

THE ROTARY CLUB OF ROTORUA CELEBRATES ITS 90th BIRTHDAY

Highlights of the first 90 years

On Monday 11th December 2017 our Rotary club celebrated the milestone of its 90th birthday, and at the same time including the Club Christmas Party, with an event at the Rotorua Golf Club. 61 people attended the function with **Past World President of Rotary International (2006 – 2007) Bill Boyd** and **Past President of our own Club, John Heaton (1974 – 1975)**, being the main speakers. John's Address can be seen on this same page under, "P.P. John Heaton's Address".

The Rotary Club of Rotorua (District 9930) was formed and organized 90 years ago on 17 October 1927. On 21 December 1927 the Charter from Rotary International was presented to the Club's first President, Thomas McDowell, by District Governor Peter Barr, with the Charter Number of 18571.

Our invited guest speaker for this very special celebration was Past Rotary International President Bill Boyd who spoke on the early days of Rotary in New Zealand including the extending of vocational service into the community. This included the starting of:

- The Crippled Children's Society in New Zealand
- Building the first Karitane Hospital
- Organizing of the first mobile TB clinic
- Starting the Milk in Schools
- Began the first Health Camps
- Brought the Defensive Driving Courses to New Zealand
- Began the first National Kidney Foundation
- Began Riding for the Disabled
- First Asthma Society
- Began the National Children's Health Research Foundation

Many of the early activities of Rotary are now lost in the mist of history.

In 1945 the Rotary Club of Auckland established the Obstetrical and Gynaecological Committee which led to the equivalent of \$200,000 being raised to endow a Professional Chair in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the University of Auckland and eventually to the establishment of National Women's Hospital. In 1961 the same club, with the support of the Governor General Viscount Cobham, industrialist Wolf Fisher and others formed the Outward Bound Trust.

To recognise the Golden Jubilee of Rotary in New Zealand in 1971 the National Child Health Research Foundation was established and significant funding towards the Chair of Paediatrics at the Auckland Medical School was initiated.

I

n 1938 Sir John McKenzie established the J R McKenzie Youth Education Fund. Rotary Clubs administer the Fund in the major cities. The Youth Education Fund is however dwarfed by the J R McKenzie Trust, established by Sir John in 1940. This Trust is professionally administered, with Rotarians being prominent amongst the trustees and Sir John's son Sir Roy McKenzie has continued the outstanding benevolence of the family through both his

Rotary and community activities. By the end of 1998 the JR McKenzie Trust had given over \$37,500.000 to worthy community organisations.

Many communities have adventure play grounds, fitness trails and walkways provided by Rotary clubs. You will see Community Police driving vehicles carrying a Rotary wheel, and similar vans driven by other community organisations. Fire engines have “Jaws of Life” and sophisticated heat seeking equipment funded by Rotarians. The Ellerslie Flower Show, the largest flower show in the Southern Hemisphere is a project initiated by the Rotary Club of Auckland.

Other New Zealand initiatives have developed into international programmes. In 1955 a group of six young men with a Rotarian leader, left New Zealand for two months study tour of the U.K. The second team in 1957 had eight team members selected from some 500 applicants and visited Canada and the United States. Visits followed to India and Ceylon, Japan and Malaysia, Thailand and Australia. Return teams were hosted in New Zealand. This programme was called ROTA (Rotary Overseas Travel Award). In 1963, it was suggested to the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation that ROTA should become an international programme and it has proved highly successful, with over 520 teams exchanging around the world each year. These groups of potential leaders in their communities are helped to develop through the experience and it is no surprise to find leaders in New Zealand industry, sport and politics among the ranks of those who have benefited from this programme now called Group Study Exchange (GSE). Through The Rotary Foundation over 200 New Zealanders have had one years’ study at an overseas University as Rotary Scholars.

Rotary’s most ambitious undertaking, announced in 1985, is the PolioPlus programme. Rotary spearheaded this initiative with a pilot project in the Philippines in 1979. Rotary has partnered with WHO (World Health Organisation) UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) and CDC (USA Centre for Diseases) to eradicate this disease.

P.P.R.I. Bill Boyd
11th December 2017