



President Richard Watts

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Contact Club's Visit 2009.

OLD FATHER THAMES

Friday 22nd May 2009

The sun shone as three coach loads of Rotarians and their ladies left the rugby club en route for Windsor. The ice (if any there was) had been broken the evening before when our visitors were entertained in gatherings large and small at local hostelrys or in our homes. Old friends were greeted, news exchanged of those who could not be present and new friendships began to be formed. The Italian contingent was the largest with 26 including some 6 youngsters, then came Villefranche with 23 (incl. 7 youngsters), Aalen-Heidenheim 17 (3) and Olten with 14(1).

Some 34 Banbury Rotarians and their ladies took part in all or some of the programme. It was good to see the youngsters so well represented, Banbury please note.

A straight forward drive to Windsor where the coaches parked with over 50 others and we entered the Castle via the strictest of security measures similar to those at airports.



Our visitors went round with their hosts, some achieving both the State Apartments and St

Georges Chapel, others choosing places in different parts of the castle 'wards' to visit. The castle is so full of opulent rooms, paintings and other works of art that one could only get a general impression of it all.

What a good choice our programme makers had made. Surely if one had to choose anywhere in the country to sum up the greatness of GB, this is the place to go to. We had been given strict instructions to be back at the coaches by 12.20 but sure enough it was later than 12.50 before we got en route again.



Our Organiser John Hansford and Tony Brace discussing some finer points of our visit.

En route turned out to be the wrong route as we overshot our destination at Boulton's Lock and ended up in a dinghy park in Maidenhead! Fair play to the coach drivers who were not really to blame and after we had all decamped (having been told not to!!) we boarded coaches again and soon found the quayside at Boulton's Lock where we embarked in one of Salters medium sized 'steamers'. We just about fitted in with a seat for everyone, I think. Perhaps it was the 'credit crunch' that caused a smaller steamer to be used, with a diminished 'buffet' lunch which turned out to be a bit of a smash and grab by the time we had waited an overlong time for the lock gates to open. We were all ravenous and thirsty and as the eats were downstairs there was

almost a catastrophe as those going down battled with those ostensibly well behaved, responsible Rotarians! Spirits (not the liquid sort) were kept up by impromptu singing on the quarter deck followed by Fred Riches and our Presidents wife "singing" in a manner redolent of Cliff Richard at a wet Wimbledon!(but not quite as tuneful!)

Having had refreshment we all admired the wonderful scenery and saw how the other half lives along the lower Thames. The greenery was stunning and our visitors could not help but be impressed by it all. It stayed fine and all was OK for an hour or two but when the voyage went on for over 3 1/2 hours, the cool breeze and hard seats began to tell.

The evening turned out to be a great success with a drinks reception followed by a very good meal professionally served to over 150 of us sitting at tables of 8. And so to the return to the rugby club with many of us asleep and Martin having to be propped up to prevent him falling out of his seat ! An adventurous day out!!

John Cooke

Day Two.

Again we gathered at the rugby club to embark on another day of events involving our guests and a good number of Banbury Rotarians and their partners. The first stop today was to be Oxford. A visit to the famous Botanical Gardens was blessed with a lovely sunny day. The gardens although not having many flowers was of great interest for the variety of species held there, with a backdrop of Magdalen Church it was a great opportunity for photographs.



Our visitors were then free to roam to the shops or a gentle walk through Christ Church meadows. The next scheduled stop was Oxford Town Hall where we all gathered for a buffet lunch in the splendid surrounding's of the Town

hall. During this time we were entertained by an Organ recital by Steven Grahl who selected four pieces to reflect the nationalities represented. Then back to Banbury allowing our guests to rest or have a walk around town.

It was now time to take our guests to the Gala Dinner. This was held at the Heritage Motor Museum and Conference Centre at Gaydon. For many it was the first time we had visited the centre and saw for the first time the excellent architectural building that held the facilities. On arrival we were greeted and guided to the Motor Museum that contains the largest collection British cars from 100 years of the British motor industry.

It was fascinating to see so many memorable cars from the early 1900's to the latest prototypes. It was a little disappointing to see so many marque's that are no longer produced. There was one highlight a very early looking car which had a B.M.W. badge it appears that the Austin company gave plans to the B.M.W. company so that they could produce their first car after the World War 1.



"A guest appearance of "Lady Penelope"

After about an hour viewing the cars, we were all called upstairs to the conference centre. We were served drinks and were able to take in the view by strolling around the extensive balcony. There was a lot of chatter reminiscing about this and previous contact visits. It is always amazing how we converse with the several languages, it is often a little embarrassing when hearing some of our neighbouring guests speaking fluently in different languages. It was then time for us to go into dinner (about 140).

What a wonderful sight greeted us, a well laid out dining room but what really caught the eye was the magnificent view, the countryside laid out before us through a massive window which

took the whole side of the room and also the completely glazed roof. This roof reflected perfectly what was happening below as the sky darkened.

An excellent dinner well served was followed by short speeches by the five counties. Our President Richard Watts introduced Piero Costa for Olten, Franco Poma for Biella, Andre Pacuad for Ville Franche and Hans Kilb speaking for Aalen-Heidenheim.



During the Saturday morning Rotarians Ian and Alison Anthistle took the younger visitors to Ten Pin Bowling, the winner of this competition was almost the youngest visitor, Chloe Rosier age 9 from Ville Franche was presented to much applause with her prize.

There then erupted a lot of cheering and the singing of Happy Birthday for Sergio Garella from Biella it was a little embarrassing to see past President Martin Philips insisting on constantly kissing him for the many requests for Photographs.



The evening was completed with many of our guests dancing to "Sophie Garner" ensemble. Then back to homes and hotels for a rest before departing on Sunday.

Sunday morning again was blessed with bright sunshine as we gathered at the various times of departure to wave our guests a fond farewell and promises to meet up in Aalen-Heidenheim next year. The programme for this visit is already

organised, and an invitation to meet on the 13th. May 2010 was given to us all.
David Hitchcox.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN.

The Rotary five country Contact has now been in existence for 52 years

It was at this time 52 years ago that Rotarian Bill Trinder and Rotarians W Paxman, George Clark, Jasper Pearson and their ladies were returning from an Rotary International convention in Lucerne, they were returning to England via Villefranche where Bill Trinder's son was pen friend of Georges Pierron. They were entertained by the Rotary Club of Villefranche and were persuaded to take a group of our Rotarians to Villefranche the following October. Villefranche already had contact with the other clubs and Banbury then joined them in what has become this wonderful Annual Meeting.

The first Five Contact clubs meeting in Banbury was held in 1959 when 55 Rotarians and their ladies attended. Our participation in this unusual five way twinning was then firmly established. With sons and daughters of Rotarians creating friendships that have lasted for all these years.

My first Contact visit was in 1985 when I found it a great introduction to the International Family of Rotary. The welcome we experienced gave me a firm grounding in the Rotary ideals of not only Service to others, but of good friendship and fellowship.

We now look forward to our visit to Aalen-Heidenheim, Germany next year when we shall all meet again. Their programme includes visits to Stuttgart to see the Mercedes Motor Museum and a visit to Ulm's New City Centre followed by lunch on the banks of the Danube.
D.H.



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**ROTARY MISSION
 CHALLENGE**

“making a real difference in Sierra Leone”

Rotary – “Make Dreams Real”

May 2009

It hardly seems possible that it is exactly four years since I heard about Mercy Ships & Rotary Mission Challenge and if somebody had told me then that 4 years later I would be getting ready to go to Sierra Leone for my 6th visit I would have told them they were mad!! – but next weekend (May 24th) I am off to Freetown for a week to hold an official opening of the 6 classroom extension at Christian Hope School.

Pastor Joseph at the site at the end of January 2007



This is the latest photo that I received last weekend – there is still some work to complete and during the visit we will put the finishing touches to the extension.

EQUIPMENT SPONSORSHIP

I have set up a sponsorship scheme to equip the rooms with blackboards, desks and benches.

For more information – contact me as above

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the grant of £1,000 from **Rotary District 1090** towards the production costs of the furniture for the school.



The next phase is to convert the basement area (see above) into a multi purpose meeting room/assembly area and during the visit we will be working with the school board and the local contractor to move things forward – I say “we” - Barry Gascoigne a member of the local Round Table, who just happens to be a builder, is accompanying me on the trip and it will be great to have his input to move the project forward. The entire building programme has cost £42,500, this includes the production of the furniture for the 6 classrooms and the ornamental steelwork forming the safety protection on the side and rear elevations.

EXCHANGE RATE - LATEST NEWS

In April 2008 the exchange rate peaked at 5,695 to the £. I sent £500 today and the rate has risen to Le 4,680.

Thank you to the following for recent donations:

- Bicester Rotary Club
- David & Janet Wallwork
- South Northants Trefoil Guild & it's members
- Ken Brazier @ Princes Risborough Rotary Club
- Tredegar & Abergavenny 41 Club members
- Mike & Diane Fitchett
- Glenn Milner @ Witney 41 Club
- Deanne & Daren @ Sew Sublime, Banbury
- Ken @ Sweet Celebrations, Banbury
- St Mary's School, Southam Road, Banbury
- Fashion Fabrics staff & customers
- Bishop Carpenter, School, North Newington
- Banbury Print & Design.

Speaker Reports.

Our speaker on 1 May was Kevin Crook from Mission Aviation Fellowship, or MAF, which as a partnership operates over 130 aircraft from bases in 30 countries to deliver physical and spiritual care to people in places of deepest human need. Kevin gave some dramatic examples of where urgent aid has been provided, e.g., at the time of the Tsunami and in the Pakistani and other earthquakes. Their relatively small aircraft enable supplies and people to be delivered to remote areas that cannot be reached overland or by water easily and thereby facilitate the speedy and effective distribution of aid in an emergency.

MAF also provides "regular" communications and logistics services for healthcare and to mission communities. For over 50 years, MAF planes have been supplying medical care, emergency food, and Christian hope. Every three minutes, a MAF plane is taking off or landing somewhere in the world, enabling the work of aid and development agencies, missions, national churches and other local groups. They carry various dedicated teams bringing healing and relief, flying across deserts, jungles, mountains and swamps which might otherwise take days or weeks to reach by land, where roads may be non-existent, or impassable for half the year. Some of the landing strips that Kevin showed looked pretty "hairy" and definitely would give some of our members a good white knuckle ride on arrival or departure.

Sometimes the local political or security situation prevents continuation of their service. For example, following evacuation from Chad earlier due to the violence there, Mission Aviation Fellowship's team has now returned to the country and flying has resumed. After rebel soldiers failed in their attempt to take the capital N'Djaména, relative peace has now returned to the country. An important part of MAF's work in Chad is a medical safari in which, usually lasting up to a week, a medical team is flown to a number of remote locations to provide care to people who don't have the opportunity or resources to see a doctor.

MAF also continues to fly in the Democratic Republic of Congo where more than 250,000 people have been displaced in the east of the country as a result of fighting between the rebel forces and government militia. MAF have not been called upon to assist with any aid directly related to the fighting and most of the aid is brought in by road or by larger aircraft. But the MAF team continues with regular flights around the Goma area for partner organisations who have been working there for several years with medical aid, trauma management, training, orphans and women's centres. Several flights have carried medical supplies and a medical team to the affected area and some flights have been delivering food and medical

supplies to refugee camps in the northern region in response to the Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) raids on villages there.

The MAF fleet comprises small fixed wing aircraft and, although helicopters are more versatile in some situations their high operating costs prevent their regular use. Whenever MAF perceives the need for helicopter use, they lease appropriately over a short term. Cost of MAF's operation is about £45million of which 30% is obtained from flight fare charges, the rest from donations. Where there are fare charges, charities, missions and aid agencies receive a discount, for some emergencies travel is free, but commercial operations pay full commercial rates. In the UK, MAF is a registered charity funded by voluntary gifts, and more information can be obtained via their website www.maf-uk.org.
Ian Calderbank

Speaker Report on Alison Davies - 8 May 2009

In 1992 Alison, then aged 28, competed for and secured a place on the District 1090 GSE visit to Japan. She was, in the eyes of our Foundation Committee, an ideal candidate for the role and listening to her at our lunch time meeting on the 8th May fully supported that view.

She explained how the visit to Japan had been for 5 weeks although a further week prior to travelling to Japan involved an intensive course on the Japanese language. During the 5 weeks in Japan the team lived with Japanese families in the northern suburbs of Tokyo. Here they learned the customs of their hosts and in particular witnessed the tensions that existed between the older generation and the more westernised younger generation. They were able to tour the world famous sites around Tokyo and travel on the bullet train.

Since the Rotary experience Alison's career has advanced in leaps and bounds. She is currently a key member of an Improvement Team at Cherwell DC whose function is to examine service procedures and introduce change which avoids waste and improves efficiency and effectiveness. Apart from her work Alison has undertaken a variety of tasks since 1992 - she has been a Town Councillor at Chipping Norton, given birth to 2 children, studied for and obtained an MBA and set up a Citizens Advice Bureau in Chipping Norton.

Alison was a founder member of the Rotary Club of Banbury Cherwell but her work commitments including the frequency of evening meetings prevented her continued membership of the club. However she is clearly a great ambassador for the Rotary movement and a fine example of the value of GSE as a tool for breaking down cultural barriers and promoting international understanding.
Brian Cornley.

Speaker Report 15 May 2009

The Anjali Dance Company Nicole Thompson introduced us to the dance company who are based in Banbury and are world leaders in developing creativity through dance of people with learning disabilities. The company was founded in 1993 and is a registered charity providing training and education. They have become world leaders in their field and are based at Banbury's Mill Arts Centre. They have performed at many professional venues from London's Royal Opera House and The Royal Festival Hall to major concert halls in European cities.

Mark Barber, who despite his learning disability has become a key member of Anjali's creative team. Mark is involved in developing teaching skills, and was a major part of the presentation team at our meeting. He explained how belonging to Anjali had completely changed his life. He is currently Associate Director (Education) As well as the theatre work, the companies outreach programme runs weekly dance classes at 5 locations in Oxfordshire. Nicole thanked Rotary for the donation to enable the purchase of camera equipment
Rtn Brian Croft

Youth Opportunities.

Philip Cavill that there were six candidates for R.Y.L.A. who were assessed for the two places available. Together with Banbury Cherwell Rotary Club it was agreed that the two to go forward are Emma Prentice currently at Essex University on a two year Maths course and Martin Gardner who is working for Ball-Colegrave in Adderbury.

There are now 220 students to be interviewed at the Warriner School during July. Children Singing for Children is to be held at St Mary's Church on 10th, 11th, & 12th. of November. The charities involved will be Schools for All in Africa and the Multicultural Play Project.

Treasurer's Talk Where the money goes. During May donations have been made to the following:
Christian Hope School - £2,150. Food Donation - £200. RYLA - £520. Party for the Blind -£100.
The level of 'free' funds stands at just over £6,000

Club Budget 2009-10 The annual subscription of £87.00 agreed at the AGM was based on a budget which assumed a combined increase in the RIBI and District capitation sum of £2.00, and which produced an annual budgeted deficit of £480.

It has now come to light that whilst the District capitation is only being increased by £1.00 the RIBI figure is increasing by £4.50, making a combined increase of £5.50. Leaving all other figures the same, this level of RIBI capitation increases the budgeted deficit to £743.

In recognition of the current economic climate and the expectation that the current year's Club budget will be under spent by approximately £1,000, Council has agreed to leave next year's Club subscription at £87.00. For further information it is anticipate that the Club general fund at the end of this Rotary year will stand at approximately £5,500 (this does not include the Contact reserve fund).

NEW MEMBER.

Inducted on Friday 29th. May.

Andrew McHugh, Partner Nicola.
Employment:- Medical Practice Director.
Classification:- Primary Healthcare.

Former Member of the Rotary Club of Warminster.

