



# Community Networker

Rotary Club of Parramatta City, District 9675

[www.parramattacityrotary.org.au](http://www.parramattacityrotary.org.au)

Meeting 16/2015 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015

## Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Thirsk in Great Britain which is hosting a festival to celebrate the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta by King John. As Bob pointed out, it was a groundbreaking document which established the rule of law forever after. Bob distributed copies of the 4 Magna Carta in both Latin and English, the English version containing many profound statements but some a little mystifying, such as a clause that the evidence of a woman against a murderer should not be accepted unless her husband was the victim.

## Our Guests

The club welcomed Gregg Kearns, NSW manager of GROW, an organisation founded in Hurstville in 1957, which is dedicated to assisting people confronting mental illness, helping them to rehabilitate themselves and become functioning members of society. Gregg, who has been in his present position for 12 months, responded to a suggestion he joined Rotary, and from his office in Harris Park got in touch with our club, and received a welcoming telephone call.

Gregg gave us a quick history of GROW, which now operates in the Sydney metropolitan area, in places like Lismore, Tweed Heads, Bega, the Australian Capital Territory, Goulburn, Yass Broken Hill. It operates in all other states. There is a prisoners' GROW group in Victoria and in Dubbo it is proposed there be an indigenous GROW group. GROW has women's refuge groups, there is a men's group in a Salvation Army facility in Surry Hills and there are negotiations to start a youth GROW group in Penrith. Internationally it operates in Britain, New

## The Rotary Four-Way Test

The Four-Way Test challenges

Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask themselves:

Of the things we say or do:

- 1 Is it the **TRUTH**?
- 2 Is it **FAIR** to all concerned?
- 3 Will it build **GOODWILL** and **BETTER FRIENDSHIPS**?
- 4 Will it be **BENEFICIAL** to all concerned?

# Club Updates



Above: David Reay

Zealand, the United States, Ireland and Trinidad.

Our other guest was the Reverend David Reay, born and raised not far from Parramatta. He worked for a time Qantas in customer services and aircraft dispatch until I became Anglican minister. Have served in parishes such as Darling Point, Pymble, Norfolk Island, Belrose, and Wahroonga. Now working part time at Baulkham Hills church but also doing interim work as required.

David is involved in radio presentations of the Christian faith on 2CH and Hope 1032fm. In earlier days he wrote a regular column for the *Manly Daily* on behalf of Christian churches in the area. He also does volunteer work each Saturday at Sydney International Airport as an Airport Ambassador. David said: "I have had previous involvement in Rotary whilst serving as minister on Norfolk Island where I was sergeant at arms during my time there" He is married with two grown up daughters and two granddaughters.

## Kaheeba Honda

Prospective member Kaheeba left Sydney last Sunday. He will be in Liberia to assist with the post Ebola rehab for the next 3 months.

### DATES FOR DIARY

**22 June.** President Ron's final regular meeting as President.

**28 June.** District 9675 Changeover Luncheon, Campbelltown.

**29 June.** Our Changeover evening to welcome Malcolm as Club President. This will be at the Oatlands Golf Club, 6.30 for 7 pm. The meals will cost \$60 per person.

**13 July.** Kylie Warry, communications specialist, speaker, author and trainer will address the club. She is the author of a book, *The Enlightened Communicator – Avoid the Common Communication Traps for Betty Connection at Work and Personally.*

# The Church and the Changing Society

David said that society had changed since he was a boy. It was evident in the changes to the city, to Parramatta, and in the social landscape. Change was evident in the workplace.

Where once dispatches on aircraft were done manually, using load sheets, now with computerisation a properly laden plane could be dispatched from Sydney from someone operating in Mumbai. David could remember data processing computers taking up a whole floor in Qantas House in the City. He was now told that his mobile phone had more computer power than all those computers put together.

David said religion's place in society was now different. At the time of the signing of the Magna Carta the church was

intrinsically involved in the affairs of state. Society and the church had marched step-by-step till recent times. Where the forties, fifties and sixties saw hundreds of children go to Sunday School, this was no longer the case. Where it was once considered a virtual obligation to go to church. When David went to Marsden High School in West Ryde, the headmaster gave talks at the school assembly on the meaning of the Lord's Prayer. The real divergence in those years was not between church and society but between Catholic and Protestant.

Since then, church and society had diverged, but it was not the first time that had happened and it was not necessarily a bad thing. In the early church, the followers had been a virtual counter-culture and its members were persecuted. That changed

That changed when the Emperor Constantine had a vision and converted to Christianity. It was good enough for the emperor, so the lay people were christianised. But the weaving together of church and state that had its downside, especially in the Middle Ages when popes conducted wars.

Tensions in the relationship between church and state were reflected in the education debate. The churches provided the first schools in Australia. When the state had intervened the Catholics had decided to go their own way. Now there was intense debate about religious education and teaching of ethics in state schools. The Protestants had once considered they had a privileged position within the state system. That was no longer the case. "I am happy to see the church message

conveyed,” he said. “We need to persuade others but we have no right to go screaming to the government to safeguard it.” He was all for ethics classes for those not wanting to go to scripture classes. Without a foundation of ethics, he said, a situation would develop where “anything went”. “If you leave a vacuum, anything will fill it,” he said. “Hedonism, self-centred sort of stuff. But I have got enough faith to think it will not go further down the slope.”

David said the divergence between church and state could be seen in the debate over “marriage equality”. “Fifty or sixty years ago we would not be having this debate,” he said. The question was now whether marriage was going to be redefined. “All I am saying is that there is no longer any agreement or consensus between the church and state,” he said. He now performed a marriage not only as a minister of religion but as a servant of the state. It might turn out in the future that the legal marriage was a state affair and if the participants wished they could have a blessing by the church.

“The state can legislate, the church can protest,” he said. “But I don’t think the Christian church can expect the government to march step in step with it with these things. We are seeing the future where the church and state

are different. But I don’t think it is necessarily a bad thing. It is not the end of civilisation as we know it. It is just one of the changes going through history.

David said another change sweeping through society related to the position of women. He personally believed that in the church, women could become anything they wanted, including becoming bishops. The Sydney Diocese of the Anglican Church which he belonged to was more conservative, but the emancipation of women could be seen everywhere, including membership of Rotary and the position of married women in the workforce.

David said the church had to come to grips with culture change. It had been caught out in the past by lagging behind, for example when it protested against mixed bathing and Sunday trading. The church traditionally had condemned divorce but the changes to the Matrimonial Act, introducing no-fault divorce. Divorce was a very sad thing but the retention of the old Matrimonial Causes Act resulted in private detectives jumping through windows taking photographs.

“Everyone predicts the demise of the church,” David said. “I think the church is under more attack.” The church had come under unfavourable attention

because of the child protection issue. Any child abuse was inexcusable, he said, but it must be remembered that child abuse had gone on in many other places. We were now finding out more about it and giving it a sharper focus.

David was not pessimistic about the future of the church. The church and society had diverged but the church message was still relevant and the power of God would ultimately prevail.

In answer to a question from Ralph Cadman David said Hillsong did “fantastic work” but in terms of its style and culture it was not what he preferred. He could shake hands with people after a service at his church but Brian Houston, who led the Hillsong Church, would have a hard task shaking hands with 600. In answer to John Surian, he said he saw no conflict between the church and science. Some fundamentalists were so uptight that any science was a threat to the bible. But the old universities such as Oxford and Cambridge which had led to such triumphs in scientific inquiry had been founded by the church.