

MY YEAR AS PRESIDENT OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF CANTERBURY, 1989/1990

I had joined our Club in 1984 at the proposal of p.p. John Sullivan along with p.p. Roger Clarke, p.p. Barry Rice and p.p. John Hill. Sometime before my year of Presidency, John Sullivan had asked me along the lines of "How would you view being President of the Club?" and I had answered "What a privilege". The next thing that I know is that I am in the run-up year to being President. I had Keith Laugharne as my immediate past president (a man of great humour) and Roger Clarke as my Vice President. Barry Rice was Club Secretary and Howard Nuttall (a figures man at Canterbury City Council for a while!) as Treasurer.

At District level we had Bob Nott as District Governor (a man of drive and no nonsense) and our theme for the year was "Enjoy Rotary". Such was his drive in District 112 that I believe only until recently an annual lunch was organised by Bob and Maisie for all Presidents in the District for 1989/1990 if they wished to attend. Clearly the world's economy in my year was far more stable than now as I see from my diary that on 3 February 1990 Heather and I hosted 14 Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholars at home.

I was 46/47 in my year and was, in the same year, Commodore of Whitstable Yacht Club (a 3 year appointment) and a Club of 400 members. Life was busy with many committee meetings to attend. In fact it was so busy that in October 1989 I completely forgot to attend a council meeting as President. I was governor at Orchard School in Canterbury and a member with David Thompson of the Local Review Committee at Canterbury Prison considering cases qualifying for release on parole.

As regards our Rotary Club we had successfully completed a year of gaining new members almost "off the streets", a drive known as Eight for '88. My year unfortunately saw the loss of almost all those new members, Peter Brett, Barrie Cole, Ian Collins, Stephen Gilbert, Martin Harker, Derek Munden, Howard Nuttall and Mike Stilwell but I can see some excellent members still in the Club who joined in 1988!

We had Wednesday Walks organised by Alan Goodman of Community Service Committee taking tourists round a fixed tour of points of interest in Canterbury for a charge of £1 which helped that Committee's fundraising.

We had mock job interviews for local schools.

We had an aperitif evening only on the second Tuesday of each month to enable those who worked during the day to attend at least one evening each month and to save the overall cost of meals during each month for all members.

We had Philip and Ted Abbott heading up the Canterbury Carnival on one of their milk floats providing up to £300 in coins in exchange for notes before the Carnival proper arrived with their collecting buckets.

We joined the Forest of Blean Club on 15 January 1990 to hear from John Harris about the twinning events between Canterbury and a town in Russia leading to actual exchanges later.

We had a new members evening at the Westgate Hall on 19 January 1990 (such were the numbers in those days!).

In my year as President our Pentangular visit was to Leuven. A disaster, on lack of home hospitality at the time of arrival, led to most of our team having to stay at hotels and it is rumoured that the mistake cost the Leuven Club something in the region of £25,000 - a difficult weekend with Presidents making very long speeches, each in his own language.

My diary notes that David Thompson opened his new Invicta Motors Showroom selling Fords in the Sturry road on 26 June 1990. It was superb but was later demolished as a result of the economic recession. I believe that the rubble is now under the B & Q store.

A late thank you to all those of our current membership who were members of our great club in the year 1989/90, it was a privilege to serve.

p.p. Alastair G B Scott