

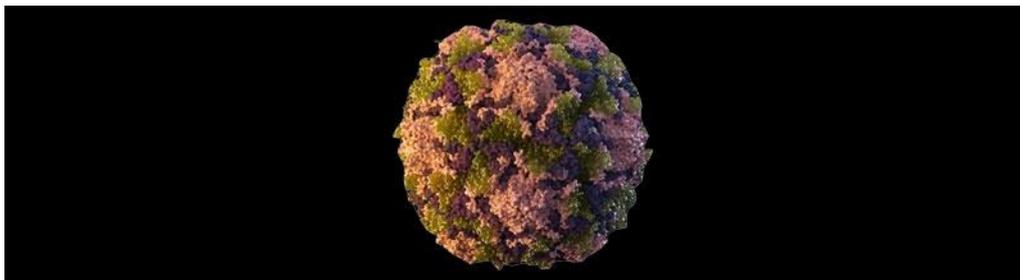


President Noel John Barton 1949-50

Some members may remember July 1950 as a time that Menzies, the Colombo Plan, and Korea dominated the Australian news.

It was also the month that members of our Club celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Rotary Club of Bendigo. John Barton was the President in 1949/50 (his year as President did not end until September 30).

President John felt good fellowship was an essential ingredient for a healthy Club. In his Annual Report, he did mention, however, that being a Rotarian means more than simply wearing the button/badge. It involves being of service and use to the community at large.



Interestingly, despite our 25th Anniversary being many years ago, the Club's community work was dramatically impacted as it was in 2020 (70 years later) due to an invisible virus that had no known cure.

In 1950, parents lived in fear that their children would catch an invisible enemy. As a result, parents kept their children away from playgrounds, picture theatres, birthday parties and swimming pools for fear that their children would catch the virus from an infected child. The Polio virus, at the time, was causing much alarm and concern in the community. If a child was infected, they were sent to hospital for rehabilitation.

As the result of Polio, the Club was not able to undertake all their community work due to the restrictions. For example, they were not permitted to deliver treats to St Aiden's Orphanage and the Toddlers Homes as they had always done. Also, the Youth Camp at Axedale was hardly used during the year as many parents were frightened that one of the children attending the camp might have Polio.



Despite the virus, the Rotary Xmas Party was held at Favalaro's with fine entertainment. Members from both Castlemaine and Echuca attended the event. The Xmas Party was one of the very few events that members could be accompanied by a lady. At the time, women were not permitted to attend most meetings.

In February, a Farewell Party was held for Past President, A Hedley Jones, Secretary, Arthur Davis, and their wives, who were all going overseas. At the event, Past President of Rotary International gave a very informative talk about his previous year as RI President.



1950 was also a year of mass immigration. Hundreds of thousands of residents and refugees from post war Europe were offered the opportunity to live in Australia.

Given some recent immigrants were provided with accommodation at the Fortuna Camp, the Club looked at ways of assisting the 'New Australians' (term used at this time) with projects that would 'absorb them' (government policy

at the time) into the general population as an International Project. At first, the Club looked at offering the new residents English lessons; however, the Teachers College in Bendigo eventually offered to undertake this role. Hence, the Club abandoned the idea and looked at projects to 'widen the circle of acquaintance' of these new arrivals to Bendigo. This too did not come to fruition as the camp was eventually closed.



The Youth Service Committee and Youth Camp committee joined forces during the year to look at how to make improvements to the Camp at Axedale and ensure it is well maintained. Two tanks of 1200 and 800 gallons were purchased and transported to the Camp for the collection of water. A fireplace was erected at the end of the Mess Hall to provide comfort for those staying in the winter months. Also, two working bees were also organised during the year to undertake the much-needed maintenance required.



A personal parcel was sent by the Club for each member of the Rotary Club of Accrington, England as a gesture of friendship. A 'talkie show' was held every month for patients in the TB Ward at Bendigo Base Hospital. Also, a free library service was offered by the Club with the books being kept at the Town Hall.

Donations during the year included Bendigo Benevolent Home, Bendigo Blind Home, The Salvation Army, The Red Cross, and Xmas and blanket appeals.