

3 Minute Talk 22nd August 2016

I was invited to say a few words on the occasion of having completed 50 years as a member of this Club.

Thinking back to the time when I joined on this day in 1966, it was an honour and a privilege to be invited to be a part of a Club of 130 people (men in those days) who represented a wide range of vocations from mostly the business and professional sectors of our community, who had been selected on the basis of being regarded as at the top of their respective vocations. I must confess to being somewhat apprehensive of mixing and socialising with a large number of men, friends and associates of my father whom I had always addressed as Mr., but now found myself on first name terms. To my delight, I immediately found that I was welcomed, made to feel at home and treated as an equal.

My father had founded our business thirty years earlier in 1936 and during the intervening years, built it up on the principles of Honesty, Good ethical practises and Exemplary service and these we endeavoured to uphold during the entire life of our business. How far we went to achieve this is not for us, but others to judge. One of the reasons I have placed great value on my membership of Rotary over the years, is that Rotary stands for those very same ideals, which can be seen in the Four Way Test :

1. Is it the Truth ?
2. Is it fair to all concerned ?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendships ?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned ?

New members were left in no doubt as to the expectations that the Club placed on them, particularly in terms of the rigid attendance requirements and committee responsibilities and general participation in Club activities and Projects. This was conveyed to them by means of Fireside meetings conducted by several senior members of the Club as part of the induction process.

The importance of engaging new members fully in the life of the Club was recognised and so early on we were allocated a job and each succeeding year I found myself with a major responsibility leading up to my year as President 1974/75.

The Club was involved in a number continuing service activities in which the whole membership would participate and these I feel, gave us a sense of the real worthiness of our Club.

One was the Sunday outings for children from the Queen Elizabeth Cerebral Palsy unit. Two cars would be rostered each Sunday to collect the children and their Nurse for a fun afternoon experience.

Second was the Blood Bank Appeal held in a public hall where the Schools and Public at large would provide donors, and Rotarians and wives would provide assistance for setting up, making teas and generally providing manpower as required.

Third was the Annual Health Stamp Appeal where the Club members were allocated areas and secured pre sales to businesses in that location. This was a very important source of funding for the Health Camps.

The Club ran a number of very successful Community Service projects over a reasonably short span raising something in the order of \$20,000 each which enabled the building and purchase of the YWCA facility and the Senior Citizens building in Ranolf Street.

Probably one of the Club's most rewarding projects was the Annual Home Show masterminded by Harold Holmes which netted around \$20,000 each year. Harold had a very dedicated and hard working committee including Ian Smith and Tony Hill who spent many hours in the organisation and preparation for it.

The whole Club membership was involved for a few days in the setting up, providing manpower during the show and dismantling and cleanup afterwards. One cannot underestimate the great benefits of the camaraderie, fellowship and general strengthening of the Club through an exercise such as this.

During my year of President I was very fortunate to have as programme organiser, Bill Judd the Station Manager for Radio Geysersland. Bill, during his career in Broadcasting had built up an impressive array of contacts and put his knowledge to good use when arranging Guest Speakers. These included Len Bayliss, Chief Economist for the BNZ, Sir Geoffrey Roberts, Chairman of Air New Zealand, All Black, Graeme Crossman and towards the end of the year we had a combined meeting with the Lions Club at the International Hotel with Sir Keith Holyoake as Guest Speaker.

Over the years Rona and I have been involved in a number of Student and Youth exchanges as well as friendship hosting and we have found all of them particularly rewarding and good fun. One in particular, was a youth exchange where we hosted a girl called Helen from Wales, who filled a teaching position at Rotorua Boys High School. The stories we could tell, would keep you entertained for hours and some would make your hair stand on end. Helen's father was a doctor and Rotarian in Wales and we thought that he may have hoped, by her coming to New Zealand we would sort her out. It just didn't happen.

Rotary has been very good to both Rona and I and in the earlier years we attended a number of District Conferences, great experiences where we were inspired by amazing speakers and enjoyed fantastic fellowship. Rona joined Inner Wheel when it was formed in Rotorua and served a term as District Chair even before she was President of the Club. She has made wonderful friendships there and together we feel privileged to have been a part of this great organisation and our thanks to you all for this day.

P.P. John Heaton
Rotary Club of Rotorua
22 August 2016