

A year of Fellowship, Action & Change

The election process for President by members had taken into account it was to be a busy year with Canterbury hosting the Pentangular weekend. The theme for this was chosen to be "At Home", as the very special part of these Rotary events can be the personal hospitality in Rotarian's own homes, and learning more of the local life and culture. The field at our home in Nonington was also used for other Rotary evenings, notably the Summer Evening of Cabaret in September, a performance of "From Within" by Sinead Gillespie in May, as well as the start of the final event of the year in July, the Safari Supper.

The RI President's message was "Lead the Way", which was an excellent start. Some may have felt it was some sort of dictatorship, however in a Club of 60 or more distinctive individuals, debate can be lengthy, so after consulting with some of the "elders", fair plans would be made and led from the front. Advice from one of the members with wide ranging experiences was to listen to all, but make your own mind up. I believe this was excellent advice, and sincere thanks to the member concerned.

The year began with a notable breakfast meeting for the handover, held at the Kent & Canterbury Club. PP John Sullivan demonstrated the feelings of older members by appearing in a night shirt with candle in hand to mark the early hour!

One of the highlights of the year was the Skiing Trip to Bettex, above St. Gervais les Bains, in France. I had the idea following the previous year's weekend to Weston-Super-Mare, and in discussions Martin Ward, who said he might know of a good place. This worked out, as the overall group was nearly 20 in number, and supported well by active members who took to the slopes once more. Great fellowship was enjoyed, and as a tribute to the success of the idea and location it will run for a fourth time this year (2010). Thank you to Martin & Jayne Ward.

The changes that came forward in the year, which did cause some debate, were not all at once, but saw the start of Rotary becoming stronger in Canterbury. The first and second Lady members to the Club were inducted, followed since by several more. They have enhanced to Club, and nobody did resign in the end! The Club also agreed to sponsor two new clubs, firstly a new Rotary Club, which is now well established as Canterbury Sunrise. The second was an Interact Club at Simon Langton Girls School. Again doing very well. As a reward/penitence I was elected to be the advisor to both in my Past Presidents'

year, which was both very rewarding and enjoyable, making the role of Past President a very busy one! I still enjoy being involved with Interact, and a regular visitor to the Sunrise Club.

The last change was actually set in motion 2 years earlier, but as members had not heard or remembered it, they assumed this was the action year. The Pentangular group of Clubs had agreed to be involved in a joint project, in line with the previously agreed objectives of size and eligibility for matched Foundation Funding. Of the projects put forward, the one from Ludenscheid was selected; to help improve a Hospital at Dodi Papase in Ghana. This is now in its four year of the five years agreed, and has gained significant support from others as well.

The major event was the Pentangular Weekend. It was one of the best supported in numbers for some years, and all agreed it was a success. The reception was "At Home", dispersing to Rotarians' homes and accommodation that Friday evening. The Saturday was in our "Home" City, Canterbury, with tours of the Cathedral. The Saturday evening was held at PP Tim Brett's barn, and the Barn Dance proved very popular allowing all to mingle and dance as they wished. The members of St. Quentin also planned their evening dress, which looked just right for the occasion. The final morning was again centred around our "Home", with coffee and croissants for those who wished, followed by either a morning service next door in St. Mary's Nonington, or a local tour of Barfestone Church and The Fredville Oak. Rotarian Marjorie Lyle enjoyed being a guide, and even learnt of some new history herself. Lunch was held in a social atmosphere of marquees on the field, before guests departed back to their home countries. Club Council had agreed the awarding of an International selection of Paul Harris fellowships (or bars) to FWB, Paul Bosmans, PP Tim Brett, and PP Roger Bickerton.

Many were thanked for their help in making this Pentangular so successful, but special note should be made of the assistance by PP Alastair Scott and the staff at Brett's.

Being the last of the current Father & Son memberships of the Club, since there were several when I joined as one of the Eight in '88 membership drive from PP Vic Banks, I had achieved something Father had always been wary of. I enjoyed the year, although it did have challenging moments. I felt I was also very fortunate to have interest and good support from District with both ADG David Lloyd and DG Norman Jones. The usual support from Chris Laming was sadly missed as his health prevented him attending for much of the year, however it was good to see him back in the later months.

One of Father's summaries of the year, was to have survived ! It had become very hectic with Mother passing away in November 2006. With the follow up of 2 years involvement with Canterbury Sunrise, and Interact, it was effectively a three year term, however the extension of Rotary has been well worth it.

Compiled January 2010.