

# Rotary Club of Hout Bay



## Bay Breezes



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Last Tuesday saw us enjoying our annual Christmas party which had all the usual hilarity and conviviality engendered by David Heath and his little band of helpers.

Rainer kindly donated champagne for each table and we all exchanged our little gifts.

Carol "singing" [note the inverted commas] led by the press-ganged choristers helped the evening along and of course Zoe's bountiful cuisine was unmatched.

Included here is a sample of some of the photographs of the evening. Hopefully you will all be able to access the gallery of photographs from the link below. If clicking doesn't work you can try copying and pasting the link to the browser. If that still doesn't work email me and I shall post a "share" on Picasaweb direct to you.

[https://plus.google.com/photos/110449258698023273380/albums/5956225583585512177?banner=pwa&authkey=CP\\_ak5-Z\\_bywJg](https://plus.google.com/photos/110449258698023273380/albums/5956225583585512177?banner=pwa&authkey=CP_ak5-Z_bywJg)

It is a shame that Apple's mobile-me gallery was closed down in favour of Microsoft's Picasa but that's "progress" for you. It seems to be a maxim of our times that if you want to reduce the functionality of any program or operating system then just download the latest upgrade.



### This Tuesday.....

Is our AGM.

I know that this might seem a little dry but it is one of the most important meetings of the year. We must have a good presence and don't forget that this is the opportunity for members of the club to put forward any and all questions they have to the Board, to learn where we have been and where we are going. To question any financial or other issues.

We also have to vote in new members of the Board and President John will expect your input on this. We need volunteers and prospective Board members. Every Rotarian is expected to serve on the Board in some capacity at some time and as you know we also need nominations for president next year and president elect the year after.

This club will not survive without a President. Don't leave it to the other guy year after year. A tap on the shoulder will be coming your way from uncle Don.

### Mick's golf day

Has anyone followed up on previous submissions in Bay Breezes and come up with sponsorship and/or prizes?

This is something else that we don't want to leave until the last moment. The big day is 11th April 2014 which actually is next week [or is going to feel like it if we don't get moving on this].

### From Terry Eldrid

I have received a message from President Pamela Bryant of the Fareham Club giving a tribute to Nelson Mandela that as a man that epitomised the humanitarian qualities that the Rotary movement represents, that any tributes that HBRC gives, that my home club, Fareham RC president and members, be associated with. She goes on to say, to pass on their sympathy to all South African countrymen at the loss of such a great man of Africa and world leader.

Terry

As you will be aware, we usually provide details of the Hikefor intended outings in editions of BB. Those of us with a penchant for the outdoors would do well to join them. They have a really excellent program and so well organised.

One of their members is Dave Moss sent an account of the grounding of the Kapako following one of their recent walks which took them on Noordhoek beach.

### THE WRECK OF THE KAPAKO

The Western seaboard of the southern Cape Peninsula has, over the years taken its toll in shipping casualties. Most of these losses have been due to faulty navigation in less than ideal weather conditions, and many could have been averted had the Cape Point and Slangkop lighthouses existed in earlier years. The stranding of the SS Kakapo in 1900, on the other hand, is one of the more bizarre versions of the same scenario.

Named for a rare, flightless New Zealand parrot, the Kapako was a 665 ton, schooner-rigged steel steamship built in Grange mouth, Scotland in 1898, and launched as the Clarence. In early 1900 her owner, CH Cooper, sold her to the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, who renamed her.

Like all vessels of her time, while enjoying the advantages of independent steam power over sail, the Kapako predated the invention of wireless radio communication and radar, as with sailing ships; therefore, her safe passage depended largely on the skill and knowledge of her Captain and officers and on the available coastal navigational aids such as lighthouses and landmarks.

On 25 May 1900, the Kapako put into Cape Town harbour for coal. She was in coal ballast and on her delivery voyage from Swansea in Wales to Sydney in Australia, no doubt being eagerly awaited by her new owners. Coaling was completed the same afternoon, allowing her captain, a Dane by the name of Niels Peter Fischer Nicolayson, to continue the voyage to Australia with little delay.

Nicolayson was a resident in Alloa on the Firth of Forth in Scotland; The Kapako appears to have been his first command as his skipper's ticket was only issued in December 1899.

A north-westerly gale was picking up and as the Kapako steamed towards Cape Point the storm increased in strength. Her position was taken at 12 noon, and a course was set to weather the Cape Point. At 4.30pm land was sighted through a break in the weather and taken to be Table Mountain. Half an hour later the helmsman reported that the compass needle swinging about, and as a consequence he could not keep the ship on her course, despite this, and the prevailing weather and sea conditions, the Kapako appears to have been kept running at her top speed of 9.5 knots.

By 5.30pm the seas were huge and accompanied by driving rain sweeping across the water and reducing visibility to virtually zero. In these conditions with no light yet at Slangkop Point, Captain Nicolayson mistook Chapman's Point for Cape Point and turned the vessel to port. At 6.30pm he suddenly saw what looked like breakers ahead and, although the order was given 'hard-a-port' and the engines put full steam astern, the Kapako almost immediately ran hard aground on Noordhoek beach, just north of the mouth of the Wildevogelvllei. The following wind and heavy seas drove the vessel well up on the beach, where she came to rest, deeply embedded in the soft sand.

These events were not accompanied by an injury or loss of life among the twenty crewmen. Two of the crew managed to get down onto the sand in the early hours of the following morning and, lantern in hand, wandered across the veld until they were drawn by a light to the milking sheds on the farm Brakkloof, from where the alarm was raised. Later that day all of the remaining crewman climbed down onto the sand and safety.

Some sources suggest that Captain Nicolayson put the crew to work digging channels across the beach to the sea, in the vain hope of refloating the vessel. When the news of the grounding reached Cape Town the tug TE Fuller was immediately despatched to attempt to pull the Kapako off the beach. Although numerous attempts were made over the next ten days, the vessel was too deeply imbedded in the soft sands of the beach to be budged, and the attempts were eventually abandoned.

On the morning after she grounded, when the crew left the ship, Captain Nicolayson chose to remain on board. As sightseers and reporters descended on the site he refused to show himself. The only communication with him was by means of messages stuck into bottles, which he hauled aboard on a rope. Throughout, however he refused to answer any questions as to the cause of the accident, or to allow anyone to board the ship. Oral tradition also suggests that he later continued to live aboard the Kapako, some sources suggest for as long as three years. Other sources suggest that a local tramp made the wreck his home.

The enquiry into the loss of the Kapako, held in Cape town towards the end of June 1900, was of the opinion that the vessel had been navigated on the day she was lost without 'proper or seamanlike care' and found the captian to have been clearly at fault. His punishment was the suspension of his skipper's ticket for three months.

After WW 1 much of her hull plating was removed under contract. Some was used by South African Railways and Harbours in an attempt to both strengthen the banks of the Silvermine River where the railway and Main Road cross it near Clovelly, and act as a barricade against the sand which regularly engulfed the railway line and road.

More recently, the wreck of the Kapako – by now just boilers, rudders and ribs protruding from the sand – featured briefly in David Lean's 1968 Academy Award winning film Ryan's Daughter.



## Editorial

Somehow I feel cheated.

Few people in the free Western world remained ignorant of the iniquities of the apartheid regime or the struggle of the ANC stalwarts, particularly in the latter years. But there was one people which did remain in the dark and not by any intended design, just as a quirk of its own development. I am writing of the United States of America where I worked from 1983 to 1991 [those very years of which I mention]. I mean no disrespect to America or Americans but even they do agree that very little which happens outside of the U.S.A. is considered of interest or reported upon.

Of course, in the present day there is access to worldwide news networks and unlimited opportunity to gather as much information as an American as you wish, with the effort only of a couple of clicks and reading. That didn't exist in the days I spent in the U.S.A. and while I was faintly aware of the apartheid issues and the existence of Nelson Mandela I don't recall ever seeing a headline or even an article in any of the New York dailies regarding the end of the apartheid regime and the freeing of Nelson Mandela. Not a single one of my contemporaries in the U.S.A. at that time would have had any clue about the goings on in South Africa. Most to this day would not know where to point to on a globe and many actually believe that I am living in a city of mud huts surrounded by lions.

So, my learning of the struggle starts in earnest really only upon my return to the UK in December 1991 and thereafter. Particularly of course, since my arrival in South Africa in October 2004.

I didn't "live" through the struggle or witness the signs of the dying fire of apartheid. I didn't witness the phoenix of freedom rising from the ashes and the steadying hand of Mandela without which and without whom there is little doubt that a terrible revenge would have been wrought. Archbishop Tutu, Mandela and others carefully steered the Truth and Reconciliation Committee and saw the country on the path to democracy. This country's constitution is regarded worldwide as a model of the highest standard and the envy of many.

I missed all of that but why should I feel cheated? This is a part of history of which maybe I should be thankful to have been ignorant.

But it has to be said that to have suffered, even vicariously, is to appreciate the remedy that much more. I can understand the absolute joy of the taste of freedom and the adulation poured upon Mandela in 1994 by those who had been part of it all.

I recognise Madiba as such a near-perfect human being as to be unique in his own right. One of the first things I did upon arriving here was to read *A Long Walk to Freedom*. I still have it and shall read it again. This book and other material have brought me fully into the picture of those struggle years and his involvement. It is staggering to realise how this man faced down his opposition so perfectly and with such dignity that the regime was left unable to decide how to handle him.

His intelligence, his command of the language, his ability to get into the mind of the opposition, to think and act so at odds with the expected and to lead his party away from the path of retribution was not just remarkable. It was masterful.

Over the succeeding years his self-effacement, his humility and dignity have only added to the image of a humble hero. I would say that he is such a very hard act to follow that it would be foolish to try. It would seem that the current incumbent has definitely decided that it is not worth it.

Rest in Peace Madiba. A battle well fought and a victory rightly won.

## Spies spy - get over it - Contribution by Don Peters

(with acknowledgement to Douglas Murray, the Spectator 12.10.13)

In the whole panoply of human idiocy is there anything so ridiculous as the outrage that occurs whenever people are reminded that spies spy ? There was just such an outburst recently when Edward Snowden left his job as a contractor to the CIA and NSA, repelled, he said, by the discovery that surveillance programmes carry out surveillance. Snowden discovered that American and British intelligence agencies were involved in data trawling and was so horrified that he found it necessary to flee

Happily the new head of MI5, Andrew Parker, used his first public speech to inject some sanity back into the debate and it was high time too. Parker reminded us, the intelligence services search for information not because they long to snoop on ordinary people, or feel a compelling need to read every email we send – but because they seek to thwart people who intend to harm us. We have enemies; there really are thousands of people hell-bent on blowing us up, and spooks exist to stop them.

The intelligence services don't read emails at random, they focus their attention only on those who are of interest to them. Sometimes it seems as it we actually want to believe we're all being spied on, to make us feel more important. But the truth is that unless you spend your vacations fighting jihad abroad, no one is watching you. The reality of intelligence work in practice is that we only focus the most intense intrusive attention on a small number of cases at any one time.

General Michael Hayden, the former head of the CIA, said that the number of foreign fighters currently flooding into Syria is twice that of the historic high in Iraq. This includes a significant amount of young British Muslim men and women. Some will die in the process. Others will return and bring not only their experiences but their ambitions back here (UK) to infect others.

So the intelligence agencies have to be able to do their work. Incidentally, when asked if there was anything more ridiculous than outrage over spies spying. The answer is 'yes'. It is those people who complain after any "successful" terrorist attack : 'Why did our intelligence services not know?' The striking thing is it's often the same people who complain in both cases.

The intelligence services have a job to do which is rendered impossible if it is subjected to the current fashion for full transparency and disclosure. A branch of journalism has grown up here in the UK which regards the highest prize as facilitating a national security leak. One of the oddities is that this should be true now, at a time when a detailed intelligence-gathering capability has never been more necessary. Hence the title, 'Spies spy.'



## More factoids

Bloodhounds' noses are 100 million times more sensitive than human noses.

Birds that live in cities have learned to line their nests with cigarette butts. Nicotine is a powerful insecticide that wards off mites, lice and fleas.

If dung beetles disappeared from the plains of Africa, its human inhabitants would be up to their waists in excrement within a month.

Oysters change sex up to four times a year.

The vampire spider is attracted to the smell of human feet.

More people have been killed by sandcastles since 1990 than by sharks.

Slugs dislike copper; their slime reacts with it and gives them an electric shock.

A crocodile can't move its tongue.

Locust swarms move so fast because each locust is trying to eat the one in front and avoid being eaten by the one behind.

Eighty per cent of plane crashes occur in the first three or last eight minutes of a flight.

Playdoh was originally designed as wallpaper cleaner.

More chemical elements have been discovered in Britain than in any other country.

Britain's rarest flower is the lady's slipper orchid: a single specimen grows on a Lancashire golf course under police surveillance.

Plants grow more quickly if you talk to them in a Geordie accent.

There is enough gold in the Earth's core to coat its entire surface to a depth of 1.5ft.

The volcanoes on one of Jupiter's moons, Io, spew fountains of lava 250 miles high.

A cloud in the constellation Aquila has enough alcohol in it to make 400 trillion trillion pints of beer.  $111,111,111 \times 111,111,111 = 12,345,678,987,654,321$ .

The paint on the Eiffel Tower weighs as much as ten elephants.

One of the founders of sleep research died in a car crash after falling asleep at the wheel.

You only need to be at least 3ft underwater to be protected from bullets fired from a gun.

You are ten times more likely to be hit by a comet than to die in a plane crash.

Courtesy of Keith. How to build a solar light bulb:

<http://www.instructables.com/id/How-to-build-a-SOLAR-BOTTLE-BULB/>



## Wynpress

This week's edition of Wynpress is attached the email accompanying Bay Breezes.

Thanks Keith for keeping us up to date on this. It is good to be aware of what our near neighbours are up to.