



Rotary Club of Christchurch South Inc.

P O Box 12-243, Christchurch 8023, NZ.

SERVICE ABOVE SELF



Bulletin

#23 for 03 December 2025

Speaker Report, 03 December 2025

Tonight, members were treated to an inspiring presentation from Jeremy Nurse, a long-time leader of the 180 Degrees Trust, an organisation that has been quietly transforming young lives since its founding in 2007. What began 18 years ago as a small, hopeful initiative has grown into a highly respected outdoor-adventure and mentoring programme for at-risk youth—despite, as Jeremy joked, “feeling like real estate agents” because funding must be rebuilt from scratch every year.

The Trust works primarily with young people aged 10–18 who have “fallen through the cracks”—many from homes marked by violence, gang involvement, addiction, or neglect. Around 90% of those referred arrive with significant trauma. Some are sent through Oranga Tamariki, with whom 180 Degrees holds a contract covering about 25% of its operations. Others come via the police, schools, or even desperate grandparents seeking help for tamariki being targeted for ram raids or gang recruitment. Increasingly, Jeremy noted, referrals include 10–13-year-olds—too young for the Youth Court, yet already heading toward serious trouble.

The Trust’s approach is simple, powerful, and unrelentingly consistent: respect, structure, challenge, and connection. Young people are taken on carefully supervised outdoor expeditions—tramping, biking, rafting, horse trekking, and multi-day wilderness journeys. The crown jewel is the Southern Alps Traverse, a five-day odyssey from the West Coast to New Brighton, mixing biking trails, rivers, huts, and bush tracks. Many participants have never been outside Christchurch; some have never eaten



a meal around a table or been away from their phones. On these trips, they discover landscapes, people, and versions of themselves they didn't know existed.

Jeremy emphasised the meticulous safety planning behind every adventure. With a staff-to-youth ratio that can reach 6:10, equipment checks, night-time supervision rosters, and rigorous gear searches, the Trust takes full responsibility for every participant. Their Adventure Mark certification reflects this high standard.

Yet safety is only one pillar—relationship and humour are just as central. Jeremy shared vivid stories: the violent 15-year-old who once tried to leap from a moving car but returned years later, now 30 and thriving, to say “thank you”; the boy from a gang family who had never seen New Brighton beach; and the young man whose mother had effectively abandoned him, only to take him back proudly after seeing his achievement on a trip.

Much of the programme's success stems from dismantling barriers of distrust. Before each adventure the staff run team-building games so that, as Jeremy put it, “ten guys who might be ready to kill each other” become allies. Phones are surrendered, vaping habits are broken, and slowly the young people reconnect—with each other, with nature, and with their own potential.

The presentation included scenes from a TVNZ feature on the Trust, highlighting the emotional ups and downs of the Southern Alps Traverse. The footage showed laughter, tears, triumph, exhaustion, and the remarkable growth that occurs when young people are pushed just far enough beyond their comfort zones. For many, it is the first time they have felt genuinely proud of themselves.

Jeremy also acknowledged the generosity that keeps the Trust running, including an extraordinary, unexpected five-year funding gift from two Goldman Sachs staff who heard an interview by chance while driving through the Mackenzie Country.

Looking to the future, the Trust is currently fundraising for surfboards so they can add surfing lessons to their programme—another way to let young people “taste success in healthy ways.”

Jeremy closed by reminding us that although not every story is an instant turnaround, the seeds planted often grow years later. A young man may pull into the driveway long after his programme has ended, roll down the window, point to the baby seat in the back, and say, “Remember me? I made it.”

Jeremy and his colleagues live for those moments as they “TURN LIVES AROUND, ONE ADVENTURE AT A TIME”

Reporters Note: As an experiment, I recorded Jeremy's presentation on my phone, used Microsoft Word to convert what he said to text and then asked AI tool ChatGPT to write a 600 word report. Except for some minor editing, the above is the result – Alan McKinnon.

Thanks to Alan McK, for this report and Viv for the photo.

Upcoming meetings:

10/12/2025	Christmas party	@ <i>Canterbury Club</i>
17/12/2025	Port and cake	@ <i>Cashmere Club</i>

NEW YEAR:

14/01/2026	Katharine Watson PhD – Chair, Christchurch Archaeology Project	Christchurch Archaeology Project – Cathedral Square Unearthed
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Notices:

- **Christmas Party flyer attached to this Bulletin e-mail.**
- **Waltham School Legacy Garden**

On Thursday afternoon Mel and Viv visited Waltham School and looked at the Legacy Garden. It's a work in progress but we saw the beginning of something fantastic.

We are certain that the students involved are very proud of their efforts. Alannah, the teacher organising the project needs to be congratulated too.

We touched base with Tim, Principal of Waltham School.

- **From:** Tim Evers <principal@waltham.school.nz>
Date: 4 December 2025 at 9:32:51 AM NZDT
To: Viv Ellis <vivmellis@gmail.com>,
Subject: Re: Rotary

Hi Viv

Thanks so much for touching base and coming to visit. I have a meeting scheduled for this time, but I will ask Ali to let me know when you arrive so I can pop out for a quick hello and thanks.



We really appreciate your continued support of our school, it is amazing!

Kind regards
Tim



- DUTIES:**

Duty	10-Dec-25	14-Jan-26	21-Jan-25
Cash Desk	A McKinnon	L Bougen	A Airay
Cash Desk	AN/A	A McKinnon	A McCully
Reception	M Opie	S McKenzie	G Dockrill
Speaker's Host	AN/A	D Buist	D Peterson
Grace	H Garlick	D Buist	D Peterson
International Toast	AN/A	S McKenzie	G Dockrill
Thanks to Speaker	AN/A	L Bougen	A Airay
Quote for the Week	AN/A	A McKinnon	A McCully
Speaker Reporter	A McCully	D Peterson	M Opie
Sergeant	AN/A	V Ellis	G Bailey

- LEAVE:**

	FROM	TO
<u>S Hays</u>	11/08/20	TBA
<u>E Bermingham</u>	01/01/23	TBA
S McLean	20/03/24	TBA
<u>K Gunsekara</u>	04/12/24	TBA
P Mears	05/02/25	TBA
A Kim	30/06/25	TBA
R McKinney	01/09/25	mid April 2026

The link for the club web pages is www.christchurchsouthrotary.org.nz

The link to club Facebook pages is

<https://www.facebook.com/ChristchurchSouthRotary/>

APOLOGIES:

Record your apology at the Reception Desk at a prior meeting, OR email: chchsouthrotary@gmail.com before 11.00am Wednesday.

You will get a reminder a couple of days before the meeting re apologising and to advise if bringing a guest.

Emergency apologies to Alan McKinnon (021 142 7668) OR, Club Secretary Viv Ellis (027 490 3161)

DUTIES If you are unable to carry out your allocated duty, it is YOUR responsibility to arrange a substitute.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Please advise all leave of absence of 3 or more weeks to the Secretary, by email or in writing.