

Probus Neutral Bay Guest Speaker – Tues. 11th APRIL, 2023

PAUL BAKER – “BANJO MAN”



“The Banjo – Its Origins, Its Development” and a Live Performance

Our Guest Speaker.... PAUL BAKER. Paul has been playing the banjo since his early twenties and can play as a soloist, in a duet, trio, or in a full jazz band. His experience – both internationally and locally - is mind boggling. Hence, he is referred to as the “Banjo Man”.

His involvement as a supreme banjo player: Paul Furniss’ San Francisco Jazz Band ..1978 – Now; Sydney Jazz Club ... 1980 – Present; Sydney Showboat musical entertainer and tourist commentator ...1996 – 2002. Having “retired”, he still plays professionally as a specialist banjo player, but enjoys playing for people who can truly appreciate his talent, having lived through those times. E.g., Probus club members.

He completed school in Sydney in 1963 then attended Sydney TFE, qualifying as a Health and Building Inspector. For many years he served with both the Hornsby and Gosford councils.

From 2008 to 2012 he served as a volunteer in the Australian HealthCall Group, a nursing and support organisation providing nursing care in the home in the areas of personal care, palliative care and disability support.

Other skills include ukulele, guitar, song writing, vocalist.

Paul has one daughter, and lives in St Ives.

His Presentation... Paul will talk on the origins of the banjo originally in the 1800s, created by enslaved Africans and their descendants in the Caribbean and colonial North America. However, the banjo’s creation was the result of a blending between West African and European forms, the latter having a different string formation. Hence the creation of the black minstrel show.

The era incorporated the American Civil War, a subject that will be blended into the discussion.

Time for a bit of history and a lot of entertainment!