

Incoming Speakers

9<sup>th</sup> February Prof. Alan Turner – ‘Why Dark Chocolate is good for you’



24<sup>th</sup> February Suchit Jani - Club's 2008 RYLA attendee and Jenny Church – Club's Youth Science Forum Nominee

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February – NIGHT MEETING – New Generations District Conference – 30 days to go!



For District News, please go to: [clarice@rotarydistrict9800.org.au](mailto:clarice@rotarydistrict9800.org.au)

	<u>09.02.09</u>	<u>16.02.09</u>	<u>24.02.09</u>	
House Committee Duty	C Ullin P Angwin	P Angwin R Swan	R Swan J Smith	
	<b>12.30 start (6.30 Night Meetings)</b>			
Bulletin:	P Peters	P Peters	P Peters	P Peters



Bridge Club Roster (7PM to 8.30PM)

- 03.02.09 C. Southall; C. Ullin
- 10.02.09 C. Ullin; P. Schneider
- 17.02.09 E. Cohen; J Plowright
- 24.02.09 J. Plowright; H Robbins
- 03.03.09 H Robbins; G Newton
- 10.03.09 P Schneider; P Angwin
- 17.03.09 P. Angwin; R. Swan
- 24.03.09 R. Swan; D. Hardham
- 31.03.09 D Hardham; J. Harris

# Bulletin

Rotary Club of Prahran



Meets Monday  
Mt Erica Hotel  
Corner High Street and Williams  
Prahran  
12.45 For 1PM Luncheon  
Website: [www.rotaryprahran.org](http://www.rotaryprahran.org)  
Email: [prahran@districtrotary9800.org.au](mailto:prahran@districtrotary9800.org.au)  
Prahran Chartered 27<sup>th</sup> December 1955

President	Peter Schneider
Vice President	Graeme Newton
Secretary	Helen Robbins
Treasurer	John Harris
Bulletin Editor	Pike Peters

**No. 2347 Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009**  
**Professor Alan Turner – Why Dark Chocolate is good for you!**  
**12.45 for 1.00 PM – Mt Erica Hotel**

Reception: C Ullin  
Cashier: P Angwin

## Previous Meeting – Tom McCarthy – The member behind the badge

Tom started his address to the club with a thank you for his inclusion in the Club (he does know how to warm up a crowd!).

The exercise of looking back is, according to Tom, ‘a bit self-indulgent – but enjoyable’.

Tom was born 1964. He is the youngest of 4 kids. Tom’s father was an Ecclesiastical Architect.

As it was a hot day when Tom spoke to us, he recalled that his memories of childhood always are of hot summer days; of riding bikes, running around with friends and even jumping on milk wagon!

Tom attended Xavier College and says that he ‘had a go’, but was not particularly good at sport or academics.

Tom went off with high hopes, hearing from brothers and sisters how much fun University would be. He went to study Engineering, and hated it instantly. Tom attributes this to the ‘28 contact hours – more than at Xavier’, and left after a year.

Tom Started working at 20 years old at the National Bank in Kew as the number 1 teller, following a less than successful time at University. Tom recalls that one could smoke at the counter when serving a customer. He says that he ‘took to it with great gusto’. Having yet another cigarette in the lunch room at the Bank, Tom saw an ad for collecting rents at Williams and Co. Went down straight away, but was told he was ‘not suitable’. The next week, he saw ad again and reapplied. His persistence paid off and he went from collecting rents to letting the apartments. Tom found himself in an office with about 15 women. He recalls it was at the time when lady Di marrying prince Charles. He found that he was not interested in what gloves she would wear. So he asked Kevin Biggin for a sales job, but alas there was not to be had.

Tom, true to form, had made up his mind on a sales career, so he tracked Greg Hocking down. Meeting in a nightclub, he expressed his desire for a job there at the nightclub and went to work within a couple of days.

Tom recalls this as an exciting time in real estate and his career. He recalls working very hard, but their selling techniques and marketing were very innovative – with publication of weekly property guides, open for inspections on Sunday and the like

After 9 ½ years, Tom was toying with taking on the new Richmond office for Greg Hocking. He was uncharacteristically hesitant, having no personal affinity with Richmond. During this period, he was driving down St Kilda Road when Kevin Biggin called (no doubt on his state of the art mobile) and said ‘let’s have a chat’... Greg Hocking still thinks Kevin is great Bulltisher of all times, which in Real Estate is a great compliment.

Tom bought the business from Kevin and started running the Prahran office of Biggin and Scott in 1996 and is still there.

Tom says that it is an exciting business. As with all Sales business, you acquire the greatest skill you need to acquire – how to sell yourself. Tom feels that selling is one of noblest professions you can be in.

Tom says that Real Estate Agents are the custodians of some of the greatest secrets. Some people are open books – others are closed, but you learn some of their deepest secrets.

So discretion is important, as is enthusiasm, and honesty. Combine these qualities with likeability and success should be at hand. Likeability is the most important element for Tom (he says that it ‘covers a lot of cracks’); if you have a life partner, that partner has to be understanding of what you do. The job is not difficult, it just takes up large slabs of time.

As a veteran of the industry, Tom says that there are great stories out there in his industry. He regaled us with some of his best ones:

1. The murder at an auction happened when Tom was selling a boarding house owned by head of REIB. He recalls that it was

best to kick open the doors and turn away from the odour. He was at an open when one person came out and said that there was a dead person in room Three.

Some days later, during the auction, Tom arrived to find the front door was taped up by the cops, as one resident had stabbed and killed a fellow, and then overdosed in his room. There was a single bid (good old days with dummy bidding – sold it). Naturally, the buyer wanted to see the interior. Tom distracted him until the police had moved the body.

2. Once in the early 90's Tom got the listing for a less than glamorous property. He could only come up with three dubious names on the buyers list for 4 weeks campaign. The place had everything wrong with it, but on auction day, much to Tom's delight, he arrived to see 7 or 8 people – this was a throng in the early 90's. Tom revealed his technique of using dummy bids like a game of tennis – distracting the crowd from side to side. He got the bids up a bit and went in to duly report to the vendor that he hadn't a bid (thinking that he was in the driver's seat. He walked back out to see his 'buyers' getting on the bus at the stop he didn't see in front of the property!
3. Chased a man down the street who stole something – stole a pair of ladies underwear – Tom didn't know when to put it back.

The current conditions are seeing properties under \$600,000 selling quickly.

Winning in real estate is a slow burn. In Prahran about 7% turn over in a year. This rate doesn't change a lot. Currently there is a lack of properties being listed, so the pressure is building, and Tom predicts that the magic 7% turnover will hold true.

His general observation is that residential property will be a good investment. The commercial market is still holding up reasonably well; but if tenants' business fails that puts pressure on landlords and it could be interesting times.

It is an opportunistic market at the moment.

Tom finished by saying that for the Rotary Club of Prahran there have to be a lot more members like him out there. He wanted to give back and the Club is the perfect way to do so. We just need to tap into that desire in others...

