Cyril Howard: President 1980-1981

As I look back 20 years, and attempt to highlight my year as president, I muse…It’s my birthday today. I’m 68. I spent today at meetings and with friends and others involved in community activities. Not a lot changes. I have been re-reading my Year Book. It evokes many memories, some sad, such as the untimely death of Ken Bird, which drew us all together in sorrow and remembrance in November of that year.

After a pause, I passed to the Silver Jubilee meeting (number 720) attended by a previous Premier of South Australia, Sir Thomas Playford. My son-in-law, Colin Mason, said the invocation and 141 Rotarians and guests including Sir Lyell and Lady McEwin, Mrs Amy Ramsay and Neil Blewitt MP sat down to lunch.

Sir Thomas told Rotarians that he had “no doubt about the future of Elizabeth”, and challenged the then Premier David Tonkin to ensure that HM Queen Elizabeth visited Elizabeth on her next trip to OZ.

I recall with enormous pleasure the visit of the Texans, and the press photo featuring me in a nine-gallon hat…I didn’t have a big head in those days… nor, I hasten to add, do I now!

I loved the fellowship and warmth of meetings. When the soubriquet “smiley” was applied to me by bearded countenance I was full of pride and pleasure.

Speakers from many community groups played on our heartstrings. From Barkuma, from the 1980 Olympics, the joyous letters from exchange students, and of course from the Elizabeth Heartfund Cyclethon.

Charlie promoted this event via local schools, and Ralph celebrated the anniversary of his ‘op’ by riding in it.

But I tell you what… If I was still living in Elizabeth today, I’d no doubt be looking forward to the Christmas Party… with the temperature hovering at 43 degrees. 105 adults and 23 children partied in the airconditioned comfort of the Kariwara Hotel and welcomed the winners of the Cyclethon. This year I shall be hosting a party of 150 local gardeners in the un-airconditioned Wallaroo Town Hall… I’ll be thinking of you all.