

## **RYDE NORTH ROTARY HISTORY**

When Ryde North Rotary Club was being formed most of the North Ryde Business estate did not exist as it is now. As you can see by the way the Business District is today, some major changes have occurred. North Ryde Rotary has been involved in many of those changes. Some of the changes and projects we have been involved in include the building of the Intensive Care Unit at Ryde Hospital in conjunction with other clubs in the area, the inaugural start of the Ryde Business Forum, and the local radio station, 2RRR.

The first interest meeting, held at Schwarzkopf which was then on Epping Road, gathered some 20 or so local executives from the original companies who set up this "hi-tech" development area - only the words "hi-tech" hadn't been put into use then. We sat amongst the hair dryers in Wella's demonstration room. Frank Herford-Smith was the prime mover at this meeting and eventually became the first president of Ryde North Rotary Club. Frank had been given the task of setting up a new club by our mother club, Ryde Rotary, and he had personally canvassed the businesses in the North Ryde area to promote the new club. We spent many hours at Wella in the early days, although early members say that it did not do much good for their hair.

Ryde North Rotary was, and still is, a club for North Ryde Business, although in recent years more members have been North Ryde Residents as well as Business people.

The great day finally arrived when all the members of the new club assembled at what was then Ryde Town Hall and the North Ryde Club was chartered. This was a very impressive occasion, with some 200 Rotarians from other clubs there to welcome us as we stood on the stage wondering what it was all about!

Originally, we were a lunch club and met on the balcony of the North Ryde RSL's Main Hall. This was great until the pop group for the evening began rehearsals in the hall. After some time we moved to the Ryde North Golf Club and started eating a Chinese Lunch while we held our meetings. This worked well until the Golf Club lunches became so popular that we found our meetings being interrupted by "Number 12, your lunch is ready" booming over the loudspeaker. It was while we met at the Golf Club that two important events occurred. 1) the great debate to admit the other gender (women) into our Rotary Club, and 2) The need to change to a breakfast club to enable members to have an uninterrupted working day was realised. That is how we became the club "where business meets for breakfast", and how we have changed so that some of the best business women in the area could become Rotarians.

Our early "Bulletin" communication was handled by Ron Morgan from Remington, who's very efficient secretary would ring up members who had failed to give a paragraph for the bulletin and extract updates from them. It is believed she was a Rotoractor. Without Ron and his secretary, this club would have had a major stumbling block to overcome in the early days as there was so much to learn, and the weekly "Bulletin" was the main communicator.

Our main fundraising was an annual Art Show, held at Ethnor (now Johnson and Johnson). This was enabled by Willi Popper, who convinced the Ethnor Board that we would not destroy the place if we took over the impressive entrance and staff dining room for a weekend each year. We had to clear out the furniture, and erect the stands and lighting after 5pm Friday, run the show of

some 500+ paintings and crafts over the weekend, and somehow get the building all back together again by 8am Monday. It took some doing, including the security for the nights concerned, but we managed to pull off the almost impossible each time. At one show we displayed copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were from Barry Dingleys Company Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Barry and Grant Walker, who we exported to the UK, and who has not come back, did much to raise the prestige of the event, and we thank them sincerely. At the time we were doing this, the road beyond Ethnor ran into a field. Macquarie Centre had not been built yet!

We also spent a year or so at Macquarie Centre, meeting there for breakfast and trying to get the shop owners involved in the club. At around that time the RSL was renovated and we returned there for our meetings. This time they were held for breakfast, minus the pop group!!

→ *date & move to Stamford with reason*

As North Ryde has grown and changed, so have we. We have noticed as we update our North Ryde business mail list that around one third of the businesses, or their executives, change. Our club reflects the community, with a few of the originals still around, sometimes under new company names, and some, like our revered founding president, retired.

The friendship of this club has been its main feature. We have always been the larrikin club, and we hope that continues. If we can't laugh at and with each other, the place would be too deadly serious. Yet, we all learn from each other and we have found much to respect in the quality and depth of fellow members. The club members foster good friendships, both here and in overseas countries, and many Rotarians feel that if you are not a Rotarian, and you live or work in this area you don't know what you are missing.