ROTARY CLUB OF GREATER GERALDTON

A *BREEZE* to Connect

Rotary Connection | Club Meeting
Highlights: Wednesday 25 November 2026

Back at the Golf Club, National GP Honours, and 2,500 Miles Through Scotland

After last week's continental breakfast trial at the Bluff Point CWA Rooms, members returned to the Geraldton Golf Club on Pass Road at 7.00 am on Wednesday 25 November 2026. President Bob Hall was in the chair, Hugh Lavery delivered the invocation and toast, and Sergeant Bob Urquhart oversaw the box and fines.

Guest Paul Blackwell joined the morning's fellowship, while apologies were recorded for Russell McKinnon and inbound exchange student Leni Tenwinkel, who is currently away on her Albany Rotary excursion.



Members gathered around the breakfast table at the Geraldton Golf Club on Wednesday 25 November 2026, with President Bob Hall in the chair.

MEETING AT A GLANCE

- **Chair & Duties:** President Bob Hall in the chair; Sergeant Bob Urquhart; invocation and toast by Hugh Lavery.
- **Attendance & Guests:** Members present: Hugh Lavery, Ian Taylor, Di Gilleland, Bob Symington, Kim Wann, Jim Dillon, Rob Mosel, Don Rolston, Bob Urquhart, Bob Hall, Grant Woodhams, Terry Stewart, Clare McElhinney, and Barry Dring. Guest: Paul Blackwell. Apologies: Russell McKinnon, Leni Tenwinkel (IBEX).
- **Guest Speaker:** Club President Bob Hall, sharing highlights and photographs from his five-week tour of Scotland.
- **Heads & Tails:** Sergeant Bob Urquhart claimed the wine using his own two coins.
- **Next Meetings:** Wednesday 2 December (Fellowship & Connection Meeting) and Wednesday 9 December (final meeting of 2026; guest speaker Bishop Michael Morrissey) at Geraldton Golf Club. Club AGM follows on Thursday 10 December at 5.30 pm via Zoom.

Thought for the Day — Barry Dring

Following on from last week's visit to the Bluff Point CWA Rooms, Barry Dring opened his reflection with a look at Country Women's Association history. Founded nationally in 1922, the CWA established its first Mid West branch in Mullewa before opening in Geraldton in 1950—the very same year Rotary began in Geraldton.

Turning to 25 November in history, Barry noted the birth of automotive pioneer Karl Benz in 1844, the first radio advertisement in 1905, the first advertisement for dynamite in 1906, the release of Disney's Frozen in 2013, and the death of Fidel Castro in 2016.

Reflecting on a recent re-reading of Nevil Shute's 1957 novel On the Beach—and recalling his childhood memories of pristine Tasmanian night skies contrasted with the red glow of Melbourne—Barry left members with a timeless question: how can we each work towards peace?

Announcements & Club Business

National Honours for Dr Richard Taylor — Jim Dillon

Jim shared proud news on behalf of Ian Taylor: Ian's son, Dr Richard Taylor, has been named the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) 2026 National GP of the Year.

The national accolade caps off an extraordinary year for Richard, following earlier honours as GP of the Year at the WA Rural Health Excellence Awards and RACGP WA GP of the Year—a tremendous achievement for regional medicine and Geraldton.

Youth Exchange Update — Hugh Lavery

Inbound exchange student Leni Tenwinkel (Germany) is currently away on the official Rotary Youth Exchange excursion to Albany and returns this Friday. In the meantime, Dave Freeman has kindly lent a pushbike for Leni's use, with Hugh carrying out a few tune-ups on it.

Hugh also reported promising news on future hosting: a former host parent put him in touch with a local mother who was herself a Rotary Exchange student to Finland in 1996 (through Kojonup), and she is keen to become a host family for upcoming IBEX placements.

HMAS Sydney II Memorial Visitor Facility Proposal — Don Rolston

Don briefed members on early discussions regarding a proposed support facility for the volunteer tour guides at the HMAS Sydney II Memorial. Currently, guides operate out of a cramped, single-person booth that offers little shelter or functionality while welcoming thousands of visitors each year.



Architectural concepts have been prepared for a modest facility at car park level—situated between the existing ablutions block and the monument side, well outside the memorial's sacred sanctum—to improve visitor experience and guide comfort.

President Bob emphasised that the City is considering the proposal and it would most likely assist with management,

and that Rotary has made no financial commitment at this early conceptual stage.

Christmas Function, AGM & New Year Dates — Grant Woodhams

Secretary Grant Woodhams reminded members of key dates closing out the Rotary year:

- **Wednesday 2 December:** Club fellowship breakfast meeting at the Geraldton Golf Club, and the induction of our newest Member, Paul Blackwell (partners are very welcome).
- **Wednesday 9 December:** Final club breakfast meeting of 2026 at the Geraldton Golf Club, featuring guest speaker Bishop Michael Morrissey with a Christmas message.
- **Thursday 10 December (5.30 pm):** Club Annual General Meeting via Zoom. A meeting link will be emailed shortly; please forward any correspondence to Secretary Grant Woodhams. President Bob is aiming to break the 10-minute state record!
- **Saturday 12 December (5.30–8.30 pm):** Club Christmas Function at Tarts & Co. ($55 per head). Please confirm attendance with Di Gilleland and arrange payment beforehand so Treasurer Rob Mosel can finalise numbers.
- **New Year Resumption & Australia Day:** The club will resume in January—likely Wednesday 13 January (with 20 January also under consideration)—to allow planning time ahead of our Australia Day Seniors Afternoon Tea at the QEII Centre, which Don Rolston is once again coordinating.



President Bob Hall addressing members during the morning's club announcements, alongside Secretary Grant Woodhams.

Guest Speaker: President Bob Hall — 2,500 Miles Around Scotland

Secretary Grant Woodhams introduced the morning's guest speaker—our own Club President, Bob Hall. Born and raised in Subiaco and a lifelong Subiaco Football Club supporter, Bob is married to Maeva and together they have three adult children (two sons and a daughter).



Bob spent most of his working career in the Western Australia Police Force, including a stint in Albany before settling in Geraldton. Now retired, Bob has a deep fascination with Scotland and recently returned from his fourth visit—a comprehensive five-week, 2,500-mile self-drive journey with Maeva and travel companions Peter and Julie.



President Bob Hall presenting photographs from his five-week, 2,500-mile self-drive tour of Scotland, opening with Edinburgh Castle.

Drawing from a collection of roughly 1,500 photographs (which Maeva is currently compiling into a 200-page illustrated travel journal), Bob took members on a lively visual tour across mainland Scotland and the Northern Isles:

Edinburgh, Leith & The Dome

Starting in the capital beneath Edinburgh Castle and the Royal Mile, Bob highlighted the historic harbour district of Leith and The Dome on George Street.

Converted from a grand former bank building into an opulent restaurant, The Dome proved a superb lunch discovery for Maeva—complete with famously palatial restrooms.

Glasgow & Aberdeen

In Glasgow, Bob showcased the sunken public gardens opposite the theatre alongside the extraordinary Italianate marble interior of the Glasgow City Chambers.

Travelling north to Aberdeen, he shared photos of historic fishermen's cottages—now prized coastal residences—and confessed to inadvertently triggering two bus-lane camera fines near Aberdeen University, leaving him a 'wanted man' should he return.

Coastal Villages, Castles & Highland Games

Along the rugged northeast coast, Bob's slides featured picturesque cliffside harbours and dramatic fortifications—including Dunnottar Castle near Stonehaven, reached via a steep 700-step descent and climb, and the striking grounds of Dunrobin Castle, complete with an 18-month-old falcon named Avalon.

At the Balmoral Highland Games, Bob and Maeva joined a crowd of around 12,000 spectators to watch massed pipe bands of 200 to 300 musicians and the caber toss—explaining that competitors win not by distance, but by flipping the heavy pole so it lands cleanly vertical.

Orkney, Scapa Flow & The Italian Chapel

Crossing to Kirkwall in Orkney, Bob climbed the bell tower of St Magnus Cathedral overlooking the Bishop's Palace, inspected a traditional hand-woven Orkney driftwood chair valued at around $3,000, and visited the 6,000-year-old Neolithic stone village of Skara Brae and nearby burial chambers.

At Scapa Flow, he stood beside heavy Second World War anti-submarine steel mesh nets and toured a moving historic lifeboat station honouring seven local crewmen lost at sea.

A standout highlight was the Italian Chapel on Lamb Holm—built inside joined Nissen huts by Italian prisoners of war constructing the Churchill Barriers in 1943–44, and richly painted inside with frescoes later restored by artisans from the Vatican.

Loch Ness, The Cairngorms & The Falkirk Wheel

Heading back through the Highlands, Bob shared scenes from Fort Augustus at the southern end of Loch Ness (where boats step through seven locks on the Caledonian Canal), a steam train journey, and the chairlift up the Cairngorms—where a young mountain biker took a spectacular tumble over his handlebars before hopping straight back on the lift for another run.

Near Falkirk, Bob marvelled at the Falkirk Wheel, the world's only rotating boat lift, which uses Archimedes' displacement principle to raise canal vessels 30 metres in ten minutes—just down the road from Andy Scott's 40-metre stainless-steel Kelpies sculptures.

Grant thanked Bob for an entertaining and richly illustrated presentation—presenting him with a Rotary End Polio Now certificate (and joking that a few shots might be handy after five weeks abroad)—before members looked forward to trip number five.



Secretary Grant Woodhams presenting President Bob Hall with an End Polio Now recognition certificate following his Scotland presentation.

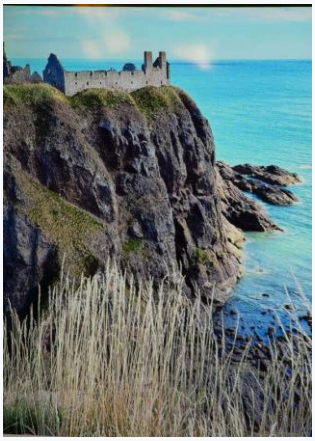
Scotland — Photographs & Route Map from Bob Hall's Talk

Selected highlights from Bob and Maeva's Scottish journey, with locations identified across Orkney, the Moray and Aberdeenshire coasts, and Edinburgh:



1. Italian Chapel, Lamb Holm, Orkney

Built in 1943–44 from joined Nissen huts by Italian POWs working on the Churchill Barriers, featuring an ornate Italian church facade and frescoed interior.



3. Dunnottar Castle, near Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire

Dramatic medieval cliff-top fortress two miles south of Stonehaven, famous as the hiding place of the Honours of Scotland (the Scottish crown jewels) from Cromwell.



2. Brough of Birsay, Orkney

Tidal island off north-west Orkney Mainland featuring Pictish and Norse settlement ruins, including a 12th-century church, accessible only at low tide.



4. Findochty Harbour and Church, Moray Coast

Sheltered fishing harbour overlooked by the stone Church of Scotland (opened 1863) and its landmark spire on the bluff above the village.



5. Palm Court, The Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh

Grand afternoon-tea room beneath a glass dome, featuring black marble columns, Venetian-style chandeliers, and signature floral displays.



6. Leith Waterfront (likely), Edinburgh

Redeveloped historic port area north of Edinburgh, where contemporary waterfront apartments reflect in the harbour waters.



Locations of the featured photographs across Orkney, the Moray and Aberdeenshire coasts, and Edinburgh.

Fellowship, Heads & Tails, and Fines

With two bottles of wine in the jackpot following last week's washout, Sergeant Bob Urquhart took charge of Heads and Tails—producing two of his own 'sacred' coins and promptly winning the prize himself. Jim Dillon kindly carried the fines box around the room.



Jim Dillon collecting fines from Barry Dring (sporting a notably colourful shirt) while Treasurer Rob Mosel looks on with a smile.

Sergeant's Session

Sergeant Bob fined President Bob Hall for subjecting a captive breakfast audience to holiday snaps, skipping Urquhart Castle over a parking permit, and leaving Scotland with unpaid Aberdeen bus-lane fines.

Barry Dring and President-Elect Clare McElhinney were fined for missing Monday night's board meeting—with Barry also copping a fine for his colourful shirt and a good-natured mix-up over his wife Eugenie's name.

Di Gilleland was dubbed 'multidextrous' after arriving at the breakfast buffet with two knives and no fork.

From the Floor

Jim Dillon bought the box to recount a dramatic week of local road incidents—including a diesel spill at Breed and Waverley Streets, a four-wheel-drive mishap near the Southern Transport Corridor, a motorcycle crash on Broad Street, and a minor reversing scrape involving his daughter's ute.

Hugh Lavery celebrated his eldest grandchild turning 20 before launching a surprise 'multi-nova' fine on everyone who failed to spot the hidden (in plain-sight) Easter egg he has been tucking into the newsletter for the past five weeks!

Finally, Di Gilleland turned the tables on Bob Hall after Maeva revealed Bob had announced their 50th wedding anniversary a day early last week—earning the couple warm congratulations on half a century together.

Coming Up — Mark Your Diary

Date	Event	Details & Location
30 Nov 2026	**RYLA Applications Close**	Ages 18–28 (Camp in mid-January). Contact Grant Woodhams or ryla@rotarywa.au.
2 Dec 2026	**Fellowship & Connection Meeting**	Geraldton Golf Club, 6.45 for 7.00 am (ClubRunner calendar).
9 Dec 2026	**Fellowship & Connection Meeting (Final of 2026)**	Geraldton Golf Club, 6.45 for 7.00 am. Guest speaker: Bishop Michael Morrissey — 'A Christmas Message'.
10 Dec 2026	**Club Annual General Meeting**	5.30–6.00 pm via Zoom (link to be emailed). Correspondence to Secretary Grant Woodhams.
12 Dec 2026	**Club Christmas Celebration**	Tarts & Co., 5.30–8.30 pm ($55/head). RSVP & pay beforehand via Di Gilleland.
13 Jan 2027	**Proposed First Meeting of 2027**	Tentative resumption date ahead of Australia Day planning (to be confirmed).
20 Jan 2027	**Breakfast Meeting at Levy Street Life**	Meet at Levy St for breakfast at 7.00 am. Guest speaker: Rohan Prowse (Levy Street Life / Friday Circulars).
26 Jan 2027	**Australia Day Seniors Afternoon Tea**	QEII Centre — Afternoon tea coordinated by Don Rolston.
9 Mar 2027	**Rotary WA Driver Education**	Nagle Catholic College — Coordinated by Di Gilleland.
27 Mar 2027	**Apprentice & Trainee Awards**	Nominations close (training completed by 31 Dec 2026). Contact Rob Mosel.

A Word of Thanks

Thank you to Hugh Lavery for the invocation and toast, to Sergeant Bob Urquhart for the box and fines, to Jim Dillon for carrying the box, to Barry Dring for a thoughtful reflection on history and peace, to Grant Woodhams, Di Gilleland, and Don Rolston for keeping our upcoming calendar and community initiatives moving, and to President Bob Hall (with Maeva's photography) for taking us on a memorable journey across Scotland.