



## President's Log

### Introduction

Excellent news when we were awarded a District Grant of \$1,000 for our school project in South Africa – one of 32 clubs of the 86 in D1120 to earn a grant. Even better news, after an unbelievably long struggle to convince the RI/TRF authorities in the States that our project for a mobile x-ray machine needed by a hospital in Uganda was worthy of support, we have finally been awarded a Global Grant of \$10,000. Very well done Rtns. Joe Smedley and Chris Smith, who kept on going, with medical input from IPP Peter Nash and strongly supported by District, until we finally won through.

Back home, Chatsworth management have responded to our concerns about lack of secure storage for Club regalia - lectern, gavel and gong and the lapel badge storage box, by fitting a door to the storage cupboard on the staircase leading to the basement. An improvement, but the door is without a lock and the cupboard can still be accessed by others. Management has been asked to fit a lock.

## MAY

The month began with a Bank Holiday, so our first meeting was the Business Meeting on the 9th May. That evening, I represented our Club, accompanied by Una, at a very full Holy Trinity church, for the induction of the new Vicar, Rev. Philip Coekin by Bishop Wallace Benn. This was the first occasion either of us had witnessed such a ceremony and we found it a most absorbing experience. It was fitting that Rotary should be present. Thanks to Paul Honney for arranging our invitation.

The weekend of the 14 /15th May was 'Tripartite' in Lille, hosted by the Lille-Nord club. 37 of us attended, which far exceeded any group we have taken before and was a record for a visit to Lille. Our hosts were delighted to see so many of us when we arrived on the Friday afternoon. We were warmly welcomed by President Francois Thelu and it was good to renew friendships with both the Lille club and with President Thierry Eeman and his group from Ghent-Maritime. In all, there were about 110 people attending the weekend.

The weather was variable but dry; some of us wished we had taken warmer clothes along, but the French had arranged an interesting program of indoor and outdoor visits, including two very different art galleries, the old citadel (fort), and a bus tour of the city sites, so the weekend went very well.

I had to address the banquet on Saturday evening which, incidentally, took place in a restaurant that had once been an iron foundry! How times change.

I was fortunate to have my son David and his wife with us. David is fluent in French and gave me a last minute 'dry run' with my introductory greetings – the rest of the speech *had* to be in our mother tongue as my French is pitiful. David repeated everything in French so they didn't miss out and I think they appreciated the courtesy.

Lille is a large modern city with a lovely old city centre which was very pleasant to walk around.

May 2011 (Cont'd)

My particular thanks go to PP Ian Hunt who again very capably organised this event. There were no hiccups and everyone enjoyed a very successful and sociable re-union.

Monday, 16th May we were back to a normal lunch meeting. Speaker Michael Prescott, had the title "My job - where life and a helping hand can lead us", retelling his story of how the unexpected can influence things in life and cause changes in direction, in ways we could never have anticipated. We can all recall such occurrences in our own lives, most of which, thankfully, were for the better. My party had stayed over in France, so my thanks to PE Simon for kindly chairing the meeting.

The AGM took place on the 23rd May. In summary, we can confidently state that the club is in all-round good health going forward into the next Rotary year. Fellowship is strong and with three new inductions this year we now total 51 members, with the prospect of a further two guest members likely to join us in the coming months.

The 2010-11 Donations Plan has been successfully achieved; our commitments were met in full with a surplus to carry forward – distribution of cheques to the nine local beneficiaries that members chose at the start of my year, will be completed before Handover on 27th June. This represents a proactive style of managing our affairs, against the more reactive style of past years. Many thanks to Alan Wenham for promoting the idea of a Donations Plan which helped us monitor progress during the year and take action where necessary to achieve our plan; the same method will be used for 2011-12.

On the international scene, we met the wishes of District and TRF in supporting the Polio Eradication campaign ('focus on the crocus') with special thanks to PP David Lambird. Club and personal giving to TRF means we have a significant credit surplus with which to start next year and more than enough to merit the award of two PHFs this year. Earning a District Grant of \$1,000 and a Global Grant for \$10,000 towards projects in South Africa and Uganda was a terrific achievement. Senior District people gave us strong support. We received a reciprocal cheque from the Ghent-Maritime club for 1,000 euro and successful fund raising enabled us to purchase four Shelter Boxes and to pay the first year fees of a medical degree course for our Zimbabwe girl.

I was pleased to record that the club had won a Presidential Citation from the RI President for meeting his performance criteria. "Success breeds success!"

Altogether, a very satisfactory year in which we have made our presence felt for the general good in Eastbourne and district and elsewhere across the world. Thank you everyone for a great year's work.

Bank Holiday Monday, 30th May, was a welcome break prior to a busy final month for your President.

## **JUNE**

The annual Fun Day took place on Sunday, 5th June. Alas, as so often in past years, it was spoiled by poor weather when mother nature, after weeks of dry weather and sunshine, decided to water the ground; badly needed of course, but her timing was a little unkind. The 'Race for Life' (Cancer Research/Tesco) elsewhere in town, meant that we had strong competition. 'Clash' is not always easy to foresee. Many charities are struggling at present and seem to be staging more local events than ever before to raise desperately needed funds.

The Mayor was there to start off the Fun Walk. Only 29 sponsored walkers took part, some in wheelchairs, braving the conditions and raising £1,400 for their chosen charities (our share 10%). There were several charity stalls, a pipe band and other musical groups, but very few spectators.

Special thanks to Alan Wenham, Community Committee and other members and partners who helped in any way. Much time and effort went into this event and although financially disappointing, both for us and the stallholders, we did wave the Rotary flag and gain publicity.

Perhaps it is now time to consider the future of this event - maybe replacing it with something which gives us publicity and social value, but is less weather dependent and has better financial assurance?

As usual, we shared the event with Eastbourne Lions Club who organised and compered the music and the 'Motorcycles and Mayhem' part of the day - an impressive display of over 100 bikes. Our speaker on the 6th June was Ruth Portway, District GSE, who accompanied last year's GSE team to New England where they were well received, had a great time and enjoyed the experience. At this meeting, I had the pleasure of presenting cheques for £1,000 each to OASIS (Christian Outreach for the Homeless), YMCA (Charlie's Youth Centre, Seaside) and Eastbourne CAB. Barrie Gent and I later visited Bourne C P School, presenting a cheque and 43 dictionaries to the value of £1,000 to Head Teacher David Swales at the school's morning assembly. Those four were the main 'home' based beneficiaries of our Donations Plan and were very grateful for our gifts, which they all assured us will be put to good use. The five other local charities we nominated each received cheques of £300 and have since thanked us for our support. In addition, as outlined under the AGM notes above, funding for International projects in South Africa and Uganda, the supply of Shelter Boxes and support for our Zimbabwe degree student, is in place.

'Kids Out' Day on the 8th, saw us taking a group of 43 disabled children and 28 carers to Drusillas. The Mayor saw them off from Hazel Court school, the sun shone and they had a very happy day.

My President's Night was held on Saturday, 11th June, at the REGC, which also celebrated the club's 89th Charter anniversary (6th July 1922). The 11th happened to be my Una's birthday - not often she's spent a birthday in such style! It's usually only family who sing Happy Birthday to her!

73 members, partners and guests came along to celebrate. Special guests were Mayor Carolyn Heaps, who has supported Rotary and our own club so well this year, and Presidents Brian Hampson (Eastbourne Sovereign), John Boyle (Beachy Head) and Lynne Flanagan (Lions). My special thanks to PP Ian Hunt for the comprehensive arrangements and to PP David Coe who led the musical entertainment, accompanied by the Paul Davis trio. Everyone had a good time and dancing went on until 'carriages' at 11.30pm. The congratulations I received were very much appreciated by Una and I and we had a most enjoyable and memorable evening amongst so many friends

At our meeting on Monday, 13th June, I had the pleasure of inducting Greg Szanto, a Past Mayor of Eastbourne. Introduced by Kevan Regan, Greg became the 51st member of our club and was the third new member it has been my privilege to welcome. One of the most satisfying tasks for any President is to induct a new member into the fellowship of our Club and I'm sure we all appreciated Greg's sincere response. So, welcome Rotarian Greg Szanto and congratulations on becoming the newest member of the Rotary Club of Eastbourne.

June 20th was Club Assembly. We 'assemble' for every meeting, so the title 'Assembly' seems a bit vague for what is actually the PE's Programme Meeting? But there we are, that's what Rotary chooses to call it. Introduced by PE Simon, presentations were made by incoming Committee Chairmen and Event Leaders in what promises to be another super year for the Club. AG Liz Wilton, reporting to the DG, expressed approval of our plans and wished us a happy and successful year.

I was privileged to present PHFs to Michael Barrett and PP Bill Tozer for outstanding services to community and club.

Handover took place on the 27th June. I have been proud to serve this great and historic Rotary Club as a once-in-a-lifetime experience. After summarising the highlights of what has, for me, been a very busy and satisfying year, it gave me much pleasure to place the President's Chain of Office

Rotary Club of Eastbourne – May / June 2011

over Simon's shoulders and to pronounce him President for 2011-2012 (the 90th President of our club).

I wish him every success. Simon duly inducted PE Nicola and VP Joe and so the wheel turns and we are ready for another year of good deeds with the Rotary Club of Eastbourne.

"End of story!"

**President Ron**