

**Rotary**  
CLUB OF BURNIE



CLUB NUMBER - 18437

# THE BULLETIN

82ND YEAR - No 7 – August 14<sup>th</sup> 2023



**CREATE HOPE**  
**in the WORLD**

President – David Bennett  
Secretary - George Austin  
Treasurer – Paul Kearney  
Bulletin Editor – Allan Jamieson

## INVOCATION

For good food, for good fellowship, may the giver of all our blessings make us truly thankful.

ROTARY MONTH: AUGUST – MEMBERSHIP

**Apologies: Before 1:00 pm Monday, call George Austin on 0438 450 801**

**Duty Roster: Dilani WIJESOORIYA**

Club website: <http://www.burnierotary.org.au>

Date	Event or Speaker/Topic	Venue
Aug. 21	Greg Ramsay of Ratho	RSL
Aug. 28	??	RSL
Sept. 4	DG's visit	RSL

## BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES – AUGUST 2023

Birthdays		Wedding Anniversary		Club Anniversary	
13	Robyn McCARTHY			11	Bekithemba BULLE
13	Ian GUEST				
17	Eleanor AUSTIN				
19	David McCARTHY				
25	Paul KEARNEY				
26	Dr Roopa MULIK				

RAFFLE WINNER	David Bennett
---------------	---------------

ATTENDANCE	??
------------	----

**Visitors:** - Julie Patton [Dilani's guest]

### Secretary PP George:

- Our first-ever BBQ on a Friday at Bunnings yielded profit of \$390. Fundraising events at our Changeover Dinner event on Sat. Aug. 12 raised about \$250
- Progress is being made on our plans for the Nestlé BBQ. Wayne Licht's draftsman is working 'pro bono' on this task

### President (and PP) David:

- We now have a functioning "Square Reader"!

### Fines Mistress: June

- Another masterful rendition of how a Fine Session *should* function.

**Guest Speaker:** Dr. John Parker

*From Cholera to Ebola* is the title of his book, which describes his experiences as a medical volunteer in war zones and many other disaster zones around the world. Most of the Rotarians present purchased a copy.



Born in Liverpool and graduate of Edinburgh University, Dr Parker was fed-up with English weather. His hobby was scuba diving, so Australia's Great Barrier Reef naturally beckoned. He moved there!

His talk was backed-up by many images, some being quite confronting though very valuable in revealing what medical volunteers such as John had to cope with.

Rwanda. The genocide there, which led to probably a million refugees crossing the border into eastern **Zaire** during 100 days in 1994, was the start of John's ventures with medical teams of the International Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Aspen Medical.

For John, it was a "moving experience;" He returned home with signs of his having PTSD, though he ignored these. Eventually his marriage ended and he headed to a war zone.

Afghanistan. In 2000, he was in the northern provinces of Afghanistan. The Taliban was in a civil war with the Northern Alliance. John explained that; 'the Taliban tolerated our medical teams, because we helped the local population.' They said, "We are too busy fighting a war."

John wanted to extend the area covered by vaccination patrols, so he decided to use horses – the roads were hopeless!

Back in Australia, John became an alcoholic, lost his medical practice and was desperately unhappy. He found that nobody 'back home' cared to hear of his experiences. They had not changed, but HE had!

John was very fortunate to secure a job mucking-out horse stables. The horses sensed his unhappiness and they would nuzzle his neck to show that they understood. He married again.

Nigeria was his next destination. There was a meningococcal outbreak in the northern area in 2006. He encountered an unusual situation – the vaccinators went on strike. He had the doctors and nurses take over vaccination and soon the strike ended.

From there, John went to Uganda to help organise a medical clinic dealing with AIDS.

Iraq. In 2008, John went to a major burns hospital in eastern Iraq near the Iran border. A major risk he faced was abduction. An Iraqi doctor was worth \$80,000 but a foreign doctor was worth \$500,000. The hospital where he worked was deliberately nondescript, no signs outside, and no car park (to reduce the risk of a car bomb). Everyone entering was searched, including the doctors – separate queues for males and females.

Many children had burns over almost their whole body. Many died. Back home again, his life was dealt another blow – his house burned down!

Sudan. Another refugee situation, with Christian clans hemmed into the Nuba Mountains in the southern region of North Sudan, an Arabic country. The medical mission there was clandestine.

It was here that John had his two most devastating medical failures. Two children had epiglottitis (a swelling of the valve between the gullet and the windpipe – caused by an infection). The young boy died first and the girl died the next day. John could only look on, helpless because he lacked the necessary surgical instrument to save them.

It took two years before John recovered sufficiently to become a functioning doctor again.

Sierra Leone. In 2015, John became part of an Aspen Medical team that went to this country to combat an Ebola epidemic. In the four months he was there not one staff member died.

John ended his talk by saying; ‘When you live on adrenaline, you *know* you are alive!’

Close: 7:55 pm