY'S GUFF

Six years ago, I became the Club's Morning Tea Co-ordinator, but after revealing that an old Navy trick was to put soda-ash in the ratings' mess tea urns to give extra flavour and oomph<sup>†</sup>, Col Jones and the late Neil

## April

Next month's outing will be on Monday, 24 April 2023, and will be a guided tour of the Penrith Museum of Printing. The museum houses a collection of fully operational letterpress printing presses and equipment from the 1840s to the 1970s. The museum also has a substantial collection of hand-set type and Ludlow fonts as well as an extensive collection of antique wooden display type. The cost of the tour will be \$10 per person. A table will be booked for lunch at the Club Paceway bistro, which is also on the site. Please advise Russell Gough if you wish to join this outing.

We will meet at the Museum of Printing which is located within the grounds of the Penrith Paceway. If travelling from Sydney on the M4 Motorway, take the Mulgoa Road exit and travel north on Mulgoa Road to Ransley Street. Turn right into Ransley Street and then left into the Paceway. The Museum is the green colour bond building. Car-pooling is advised.

## May

The Naval Historical Society will be holding a cruise on Thursday, 1 June 2023, the 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the attack on Sydney Harbour by Japanese midget submarines. The cost will be \$70 per person for a group. The Club has booked a limited number of places on this cruise. It is expected that the cruise will be very popular so, if you are interested in this outing, please advise Russell Gough early so more places can be booked if necessary.

We paid early to avoid disappointment, so those members who have booked a place and have not already paid are asked to please pay on or before Monday, 13 March 2023.

If not paying cash, please make a direct deposit to Probus Account BSB 633 000 A/C 182681668 stating YOUR NAME and reason for payment and advise Russell Gough, by email to: [Russell.Gough51@gmail.com](mailto:Russell.Gough51@gmail.com)

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

The following 'Other Activities' are planned for this month. It goes without saying all activities are conditional on compliance with any relevant Covid-19 restrictions.

**Old Codgers Music Group**—this month the meeting will be at 2.30 p.m. on Monday, 13 March at the home of Bob and Margaret Cruikshank, 1 Mason Avenue, Cheltenham. If you wish to attend, please add your details to the Secretary's list at the March General meeting.

**Coffee Club**—members, wives, partners, and guests are all invited to meet 'face to face' to socialise over tea, coffee, etc., at the Coffee Club,

Carlingford Court, at 10.00 a.m. on Friday, 17 March. This activity is hosted by Ray Palmer.

**Dining**—the next lunch is at noon on Wednesday, 22 March, at the West Pennant Hills Sports Club, 103 New Line Road West Pennant Hills, hosted by Ray Palmer. Just turn up on the day or talk to Ray for further information.

Members are encouraged to consider arranging a future lunch or dinner at a venue of their choice. Please discuss with Ray Finch: email rayfinch42@gmail.com or mobile 0414-746-954.

**Movie Group**—a visit to Hornsby Event Cinemas was arranged for the 7<sup>th</sup> of March for a viewing of *Empire of Light*, followed by lunch at Hornsby RSL Club. Details of the next movie will be advised to members via email.

**The Ramblers**—on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March a good turnout of 14 of us (9 members and 5 guests) enjoyed a ramble from Umina Beach to Ettalong Beach, with lunch after the ramble on the Alfresco Terrace at Ettalong Diggers.

For this month we will meet at 9.45a.m. on Thursday, 30 March at Epping Station concourse to catch the 10.02 a.m. train to Rhodes. From Rhodes station we will enjoy an interesting 5 km ramble along the scenic Parramatta River foreshore to Concord West, including the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway, the Concord Foreshore Trail, the heritage Yaralla House and Estate, and the Wilga Street heritage precinct. Lunch after the ramble will be at Bar Briscola on Victoria Avenue, Concord West. After lunch we will catch the train from Concord West Station back to Epping. Please give Rick Collins a call or text on 0411-611-338 if you would like to come or if you have any queries.

**Cycle Group aka Wobblies**—there were seven riders for the Rouse Hill to Windsor ride on 24 February 2023. After meeting at Rouse Hill Regional Park, the ride was via the Windsor Road cycle path to Windsor for coffee at the Bridge Café. The return journey was via the same route, a total distance of 25 km.

The next ride will be the Prospect Parklands and Viaduct ride on Friday, 31 March 2023. The meeting point is 10.00 a.m., in the bottom car park (Walder Park Gate) on William Lawson Drive. Access to the Parklands is via Reservoir Road. Take the M4 from the Cumberland Highway (Wentworthville). Approximately 4 km along the M4 take the 1<sup>st</sup> exit ramp to Reservoir Road/Blacktown. Turn left at the lights, and then right at the 1<sup>st</sup> roundabout into Reservoir Road, then 2<sup>nd</sup> left is William Lawson Drive.

We will ride along the Prospect Canal Reserve track, over the viaduct, across the Cumberland Highway and on to the end of the track near Fowler Street, Guildford West. We will then take Guildford Road into Guildford for coffee.

For the return journey we will retrace our route back from Guildford to the Cumberland Highway, then take the Highway cycle path south, before turning right into Prospect Creek/Long Street Park Recreation Reserve and back to Prospect Reservoir (a total distance of approximately 25 km).

Please contact Steve Drury if you wish to participate or need more information: email [sandbdrury@gmail.com](mailto:sandbdrury@gmail.com) or phone 9872-7447 or mobile 0487-785-444.

**Theatre**—Wal Gallagher is taking bookings for the first play in the Theatre on Chester's 2023 season of three plays, the much loved *Blithe Spirit*. Often described as 'An Improbable Farce', the play is about the chaos that arises when the ghost of Charles Condomine's former wife, Elvira, appears after a séance that he organises in his house. Charles can see and hear the ghost but no-one else can. The play is beautifully written in typical Noel Coward style with his subtle but biting social comment on the English wealthy classes. Some lines are particularly relevant today.

Wal has tickets available for the Wednesday, 26 April 2023 performance at 8.00 p.m. at \$25 each. Please book with Wal at the March or April General Meeting. Also let him know if you wish to attend dinner at the Epping Thai Restaurant before the play.

**By Opal Card**—four members enjoyed a trip for lunch at the Budgewoi Hotel on the 27<sup>th</sup> February. Use your Opal Card on Monday, 27 March 2023 to travel to Cronulla for lunch. We will assemble either at the bus stop in Rawson Street (opposite Coles car park) no later than 8.50 a.m. or at bus stop A2 at Parramatta Interchange no later than 9.35 a.m. In Epping we will board the Route 550 bus at 8.54 a.m. to Parramatta, arriving there at 9.29 a.m. Here we will board the Route M92 bus from Stand A2 at 9.45 a.m. for Sutherland, scheduled to arrive there at 11.12 a.m. We will then go to Platform 3 at Sutherland Station to catch the train to Cronulla. Lunch will be at the South Beach Seafood Company's shop 1/20 Gerrale Street with outside tables (its Menu can be found online).

After lunch we will catch the train from Cronulla at 1.33 p.m. to Central Station, arriving there at 2.29 p.m. We will alight and visit the new Central Walkway, which has been constructed in the middle of the Station, via the lift. There is the option of continuing through to the Grand Concourse and board the 2.45 p.m. fast train back to Epping or the 2.46 p.m. train from Platform 18.

## WELFARE REPORT (prepared by our Welfare Officer, Ray Palmer)

**I** sadly have to report the passing of Ray Williams, who was 97 years old. Ray was one of the original members of Epping RSL and always represented our Club at wreath laying, etc., on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day when he was able. Five members and two wives attended his Celebration of Life and what a wonderful term of service he did for our country.