

ROTARY CLUB OF PARRAMATTA CITY Inc. DISTRICT 9675

www.parramattacityrotary.org.au

Rotary Four Way Test

The Four Way Test challenges Rotarians, in everything they do, to ask of 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?

Meeting 14th September 2015

Our Toast

Bob Rosengreen proposed a toast to the Rotary Club of Kyoto, Japan. He said that 70 years ago the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been devastated by atomic bombs, with a combined death toll of 250,000. The dead in Nagasaki included some whom had fled Hiroshima when it was struck several days before. The firebombing of Tokyo had been the biggest bombing of the war. The city of Kyoto, the ancient city of Japan, had been on the list for bombing and might have been had not Japan surrendered/ The fact that it was not one of the initial targets was probably due to the fact the US Secretary of State for War, Henry Stimson, had honeymooned there. It was a beautiful place and it would have been harder for the Americans to have justified bombing it.

Our Guest

President Malcolm introduced Dr Michael Bendon, who holds post-graduate qualifications in Archaeology, History, Maritime Archaeology, Education and Cultural Heritage. He has worked for many years as an archaeologist on numerous sites around the Mediterranean and Europe, including Israel, Portugal, Germany and Greece, with extended surveys in Turkey, Syria, and Jordan. One of his latest projects came from his inquiry into the origins of a wreck off the coast of western Crete. He found a treasure trove of information which he has turned into a book, *The Forgotten Flotilla: The Craft of Heroes, Greece, Crete and North Africa, 1941*.

The Proposed Concert

President Malcolm and PP Keith are pursuing the idea of a concert next year at The Kings School Parramatta to raise money for the Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. Keith and Malcolm visited Simon Wilkins, former member of our club and now fundraising manager for the institute. He agrees that the \$3,000 hire cost of the school auditorium for a charity concert is a bit much and will be negotiating with The Kings School. There is a possible date in April-May next year and we will be able to promote it in various ways, in particular through the Lantern Clubs that support the institute. We are trying to get the school choir involved to make it a school event as well.

Christmas Trees

PP Keith and President Malcolm visited Jenny Scott at her property off Castle Hill Road and about 500 metres from Dick Smith's place where there is potential for selling Christmas trees next year. We need to have a shelter. We would have to put up a hire fence to keep the horses out. We would also have to arrange a water supply from Jenny's neighbour. There is a question of security of the trees at night, and I am thinking that perhaps we could have a huge tarpaulin to put over them, nailed to the ground with steel pickets. But this year we will be right to sell from Dick Smith's place.

Mental Health Research Funds for Hat Day

A message from our DG Graham Wilson is that Australian Rotary Health and Bunnings have entered into agreement to raise the much needed Mental Health Research funds for Hat Day on Friday 9 October. He asks whether we are prepared to take up the challenge to use this opportunity with Bunnings to raise the awareness of Hat Day and Mental Health Research? If we do, the club will have to register with Bunnings, (Terry Davies 0412 229 994 OR EMAIL terrydavies@australianrotaryhealth.org.au).

Wine, Food and Music Day

On October 11, there will be a wine, food and music race day at the Hawkesbury Race Club, Clarendon Road, Clarendon, music and racing day at Sylvania. People wanting to attend contact Jenny Towe, phone 02.8837.1900.

Pride of Workmanship Awards

Natalie Cowell is pressing on with the Pride of Workmanship Awards, and has put out a press release saying that nominations for the award close on Friday 16 October. The event itself will be at the Oatlands Golf Club on Monday, 2 November at 6.30 pm. The cost is \$65 a head. A reminder that Natalie is available for any queries. Her telephone number is 0439 400 670.

The Gallipoli Publication

With regards to the Rotary clubs of Parramatta and the Gallipoli publication. President Malcolm has read the entries on contributions of Parramatta residents to the Great War and they are of fine quality. He was asked to write a 2,000-word introduction to the publication which he has done. The headed by Janis Harvey and with Dave Shakespeare, Jack Elliott and Christine McSeveny is meeting to go through the proofs. One suggestion from Dave Shakespeare is that it be launched in conjunction with the visit of the Coo-ee Marchers to Parramatta on November 9 -11 but that depends on whether the printing can be done at that time, what else the Parramatta RSL has planned for those days and whether invitations can be sent out in time to all the contributors.

Changeover for Ramon Magsaysay

President Malcolm will be accompanying PP Keith to the Philippines on October 1 to attend the changeover night of our sister club Ramon Magsaysay, which is a Rotary Club in Metro Manila. I have not been to the Philippines before and should be an exciting and most informative experience.



Members of our sister club, Ramon Magsaysay, in a recent 'Walk for a cause' community event L to R. Carlos and Rosie Oliveros, Philip Bonita, Pres Leo Vedan, Marie Vedan, Mherlyn Amador, Mina Bonita and Bhoi Carandang.



What Michael Found in the War Debris



President Malcolm with Michael

Michael Bendon, ever alert for significance in material others pass by, was intrigued by wreck he found barely beneath the surface as he was swimming from a beach opposite the site of the ancient city of Phalasarna in Western Crete in 2008. His Greek colleague, Dr Elpida Hadjidaki, told him it was "from World War 2" and was able to point him in the right directions to begin the search. Michael has spent some six years researching the wreck which he has found to be the remains of Tank Landing Craft A6 which had been sunk by Stuka bombers in 1941 during the evacuation of Australian and New Zealand soldiers from Greece to Crete. Such vessels did not have the glamour of destroyers but did vital work in conveying tanks and huge number of troops, running the gauntlet of enemy aircraft and vessels as they went into the thick of the action. The sinking of this vessel had never been officially recorded. It had been listed as missing.

Michael found that no personnel had gone down with the vessel, so it was not a war grave. Locals knew it had gone down in the war and in the immediate aftermath of the sinking they had gone down to retrieve what they could, including the craft's powerful motor, parts of its armoured shell, weapons – even a Vickers machinegun – and any gold that was lying there. Some of the items could still be found in town, including, he was told, a working Vickers machinegun held in someone's basement, primed in case the Germans should ever return.

There was a reference to the sinking of the tank landing craft in the London Gazette of 24 May 1948. Michael also discovered that the commander of the vessel, John Sutton, was still alive, at 95, living in England, and was able to tell him what had happened.

Michael nevertheless had to face barriers in his research. Official histories pointed to there being no ships lost in the area. The British Admiralty was a little dismissive of the possibility of ships from 1941 being in that area while other historical departments and units lacked the resources, as so often is the case, to search anywhere outside of the official historical record.

That, Michael said, was why archaeology was so important, because it was evidenced that could put the historical record straight.

Of course, the sinking of the craft in 1941 was just the latest chapter in a history of tumult that surrounded the site. It had once been a fortified harbour, whose residents upset the Romans so much that a legion was sent there in 67BC to level the city to the ground. An earthquake in AD 365 had been so severe it had tilted the island and the harbour had ended up 200 metres inland.

Michael said there were some drawbacks to being a professional archaeologist. People would often say: "Oh, I always wanted to be an archaeologist", or "Have you found anything?" And he would also get: "Have you found any treasure?"

But the moments of gratification overwhelm all this. The research carried out with the assistance of his Greek colleague, Dr Hadjidaki, has proved that was not just a bit of rotting war debris. From his research, Michael has produced a fine book, *The Forgotten Flotilla*, which gives an account of these sturdy craft and brave crews who operated in Greece, Crete and North Africa when Germany was at its strongest. The value of these craft did not go unrecognised in Britain. Winston Churchill ordered that their production be an urgent priority. When the Allies invaded Europe in 1944, the landing craft were vital and were a generation or more beyond the landing craft that had served three years before. Like all good archaeologists, Michael had added to the sum of human knowledge. Members of Parramatta Rotary Club bought copies of his book. Michael invites members of the British Admiralty to do the same. For more information please visit his website www.forgottenflotilla.com.

John Surian thanked Michael for his address and wished he had time to continue.

For Diaries

September 18. District Presidents Meeting

September 21. We will hear from Eric Stanley, motivational speaker and author.

October 9. Hat Day to raise awareness for mental health research.

October 11. Bunnings barbecue

October 12. Speaker is Tony Edwards from MindDog, an organisation that certifies Psychiatric Service Dogs.

October 18. Triathlon Pink Barbecue. Parramatta Park

November 2. Pride of Workmanship Awards at Oatlands Golf Club