

The Pipeclay Club

President's Report 2019

It is my pleasure to present my annual report on the activities and state of the Pipeclay Club for the year ending 31st August 2019.



People

The year began at the last AGM, on 26th September 2018, with the retirement from the Presidency of our founder and long-standing guide and mentor, Major General Jim Barry. After picking up the pieces of the Naval and Military Club, Jim, with the able assistance of the Secretary, Stephen Lake and a small and willing committee, forged the on-line Pipeclay Club which has provided us with a means of keeping in touch with former comrades and the maintenance of a social program for those of us with a military connection or inclination. We wished Jim well in his retirement at the last AGM but I am pleased to report that he is a busy and valued Immediate Past President and committee member.

In a burst of yet-to-be-justified confidence, Jim suggested I might like to replace him in the chair and I was duly elected by the AGM.

Another changing of the guard is to take place at this meeting. In the nine years that have elapsed since we began on 11th November 2010, Sub-Lieutenant Stephen Lake has been the club's Secretary and Webmaster. He has put extraordinary amounts of time, effort and most of all, expertise into the development of our club's on-line existence in the website, has maintained our relationship with our hosts, the RACV Club, sent out newsletters and invitations and organised events. For most of our members, Stephen's efforts could go unnoticed simply because he does it all so well and apparently effortlessly; those few of us who have seen his work at close quarters know that none of it is easy and all of it is achieved by hard work, initiative, imagination and a necessary touch of resilience. Stephen has decided it is time for him to step down; his contribution to the success of this club has been remarkable and will be missed.

An announcement about his successor will be made soon.

Events

The club has been involved with a number of events through the year, some of which we have initiated and conducted for ourselves and some in which we have joined with like-minded groups. These have included

26th September 2018. Annual General Meeting and Lunch.

28th November 2018. Christmas Lunch.

25th February 2019. Members Get Together.



6th March 2019. RAA Lunch

25th April 2019. ANZAC day Lunch and Speaker.

16th May 2019. 138th Birthday of the Pipeclay Club Lunch

5th June 2019. Defence Reserves Association Lunch

8th August 2019. Battle of Amiens Commemoration at the Shrine.

9th August 2019. General Sir John Monash Commemoration at Parliament House followed by Spirit of Australia Lunch.

16th August 2019. Vietnam Veterans Lunch.

31st August 2019. Dinner dance at RACV Club.

Attendance at most of these functions has been satisfactory with about two or three dozen at our lunches. Two events stand out although for different reasons. On ANZAC Day we were most fortunate to have as a guest speaker, Mr Michael Bennett, grandson of Sir John Monash; this attracted a very strong attendance and we were treated to a very interesting and moving talk from Mr Bennett about General Monash from a family perspective.

On 31st August, fourteen members and partners attended the RACV Club's Dinner Dance, with our own private room adjoining the main dining room and dance floor. A grand time was had by all but it was disappointing that so few members decided to attend. The committee must be attentive always to what people want to do but please let us know if evening functions are not going to attract you. The committee would like to hear feedback and suggestions from members preferably early in the club's year, (that is, now) so that we can plan ahead for activities that you want to attend.

The collaboration with other like-minded groups is an important part of our existence. We have good relations, and a lot of overlapping membership, with Royal United Service Institute, Military History and Heritage Victoria, Defence Reserves Association, the Royal Australian Artillery Association and The Spirit of Australia Foundation. It is in our interest and the interests of the other groups to encourage and support each other's events and initiatives, by passing on each other's notices and publications and participating in joint activities.

Membership

After a concerted effort during the year, we have a membership data-base of 748 members. Of these 337 have supplied us with an email address and to that extent are regarded as active members. A creditable 45% of these members read and/or reply to email communications. We are always grateful to members who reach out to people they know who may be interested in our program; please do not leave recruitment to the committee.

The RACV Club

We continue to be grateful to the RACV Club which provides us with excellent facilities and service. We could not find a better host for our functions when we go off-line and meet in the real world.



The RACV Director who has been a most helpful and enthusiastic supporter of our club within their club, Ms Merran Kelsall is standing down from the Board. We thank her most sincerely for her support and friendship. Our long-standing contact, friend and supporter on the staff of the club, Ms Claire McParland has left the employ of the RACV to move on to bigger things in her career; we are very grateful for her help over many years.

Governance

The club is well served by an executive and a broader committee which have met as required during the year. I thank all of them for their efforts and commitment.

LTCOL Michael Buckridge
President

25 September 2019