

ROGER CLARKE -- PRESIDENT 1990-1991

How right the saying is that "when you are enjoying yourself time passes quickly". My year as President came to an end far too quickly. My enjoyment was thanks to the support given to me by all Club members and particularly by the year's Vice-President Roddy Tyndale-Biscoe.

A highlight of the year was the week-long Blood Donor Drive in September 1990, launched by Julian Brazier MP. It gave a significant impetus to local blood-giving: a grand total of 630 members of the public requested information, and out of these over 550 became donors.

Our Club and the Maidstone and Ashford Clubs organised a spectacular multi-sponsored event on the M20 Motorway, just before its official opening. It was entitled "M20 YOURS FOR A DAY", giving the public a chance to run, walk and ride along the 26 miles of "missing link" of the M20 between Lenham and Ashford - an opportunity which could never be repeated. The Day raised over £36,000: of this £18,000 was donated to the Kent Air Ambulance Appeal, and the remaining money was divided among various charities supported by the three Rotary Clubs.

I learned on that day that a President has to be very adaptable. I of course delegated the organisation of the event within the Club, and the organiser asked me to take first turn in seeing cars into the car park some distance from our roadside HQ. I agreed to this, expecting to be relieved after one hour. However, in the heat of the moment the organiser forgot, and I spent the day as the car park attendant, no doubt a worthy occupation !

We had a smile over our contribution to the Year of the Environment. Philip Abbott did his bit by editing and printing all Club Bulletins on green re-cycled paper. The content was user friendly too, except for the scheduling of the New Year's Eve party for the 28th December!

Due attention was paid to the fitness of Rotarians. The Sports Officer reported to the AGM that there were still training problems to be overcome, but he kept his managerial post after an overwhelming victory at Ten Pin Bowling against the Forest of Blean Club. Another sign of the times for Rotary - that is, there being already a fair proportion of retired Members ready to take exercise - was the success of "The Wednesday Walk". £350 was raised during the year and donated to the Cyrenians.

Among a host of Club activities, I consider that we supported to the full a variety of events involving youth and young people. We were again mainly responsible for the Rotary Foundation Students at the University of Kent and Canterbury Christchurch College, and we played a large part in the visit of the Group Study Exchange Scheme from Australia: Members of the Club acted as Counsellors and Hosts.

Rotarians helped supervise the Prince of Wales Youth Club, and the year saw the revival of the Mock Job Interview programme for local schools. Our Rotary arranged a very satisfactory day out for deprived children to Bemboms Amusement Park in Margate (shut after a huge fire in 2006 and now re-opened as "Dreamland Margate").

Still on the subject of youth, I was glad that my son Alistair was able to give a slide talk to a Club social evening based on his participation in an "Operation Raleigh" expedition to Zimbabwe.

There should wherever appropriate be an international flavour to Rotary activities. We were reminded of this by a visitor and his wife from another Kent - Kent Ohio, which is loved for its "rolling hills, lush green lawns and forest green foliage". James H. Lane came in September 1990 as a distinguished member of Kent Rotary Club; he had just been made a Paul Harris Fellow for raising a large portion of the Club's \$40,000 contribution to Rotary International's PolioPlus Fund. His wife Dotty wrote a glowing article for the Kent Ohio Record-Courier on our Club, Canterbury and its University, as well as on their subsequent tour of the County of Kent.



Julian Brazier MP launches our Blood Transfusion Drive (from our Club: Roger Clarke left hand side and Terry Pears on the right)



Open day event on the M20 September 1991: representatives of Ashford Rotary and our Club present a cheque for £18,000 to the Kent Air Ambulance Appeal