



District 1150

April 2018

# BRUIN

## Brecon Rotary Update, Information & News



### Speaker's Corner

A recent speaker to grace the Club was Roy Garnell, who many of us will know as the man who sells all manner of ironmongery in the market of a Friday. He is a cheerful chap who calls himself Taffy, and he had prepared for the talk by laying out on a table behind him as he spoke a large quantity of memorabilia; one was like a very sturdy giant mousetrap and another was a photograph of himself with beard and hair, neither of which he possesses now.



In 1965 Roy signed on in Plymouth as a boy soldier. At the outset, he earned the princely sum of two pounds nine shillings and ten pence. By 1968 in Plymouth he had joined the RPG. I thought this stood for his initials, but he explained that it was the special investigation branch of the Royal Military Police. In no time at all he was posted to Londonderry at the height of the IRA's concentrated attacks in that city. One of the highlights of his tour of duty there was to discover a cache of armaments which had evaded searches by other forces. His trick had been to drain a series of reservoirs, thereby exposing the guns as well as the account book that laid the blame at the IRA door.

Roy interspersed time in Northern Ireland with time in Germany, where he discovered booby traps. The one he showed us would normally have been left under the driver's seat of a Land Rover with devastating effect. He was in Berlin on 10 November 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down, and was sorry that he had never visited the east of the city whilst it was in Russian hands. There was mention of Donna Maguire, whom Roy

described as a demon, and it was she who was held responsible by the German authorities for laying traps for the British forces, and was eventually extradited to Germany to be sentenced.

In 1985 Roy was awarded the BEM and later, in 1991, a bar to put above it. Had he been of higher rank, he might have received the MBE or OBE (Military versions). He spent the last ten years of his working life with the South Wales Police.

I must admit that it was quite difficult to imagine from what he said how dangerous the job of a special investigation branch soldier was, but he was cagey when asked if he had killed anyone, so maybe he had. However, what was very clear was that his time in the Forces is an ever present memory.

- Peter



## Tales from the Shed – Part 4



### Musical Items

Music has always featured in the Caledonian Market. Obviously records and CDs have been popular sellers although some are more desirable than others: marching band music is now out of favour! Record collectors are always at the front of the queue when doors open to get to the stall first and find that elusive collectable album that has missed the eye of both the younger stall holder and us older members.

One year, to add a musical flavour to the event, our dear Rotarian “Jumbo” Anthony Edwards decided to play records at the entrance door. Unfortunately, his choice of music was Max Boyce *Live at Treorchy*, a tasteful sound of national Welsh pride which got rather repetitive as the day wore on.

Musical items collected by our eager members include a stringless violin, a quantity of out-of-tune guitars, an accordion, and a drum set which everyone passing had to bash. Ear plugs were an optional extra!

Vinyl record players are now back in fashion, especially the windup versions with the horned needle heads. Guessing their true value is down to the art of the stall holder.

Despite saying we would not accept larger musical items, this year both an impressive and extremely heavy upright piano and a mighty electric organ mysteriously appeared in the shed. Shifting the piano to the hall, only to hump it back to the shed when it remained unsold and then to dispose of it to recycling was a daunting prospect. So, an offer received from the local farmer and shed owner for his young children to learn to play was too good to turn down and the deal was done to the relief of many.

No such luck with the organ. Despite putting a modest price on it in the hall, it remained unsold at the end of the day, until a last-minute buyer expressed a passing interest, but only if we could deliver it to Llanfihangel. No problem said Hayley, not realising that she had just dropped herself into one of the joys of post-Caledonian Market, the delivery of items to outlandish and often inaccessible locations. It was a good job that Hayley had eaten

a hearty breakfast, as she needed all her strength to help lift the organ through the garden and in through the narrow back door. The offer of a gin and tonic was well received. One could say it was music to her ears!!!!

More tales from the shed to follow.

- Gareth



## From the Editor's desk in East London, South Africa

So here I am back in South Africa with mixed feelings. I'm staying in a guest house in East London and driving 55km each day to King William's Town along a splendid highway to work with my dear colleague Peter Mtuze. Last week Peter received an honorary doctorate from Rhodes University, where many years ago he served as the first black Professor and Head of a Department of African Languages in the country. He is one of those titans that Africa produces from time to time, the most prolific living Xhosa author, holder of doctorates in African literature and Divinity, an ordained priest and Archdeacon in the Anglican church. We labour at editing and translating a collection of early historical texts, increasingly doddering and infirm but delighting in our fruitful collaboration, now of considerable standing.

Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are.

In East London I'm living in a house once owned by Donald Woods, a local newspaper editor who championed Steve Biko and suffered the consequences. I visited him in this very house while he was enduring house arrest and permitted the company of only one person at a time. His wife Wendy entered during our conversation to draw the curtains so that she could serve tea to us free of the spying eyes of the Security Police.

Steve Biko is buried in a simple grave in King William's Town, not far from the house he occupied in the Ginsberg Location, where I once called on him. He was physically drained: without his knowledge his partner, Mamphela Rampole, had been arrested the previous day and transported to the Transvaal, and Biko had been on the phone all night trying to ascertain her whereabouts. Exhausted as he was, he honoured his commitment to meet me. Exhausted as he was, he gave me the impression of immense strength: he struck me as the nexus of power in apartheid South Africa. Nine days after his subsequent arrest he lay dead in a detention cell.

Men and women of simple courage like Woods and Biko paved the way for the demise of apartheid, and men and women of burnished integrity like Mandela and Tutu conjured up the prospects of a remarkable transformation in the country. Twenty five years later, the rainbow has faded from view and the mood is dour and sour. Corruption, nepotism and incompetence are hallmarks of government at every level, and anti-white discrimination is unchallenged. When Peter Mtuze and other colleagues of mine lecture on the work we're engaged in, they inevitably field the question "What are you doing working with that white man?" Universities are dismissing western European academic standards and demanding a regressive transformation to Africanisation. White farmers are threatened with confiscation of their land without compensation. Away from the impressive highway system, the roads

in towns like East London and King William's Town are grievously potholed, the pavements and the fabric of buildings crumbling into disrepair. Neglect rules the air.

On Sunday my son drove me to the Johannesburg airport. On the way we stopped at a mall to buy a simcard for my phone. The electricity throughout the mall had failed: escalators stood motionless, shops were barred. We drove on regardless and simcardless. At a fourway intersection overseen by unblinking traffic lights we risked our lives in a deadly game of dodgems. All of last night I struggled to get through to Melanie: the wifi was down.

On the way back to East London today after a solid day's work with Peter, as I was overtaking a delivery van on that splendid highway financed, I'm told, by the Chinese, a car squeezed between my car and the van and raced off at high speed. Shaken, I was, and stirred.

I return to this country now with mixed feelings, this country, once mine, of limitless possibilities and unrealised ambition. I'm tempted to turn my back on it all and spend my days in idle contemplation of my unrealised ambition to scale Pen y Fan, but

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!  
As tho' to breathe were life!

- Jeff



## International Committee at work

Under the Mango Tree (UTMT) is a UK-based charity we have supported in the past and recently we were able to forward 35 maths sets for children in the school they support in Kenya.



We regularly receive their newsletter, from which we learn that there is a need for teachers to continue offering their services to schools after they retire at age 60. This year UTMT has been able to return two retired teachers to service for a year for the sum of just £600 each (subject to exchange rates).

More teachers need to be found and we have been approached with a request to sponsor two in 2019. The Committee forwarded to Council a request to provide at least one teacher. A matching grant might be forthcoming from our District; if approved, we

could fund two teachers for a year, commencing in January 2019. The next District meeting is on 12 May and I'll be attending to seek financial assistance. If it is approved, Club members will then be consulted on this International project.

Two members of the UTMT have offered to visit our club to make a presentation and dates are now being considered.

A second project has been brought to our attention by Roger and his wife Ann. This will link up with the Dundee Rotary Club in South Africa to enable two primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal, Sibanesithu in Maphumulo and Indlovana in Greytown, to benefit from reading books to help in their education. Appropriate elementary books have been proposed by the Head of Ministry in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education. The support will be channelled through the connection already established with the Dundee Club (who I believe we have co-operated with in the past). The cost of this scheme is likely to be £150 for each school. The books will be purchased in South Africa by the Dundee Club, who will handle distribution to the chosen schools on our behalf.

Roger and Ann intend to travel to KwaZulu-Natal early in January 2019, when they can check that this scheme can be finalised. It happens to be the 140th anniversary of the Battle of Rorke's Drift.

These two International schemes have secured the backing of our Club and we hope that further support can be considered in the future.

- Pat

### Dates for the diary

20 April	Fun: wine tasting	14 May	Business meeting
23 April	Speaker meeting	21 May	First Aid
30 April	Breakfast meeting	4 June	Club Assembly & AGM
	11 June	Dinner meeting	



Up & coming: this year's Nikki Grist Rally

### Speakers

23 April	Julian Atkins, new CEO Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
25 June	Rebecca Chamberlain and Gill Colerick, The Stroke Association
23 July	Misha Pedersen, Wye and Usk Foundation

### Bottle Rota

16 April	Owen Hughes
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23 April	Anne Ingham
30 April	Peter Jenkins