



# HOWZAT!



The Rotary Club of Newlands  
*The Club that Appeals*



PRESIDENT JENNY IBBOTSON

Editor	Janey Ball
Email	<a href="mailto:howzat@newlands.org.za">howzat@newlands.org.za</a>
Website	<a href="http://www.newlands.org.za">www.newlands.org.za</a>
Facebook	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/NewlandsRotary">www.facebook.com/NewlandsRotary</a>



*Apologies before 10:00 on a Monday to Heidi Andersson, please.*

---

## COMMENT: A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO ... (Wobblies Ink)

"Ok, left, left, good boy!"  
"Find the pole, find the pole, good boy!"  
"Wait, ok, forward."  
"Find the kerb, good boy."  
"Find the pole, good boy!"  
"Forward, find the kerb, good boy!"  
"Straight on, no, find the kerb, forward, good boy!"  
"Left, left, good boy."  
"Straight on, good boy!"  
"No, we are not going right here, straight on, good boy."  
"Clever boy!"  
"Good boy!"  
"Yes!, good boy!"  
"Yes, you are such a clever boy!"

We have arrived at our destination.

This transcript is verbatim and what I would say to my guide dog Ronnie, when we are walking to a friend's home every Tuesday and Thursday. The distance is just shy of 2kms and takes about 20 minutes.

From here, we will all go to the park for a proper walk, where Ronnie can run free and my friend can be my guide dog for a while.

Over the past few weeks of this routine, I have been watching and enjoying my friend's fascination and unbridled admiration of Ronnie as he performs his duties, getting me to and from his home and the park.

It gave me paws (sorry, I couldn't resist) to reflect on the past 14 years of having owned my three guide dogs; Barklee, Gatsby and Ronnie.

It would require a fair-sized book to adequately relate all the extraordinary adventures I have had with each of the dogs, so one or two anecdotes must suffice, here.

First a little lesson in what they can and cannot do.

It is fairly simple to "programme" routes into the dog.

Step 1 Download available routes, tricks and sundry adorable habits onto your USB device.

Step 2 Insert USB device into the appropriate port conveniently included on all current versions of Guide dog.

Step 3 Simply hit 'upload' on your device.

No, no .... only kidding.

Actually, the dog only needs one or two trips in a given route to internalise the route.

This was most incredibly proved when Barklee, on only his second visit, the first being done some weeks before with sighted help, remembered the entire journey from the arrivals hall of OR Thambo Airport to the Gautrain terminal!

Anyone who has walked that route, knows that it is long and rather complicated.

This wonderful confidence was invaluable over the next seven years when Barklee and I flew more than 450 times, mostly to Jo'burg.

Another thing to remember, is that the blind person actually does do some of the navigation, especially in areas that the dog is not familiar with, or where deviations of known routes are required. In my case, I am blessed with a pretty good sense of direction, also, I am not afraid to ask for help. So I was quite happy to teach Ronnie the new route to my friends home. All I needed was Ronnie to make sure I don't walk into poles, trees, cars; trip off pavements or step in any holes en route. In this case, I employed the navigation app on my phone to let me know the names of the roads I needed to look for and to ultimately find his house. Ronnie now knows the route, so it's mostly up to him, and I don't need to even turn on the GPS.

So being guided by the dog is a joint-effort between user and dog. Having said that, I used to love coming home in the evenings from the station. I would tune out entirely and read a book or audio magazine and pay little attention to the 20-minute journey home.

But the funniest thing that ever happened to us was when I walked into a well-known office building in Cape Town with Barklee.

Barklee, as he was trained to do, headed for the nearest counter. Before I had arrived, however, a strident voice accosted me.

"Sir", it said, "can't you read? The sign says "No Dogs"!"

Now, I need to point out that this is the bane of all guide dog users all around the world .... security officials trying to prevent our access. In truth there are few places we cannot legally go. Nevertheless, this problem persists.

Anyway, I rarely resort to rudeness or anger when this happens and said, smiling, to him: "No, it is okay. He is allowed in. He is a guide dog."

Quick as a flash, he retorts; "No sir, it does not matter what breed of dog it is, he is not allowed in!"



*For those that might struggle to see the cartoon, it depicts the above recorded scene.*

#### Glossery of terminology:

- Left: Unlike many humans, guide dogs do actually know their left from their right. Telling him to go left lets him know which direction we are embarking on, which in turn informs him of the probable routes associated with that direction.
- Find the pole: This is one of those pre-programmed techniques. In training, when we know there is a pedestrian signal call button on a pole at an intersection, teaching the dog to find the pole is invaluable.
- Wait, ok, forward: This is used when crossing roads. Contrary to popular mythology, the dog does not look at the traffic light and then at the cars, and then decide to walk. These decisions are left to the fortitude and anxiety of the blind person crossing the road. Saying 'forward' tells the dog to go ahead.
- Find the kerb: This focuses the dog on a specific task within a route. Useful when deviating from an assumed route.
- No, we are not going right here: This is spoken kindly, acknowledging that he knew where to turn, but informing him of a change in route.
- Straight on: Helps to focus him and lets him know that he is on the right track.
- Good boy, clever boy!: Simply constant affirmation during a trip. Apart from pleasing him, it also serves to focus his attention. These verbal gestures have also been known to work on men in their fifties and older.

Finally, I think it only appropriate to give a big shout out to the South African Guide Dog association.

For the past 66 years, SAGDA has trained thousands of guide dogs and service dogs for blind and physically disabled people and youngsters on the autism spectrum.

In addition to training dogs, SAGDA is also responsible for the training, through the College of Orientation and Mobility, of all the orientation and mobility instructors in the country, who in turn go out into the urban and rural community to train blind people in the use of the cane, and their skills of daily living.

## MINUTES of the PARTNERS MEETING on ZOOM 12<sup>th</sup> April 2021 18h30

---

*Scribe: Jamie Hart*

Sergeant Jeannine opened the meeting at 18.33 and asked President Jenny to welcome guests

President Jenny said it was wonderful to be back at an RCN meeting and welcomed two guests, Deon van Zyl, and our speaker Elash Mistry

Jeannine reminisced on events that had taken place on 12th April before asking PDG Ian Pursch to do the Four-Way Test. Ian said it was important to understand the test rather than repeat it parrot fashion and proceeded to take a leaf out of the Shakespeare Company by reciting a very emphatic test.

Michelle said Grace and toast to RI.

Anthony Galloway lit the peace candle reminded us of the importance of making responsible choices in life.

The Just Desserts spoon was handed on by Jeremy to Geraldine in appreciation of the wonderful work she does for Rotary.

Jeremy Opperman introduced the speaker, Elash Mistry, and explained how he had first heard of Elash through the Financial services Board as the first blind actuary in South Africa and one of very few in the world. He now works for Old Mutual. He is married with a wife and three children and his main hobby is D.I.Y.

Elash started by saying he wanted to talk off-the-cuff to add value to his talk. He was born in Pretoria in 1976 and until he was 3 months old, his parents hadn't realised he had limited vision so he has a concept of sight.

Initially he went to a mainstream school but soon moved to the Arthur Blaxall school for the blind in Pietermaritzburg. He enjoyed the sheltered environment at the school and did really well but was eventually thrust into reality when he went to Wits University to study actuarial science.

One of his problems was to interpret the mathematical equations used in actuarial science, to a form that he could understand in braille and he spent many hours transcribing his lecture notes to a form he could relate to. He developed computer programmes to assist him. Today these are commonplace. He passed his board exam after many attempts - one subject took him six attempts! He feels that his failures have made him a much stronger person and he really appreciates his successes as a result.

He admitted that being blind in a sighted world has been difficult but believed that his passion has been critical in enabling him to succeed. He feels that success is not a financial issue and he believes that inner peace is critical.

He answered questions - Jeremy asked why maths isn't taught at blind schools anymore and Elash felt that the lack of good teachers was a major reason as it required a very different skill set.

Johan Taljaard thanked him on behalf of the club for his interesting talk.

**Slots:**

There was only one slot - Richard spoke on behalf of Jan in Prince Albert who was off to Europe to get funding for his improvement project to uplift the inhabitants of the township.

**President's Spot:**

President Jenny discussed issues of the upcoming Rotary programme. There is a district assembly on Saturday and she urged all members to tune in. The new RI President has come up with his theme - "Serve to change lives". Rotary membership has stayed constant for several years so this needs to be expanded. Jenny praised the *Rotary Africa* magazine and highlighted articles by Jeremy and Jeanine in the current issue.

This year is the "African centennial" conference and the organisers have put together a full 2-day programme with speakers such as Bill Gates. The cost is R350 per head. Jenny also mentioned a new fundraising model by splitting the club into groups but details will follow.

President Jenny read out the upcoming birthdays and anniversaries before asking for Happy Rands. One particular Happy Rand was from Richard, who praised Prince Phillip.

The meeting closed at 19.51.

## ROTARY NEWS

April 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> is World Immunisation Week. What could be more topical? What could be more necessary? Click below for more information and for more on just how close Rotary is to 'ending polio now' take a look at *Howzat! No 35*.



And next weekend sees the Rotary Africa Centennial International Conference. Just don't miss it! Click below to book and to view the programme which – surprise! - includes the inimitable Ndlovu Youth Choir, Minister of Finance Tito Mboweni, the renowned Soweto String Quartet, our RI President Holger Knaack, Bill Gates, Dr Tunji Funsho, one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in 2020 and President Nominee, Jennifer Jones, who in July 2022 becomes the first woman President of RI.



## LESS THAN 2 WEEKS TO GO UNTIL UNPRECEDENTED ROTARY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

**Dear Fellow Rotarian**

Time is fast running out to book your complimentary virtual seat for what is guaranteed to be a Rotary International highlight for Africa: The Zone 22 Rotary Africa Centennial International conference.

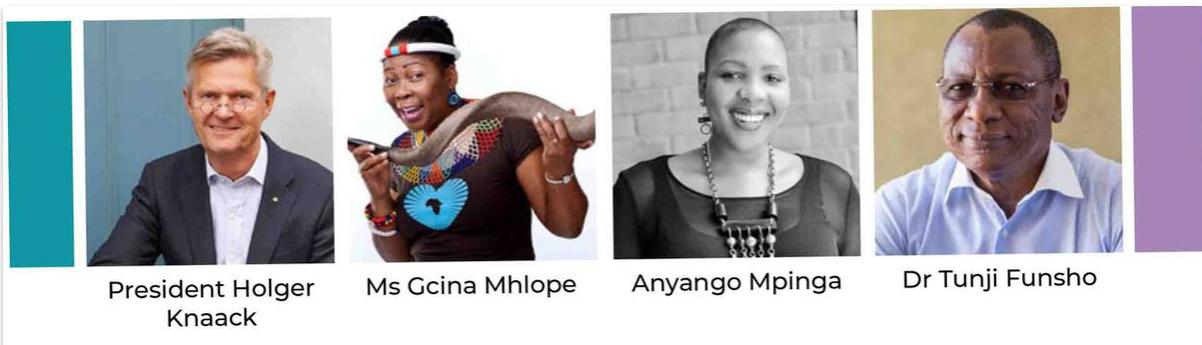
Be transported from the comfort of your home or office to meet some of Africa's most inspiring business leaders, visionaries, pioneers and icons, and hear from significant Rotary representatives from around the globe.

As Rotarians, we provide service to others and promote integrity, understanding, goodwill, and peace. Now is the time to join with other business, professional, and community leaders to celebrate all that Rotary has achieved in Africa over the last 100 years.

Hear from Rotary International President Holger Knaack, Bill Gates representing the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, South African Storyteller, Ms Gcina Mhlope, Kenyan designer and eco-innovator Anyango Mpinga and chair of Rotary's Nigeria National PolioPlus Committee Dr Tunji Funsho, who was last year named as one of TIME's 100 Most Influential People. Meet Jennifer Jones, who will be the first woman International President in Rotary's 117 year history, when she takes up this position on 1 July 2022.

These are just some of the many speakers who will be unpacking Africa's current challenges and playing tribute to the role Rotary has played on the continent during this cutting-edge two-day virtual event. Added to the festivities will be entertainment by the Soweto String Quartet and the Ndlovu Youth Choir

**We look forward to you joining us this worthy celebration.**



President Holger  
Knaack

Ms Gcina Mhlope

Anyango Mpinga

Dr Tunji Funsho

### RCN FUTURE FIXTURES (Online, until May)

#### APRIL – MATERNAL and CHILD HEALTH

- 19 Ordinary Meeting Quiz: Wendy Goddard
- 21 Board meeting
- 26 Business Meeting

#### MAY – YOUTH

- 1 District 9350 Conference
- 3 Partners' Meeting: Thomas A. Gump Rotary International District 5950, District Governor 2020-21, Rotary Club of Edina / Morningside, MN, USA
- 10 Committee Meetings

- 17 Ordinary Meeting: *Brett Agiotis, M Soc Sci Candidate. University of Cape Town, Environmental and Geographical Sciences*
- 19 Board Meeting
- 24 Business Meeting
- 31 Ordinary Meeting: *Marilyn Lilley & Jan Arkart - exploration activities and impacts in the Kavango Basin in Namibia and Botswana.*

### JUNE – ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS

- 7 Partners Meeting: *Adele Pudney and partner, Aimee: [Equine-assisted therapy programs](#)*

	19 <sup>th</sup> April	Ian Pursch
	25 <sup>th</sup> April	Peter Ennis
		Shelley Finch
<b>ANNIVERSARIES</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> April	Jamie and Glyn Hart
<b>JOINED ROTARY</b>		
<b>JUST DESSERTS SPOON</b>		Geraldine Nicol

### UMPIRES and SCORERS

	19 April 2021 <i>Ordinary</i>	26 April 2021 <i>Business</i>	3 May 2021 <i>Partners</i>
Sergeant	Pieter van Aswegen	Glynis Menné-Hart	Wendy Goddard
Four-Way Test / Object	Graham Finlayson	Michael Walwyn	Lisa Lombard
Grace and Loyal Toast	Chris Beech	Terry Lancaster	Richard Burnett
Peace Candle and Quote	Tony Davidson	Heidi Andersson	Wybe Meinesz
Minutes	Johan Beukman	Richard House	Melinda Stapleton
Intro speaker			Geraldine Nicol
Thank speaker			Jeremy Opperman
Comment	Vanessa Rousseau	John Stephenson	Jamie Hart

- *If you cannot make this duty, please arrange a substitute and let the Sergeant know.*
- *Peace Candle duty includes lighting a candle and providing a quote.*
- *Comment is due on the date above. Publication is the Monday following. Usually. Please submit a text file and, if you have pics, please attach these.*

## CLUB OFFICE BEARERS

---



**President**  
Jenny Ibbotson



**Past President**  
Terry Lancaster



**President Elect / ECD**  
Geraldine Nicol



**Secretary**  
Janey Ball



**Treasurer**  
Peter Ennis



**Club Services**  
Heidi Andersson



**Community Services**  
Wybe Meinesz



**CSI**  
Graham Finlayson



**Entrepreneurship**  
John Stephenson



**Environmental Sustainability**  
Tony Davidson



**Foundation**  
Mike Walwyn



**International Service**  
Shân Biesman-Simons



**Membership**  
Jeannine Ibbotson



**Public Image**  
Shelley Finch



**Public Image**  
Vanessa Rousseau



**Vocational Service**  
Jeremy Opperman



**Youth Service**  
Wendy Goddard

## AND the LAST WORD .....

---

President Jenny is back home after her op, last week.

Jenny.... In the weeks ahead, maybe just a little less 'shoulder to the Rotary wheel'? 😊

See you on the moro.....