Well what a year and when I say that it’s not just a great year for me but I strongly believe a great Rotary Year for you all.

Whilst we have achieved a lot there is also some work still be completed. Together with regular interesting weekly speakers we are now seeing how our two Rotary Youth Exchange Students are adapting into their current environment being overseas away from their family and friends here in Queenstown.

In August last year we had an interesting life story from Geoff Smith about his earlier engineering days. This was an extremely interesting night and one that should be followed up by other members telling us about their earlier contributions to Rotary and to the Community in General. Unfortunately, Geoff had a relapse of cancer and passed away recently.

Following Michael Henry’s address on the local Mental Health situation we arranged a Garden Tour on his property at Lower Shotover. He and his wife then generously equalled our take for the day as a donation towards Local Mental Health Resources.

The AdEaters Project unfortunately did not take off within our community despite the hours and hours and time and effort put in by the very enthusiastic Committee but it is possible that through royalties we may be able to recoup some if not all the losses incurred.

October saw the Official Opening of the Tucker Beach Trail which has become our gift to the Wakatipu Community in acknowledging the community’s support that we have received for the last 75 years. This is a wonderful asset to the community and is being regularly used by locals and visitors to the area.

At the end of October those who attended really enjoyed The Bohemian Rhapsody which raised funds for Polio Plus. It was great to be in the age groups where we knew the lyrics and remembered the songs. To tie in with the Polio Plus Eradication programme, it was lovely to hear from Anne Mace later in the year as she spoke about her personal illness with Polio and the challenges she faced and overcame in her life time.

Mid November we hosted the International Marathon of Rotary Fellowship team who travelled mainly from Europe to partake in the Air New Zealand Queenstown Marathon. How amazing they were prepared to have our local Marathon as their focus. It was great to see their promotion of Queenstown in the March 2019 issue of Rotary Down Under.

Our Christmas Meeting was very enjoyable and certainly different when we joined with Inner Wheel on board the Million Dollar Cruise.

Having our first meeting for 2019 as a BBQ on the Tucker Beach Trail let us all see just what the organising team and volunteers had achieved. You can all feel very proud of this Trail.

One of our more light-hearted speakers was on 19th February when our own Derek Bulman gave us an insight of his childhood and earlier days in the SHIT in Invercargill. We are still awaiting episode two of Derek’s life story.

Another great night at the end of March was partaking in the Hangi put down by Darren and Debbie Rewi together with their friends and their welcome to us all.

Those who could be there earlier enjoyed seeing the work involved in the putting down of the hangi and we all saw it being lifted. A great night was had by all.

Following a very enjoyable night hosting and hearing the Wakatipu High students competing in the District Speech Contest our winner Gracie won the Central Otago area final but was unfortunately pipped at the post at the District Final which was held in conjunction with the District Conference. We hope she will continue with her public speaking and feel fortunate to have given her an opportunity in this area.

In April we had the privilege of hosting the Tasmanian Professional Development Exchange Team and what a great group of young professionals. They were really hungry for information that they could take back to Tasmania especially in the Agriculture and Tourism sectors. We had the opportunity of being their first hosts so we showcased the Wakatipu with a visit to Camp Glenorchy, a trip around Queenstown

to see how Remarkables Park and Five Mile etc. developments are proceeding, along with how housing subdivisions such as Lake Hayes Estate, Shotover Country, Jack’s Point and Hanley’s Farm are attempting to cater for the housing required. They of course experienced the excitement of the Shotover Jet, Bird Life Park, took in the views from Skyline and enjoyed the Earnslaw Cruise to Walter Peak. Following their time with us they transferred to Cromwell / Alexandra, then to Wanaka who took them to the District Conference in Oamaru. From there to Timaru and then back down to Dunedin, Balclutha, Stewart Island, Invercargill, Winton and finally to Te Anau and Milford Sound and we picked them up from Five Rivers to get them to Queenstown Airport to fly back to Tasmania. They were a great team to be involved with and were really, really appreciative of what had and was being arranged for them.

At our meeting last week we heard from Angela Juer-jensen, a Wanaka girl who works at Queenstown Resort College about her experience as being one or our District Exchange Team Members who travelled to and experienced the Tasmania part of the exchange.

Our Un-Sung Hero’s Night was once again a highlight of 0ur Rotary Year when we acknowledged others who are putting their heart and soul into various aspects of our great community.

We had a fantastic night to celebrate our 75 years of Rotary in Queenstown and enjoyed the company of some of our Past Members. Great to hear people reminiscing and telling stories of their past involvement with our Group.

Following a 5 or 10 minute address from Bruce Boivin last year about his time as President twenty five years ago I uplifted an idea that happened during his year. That was,

that Inner Wheel stormed into and took over one of our meetings. In my mind this was a really enjoyable meeting had by all. The link between Rotary and Inner Wheel I believe is very important and should be encouraged. Each organisation has much to offer the other and it is good to work alongside and support each other at times during the year.

We have since held a smaller Art Auction night with funds raised going to Rotary Foundation.

And of course the year has concluded with a very successful Duck Race last Sunday which I understand at this stage will net approx. $7,000 for Lakes District Air Rescue Trust, - another very worthy cause for our area.

So at this time last year I Quoted the words of the Rotary International Secretary John Hewko when he described Rotary as being like an orchestra and I think this fully described an operational Rotary Club, where everyone is fully involved, and had their specific and important part to play, and thus enjoy their involvement and achievements as an entire team. We have been the orchestra working with and helping one another to achieve the goals which had been set.

To have a successful year I needed your full support. So whether you were the quiet and calm cellist, or part of the strings or woodwinds, or that noisy bassoonist, I thank you all for making it happen, and showing that we can all be the inspiration within our Club, within our community and of course within the wider sphere of Rotary International.

I wish to give special thanks to District Governor Andrew Hamilton for his guidance and keeping me on my toes, and acknowledge the huge amount of time he has put into Rotary. Also the Board Members and Committee Chairs and Bulletin Editors who all in total took on the idea of delegation.

 This allowed a greater participation of the entire membership so that no individual felt being overloaded with duties etc. or at the same time felt left out in what was happening. Special thanks must go to our Secretary Chris who is currently having a well deserved holiday.

 I certainly was unaware of the hours that Chris spent on Rotary matters. His experience, knowledge, enthusiasm and encouragement have been really appreciated by me and the team in total. Following advice of one his last final clean-ups prior to him leaving I sent the following Email to him saying “Have a great time away you certainly deserve it and many, many thanks for your assistance during this past year and his reply was “Thank you Russell. I get a great deal of pleasure from Rotary and happy to play my part. Sorry to miss changeover night.” Mention should also be made of Heather who has spent at least a good part of an afternoon or evening once a fortnight collating our Bulletin so that we are all kept in touch with what’s happening. Thank you, Heather.

Can I finally go back to my address at this time last year when I stated that “Of course, I was only the Conductor of that Orchestra but at the same time the Privileged Leader or President of the Rotary Club of Queenstown and that hopefully at the end of the year, I will take the bow, but as any good Conductor does, I will immediately turn to my orchestra or to you the members and acknowledge the great efforts that You all have contributed to make Twenty 18/ Twenty 19 a great Rotary Year in Queenstown.

We are now handing the reigns over to Ross and Rosanna and I’m certainly sure that with your continued support during twenty 19/ twenty/20 year, this will be another great year for Queenstown Rotary.

So in conclusion both Ruth and I thank you all for your support in what has been a really enjoyable Rotary Year for both of us and we trust that you have all enjoyed and benefited just as much as we have.