

# ROTARY CLUB OF RICHMOND

## The Tiger Rag

Meeting 2081

14 December 2009

### Speaker

Christmas Celebration  
Salvation Army Band Ensemble  
Visit from Santa

### Chair

Phil Mylecharane

### Forthcoming:

Date	Meeting	Speaker & Topic	Chair
11 January	2083	First Meeting of 2010 - <b>BBQ in the park</b> - Venue: Barkly Gardens, Richmond ( <i>Mel Map 2H/B12</i> ) - 6:00 PM	
18 January	2084	Commander Rob Taylor, MFB - Bush Fire Season in the City	John Liddell

### Birthdays

*Trevor Pang - 9<sup>th</sup>*

*Jean Marc Berthier- 15<sup>th</sup>*

*John Benger - 18<sup>th</sup>*

*Michael Cowling - 9<sup>th</sup>*

*Ann Baker- 10<sup>th</sup>*

*Lorel Webb - 18<sup>th</sup>*

### Wedding Anniversaries

*Brian & Jenny List - 8<sup>th</sup>*

*Ann & Tim Baker - 20<sup>th</sup>*

*Kevin & Sue Bolton -21<sup>st</sup>*

### Induction Anniversaries

*Michael Blake - 2008*

*John Nairn - 1998*

### ROTARY DISTRICT 9800, R.I. & OTHER ROTARY LINKS

Richmond Rotary website:	<a href="http://www.rotaryrichmond.org.au">http://www.rotaryrichmond.org.au</a>
District 9800 Home Page:	<a href="http://www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au">http://www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au</a>
District E-Zine:	<a href="http://www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au/Members/Networker">http://www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au/Members/Networker</a>
Rotary International:	<a href="http://www.rotary.org">http://www.rotary.org</a>



## From the President's Laptop

My Fellow Rotarians,

**WARM CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO OUR RICHMOND FAMILY OF ROTARY...**

Let me start by extending a very warm 'Thank-You' to the Rotary Club of Fitzroy for organising our joint meeting at The Wine Liquidation Centre last Monday evening. Great fellowship was enjoyed by all who attended & plenty of quality wines were purchased.

Tonight is our final meeting for 2009. The evening has been organised by Brian & Jenny List together with our Club Services Chair, Janice Kesterton. Another very big 'Thank-You' to all of you for the great job you have done, not only tonight but for the whole year. It's wonderful to see events come together so effectively with the expertise of our team. Well done!

**Our first meeting for 2010 is on Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, Barkly Gardens, Richmond, off Coppin Street (Mel Map: 2H/B12). We will return to our traditional BBQ start for next year & look forward to sharing some great fellowship with all our Members, Friends of RR and family members – especially the children. Please make a note in your diary now. (See entry in the NEED TO NOTE page 11)**

And yet another big 'THANK-YOU' to our Members and Friends of Richmond Rotary for their generosity in again supporting our Christmas toy collection – all for presentation tonight to Warren Golding and our Salvation Army guests. These toys will certainly make a big Christmas difference to many children. It is a great time of year to not only spare a thought for those less fortunate than ourselves, but to commit to being more sharing within our community as a Club, and as individuals, in this coming year.

On behalf of Sally & I, we wish you and yours a great Christmas and a New Year full of hope & peace.

Celebrate well and remember -

**The FUTURE OF ROTARY AND OUR CLUB Is In YOUR HANDS**

**Michael O'Sullivan  
President 2009-2010**



**DECEMBER IS FAMILY OF ROTARY MONTH –**



Friendship was the foundation; the rock on which Rotary service was built. The Family of Rotary Task Force encourages clubs to care for Rotarians and members of Rotary's extended family (spouses, children, and parents) and remember spouses of deceased Rotarians. Special emphasis is on visiting sick Rotarians in their homes; promoting membership retention; promoting diversity of membership in clubs; encouraging partners, children, and parents of Rotarians to participate in service projects; maintaining relationships with the family of deceased Rotarians and spouses; supporting the family of deceased Rotarians in their times of need; encouraging the family of deceased Rotarians to continue their Rotary involvement.

**LAST WEEK'S JOINT MEETING:  
Wine tasting with the Rotary Club of Fitzroy**

*By our special Tiger Rag Reporter, Ben Hosking*

Last Monday evening we joined with the Rotary Club of Fitzroy for a joint meeting at the Wine Liquidation Centre in Alexandra Avenue, Fitzroy North. The RC of Fitzroy, President Peter Hille, warmly welcomed the 19 Richmond Rotarians, led by President Michael O'Sullivan, and the 3 Friends of Richmond Rotary who made up the Richmond contingent.

The Principals of the Wine Liquidation Centre gave us an insight into their business which specializes mainly in selling end of line lots from some of Australia's main wine producers. A feature of their business is that you can try before you buy and also can return for a refund if you are not satisfied. Both Clubs and their guests were invited to sample the wide range of wines on display. The Centre produced a special list of wines for the Rotary evening with the incentive to give 10% of all sales to the RC of Fitzroy. President Peter Hille advised that this generous donation would be earmarked for the Rotary Foundation.

Overall it was a most enjoyable evening with everybody mixing in well. Our joint meetings over the past two years are certainly binding the two clubs closer together. The finger food provided complimented the wine tasting and several of our members took advantage of the wines available to stock their cellars for the coming festive season.



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# THE ROTARY NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By Rotarian Annie Wysham, with apologies to Clement Clarke Moore (or Henry Livingston)



'Twas the Rotary night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
Rotary banners were hung by the chimney with care,  
'Cos **Santa** - a North Pole Rotarian - soon would be there!  
President Michael and Sally, were both snuggled in bed,  
Dreams of their President's year drifted round in their heads!  
Rotary-Jo had wrapped up her Club Membership coup,  
And Krissy's Kris-Kringle involved an OXYGEN or two!  
John Benger had ROMAC check each Christmas elf,

While PDG Judy researched Santa's Aus. Rotary Health.  
Jenny and Brian planned a Richmond Fellowship bash;  
Aivars, Kieran and Ross counted the fundraising cash!  
The two Janices', Sue 'n Sandy; plus Pam and Dot too,  
Hoped to sit on Santa's knee ...and make *their* wishes come true! (*Mmmmm!*)  
Chew Chan and John Griffith had cameras and flash  
To catch Santa's arrival on his sleigh with the stash!  
When, to our waiting Club meeting, should then appear,  
But John Nairn on a reindeer - along with Robert Mactier!  
Their eyes - how they twinkled! Their dimples - how merry!  
Their cheeks were like roses; their red noses like cherries! [*Pinot Noir or Cab. Sav?*]  
Then Miles, Tim and Nia saw a sleigh, o'er far Richmond Hill,  
"It's Santa - and Geoff Clarke - Neale, Mark ...and our Phil!"  
Barbara, Barry and Ben were brave and so game  
As they whistled and called them all by Club name -  
"Charter Member, Rotarians, Past Pres. and Club fix-ems!  
Fly to the Amora and at Rotary we'll blitz 'em!"  
With the sleigh full of toys, and a few Rotary pens,  
There were cheers from the Members and the staunch Richmond Friends!  
And then, in a twinkling, they heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my breath, and the horizon I panned,  
I saw Warren Golding - and the Salvation Army-Band!  
They were dressed in their uniforms, with musical instruments to play,  
Maureen Pang twirled a timbrel; Sue-Roberts-soon-caroled-away!  
Then, from the back of the sleigh, old Santa appeared -  
Seems he needed a makeup to keep his attendances geared!  
Our Editor, Tony, thought The Tiger Rag Team  
Had a media scoop they could sell off mainstream!  
A large bundle of toys Santa flung on his back;  
Elissa eagerly eyed-off this fundraising stack!  
(\*Cos Santa had a broad face, and a little round belly,  
She mistook it for Simon's - 'twas like Aeroplane jelly!)



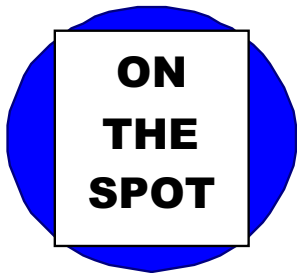
Poor Santa - so plump - his heart-health was in strife;  
Melissa soon feared he'd need the '4 Steps for Life'!  
"Santa - guest speaker!" mused Program's, John Liddell,  
"Or a judge for the Slades' - and the Aingers' as well!"

Jenny Crofts and Wilma, plus *Glenys* Liddell,  
**Wore** their stockings for filling - to give 'St Nick' the hard sell! (*Go girls!*)  
 A Rotary prayer for Chris Wang, and our Heritage 'coves',  
 With Nigel's Peck's blessing, on NHP's roof, old Santa rose.  
 Then Jean Marc felt his Foundations starting to shift -  
 Amanda the Mayor counseled JM in a jiff!  
 Santa sprang to his sleigh - and with a 'Tiger-Woods-wink' for the girls,  
 Away his team flew, in a climate-change-cyclonic-whirl!  
 I then raced to the window, and saw with a clang,  
 The driver up front was our own Trevor Pang!  
 But a blink of his eye, and a twist of his head  
 Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
 As those two bold Rotarians drove the sleigh out of sight,  
 I heard Santa and Trevor exclaim with delight...



***"Happy Rotary Christmas to all! Enjoy all those toys!  
 \*Thank you players! Thank you linesmen...and thank you ball-boys!"***

*(\*The end of meeting sign-off message favoured by our Club President, Michael!)*



***Warren Golding (PHF-Sapphire)  
 Past President: 1987-1988  
 Rotary Club of Richmond (Hon.)  
 2009-2010: Club's ongoing Christmas  
 Meeting Music Master  
 and steadfast Club supporter.***



***What year and why did you join Richmond Rotary?***

***1985. Had been in 4 previous Rotary Clubs due to work transfers. I was then appointed to Bethesda Hospital and so lived and worked in Richmond.***

***What keeps you committed to Rotary itself?***

***The ideals of Rotary have always challenged me!***

***What was your very first Rotary project?***

***Richmond Club: Jumble sales – major fundraising in the Richmond Town Hall.***

***What's been your favourite RCR commitment and why?***

***RCR's Solomon Island Project. Most rewarding.***

***What keeps you awake at night?***

***When the dog barks!***

## **OXYGENS' WORKING-BEE AT BUXTON – SATURDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2009 –**

Compiled by PP Trevor Pang on behalf of the OXYGens'  
(On the RCR web: <http://www.rotaryrichmond.org.au/buxton.pdf>)



A team of Richmond OXYGens', along with volunteers from the R C North Balwyn, helped with the clearing of destroyed fencing, general tidying-up and re-fencing on the property of Ray Donkin. OXYGens' - Nick, Bonny and Krissy - regretfully missed the opportunity to assist Ray Donkin on the 28th November, but are keenly looking forward to assisting the Buxton and surrounding communities in the New Year!

Things didn't go to plan on the day, so Krissy was stuck in Melbourne without a car; and although Nick and Bonny made it to the Buxton Hotel and were directed to where Rotarians had been seen working the day before... they searched, but couldn't find any familiar faces – or even unfamiliar faces! Unfortunately, all being on Vodafone, they didn't have any reception to call.

However, Nick said, 'We didn't waste the day, and enjoyed a drive through Lake Mountain, Marysville, and Healesville. But, we were obviously disappointed we couldn't join the team to help out, and do what we'd driven up to do.' Nick, Bonny and Krissy are all very pleased that some great work could be achieved for Ray, but said, "...we still owe a day of hard work to the local community! Bring on 2010!"

The following is Ray's story as told to the *Australian Red Cross Publication* – August 2009 Issue. I will say no more except - there is more to be done!

**'.....Ray Donkin, a Buxton resident of more than 35 years, he stayed to fight the fires that ripped through his property. Tears still form in Ray's eyes months later as he surveys the rubble that was once his home.**

**"It was pretty hard to take," Ray says. "When you see everything you've built up for 35, 40 years just destroyed, you think, 'God, will I ever do it all again'. It's a long way back for me at my age." The irony is heartbreaking. While the brick home he risked his life to save was burnt to the ground, his two fibro cabins built to accommodate holiday goers were spared without intervention; their grassy surrounds and material porch blinds protecting them from embers and flames.**

**"I'm from the old school. I'm tough," Ray says. "But just the same, at times I was thinking I was all right and I wasn't. I can handle everything physically, but emotionally I just get a bit upset when I talk about it." He says. "I still go and visit friends every Friday and talk about it. I'm known for a bit of a talker and I think it probably does do me some good to talk about it."**



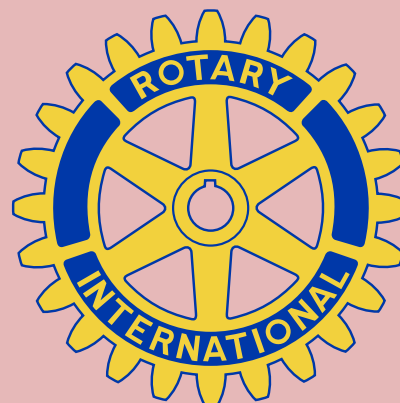
**Like many of his neighbours, Ray's focus is now on rebuilding, a task that he says is daunting. 'I could go out and start 10 different jobs,' he says. 'But mainly I am trying to get my fencing in order. I've still got five or six horses, but I sold my cattle straight away. I thought, 'What's the good of them?' No feed, no fences, and me lying in bed of a night thinking that the cows might get out onto the road. You can't just fix up the fences in five minutes.' Ray says the most difficult part of it all is the thought of starting from scratch at such a late stage in life.**

*Ray Donkin surveys his land in Buxton, which was destroyed by the Black Saturday bushfires.  
Photo: Rodney Dekker. Australian Red Cross Publication – August 2009 Issue.*

**THE ROTARY CLUB OF RICHMOND INC.  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Held on Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2009,  
Amora Hotel, Bridge Road, Richmond**

**DULY ELECTED CLUB OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2010-2011:**

**President:** Jo Cowling  
**Assistant to President:** Elissa Marriott  
**President Elect:** Rob Mactier  
**Secretary:** Susan Bolton  
**Treasurer:** Ross Telfer  
**Directors:** Judy Nettleton  
Kristen O'Reilly  
Annie Wysham  
Brian List  
Melissa Carfax-Foster  
Chew Chan



**2010 ROTARY CONFERENCE 'EARLY BIRD REGISTRATIONS'  
EXTENDED - GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SAVE!  
REGISTER NOW!**

Dear President [**and Rotarians**],

Members of the 2010 Conference Committee have just returned from a site visit to Perth, WA, and have reported that all is going extremely well with the planning for the 'Big One' in March next year. The venues, functions, entertainment and speakers are all locked in and ready to go. However, as always the success of any conference is reliant on a good attendance. That's where you come in.

**Could I please ask you once again to promote our conference and also to encourage your members, those who are considering attending, to register now while the Early Bird option is available.**

We have extended the **Early Bird Registrations till the 22 Dec 2009** to try and get those Members that may have been a little slow off the mark or those that haven't had the time to think of holidays and the like. We want them to say **YES** and Register **NOW**.

Our numbers so far are OK. However, we really do need to see significant numbers registering before the Christmas break – if possible. So once again it is up to all our Presidents to get things rolling: **The Future Success of The 2010 Conference is in YOUR Hands.**

*Very best regards*

**Colin Muir**  
District Governor  
Rotary International  
District 9800



# EDITORIAL

## Tiger Rag 21<sup>st</sup> Edition....

We were only ever intending to produce a simple 8 page weekly communication for the Club in black print – that was May '09. However, Annie's enthusiasm is catching and, fortunately, using some skills acquired at work, we have managed to wreak havoc in our respective calendars.

It has been a pleasure to support President Michael in his stewardship and present to Club Members, Friends of Richmond Rotary and various others, what we trust, is an informative and interesting weekly Tiger Rag. I must thank our industrious Sub-editor, Annie, for her work in gathering material, massaging articles, organising pictures each week- her efforts are awe inspiring and highly impressive. Our erstwhile photographer, Chew, has enthusiastically clicked away and you all see the splendid results each week, edited in turn by John Griffith and a disk **delivered** to Annie the next day and, a disk mailed to me – the ed.

My thanks to our voluntary and con-*scripted* "guest" reporters and article suppliers. THE TIGER RAG is produced through a great TEAM effort. We also thank all Members, FORR and all our supporters for your encouragement.

May we all enjoy a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful & healthy New 2010 Year.

Yours in Rotary,

WEBB the ED.





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## [JOYCE RAYMOND IS GOING HOME](#)

**Robyn Riley – Herald Sun, Sunday, December 06, 09 (09:16 am)**

THERE are few things Melbourne does better than medical marvels.

**This report will be in the Jan 2010 Meeting 2082 edition.**



## LEAPING LORDS, FRENCH HENS, SWIMMING SWANS... AND A PARTRIDGE WHO WON'T COME OUT OF THE PEAR TREE!

Compiled by Annie Wysham, Tiger Rag Sub-Editor, from a web version



There is one Christmas Carol that has always baffled me! What in the world do leaping Lords, French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge that won't come out of the pear tree, have to do with Christmas? Well, I've found out.

From 1558 until 1829, Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. Seems it has two levels of meaning: the **surface** meaning, plus a **hidden** meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember.

- The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.
- Two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments.
- Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.
- The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.
- The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.
- Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit—Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.
- The eight maids-a-milking were the eight beatitudes.
- Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control.
- The ten Lords a-leaping were the ten commandments.
- The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.
- The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed.



### Family Of Rotary Month:

*Every club should strive to achieve a balanced interaction between Rotarians and their families – and the family of Rotary. Only by working together, as a family, can we ensure that the Rotary of today grows into an even stronger Rotary of tomorrow.*

**John Kenny**  
*President, Rotary International*



**Check out Rotary District 9800's latest event listings at 'News and Events' & 'Events Calendar'. Go to:**

<http://www.rotarydistrict9800.org.au/Members/NetworkerOnlineArticles#Grapes>



**DECEMBER IS FAMILY OF ROTARY MONTH**  
*Excerpt From District Governor's Weekly Message -  
 'Networker', Issue 23, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2009*

**How Important Is Family:** ‘ .....The idea of the family of Rotary is a simple one, and one that we celebrate every December during Family Month. Every Rotarian is part of the Rotary family – but our family is much larger than just our 1.2 million members. The family of Rotary includes every one of the men, women, and children who are involved in our work: the spouses and children of our Members, our Rotary Foundation program participants and alumni, and all of those who are part of our programs, in the tens of thousands of Rotary communities around the world.

One very important group within the Rotary family that I would like to specially recognise is the youngest generation of the Rotary family, is composed of our Rotaract clubs and Interact our young supporters, those involved in our New Generations programs and activities. These, Clubs, the participants in our Rotary Youth Leadership Awards program, our Ambassadorial Scholars, and our Rotary Youth Exchange students every year.....’.

**Colin Muir, District Governor 9800**



**OUR SUCCESSFUL CHRISTMAS FARE FUNDRAISER**



*Report by Jenny List, Chair, Friends of Richmond Rotary*

On Sunday, 29th November, a gathering of 22 Rotarians and Friends enjoyed two hours (3.00pm-5.00pm) of 'Fellowship and Fundraising' at Elissa and Simon Marriott's home in Richmond. We sipped champagne and nibbled cheese straws; we drank cups of tea and ate shortbread, cake and pikelets! We perused the beautiful handmade dolls (made by Elissa), children's aprons (made by Sally), T-shirts, gift wrap paper (donated by Annie) etc. for sale.

The main event was the Tupperware demonstration by Elissa's friend, Vicky, introducing us to many new and colourful additions to the range. Vicky also prepared and cooked an apple pie and chocolate pouring sauce for sampling. Thank you Vicky! Jenny List thanked both Elissa and Vicky and presented Elissa with a pretty indoor/outdoor 'Somana' potplant with our thanks.

The fundraising outcome is now well over \$1,000 (with late sales), plus \$1,300 worth of Tupperware ordered, for which Vicky will give the Club some gift vouchers to use for future Club raffles etc, plus a collection of Tupperware for auction.

Again, many thanks go to Elissa for her initiative and hard work, plus to Sally O'Sullivan and Maureen Pang for their great help with this event.

*Since we are destined to live out our lives in the prison of our minds,  
 our one duty is to furnish it well  
 ~Peter Ustinov~*

## **NEED TO NOTE – 2010**



**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS & A HAPPY HOLIDAY!**

### ***\*January is Rotary Awareness Month***

✍ **Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2010 - *FIRST CLUB MEETING OF THE YEAR!*** A BBQ, fellowship & a New Year catch up in the Barkly Gardens, Richmond, off Coppin Street (Mel Map: 2H/B12) - plus a game of Bocce! Time: 6.00pm. BYO: Food & drinks. Family & friends welcome – especially your grand children! (Contact: Pres. Michael)

### ***\*February is World Understanding Month***

✍ **Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> February – *Early Birds Cocktail Party for Conference delegates at Lexus of Blackburn Showrooms.*** Early bird registration prizes drawn. (See D9800 'Networker' – News & events for all details)



### **Year of the Tiger**

✍ **Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2010 – *OUR MAJOR FUNDRAISER FOR RI FOUNDATION - Lunar New Year Dinner at the Dragon Boat Restaurant on the Yarra, Crowne Plaza Melbourne. 6.30pm for 7.00pm.*** Friends most welcome. Entertainment & traditional Chinese Lion Dance! More details to follow. (See Pres. Michael & PP Trevor Pang)

### ***\*March is Rotary World Literacy Month***

✍ **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March is *Clean Up Australia Day - Involves all available Members & Friends.*** Richmond Rotary Club's project: Burnley Oval & Gardens. Sign-in at Burnley Gardens, Richmond (Mel map 2H/9-10) for clean-up: 8.45am-9.00am, then BBQ – 11.00am onwards. Contact: Annie Wysham, 0419 100 287 or Phil Mylecharane, 0449 752 711

**4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2010 – 'Where On Earth, but Perth'. Rotary District 9800 Conference.**

### ***\*April is Rotary Magazine Month***

✍ **Thurs 29 April, Term 2, Week 3 - *MGC Mock Job Interview Day*** (Contact: Tim Baker)

### ***\*May is Australian Rotary Health Research Month***

✍ **May, 2010 - *RCR's 'Ainger Public Speaking Awards'*** (Contact: Ben Hosking)

### ***\*June is Rotary Fellowship Month***

✍ **Monday, ? June, 2010 - *RCR Presidents' Changeover Night. Date/Venue TBA***



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Don't walk behind me; I may not lead.  
Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow.  
Walk beside me; that we may be as one.

-American Indian Proverb, Ute

## Greetings and happy Christmas from a VERY cold Oxford!

Friday, December 4th, 2009

I am well, and have been working hard. I visited Windsor Castle and Eton College last weekend with the other Rotary Scholars. I've joined the Oxford University Taekwondo Club, and I went to Rhodes House for an Australian politics lunch, which I found exceedingly boring, but worthwhile in understanding why nothing gets done! My Oxford experience is really going above and beyond my expectations. The study is going well. I am at the stage where I need to shave 2000 words from my dissertation, which is not due until July 2010, so this is good. I have also found two excellent Chinese take away restaurants 5 minutes from my place of residence - this has made me feel right at home. So, all good news from my end!

I've updated my blog too re Windsor Castle, Eton College and Taekwondo:

<http://angelocapitano.blogspot.com/>

Enjoy your summer Christmas. Tomorrow I have Christmas at Christ Church Cathedral, and then more eating!

Angelo

*(Angelo Capuano is a law graduate from Melbourne, Australia, and has worked as a sessional tutor and lecturer at two law schools, and as a Judge's Associate at the Federal Court. His blog documents his journey to read for a BCL at the University of Oxford, as the recipient of a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholarship and an Australian Bicentennial Scholarship. He was a guest speaker at Richmond Rotary just prior to leaving for Oxford.)*

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## OUTBACK KIDS GET EARLY CHRISTMAS CHEER

**Hundreds of presents are about to be delivered to children across outback Queensland by flying chaplains. Envoys with the Salvation Army Outback Flying Service have begun visiting remote stations and communities to drop off gifts to struggling rural families.**

The service is based in Mount Isa but covers a huge area from Cape York, to the Gulf and south to Birdsville. Spokeswoman Natalie Steele says drought and widespread flooding has meant a difficult year for many.

"It's pretty difficult for people. The kids are always really excited - like at Urandangie we had quite a few of the people from town and the kids meet us at the airport. We opened up the presents under the wing of the plane and the kids were really happy - overjoyed - and it's a lovely privilege to be able to do that - playing Santa," she said.

She says people are still making generous donations to the cause.

"I think it's amazing that people will still [donate], they're not selfish," she said. "We've already had some presents go out in the Cloncurry area and to Camooweal and Boulia."

"With the recent drought and then floods - people don't have a lot of money to spend on Christmas presents. We just want to go out there and help them have a good time and not miss out."

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/a/-/australian-news/6559780/outback-kids-get-early-christmas-cheer>