



Below the Belt!

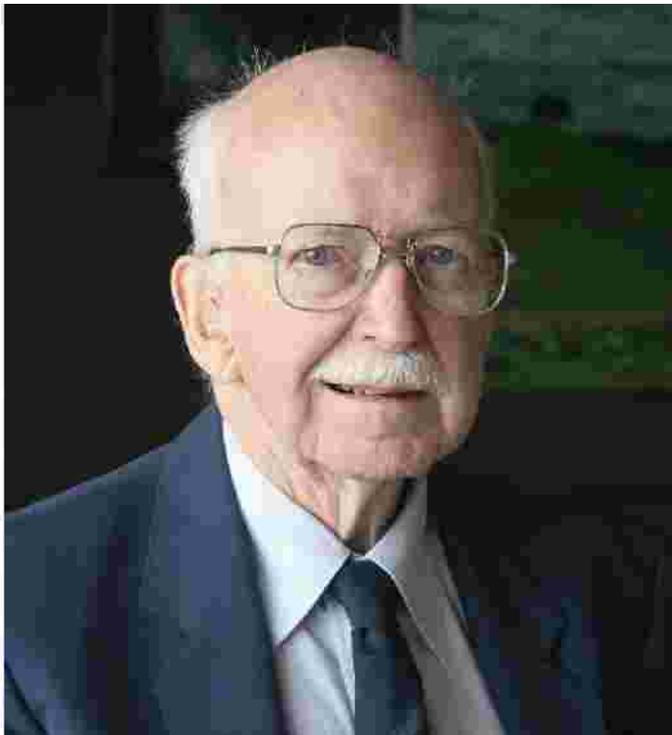
Vol. 12 No. 1

Dec. 2012 – Feb. 2013,

Newsletter of The Nepean / Blue Mountains Prostate Cancer Support Group Inc.

(ABN No. 35 871 442 176)

Rob Dowthwaite – 5/3/1930 – 1/9/2012



Rob Dowthwaite the inaugural Chairman of our group passed away on the first of September, 2012.

Robert William Dowthwaite was born on the 5th March 1930 in Cape Town.

The son and grandson of accountants and great grandson of a non-conformist minister, the strong Evangelical Christian heritage of his family shaped his life.

Rob grew up in South Africa attending Primary school in Cape Town, then Boarding school at Kingswood College this was followed by an attempt at studying medicine – which failed because in his words “I studied more anatomy on the beach than in the classroom!” He became, for a time, an accounts assistant with a ship builder. All this time, he enjoyed life in Cape Town with friends, climbing Table mountain, swimming at the beach, and mucking around with cars. There was a lot of tinkering with cars and Rob’s Fiat was a bit ‘suped up’ so it could keep up with the MG’s and Morrisies of his mates.

He was also involved in church and evangelistic activities – parish council, youth camps, beach missions and the like – and increasingly felt the call to ministry. Studying for ministry as a Church of England evangelical in South Africa was not too easy in those days and Rob headed off to England (taking the Fiat with him!) in 1953, commencing a BD at London Bible College, which he later completed at Moore College in Sydney in 1957.

While at Moore College in Sydney in the mid 1950's Rob continued his involvement with cars, (usually always Morris's!). This became a habit that he never did kick! He did well at college and was one of the first to achieve both the Licentiate of Theology and the London Bachelor of Divinity concurrently, an option that was then offered to others.

It was in Sydney that Rob met Ruth, who was also studying theology at Moore College, and the most important friendship of his life started, that would last nearly 53 years of marriage. They were married in Cape Town in 1958 where their three children were born while he was in charge of a suburban Church of England Church in that city.

Rob had a lifetime love for the church, in particular the evangelical variety of the Anglican Church. His independent thinking nature, non-establishment bent and determination that the gospel of Jesus be told above all else brought him into disagreement with the hierarchy at times and Ruth's ultimatum that she 'would not be a bishop's wife' was never put to the test. He was ordained priest in South Africa and cared for 3 parishes there, before finally emigrating to Australia in 1969 to work for Frensham Girls School as an administrator. While there he acted as honorary Curate at Mittagong, before becoming Rector at Sutton Forest in 1971.

He was honorary General Secretary of a missionary society with work in Southern Africa until 1975 when he became full time Australian Director and dedicated the next 11 years of his life to building the organisation, which grew from 4 serving missionaries from Australia to over 30.

Returning to full time ministry in 1986, he joined St John's Parramatta as Senior Assistant until he retired in 1995.

Rob continued his lifelong love of Morris cars. He missed out on being a founding member of the NSW Morris Register by being overseas on mission work at the time, but remained a member till the end, becoming a life member and official club chaplain.

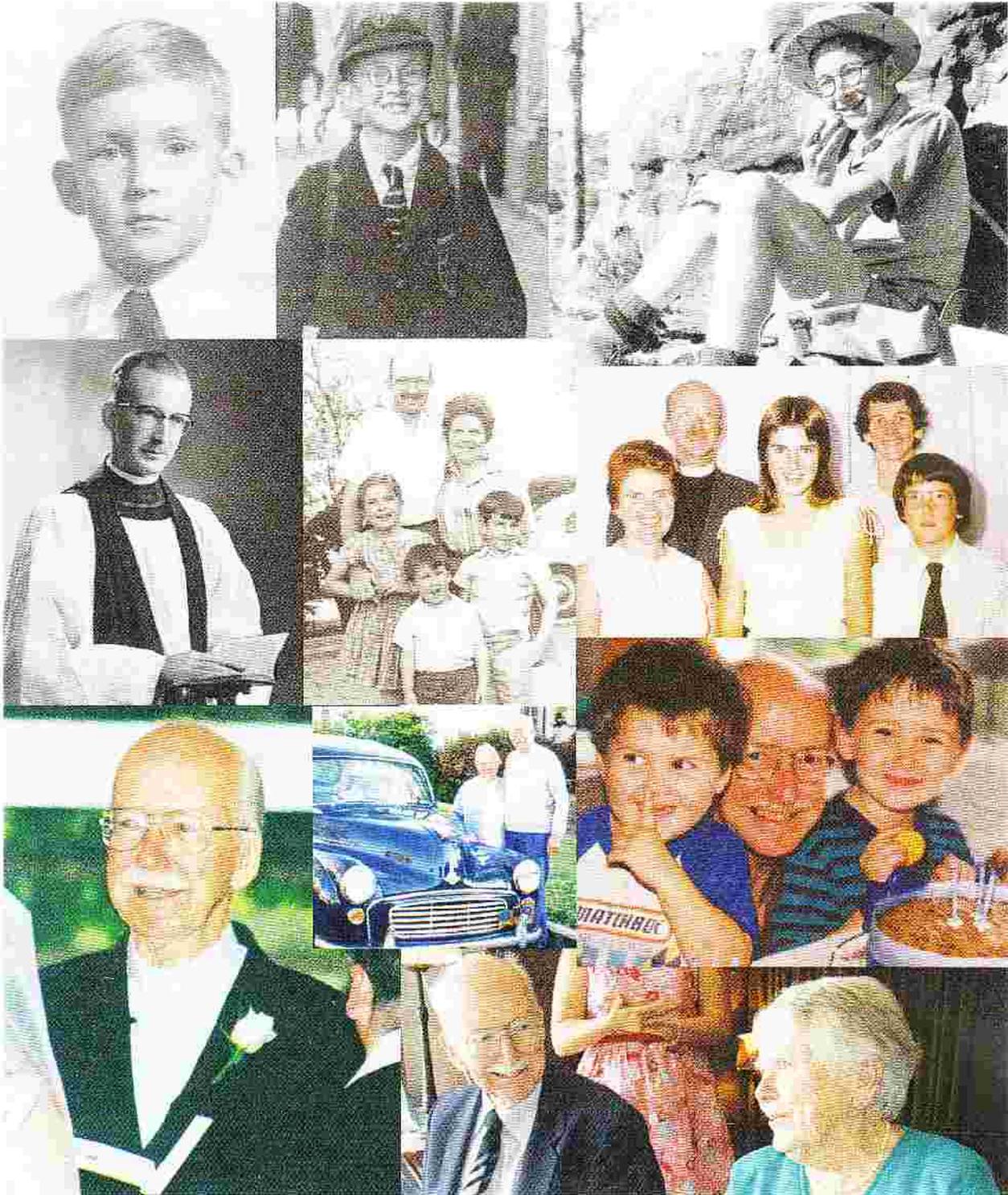
Rev Rob Douthwaite was the first President of our Group.

Rob, with others organized a number of meetings prior to our Group's formation in October 2001. He formalized the establishment of the management committee of 8 members which has stood our Group in good stead ever since. Rob was our first Newsletter Editor and it was he who named it "Below the Belt", His practice at the start of each Support Group monthly meeting was to tell a joke purely in order to put the members at ease.

The functioning of the Board of Directors in its present form is due in no small part to the influence of Rob and Ruth to hold these meetings in different Planning Committee member's homes, which has enabled the committee and the Board of Directors to be most harmonious in their meetings. This aspect of our dealings with one another is due in no small part to Rob's influence and patience.

Sadly Rob has not been in the best of health of recent years mainly as a result of his heart problems however he kept in regular contact to see how the Group was functioning and he and Ruth attended our monthly meetings when possible.

Condolences have been sent to our Group from Tony Sonnerveld, Chairman of the NSW Board of the PCFA, Con Casey who was Secretary of the Support and Advocacy Committee of the PCFA in Rob's time as President, and David Sandoe the Chairman of the National Board of the PCFA who said in his email "We have lost another great contributor to the Support Group Network of the PCFA".



Rob's Funeral Service and Burial took place at Sutton's Forrest while a Memorial Service was held at St John's Church, Parramatta.

Several members of our Group attended this Service.

Rob is survived by his wife Ruth, their three children and their families. (including 8 grandchildren and 6 (soon to be 8!) great grandchildren.)

(Many thanks to Rob's son Gordon and also Alan Moran for providing the details for this item)

A weekend spent messin' around with boats! – October 27th & 28th 2012

(The Hawkesbury Canoe Classic and The Darling Harbour Dragon Boating)

The weekend of October 27th and 28th of October 2012 was a very busy one for members of our support group.

Day 1 – Hawkesbury Canoe Classic

On Saturday we once again assisted with the scrutineering of the boats taking part in the annual Hawkesbury Canoe Classic, this was the eleventh year that we have participated in this event. Once again a tremendous day was experienced by all who attended. The work we do is not hard or difficult (tiring, yes!) and it allows us to not only promote awareness of Prostate Cancer but we also raise funds for the group to continue our support of cancer related projects in our local area.



This year, leading up to the event, the organisers were apprehensive as to the viability of running the event due to poor entries but a last minute rush saw the event well supported with over 350 craft and 530 paddlers taking part. At the most recent count, over \$246,000 had been raised. The bulk of this money goes to The Arrow (Bone Marrow Transplant) Foundation. We, along with other groups who help out, receive a smaller amount.

One pleasant aspect of this year's event was the number of competitors who took the time to thank us for volunteering to assist with the running of the event. No big deal but still good to get the recognition.

We recently received an email from the Hawkesbury Canoe Club thanking us for our efforts and advising us that we will be receiving a cheque for \$800.00. The email reads (in part),

"To all of you involved on the day, thank you very much from the committee. I have received many 'thank you's' from competitors etc about the efficiency and therefore lack of long queues on the day. It is a big effort and much appreciated by everyone. Hope your year goes well and thanks again.

*Best wishes.
Robert Grozier
Hawkesbury Canoe Club"*

The 'Blue Blokes' at the Nowra Regatta – 16th September, 2012

Members of the support group once again took part in the Annual Regatta on the Shoalhaven River at Nowra hosted by the Nowra 'Water Dragons' Club.

On the day the 'Blue Blokes' won their two heat races but were defeated in the final. We also successfully defended our 'Challenge' Trophy against the 'Pink Ladies' Breast Cancer survivor's crew. This year a third team, 'The Daffodils', made up of survivors of other various cancers also competed in this race.

Another great fun day! How about coming and joining us next year?

Day 2 – Darling Harbour Dragon Boating



Members of The Prostate Dragons Teams with the “Pink vs Blue” trophy

On October 28 a group of prostate cancer survivors, their families and carers, turned up at Darling Harbour, Sydney, to take part in the Dragons Abreast festival organized by Dragons Abreast Australia. This is the 5th year prostate cancer survivors have been invited to be part of this great day.

We had 2 teams of paddlers (20 in each team). PCFA were well represented in the crews by John Friedsam and Evan Kallipolitis from PCFA. CEO, Anthony Lowe was there to lend support and encouragement, although unable to paddle. Next year Anthony?

Each crew took part in 3 races, which included the final of the inaugural ‘Pink vs. Blue Challenge’ between Dragons Abreast and the Prostate Dragons.

This event carries a perpetual trophy and was awarded for the first time to Prostate Dragons #1 crew. Prostate Dragons # 2 finished 4th in this race.

Our #1 team posted one of the fastest times of the day and #2 team put in some good times especially in view of the fact that some of them were 1st timers (a couple had never even sat in a dragon boat before!) Well done to both teams, their supporters and families.

The teams were sponsored by the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia and Suncorp Insurance (Motor Group).

We especially thank Suncorp for their assistance in sponsoring a team. This is truly welcomed and appreciated.

PCFA also provided the team T shirts and caps, which so strongly identified us and our cause. Many thanks.

Thanks and congratulations to Gary Clear and Brett Sowerby who, between them, organised the teams. (A task not made easy by peoples reluctance to reply to emails etc!) This job has, in the past, been likened to “trying to herd cats!”



Prostate Dragons #1



Prostate Dragons #2

This is a quote from the 2012 PCFA Annual Report:

“A group of prostate cancer survivors took part in the Dragon boat Regatta at Darling Harbour. This annual event, organized by Dragon’s Abreast Australia, is a major cancer fundraiser. The Prostate Dragons were sponsored in very large part, by PCFA this year.

This is the 4th year in which the Prostate Dragons have taken part in the regatta, along with their partners and families. Two teams competed in four races each and performed very well, gaining three 1st places and four 2nd places in the heats.

A feature of the day was the social (?) race between the Dragons Abreast ladies and the Prostate Dragons.

This year for the first time, (second actually. Ed.) the Prostate Dragons were invited to take part in the “Flowers on the Water” ceremony, held each year to celebrate the lives of those who are no longer with us. A very moving ceremony, hundreds of rose petals were cast onto the waters of Cockle Bay. This was a special moment for both breast and prostate cancer survivors as they joined hands and hearts to pay tribute”.

Plans are already being discussed to further the involvement in the defence of the Pink/Blue Trophy for 2013.

This has become a wonderful showcase for our Prostate Cancer awareness and survivor activities. Well done to all!

We’re always on the lookout for new paddlers, why not come and give it a try!



**The December Group Meeting
Monday, December 17th
is
Christmas Party Time!**

Venue:-

Learning & Development Unit Building SWAHS2,
(adjacent to where the new car park is being built)

This is our usual meeting venue.
Commencing at 6-30 to 7-00

Food, Drinks and Music Provided.



And still it goes on.....

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) has recently launched its eighth edition of Guidelines for Preventative Activities in General Practice or "Red Book" which advises Australian GPs to not recommend prostate cancer screening saying that the risks associated with screening – which involve Digital Rectal Examination (DRE) and Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test - outweigh the benefits.

Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia (PCFA) says the latest recommendations by the RACGP about prostate cancer testing will only add more confusion to the current prostate cancer testing debate.

President, Alan Moran, states;

A few days ago I sent around information in respect to the above matter. I have now received a response from one of our members, Adrian, and I have sought his approval to share with you all.

Yes, I know we are speaking to the converted about PSA testing but why there is still a controversy about the issue beggars belief. As Adrian says "and continually amazed at this silly debate about the value of PSA tests". With at least 3,300 men passing away each year from prostate cancer it is a no-brainer, and anything that would/could lead to the reduction in this number has to be pursued. To put the numbers another way, if 8 jumbo jets were to crash in Australia each year something would definitely be done to stop them falling from the sky, therefore it is just plain common sense that we should take action in regard to PSA testing , particularly when taking into account the fact that the passenger numbers on those jets would equate to the number of men we lose on an annual basis.

Alan Moran,
President

Here is Adrian's reply

"G'day Alan,

*Adrian here (still) and continually amazed at this silly debate about the value of PSA tests. From mine (and I suspect most Pc patients point of view) a PSA test is simply one of the tests which might indicate a new or continuing Pc problem. There's nothing definitive about it by itself whether we get a low or high result - even if we also check the PSA doubling time over a reasonable period of time. If it's not doubling, it's probably stable. And a high reading doesn't necessarily mean, "**malignancy**" **PANIC**. Indeed, Pc compared with many other cancers is generally slow to progress anyhow - so there should be no **urgent panic** to further test - even if a routine blood test shows a high PSA reading that does double over a 6 month or 12 month period. Doctors should simply advise men to calmly go about their lives, get a DRE and then follow up with other tests if it seems necessary - without jumping to conclusions.*

Having lived with (and been treated for) various sorts of cancers (inc. Pc) now for over 20 years, I know not to panic when some test or other suggests a problem. In my opinion, an annual DRE from an experienced doctor is a much better way of checking for Pc in men of the right age group - especially if there might be a familial connection to Pc. But this doesn't rule a line through the value of routine PSA testing if the tests themselves are not too expensive or resource consuming. Many of us get blood tests done for all sorts of things. And so I think PSA should be included in these if there is a history of Pc or if we are in the right age group and it hasn't been done in the last 12 months. Combined with a DRE, PSA tests can more clearly indicate whether further testing (biopsy & scans) are required.

Regards,

Adrian "

