

1968-69

President	George Watts
Vice President	George Crawford
Secretary	Ross Wilson
Treasurer	Pat Northeast
Directors	Club - Tom Bartholomew Community - Harold Errey Vocational - Don McKenzie International - Jack Langley

District Governor Albert Bell, Geelong

R.I. Theme - “Participate”

Heytesbury Shire President Mr and Mrs Jeff McCue, Mr and Mrs Francis Gaut representing Cobden Apex, guest speaker Mr Neville Christie and Rotarians from Warrnambool, Camperdown, Terang, Mortlake and Colac attended the change over dinner at the Cobden Civic Hall to witness the induction of George Watts as the fourth President of the Rotary Club of Cobden.

During the year local cricketer Graeme Hunter spoke to Rotarians in July about his recent tour to New Zealand showing many slides to the appreciative audience that included Past District Governor Fred Bennett of Warrnambool and Camperdown Rotarians Lyle McDonald, Tom Armstrong and Cec Towner. A week later District Governor Albert Bell visited the Club on Thursday, July 25, 1968 advising members that 43 Rotary Clubs now made up District 278.

President George Watts and wife Doss attended the Cobden Apex handover dinner in August and then the first birthday of the Cobden Senior Citizens' Club in October 1967 in the R.S.L. Hall. President of the Cobden Young Farmers' Club, John Scott spoke to the Club in September speaking about the state wide formation of the movement. Later the same month former Cobdenite Bruce Jones gave a first hand account of the cyclone that hit the Gold Coast the previous year at 3 a.m. when 36 inches of rain fell in 24 hours!

A highlight for the year was the hosting of the State Service Concert Orchestra on November 17, 1968 in the beautiful setting of the Cobden swimming pool. An appreciative public enjoyed the wonderful music and singing on the night as a taste of city culture was brought to the 'bush'.

Student Michael Bejiji returned home to New Guinea in mid December 1968 to spend Christmas with his parents and family before returning for the 1969 school year. Michael was appointed a school prefect at Camperdown High School for the 1969 year and had been staying with Alice and Charlie Oates for a few months before returning home for Christmas.

Rotarians were given a talk and demonstration on the use of the breathalyser by Constable Roger Sharp at a January 1969 meeting when two Rotarians – names unknown! – were set drinking before the meeting. I wonder how many volunteered to participate?

Well known skin diver Neil Buckingham spoke to the Club in March 1969 followed by Mr Doug Martin, a Seventh Day Adventist mission worker who spent eight years in New Guinea. Cobden Technical school Principal Mr Dan Costigan spoke the following week about the temporary school at the Cobden Recreation reserve.

The annual Rotary Club Ball in early May 1969 with a Dixie Land theme proved another success with over 250 people attending to dance the night away to the music of the State's top jazz band, the Red Onions. The Ball received good coverage in The Cobden Times report of May 7th, 1969.

The Rotary Club hosted a 'Theatre Dinner' on May 31, 1969 when the Camperdown Repertory Society presented the play "The Bride and Bachelor" at the Civic Hall. Proceeds from the evening (\$233) were given to the Cobden Pre School Centre (Kindergarten). May was a busy month as Rotary President George Watts chaired a Combined Service Clubs dinner with Timboon Lions, the guest speaker being Terang Apexian David Richards speaking on Apex Dental Health Week.

At the changeover dinner President George Watts announced that the Club had given \$300 to the Cobden Hospital, made a donation to Rotary International to purchase sewing machines to teach women in Wewak, Papua New Guinea to sew and a donation to allow two students in Kuala Lumpur to remain at school for a further two years. Other donations included \$50 to the Indian Famine Relief Appeal, \$25 to Cobden Technical School for a Student Scholarship, \$20 to the W.A. Earthquake Appeal and the spending of \$575 in educating and hosting student Michael Bejiji.

The Club lost 2 members during the year when John Gardiner (NAB) transferred to Werribee and Ken Harwood (shop keeper) to Geelong. Members inducted were Ralph and Bette Rowan (State Savings Banking), Sam and Peg Ralph (General Stores) and Bill and Evelyn McGregor (Land Settlement). Rotary Club membership had peaked at 35.