



Rotary
Club of Newlands



HOWZAT!

WEEKLY CLUB BULLETIN



Chartered 1993 | Club No 29806

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PRESIDENT : JENNY IBBOTSON

COMMENT: EVERY CLOUD (Ian Pursch)

*I did not err; there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.*

John Milton ("Comus": a masque presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634)

So here's the thing: as I enter the final year in which I can still describe myself as in my sixties, parts of me have been falling off with awful regularity. Figuratively, I mean – well, so far anyway...

First it was my ears. My audiologist attacks them with a spade every few months in order to remove a few pounds of the wax that regularly clogs them up, but recently she stood back in horror, refused to have anything to do with my left ear in particular, though she said the right wasn't much better, and packed me off to an ENT specialist with a note. She (the specialist) then spent a happy half hour vacuuming out what she was pleased to call infected 'debris' (I picture rubble and half-bricks) and squirting in antibiotic cream. I was then instructed not wear my hearing aids for a couple of weeks so that conditions for the re-growth of whatever it was in there were less warm and inviting.

This was no real hardship from my point of view, the world becoming pleasantly muffled, but Paula grew rapidly tired of repeating everything three times and I think became suspicious that I was feigning deafness for convenience, rather than through real disability.

The next medical issue came when a blood glucose test unexpectedly revealed that I had become pre-diabetic. This really did unnerve me, largely due to a misapprehension that I would now have to go on the wagon. Happily, after a perusal of Banting's famous pamphlet ("*Letter on Corpulence, Addressed to the Public*", 1863) I found that I simply had to give up bread, potatoes, cake, biscuits, cereals, salty snacks – in fact most of my previous diet – but that I could live on cheese and wine, so long as I abandoned the crackers.

Underlining my growing fragility, a tooth then became loose and my dentist, shaking her head, swiftly removed it and sent me to a periodontist with another note. The upshot is that I am to present myself to him again in June, when he will remove a few more wobbly teeth and will nail six implants through my gums. After a pause for the wounds to heal, my dentist can then amuse herself gluing a lookalike tooth to each one.

You will be glad to hear that this is almost the full extent of my health woes, with the exception of the three smallest toes on my right foot. They have taken to waking me, in stabbing agony, several times each night. I think this is probably the onset of some sort of arthritic condition, but I don't intend to explore any further, fearing amputation or worse from whichever specialist deals with feet.

So, in view of this catalogue of personal disaster, I hear you say, not to mention the substantial enrichment of the medical profession at his expense, why then does the fool speak of 'silver linings'?

Good question. I'll tell you. The point is that no matter how bad things might have looked, there were real positives that emerged, every time.

It turned out, to begin with, that my existing hearing aids have been superseded by vastly more efficient ones that no longer need to plug up my ears to work properly. Yes, they come with an eye-watering price tag, but they allow air to flow freely into my ears and this, I am assured, will discourage bugs from breeding in there. Not only this, but I no longer need to hang a device looking like Paddington Bear's name tag around my neck in order to connect to the TV, and I can hear phone calls properly at last.

Another positive is that I have found my new low-carb diet to be actually quite enjoyable. There is a far wider choice of edibles than I would have believed possible and, after dropping five kilos (that's heading towards a *stone* in real weight) I've found that previously shrunken jumpers and shirts now *fit* better.

Even the tooth disaster is probably a good thing, as the periodontist tells me that once I've stopped emulating my seven year old granddaughter's gap-ridden smile (and have got over another astonishing price ticket) I should have a set of dental equipment that will allow a decent bite for the foreseeable future - thus avoiding the threat of a liquid diet. Except for the wine, obviously.

And, I say, all of these good things should not be surprising. If one lives with determined optimism, there really is always a silver lining. If you doubt this, just look at how the necessity imposed by COVID-19 has opened us up (especially in Rotary) to fast and efficient Zoom communication around the world, and how, despite all the sadness and difficulties, the pandemic has also brought us a whole range of new ideas and improvements.

The hidden benefit of arthritic toes, you ask? Well, to be honest, this is more of a silver lining for Phoebe, the cat. You see, every time I am painfully awoken it allows me to re-position myself for her maximum comfort and for the best possible heat exchange!

MINUTES of the MEETING on ZOOM 17th May 2021 18h30

Scribe: Jeannine Ibbotson

Sergeant Lew Botha opened the meeting and President Jenny welcomed the speaker Brett Agiotis, an Environmental Master's student, and his colleagues Matt Davis and Michelle Glover from Aerobotics. Brett received some sponsorship for his masters from RCN in 2020.

Jenny Howard and Adré Smit, incoming President at the Club of Hermanus we also made heartily welcome. John Stephenson lit the peace candle and shared the quotes from Frank Zappa and John Lennon relating to actions to create peace. Richard House related the Four-Way test and did not neglect to add the environment. Pieter van Aswegen proposed the Grace and loyal toast.

President Jenny, who was holding the Just Desserts Spoon, on behalf of the entire club, handed the Just Desserts Spoon to Mike Walwyn for the work he does constantly and quietly in the background especially on the recent PPE shipment.

Johan Beukman introduced our Brett Agiotis as speaker. Brett has experience in the conservation and environment arena. He has also volunteered for animal rehabilitation and achieved great things in University including being on the Dean's merit list.

Brett delivered a talk about Aerobotics and showed a video which showed how Aerobotics could help plan for an unpredictable future by identifying potential pests and disease in agriculture. Aerobotics uses 3D drone technology and is an Agritech start up, started in 2014 and operating in 18 countries and spanning 500,000 acres in the world, particularly targeting fruit orchards. The 3D drones can detect a greater spectrum of issues -eg chlorophyll stress - than the human eye can, by penetrating deeper into the canopy and analysing colour reflections.

Pest and disease such as citrus greening is estimated to cause 20 – 30% crop loss every year – up to 2k USD per acre. High cost of labour and partial coverage of the field cause problems and weakness for farmers in collecting data about their exposures.

Aerobotics - which is effectively a data analytics company - creates a 3D model of each tree on a property. Once the algorithms have identified each tree, specific data for each tree is collected, which is then converted to per tree insights and metrics. Metrics such as whether trees are missing, or health-stressed, are generated, plus the health of the orchard over the years can be tracked. As health improves, so yield improves.

An infield app then takes the farmer through questions and answers and issue identification in order to help move from data to concrete actions e.g. is irrigation inefficient in some areas where the aerobotics data is showing areas of concern?

The data can also be used to calculate specific fertilizer loads needed for specific areas of the orchard. The app also guides the farmer as to the co-ordinates of the specific tree which is showing health stress, so that he can move efficiently through the orchard on a "scout route", observing unhealthy trees and capturing data which can then go into the app, for analysis and recommendations.

In addition to the infield app, Aerobotics offer a Product called Yield Insights which predicts size, quality etc for their crop. The drone can identify up to 6000 fruits in one flight to provide a much more accurate view of the crop and yield Insights then produces a forecast of fruit size and tonnage with 95% accuracy. Farmers can then ensure that fruit doesn't grow too big or too small by managing the fertilising.

Lew Botha quipped that this was farming of the future in the present!

Several questions ensued from the audience which clearly found the application of high tech in the agri-industry fascinating. It emerged that Aerobotics also get good results for citrus, apples, pecan nuts and table grapes as well as other crops. Also that the technology can be used for other applications such as game counting and that organisations such as Naspers are funding the venture.

It is also possible for small-scale farmers to share the use of the technology. Actionable data can be obtained in three days and this technology which is charged per hectare actually aims to save the farmer on data collection and normal farm management costs.

Chris Beech thanked Brett for a fascinating talk, reflected on what an amazing tool this is for the farmer and said he felt the economics must work out massively for the farmer and actually save money and reflected that he was glad that Brett didn't drone on like many of us do!

Jenny Howard gave a spot and thanked RCN for agreeing to participate in the PPE project and thanked Mike Walwyn for being an absolute trojan in getting the container of the PPE into the country. Adré Smit also reflected on the longstanding relationship between Hermanus and Newlands and thanked Mike for the anxious moments he endured to assist in getting the PPE into the country and the money he saved other participating clubs. The District has benefitted hugely and probably brought in three quarters of a million rand of PPE for about R20 000.

Jeremy Opperman had a spot and explained that the planned family immigration cannot happen due to immigration law changes in New Zealand which led to the family being split. His wife was completely alone in New Zealand for 15 months. The family will now remain in SA. It was clear that the club welcome him staying in the country!

Pres Jenny thanked Brett again for a wonderful talk and thanked Mike again for being a wizard at bringing goods into the country.

Pres Jenny also drew attention to the talk that Jeremy Opperman will give in late May as well as that Dottie Leveque will have a birthday on the 18th May. Graham and Lynne Finlayson have an anniversary on the 18th and Rochelle will have been with Rotary for 7 years on the 19th!

Richard Burnett shared the good news that his latest test is clear and he doesn't need a test for another year. He gave a Happy Rand and the meeting was duly closed.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 27 May, 18h00 *Building a Welcoming Community for People with Disabilities.* Jeremy Opperman will join assistive technology expert, Dr Maria de Mello (United Arab Emirates) and Disability Rights Activist, Mark Wafer (Canada), in discussion. Register [here](#).
- Wynberg Rotary Talks with Andrew Patterson* who climbed Table Mountain 365 days in a row for a great cause. Register [here](#).
- 1 June, 10h45 Kirstenbosch Walk ([Email Glynis](#) for details or see Howzat! 16th May.)
- 28 June Induction Dinner, President Geraldine Nicol
- 7 & 8 September Agulhas National Park ([Email Glynis](#) for details or see Howzat! 16th May.)

NEWS from NEULANDS

PI, Vanessa Rousseau, was present to witness this happy moment on Wednesday when Lungie received her PHF and certificate.

The award was made by PP Terry on 27 June 2020 but Covid got in the way of delivery.

Well done, Lungie!

Watch this spot for news on more special deliveries.



RCN FUTURE FIXTURES (*Online, for now*)

MAY – YOUTH

- 24 Business Meeting
- 31 Ordinary Meeting: *Jan Arkart: "Oil and Gas exploration in Namibia and Botswana and possible fracking."*

JUNE – ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS

- 7 Partners Meeting: *Adele Pudney and Aimee Kuhl: [Equine-assisted therapy programs](#)*
- 21 Ordinary Meeting: *Kim Whittaker, Ubuntu Beds*
- 28 President Geraldine Nicol's *Induction Dinner*



BIRTHDAYS	27 th May	Claire Lowden
	28 th May	Geoff Session
ANNIVERSARIES		
JOINED ROTARY		
JUST DESSERTS SPOON		Mike Walwyn

UMPIRES and SCORERS

	24 May 2021 <i>Business</i>	31 May 2021 <i>Ordinary</i>	7 June 2021 <i>Partners</i>
Sergeant	John Winship	Henry Campbell	Pieter van Aswegen
Four-Way Test / Object	Richard House	Melinda Stapleton	Lew Botha
Grace and Loyal Toast	Jamie Hart	Graham Finlayson	Geraldine Nicol
Peace Candle and Quote	Michael Walwyn	Janey Ball	Chris Beech
Minutes	Heidi Andersson	Nora See	Vanessa Rousseau
Intro speaker		Richard Burnett	Michelle Roos
Thank speaker		Shân Biesman-Simons	Lisa Lombard
Comment	Tony Davidson	Wendy Goddard	Anthony Galloway

- *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

My, May is such a delight.

Last week it was *Liza Doolittle Day*.

And this week, dear, intrepid inter-galactic readers, it is *Towel Day*¹.

Be prepared! And Don't Panic!

See you on the moro....

Janey



¹ The importance of the towel was introduced by Douglas Adams in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. "A towel, it says, is about the most massively useful thing an interstellar hitchhiker can have. Partly it has great practical value. You can wrap it around you for warmth; you can lie on it on brilliant marble-sanded beaches.....; you can sleep under it beneath the stars; use it to sail a mini-raft.....; wet it for use in hand-to-hand-combat; wrap it round your head to ward off noxious fumes or avoid the gaze of the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal (such a mind-bogglingly stupid animal, it assumes that if you can't see it, it can't see you — daft as a brush, but very, very ravenous); you can wave your towel in emergencies as a distress signal, and of course dry yourself off with it if it still seems to be clean enough. More importantly, a towel has immense psychological value. For some reason, if a strag (strag: non-hitch hiker) discovers that a hitchhiker has his towel with him, he will automatically assume that he is also in possession of a toothbrush, face flannel, soap, tin of biscuits, flask, compass, map, ball of string, gnat spray, wet weather gear, space suit etc., etc." And that is why it is so very important to always know where your towel is. But especially on May 25th.