

THE ROTARY CLUB OF TRURO

BY WARD MURDOCK

From the 50th Year of Rotary

29th Year of the Truro Club

1955

The Truro Club No. 2314, with 16 Charter Members, was first established on the 3rd of February, 1926, with the help of 25 Rotarians from New Glasgow, and 15 from Halifax, the latter headed by John C. Gass, who was mainly responsible for bringing Rotary to Truro.

The first officers elected were F. L. Lewis, President, A. R. Coffin, Vice- Pres., R. A. Mingie, Secretary and R. S. Boyd, Treasurer. Directors were E. G. Moxon, T. G. Taylor, and T. P. Bentley. This first meeting was adjourned until March 5th, 1926, when the Charter was presented by Charlie Burchell of Halifax, 3rd Vice-Pres. of Rotary International. Many visiting Rotarians attended the Charter night from Moncton, Saint John, New Glasgow and Halifax. Wm. P. Webster of Halifax presented the Truro Club with a bronze gong and gavel. Short addresses were given by Al Grainger, Pres. of the Moncton Club, and by Don Fraser, Past-Pres. of the New Glasgow Club, but the address of the evening was that of J. Layton Ralston of Halifax. He told of the spread of Rotary throughout the World, and of its acceptance by men of every station and walk of life, and also of his own experience as a special ambassador of Rotary Inter-national to introduce Rotary into Australia and New Zealand. Through the years our meetings have been held in the Scotia Hotel, which was first known to us as the Learment Hotel.

Our District was originally No. 32, then 192, and now is 284, with the increase in Clubs, and the many changes it became necessary from time to time to change the District.

At the end of the first Rotary year the Membership of the Truro Club had increased to 32. New members included Fred Blois, Lou Christie and Lamert Daniel. In July of 1926 the New Glasgow Club put on a Minstrel Show in Truro, in order to help us with funds to start our Rotary work in the community. The show was a great success, and included a street parade to drum up interest.

Soon the Club Membership increased to 45, and remained near that number for many years. No Major projects were taken up but members individually through the Rotary influence took an active part in all community activities, such as Town Council, Electric Commission, Boy Scouts, Children's Aid, Board of Trade, Canadian Legion, and many others.

In 1930, just after the death of Rotarian Harry Wellard, the Club supplied the Wellard Memorial Shield for annual musical competition, in the Truro Schools. It

was won the first year by Willow Street School, and is still up for annual competition, and presented to the winners by the President of Rotary.

Also in 1930 the Truro Club first became actively interested in Crippled Children, and made a complete survey and canvass in the Town and County, in the interest of a "Provincial Society for Crippled Children".

In the early days it was a constant problem to raise funds to support the many community projects. Personal donations and the sponsoring of concerts and moving pictures were often used, but the crowning effort came in the spring of 1934, when the Club, after rehearsing all winter, put on its first Minstrel Show, running two nights to capacity houses in the old Graphic Theatre, with a 20-voice male chorus and a 12-piece orchestra. Ed. McCullough acted as interlocutor, soloists were Gerry MacElhinney, Jim Pirie, Hec Munro, Ward Murdock and Gordon Taylor. Endmen were Jim Pirie, Fred Blois, Gordon Taylor, Elmer Doyle, Jack Glassey and Ward Murdock. The second part of the programme was a concert with many Truro artists assisting.

During the early years many joint meetings and picnics were held with outside clubs including Amherst, Windsor, New Glasgow, Westville and Pictou. Also Annual Curling Bonspiels were set up, with the Pictou County Clubs. It was during these years that the Annual Curling Matches started with the Kiwanis Club of Truro, for the Lord Depression Cup.

In the early thirties annual Club events were the entertaining of the County Council, and our meetings were started then, with our friends as guests from the various parts of the County each Fall. We have held meetings in Stewiacke, Middle Stewiacke, Upper Stewiacke, Brookfield, Old Barns, Clifton, Great Village, Bass River, Debert and Tatamagouche.

In these same years we started to supply milk in the schools, which is continued to this day, with many thousands of bottles being supplied. Our files carry letters from the School Nurse and the Local Council of Women, citing many cases of children gaining 5 to 7lbs. in weight during the school year, thanks to our Milk Fund.

In the summer of 1934 Rotary opened a supervised swimming pool, near the Salmon River Bridge, and supplied tents and other equipment. This was arranged by a committee that was headed by B. C. Holder.

In 1936 the Club set up the first library in the Colchester County Hospital, with 200 books. This has been maintained, and added to each year. In recent years, under the direction of Harry Weatherbee, a portable library has been added, so that a selection of books could be wheeled into each patient's room for them to make their own choice. Still more recently have been added more bookcases, through the perseverance of our member, B. C. Holder, who earned the sobriety? "Bookcase Holder" in his efforts to supply the necessary cases.

For nearly 20 years the Club held an Annual Motor Drive for the Girls from the Maritime Home, which was greatly appreciated, perhaps this service should be revived again.

In 1936 Rotary Welcome Signs were first erected at the entrances to Truro, which continue to be maintained, and renewed as required.

Many hundreds of pairs of glasses have been supplied to needy school children on the Recommendation of the School Nurse.

In 1936 the Truro Club decided to make Crippled Children's work a major project of the Club and a complete survey was made of the Town and County to find every case of a crippled child. This resulted in a Clinic being held the following year at the Colchester County Hospital, conducted by Dr. Tom Acker of Halifax, to which Clinic 30 patients were brought in from the area for examination. This again resulted in many recommendations by Dr. Tom for operations and corrective treatment, etc. Many of these were needy cases, where the Club could help with transportation, hospital and surgical fees, etc.

At that time, 12 individual Rotarians volunteered to sponsor a child each, to follow their cases through, and to see that they received all of the assistance required. Up to the present, Crippled Children's work has continued to be a major project of the Club, with a proud record of many dozens of children, who, through treatment and operations, are now able to take their place in the schools and community at large in a normal way.

In 1937 the Club gave strong financial support to a Student Coronation Fund, which enabled D. G. Davis' nephew, Murray Davis, to go from Truro. It was a wonderful trip for him, and well described to the Club on his return.

In 1938 our second Clinic was held with 45 patients attending. Our records indicate such cases as that of a young girl who attended the '37 Clinic on crutches, being back in '38 without even a bandage required; a small boy, after an operation for a club foot, now clear of steel braces, and only requiring a special boot. A one-month old baby having a cast put on a crooked leg, which would be straight in four months. The Club History cites many similar cases of this great work.

During the War period four Rotarians were made Honorary Members, while on active service-Lyman Chapman, Gerald MacElhinney, Art MacKenzie and Ward Murdock.

In 1940/41 the Club donated two pianos for the use of the troops at Debert. One, a grand piano, was returned after the War, in good shape, and was then loaned to the Provincial Normal College, and is now at the Maritime Home for Girls. The other piano, when returned, was useless, so was disposed of, and a good one

was purchased, and donated to the new Margaret Rose School, at McClures Mills.

During the War period the Club also took a very active part in many War services. Entertainment for the troops, Air Cadets, supplying of comforts to members of the crew of H.M.C.S. "Truro", a Canadian Minesweeper, etc.

During 1944 and '45, the Truro Club entertained each week five wounded Veterans from the Debert Military Hospital, the expense being covered by holding a "Gosh Auction" in the Club each week. Previous to 1948 many methods had been used to raise funds for the many Community Service projects of the Club. For years personal donations, sponsoring of theatricals and moving picture shows were the normal methods used, and it was always a big problem in ways and means to meet our needs and obligations.

Late in 1947 when word was received that a radio station, CKCL, was to be established in Truro, the Rotary Club made an early application for an annual Radio Auction. This was authorized and the first Rotary Radio Auction was held on April 20th and 21st, 1948. Ward Murdock was named Auction Chairman with strong Committees. Many months of hard work were put in, planning and organizing for this venture. It was very successful, with every Rotarian taking an active part. The Club realized a net return of \$4,316.00 for its underprivileged children's work.

Similar auctions have been held each spring since 1948, all of which have been successful, and have supplied the Club with ample funds for its work. Many stunts result from the Auction, which are taken in good part by the Rotarians, such as Russ Davison drawing bids up to \$65.00 as a special "baby sitter", others leading a pig and a goat through the streets of the Town, accompanied by Rotarians on parade.

For many years the Club has owned several wheel chairs (Now 5), these are constantly in use, loaned out free of charge to those who need them. In 1948 a Truro Club member was elected a member of the Canadian Advisory Committee of Rotary International.

During the same year the Club completely outfitted a Rotary room in the County Hospital, and have maintained it since that time. In 1949 the Club sponsored the family of an ex-Rotarian, refugee Poland. They were in dire need as a result of the War. Parcels were sent to this family each month for a year and were gratefully acknowledged.

Also, during 1949, a boat load of supplies was being sent by Rotarians to aid orphaned children of France. To this project the Truro Club gave outstanding support, which resulted in \$3200 in food and 18 bales of clothing going forward from District 192, all arranged under the direction of District Governor Laurie Ells of Kentville.

In February, 1949, the Club authorized the first Radio School Quiz Contest, afterwards named "Schools in Action". This programme over CKCL has been carried on very successfully each year since, and has received much favorable comment.

July 28th, 1950, was a Red Letter Rotary Day in Truro when we enjoyed a visit from International President Arthur Lagueux of Quebec, accompanied by his Rotary Ann Christine. President Arthur was with us at an evening dinner and was accompanied by District Governor Ed Ford of Halifax. Our Rotary Anns entertained Mrs. Lagueux and Mrs. Ford during the afternoon and evening.

In 1951 when the "Adventure in Citizenship" was first inaugurated by the Ottawa Club, Truro sent a selected High School student and have continued to send one each year since. These included Ross Burgess, Borden Taylor, Jack Hatfield and Sandra McKay. The specific aim of this project was:

1. To give the group of visiting students an appreciation of the privileges and responsibilities of Canadian Citizenship.
2. To give them an opportunity to see the Canadian Parliament in action.
3. To show them some of the outstanding feature of the Canadian Capitol..
4. To encourage them to give an account of their visit on return to their home community.

All of these talented young people spoke to the Truro Club on their experiences, after they returned, proving to us the great value of the project. During the year 1952 our Club .started the practice of presenting to each visitor from outside Canada a small silk Nova Scotia flag, and a booklet of Nova Scotia history. These seem to be greatly appreciated by our guests.

We have had many outstanding men as guests speakers in our Club, including Col. the Honorable J. Layton Ralston, Dr. Kirk Connell, Col. Robert Hare- I wood, Rubinoff., Air Vice Marshall Clarence Dunlop, Arthur Lagueux, A. V. : Baker, Will R. Bird, Lord Rowallan, Frank Bayrd, Judge George Patterson, and many others.

We have supported the Rotary Foundation Fellowship. Last Fall, sending forward an additional donation to bring ours up to 100% for our Club Membership. This year there will be selected 109 Rotary fellows, 90 men and 19 women, who will study for one year in countries other than their own on \$2500 scholarships from Rotary International. This brings the total since 1947 up to 602 students helped In this way.

The Truro Club does not have an outstanding record of 100% meetings. They have been few and far between. However, we have maintained a good average over the years. At the time of writing the Club Membership stands at 52, plus Honourary members. Many fine members have come and gone in the Club, but it

continues to draw a very high caliber of members imbued with the Rotary ideals of "Service above Self" and "He profits most who serves the best".