

The Rotary Club of North Balwyn

... in Celebration of our 40th Birthday ... 8 May, 2020

This is history in the making as we gather round online
To mark our fortieth birthday, coronavirus in decline.
Jack Nankervis was District Governor and decided it was time
For the Rotary Club of Balwyn to find new offspring to prime.
Duncan McKenzie had the task to form a brand new club,
North Balwyn was its name for North Balwyn was its hub.

The Charter date in 1980 was Thursday eighth of May,
There were 32 members in our Club who started that first day
With Stan Hibbert as Charter President, only four remain today,
But so much has been accomplished in four decades on the way.
To try and do true justice and cover what we've done
Is really nigh impossible but my challenge has begun.

What is it that's made the Rotary Club of North Balwyn last this long?
What's its essence, what makes it continue to offer service strong?
The answer is a mix of people who share like-minded goals,
Who share a sense of fellowship and who take on different roles,
Whether serving the community within Australia's shores
Or using our Rotary membership for international cause.

Today, on this our birthday, let's look at some highlights
That stand out in our history, over many days and nights.
We have had three District Governors whose Conferences we ran
In Adelaide, Melbourne, Launceston, so shone the North Balwyn clan.
Ross, Reddish and Studebaker, our DG's who went full steam
While Cheney, Hibbert and Matthews, they chaired each Conference team.

We've had many outstanding members, too many for this roll call,
But Ron Carnell is one to mention, his legend still stands tall.
He was named 'Rotarian of the Millenium,' was Secretary, ten years,
He ran our Rotary radio and, with Betty, earned our cheers.
After strong debate within the Club regarding female membership
Maria Moffat became our first, and our numbers didn't dip.

It should be noted, as a fact, that President Tom Wing Young
Earlier inducted a female member, whose background was far-flung.
Though massive in her stature, Suzy Wong, in truth Clive Hughes,
Had Glen Walmsley playing Sum Ting Wong, what a wife to choose!
But when it comes to dressing up, Judy Reddish was fantastic,
Her Lily Marlene was just one hit, her face was quite elastic.

Club meetings at Kew Golf Club have been held since 'ninety-four,
Marwal Avenue, The Sentimental Bloke and Argenti's were before.
Argenti's had one legendary night when DG Gordon McKern
During his official visit became agitated, stern.
A downpour of huge proportion saw water dripping free,
Seeing the mirth of many members, he didn't share their glee.

Our weekly newsletter, The Grapevine, still keeps us up-to-date
With projects and information and is very rarely late.
It contains advice from Geoff Steinicke promoting our good health
And reports on our Guest Speakers, of whom we've had a wealth.
The businesses who give support: Mollo's Hello World, Chris Cross,
Baker's Delight and Bendigo Bank, and Bread Street, hard to toss.

Our Changeovers have often had some home-grown entertainment
Including 'Nothing But The Truth,' John Gartlan's words (no payment).
At our 21st birthday celebration 'The Village People' sang,
To see that group perform with skill, the acclamation rang,
And then, of course, at Christmas time you'll hear our members singing
Although 'Twelve Days of Christmas' sees some members' hands a-ringing.

Annual golf and fellowship trips, early days preferred Rich River,
Since then our President Elect decides, with scant regard for liver.
In early days a fashion parade took place through one Ron Liner
Who told most everyone he met, 'There is no painter finer.'
When Paint Your Heart Out Melbourne happened in nineteen ninety-two
Ron jumped at the chance to help organise and show what he could do.

Vocationally we've been involved in many different ways,
Shine On / Livewire / literacy / job search, and vocational visit days:
William Angliss, Alcoa, Ford, Vic Roads, Ronald MacDonald House,
Melrose Health and so much more; our Business Awards were grouse.
Police Mentoring in recent years has been a job worthwhile,
Building skills and a relationship leaving everyone to smile.

Some community service activities that we have come to master
Revolve around bushfires and drought, and even flood disaster.
Special thanks to those who've worked at Ash Wednesday and Benalla,
In Gisborne, Grampians and so much more, no mention of Walhalla.
Only last year 'twas in St Arnaud we held a comedy night
To raise morale for the farmers there in their drought affected plight.

From donating blood, Red Shield appeal and a house for Anglicare,
Eva Tilley, Boroondara Family and the River Ride to share,
Variety, Servants, Second Bite plus our garden project shine,
Through Ted it's been Carols in the Park since nineteen eighty nine.
While at Axedale, east of Bendigo, Ken Maxfield came to play
And so inspired a project grand ... we love Camp Getaway.

There's no doubt now that we are seen as a well run catering club,
Nino, Bill and a brilliant team provide wholesome, healthy grub
From the Grand Prix through to Bunnings, where we barbecue with pride,
To Camberwell Market on Sunday morns, and Council functions on the side.
Those things along with golfing days, through Greg Matthews and his team,
See donated dollars flowing in, Club Treasurers can beam.

Other ways in which we've raised some funds to keep us strong:
Do you remember cash-a-can? The Christmas raffle for so long
Has seen most members in the Club sell tickets in the street,
While after some wine bottling days, it was hard to keep your feet.
Our dear 'ladies,' now they're 'partners,' have also paid their way
Through card luncheons and sweet things sold. To you ... hip, hip, hooray.

A mix of fundraising fellowship, one fifty volunteers in all
Travelled north to the 'Hilton Lindfield,' in fact a large Scout hall,
We catered for thousands watching the world's best athletes run
And despite the rigorous workload, it really was great fun.
From the cooking and the snoring and the drinking it would seem
That there in sunny Homebush, we lived the Olympic dream.

In social terms the Peninsula, through golf and fishing trips,
Will never, ever be the same without Ted's fish and chips.
Bernie Smith invited those who could to join him at Strathbogie,
While some Melbourne Cup outfits each year were deserving of a Logie.
Ian Mollo has us playing bowls, now next to our Men's Shed,
What a monumental task that was but now full steam ahead.

We've gone to Vanuatu to help build an eye clinic
And work done in the Solomons should quell the fiercest cynic
Sue McDonald's skills in midwifery have been used in Timor Leste
While Bill Oakley, famous for his jam, his work with RAM's the best.
ROMAC also served so well through Paul when he was fit,
While Oleg and his tractor was a one-off Robson hit.

We've supported The Rotary Foundation, Vietnam's now our focus,
Through Matching Grants so much achieved, no hint of hocus pocus.
Paul Fitz of the Foundation said, 'It's Rotary's engine room,'
And we all do know that polio will one day meet its doom.
We're funding a PhD Scholar in our mental illness fight
Through ARH's 'Lift The Lid' research, looking for the light.

Youth Exchange for many years has been a favoured choice
With many families hosting, they give the project voice.
We've encouraged senior students to explore their love of science
And through MUNA we have given some the chance to end their silence.
A great program for young leaders, RYLA simply is the best
While RYPEN gives a lift to those who seem unsteadiest.

We cover every age group for fellowship and service
And all have been established since the time of Jack Nankervis
The youngest group is Earlyact, Bronwen Dimond's inspiration,
Then Interact, with Estelle's help, is a cause for much elation.
Rotaract was strong for years but now it needs Jane's passion,
While Probus for the oldies has been never out of fashion.

In wrapping up this segment, for better or for worse,
We salute our Charter Members and we do it here in verse.
The four still active on our books are Muntwyler and Cleary,
With Hibbert as an Honorary, leaving Steinicke still cheery.

James Bomar in 1980 asked us all to, 'Light The Way,'
While, 'Rotary Connects The World' is Mark Moloney's theme today.
Grant Hocking is District Governor, four decades after Jack,
While Peter Sutherland is Club Pres, his son's now joined the pack.

We trust that future birthdays won't be spent in isolation
For it really isn't the optimum way to enjoy our celebration.
Forty years have come and gone, what future lies in store?
For Rotary North Balwyn, we trust there's a great deal more!



Gregory Ross
Happy 40th Birthday RCNB, 8 May 2020