



President Dallas L Martin 1970-71

When I was coordinating the digitisation of the history of the Rotary Club, some Past Presidents names came up more than most. One of those names was Dal Martin.

Let us now go back to 1970 and find out why it was that Dal Martin featured prominently in many members' memories and the history records. The Rotary theme for the year was: Bridge the Gap. Our footy fans will probably remember 1970 as the year, Carlton 'bridged the gap' in the second half of the Grand Final to win by simply handballing constantly to confuse the opposition.



Dal Martin, when he received a handball to become President, not only was it his goal to undertake to bridge the gap within the Bendigo community, but President Dal also had brought with him his own coaching mottos for the year ahead. The first one was Teamwork, and the second one was truly admirable: to get to know every member, personally. President Dal invited every member of the club to his home before Xmas for that purpose.



President Dal loved the Youth Camp at Axedale. During his year as President, he became a Member of the Deputation to meet with the Premier of Victoria (Sir Henry Bolte) and the Treasurer to obtain \$10,000 to improve facilities at the Axedale Youth Camp.

The visit was successful, and the money provided started a dramatic improvement to the facilities at the Camp. At the time, the Youth Camp had grown to be very popular with the Education Department with over 2,100 students attending the Camp in a year. Consequently, the living quarters for the caretaker were dramatically improved. For the young people attending the camp, a new toilet block, shower rooms and cool room were built to enlarge the Camp. Also, 35 new double-decker bunks, rubber mattresses and curtains were provided to ensure those attending the camp would feel much more comfortable during their stay.



With the success of the funding, one might be forgiven for thinking any President might then simply enjoy the rest of the year. However, President Dal wanted the Club to come up with a new Community Project. John Little and a New Project Committee were given the task of doing just that! Hence, the idea of holding a Community Carols came to fruition to be held each year at Rosalind Park.



At the very first Carols, despite it being a cold night, over 2,000 people attended the event. While the project was immensely popular with the public, it was also viewed as an opportunity for the public to make donations to Rotary to aid the work of the Club, locally.

The guest artists were Meryl Cohn and Lee Robertson with the Benola Singers. They were given the responsible task to lead the community singing of the Carols.

David Smith was the guest compere. The Lamplighters also took part in the program.



Another achievement for President Dal, was the introduction of Interact to Bendigo for the first time. Form 4 (Year 10) students were encouraged to join the Rotary program at Bendigo High. Also, the Club organised a Careers Night for 1500 students and their parents with 40 occupational counsellors (many from Melbourne) attending. Furthermore, 40 students from White Hills Technical School were transported by Members to visit local industries.

Jim Mahoney, committee member of the Carols for 51 years and member of Rotary in Dal's year comments:

I was new to Rotary, and I can recall being very impressed by what Rotary achieved, under Dal's leadership, that year.

I was on the first Carols committee and have been every year since, it has been a most rewarding and worthwhile project.

I recall that, after much discussion, as there was no Carols being held in Bendigo at that time, we would hold the event for one year and then decide regarding future years.

We were amazed and delighted at how well the event was attended and Carols has now become a very popular Christmas tradition in Bendigo.

I can't remember many details of the organisation or programme that first year, but every year since the committee has always endeavoured to develop and improve the evening wherever possible.



THE ROTARY CLUB OF BENDIGO - YOUTH CAMP PROJECT

Back in 1946, members of the Community Service Avenue of the Rotary Club of Bendigo felt that there was a need in the Bendigo and Northern District area of the State of Victoria for a controlled Youth Camp.

After much discussion they finally succeeded in negotiating the release of 29 acres of fine land on the shady banks of the Campaspe river, about 15 miles from Bendigo.

Each year the Youth Camp Committee of the Community Service Avenue has advanced the camp in line with the increasing demand and maintained the standard of cleanliness and management on a very high level.

In 1961, a large recreation hall was added. Early in 1968, a new dining hall was officially opened by John Rossiter, M.L.A. The old dining hall was converted to dormitories, thus enlarging the capacity of the camp to accommodate up to 100 persons.

An open air Chapel was donated and erected by the members of the Bendigo Y.M.C.A. in appreciation of the usefulness of the camp, and as a means of assisting the development of a sound mind in a sound body. The present view, looking away from the Chapel down a shallow gully, with its sunlit avenue of trees, is truly inspirational.

In its present size and condition the whole area is a definite asset to the youth of our State. It is a continuing project of ~~The Rotary Club of Bendigo~~ and a lasting memorial to the foresight and energy of so many willing and dedicated men, who wish to bridge "the ^{GENERATION} gap" by close association with the young people of today. ^{YOU} The camp is a collective gift to the youth of our district from the individuals who make up the membership of The Rotary Club of Bendigo.

I thank you for your support this evening and may I extend to you "Christmas Greeting".

Dal Martin,
PRESIDENT,
THE ROTARY CLUB OF BENDIGO.