

1961-1962 Sam Tongway

In 1961, the most popular film was: Walt Disney's, 101 Dalmations. The most popular song was: I'm Gona Knock on Your Door, by Eddie Hodges.



In 1961, the President of the Rotary Club of Bendigo was Sam Tongway.

Sam Tong-Way (Tongway) was born in the Goldfields in Ballarat. His father came to the Goldfields in the 1880's, but later became a Missionary. Sam studied hard at school and eventually became a teacher in Primary Schools. A talented teacher, Sam was chosen as one of only 14 teachers for a newly established secondary teaching studentship at Melbourne Teacher's College.

When the First World War began, Sam tried to enlist for the army, but was not allowed to join on account of his Chinese heritage. He later tried again, but this time was not taken on medical grounds. Sam was not easily discouraged and on his third attempt he was successful.

After the war, he studied pedagogy at Oxford and later studied Latin and history. He taught at many schools and formed the very first children's library in Victoria. He eventually came to Bendigo and is remembered as a well respected School Principal.



Song leader, George Mayne, started each luncheon meeting in 1961. He was assisted by pianist, Clark Jeffrey. Members needed a copy of the Rotary Song Book if they were not familiar with the songs. Singing at meetings grew more popular at luncheons.

During the year, Asian students studying in Bendigo were invited to attend luncheons. At one meeting, ten officers of the Pakistan Regular Army attended a luncheon as guests. The officers were invited to Australia to attend a training exercise.

T. Chou, the Consul from the Republic of Free China, spoke about his country. Likewise, Katashi Suge, the Consul from Japan, also was a guest speaker.

President Sam contacted all secondary schools informing them that Rotarians were always willing to assist students with vocation matters.

Members were able to offer students visits to local employers and were an invaluable resource for the students to talk to on what career opportunities there are in Bendigo.



At this time, the Club held extraordinarily strong ties with local employers. Improving employer-employee relationships was a huge focus for members. It was not unusual for prominent speakers to speak on the subject.

Business Consultant, George Chandler, spoke during the year on innovative ways to improve employer-employee relationships. For example, he spoke about: human relations, selection of staff, recognition in the workplace and proper delegation.

The Club maintained their sponsorship of Bendigo South and representatives from our Club would attend their meetings.

Speakers were provided to other Clubs. For example, members spoke at Charlton, Castlemaine, Echuca, Bright, Swan Hill and Daylesford.

The White Elephant auction continued this year and the 230 Pounds raised was donated to assist a Day Centre for people with an intellectual disability.

The Mannequin Parade held in the City Hall was also a good fundraiser for the Youth Camp at this time. 158 Pounds was raised which came at a vital time when funds for the camp were low.

After a talk about the Rotary Foundation from Bill Chapman from Oklahoma, a significant donation was made to assist the work of the Foundation.



President Sam ensured the Four Way Test plaques were placed in every school in the Bendigo District. Plaques were also given to local libraries. Every member was encouraged to have the Four Way Test displayed on their desks or walls at work.



Rotary Youth
Exchange Australia

Rotary Youth Exchange was in its infancy at the time for the Club. Two local Bendigo students were sent to the Philippines. In return, the Club agreed to host a Philippine student in Bendigo.

Reports during the year indicated that members were extremely impressed with the demeanour of the young student.

Inner Wheel have always been integral to the success of Rotary and this year was no different. The ladies donated a piano, two fridges for the kitchen and twelve new beds for the campers. They also assisted with holding a dinner and social evening at the camp.

President Sam ordered a plaque to be placed on the piano to acknowledge the wonderful support Inner Wheel had provided to the youth camp.

The members of the Club and YMCA members re-painted the youth camp. The new hall that was recently built was called the Vic Smyth Hall. The Opening Ceremony for the new hall was held on Sept. 28. Vic had given so much of his time over many years to support the maintenance and upkeep of the youth camp.

Working bees were held during the year. Lining within the new hall was undertaken. Sixty trees were planted in the camping area. Two new tanks were installed, fifty new mattresses were purchased, and repairs were undertaken to the buildings.

Samuel John Tongway was Principal of both Violet Street (1948-53) and Gravel Hill (1953-59).

He retired in 1960.

