



## The Argus headline in 1939 and London 1940.

In 1939, Nazi Germany invades Poland on September 1. On September 3, the United Kingdom and British Dominions declares war on Germany. Robert Menzies announces a new War Cabinet on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September.

It is also the year when *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz* featured in cinemas overseas and *Over the Rainbow* is an extremely popular song in Australia.

It is also the year, Harry P.Y. Wright undertakes to be our first President during the War years.



## President Harry P.Y. Wright 1939/40

**President Wright drinking milk. The Club provided financially disadvantaged children with milk each day in Bendigo schools.**

Throughout our history, Presidents of our Club have often taken the reins during tough times; for example: during a drought, when there have been bushfires, or in the middle of a pandemic. Let us now look at how our Presidents responded during a time when our whole way of life was at stake...during the Second World War.

Given the dark clouds of war was on every member's mind, President Wright focused on good fellowship in the Club.

Treasurer, Harold Porteous, had become our first member of the Club to leave to serve in the RAAF. Furthermore, many members had farewelled their children who joined the armed services.

During 1939/40 the Club provided one hundred pounds for Bendigo War Funds. Also, the Club (with the support of Inner Wheel and individual members) raised two hundred pounds for the victims of air raids in London.



Apart from assisting the War effort, the Club was active during the year in Bendigo with respect to organizing a picnic for children from St Luke's Toddler's Home to Bridgewater. Members provided fourteen cars to transport the children.

Also, members continued to assist residents of the Blind Home in Bendigo who all appreciated their kindness.

President Wright encouraged individual members to develop good relationships with other Rotarians overseas from friendly nations (enduring hardship as a result of the War) by sending greeting cards to members that held similar classifications to themselves.

As a result of this initiative, members received some interesting responses from Rotarians experiencing their darkest hour. Importantly, President Wright felt such contact would not only develop friendly relationships, but members would increase their sympathies and knowledge of other countries present plight when talking to school children.

During Youth Week, Club members did address local schools with the topic: "Building for the Future." Members encouraged students to enter an Essay Competition on the topic, with winners from each school invited to the Club to receive prizes at a Club luncheon.

Other achievements during the year involved:

- An increase of membership from 55-61.
- The Club held 49 meetings during the year.
- A Ladies Night and a Ladies Xmas Night were held during the year.
- A total of nearly forty-seven pounds was distributed to local charities in addition to the 300 pounds for War Funds and victims of air raids in London.



A small sample of the many local organizations to benefit from the funds were Bendigo Base Hospital, the Mayor's Blanket Appeal, and the Travelers' Charity Club.

