



Next E-Club Meeting

Tuesday 26 June 2018

7.30pm (Sydney Time)



*From the meeting held on
12 June 2018*

Attendance: John, Marilyn, Debbie, Cameron, Monica, Tebao,

Guest Speaker: Bev Cooney

Apology: Ruth Barber.

Debbie recently attended the District 9700 Foundation Grant Seminar in Young and was lucky enough to sit next to a member of the Rotary Club of Bathurst, Bev Cooney. Debbie was so impressed with this remarkable lady that she invited Bev to be our guest speaker this week.

Bev attended our meeting on 12 June and it was a fascinating story. I did a search on Google for more information and found this newspaper article from the local Bathurst paper, the Western Advocate. I have cut and pasted it below as it is an excellent synopsis of Bev's presentation.

Western Advocate

MARCH 19 2016

Making a difference



WHAT A WOMAN: Bev Cooney, who has helped many people in desperate need, says she has had an amazing life. She has received a Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of her work, as well as an award from Peruvian president Alan Garcia in 2008 for being a 'Notable Carer'.



It's easy to make assumptions when you meet people, some good and some bad. But then you meet people who simply amaze you with what they have done.

At 67 years of age, it would be easy to assume that Bev Cooney is winding down and starting to take it easy. In fact, the opposite is true.

Mrs Cooney is a registered nurse who has spent a lifetime caring for people, and there is no way she is about to stop.

She took her first trip to Peru when she was 55, and it was an experience that changed her. What she saw was poverty, desperation, and for those unfortunate enough to have a disability, exclusion.

Mrs Cooney's passion for South America began decades earlier, when she was around four or five years old. "Mum and Dad used to put on a program every Friday night from Quito, Ecuador in South America," she said. "They talked about Incas and South America and so, right from that age, I had a fascination with South America. All my life I wanted to go and live in the Andes. And, I did."

Fast forward a few decades, and in 2003 she finally made her first trip to South America. "I was invited to go through an 1100-bed children's hospital in Lima [in Peru]. What I saw was an absolute horror," she said. "The nurses had no equipment to look after the children and they were responsible for 8 to 10 children."

The experience, and a conversation with a doctor at the hospital, set Mrs Cooney's life on a new course. "I said to the doctor: 'What can I do for you?'. He said: 'Bring me people to teach us'," she said. "I said: 'I'll be back next year with a team.'"

Despite some doubts about her ability to gather a team, Mrs Cooney was true to her word. Eleven months later, to the day, she was back in Lima complete with a medical team that included a paediatric surgeon, three nurses (including herself), an anaesthetist and his wife, who was a school teacher.

"We worked in that 1100-bed hospital for a week and after that we went out into the jungle and saw a 19-bed hospital," she said. "I couldn't believe anyone could heal in a place like that. "The beds were about 30 centimetres off the ground and there were no mattresses, only a blanket."

During her time there, the medical team saw around 500 disabled children. "These kids couldn't go to school because the people with 'normal' kids thought their children would catch what these kids had," she said.

"I was really concerned so I went back over to find out the logistics of making a school."

In 2006, Mrs Cooney retired and withdrew much of her superannuation and started plans to build a school.

"With my super I built a school with the help of 21 builders from the Sunshine Coast. They also worked for a solid year and raised \$80,000," she said.



Her commitment has not wavered. The school is set up and Mrs Cooney has since organised a donation of used hospital beds from John Hunter Children's Hospital to go to the 19-bed hospital in Satipo.

Mrs Cooney's last trip to Peru was in mid-2015. Her next trip is in July this year (2016) and she has a new mission in mind.

"There is no treatment for cancer outside Lima, so if people want treatment they have to go there," she said.

But, she said, many people do not have the money to travel to Lima for treatment. Her next mission is to organise a medical team to go to Peru and set up a cancer centre outside the capital to teach doctors to diagnose and treat cancers. "It's the first cancer centre Peru has ever had," she said.

"I also set up the first school in Peru for disabled children.

"The government of Peru has now built schools for disabled children all over Peru," she said.

Mrs Cooney only moved to Bathurst in June 2015 but has already found support for her endeavours from the Rotary Club of Bathurst.

Mrs Cooney said she has had a lucky life.

"From day one everything has fallen into place ... I haven't had to work hard to make this happen, that's why I know I'm doing the right thing," she said.

"I've had the most amazing life that anyone could ask for."



Uros Island, Lake Titicaca



School for the Disabled Satipo Peru



Ambulance boat on the Rio Ene, Satipo, Peru



Drs from John Hunter teaching in Peru

Editor’s Footnote: This article was written in 2016 and Bev did return to Peru in 2016.

Bev also told us that in 2008 she purchased an ambulance boat as shown in the above picture. The boat is 12 metres long, has 2 beds for patients, 2 chairs – one for the driver and one for the nurses and has nails to hang the IV drips from. In appreciation they named the boat “Beverley”.

This year on 27 August 2018, Bev and her team will depart for Peru to paint a school and to build a playground. There is also a medical team making the trip who will hold teaching seminars to the Peruvians regarding the treatment of Cancer.

Bev’s story is amazing and it was a privilege to have Bev attend our meeting.

Thankyou Bev. Our Club wishes you the best and safe travelling to you and your team.



INDUCTION OF NEW MEMBER - TEBAO AWERIKA

Welcome Tebao !

President John had the pleasure of inducting Tebao into our Club, which was a thrill for us all.

Tebao is from the Republic of Kiribati and is the Member of Parliament for Betio, from Ambo, Tarawa, Kiribati

The club welcomes Tebao and we are sure that he will be an asset to our Club.





Tebao mentioned that he would like to try and support the schools in Kiribati by supplying furniture and desks. The students currently sit on the floor for lessons and are greatly disadvantaged by the lack of furniture and educational equipment.

The members at the meeting thought that the Club may be able to help deliver school chairs and desks to needy schools in Kiribati from the DIK warehouse. Tebao, as a member of parliament is in a position to assist with some financial aid. President John took on the role to follow this up.

After the meeting, John, Debbie and I rushed an application to the District Board for a D9700 District Grant to assist in this project. We will have to wait and see how things go.
Thanks Debbie and John.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

President John opened the AGM and called for volunteers for positions. The following positions were filled however we still require all members of the Club to put their hands up to fill some of the vacant positions, or assist with some of the duties.

Office Bearers:

- President – Marilyn Roberts
- President Elect – John Roberson
- Secretary – Debbie Schache
- Treasurer – Cameron McKern
- Foundation – John Roberson
- Programs – John Roberson
- Membership – ***
- Social Director – Debbie Schache
- Rotary Information - ***
- Information Technology – Cameron McKern
- Project Co-ordinators – Monica Vaughan and Donna Vaughan
- Bulletin – Marilyn Roberts

Membership Fees:

It was agreed that the membership fees for 2018-2019 will be \$320

Proposed: Marilyn Roberts
Seconded: Cameron McKern



NEXT MEETING - Tuesday 26 June 2018

The next meeting, to be held on Tuesday 26 June, will be a social meeting. We look forward to hearing what our members have been involved in.

CLUB CHANGEOVER - Tuesday 10 July 2018

The Club's changeover will be held on Tuesday 10 July. We will have a number of District guests attending.

President John will report on what our Club has achieved during 2017-18 and our incoming President Marilyn Roberts will introduce her new Board and the objectives for our Club for the 2018-19 year.



Looking forward to catching up with everyone at the next meeting.



Marilyn