

**Stephen Thompson**  
**President's Report 2021/2022**  
(Based on report to AGM 2022)

### A Centenary Year

The year started with the Club restricted to online Zoom meetings and our first social get-together was on the 20<sup>th</sup> July which trialled a Zoom/Face to Face combination meeting. A successful feature that has remained since. After that as the covid threat has ebbed and flowed we have still managed to meet regularly face to face.

We have managed to welcome several Rotary widows to many of our meetings throughout the year and this has been a very great pleasure for us, and I hope for them.

Very sadly we lost some great friends during the year Bob Anderson, David Barton, Ken Beere, Roger Bickerton and Roger Clarke. Their contribution to the Club's success is, in a big way, thanks to their individual contributions over the years. I had the great pleasure to induct Viv Hird, Jim Gascoyne and Keji Moses during the year who are all most welcome.

Our Regeneration Project started to take effect at the beginning of the year with a restructure of the Club's Committee responsibilities and a reduced size of Club Council. As President this has worked well and I am sure that the Committees have benefitted from their independence. More work needs to be spent now in expanding the Club's friends and associates.

During the year I wanted to share my love of the countryside with the Club and by following the "Food We Eat" theme we have learned about sea fishing, beef farming, spinach farming, bees & pollination, climate change and its effect on UK farming, cheese making and the dairy industry, lambing and sheep farming, farming in the UK and finally fruit farming. In addition to this we had the memorable falconry dinner and heard about conservation & shooting at Godmersham Park as well as coppicing and conservation work on farms.

On the social side great fun was had with the Car Treasure Hunt, American Style Lunch, Christmas Party, Music Quiz, Easter Egg Hunt and who will forget the Burns Night Dinner in Kingston Village Hall with Piper Ivan Brooks!

Sport featured during the year with the Bat & Trap evening at Broad Oak, the Wimbledon afternoon and the Club's Croquet Championship.

Culture too was embraced with the MacBeth evening at Nonnington. I am ashamed to say that this was my first dip into Shakespeare, but I was intrigued by the first world war theme!

So much for all of the fun, but we also have had a good year raising money and supporting many causes. In Fundraising we have held several events to keep the money coming into our Charity Account: the Horse Race Night, Bingo Night, Film Night, Quiz Night, Mini Auction and "Taste of the East". However, the star of the show was without doubt the Duck Race. Despite all of our concerns about the effects of the pandemic, hundreds of people flocked to the river and supported the Duck Race. The amount raised was on a par with many previous years.

The Committee heads will have reported separately but it has been a pleasure to see them back working normally, particularly when at the beginning of the year it was doubtful that we were going to be able to support charities and needy causes in the way we had pre-pandemic. This was achieved.

During the year we were able to develop closer ties with our two Canterbury “daughter” Clubs – Canterbury Forest of Blean and Canterbury Sunrise. Several meetings have taken place. The cooperation started with the Bat Trap Evening. In November I was present to support the President of Canterbury Forest of Blean in laying the wreath on Remembrance Sunday and the strength of our association became evident when we all joined forces to carry out street collections for Ukraine in Canterbury. These meetings will continue as we work to benefit from each Club’s experience and knowledge and then share various events together.

Of course, this year we have had two key events to celebrate, the first being our Centenary.

Our Centenary on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022 commenced with a coffee morning in the Abode Hotel, where the Club started in 1922. This was followed by a dinner in the evening to replace our postponed party, where I had the very great pleasure to present long service certificates to Andrew Barchi, Roger Bickerton and David Naumann.

In March we held a dinner “1922 Remembered” where we were able to reflect on what life was like for our Rotarian predecessors and heard several stories about some of the Club’s past characters. I very much hope that the work that went into researching this evening will be able to be preserved and brought to light again in the future.

Our postponed Centenary Party was held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at the Cathedral Lodge with over one hundred guests in attendance. In the form of a 1920s Dinner Dance with almost everyone attending dressed for the period, it was a true celebration of 100 years. As one of the guests that evening, the Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Cllr Anne Decker, thanked the Club for their huge contribution to Canterbury over that period. At the dinner I had the rare and very great privilege to present Graham Bough and Naima (Julie) Reza with Paul Harris Awards. (I was also surprised and honoured to receive one from incoming President Tony Loughran.)

Throughout the year we have been continuing to develop our plans to establish a Drinking Water Filling Point in the Longmarket: “The Point”. The project has been beset with complications which we have managed to bump over and great progress has been made. Following a very successful fundraising campaign we have raised over 60% of the funds required. My hope is that we will be able to unveil the tribute to our 100 years within our Centenary Year. The impressive column will be our gift to the city of Canterbury.

The second key event was Pentangular. Pentangular is close to many of our hearts and in the week before Christmas we were able to enjoy each other’s company by Zoom and exchange Christmas carols and a story across Europe.

The Pentangular weekend was held on the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and we had the very great pleasure of hosting the weekend here in Canterbury. We also had the privilege of celebrating Pentangular’s Golden Jubilee. Fifty years of this association is something for us all to be very proud of. The weekend proved to be a very great success with dinners in members’ homes on the Friday evening, a visit to Faversham on Saturday morning to see

the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School's F1 in Schools project and the Shepherd Neame Brewery. We celebrated Saturday evening together with a dinner dance in Canterbury Christ Church University's Augustine Hall, dancing to the music of Hullabaloo. Sunday saw us at the Prince of Wales Youth Club where we were treated to exhibitions of boxing training, judo training and an amazing and captivating Irish dance group. The weekend showcased much of our work with young people.

Finally, I have deliberately not mentioned any names in thanking people for specific events, for fear of missing someone out of the list! Each of you know who you are and please accept my thanks for your part in keeping the Club running smoothly, chairing committees, organising events and above all making my year as President so much easier. It has been a team effort - thank you very much.

Stephen Thompson