

HARRY CRAGG - PRESIDENT 2011-2012

1. Address to the Club AGM, May 2012

As I begin to write this annual Report, I have been reflecting on recent days, when we had such a wonderful weekend of fellowship and friendship with our Pentangular partners. All our efforts proved worthwhile and I am confident that our guests will have returned home with good memories of the occasion and of the Rotarians they had met. It helped too that the sun shone!

During the past year we have had an interesting and very varied programme of speakers at our meetings - In our imaginations we have travelled from Palestine to South Sudan, and from Hong Kong to Rugby. We've enjoyed talks on Conrad, running an Oxfam Bookshop, and on the work of the Canterbury Street Pastors and on bellringing.

There have been many social activities during the year at which members of the Club have shared, in my view, an enormous amount of fun and fellowship. Let me remind you of a few: The Annual Cocktail Party in the Cricket Tent on the St. Lawrence Ground - 32 members and their guests attended the Old Stagers production of "Whodunnit" at the Gulbenkian - an expertly cooked BBQ at the President's home/garden - launching also the sales of Rotary's Tomato Ketchup in aid of the End Polio Now Project - A slide show at the Dominican Priory, drawing on Rotary connections and focussing on the last 90 years in Canterbury - Our Christmas Dinner with the Archbishop of Canterbury and seasonal entertainment from the choir of St. Stephen's Church and the New Year 'Get Together' at my home - and then the absolute highlight of the year, the 90th Anniversary Luncheon at the Abode Hotel, (attended by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, the District 1120 Governor and the Grandson of our founding President). I was delighted that we produced an anniversary booklet updating the Club's achievements with emphasis on the past 15 years, bringing the Club's history up to date. (A job for someone else in 10 years' time, I imagine!)

We enjoyed a fruitful relationship with the Inner Wheel Club of Canterbury, helping them to boost their funds through some of our catering requirements, and benefiting too from their gift to us of the 90th anniversary cake. A number of Rotarians and guests had a most enjoyable weekend in Marlow in April, enjoying each other's company and seeing sunshine once again, as some set off on the planned walks and others took to gentler pursuits. Sunny weather again last weekend for the Pentangular Meeting when over 150 Rotarians and partners came together in Rotary fellowship over the three days.

One of our major fundraisers was again the Top Choir Kent Competition - now in its third year. The event was very successful, producing worthy winners once again. District Governor Lynn Mitchell was pleased that we had followed through on a theme of music, which was something she tried to promote within the District.

This year I took the view that any money raised for the President's charities would be distributed to several smaller charities, where the money could make a greater impact rather than to one main one. I am happy to tell you that thus far, including the donations from the Pentangular Presidents, £4,900 has been raised and the following charities have benefited.

- The Lady Mayoress' Charity
- District Governor's Charity The Cambria Trust
- Demelza House The Beerling Foundation
- St. Stephen's Church Choir
- The Skylarks (Parkinson's U.K.)
- Cobbs Meadow - Riding for the Disabled
- Prince of Wales' Youth Club
- Porchlight

Sadly, since the AGM of 2011, three of our members died: John Sullivan PHF, Terry Pears and Malcolm Morris and they will be sorely missed.

The Club continues to be the largest in District 1120 with 63 members - over 25% having joined in the last 5 years. We have been delighted to welcome to date as new and active members Mark Esdale, Alan Mepstead and Sharon Jordan.

There were celebrations within the Club for 50 years' Service to Rotary from Rotarian Tim Brett and the occasion was marked with the presentation of a certificate and a personal message from the President of Rotary International, Kalyan Banerjee and from the District Governor 1120.

Club members were active in promoting the Stroke Awareness Day in Canterbury, encouraging shoppers to get their Blood Pressure checked by our team of volunteer nurses and welcomed Canterbury's Member of Parliament and the Lord Mayor to take part too. On World Rotary Day we sold purple crocus badges to raise awareness of the End Polio Now Project, and we shall soon be promoting our Duck Race to benefit our Rotary charities.

I am greatly encouraged that this year we obtained sponsors for our New Club Website from amongst the Club membership and hope that we shall go on to develop this further in the coming years for the benefit of us all. Meanwhile, please look regularly at our webpages, which keep us informed of the Club's record of achievements whilst advising us of activities to come.

Finally I should like to thank all the members of the Club for their support and particular thanks to those who made major contributions to our activities during the past year. In my first address to you I urged you to "Enjoy Rotary" and I think that I can say that it has been enjoyable, varied and successful in so many ways.

Speaking for myself, I have enjoyed your company and am confident that we have made a difference to our local community whilst enjoying our 90th year. I look forward to enjoying your "talents" once again next week with the promise of Rotary's Got Talent at our meeting on 29th May.

II. Further reflections on the Year

A year ago, Roger Clarke set a challenge for us to recruit four new members and I am delighted to report that we achieved this and have a possible two members waiting in the wings!

In addition to the normal weekly meetings, Rotary entertained itself in Amanda Cottrell's barn and garden, enjoying delicious fish and chips. A week ago we had a very successful Safari Supper and, as is customary on that occasion, we awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship. I was delighted to be able to present it to Robin Hendy, a stalwart of this Club. And last Saturday, Rotary was seen at its best, when we mounted our 14th Duck Race. We enjoyed great fellowship and on the day, some 44 members were actively involved. It was great to see so many families in the Westgate Gardens enjoying the event. One young boy was overheard saying to his father "This is really COOL!"

The Club has had another successful year in fundraising and I am grateful to each and every member who has played his/her part. We have successfully continued the tradition of offering our support to those in need, particularly in our local community, for we have proved before when we all play our part our combined efforts, however seemingly insignificant, can make a big difference.

The Duck Race, Top Choir Kent and Supermarket collections at Christmas raised over £13,500 and from Social Events and Pentangular contributions over £5,500

At this meeting last year I hoped that we would have a year based on two pillars of fun and friendship, whilst supporting the platform of Rotary service and I feel that we have achieved this, but it is up to each individual to have their own opinion! But to support my feeling let me quote from an e-mail received from one of our visitors: "One couldn't meet a warmer, kinder, more friendly group of people than yours!"

III. Party at the St Lawrence Ground during Canterbury Cricket Week



Pictured above L to R: David Watts (Canterbury Forest of Blean), Kathy Wilson (Chestfield), Harry Cragg (Canterbury), Lady Mayoress Mrs. Suzanne Thomas, Lord Mayor Cllr. Ian Thomas, Ruth Portway, Asst. Governor, Lynn Mitchell, Governor Rotary District 1120, Sheila Cragg, wife of the Canterbury Club President

Members of the local cluster of Rotary Clubs met together to celebrate at the St. Lawrence Cricket Ground during Canterbury Cricket Week at the invitation of the Rotary Club of Canterbury. The Party offered the opportunity to welcome the Rotary District 1120 Governor, Lynn Mitchell and Assistant Governor Ruth Portway, as well as members from the Rotary Clubs of Canterbury, Canterbury Forest of Blean, Canterbury Sunrise, Chestfield, Herne Bay and Whitstable and the President of the inner Wheel Club of Canterbury, Mrs. Anne Arnold.

A finger buffet was provided by the members of Canterbury Inner Wheel to accompany the Pimms served by Rotarian Roger Power and his team.

Lord Mayor Ian Thomas and Lady Mayoress Mrs. Suzanne Thomas were special guests and an auction, ably conducted by Rotarian Alastair Scott, raised £375 for the Lady Mayoress' Charity.