

THE enduring appeal of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* has baffled many people down the years since it premiered at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, in 1952. So a group of Kyrle Probus Club members, their wives and guests recently visited Malvern Theatre to see if they could solve the mystery of both its popularity and its plot.

Even the author herself was puzzled, once offering an explanation that 'It's not really frightening. It's not really horrible. It's not really a farce. But it has a little of all these things. It is the sort of play you can take anyone to.' The Kyrle Probus party would probably agree.

Having whetted their appetite with a satisfying lunch in the theatre's Scene Bistro restaurant, the Probus group thoroughly enjoyed the matinee performance in this reprise of the 60th anniversary tour of the record-breaking play.

It was made all the more pleasurable by the delightful ambience that Malvern Theatres now provides for audiences. Before entering the traditional auditorium, visitors can linger in a spacious, light, architecturally pleasing foyer area, overlooking the beautifully landscaped Priory gardens.

If anyone has yet to see the *Mousetrap*, be advised to regard everyone as a suspect, including the detective sergeant!

The day following the theatre visit, Kyrle Probus held its second meeting of the month when the speaker was member Martin Barr. In a well-illustrated, humorous presentation, entitled 'From bicycle to helicopter,' Martin claimed to be of 'noble birth.'

Talking about his early life in Scotland, Martin explained that he was born in Stirling castle where his father was employed and was brought up in Bonnybridge, whose claim to fame was that it was known as the UFO capital of Scotland.

While a young Martin had his bicycle, his father was a great motorbike enthusiast, he said and family holidays were spent travelling on a motorbike and sidecar, although they eventually went on to holiday in a caravan.

At 15 he was told he could leave school if he could get a job. He was offered a job at the age of 16 as an apprentice electrician in a local paper mill and during the course of his apprenticeship, he met a young lady, Emily, whom he married at the age of 20.

He eventually got a job at the Dounreay nuclear power station near Thurso, where some 2,500 workers were employed. From Dounreay, he moved to the British Aluminium factory at Invergordon, before moving on to work in the North Sea oilfield, when transport to work was by helicopter.