

Recollection of the President's Year 2009/2010 – by Richard Kemball-Cook

The year 2009 saw the departure of “King of Pop”, Michael Jackson, while an airliner landed on the Hudson River yet everybody survived! However, the UK economy was reeling from the late 2008 market crash and the ensuing bailout.

So, the year started with bad news in terms of the world economy, putting many into crippling debt. Our Club, along with the local branch of the Salvation Army, hosted a conference which aimed to help those in the local area facing increased financial and housing difficulties. This was attended by representatives from Porchlight, the CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau), Age Concern, the Canterbury Credit Union and The Canterbury Umbrella Centre, together with Canterbury City Council housing officials. All agreed to increase the pooling of information and resources; it emerged that it was the local Credit Union that could provide a solid base for those in trouble to take their first step to recovery.

The tradition of an “Ascot” event at Highfield was started - with racing from a number of wind-up horses. Everyone dressed up, and a donkey was loaned for the “saddling enclosure”. It was fed too many carrots and refused to go home!

The Cluster Group of neighbouring Rotary Clubs held a cocktail party at the end of Ladies Day at Canterbury Cricket Week and all watched the colourful band of the Princess of Wales Royal Regiment beating retreat on the beautiful pitch.



I was asked to address the Rotary District Conference held in Brighton about the Campaign to Eradicate Polio, especially to talk of my trip to Lucknow to join with a local Rotary Club as they manned their booths on their National Immunisation Day (where some 800,000 young children across the city were given the drops of vaccine). It seems that my account of this amazing event inspired some 50 Rotarians and their wives to attend other Immunisation Days across North India. Annual giving to the Polio Campaign increased from £30,000 to £150,000!

A dinner at the House of Lords for the Club was hosted by the Rt Hon Lord Carey during which he spoke about his appreciation for the work of the Club.

Early in the new year about 30 members and their wives went on a ski trip to St Gervais, enjoying the lower slopes of Mont Blanc. We were later able to walk on the icy surface of the Mer de Glas after taking the little ratchet train up to Montenvers.

As the new year progressed, the Club was very involved with the initial Top Choir Kent event at the Shirley Hall at Kings School. Proceedings were held up by a sudden

torrential downpour - the choirs did not want to appear wet and bedraggled on stage!

Many members attended the Pentangular meeting hosted by Leuven; this was enjoyed very much. A number of members hired period costumes and travelled by train to Rochester to join in with the processions of the Dickens Festival; they were hosted for lunch by the local Rotary Club.

The President's year ended with BBQ at Highfield.

Richard Kemball-Cook
President 2009-2010

Picture: Richard, in Delhi, going house-to-house seeking children to be vaccinated. Picture credit: Richard Kemball-Cook.