

## **PRESIDENTIAL YEAR 2003 - 2004**

Very soon in my "year" I realised there were only two words a President needs in his/her vocabulary.

Well before July a few quiet words with members produced the names of those who "volunteered" for jobs as committee chairmen, members of Council and all those other roles that keep the Club running.

What did we do during the year? We visited stonemasons, Westminster Abbey, Crown Kitchens [our new house in Norfolk has their units in!], the bird reserve and a brewery. We raised money for our own charities through the duck race and the Christmas collection, where I stood as Santa for eight tiring days - we collected for others including British Legion, Lord Mayor's appeal, Marie Curie, Save the Children, the Hospital Fair and other organisations. Through the Committees we used the money raised to support various charities at home and abroad and we encouraged young people to broaden their horizons by helping others overseas.

We had fun - following President Roger's lead in the previous year we started with a BBQ and all those there will remember the rain, the Canterbury City brass band playing whilst the dripping gazebos problem was solved with clothes pegs. We sorted Ducks and enjoyed our Ladies Nights and Christmas Dinner. We "off-roaded" at Barretts, experienced an African evening with Inner Wheel, took part in sporting activities for all levels of fitness and generally enjoyed Fellowship in its widest meaning. We experienced French hospitality in the Autumn and again at Pentangular where the Mumm champagne flowed like a sparkling river. Some braved the joys of Eastbourne for District conference and we welcomed Rotary Scholars. Our speaker programme was wonderfully varied. We took blood pressures from the public.

And during all this the administrative function of Rotary ground on with District Council meetings, PETS and Assembly. We raised a few eyebrows by making Irene Roe a Paul Harris Fellow for her unstinting work with Inner Wheel over a twenty five year period. She joined husband Sidney as they both now have this honour.

There will be activities not mentioned above as my memory six years on has failed me, but they all add up to a typical year in the life of the Rotary Club of Canterbury.

To return to those two words which I used so many times during the year - thank you! Thank you to all those who led, chaired, organised, cooked, volunteered, sang, celebrated birthdays, administered, took minutes, organised finances, spoke at meetings and so on. In particular, my thanks to Ann who supported me throughout, as always!

The final thank you to Jack Parkin, Alan Goodman and Arthur Godman who passed away during my term. They contributed to the community in their different ways as they demonstrated Service above Self.

Six years on, I still appreciate the privilege of being President 2003/4

Richard Akister

Compiled May 2010