



Seventy Five
Years of
Service

Rotary in Australia,
Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands
1921-1996



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by Paul Henningham

Introduction by Sir Clem Renouf and Royce Abbey
Foreword by His Excellency the Governor General
and special contributions
by Basil Shaw and Glen Kinross

Rotary Down Under
for
The Australian Rotary Institute
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Rotary Down Under for The Australian Rotary Institute

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INTRODUCTION

by
SIR CLEM RENOUF, A.M.
President, 1978-79
Rotary International

and
ROYCE ABBEY, A.M., D.C.M.
President, 1988-89
Rotary International

If it be true, as Sir Winston Churchill averred, that "a nation that forgets its past can expect no future", then equally it could be argued that the future of an organisation such as Rotary will be influenced in large measure by the extent to which we who are the inheritors of its history and traditions remember (and learn from) its past.

Seventy five years is a long time in the life of any organisation. No one in this country to-day has had personal association with Rotary over all that time. It was a realisation of the importance of preserving that history in a form that would appeal to a wide cross section of Rotarians that prompted the Rotary Institute to engage Paul Henningham to write this book – a man uniquely qualified by experience, knowledge and insight, and with a distinctive sense of humour which frequently brightens its pages.

Here the past comes to life, for it is much more than just a collection of historical data, important though that is, especially for those of us who need on occasion to go to some authoritative source of reference to check a date or fact. This is the story of the evolution of a movement – of factors that have shaped it, of those who have helped to create it and of its influence upon the lives of people in hundreds of communities across the land.

It is a reminder of the debt we owe to those who blazed the trail we follow to-day – men like Professor Osborne and Sir Henry Bradon, the charter presidents of the first two clubs (Melbourne and Sydney), who were appointed commissioners to set up clubs in the major cities in all States – the former responsible for extension in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia and the latter in New South Wales and Queensland. Imagine undertaking a six-day sea voyage from Melbourne to Perth just to set up a new club!

Despite the fact that it is a story devoid of the emotive issues of politics or the drama of great events, it captures the interest of the reader because it deals so comprehensively with a whole range of issues and the birth and development of so many of the Rotary programs we take for granted to-day, presented from the perspective of one whose personal involvement in many of them has been complemented by an immense amount of research.

How did RYPEN originate? What is MUNA? What is the Peer Support Program all about? When Interact was limited to males, how were girls catered for? What part does Rotary play in the Probos organisation? You will find the answers to these, and many questions like them, not in the language of official publications, but of people personally involved.

Did you know that the medical school of the University of Western Australia owes its origin to the Rotary Club of Perth? Or that the Administrative Staff College was established in 1954 by the Rotary Club of Sydney? Or that Apex was sponsored in 1930 by the Rotary Club of Geelong? Or of the involvement of Rotary in the establishment of International Houses throughout the country?

Because these are not ongoing Rotary projects, with the passage of time Rotary's involvement would almost certainly be forgotten, but for this history. It is therefore important not just as a matter of history, but because it creates in the reader pride in our long record of practical service and an awareness of the significance of our involvement in projects which meet the needs of the wider community. We need to be reminded of them – for they are part of the tradition of service which will inspire future generations.

Of particular interest to new Rotarians are chapters titled "Getting Organised" and "Getting Together", briefly explaining, (in "non-official" language) the organisational structure of Rotary and such fundamental matters as the classification principle, attendance requirements, and the various meetings which punctuate the Rotary calendar. On that score the author asks the question: "What have all these meetings, apart from club meetings and possibly district conferences, to do with the average Australian Rotarian?" And his answer is "Not much." But then he goes on to say: "It is important that the average Rotarian, serving quietly in his

club – the only Rotarian who is indispensable to Rotary – should have an understanding of Rotary's support services. For that, in the final analysis, is what they are: meetings of people charged with the responsibility of helping Rotarians, in their clubs, to serve more effectively. And if they fail to do that, then they are wasting their time and your money."

It is this sometimes irreverent and invariably refreshing approach which characterises this book as one to be read and enjoyed by all Rotarians, at whatever stage in their Rotary journey. We certainly have.

Clem Renouf

Royce Abbey

FOREWORD

by His Excellency the Governor General of the
Commonwealth of Australia,
The Honourable Sir William Deane, AC, KBE.

It is a particular pleasure to me, as Governor General, to write this short foreword to Paul Henningham's outstanding work on Rotary's first seventy five years of service in Australia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

My own background in Rotary stretches back over forty years to 1954 when I had the good fortune to be awarded a Rotary Foundation Fellowship to study international law at Trinity College, Dublin. Subsequently I was a member of the Rotary Club of Sydney. Recently I have been privileged to resume my direct association with Rotary by being admitted as an Honorary Member of the Sydney Club.

Dr. Henningham's book is an elegantly written story of fellowship, unselfish dedication, achievement and plain goodness. It is highlighted by biographies of Australia's three Presidents and one President Elect of Rotary International and by informative glimpses of many other outstanding Australian Rotarians as they play their varying roles in the Rotary story.

The book will be an invaluable source of factual information for all who are interested in the story of Rotary International in our part of the world. For me, its outstanding quality is that, no doubt because of Paul Henningham's own experiences as a distinguished serving Rotarian and past district governor, the spirit of Rotary shines through its pages.



THE AUTHOR

Rotarian Herbert Paul Henningham, M.A., Ph.D., Dip.Soc.Stud.

It is most difficult to write about Paul Henningham in a few words; a man who has given so unselfishly to Rotary and the community and who has accomplished so much.

Paul was raised in the bush and, in his youth, tried farming, radio journalism, office work and retail selling before preparing to enter the Anglican Ministry. This was not to be, however. War intervened and he served in the A.I.F. as an infantry lieutenant. After the war and graduation from University he worked for several years as a social worker and then re-entered journalism, becoming editor and managing director of a small suburban newspaper company.

He was invited to membership of the Rotary Club of Marrickville in 1955 and, after seven years of Rotary service, became charter vice president of the Rotary Club of Newtown where, against the many knockers and doubters, he worked tirelessly in 1964 to establish a regional magazine. At that time Bayswater, like Newtown, was a very young club, also attempting to begin a magazine; and when the two joined forces I first met Paul, whose ability and enthusiasm made the project successful. If it had not been for him and his leadership and expertise, I doubt that we would have our Rotary Down Under today.

In 1970 Paul joined the Rotary Club of Lower Blue Mountains and was elected to honorary membership of the Newtown club in recognition of his services.

Paul's service to Rotary has been widespread. He has served Rotary International as district governor, committee member and chairman and R.I. representative during International Year of Peace. The Rotary Youth Leadership Awards program has been a great interest for 30 years and he helped to promote RYLA world-wide and led the committee that prepared the RYLA Handbook. He was chairman of the Probus publications committee and edited Probus News for 11 years. Among his several published works is *The Story of Rotary Institutes* (1978).

Included among Paul's many other voluntary activities are Legacy, which he has served for many years; the Ranfurly Library Service and the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Western Sydney.

The task of writing the history of Rotary in Australia has been an enormous undertaking and could only have been written by someone who gives "service above self" unstintingly. It is a remarkable achievement by a remarkable Rotarian.

Paul has five sons and 11 grandchildren. He and his wife Peggy live on the Blue Mountains of New South Wales.

Leslie A. Gilbert

PREFACE

THE originally intended task of the Australian Rotary History and Archives Committee appointed by the Australian Rotary Institute was to issue a re-print of Harold Hunt's *The Story of Rotary in Australia 1921-1971* with a companion volume covering the next 25 years. It is regrettable that production costs prohibited the pursuit of the project so that the committee found it necessary to recommend a single volume covering the 75 years as an alternative. It is even more regrettable that, in the absence of anyone with the literary and research skills to do justice to the assignment, the choice should have fallen upon one whose only qualifications are length of service and some familiarity with the subject.

Only a complete year-to-year chronicle of every Rotary club's activities could be described as the history of Rotary in this area; and clearly such a project would be encyclopaedic in scope and in size and far beyond the resources of the institute. This, then, is not a definitive history, nor is it a single, cohesive story. It is, rather, a series of stories and reports of some aspects of Rotary service and activities during the past 75 years.

On April 21, 1921, there was one Rotary club in Australia with a total membership of 37. On April 21, 1996, there were 41,787 members of 1178 Rotary clubs in Australia and Papua-New Guinea. Of these, 1,029 clubs had been in existence for more than ten years; 792 had been serving for more than 20 years. A very brief description of only the most significant projects of each of these clubs, without any reference to district or multi-district activities or to any other aspect of Rotary service, would occupy several volumes of the dimensions of this modest book. It will be understood, therefore, why this discourse can provide no more than a glimpse of some of the work performed by Rotary clubs and Rotarians in 75 years of service in Australia: a kalaidoscopic view of a rich pattern into which the myriad pieces have dropped at random. And for each piece we see, there are hundreds of equally attractive pieces that did not come into view.

Most of the information herein has been provided by others: in books, reports, newspaper stories and articles, club and district histories, minutes of meetings, Rotarians' reminiscences, responses to

questionnaires and interviews. There is no list of references to these numerous sources (except in Chapter Eight) but there is a comprehensive bibliography in which all are acknowledged. Some, of course, deserve special mention. These include The Story of Rotary in Australia 1921-1971 by Professor Harold Hunt of Melbourne; A History of Service 1921-86, the 60 years story of the Rotary Club of Melbourne by John W. Thompson; two scholarly works by Emeritus Professor Alex Mitchell of Sydney: The Rotary Club of Sydney 1921-1981 and District 975 of Rotary International 1927-1983; Rotary in Queensland - An Historical Survey by Sir Arnold Bennett of Brisbane; and, of course, the files of The Pinion 1924-1940 held in the Archives of the Rotary Club of Sydney, and Rotary Down Under, 1965 to the present.

The absence of a regional magazine for 25 years leaves a serious gap in our knowledge of Rotary club activities between 1940 and 1965. Few annual reports have been preserved by clubs and those that do exist are not readily accessible. Many of those still in existence provide information about the officers, growth of membership, meetings and other statistics with information about projects confined to a list, such as the following enlightening example: "Vocational - courtesy awards, careers advice at High School, Four Way Test debate. Community - park cleanup, tree planting, bus-shelter in Kurrajong Street, Guide Hall, 2 sponsored for RYLA. International - exchange students (USA), toasts to overseas clubs, carpenters' tools to school in Fiji." The report did suggest a year of useful service and no doubt reminded the members of their own achievements; but it is not very helpful to a researcher 25 years later. The same report, incidentally, provided a full list of guest speakers and their subjects, leaving to posterity more information about what these Rotarians heard than what they did.

Chapter Eight, Papua New Guinea and the Solomons is contributed entirely by District 9600 Governor Dr. Basil Shaw, whose authoritative approach to the subject, with which he is clearly very familiar, combined with his lucid style serve to reinforce my conviction that he would have been a better choice for the whole assignment. It is unfortunate that his gubernatorial commitments precluded his acceptance of the task.

The inclusion of those chapters (Nine and Ten) briefly describing the purposes of the various meetings of Rotarians and the general organisational structure of Rotary may require some justification. The History and Archives Committee hopes that this book might be used as a source of information, not only for experienced Rotarians who wish to know more about their great movement, but also for new members and potential Rotarians, for whom an explanation of the general organisation and procedures of Rotary at club, district, regional and international levels might be helpful.

I thank all those who have generously provided information, including the 504 Rotary club historians or secretaries who responded to the History Committee's questionnaire and I apologise to the great majority of them whose club activities are not recorded in this book. Their reports are now lodged in a more important and permanent repository, the Rotary Archives, in which, it is hoped, a vast store of material will be collected to assist future researchers.

I am sure the committee wishes me to thank Mrs. Jane Campbell for her cheerful acceptance of the numerous production tasks: typesetting, picture selection, design and page makeup; and Bob Aitken for co-ordinating production, liaison with the printer and organising distribution. On my own behalf I thank my long-suffering wife, who not only tolerated my incogitancy during my involvement in this project but also read the proofs with her usual quiet efficiency.

Paul Henningham

ROTARY IN AUSTRALIA 1921-1996

PROLOGUE

"ONE evening I went with a professional friend to his suburban home. After dinner as we strolled about the neighbourhood my friend greeted by name various tradesmen at their stores. This reminded me of my New England village. The thought came to me why not in big Chicago have a fellowship composed of just one man from each of many occupations, without restrictions as to their politics or religion, with broad tolerance of each other's opinions? In such a fellowship could there not be mutual helpfulness?"

"I did not act upon my impulse at once; months and even years passed. In the life of great movements it is necessary that one man who has faith walk alone for a time. I did walk alone but eventually in February 1905 I called three young businessmen to meet with me and I laid before them a very simple plan of mutual co-operation and informal friendship such as all of us had once known in our villages. They agreed to my plan."

So wrote Paul P. Harris in *My Road to Rotary* as he simply described the beginnings of Rotary.

The story is too well known to Rotarians everywhere to need retelling; but, for the information of those who are not Rotarians or who only recently have enlisted in Rotary ranks, Paul Harris was a Chicago lawyer aged 38, whose happy childhood had been spent in the care of his grandparents in Wallingford, Vermont (his "New England village") and who admitted to being lonely in the big, bustling city. His three friends were Silvester Schiele (a coal dealer), Gustavus Loehr (a mining engineer), and Hiram Shorey (a merchant tailor). They met on the evening of February 23, 1905 in Gus Loehr's office in the old Unity Building in Dearborn Street Chicago.

Silvester Schiele was elected the first president of the still unnamed club, the objects of which were friendship and mutual co-operation. Though still holding their place in Rotary history as original members, Gus Loehr and Hiram Shorey, as Paul Harris said, ". . .

failed to follow through. On the other hand Harry Ruggles, Charley Newton, and others who were quickly added to the group, with hearty zest joined in developing the project."

Paul Harris declined any foundation office but was the "guiding hand" who nominated the office bearers and recommended the activities of the club. In the third year he was elected president and gives the first hint of his future plans for Rotary: ". . . my ambitions then were - first, to advance the growth of the Chicago club; second, to extend the movement to other cities; third, to intensify community service as one of the club's objectives." Paul Harris, of course, is remembered and honoured as the Founder of Rotary - and, indeed, is in danger of being deified for creating the movement which began with four members of one club in one country; and which, 91 years later, has 1,180,000 members of 27,700 clubs in 188 countries and geographical regions.

Why Rotary?

"At a third meeting of the group," wrote Paul Harris, "I presented several suggestions as a name for the group, among them Rotary, and that name was selected as we were then holding our meetings in rotation at our offices and places of business. Later, still rotating, we held our meetings at various hotels and restaurants. Thus we began as 'Rotarians' and such we continue to be."

It was the enjoyment of each other's company which seems to have engendered feelings of goodwill that extended beyond their own circle to embrace the whole community, that expressed itself, under the guidance of Paul Harris, in the first "service" project: provision of a "public comfort rest room" in Chicago City Hall. This was not achieved without some resistance from a few members who saw this new role for their club as a threat to the "mutual assistance" principle on which it had been founded. There were some resignations, but the Rotary club continued with renewed vigour.

In 1908 a second club was organised in San Francisco; and a third in Oakland, California, in 1909, which was followed, in the same year, by clubs in Seattle, Los Angeles, New York City and Boston. By now it was accepted that the objectives of Rotary clubs were "fellowship and service".

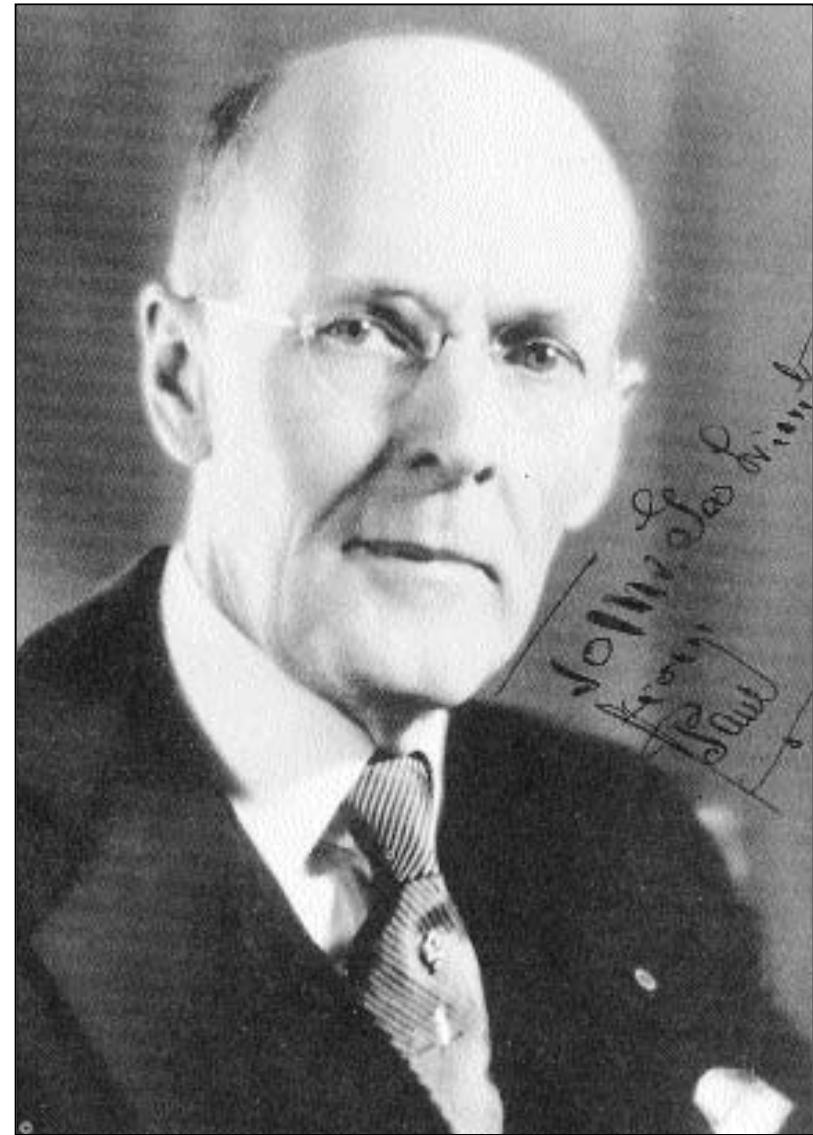
In 1910 the number of clubs grew to 16, the National Association

of Rotary Clubs was formed and five "principles" were adopted in the form of five objectives. Rotary then became international when a club was formed in Winnipeg, Canada and, in 1911, the movement crossed the Atlantic with clubs organised in Dublin, London and Belfast.

The name of the association was changed in 1912 to the International Association of Rotary Clubs. By now there were 50 clubs with some 5,000 members and the system of districts (then called "divisions") was established for administrative purposes: five in U.S.A., two in Canada and one in Great Britain and Ireland.

The growth continued, seriously retarded by World War I, until, in 1921, the 1000th club was formed in York, England, and the first international convention to be held outside the U.S.A. convened in Edinburgh, Scotland, at which the most significant decision was to include a new Rotary objective: the advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace.

Also in that year the International Association of Rotary Clubs appointed two Canadian Rotarians, James W. Davidson, F.R.G.S., a past president of the Rotary Club of Calgary, and Lieutenant Colonel J. Layton Ralston, C.M.G., D.S.O., K.C., president of the Rotary Club of Halifax (later to serve as Minister for Defence in Canada), to be honorary commissioners to introduce Rotary to Australia and New Zealand.



Paul Harris