

1 August 2019



Rotary Club of Sawtell

**Sawtell Sun**

## Explosive beginnings

When Jeremy Hill came to Coffs Harbour in 1993 to set up an office for Guide Dogs NSW, he learnt first hand the need for improved vision in our local community. A disgruntled resident threw a pipe bomb into the office in Moonee Street, missing the intended target next door.

Jeremy has worked with Guide Dogs for over thirty years and has seen changes in the client base. No longer are guide dogs assisting as many young people who have lost their sight due to going through the windscreen of a car (praise be for seat belts) instead more clients are older people suffering from conditions such as macular degeneration, diabetes and strokes.

Guide Dogs such as Pascale, who's owner is currently in hospital, cost \$35,000 to train. Combined with GPS enabled phones, guide dogs give people with vision impairment wonderful independence and freedom of movement.

The organisation also trains people in the use of canes and other mobility devices. The local office can lay claim to a wonderful



*Above: Jeremy Hill, Pascale and President Warren Hollyman*

device which can be used on walkers to sense obstacles. Inspired by parking sensors on the rear bumper of cars, they raised the idea with a former British Airways aerospace engineer who came up with prototypes in a matter of weeks. These devices are now sold around the world.

Some other ideas haven't quite worked out—Coffs suggested placing failed guide dog puppies into nursing homes, only to discover ,

# Explosive Beginnings (Cont.)

when visiting three months later, that the Labradors were twice the size they should have been. The residents were all perplexed about who was feeding the dogs. Other puppies who don't make it as guide dogs have gone onto a career with Customs as sniffer dogs or are trained as pets for autistic children.

When asked why Labradors are chosen, Jeremy referred to their intelligence, loyalty and the fact that labs learn through positive reinforcement. Sometimes it takes a while, waiting for the correct behavior to reward, but it is the preferred method for training.

Guide Dogs in Australia kicked off in the mid fifties with Arnold Cook and most of their

funding comes through community support with only 4% coming from government coffers.

Jeremy finished with a story from Kyogle. He received a call from a gentleman concerned with the rapid deterioration of his eyesight. He had no one locally to support him and needed a prompt visit—three weeks was too far off. Jeremy re-arranged his commitments, took a drive and met this chap on his place out of Kyogle. After a introductory chat, Jeremy took an alcohol wipe and cleaned the pair of glasses and handed them to the chap. "It's a bloody miracle, I can see!"

Well done, Jeremy, miracle worker!

DUTY ROSTER	5 August	12 August
Attendance	Ray Baldwin Alan Freedman	Ray Baldwin Alan Freedman
Affirmation	John Underwood	Shane Della
International toast	Alison Williams	Peter Paff
Sergeant	Phil Makinson	Alison Williams



Left: Newly arrived Slovakian exchange student Adam Leskovjansky with his counsellor Peter Paff and President Warren Hollyman.

## Welcome Rotarian Shane Della

---

Peter Paff officially introduced Shane Della to the Club. We've known Shane as father to Charley, our exchange student in Germany this year. Shane is also father to Samuel and works with Lindsay Australia. He first came to Coffs 30 years ago to visit a girlfriend for a week. The girlfriend didn't last, but he's been at home here ever since.

Born in Taree, Shane is 58 and happily will lower our club's average age! He attended Wingham High and completed an electrical apprenticeship with Manning Shire. After six years with the Shire Shane then joined his father's transport company (Shane doesn't recommend working for your father!)

Shayne has been appointed into the Club Service Committee with, and we look forward to working with Shane for the betterment of our community.



**Dorothy Underwood**

5 August

**John Underwood**

15 August

**Phil Makinson**

24 August

*Below: Peter Paff, new Rotarian Shane Della and President Warren Hollyman*



## Upcoming Events

5 August	Dinner Meeting at Sawtell RSL, guest speaker: Deb Ellison, Make A Wish Foundation
12 August	Dinner Meeting at Sawtell RSL, guest speaker: Dean Evers, Founder & President "Hope for the Homeless"
12 September	Downton Abbey Movie night at Sawtell Cinema, 139 tickets to sell.
26 October	Dr. Richard Harris, for the Daybreak Club (see the next page for details)
4 November	District 9650 Governor, Phil Hafey, visits the Club
15-17 November	Weekend away at Wooli
6-10 June 2020	Rotary International Convention, Honolulu
Please RSVP by 4pm Monday to Alan Freedman 0419357864	

## Sergeant at Arms

5/8/2019	Phil Makinson
12/8/2019	Alison Williams
19/8/2019	Shayne Long
26/8/2019	Bruce Hall
2/9/2019	Warren Hollyman
9/9/2019	Roslyn Cousins
16/9/2019	Denis Gleeson
23/9/2019	Steve Kassulke
30/9/2019	John Underwood
14/10/2019	Peter Paff
21/10/2019	Ellis Nicholson
2/10/2019	Rob Alford

## The Rotary Club of Sawtell

PRESENTS...

# DOWNTON ABBEY

THURSDAY September 12th  
7PM Sawtell Cinema 1

TICKETS: \$20

*Proceeds towards tree planting at Richardson Park*

*Contact Alan Freedman 0419 357 864*

