



Rotary Club of Cooma Inc

Meeting - 8 January 2014

Mike Carroll - Riding from Alaska to Patagonia at the Cooma Bowling Club



In 2007 Mike and his friend Max were finishing Uni and were wondering what to do with their lives. Max said why don't we ride across the world like a couple of blokes were already doing. They decided they would do it a bit differently, they looked at a map to see what would be the longest ride they could do without getting on a boat too often. After looking at a map it was clear to them that going from the extreme north in North America to the extreme south in South America would be it. They spent 18 months saving to cover their expenses, then they were off. They did say to each other don't get injured before we leave - 6 weeks out Mike broke his leg.

They started in Alaska at Prudhoe Bay as close to the Arctic Sea as they could get. One of the reasons for the trip was to sate a curiosity about the world, both had previously travelled but wanted to see more. When they got to Alaska, it was Autumn and the leaves were turning, they bought a couple of cheap bikes and 4 panniers each. The first week was the hardest, they were riding through a tundra, no trees and a couple of polar bears. After 10 days the scenery changed to trees. The route wasn't planned other than sticking to the West Coast as the roads were better. Lessons learnt after the first month on the road included; food was very important; don't think about the end; carry only what you really need; patience - especially with flat tyres and when it rains don't worry as it will definitely happen again.

They had no distractions like phones or TV so they did a lot of reading. There were also many photo's taken. They stopped worrying about km's travelled and focused on time on the road instead. When they got to the USA they decided to avoid LA and went down Route 66 instead. They spent Christmas at a ranch on the US/Mexican boarder. They were only planning on staying a couple of nights but this extended to a month and they got a much needed rest. When they left their host flew them over the boarder into Mexico. Mexico was very hilly but the culture was very special. The route was then random as they had no map. They made a side trip to Cuba which was really worthwhile. Central America was great but the heat and humidity was taxing. They saw a volcano in Guatemala over which they toasted (burnt) marshmallows. Riding through the Andes saw a lot of extreme ups and downs. Peru had spectacular scenery and Bolivia was the highest point on the trip. The wind in Patagonia was extreme and they finished the trip looking pretty worn and weary. Mike said the common thread of generosity of people is the thing that kept them going as they met some amazing people some of which they will never forget.



The contact for making apologies and for notifications of guests for dinner meetings is Les Sutcliffe on 6452 7442 during business hours or e-mail leecooma@bigpond.com

THREE MINUTER

This week our speaker was Mark Cooper and he shared an overview of his life to date.

Born in RPA hospital 1960 – a blue baby with blood rejected by my body so a full blood transfusion was the order of the day. He grew up in Murrurundi at the head of the Hunter Valley. Attended Murrurundi primary school from 1965 to 1971 with a student population of approximately 100 - part of which time the school was also a high school with a few 1st to 4th form students. At this time Murrurundi also had a Catholic primary school which caused much rivalry at sports competitions. In 1972 he started High school at Scone high which was a 1 hour trip each way each day

In 1976 he joined the reserve army with the Hunter River Lancers driving Armoured Personnel Carriers sometimes called M113A1's the same vehicles as used in Vietnam by the Australian Army. Then in 1978 he Applied for and was accepted into Duntroon military college. He graduated from year 12 in 1978 with an excellent result in everything except English for which my mark of 49 out of 100 was not a pass and as such he was no longer accepted into Duntroon (a low point in his life).

This result meant a change of life plan so in 1978 he moved to Sydney and got the first job he applied for – A Trainee Chartered Accountant for Hill Rae & Embury. He stayed in the Reserve Army with a transfer from the Hunter River Lancers to 1 Commando company at Mosman.

He got his first motor bike which was a Honda racing 90s. He took up a few adventure type sports including Rock Climbing with the Sydney Rockies where he met and climbed with a group of Aussies many of which have since gone onto climb Everest (Tim Mcartney-Snape and Greg Mortimer and Lincoln Hall amongst others), Canyoning - starting with Claustal canyon in the Blue Mountains Mt Tomah area in which he almost got his future brother in law killed, White water kayaking – Childowla near Yass was a favourite, sailing, surfing, cycling etc. He met his future wife at Earlwood St Georges Church of England where he was a regular at Youth group.

After 3 years at the Chartered Accountancy firm he decided that spending every day at a desk doing paperwork was not really for him and he embarked on a 4 year degree in Construction, consequently spending the rest of his life sitting at a desk doing paperwork.

In 1983 he married Fiona, a trainee nurse from Earlwood training at RPA. Life was interesting with no money, living in Erskineville and both of them still studying. In 1984 he graduated from the University of NSW with a Bachelor of Building Degree. Consequently getting a job with Girvan Brothers where he spent the next 5 years progressing from Cadet to Project Manager building projects such as: Doubleday book warehouse in Lane Cove, Office blocks in Epping, Hurstville, Burwood, North Ryde and North Sydney, Shopping Centres in Bass Hill, Bathurst, Bateau Bay, Bathurst and many other smaller but interesting projects

Purchased his 2nd bike a Yamaha xt600zl. They moved to East Kurrajong where he built their first home on 15 acres and his parents first new home on 10 acres. He joined the Blaxlands Ridge Bush Fire Brigade progressing to Deputy Captain. He continued his love of adventure sports and added Snow skiing, parachute jumping and endure bike riding to the list.

Following the demise of Girvan bros he moved to CH Webb constructions in Parramatta where he spent a miserable 12 months working on office blocks in and around Parramatta. The only good thing in that year was the birth of their first child Gemma on the 4th July 1989. From there he changed focus and moved to a small civil company spending 5 years working on highways and byways throughout NSW -Including Lapstone Hill & Mt Lambie on the great western highway. The refurbishment of Hyde Park in the Sydney CBD was his first major Heritage work.

Along came David soon to be followed by Charlotte and they decided to do a tree change and move to Cooma in 1992, 3 kids and 1 income trying to live in Sydney did not seem appealing to them at the time (and they were right). He spent the next 7 years working all over Australia in firstly the Civil Industry followed by 5 years as a Project Manager with Westfield building shopping centres such as Tuggerah in the Central Coast, Belconnen Mall in Canberra, Marion in Adelaide, Southlands in Melbourne and Chatswood. During this time he spent quite a while at Head office writing the Westfield Construction Manuals.

Fiona spent the time in Cooma bring up the kids. He bought his first BMW bike followed by his 2nd and now his 3rd. Since then he has worked mainly in Cooma and Canberra with a stint back in Sydney with Stockland's the Shopping centre Company.

He is involved in Cooma Bush Fire Brigade, Soccer coach, Basketball coach, St Moritz Kids Ski Club President and Rotary. The kids have grown up and fled which has allowed he and Fiona to travel quite a bit and they will continue to do so.



THOUGHT OF THE WEEK: Margaret E

There is a past that has gone forever but there is a future which is still our own.

Rotary Theme of the Month:
Rotary Awareness Month

Announcements

Elaine M announced that the visit to Birdsnest will be held on 19th February at 6pm returning to the Bowling Club for dinner at 7pm.

President Hass presented Tamara John-Natley with some banners to take with her to share with other clubs during her exchange year in Italy.

A special thank you to Claire for her hard work surrounding the Christmas Lights Competition. Also a special thanks to Claire, Darrell and Peter for spreading Christmas cheer at the market.

The club received a \$500 donation from Walker, Gibb & King following the receipt of a large computer which had been refurbished by Tom Shirvington.

We received a Christmas card from the ANU medical student staff.

Our attendees at RYLA this year are Sarah Adams, Ryan Constance and Mathew King.

If you are interested in the Grassland Earless Dragon then Pres Hass has a letter talking about it.



This Weeks Attendance: 72%

Visiting Rotarians: None

Guests: Mike Carroll (Club), June Carroll, Carol Slater (Tony S), Cathy Byrne (David B),
Tamara John-Natley (Mark J-N), Janette Clarke, (John C), Veronica Vescio (Joe V)

Apologies: Geoff B, Neil B, John C, Katrin H, Joe V, Alyson H-J

Leave: None

Make-ups: John C (Queanbeyan)

We Also Missed: Tom B

The Rotary Club of Cooma
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December Rosters	
Attendance	Les S
	Peter D
Property	Joe V
	Des T
Fellowship	Margaret E
	Claire N
Market	John K - Co-ord
	Tom B
	Neil B
	David B
	Brenda CB
	John C
	Ashley C
3 Minute Talk	
8 Jan	Mark C
15 Jan	Ken D
22 Jan	Peter D
29 Jan	Kevin D
Thought of the Week	
8 Jan	Margaret E
15 Jan	Graham F
22 Jan	Darrell G
29 Jan	Katrin H
Thank you	
8 Jan	Jim H
15 Jan	Dave H
22 Jan	Mark JN
29 Jan	John K
Introduction	
8 Jan	Patrick K
15 Jan	Wolfgang L
22 Jan	Richard L
29 Jan	Dugald M

Upcoming Speakers
15th - Adrian Oakey - Trials and tribulations of wind farming
22nd - Rebecca - Exchange Student
29th - Keith Goodwin - Bowls with flat sole shoes or bare feet
MEMBER HAPPENINGS
January

BIRTHDAYS

1st - Dugald M

12th - Marjorie Revelant spouse of Marco

26th - Janine John-Natley spouse of Mark

JOINING DATE

2 Jan - Alyson HJ

3 Jan - Darrell G

3 Jan - Rob S

5 Jan - Marco R

6 Jan - Ashley C

6 Jan - Brian J

6 Jan - Des T

9 Jan - Kevin D

9 Jan - John M

9 Jan - Tony S

11 Jan - Wolfgang L

12 Jan - John C

22 Jan - Tom B

29 Jan - Geoff B

ANNIVERSARIES

None recorded for this month

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