

Rotarian

Rotary Club
of Bramhall and Woodford



BULLETIN

February 2003



Presidential Pearls

We have now reached and passed the half-way point in the Rotary year and are now facing some important decisions. Not the least of these is the decision as to where to meet, should Millington Hall close. The position at the time of writing is that we are still able to meet at Millington until the end of March, which could possibly extend to the end of April. Meanwhile we are still actively pursuing a new venue.

Equally important is the matter of offering apologies. In future we will almost certainly have to pay for meals ordered and not consumed because of people not apologising in time, or at all. It is recognised that emergencies do arise, but not with the frequency which some people's record implies. Maurice has been particularly helpful in this regard, but should we move it is almost certain that we will be faced with the full cost of the meal, which will be passed on to anyone who has not apologised in time.

Finally we must continue to think about new members. We have lost two members this year and have a further four members on extended leave of absence, reducing our strength to an effective 29 members. Our attendance is also low so it is vital that we find new recruits to boost our effectiveness as a club. Any names should be passed to Tony Burch.

President's Night is our next big event and I hope that as many people as possible come to Adlington Hall on March 21st to make this another of those nights to remember.

Henry

do not have the patience to find out that it is a waste of time!
I do not know if you will have the patience to find out that it is a waste of time!

Council Capers – January 2003

Eager to start the New Year well, your valiant Council shrugged off the lazy days of festivity and tried to concentrate on things Rotary.

- the Secretary would ensure that those on Leave of Absence had formal letters to that effect.
- our General Account held £1200 and our Charity Account £3900 (this includes £2187 from the Christmas tin collection). Payments are due to Sally Massey's nominated charity for her work on the Father Christmas float.
- the social calendar has been arranged to end May (see Diary)
- the money raised for Sightsavers by us not giving each other Christmas cards was £290
- our new web site is up and running (see web address with our email addresses)
- the dance on 22nd November raised £945 for our Charity funds.
- a possible 'Away Day' to a European city is still under investigation, possibly for March
- Henry will take over from John Meeus as PRO for 2003/4
- the press unfortunately did not report our Grotto activities
- Council would decide how to distribute profits from our social events
- £500 had already been sent to Foundation for the Polio campaign
- the search for a new venue for our meetings was continuing.

Always Check the Original.

A new young monk arrives at the monastery. His first assignment is to help the other monks in copying the old canons and laws of the church by hand. He notices that all are copying from copies, not from the original manuscripts. The monk goes to the Abbot and points out that if someone made even the slightest mistake in writing the first copy, it would never be corrected. In fact the error would be repeated in all subsequent copies. The Abbot said " We have been copying from copies for centuries - but you have a good point my son". The Abbot goes down to the vaults where the original manuscripts are held in a sealed container that hasn't been opened for hundreds of years. Hours go by and nobody sees the old Abbot. The young monk becomes very concerned and decides to go and look for him. He eventually finds him banging his head against the vault walls, weeping uncontrollably.

"Father Abbot, what is wrong?" the young monks asks. "Why are you doing this?" With a choking voice the old Abbot replies: "The word is *celebrate*".

Bramhall Glitterati Awards – 4th December reported by Tim Sheppard

As the scheduled bulletin reporter had failed to appear, and the author had foolishly made the mistake of letting the President see a sheaf of papers, yours truly was duly ‘volunteered’ to write this bulletin. The event was the much heralded Literary evening organised by Sam Kennedy, which had been delayed from its original planned date in October. Unfortunately many members seemed to have taken fright at the thought of literature and only a select band of die-hards were present on what proved to be a most interesting evening.

After our usual high quality meal, (don’t forget to object to the planning application in case it helps prevent Maurice and us being evicted), Sam got the evening off to a fine start by getting his opening speech mixed up. Stephen Day then showed his usual grasp of matters by asking Sam why we had 2 pieces of paper to put scores on, just as Sam finished explaining why! Stephen then wanted a prize for knowing that the Irish have the highest number of authors per head of population anywhere in the world.

Sam announced that there would be 3 prizes, a bottle of whisky for the best presentation, a mystery prize (which proved to be a miniature bottle) for the runner up and what was claimed to be the pen used by Shakespeare to write Hamlet and Richard III, which looked remarkably like a roller ball promotional pen!

Names were drawn from a hat and the chosen speaker had 1 minute to explain why he had chosen his selected text and then 3 minutes to read it.

Graham Yule, who had dressed for the part with a tartan bow tie and smoking jacket, was drawn first. He announced that he was a SciFi fan and selected H G Wells ‘War of the Worlds’. Graham set the scene for the original radio dramatisation of this in America in 1938 which had caused widespread panic as it was presented in the style of a news report. Judging by Graham’s knowledge of this event, he must have lied about his age on his application to join Rotary.

Tony Burch came next with a powerful rendition of ‘Moby Dick’ – he certainly had a whale of a time!! He was followed by Bob Batty who admitted that he could not quote Shakespeare accurately. He then caused a great laugh by stating that he was not a literary giant. His chosen text was about the building of an 8 family, 3 hole privy (typical choice for a water engineer!) from ‘The Specialist’

by Charles Sale. This proved however to be one of the highlights of the evening and was highly amusing.

Stephen Day attempted to restore some culture into the proceedings with Churchill's study of the legend of King Arthur in 'The History of English Speaking People'. Just like a politician to choose another politician, even if said politician has just been voted the Greatest Briton'

David Rabone admitted he was an extreme fundamentalist Baptist and gave a Bible thumping rendition from 'But that I cannot believe' about the Christmas story with its stars hovering over villages etc.

Ron Malabon, who always seems so quiet, showed a different side of his character with his description of the 'Wow' factor in William Wordsworth's poem 'Composed on Westminster Bridge'.

David Poizer rapidly reversed the tone of the evening with his choice of a passage from Les Dawson's 'The spy who came' which he had found in a charity shop.

The author was drawn next. Prior consideration had failed to identify a suitable piece to read, the 'Oracle Server Manual' having been rejected on grounds of taste, so Sam thoughtfully provided something – from Lady Chatterley!! Alan Newsome was so overcome at the reading of this that something premature almost happened.

Sam valiantly attempted to inject more culture into the event with a reading of 'The Gettysburg Address' by Abraham Lincoln and Dennis Allport completed the event with 2 poems from John Betjeman, 'Seaside Golf' and 'Cornish Cliffs'. Betjeman is apparently buried near Dennis's holiday home.

Sam awarded the first prize to Stephen, who commented that Churchill would have appreciated it, the second prize to Bob and the booby prize to the author. Bob was also the winner of the raffle and left the evening with an armful of bottles. Tony Burch was the S at A and relieved most members of 50p, including Graham Yule for looking like a Guardian reporter.

Polio (but not Plus)

Dr Robbie Phillips of RC Lamplighter visited us on 11th December to update us about Rotary's polio eradication campaign. Robbie is an orthopaedic surgeon and is a strong advocate for this major Foundation activity. He reminded us of those terrible cases involving the 'iron lungs' to aid breathing, and that, once a patient suffers paralysis from polio, there is no cure. Polio is a viral disease in which about 15 - 25% people catching it suffer major symptoms. Prevention is the key to this disease - not treatment. As we all know, Rotary has funded much of the immunisation against polio across the world, though its target of eliminating the disease by 2000 was not met. Despite this, there has been a steady increase in polio-free countries across the globe. Each child needs 6 doses of the vaccine by mouth up to the age of 5 to give lifelong protection. Each area that is believed to be free of polio has to be monitored for 3 years before it is declared 'clean'. Doctors are needed for this, and it all costs money. Each polio dose costs 5p and about \$400 million is required from the co-operating agencies to finish the job. The other main players are WHO and UNICEF; Rotary's share of the extra funding needed is \$80 million, which works out to be about £50 on behalf of everyone of the 1.3 million Rotarians world-wide. Our own club has committed to playing its part in meeting this target and some of the funds have already been sent to District. What a magnificent achievement it will be to be part of the goal of a polio-free world! Believe it or not, the EU was only declared free in 2001, after the Americas and the Pacific region. 2005 is the new target year for complete eradication of the disease and the year to June 2003 the time to get the required funds in place.

Polio eradication is no longer PolioPlus, which included giving some vitamins and vaccinations for other diseases. The task seemed just too big. Our publicity about this campaign is still pretty poor as several remarked. It seems unbelievable that we cannot get the message out and involve the public more in funding. Geoff Hunt ably thanked Robbie for coming to speak to us.

Your correspondent's paper and pen must have run out at this point as no record seems to exist about other business, or the machinations of the S at A, so I expect that it was not critical!

Christmas party

About 65 sat down in festive mood to a really excellent meal at Bramhall Park Golf Club on 18th December. Crackers, paper hats party poppers were all deployed as usual, with some believing that neighbours were exemplary targets for streamers and missiles. The raffle had mega prizes this year - a music centre, a work bench (chosen by a lady winner!) a portable grill and much alcohol. A quiz about Yuletide topics new and old was left on each table for diners to attempt over their food. It was no surprise to anyone that the table that won had organiser Michael Lacy sitting there - he did not help them, you understand! But what was a big and welcome surprise was the presentation of a Paul Harris Fellowship to Tony Burch for his contribution, especially to recruitment. Tony, for once, was lost for words! I'm sure that he will recover soon. Kelvin lead a singalong involving the 12 days of Christmas, though thankfully we were spared his choral involvement. A splendid evening - our thanks to all the organisers on the social committee.

The jokes in the crackers don't seem to improve - perhaps they are not meant to!

Q: What did the bald man say when he got a comb for Christmas?

A: Thanks, I'll never part with it.

Q: Who delivers presents to baby sharks at Christmas?

A: Santa Jaws.

There are more, but I'll spare you!

Computers and worms

I recently read of two tips to help yourself:

1. shut down the 'Preview' pane in Outlook Express – this will prevent some *worms* starting up before you can delete the file. To do this, select Layout from the View menu and remove the tick from the 'Show preview pane' box.
2. send document attachments as RTF files, not as Word attachments. The formatting will not be affected, and some *worm* macros will not be able to lodge as they do in Word files.

Seem good ideas to me – or does anyone know better?

Committee night 15th January

Absentees aplenty - confirming the poor attendance recently. We are now down to about 60%, which is pretty poor by any standards! This is now becoming a matter for concern to many. More than this, several are still not apologising in time (or at all), which means that Maurice is over-catering. As we will probably have to move venue soon, it is most likely that meals booked but not eaten will be have to be paid for. Fines will therefore always be necessary unfortunately. One suggestion was that we pass a sheet round each meeting to 'sign in' for the next week - trouble is, how do we reach regular poor attendees?

Committees met as usual, though not all were quorate.

Club Services:

We will be trying out some possible new venues as soon as possible. Stockport Rugby Club would be high on the list. Geoff Hunt has stepped in as speaker-finder, and was just getting going. The committee would try and meet outside normal meetings to sort out remaining problems.

Ways and Means:

Over £3000 raised so far from the Dance Evening and from the Christmas tin collection. We await a donation from Barton Grange for our work in the Grotto. Ideas for the rest of the year include a possible Blues Event on April 5th or 12th, running the barbecue at Stockport Rugby Club on 28th June, and a prize quiz sheet at, say, £1 a go. The plane trip-for-a-day was likely to be deferred.

Community Service: where were they all?

International and Foundation:

Names were taken by Tim Sheppard for the District International Rally at 6.30 for 7 pm at the Armoury, Stockport on 27th February. Cost £12 including a meal. Tim has now re-jigged our club website – we now have our own! Try www.Bramhall-Woodford-Rotary.org.uk and see for yourself. There's more! There will be personal e-mail addresses on the website for club officers. So there will be eg. Chairman@..., Secretary@... etc. and any mail will be forwarded to the holder's home e-mail address. So personal addresses will not be published.

.....there's more

Social:

The previously announced dates were all confirmed. See Diary later in the Bulletin.

David Dewhurst was organising an unofficial trip (ie., non-club) to Ladies Day at Chester Races on 9th May. Anyone interested in joining David should contact him directly.

New Rotary Club:

There is to be a new club in our District. The inaugural meeting of Sandbach Cross will be on 25th April.

Blue Evening – our next Ways & Means project

Saturday 12th April 8pm onwards. Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club, Mellor Road, Cheadle Hulme. Tel: 0161 485 1087. The Club is situated at the very top of Mellor Road, to the left of the public footpath between CHADS theatre and the Club. Ample Car Park. There will be a raffle and possibly a tombola. Club members are asked to find people willing to either donate a single raffle prize of £100 value or contributions towards. The band is the King Ivory Blues Band and has appeared on the Paul Jones Blues Show on Radio 2. Top grade musicians who have done session work backing many different artists, on recordings and live, as well as playing together in the King Ivory line up. Performance normally includes many of their own excellent blues style compositions as well as blues standards. King Ivory have recorded albums of their own on CD format including their 'Live at the BBC' album. Both this and their 'Nighthawkin' album, (both of which I have) will probably be available to buy if anyone wants one. Tickets will be a very reasonable £10 for a band of such quality. There is a dance area in front of the stage, and people can dance if they want, although past experience of their performances usually means people are more than content to sit and listen. If you like John Mayalls Bluesbreakers, Eric Clapton or the likes of B B King and Chuck Berry this is the style for you. Although the Club holds approx. 130 people, it is advised you arrive early if you want to guarantee a seat. The club normally opens at 7pm.

Please contact Stephen Day if you can help with the raffle prize or the tombola.

Mines

observed by Cassandra

Everyone was very jovial before the meeting. Beer and wine seemed to be flowing profusely as were the tongues! Conversation stopped when Simon Smith appeared in his new hairdo. Was it Beckham? Was it Michael Owen? More like Michael Owen's dad! Poor Bob Batty had lost a tooth and looked very down in the mouth.

Dinner was a late starter at 8.10pm. The President, knowing his stuff, finished the meal on time promptly at 9.10pm. That's called precision dining.

Our speaker was Tim Carstairs from Mine Action & Development (MAG). A rather fetching young lady accompanied him, unfortunately, I did not even speak to her or grasped her name. (or should it be other way round?) MAG is of course the organisation Princess Diane made famous in her well-publicised walk through an anti - personnel mine strewn Angolan territory. Tim began his talk by explaining that he was here to speak not about past wars, but about the future, a future where people could get along together after years of conflict.

The organisation was started in 1989 as an advisory body. During the 1990s they decided to get more involved with the problems. A staff of 18 in Manchester supports a team of 1700 "deminers" throughout the world. There is also an international staff of 28 who have been in action from many countries – from Angola to Vietnam. In 13 years they have helped in 20 different countries mainly successfully but Rwanda was not one of those.

The clearing of mines has helped not only to save lives, but also to allow the victims of the wars to get on with their lives. Meetings are held to discuss problems, then work together to solve them. Advice is given to help minimise risks when villagers return to their homes after the conflicts. MAG also gives medical support by using Trauma Medics., these nurses also give of their expertise to help villagers with normal ailments.

In addition to MAG training local people to locate and disable anti-personnel mines, machines are also used. These are made in Cambodia but were designed by students at Warwick University. All bombs found are destroyed. A mine action team consists of 15 people: including 2 team leaders, 2 medics and 1 driver all trained in multi skills. This style of teamwork has been copied by other voluntary organisations.

Donors and supporters of MAG consist of many national governments, private companies, individuals and not least R.I.B.I. It was clear that Tim did not approve of the British government contributing through the Commission of the European Community and not directly to MAG.

Tim quoted 2 magnificent achievements:

- 1) Luena, Angola, where 17 mines were cleared freeing a pumping station so that people could have fresh water again.
- 2) Northern Iraq, where mine clearance had been extremely difficult and arduous. Starting with 2 people they now have 1,700. To emphasise the second achievement, Tim told of a Bill of Lading that had been found containing details of 9 million mines imported from Italy.

Tim's talk was excellent and showed all the enthusiasm and dedication that such an organisation deserves. He answered a number of questions before being very ably thanked by our friend, Simon.

Following the talk, a number of committee chairmen spoke and aired their views, but as I had run out of paper, thought "What the Hell!" I can at least give you some dates for your diaries - particularly for those of you who weren't there, but who just might find the time to read this.

21st March. President's Night at Adlington Hall.

12th April. Blues Night at Cheadle Hulme Conservative Club.

16th May. Ceildh Night. 4 Rotary Clubs involved. (Incidentally, my dictionary says that a Ceildh is a social gathering, especially in Scotland, so Herb Boyes may be forgiven for not realising that it isn't Irish!!)

Bob Stevenson Sergeant-at-Arms, fined every single person in the room and caused absolute and utter confusion, particularly to the President who lost his voice, his glasses and composure trying to shut the blighter up. My advice to everyone is: 'When Bob is next Sergeant-at-Arms, STAY AWAY!'

[Ed: I think that Cassandra - whoever he is - could well be fined by the next Sergeant at Arms for this attack on a fellow member under the cover of a false name!].

History, technology and the way we are

The US standard railroad gauge (width between the two rails) is 4 ft 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way the English expatriates built the US railroads.

So why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? The first long distance roads in Europe (and England) were built by Imperial Rome for their legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? Roman war chariots first formed the initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of destroying their wagon wheels. Since the chariots were made for (or by) Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. The United States standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches thus derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman war chariot. Specifications and bureaucracies live forever. So the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's behind came up with it, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman war chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses. Thus, we have the answer to the original question.

Now comes the twist to the story.... When we see the Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. Thiokol at their factory in Utah makes the SRBs. The engineers who designed the SRBs might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory had to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track is about as wide as two horses' behinds. So, the major design feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over two thousand years ago by the width of a Horse's Behind!

Job Rota

<i>Date</i>	<i>Speaker host</i>	<i>Bulletin</i>	<i>S at A</i>
January 29	J Sykes	S Kennedy	R Taylor
February 5	M Wolverson	J Thewlis	G Yule
February 12	D Allport	B Batty	H Boyes
February 19	T Burch	M Lacey	S Davies
February 26	S Day	K Death	D Dewhurst
March 5	M Mcleod	R Malabon	G Hunt
March 12	J Meeus	J Mould	A Newsome
March 19	D Poizer	D Rabone	P Ridgway
March 26	T Sheppard	S Smith	N Smethurst
April 2	B Stevenson	J Sykes	R Taylor
April 9	J Thewlis	M Wolverson	G Yule
April 16	H Boyes	S Davies	T Burch
April 23	D Dewhurst	S Day	K Death
April 30	G Hunt	M Hurst	S Kennedy
May 7	R Malabon	M McLeod	M Lacey
May 14	J Mould	J Meeus	D Poizer
May 21	A Newsome	P Ridgway	D Rabone
May 28	J Sheard	T Sheppard	S Smith
June 4	N Smethurst	B Stevenson	J Sykes

If you cannot attend, please find a replacement!

Club Diary

February 5	Steve Rowley. Water in Africa
February 12	HomeWatch
February 19	Martin Baldwin. Money laundering.
February 26	Committee Night
February 27	International Rally. Armoury, Stockport. 6.30 for 7
March 12	Betty Allport. The Jubilee Sailing Trust
March 21	President's Evening
April 5	Stroke day (Community Service project)
April 9	Brewery visit
April 12	Blues evening (Ways & Means)
April 25	Inaugural meeting, RC Sandbach Crosses
May 16	Ceilidh, with Poynton, Hazel Grove Wythenshawe
June 28	Barbecue: Stockport Rugby Club (Ways & Means)

BLIND RUN

Mrs Joan Kuroski, 13 Hulme Hall Cres., Cheadle Hulme
Tel: 485 6729 Pick up 7.00 pm
Mrs Phyllis Bell, Flat 19B, York Close, Cheadle Hulme
Tel: 428 8008 Pick up 7.15 pm
Bernard Sharp, 6 Woodbury Rd., Birdhall Lane, Cheadle Hulme
Tel: 428 6506 Pick up 7.20 pm

Mrs Dorothy Birch, 53 Mill Lane, Woodley
Tel: 355 3252 Pick up 7.00 pm
Mrs Joan Goodall, 3 Poise Brook Drive, Offerton
Tel: 456 2076 Pick up 7.15 pm
Mrs Edith Fidler, 18 Old Hall Drive, Offerton
Tel: 483 2286 Pick up 7.15 pm

Make sure that you know where to find them. Ring up Sunday or Monday to check that your passengers still need a lift. If you can't get through, go round anyway at the appointed time. Let Geoff Hunt know if you get stuck. Please swap with someone if you can't do your appointed run. During holiday periods, Walthew House may be closed. Cancellations will be announced at club meetings.

January 28	S Kennedy	M Lacey
February 4	R Malabon	J Meeus
February 11	J Mould	A Newsome
February 18	D Rabone	D Poizer
February 25	P Ridgway	T Sheppard
March 4	S Smith	N Smethurst
March 11	B Stevenson	J Sykes
March 18	M Wolverson	G Yule
March 25	D Allport	H Barker
April 1	B Batty	H Boyes
April 8	T Burch	S Davies
April 15	S Day	K Death
April 22	D Dewhurst	G Hunt
April 29	S Kennedy	R Malabon
May 6	M Lacey	J Meeus
May 13	J Mould	A Newsome



'SOW THE SEEDS OF LOVE'

Please send all copy for the bulletin to Dennis Allport, preferably
as a Word attachment to an e-mail

dennis-allport@supanet.com