



President's Log

Introduction - Una and I spent the turn of the year with our youngest daughter and family at their home in Buckinghamshire and, for the first time in my life (so I must have been lucky in past years), I was bedridden on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day with what felt like the 'flu. I'd had a 'flu jab, so it couldn't have been, but it felt like it! Our two small grandchildren kept peeping round the bedroom door to make sure I was okay, but couldn't understand why I had to be quarantined and couldn't play with them. I've since made up for it!

JANUARY

At our opening meeting of 2011 on the 10th, PP Bill Tozer reported on his 'trip of a lifetime' with wife Gwen to India to visit the village of Amreli, his project as President in 2008-9.

We had funded badly needed improvements to schools, e.g. sanitation, furniture, learning materials, etc. Bill described how appreciative people were of all we had done for them; the improved facilities had resulted in children achieving better results and the school attracting many more pupils, thus influencing the wider community. Bill and Gwen had been "treated like royalty" by Rotarians and others wherever they went. With their tourist hats on, visits to historic sites, including the Taj Mahal, were memorable. The occasional long train journey (up to 14 hours) was endured - very limited comfort, one public loo down the corridor; not so easy at night!

Altogether a brave trip to make – many congratulations to you both and very well done.

Shortly after his return from India, Bill as our Club Webmaster was pleased to announce that we now have a website up and running. Material is needed, narrative, pictures, funnies, etc. from Chairmen, project leaders and members generally, to put some flesh on the bones. As Bill strives to make the website user friendly, it will be a case of 'continuous development' in the coming months, to which we can all contribute.

Friday the 14th saw me visiting Eastbourne AM – up at 6.00am, arriving at the unearthly hour of 6.45 for a 7.15 breakfast – almost like old times, commuting to London or Heathrow. I wished President Hilary 'bon voyage' for her trip to India (Kerala) with the District VTT (Vocational Training Team), a team composed of Rotarians with teaching skills who will be 'teaching the teachers'.

Former member Mike Wadey was re-inducted; MP Stephen Lloyd read the 'Objects'. An informal meeting by our standards but, as we all know, a very active club.

January 2011 (cont'd)

At the Business Meeting on the 17th, I had the pleasure of inducting Dr Andy Kinniburgh – my first induction ceremony as President, which I was proud to conduct. There can be few tasks more pleasing for any President than inducting a new member. Andy was a very patient Guest Member for too long – sheer inertia on the Club's part - we must try to ensure a much shorter lead time for future inductions. A very warm Rotary welcome Andy - delighted to have you finally aboard.

On Friday the 24th, at the invitation of President Lynne, Una and I attended the Lions 43rd Charter Night dinner at the Hydro hotel. We were made most welcome and had an enjoyable evening. President Lynne is keen to work closer with Rotary. The Mayor was in attendance and would like to see more joint efforts between clubs such as ours; she made an appeal on behalf of her chosen charities – YMCA and Young Carers.

The planned speaker for the 24th, Peter Moore on 'People Matter' was unfortunately ill. VP Nicola arranged for Val Winslade, Secretary, 'Eastbourne Talking Newspapers Association' to deputise. Val told us about this very useful service which fulfills an important need across the whole of Sussex.

On the evening of the 26th, I represented us at the District Council Meeting in Maidstone. There were around 170 Rotarians present representing 54 of the 84 clubs in D1120). A full agenda was discussed and voting took place on various issues, notably, the proposal to raise District contributions by a further £1 which I voted against (as we did last year); so did AM club, on the principle that if it's a small amount to add, it's a small amount to absorb, i.e. by District economies. Also, as last year, the proposal was carried overwhelmingly with some 95% in favour.

The 31st was a rather special meeting. It was my pleasure to welcome our Mayor, Councillor Carolyn Heaps, who has been very supportive of us during her year. On behalf of the club, Nigel Greaves presented the Mayor with the portrait he had painted of her in full regalia, from personal sittings. She was delighted to receive it, saying she would need to persuade her husband where best to hang it at home! I don't think she will have any difficulty in getting her way. This was an honour for the club and I was pleased to congratulate Nigel on his artistic talent.

Mary Irving then gave a most interesting Job Talk which covered her varied career from early days as a nurse, to her present life as the Practice Manager in a local law firm where I'm sure she keeps everyone firmly in line, including another of our number who happens to work in the same firm who shall remain nameless! Altogether a most enjoyable lunch meeting.

FEBRUARY

At our meeting on the 7th, Bob Mulvey of Saspire described the great work his organization was doing for the many unfortunate children and young people in Sussex who are suffering from the awful effects of spina bifida and hydrocephalous.

On the 9th, I paid another visit to the Past Rotarians. They had an excellent talk by David Carey, a retired ex RAF helicopter pilot, who held everyone's attention as he told of his exploits whilst flying with the Air Ambulance service, from several of nine bases which together cover the whole of the UK. Many of us will recall a similar talk he gave to our club at an evening with partners a few years ago.

PE Simon, Joe Smedley and myself had a meeting that evening with Noel Tatt, District Foundation Chairman. Noel needed our signatures on documentation as part of our club's 'approval process' under the FV Pilot scheme. We also discussed our restructured application for a Global Grant, after the first submission was rejected by TRF, in regard to the portable x-ray machine we are funding as donor for a hospital in Kampala, Uganda. Noel's parting words were "we will win!"

It's good to know that District is supporting us and we hope his optimism proves to be justified.

February 2011 (cont'd)

Monday the 21st February marked the start of Rotary Week when clubs the world over celebrate our movement and the work that it does, week-in, week-out, to make the world a better place. The Rotary Club of Eastbourne began with a meeting of a few business people on the 22nd February 1922; shortly afterwards, our club was founded and received its Charter on the 6th July 1922. Of the 84 clubs in District 1120, only three are older than ours; eight clubs were Chartered in 1922, a boom year for Rotary in SE England!

Our speaker on the 21st, Honorary Member of our club and immediate past Mayor of Eastbourne, Councillor Greg Szanto, spoke about "Walking with destiny - the practice of Astrology". We were intrigued and a little mystified by such an unusual topic; Greg had made a study of astrology over many years and seemed confident of its usefulness in predicting future events – we listened intently, but most of us seemed unconvinced?

On Rotary Day, 23rd February, Una and I attended a celebratory dinner at St Andrews school, organized by Eastbourne Sovereign club. The event was very well attended (85 people in all), representing clubs from D1120, London District 1130 and members from Sovereign's French partner club, Ardres, Calais. We all enjoyed a very successful evening. DG John Dunkley gave a short address, in which he mentioned that a highlight of his year to date was 'Home Alone' on Christmas Day.

In the Arndale Centre on the 25/26th, we held bucket collections, assisted by Volunteers and Past Rotarians to raise awareness of Rotary's international 'End Polio Now' campaign - focus on the crocus, relating the 20.000 purple crocuses we planted in and around Eastbourne last autumn, to the purple 'pinkies' of children immunised against this awful disease in countries where it is still endemic. Our crocuses are about to come into flower and will, for years to come, multiply and beautify the town as a symbol of the good that Rotary does in the world. The collection will also help to improve the lives of the less fortunate in our own town, in the prevailing economic situation.

Our meeting on the 28th featured a talk by the Head Teacher of Bourne Primary School, David Swales. His is a multi-cultural school with many children whose families originate from countries where English is not the first language; there are some 35 foreign languages spoken in the school, an amazing and challenging prospect for any teacher! Given the school's Victorian image, in what is generally regarded as the poorest part of town, David was understandably pleased and proud to mention that Bourne is a happy school with a good academic record as reflected in his OFSTED report.

President Ron