



Community Networker

Rotary Club of Parramatta City, District 9675
www.parramattacityrotary.org.au
Meeting 21/2015 8th August 2015

Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen commemorated the Australian assault on the Turkish position at Lone Pine between 6 and 8 August 1915, which cost the Australians 2,277 casualties, about 50 percent of the total force committed and the Turks between 5,000 and 7,000 casualties. Bob proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Ankara, which was founded in 1955 Turkey, the first Rotary club in that country. Rotary represented then as it does now the ideal of goodwill and understanding. The country now has 232 clubs and 7,400 Rotarians.

Our Guest

Our guest today was Margery East, who grew up on a farm in Suffolk in England and became a geography teacher. In 1972, having formed a friendship with a Queensland family who had stayed at her farm, and wanting to see some of the world she had in geography, she came to Australia as a ten-pound pom and for two years was a teacher at Dubbo High School in the state's central west where she had first-hand contact with rural women. Margery has since taught in the TAFE system and at Macquarie University. She joined the CWA at Eastwood six years ago after seeing an advertisement calling for volunteers to serve Devonshire tea and scones at the Women's Rest Centre. This representing the gentility of her homeland, Margery took to it and is now President of the Eastwood CWA branch and a group international officer for the CWA. The CWA is affiliated with Associated Country Women of the World which, like Rotary, is heavily involved in welfare activities.

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?

The Country Women's Association

Showing How It Is Done!

Much of what Margery told us during her address struck a strong resonant chord with the listeners. The CWA has committed themselves to many of the issues that Rotary has taken up over the years, such as funding medical research, providing relief for disaster areas and funding overseas projects. And they do it very, very well.

The Country Women's Association (CWA) started in Australia in 1922, in the NSW country town of Crookwell, to provide a service to women isolated on properties. On Margery's account, it was a time when women went to town with their farmer and grazier husbands and had to wait all day while they did their business, perhaps at the stockyards, then went to the pub with their mates. The most sensible thing from a woman's point of view was to have a centre where they could rest and wait for their

husbands, Women's Rest centres were set up in many country towns

The CWA's Eastwood branch was formed 89 years ago when Eastwood still had apple orchards and dairy farms. It was not the oldest branch in the metropolitan area. That honour went to the Manly branch that started 92 years ago.

Margery said the CWA had gone way beyond the needs of women waiting for their husbands. It had campaigned for and helped to finance facilities such as better health centres and maternity wards. There is a National association which would be having its national conference at Port Macquarie at the end of this month.

"The idea is that the CWA is trying to improve the lives of women not only in the country but Australian women

generally and their families and we do it through fundraising, lobbying governments and promoting life skills", she said. "We provide a very good network of women which also provides friendship and interests." The CWA ran courses in handcraft skills, hold poetry and essay writing competitions or other activities that provided interest in the country areas, but it also flexed its muscles. "We lobby the State and Federal Governments on a number of issues," she said. "They are many and varied. The white lines on the verges of country roads and due mainly largely to lobbying by the CWA."

The age range for women in the Eastwood branch was from 55 to 90 and there were three members who were over 90. Up till last year two of them were regularly serving Devonshire tea and scones at

the Eastwood Women's Rest Centre. The Eastwood branch meet once a month, and there was nothing staid about what it talked about. On Saturday this week, it would have a talk from a lady beekeeper who would who show and sell her honey.

Eastwood-Epping branch of the CWA is one of 10 in the metropolitan area. It had 34 members and across the state there are 400 branches and more than 10,000 members. The Rest centre was initially for women but after a resolution in the 1970s, men were able to come in provided they were accompanying women. But that had now been relaxed and men could come in by themselves. At Eastwood, many people came in going to or coming from their doctor or dentist.

The branch raises between \$10,000 and \$20,000 a year, which was quite exceptional for a branch. It ran raffles, it operated a stall at Bunnings and made money from its devonshire teas and scones. It provided grants for students in country areas, especially at times of stress as in the drought in the north-west of New South Wales which produced a great deal of poverty. Last year the branch allocated \$250 to eligible primary school students, \$350 to junior high school students and \$450 to \$500 for senior high school students. This month the branch had had a meeting where it allocated

\$8,000 to \$10,000, including to the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Far West Children's Health Scheme and Stewart House, the seaside resort for country kids, and Ryde Hospital, in addition to donations for overseas welfare.

Part of the CWA's state fundraising every year was for medical research. Up till last year it was funding research into Crone's Disease and over the last three years had raised \$90,000. At the last state conference there had been a report back on progress of the research. Another disease that had attracted the interest of the CWA was Lyme Disease. It is active in other areas and was able to send \$50,000 for relief after the earthquake in Nepal.

The branches had a special country of interest allocated each year. This year it is Italy and it had been preceded by Botswana, East Timor. The CWA looked at conditions in those countries. In terms of international network the CWA was affiliated with Country Women's of the World which was established in London in 1931. That body was part of the standing committee of the United Nations Committee for Women's Issues and was in consultation with UNESCO and other agencies. The ACWW wanted local organisations to run their projects but the association provided the funding. "They are trying to help women in

rural communities where it is leaning towards making such as a mushroom growing projects in Tanzania and greenhouse development in Mongolia" Margery said. "A thousand projects had been funded by ACWW worldwide." There was a focus on providing clean water for people and there was help in many other areas such as safe childbirth and dealing with such complex problems as female genital mutilation. The Australian CWA branches had a special focus on the Pacific area and in Papua New Guinea. It was sending material for clothing. It put together 5 kilogram packs of haberdashery materials to send to the Pacific Islands such as Fiji and Samoa.

There must be a few lessons for Rotary somewhere in all this!

Dates for your diary!!

17 August. Our Parramatta Daybreak president, Fether Martin Maunsell, is to speak

August 20. Dinner at Deltone House, Darling Harbor, for International President John Germ & His Wife Judy” This evening will mark the official visit of RIPE John and Judy Germ for the RI Director’s Networking Seminar and presents the only opportunity for Rotarians and partners to enjoy a general Rotary world update from the man who will lead our organisation in 2016/17. The evening will consist of a 2 course meal, entertainment and most importantly an address by RIPE John Germ – with opportunity for questions. Cost is \$80 a head, RSVP by August 14.

August 22. We have the dinner of Friends of Lamb Australia which I will be attending with my wife;

August 24 We have Peter Consandine, of the Australian Republican Party and the following week

August 31. Craig Jennings of Samaritans Purse

September 7. We will be hearing from Zyra McAuliffe.

September 14. Archaeologist Dr Michael Bendon will speak.