

**Margaret Griffin**

**President's Report 2018-19**

(Based on AGM report)

This has been another busy and enjoyable year when, although there have been deaths and resignations, there has been much life, new members and both substantial enjoyment and rewards for our activity both locally and overseas.

The annual Duck Race – as ever – was one of the highlights of the year when we changed the date to accommodate “Engage”, the District Conference that was held at the University of Kent so that they could participate in the event. It was particularly gratifying to award prizes to those from other Rotary Clubs and especially to present cheques at the Abode Hotel to local winners who had supported the event for several years.

“Songs for a Summer's Evening” – the dinner that launched the year at the Cathedral Lodge – stamped a measure of enjoyment that continued throughout the year. Followed by the “Open Farm Day”, held at Robert Boyd Howell's farm on a lovely day in July which raised over £1000 for one of my three charities for the year –The Juba School in South Sudan. My two other charities were more local – Canterbury Food Bank and Porchlight.

Another early highlight of the year was the annual Mini Group Study Exchange visit which was held here in Canterbury and organised by Martin Ward. This was another success. It was greatly enjoyed by all and the young people “gelled” into a group very quickly and I understand they are still in touch with each other and greatly appreciative of the opportunity that they had. For some it was life-changing.

The Pentangular contacts continue to be invaluable and the year started off with a visit from the St Quentin Club when we were able to meet and discuss some of the issues that are common to all in Rotary. We spent two very happy days with them visiting Chatham Dock Yard and then engaging with smaller groups in discussion. It proved to be a useful preparation for the Presidents' Annual Meeting in Leuven in November when our European Colleagues agreed to further support the School in Juba as we had been let down by not receiving support from Rotary Foundation. The recent visit to St Quentin underlined the friendships that exist between the Clubs and our high attendance as a group helped us regain the privilege of being awarded “The CLOCK” for this coming year.

RECRUITMENT was also one of my aims for the year and the Guest evenings were used to attract interest and several newcomers attended. A tantalising Quiz Night, a Valentine Event and the hilarious Balloon Debate all added a different dimension to Rotary life and interested the visitors. Links to the two local Universities was also high on the agenda and several meetings have taken place with Lecturers, Development Officers and students who have all shown interest. Both the Vice Chancellor and the new Dean of Medical School have spoken at our regular meetings and have also expressed interest in having other meetings with us. Clearly this is ground that we can pursue.

All the Club Committees have been working hard and I have had not only the privilege of attending meetings from time to time but also of being engaged in some of their activities. I have enjoyed mentoring students in two local secondary schools. I have presented prizes at local primary schools for good essay writing and attended the public speaking competition for secondary schools.

The work on the Millennium Scholarship Fund (MSF) has gained momentum and it is encouraging to see so many young people anxious to help those who are less privileged in the world.

Quite a large number of us enjoyed an excellent afternoon at the Cathedral examining their archives – a very varied life.

I would like to thank all who have supported me during this year and particularly those who have stepped in and taken on a heavy role at short notice. Several past presidents have been particularly supportive, and I am very grateful to them for both their actions and helpful advice, At times it has been quite a challenge but most of the time it has been both a privilege and enjoyable.

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President 2018-2019