FROM THE LIONS DEN April 2014.

When I scanned the minutes of the March General Meeting of the Mayne Lions, I discovered that two of our members were fined for wearing a tie. Neck ties are a symbol of respectability, and the two Lions who were fined are respectable gentlemen, of the type that might well have felt naked without a tie. Readers with long memories may recall the Profumo scandals that shook the Macmillan government in the U.K. in the early 1960s, which revealed a steamy liaison between the Hon. John Profumo, then Secretary of State for War, and a 19-year old Christie Keeler who was also a favourite of the Soviet Embassy. One story described a riotous party that both Profumo and Christine attended, where one of the male guests wore a tie and nothing else. I have always admired that man’s attachment to respectability. He knew what was essential for a gentleman to wear. Yet if any Mayne Lion were to turn up at a General Meeting wearing only a necktie, he would be fined. He might also be fined a second time for failing to wear his Lions vest, but that is beside the point.

Such matters are important. But the news of the fine levied on two of our members at last month`s meeting moved me to do some research into neckties, ascots, cravats, skinnies and the like. Apparently they are all descended from handkerchiefs which Croatian mercenary soldiers fighting in the French army in the seventeenth century wore around their necks. The word ``cravat`` is, in fact, simply a failed French effort to pronounce the Croatian word for these handkerchiefs. Cravats became all the rage in France, and over time they evolved into various new designs, including the ties which cost two of our members a fine. According to Wikipedia, neckties are worn now only by businessmen and waiters in well-mannered restaurants, though young men may wear them tied loosely around their necks with unbuttoned shirts. I do not know if that loophole would apply to our two Lions guilty of wearing a tie.

There is a Lions Club necktie. It is 100% Italian silk and has Lions Club emblems arranged in oblique stripes. It is a “perfect addition to your wardrobe”. I am quoting from a blurb in the Lions Club store.

The Toby Snelgrove photo attached to this month`s ``From the Lions` Den`` shows two Mayne Island Lions members who are NOT leaving the Lions Club: RCMP Constable Brian Davie and his wife Colleen. Last month`s *Mayneliner* had a photo of Brian in full ``strong-arm-of-the law`` regalia, accompanied with the news that he was being transferred from Mayne Island. But Brian and Colleen are not breaking their ties with the Lions Club, and plan to participate in our activities when they can. On March 16th a group of appreciative islanders gathered in the Community Centre for a reception to pay tribute to the contribution that Brian and Colleen have made to island life. I could not attend, but rumours of a wonderful cake produced by Sunny Mayne Bakery have reached me. I intended to interview Brian for this column, but instead found myself being interviewed by a doctor in the Royal Jubilee Hospital in Victoria. But I am not quite at a loss, for I rely on the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. When the picture is a Toby Snelgrove photo, it is worth one thousand and one words.

In last month’s “From the Lions’ Den” column I mentioned the ``Friends and Family Day`` promoted by Lions Club International. Friends, family and anyone who wishes the Lions well, or simply wants more peace in the world, will meet at noon, April 14th, to eat and drink together, shake hands and even hug each other. The clubs in New Zealand will start the luncheon rota which will then follow the time zones around the world. So on Friday, April 14th, at 12:30, it is our turn. The Mayne Lions will present a simple lunch at the Ag Hall. It is a free lunch but donations are welcome. We shall rely on the generosity of Mayne Islanders to keep our bank balance not unhealthy. This is a chance to welcome the world, or at least our little part of it.

James Allan EvansaolrdMac