

# Tulip Times Club Bulletin: 8 August 2023

Volume 85 No 07



**CREATE HOPE  
in the WORLD**

Bowral-Mittagong  
**Rotary**  
District 9705  
Chartered 26 March 1940



## Board of Directors

### President:

Don Graham

### Directors:

Trevor Fair - Secretary  
Paul Leotta - Treasurer

Rod Aistrop  
Robbie Allen  
Denise Coad  
Rosemary Kelly  
Tim Bowland  
Allan Falvey  
Leigh Robinson

Email : [rotarybm@acenet.com.au](mailto:rotarybm@acenet.com.au)  
[www.bowralmittagongrotary.com](http://www.bowralmittagongrotary.com)

## RI President:

Gordon R McNally

## Club Meetings:

Weekly on Tuesdays, 6.00pm for 6.30pm at various Southern Highlands venues. (See below)

**If you are an apology please text or phone Denise Coad 0416009395 or email**

**[denisecoad@bigpond.com](mailto:denisecoad@bigpond.com) by 5.00pm Friday before the Tuesday meeting. By default, it will be assumed that members are attending.**

Date	Meeting Venues	Speaker/ Topic	Journalist
15 Aug	Bowral Bowling Club	Johanna Airlie, Beyond the Badge	Trevor Fair
22 Aug	Annesley	Rod Aistrop et al, RAWCS Fiji Report	Pamela Brown
29 Aug	Bowral Bowling Club	Nurses Award	

**Journalist:** Tim Bowland

**Venue:** Kookabar Cafe

**Sergeant:** N/A

PP Trevor Fair opened the meeting and welcomed our guests; Bob Miller, Stephanie Robinson & Ria McCosh

**Our RAWCS team members:** Will Eddowes, Lynton Kettle, Don Graham, Robert de Jongh, Rod Aistrop are in FIJI.

**International Toast:** Leigh Robinson

**Invocation:** Leigh Robinson

**Guest Speaker:** Robbie Allen [member story]

## Announcements:

- No Sergeant this week due to members being on RAWCS trip.
- Rosemary Kelly will be the stand in President next week.
- Thanks to Bob Miller for his contribution at the Chevalier BBQ on Saturday.

- Thanks to all who helped at the Chevalier BBQ and to Rosemary & Graham who did double shifts.
- The BBQ cleared approx. \$700. It was more a Good Will exercise than a money maker. Chev was previously managed by Berrima Dist.
- An email has been received from the manager of Brigadoon looking for us to do a BBQ early April 2024.
- Don received an email from previous Disability Services. They are running a Disco for disabled youth. Trevor asked for a show of hands to support the club donating \$700 to pay for a DJ for the event. The show of hands was unanimous.
- David McCosh gave the meeting an observation about Brigadoon. In that we need to check how many other food stalls there would be.
- Ian Langford advised that Brigadoon was previously a Moss Vale Rotary event.
- Rosemary asked for members to return any aprons they have at home.

- Denise asked for a show of hands for those coming next week as we have a very good guest speaker. We need apologies in early so venues can be advised.
- Denise reminded members that there will be a Pizza lunch on the 25<sup>th</sup> August to celebrate members Birthdays.
- Jim Gasson advised members that he was approached by a young lady who wanted to congratulate the club on helping with the parking at Chevalier College.
- Ian Langford gave a report on the Science and Engineering Challenge held by the Goulburn RC. Five members from our club attended [Ian, Rose, Leigh, Will & Rod]. Yass High School won the challenge. Six schools participated, some schools only had 2 students. Approx 150 students attended all up. Leigh advised that a complaint was raised about the judging.
- Trevor thanked Kookabar for the beautiful meal and the introduced our Guest speaker Robbie Allen.
- Leigh advised that the current version of RDU magazine has a great section on Membership in the back of the magazine and encouraged everyone to read it.

## Robbie Allen [Membership Talk]



*I have tried to be brief as you may hear, I will skip over bits of the story but have kept the interesting details in here.*

### **Robbie's Journey or to be more precise -- The Innocent Abroad**

We arrived in Australia, me a babe in arms, probably 10 pound Scots 1948. Fast forward

Canberra 1964

Left School, Tafe college for Secretarial training.

Joined Government Department and soon sent to work in Parliament House. Worked for Edward Gough Whitlam, member for Werriwa, in his parliamentary office along with other staff.

Met my future husband who was a journalist in the Press Gallery, Parliament House.

We decided to go back to England to be married, for no particular reason except it may be a cheaper option!!

We arrived in LONDON

We stayed in a hotel for a night or so, looking for accommodation. I could see Neville in a phone booth with his newspaper and ringed accommodation list in front of him. He was ages. Finally he emerged saying he had been speaking with a writer who had been married to Ronald Searle the Australian Artist of St. Trinians fame. She approved of Australians and had accommodation for rent. We went around next day, It was a free standing house of three stories built in the 30's . we were offered the Servants quarters at the back of the house, Bedroom,



lounge, bathroom with bath, and a huge industrial style kitchen with all the crockery and pots and pans you could ever use. We took it. Close to the city in W2.

Neville already had a job to go to, working for British United Press, Our Landlady, the writer, worked for Penguin books, being the editor of the newly started Puffin books for children. She gave me a job and I drove to Maidstone every morning with her. I was mainly typing out manuscripts and helping with her new Puffins Club for children. So we now had money to pay for our 12 pound a week accommodation. That was a lot but better than a bedsit in Earls Court. At weekends we would travel, seeing as much as we could. What you went to Wales for the weekend? Occasionally affording the odd West end show.

We arranged to be married in July 67. Church was arranged and a reception arranged at a hotel overlooking Hyde Park. It was a small wedding with friends we had in London and Scotland. It was 1 July Canada's National Day and fireworks were being set off in the Park. They could well have been for us! We went on a quick honeymoon to Scotland in a hired Mini, travelling through the beautiful Glens of the Highlands and staying in cute pubs.

Decided we would head back to Australia later in the year, but make a journey of it.

We planned to travel by train through Europe and then to Moscow to catch the Trans Siberian Train across Russia. All this was arranged through a Communist Travel Agency in London, and of course now married had to obtain a new Passport. British of course. Finally we had travel dates and packed up small cases and sent the rest of our kit home by ship.

First stop Paris, and all the Parisian things you do, Left Bank, Moulin Rouge, delicious French food.

Next we were heading for Germany, East Berlin to be precise. The train arrived at the Station early in the morning and the guard ushered us into the waiting room as we needed our Passports stamped. The lady behind the counter took the Passports, then asked for 20 East Marks for the entry Visa. We had American Dollars, English pounds and Travellers cheques. She indicated the lady in the next booth who would change the money that we needed. During this process she noticed we did not have the required stamp on Passport which we could not get until we paid the other lady in the same cubicle the 20 Marks. So I took the Passports back to the first lady and said you stamp our passports pass it to your colleague and all will be well. You will get your 20 Marks. I think she thought I was scamming her! Finally she must have realised how stupid it must have looked and she stamped the Passports and received her 20 Marks.

Entering outside the Station we saw a Taxi sitting with trunk open so we walked over placed our baggage in

there and closed the lid. I slid into the back seat and Neville bent down and said to the Driver "Hotel Berliner""Nein, Nein came back the reply. We were confused, did he not want our fare or what? Neville jumped in the front seat slightly shaking his fist, "Hotel Berliner". The driver shrugged and took off. Drove 200 metres, did a U turn Stopped and indicated "Hotel Berliner"". East Berlin was still a bombed out city covered in rubble in 1967 whereas West Berlin, was glamorous and the buildings were slick.

A few days there and back on the train again heading for Warsaw, Poland. Very pleasant hotel and lovely weather to walk the Streets of Warsaw. The site of the Jewish Ghetto and the rebuilding of the old town as it had previously been was indeed dedication.

Down to the Station for our onward journey to Moscow. Walked across the tracks to Platform 3 where our train was waiting. Up to the carriage we go, show our tickets to the Guard who promptly says No! No! Not giving us any explanation as to why. We persevered for a while, and decided it was a waste of time. So back to the hotel we had just left, deposited our bags with the front desk and straight across the road to the Tourist Bureau. It was around 6pm and there were still staff in there. We explained what had happened, and that we had not been able to continue our journey. The pleasant young woman in the office, smiled and said I will call my Boss who has just gone home. A long conversation in Polish, finally she returns to us and we are told us to return to our hotel for a couple of days (they will pay). Come back here in the morning and we will sort your onward journey to Moscow, the next train is not for two days. So over to the Travel Bureau we go next morning, to be greeted by the young woman again and a small Polish man dressed in a short leather jacket and leather cap and a leather satchel over his shoulder. We are introduced to Jakub, who tell us that he will accompany us to the train on Thursday and he will make sure we get on the train to Moscow. I went over to thank our young lady for all she had done. She whispered "We do not like Communism" I happened to mention that I needed a pharmacy as I was developing a cold and needed some drugs. Jakub opened his satchel and said, what do you need, aspirin, cough medicine, codeine. His bag was packed. He must have been Mr Fixit in Waraw. We were also given a car and guide for the next couple of days, so we saw more of Warsaw than we expected.

Train day again, over to the Travel Bureau again to be met by Jakub with a taxi. He was a hyper active little man little man, with lots of smiles. In the taxi we head off, and come across large number of people marching with Flags and placards. Jakub chats to the taxi driver and we turn into side streets getting out of the avenue of marchers. When asked what was happening, we were

told it was a march to commemorate the Germans marching into Poland on 1 September 1939 .

We arrived at Warsaw's main station and our little man gets a trolley for our baggage and we walk across the tracks again to get to Platform 3. He says wait here. He walks up to where the train is stopped, starts speaking to the guard who is standing on the top step to the carriage. Then Jacob pushes the guard into the carriage where we could not see. A minute later he appears and indicates we should come up. We are ushered into a lovely carriage with two bunks and comfortable seating. He had paid him off!!!

We arrived in Moscow the next morning, cab to our hotel. Beautiful Pre-revolutionary building with a massive bedroom and two queen beds with white fluffy doonas. Toured Moscow for a couple of days, Kremlin museums, lined up to see dead Lenin, no shopping, no Bolshoi it was overseas no Moscow Circus also overseas, but we managed to see the Red Army Choir and Dancers on one evening. On our last night there, Neville decided we should lash out and have a special dinner. We went to the Metropol which was very famous for something, I think Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt may have stayed there. The most beautiful dining room, Paintings, Velvet curtains large floor to ceiling windows. Stunning crockery and silverware on the table. We ordered and Neville asked for some Vodka. A small carafe was brought. I thought I might need some orange juice for my vodka. Another carafe was brought, the waiter telling me it was tangerine juice. We had a lovely evening and asked for the bill. All reasonable except for the tangerine juice, equivalent of 10 pounds sterling. Oh.!! Neville calls the waiter and queries the amount saying there was still half a carafe left!!! The waiter returns with a revised bill, but still 5 pounds sterling. But we had a night to remember!!

Down to the beautiful Moscow Station to catch the Trans Siberian Railway to travel across Russia to the East coast. We found our compartment and deposited our bags and were just standing in the corridor watching the passing parade on the platform, when a pleasant gentleman approached Neville asking where we were going. He was politely asking many questions. Where was he going? We asked . " " No just seeing off my sister, who is going home." pointing to a lady sitting in the next compartment. When the train finally left the station the sister was nowhere to be seen. We decided given Neville was a journalist, he had been sent to check us out. Maybe KGB. Who knows!

When we returned to our compartment which had 4 bunks there were two young Russians lying on the other two. They were slightly inebriated. When they realised we weren't Russian but westerners, they were very apologetic. They were even offering to open large jars of preserves, plums and pears which they had obviously bought on holidays to take home. I said no, no. They are

for your families. They did try hard to converse we had some fun laughs. At the end of the corridor was a large brass samovar filled with hot sweet tea which was available for all. The dining room seemed only to serve grey meat and cabbage. I think if there had been a first class we would have transferred. But there wasn't. So here we were trying to make the best of it. Pleasant enough scenery passing by. But I had seen Dr. Zhivago just before we left Australia, nothing like what I saw out the window. After 7 days we arrived into Irkutsk half way across Siberia. The train was to stop overnight and we had a hotel room. We both decided another 7 days on this train was not for us and would ask to fly the rest of the way. Not so easy! Moscow had to be informed by telex that we wished to change our travel plans. Later that afternoon the hotel manager was to inform us that it was highly unusual for changes to be made, but Moscow had said yes and we could fly out tomorrow.

Onto a large Aeroflot plane with little or no comforts, very basic seats no lining on the plane just the shell. A young woman further up the plane had a small child on her lap. The child was sick . The Hostess walked up with a cloth and threw it at the young woman, and said in Russian what I assume was "clean it up yourself.

We duly arrived on the east coast after a noisy flight to Nakhodka port. We were to join a ship to sail to Japan. Quite a reasonably sized ship. The weather didn't look good. A couple of hours into the trip we encountered a Typhoon. Very quickly people disappeared to their cabins, obviously feeling unwell. Neville included. I was fine. I do remember sitting in the lounge and all you could see out of the big windows was green sea, no horizon just sea. By morning it had passed and we arrived in Yokohama.

Our time in Russia had been wonderful, but their people just were not ready for tourists.

By comparison arriving in Japan was a treat. Lovely people, courteous, great fresh food, young school children wishing to try out their English. We had a month in Japan travelling throughout. Mostly staying in Japanese hotels and Youth Hostels. Community bathing, and hot tubs you got used to. Bullit trains amazing. So our time in Japan was filled with pleasure and joy.

Finally on our homeward journey another ship to Hong Kong, where it stopped for a few days. We caught up with some of Neville's colleagues, he had previously worked in Hong Kong. Purchased lots of electrical items, tape decks, linen and had suits and clothes made.

Arrived back in Sydney to open our bags for Customs on the open floors of what is probably Wharf one or the Sydney Theatre Company now.. What a journey!!! Times were different, cities have changed, a little nostalgic for the good old days. All this done without credit cards, mobile phones or bags with wheels!!!

## International Toast

On 8 August 1919 Britain recognized Afghanistan independence with the Treaty of Rawalpindi. As we have lived through so much of Afghanistan's traumatised history in recent decades it is hard to come to terms with the fact that the Afghanistani people have never truly experienced independence.

Afghanistan remains one of the three countries still affected by the risk of Polio.

In 2021 there were three Rotary Clubs and two Interact Clubs.

As at 1 July 2023 the Rotary International directory only mentions two Rotary Clubs and no Interact Clubs. The Rotary Clubs are: Kabul City RC chartered 26 June 2013 having 9 members led by President Murtaza Haidey; and Jalalabad RC chartered 12 April 2004 having 13

members led by President Sayad Rafi.

Kabul City RC has no web site and its Facebook page is closed down.

Jalalabad RC has a Facebook page and emphasis is on Artificial Limb Distribution.

The dearth of information is part of the story and no doubt reflects the difficulties Rotary Clubs have to work through in some cultures, such as Afghanistan, to make a purposeful contribution to their communities.

Please be upstanding and toast the Presidents and Members of the Rotary Clubs of Kabul City and Jalalabad.

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Raffle was won by Ria McCosh, Kookabar gift Cert for \$25 redeemable at Kookabar.  
Meeting closed 8pm

**BREAKING NEWS!!!**, David Rees has a heart. According to He. Good to see you back David.



