



Probus Club of Champagne Valley

October 2010

2010/11 Committee

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Fibonacci: a recurring relationship

At our October meeting, Peter Sutton, retired investigative journalist and the publisher of the Natal Mercury for 10 years, stunned and, perhaps, confused his Probus audience with mathematical theorems and formative angles drawn from the Fibonacci series of numbers as interpreted by Fred Crooks through some 800 different scientific observations.

Tracing a path through the hydrogen atom, the pyramids at Giza and Stonehenge, Sutton brought his conjecture into our immediate future by forecasting an "awful depression" just around the corner. Illustrated by complex diagrammatics, he argued that the possibility of another civilization challenges traditional Egyptologists' theories and drew parallels in nature such as branching in trees and the arrangement of leaves on a stem.

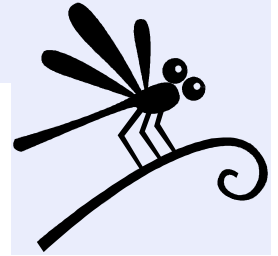
A complex and clearly different topic to our traditional presentations, Peter Sutton provided members with some challenging arguments for discussion over supper. Our thanks to Peter for his research and presentation and also to Nikki Walters for hosting the speaker.

Who was Fibonacci? "The greatest mathematician of the middle ages" was born in Pisa, Italy (of leaning tower fame) about 1175AD. His full name was Leonardo Pisano. Fibonacci is a shortening of the Latin "filius Bonacci" which means "the son of Bonaccio". His father's name was Guglielmo Bonaccio. Fibonacci was one of the first people to introduce the Hindu-Arabic number system into Europe – the positional system we use today – based on ten digits with its decimal point. In a book published around 1202 he detailed a sequence of numbers by which the first two numbers are 0 and 1 and each subsequent number is the sum of the previous two ie 1,2,3,5,8 and onwards. In 1870 this numerical series was named after Fibonacci. Source : wikipedia.org.



In view of the overwhelming silence resulting from our request for alternative suggestions to replace a Progression Dinner as our year end event, we shall, indeed, continue with this annual tradition. This year the dinner will be on **Thus 2nd December, so please keep your diaries clear for that date. The Crawfords will be organizing the evening. This is a great fun evening combining different Members at each destination with a range of top class home cooking plus the added sense of mystery in not knowing where you will be for your next course or who you will be dining with. More details next month!**

Dragonfly Diary: Come dine with me!



So I received an invitation the other day. No, no don't be too happy for me – it wasn't a proper invitation, all handwritten and sealed in an envelope or anything larry like that. It arrived by e-mail along with all the other dross, garbage and day old fish of everyday life – the jokes family believe are so hilarious and encouragements to treble my money while simultaneously helping an heir to the Nigerian royal line out of a tight spot – but still, it was good to receive an invitation, even if it will plunder my protein and fat free yogurt diet named after some unpronounceable French icon.

Lunch and supper invitations in this Valley flow fast and furious with a host of home chefettes plating up delicacies both local and exotic. The popularity of home entertaining is not simply the opportunity to parade and exchange views on issues from the Ratepayers' Association to the performance of the local police captain but is, rather, a sad reflection on the inadequacies and inconsistency of our valley eateries.

What then of the nosh we enjoy in local homes? Thankfully, it has moved from the lavish – and costly – to a more fundamental supper concept. Escoffier famously said that *la nostalgie*, or homesickness, was simply a longing for the food of one's childhood. As a Frenchman living in London at the turn of the twentieth century, he had reason to be mournful perhaps, but those of us who live in today's food-fashion world of Bill Granger, Gordon Ramsey and Rick Stein have cause for wistfulness when so much of what we ate when young has disappeared. Hail the retro supper and be gone the perfectionist-pleasing parties with best china – if the food is fresh, tasty and neatly presented, crockery be damned.

Then there is the matter of the bottle..... or rather its contents. Happily, Jens Jacobsen, as he goes about his business of counting ecoli in our waterways, does not include a test for alcohol content. So the only real give-a-way are the mountains of bottles that we surreptitiously move to the nearest communal refuse area with the silent prayer that the local Estate Manager or his wife is not alerted by the loud clinking that follows. But whether the hue is red, pink or white or the source was grape or grain, always remember that a meal without wine is like a day without sunshine except that on a day without sunshine, you can still get wasted!

November Birthday Celebrations



- Bunny Ashley-Botha on 30 Nov**
- Eric Hancock on 8th Nov**
- Barry McLoughlin on 13th Nov**
- Veronica Muirhead on 20th Nov**
- Nikki Walters on 14th Nov**
- Judy Wellbeloved on 13th Nov**
- Dave Wilcox on 27th Nov**

Have a great and healthy year ahead!

The Thai Food Flop

Unfortunately, due to the minimal interest shown in attending this outing, it was necessary to cancel. Our apologies to those already donning their aprons, sharpening their knives and brandishing their cutting boards.

Outings convenor, Hylton Mercer, is currently running down a few options and we hope to arrange an alternative event before the end of the year.

Tales from the early Settlers

A husband and wife duo will be our presenters at our final Probus meeting for 2010 on Thus 4th November. Since the 1960s historian **Shelagh O'Byrne Spencer** has been compiling biographies of the first wave of British settlers (the term 'British' encompasses English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh).

Her project covers the approximately 2800 settlers that came to Natal between 1824 and 1857. Today Dr Spencer has published seven volumes of these biographies in the critically acclaimed series known as 'British Settlers in Natal 1824 - 1857: a Biographical Register'.

The presentation will be led by Shelagh's husband, Brian, who way back in the early 60s started to collect memorabilia and anecdotes relating to the 1850 Settlers of the Byrne Valley in hopes of starting a Museum there. It was not long before he was introduced to Shelagh who was already deeply involved into much wider research. It did not prove practical to build a museum at Byrne and what was collected became the nucleus of Richmond, Byrne and Districts Museum which is housed in what was the Presbyterian Manse in Richmond. So far seven volumes of Shelagh's register have been published by the University of Natal Press and she is presently preparing volume eight for publication.

Brian and Shelagh will provide us with a host of stories and anecdotes drawn from their research, some funny, others inspiring and even a couple about downright bad behaviour. This promises to be an intriguing and captivating evening so get your friends together, join Probus for supper and let's hear Brian and Shelagh tell their tales. Details are as follows

Date: Thus 4th November 2010

Time: 6:00 pm

Where: Monk Cowl Country Club
Conference Centre

Cost: Members R80/ Guests R95
A cash bar will be available

If you are bringing guests, we recommend that you arrive in sufficient time to ensure you are seated together.

MENU for 4th November

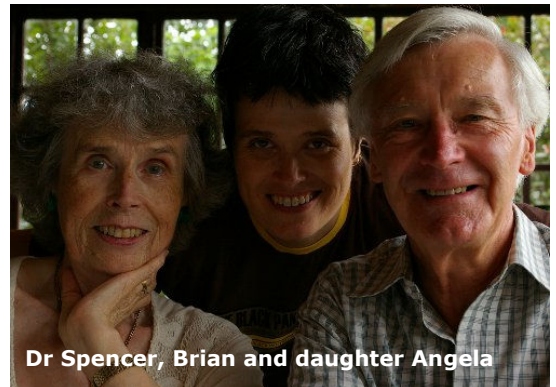
Minestrone Soup
with croutons & rolls



Monks sticky chicken
fresh vegetables and baby potatoes

Apple crunch pie
with ice cream or cream

Vegetarian Option
Peppadew, spinach and feta quiche
served with salad



Dr Spencer, Brian and daughter Angela

PLEASE confirm your attendance for the next meeting with Martin Goulding.

Please assist by contacting Martin advising whether or not you are going to attend,

Martin's number is:

084 491 3899 or

e-mail: martin@genkem.co.za.

Please note that, in consideration to the Caterers, we must apply a cut off time of midday on the day before any meeting; ie if you have not booked by that time, we shall not be in a position to accommodate you and, conversely, if you have booked and do not cancel by the day before, we must still look to you for payment. Of course, substitutes are always welcome but should be advised to Martin.