



50 YEARS OF ROTARY FRIENDSHIP

This year's contact trip to Biella, Italy celebrated 50 years of the special five way club contact. The association with the four other clubs of Biella Italy, Aalen Heideheim Germany, Villefranche sur Soane France and Olten Switzerland, began when some Rotarians from Banbury led by Bill Trinder visited a Rotarian friend in Villefranche. It was then suggested that we join with the other clubs and start the five way contact. This was to alternate between the five clubs each year and has continued for the 50 years.

The Banbury contingent started from Heathrow with most of us on an Air Italia flight to Milan. On arrival at Milan Airport we met up with Martin Phillips and Annie and completed our party of fourteen. We were met by a courier waving a Rotary symbol and were quickly transferred to our coach for the journey to Biella.

We were able to take in the first glimpse of the countryside in the region between Milan and Biella . At the start of the journey it was very flat and to our surprise we saw that many acres of fields were in fact "Paddy Fields" growing rice, a long way from China. As we neared Biella the mountains began to appear in the distance these were very high with a covering of snow still on the tops. Biella itself is in a valley at the start of the mountain region and the hills make a great backdrop for the town.

On arrival at the Hotel Agora we were greeted by members of the Biella club and were quickly signed in with John Hansford and myself supervising the transfer of a lot of Euros for our stay. We were then ushered to an outside area where we were given refreshment of various flavours of iced tea.

Needless to say as there was a bar adjacent one or two of us decided to sample the local ale. We were also introduced to our individual hosts and arrangements were made for the various evening activities some at restaurants and some in our hosts homes. We then retired to our rooms and prepared for the evening ahead.

Ann and I were met by our host, Alberto Borsetti at 7.30 and were taken to his Town Centre apartment, a beautiful 19th century town house which was divided between him and his parents. We were introduced to his wife Maura and met with the other guests two more Italian couples and others from Aalen and Olten. We had a lovely evening with good conversation which was, mercifully, carried out in English and was complimented with an excellent meal and good wines. The evening finished, much to my surprise and delight, when our host reappeared with a tray holding three very good malt whiskies and glasses. Needless to say the evening finished on a high note.

Next morning, Friday, we were met by our coaches at 9.00 a.m for the journey to the Fort of Bard and the "Museo Delle Alpi". The coach took us by a scenic route and we were able to see the diverse countryside as it went from the plains to the mountains and valleys. After the Paddy Fields near Milan we could see many diverse crops being grown on what appeared to be very fertile ground watered by the melt waters from the mountains. The Fort was situated in the steep sided Aosta valley and itself was on a high, almost sheer cliff. We were greeted by a guide who instructed us in the history of the fort.

It was besieged by Napoleon with many thousands of soldiers but the local garrison of only 200 was able to withstand him for fifteen days until they were eventually overcome. Napoleon then virtually destroyed the fort, it was then rebuilt much later to replicate its former glory.



We then ascended the various levels by three outside lifts, such was the height of the fort. On the topmost level we were able to see marvelous views along the valley with a town at the bottom and the river in full spate rushing down the mountainside. On this level was the object of our visit the “Museo Delle Alpi”.

We were given a 50 page guide to this museum which in itself outlines the scale and size of it. The museum covered every aspect of the Alps from their formation, through history and the various animals and plants to be found there. The museum was presented in a very imaginative way mixing modern technology with traditional museum showcases.

After this visit a number of us decided to descend by a very well made cliff path that wound around the hill and gave us wonderful views all the way down. At the bottom we were able to wander through the old narrow streets and under ancient archways bedecked with flowers.

We then met up with our coaches and were transported a short distance for an aperitif which was very welcome as it had been a long morning without refreshment. It was then a short walk to the “La Kiuwa” restaurant for lunch. This “lunch” was to take over two hours as many courses of local food took us to nearly 5.00pm.

It was during this lunch that our next President Martin and the incoming Aalen Heidenheim President Michael Banz decided to have a meeting to discuss their next year as Presidents as you can see they are old friends having been in contact over many years.



Now back to Biella and a famous Italian ice cream. It was then decided to follow this with some stronger refreshment at our hotel. It was during this time while sitting in chairs outside our hotel that we were suddenly frightened by what we thought was a gun going off, but on seeing Tony Wiltshire slowly sinking to the ground we realised that his chair had disintegrated. The waiter was quite concerned but reassured Tony that he had a further 45 chairs and that it would not be a problem.



It was now time to prepare for the evening dinner at the Villa Cernigliaro. We were again collected by our coaches and taken to this lovely old mansion with lovely gardens full of ornamental trees and flowers. We had a reception outside and then went in for dinner. This continued until late when a few of us found the energy for a little dancing. Then back to the hotel and some sleep.

Saturday was another 9.00 o'clock start with the majority of guests having a guided walk around Biella. The Presidents including myself were walked through

the town, first for coffee and then on to the Town Hall to meet the Burgemeister. We were taken to the Council Chamber where the Mayor appeared and with due ceremony and quite a long speech in Italian that was translated for us in two sentences, we were presented with an engraved paper weight and made Honorary Citizens of Biella. I hope I don't have to pay taxes there.

After this we took a leisurely stroll to meet up with the rest of the visitors around the town. Lunch was to be at the Chiostrò De San Sebastiano, a quadrangle which we sat around for lunch. First of all we were treated to a selection of music by the Filarmonica Big Band.

They started by playing all our national anthems and unusually two verses of the British anthem played in two different styles. We then had lunch in the open enjoying lovely weather. During this event a massive cake appeared celebrating 50 years of contact.



The Presidents and incoming Presidents then had a short meeting to arrange for next year's contact in Olten. Our hosts then took us to various places around Biella or back for a rest. Our host took us for a walk into the hills to see a hillside garden belonging to the town of Biella which was open for the folk to wander. There were masses of Rhododendrons and ornamental trees collected from all over the world including Giant Redwoods from America. Then back to our Hotel to prepare for the Gala dinner.

Our hosts appeared promptly to take us the short distance to the Gala dinner held in the annexe to the Old Town Theatre. This was a distinctive old building with many unusual features, unfortunately there was not room to accommodate all 280 guests in one room

so that we were rather spread out. The sound system was relayed into all the rooms used so that all the guests could hear the speeches given by the Presidents of all our clubs. The speeches all celebrated our unusual 50 Years of contact and were grateful for the friendships that had been built up over the years between the Rotary Club members. Again we enjoyed a good dinner with plenty of wine to loosen our tongues and made sure that the conversations were enjoyed regardless of language. The one downside of the evening for me was that after waiting quite a time for a beer at the bar it eventually appeared and was within inches of my hand when a certain 1st vice president stole it from me ensuring another wait before I received another. After dinner there was dancing which continued for some until the early hours. Our host obviously sensing some fatigue offered to take us to our hotel at 12.30 this was appreciated as we had to have a 6 o'clock call to get to the Milan Airport in time for our flight home. A number of us returned on Sunday with others taking the opportunity to extend their stay in Italy.

This was my first visit to the Italy contact and it proved to be a great experience with excellent arrangements and very friendly people. Our hosts ensuring that everything went according to plan. The 50 year contact was taken very seriously with banners and all the documentation showing the 50 year logo. The local paper gave a full page over to the event.

So we now look forward to next year in Olten Switzerland and to renew the many friendships made during this and previous visits.

David Hitchcox

How to give a cat a pill



- i) Pick up and cradle in the crook of your left arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger and thumb on either side of the cat's mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks while holding the pill in right hand. As cat opens mouth pop pill into mouth. Allow cat to close mouth and swallow.
- ii) Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind sofa. Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.
- iii) Retrieve cat from bedroom and throw soggy pill away.
- iv) Take a new pill from foil wrap, cradle cat in left arm holding rear paws lightly with left hand.
- v) Force jaws open and push to back of mouth with right forefinger. Hold mouth shut for a count of ten.
- vi) Retrieve pill from goldfish bowl and cat from top of wardrobe. Call spouse from garden.
- vii) Kneel on floor with cat wedged firmly between knees, hold front and rear paws. Ignore low growls emitted by cat. Get spouse to hold head firmly with one hand while forcing wooden ruler into mouth. Drop pill down ruler and rub cat's throat vigorously.
- viii) Retrieve cat from curtain rail. Get another pill from foil wrap. Make note to buy new ruler and repair curtains. Carefully sweep shattered figurines and vases from hearth and set to one side for gluing later.
- ix) Wrap cat in large towel and get spouse to lie on cat with head just visible from below armpit. Put pill in end of drinking straw. Force mouth open with pencil and blow down drinking straw.
- x) Check label to make sure pill is not harmful to humans. Drink glass of water to take taste away. Apply band-aid to spouse's forearm, remove blood from carpet with cold water and soap.

- xi) Retrieve cat from neighbour's shed. Get another pill. Place cat in cupboard and close door onto neck to leave head showing. Force mouth open with dessert spoon. Flick pill down throat with elastic band.
- xii) Fetch screwdriver from garage and put cupboard door back on hinges.
- xiii) Apply cold compress to cheek and check records for date of last tetanus jab. Throw tee-shirt away and fetch new one from bedroom.
- xiv) Ring fire brigade to retrieve cat from tree across the road. Apologise to neighbour who crashed into fence while swerving to avoid cat. Take last pill from foil wrap.
- xv) Tie cat's front paws to rear paws with garden twine and bind tightly to leg of dining table. Find heavy duty pruning gloves from shed. Push pill into mouth followed by large piece of fillet steak. Hold head vertically and put two pints of water down throat to wash pill down.
- xvi) Get spouse to drive you to the A&E ward at the nearest hospital, sit quietly while doctor stitches fingers and forearm, and removes pill remnants from right eye. Call furniture shop on way home to order new table.
- xvii) Arrange for RSPCA to collect cat and ring local pet shop to see if they have any hamsters.

How to give a dog a pill....

- i) Wrap pill in bacon!



Guess who.....



This is the first of a series that seeks to tell us more about our fellow Rotarians.

Although anonymous on this page, the identity of the individual will be revealed in next month's newsletter and so on until we get bored or run out of members.

Category	Response
My favourite book	Wisden (Cricket)
My favourite film	Any James Stewart film
My favourite food	Lots!!
My favourite drink	Any good real ale
My favourite car	Jaguar E type
My favourite sportsperson	P Mcparland scored twice to win 1957 FA cup final
My favourite charity	Rotary Foundation
My favourite music	After the Gold Rush – Neil Young
My favourite holiday	Cricket tours anywhere in the World
My favourite dislike	Australian cricketers!

Spotted by David Sullivan on his holidays in the Scilly Isles.....



It seems one of our more senior and distinguished members may have a side-line that he is not telling us about!



An early note for your diary – contact weekend next year is 1st to 4th May. Details below - 1st Vice President Martin is keen for you to get this in your diaries now!

Rotary Club Olten
District 1900 / Switzerland

Contact club meeting 2008 Olten / Switzerland
From the 1st May to the 4th May, 2008

Invitation | Einladung | Invito

Program
Contact club meeting 2008 Olten / Switzerland

1st May	2nd May	3rd May	4th May
Arrival and welcome Individual dinner with Rotarians	Visit the Swiss Historic Open-Air Museum Bollenberg Ship round trip on lake «Brienzersee» Wine and cheese in Olten	Visit and guided tour on the Zentrum Paul Klee Sightseeing and lunch in Eren Gala evening in Olten	Individual journey home