

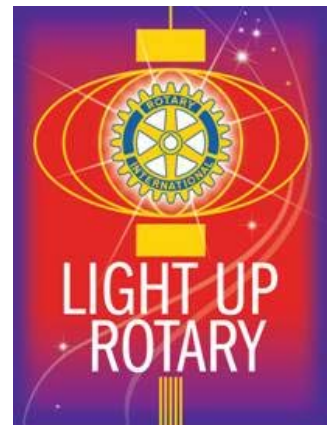


The Rotary Club of Whangarei

(Chartered 1925)

District 9910

Chronicle for 27 Aug 2014



Int President Ron Burton

President - Peter Mulhare, President Elect & Secretary- Gail Taylor, , Treasurer - Peter Bayne, Chronicle - Andrew Bax, Community – Andrew Bax, International - Roger Barber, Programme –Rex Morris, Almoner - George Wilson, Historian - Lloyd Morris, Website - Andrew Bax, Board Member – Bill Rossiter, Board Member – Frank Geddes, District Governor – Phil Ashton, Assistant Governor – Peter Smith

President Gail welcomed members Guest to the meeting

Appologies: Bill & Alison, Rae, Jack & Barbara Lucy, Peter & Margaret

One Minute Notices :

Joint venture proposed for notice boards to be placed at each School. We agreed in principle and will seek further information.

HRH The Duke of Edinburgh's Sixth Commonwealth Study Conference

This is a tale out of my not inconsiderable past, possibly best not revisited but nevertheless, in doing so I hope I can find something of interest for you. What I have been asked to share with you is my experience as a member of the D O E's 6th C, Wealth Study conf, in Australia and India in 1986.

What is it?

In the Duke's own words, it is an experience enabling the members to look in detail at elements of life in a particular situation. Beginning in 1956 they happen about every 10 or so years. The theme always has three elements, people, work and change. Aspects include the quality of life at work, and in the community and the way it is affected by the swift advance of industry. It is funded through industry, government and private donation and takes a full time team, years to put together. The programming, scope, attention to every detail and the generosity of all involved, including the people at each site visit was astonishing.

The heart of the conference is the study tour which enables participants to engage with people in industry, in local and national communities and in funded and volunteer services at all levels. Our conf. theme was "Managing Change in an Industrial Society". The term "managing" suggested not only positive action in the face of change but also an attitude expected of the participants (us) conducive to problem solving and, as the brief to us added, indicative of the qualities associated with leaders of the future. So, in each visit, we were to meet, observe, question, discuss, analyse, share, compare and contrast, ponder possible approaches and solutions and in daily pre and post visit briefings within our group, bring our combined wisdom to bear always using a problem solving approach. Those day end meetings of 14, tired high flyers each with their own strongly held opinions were sometimes very testing .

So for example, given the nature of the industry involved the following questions might arise: how big is the required workforce, is it available in the local community or does it have to be imported, what skill/educational levels are needed in the work force, should they bring them to the job or will the

company do the educating, how permanent will the workforce be and depending on the answer, where will it live and what differences here for married versus single workers. Are there enough houses, will the new residents fit in the town, can the existing community resources stretch to cover larger numbers and can the community provide for the needs of the industry in its daily living. For example, are there furniture shops, bakers, doctors, Football clubs, schools, shoe stores, hair dressers, midwives, libraries etc. What about the environment, not just the industrial environment, but street lights and footpaths and rubbish disposal etc. And what happens when industry moves on or out? When jobs disappear, when shops close and services are no longer needed and there is no one to mow the lawns or collect the rubbish, and the schoolboy aiming to follow his father into the mine no longer has one to go to? And where do the teachers go and the pupils when the school closes? What are the strengths of this community, how has it managed the change brought about by the industry in its midst, what problems are evident, how are they being managed? The tour sites we visited were in effect, conference laboratories where we were to observe and discuss the relationship of people to their work and social environment.

We were 100 people from all over the British Commonwealth, judged to have the potential to be leaders of the future, gathered in Oz and India for three weeks of the hardest most intense work one could imagine. Of the 100, 60 went on to India after the initial briefing gathering, and 60 odd remained in Oz. One could state a preference. Mine was Oz.

How did one get on to the thing?

In 1986 I was the CEO of the NZ Nurses Organisation and the National Sec of the Nurses Union. As such I was a member of the Executive of the Combined State Sector Unions and on the Council of Trade Unions Education Authority.

The CSSU nominated me for the tour and I had the good fortune to be selected. I was one of 6 union reps. from NZ and we joined 12 reps from each of the Manufacturing/industry/public and private service sectors. Before our departure, all 18 of us met at the Beehive where we were feted and feasted and primed by previous conference members only too well aware of the work ahead of us. That was an interesting gathering in itself, a taste of things to

come, reflecting the sort of people with whom we were to spend our next three weeks. The Prime Minister and a number of other ministers were there, together with dept. heads, voluntary org. leaders, and industry and union leaders. The emphasis was on informality and everyone moved about mixing quite freely. It is fair to say, and relevant to the context, to acknowledge that most of us knew at least some of these people quite well. We were really in our day to day work context, but without the tension or challenge we usually encountered when together. And that was how it was to be through the whole conference. Baggage and agendas were left at the door and we got down to tin tacks in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Now that makes sense if you have the impression that, for instance, unions and bosses behave like a bunch of alley cats when in so called negotiations. The importance of having a relationship on a level which cuts through that is vital. It is the latter relationship that enables a fair and reasonable settlement.

This Conference was an exercise in establishing a base for that kind of relationship across all sectors and particularly with people, workers, families, service organisations and volunteers, people everywhere. Doors were opened for us that are normally very tightly closed. We visited factories, schools, law courts, nurseries, rest homes, universities, hospitals, caravan parks and holiday resorts. We saw balance sheets and future plans, social statistics, town plans, building designs, production schedules, newspaper reports, and employment stats. We heard tales of woe and of triumph, we encountered despair, hunger, alcoholism, fear, ignorance and truculence. We met ambition, talent, compassion, skill, clear thinkers and duffers, it was all there. We found all of it among ourselves in the group, too!

Let's see if I can show how it worked. I'll take you on my tour which was to central Queensland.

My group comprised 14 participants from as far away as Trinidad Tobago, India, UK, Malawi, Canada and so on. There were 6 other groups in the Queensland contingent, each headed for a different part of the state. All had an equal representation from the various sectors and we spent the whole tour in these groups. My group went to Central Queensland. The task each member had depended on their sector of origin. So, I was technically labelled union so it was my task to focus on the workers and their work in any situation. Another

might focus on the legal/ environmental aspects of the business or project. A third on the social services and so on.

But back to the beginning: On arrival in Oz we checked in to Monash University which provided the meeting and greeting facilities we needed. In Melbourne our collective assembly was welcomed by the Duke who told us that the idea for the conference had followed the 1954 post coronation tour by himself and the Queen when they had visited every country in the CW and were amazed by the diversities and similarities, the common needs and the differences, and the range of skill, creativity and solutions to problems the communities had found for themselves. He was blown away by the huge potential of the united family of the Commonwealth and wanted its members to have the opportunity for a similar view and experience. He gathered his mates around and so it was done!

During this week in Melbourne we established our credentials as it were. There was a session with Bob Hawke the PM who told us that OZ's future and potentially all of ours, was to be found in building a relationship with Asia the continent that would have the most influence in the next century. He invited us to consider, reflect and propose this at all times as we visited industry and communities throughout OZ. Going into lunch after that session I was called aside and asked to be one of the guests at the Duke's table. We were 6, among whom was Simon Creane the then leader of the trade unions in Oz and more recently, a leader and significant figure in the Labour opposition there. Needless to say It was a great lunch and I found the Duke to be very impressive. He knew our territory work and geography wise, and encouraged us to talk together about it.

Every group had a leader selected from one of the represented sectors . My leader was an ANZ bank manager from Sydney who amazingly turned out to be married to a not so distant cousin of mine! After a state reception and a visit to government house and various other such high level affairs we were off to Canberra, for a briefing on the nature of Australian Government and to meet all the dignitaries and visit parliament. Again a wonderful evening reception by the Governor General at Government house, with all sorts of interesting guests, including the Duke of Kent whom we met for the first time and who was to be the Duke's rep. on the India tour.

Our rail journey to Canberra made history as it was the first time they had managed to drive an interstate train across the NSW/ Vict. border and there was much posturing and objecting from both the unions and the authorities involved. We were trailed by helicoptered paparazzi for a good bit of the way, and were generally the subject of much interest. The Duke and his retinue wandered through the train and were able to report a wonderful journey and give profuse thanks to all who made it possible, later on in the evening news. He was the soul of diplomacy and charm itself.

Ansett was a principle sponsor and flew us to Brisbane and then transported us around our various venues. We began our days at around 7am and concluded when we had, as a group, completed our daily review and report and the briefing for the following days visits, usually well after midnight. There was a new group chair appointed each day who was responsible for keeping the days programme on schedule, performing the welcome and thank you rituals at each visit and running the evening report back. An official secretary travelled with the group and kept records and minutes. At the end of the tour, the group presented reports to the Queensland State committee and the Business and state government group. The daily records became crucial in preparing and presenting these reports.

Where did we go? Down coal mines in a lift at the Black water mine, into gem mines in Emerald and sapphire, into the cotton gin at Biloela, and the meat works, and up onto the 14 story high driving cabin of the diggers in the open cast mines. We checked out the central control centre of the Q,land rail network, toured the Comalco aluminium smelter at Boyne Island, spent time in a high school at Gladstone, visited the planning dept of the city council at Rockhampton where we checked out the plans for the yepoon resort project. We spent time at a caravan park for mining families in Gladstone and visited the local kindergarten and social welfare centre. An inspired and revealing evening was spent in an aboriginal settlement funded by the state government where we were hosted to a BBQ tea by the local missionary sisters and where we met with the school children. By and large the final report back from all groups independently prepared, noted the plight of the aboriginal people in general. It emerged as a consistent observation and became the subject of yet another of the Duke's television presentations. The man certainly doesn't mind

getting into trouble for a good cause! Our final visit was two days on Keppel island where business was definitely mixed with pleasure.

We reported back first in Brisbane and later to the whole India Australian conference gathered in Sydney university with all the officials flown in from all over OZ. The Duke was joined on the dais by chief justice Michael Kirby. They watched and listened to the whole two days of presentations which took the form of a written presentation not read aloud but entered into the record, and a dramatic portrayal supposed to show the main impressions and observations from each tour. Both gentlemen commented on each report. They were both complimentary and critical. Without doubt from my point of view, Justice Kirby's closing address was the most inspiring I have heard. He has an amazing brain and huge capacity to speak to both the heart and the mind.

Lasting impressions 30 years later?

The miner "the earth speaks to you, you know"

The mine and the fossil leaf

The size of the open cast

The street full of closed shops

The aboriginal child and Hayley's comet

The huge anxiety about Queensland's water conservation needs

The great emptiness of the potline shed at Boyne island

The amazing energy, wide knowledge and broad experience of the Duke of Edinburgh who visited every group on site on the tour. Given that we were in every corner of Oz, it was a great effort.

Well that is the story and I often come back to it when I hear about the GSE tours and listen to the exchange students, coming and going. I do know a bit about how it will be for them and some of the experiences they will have, the tensions and the tiredness yes, but mostly the huge interest in getting together with people, listening to their stories, admiring their courage and achievements. These are great experiences.

Duty Roster (a.m – 11:30 for noon, p.m. – 5:30 for 6:00pm)

Lunch first, dinner second – 1st Wed lunch 2nd dinner etc
Notify Club of apologies – 4387429 (by Tuesday)

Duties	3 Sep (am)	10 Sep (pm)	Hospital	
Speaker	Lunch Forum	Shane Reti Don Nightingale	Gail	
Host	None	Bill & Alison		
Thanks	None	Bill & Alison		
Reception	Everyone	Everyone		
Parting Thought	Lloyd	Bill & Alison		