

DO YOU KNOW WHY ROTARY IS SO EXTRAORDINARY?

A satisfying thing about being a member of something is pride in that group's history of achievement and a depth of admiration and respect for its heroes. If you follow a sporting club then you will easily understand what I'm talking about. Port Power devotees will know exactly what year their club entered the AFL. Who the first coach was and when they won their premiership. They can tell you about the ups and downs of their club. They are living catalogues of who is who and what is what at Alberton. They will tell you everything you ever or never wanted to know about the Cornes brothers. They have solid opinions about why their team was unfairly denied other premierships. Even the younger ones will know and revere names like Foster Williams, John Cahill and Russell Ebert. Football carries an extra level of 'special' for them because of their pride in their club.

That type of rusted-on devotion and excitement at being 'part of it' used to be a feature of Rotary when many of us became Rotarians – maybe 20-plus years ago. And it was easy to develop that feeling of pride in Rotary. Because knowing about Rotary was a part of our membership. Rotary has its own proud history of achievement. Heroes too. And we came into contact with these things through 'Rotary Information'. Snippets about Rotary that were always found in club bulletins. Three-minute Rotary quizzes conducted by the Sergeant-at-Arms in lieu of a fine session. Sometimes a meeting program devoted to our past and our great leaders.

When these things were part of our Rotary experience we had a dimension to our membership that is akin to feelings of belonging that are enjoyed by the footy tragics. Knowing things in our history that make us proud to be in Rotary and pride also that we know this stuff.

What happened to all this? What has become of the pride and enthusiasm of being part of something that has been doing spectacularly successful things all around the world for over 100 years? Who were the people behind these things? Do you know.....

1. Why is Rotary called Rotary?
2. What happened with \$26.50 that Arch Klumph pulled out of his pocket in 1917?
3. Who was the first president of the first Rotary club?
4. What was FAIM and why was it called that?
5. Who was the Australian who started Rotary's quest to eradicate polio?
6. What is the origin of the 4-Way test.

There's a story behind each of these things, and these stories are part of a history that eclipses in its magnitude most sporting teams, charities and clubs – anywhere. And we have shiny, remarkable Rotary heroes who we would look up to and admire – if we knew about them.

If you can answer these half-a-dozen questions above then you can probably answer a lot more and it's likely you have been a Rotarian for a while. If you know who Cliff Dochterman was and you've watched his iconic 'If I Could Be President Again' presentation then you probably get the idea about Rotary Information. If you know why the first Rotary club in Australia was chartered in Melbourne rather than Sydney then congratulations. You probably have some Rotary in your bloodstream.

If you see Rotary as a regular meeting with like-minded people, fellowship with some good folks, and a chance to put something back then you are probably a terrific Rotarian. But if this is all that you see then maybe you are missing out on something. That great feeling you get when you really understand why this great organisation you have joined is such a great organisation.

Rotary! You're in the middle of it. Find out about it.

Talk to the long-serving members of your club or start at [History | Rotary International](#).

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