

March / April 2008

THE BULLETIN

of LUTON NORTH ROTARY CLUB

**NEWS
AND
VIEWS
FROM
HOME
AND
ABROAD**

**PRESIDENT'S
"POINTS"**
President Bill speaks his mind!

REPORTS
ON RECENT EVENTS
AND HAPPENINGS

*
**COUNCIL
SNIPPETS**
Things you might
(or might not) wish
to know

**FORTH-
COMING
EVENTS**

*
**SPECIAL
FEATURES**

*
WELFARE

*
RI & RIBI

ROTARY INFORMATION
Occasional articles on aspects of Rotary



**PRESIDENT
2007 - 2008**

**BILL
HENDERSON**



CLUB PROGRAMME FOR MAY - JUNE

	Speaker Steward	Speaker / Subject
May 13th	Richard Daniells	Mark Harwin "Dell Farm"
May 20th	Business Meeting	
May 27th	No Meeting - Bank Holiday	
June 3rd	Paul Denton	T B A
June 10	Geoffrey Farr	to speak himself?
June 17th	Business Meeting	
June 24th	Club Assembly	
July 2nd	Changeover	

If any of the above foresee difficulties with their duties, please let Viv Dunington know **NOW** so that alternatives can be arranged.

CLUB STEWARDS FOR MAY - JUNE

May 11th	Paul Davies	Roger Munday
May 20th	Ron Wright	Tony Lenton
May 27th	No Meeting	
June 3rd	Paul Denton	Ron Silvester
June 10th	Chris Buckingham	Saed Rahman
June 17th	Joan Gray	John Ashton
June 24th	John Buttle	Alastair Hay

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, May 24th	May Ball, Dunstable Rugby Club
Saturday, June 7th	Pub Walk (venue T B A)
Monday, June 9th	Club Council (NOTE CHANGED DAY)
Wednesday, June 11th	Kids Out
Friday, June 20th	Presidents Night
Tuesday, June 24th	Club Assembly
Thursday, June 26th	District Induction Dinner
June 27 - 29	RYLA
July 28 - 31	Dell Farm
Sunday, September 7th	Hitchin Tilehouse RC Dawn Walk
September 26-28	Tripartite Meeting, Dresden
Friday, December 12th	Putteridgebury Xmas Party

Please help me to keep this diary up to date by letting me have details of all forthcoming events as soon as possible. Ed.

MENUS TO COME

May 13th	Steak & Kidney Pie - Peach Melba
May 20th	Mushroom Soup - Fish & Chips
June 3rd	Lasagne - Gateau
June 10th	Roast Pork - Apple Tart
June 17th	Bacon, Leek & Onion Pie - Gateau
June 28th	Scampi - Bakewell Tart

Members are reminded that they can request Vegetarian or Salad through David Johnston, Tel. No (01582) 611567, and that these normally need to be pre-ordered to avoid disappointment.

PRESIDENT'S POINTS

Part 1. Since the last bulletin the Alexander O'Neal project has really come together and the event is set to be a great success. I spent a week in St Vincent and the Grenadines during February with John Ashton, we did a tremendous amount of research into the need for wheelchairs. Having visited the poorest villages and met with Rotarians and Government officials, we were in no doubt that they have an urgent need for a container of wheelchairs.

A group of us went to the theatre in Milton Keynes in February to see South Pacific, a fantastic performance which was greatly enjoyed by all. Thanks to Don and Charlie once again for organising yet another great fellowship event.

The Technology Tournament on the 7th March was very well supported by Luton and South Bedfordshire schools. The standard of work was superb; I'm sure that many of those taking part will be engineers in the very near future. Thanks to Paul Davies for his work on this very worthwhile event.

On 22nd March the club took part in the Rotary Easter Showcase at Middleton Hall in Milton Keynes, a great event which really did promote Rotary to the general public in a very professional way. Elizabeth Sheldon, who spoke to our club a short time ago, did an excellent job along with her husband in organising this very worthwhile event. A big thank you to all those members from the club who helped man our stand.

District Conference at Bournemouth was a superb weekend thoroughly enjoyed by all and a fantastic fellowship event. I guess we will have a full report in this issue of the Bulletin on the content of the conference. We all enjoyed an Italian meal on Friday evening which was arranged by Linda Munday, many thanks. Thanks to Richard Giles for his work in taking bookings arranging hotels and for making the weekend such a great success.

Part 2 The Alexander O'Neal function took place at the Auction House on Saturday 12th April and proved to be a great success. The whole evening was controlled superbly by Eminence Leisure in a very professional and precise manner. After dinner we were entertained by a comedian, Russ Williams, who held the rapt attention of the audience for the full forty-five minute performance. This was followed by an auction of sporting memorabilia and other special interest items, which proved to be very popular. The professional auctioneer was fantastic and a large sum of money was raised.

Alexander O'Neal himself came on at 11 o'clock and invited guests on to the dance floor whilst he sang hit after hit of his very well known songs. Alex really brought the house down with a full dance floor for the whole of his performance which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

This was followed by a disco until 1:30 which proved to be very popular, a tremendous number of guests were still dancing at 1:30 and were in no rush to depart when the music stopped.

My thanks must go to John Ashton for working so hard to make this event a great success. Little did John and I know when we hatched this project at conference in 2007 that we would raise one of the largest sums of money ever at one event in the history of Luton North.

We then had our fellowship visit to the Beaujolais, which was attended by a party of 30 including Klaus Brehmer and his wife Gisela from Wolfsburg. The whole weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by all, good company, good food, and much alcohol consumed into the early hours.

Leslie did an absolutely fabulous job in organising this trip, no stone was left unturned and all was done to military precision. We all owe a great deal of gratitude to Leslie for a wonderful weekend of fellowship, many many thanks Leslie, I am sure we are all looking forward to the next weekend away with "Robertson's Tours". Please see other articles in the bulletin for a full report on the trip.

President Bill

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Four months ago the name Alexander O'Neal meant nothing to me and I know others in the club were the same. Now I should think most of Luton knows the name as our Dinner Dance has received good press and radio coverage and over 300 guests attended on the night. I have become a keen member of the Alexander O'Neal fan club and now receive emails from the likes of Debbie Drumsticks, Misty, and Lammie199, to say nothing of my contact with Lady Diamond and LennieT from 3 Counties Radio. He has a two-hour music slot on Sunday evenings and his programme has a strong Afro Caribbean slant.



With ticket prices ranging from VIP £125 each, to bronze at £60, we wondered how we would fare but thanks largely to John Ashton we exceeded our breakeven figure of 32 tables (of ten) but exceeded by a **considerable margin** the income from the Auction and Raffle. Final figures have yet to be released but every indication is that we have over £10,000 for the Wheelchair Foundation and our objective of providing support to people in St Vincent and the Grenadines will become a reality.



On Monday after the show, a message from *Misty* was posted on the Fan Club site along with 24 photos. The message read, – Fabulous evening, and our All-True Man was on good form as always.

The evening was fabulous and I am sure everyone who attended would agree. In addition to Alexander we had the benefit of a professional M C and Auctioneer, and a man from London who had the hall rocking with laughter for nearly an hour with good clean humour. Value for money? - I would say so and perhaps this will give us confidence to do another show - who knows. For the record Alexander's Set List was as follows:- What's Missing: All True Man: A Million Love Songs: What Can I Say (to make you love me): The Lovers: Always & Forever: If You Were Here Tonight: Saturday Love: What is this thing called love: Criticize: Fake

The dance floor was packed from the time Alexander O'Neal appeared to the time he left and immediately afterwards he spoke to many, photos were taken and autographs signed. More formally he was introduced to the Mayor of Luton Cllr Norris Bullock and his wife Joycelin, and also to Susan Menez and her partner Greg Thomas who had flown over especially for the event from Gibraltar. They had seen my advert on the Fan Club site.



Paul Denton

EDITORIAL

Although the final figures for the Alexander O'Neal Event are not yet to hand, it looks as if it will bring in between £9,000 and £10,000. But we must not get carried away by this success. The target, remember, was a complete container of wheelchairs for St Vincent and the Grenadines, at a cost of £14,000 at the time the event was proposed, (a figure which has now risen to £21,000, unfortunately). And without the dedication and sheer persistence of one man, John Ashton, the event would not have been a success at all. John sold more tickets than everyone else put together, and must be disappointed that he did not get more support from the club to achieve what was, in fact, a reachable target. OK, President Bill and Paul Denton put their shoulders to the wheel, and other members also sold tickets and brought guests. But without John it just would not have happened. The club should not swell with pride at this success; and to talk about repeating it now that the infrastructure is in place would be, at least, premature. This was John's success, and his virtually alone. Well Done John.

For a future event? First, find a good cause. Then be absolutely sure that there is a man to make it happen. Then give 100% support.

On a more mundane note, I'm sorry about the size of this Bulletin. Events conspired to delay publication, and we have been so busy that there are many things to report. Thanks to everyone who has contributed, and let's hope that normal service will resume as soon as possible.

PS. Does anyone have a spare cup final ticket for Martin Love?

From Membership Services

Following comments from a few members about the club continuing with the evening meeting on the first Tuesday of each month, a questionnaire was distributed to each member present at the business meeting on 26th February to gauge the support for change. The options put were: to continue with the present arrangement; to change to a lunchtime meeting; to change to a breakfast meeting; and to have no meeting at all on the first Tuesday of each month. 25 members were present and all returned their questionnaire duly completed, with a majority of the members present in favour of changing the first Tuesday meeting to a lunchtime meeting. The actual figures were:-

Eighteen in favour of a Tuesday lunchtime meeting

Two in favour of retaining the Tuesday evening meeting

One in favour of a breakfast meeting + Four spoil papers

The result of this questionnaire will be discussed at the next Council. RG

From the Council Minutes: "In view of the questionnaire, the strong view that the evening meeting was not benefiting fellowship, and the fact that it had manifestly not achieved its intended aim of attracting new members, it was resolved that the resolution **"That the Club reverts to lunchtime meetings on the first Tuesday of the month"** be put to the club for discussion at the next Business Meeting in order that a decision can be reached at Club Assembly."

DISTRICT CONFERENCE

President Bill was hoping for a Conference report from someone.,and Christine Sinfield has come up trumps again at the last minute! I had outlined a report, but as Registrar I spent almost all of the Conference in the foyer sorting out problems and working out the table plan for the Dinner, but the feedback was almost all positive, with the consensus that this was one of the most successful and interesting Conferences of recent years. Particularly commented upon were the down to earth contributions of the RIBI President, and the address by Steve Cunningham, a young man who had overcome his blindness in inspiring fashion. As Steve lives near Bicester, he would seem to be well suited to speak at a Five Clubs Meeting.

I believe that all the members who attended Conference had a good time, and a few were also able to help with stewarding, for which thanks are due. Next Conference is in Eastbourne, March 2009. LR

DISTRICT CONFERENCE 2008 - Bournemouth

After visiting friends in the area for a day or two, Haydn and I booked in to the hotel on Friday morning and immediately assumed our stewards duties at the BIC. We duly donned our boaters and sash and manned the area assigned to us and had a very easy time as there were not many people about. We missed the presentation by the Inner Wheel District 26 Chairman, Emmeline Lambert but were able to see Graham Walton who is the father of sextuplets, all girls, born in 1983 and he gave an amusing talk on the trials and tribulations the family have faced and he is saving hard for the weddings! In the evening we all went to an Italian restaurant which Roger and Linda had booked and had a super evening despite the layout of the tables!

We were up bright and early on Saturday to get to conference and thankfully the hotel was very convenient and it only took us a few minutes to walk to the centre. Format of conference was very much as usual and a variation on a theme which we feel is all too familiar. However, the speakers were interesting and in particular Rotarian Elizabeth Sheldon from the Brickhills Club who spoke about the Easter Showcase at Milton Keynes. This event proved not only a success for each Club which took part but also for Rotary in the district as lots of interest was shown by visitors to the stands and the leads are being followed up. Lynn Faulds Wood who is the wife of John Stapleton the broadcaster spoke about bowel cancer to make everyone aware of what signs to look for and how to deal with them. Another speaker was Steve Cunningham who became blind at the age of 12 and spoke about the adjustments he had to make and the problems he faced in growing up and securing a career in banking. He went on to marry and has two daughters and has faced numerous challenges ie flying a plane, driving a car etc., and raised an enormous amount of money for Guide Dogs for the Blind. His guide dog sat very patiently throughout the presentation.

Saturday evening was a dinner dance and the entertainment consisted of Soprano Bella who were dressed as firemen and there is no doubt that most people in the room expected them to disrobe and we all got very excited when they took off their jackets. But that was as far as it went which was just as well as Charlie was beside herself with excitement and tried hard to convince us all that it was purely due to their lovely voices!

Thankfully we all remembered to put the clock forward and arrived for breakfast in good time with every intention of going to the conference, but were delayed due to President Bill somehow locking his car keys in the boot of his car! Oh dear, lots of rubbing of chins, scratching of heads, general nodding, searching of bags and around the car, bright ideas and not so bright ideas until eventually he called the AA.

Once the AA arrived there was even more of the above as it became clear that he was not going to be able to help without causing a lot of costly damage to the car. He couldn't tow it as it was in "park" and eventually after offering Bill and Mary a lift home which they declined, he left. So, yet more pondering by the assembled group and it was decided that Haydn and I would take them home, and as Bill was flying off to Majorca the following morning it was down to Mary to get the spare car keys from home and collect the car the next day!



The unsuccessful "problem solvers" then arrived at conference rather late but we were in time to see a presentation by Jan Meek who at 53 took up rowing to compete in the Atlantic Challenge with her son who was 23 and at Sandhurst. They completed the crossing of 3,044 miles in 101 days and although were the last rowers to complete the course they were not last overall as many boats had dropped out. Quite an achievement.

We had a good journey home and I duly picked up Mary on Monday morning and we drove down to Bournemouth with quite a selection of spare keys – the first of which did not work so mild panic set in, but thankfully the second set did work and we both breathed a huge sigh of relief, had lunch and drove home.

Christine Sinfield

TECHNOLOGY TOURNAMENT

The Baptist Church Hall at Stopsley was a hive of industry on Friday March 7th. Thirty one Teams from Luton schools and schools throughout the Area arrived at about 9.15 am to take part in The Rotary Technology Tournament.

Prior to the Event everything has to be got ready. Over forty tables have to be located and transported to the Hall. Some come from the Cross Keys at Pulloxhill, donated by Paul Meads, others from Stopsley High School. We could not manage without the help of Mike Henman and Nevilles.

The students arrive with obvious enthusiasm, not just because they are having a day out. The tournament is something they like to take part in, they clearly enjoy the challenge. Feedback forms show that the team work is very good, effort considerable and importantly scores for fun and enjoyment are high.

The organising committee is chaired by John Halstead of Leighton Linslade who is well in control, an extremely good delegator. The responsibilities, which are considerable, are well shared.

The tasks were of varying difficulty for the Basic, Intermediate and Advanced Sections. They were to design and construct bridges out of paper card, straws and thin wood. Cutting, sawing and using adhesives and glue guns, all under careful supervision by their own teachers and Rotarians.

I was left in no doubt this is a most worthwhile exercise, involving eight Rotary Clubs and Twenty seven Rotarian helpers.

The Winners were:

Advanced	Harlington B, with Harlington A Runners up
Intermediate	Manshead B, with Redbourne B Runners up
Basic	Harlington B, with St Andrews B Runners up

Paul Davies

STROKE AWARENESS DAY

After some doubts about the date, the day was even more successful than in previous years, with a record number of blood pressure readings being taken (590). 84 (one in every 7 people seen) were referred to their GP, five of them urgently, including one aged 20!! It was again a great effort and a happy co-operation between the Luton clubs, orchestrated by Someries. Well Done everyone who helped.

ROTARY EASTER SHOWCASE

Considering that this event was on Easter Saturday, there was a very good turnout of 14 members and 3 wives on the day, and some were even there for the whole time from setting up just after 7 a.m. until breakdown after 6 p.m. Richard Daniells brought a hoop-la as the family attraction, which was a great success, (looking like a shark 'feeding frenzy' at times), but he and Tony did a great job 'anchoring' the stand, enabling three or four of us to engage with the public and answer their questions. Over twenty clubs from the District were there, plus Towcester and Northampton, each with their own attractions, plus a stage with a variety of acts and features throughout the day. Over 80 members of the public filled in cards indicating that they wished to join or be more involved in Rotary. All of these are being followed up at the moment. Hard work, yes. Worthwhile? Very much so, judging from the comments of the public and the feedback received by the organisers, who are to be warmly congratulated on their initiative:

"An awareness of Rotary Day to be proud of..."

"A great day of Fellowship..."

"...the best district event that many of us have experienced over many years"

"Everything was first class, from start to finish"

"A fantastic day and very well received by the general public"

"...a fantastic achievement which far exceeded my expectations"

"The adults who visited our stand seemed interested and impressed with Rotary"

"It was a very successful day in generating awareness"

"I felt a good atmosphere amongst all concerned"

LR

3H PROJECT with RC PUNE SPORTS CITY

It is with considerable disappointment that I have to tell you all that the proposed \$300,000 3H project for the supply of equipment to an Eye Hospital in Pune has not been accepted by the Rotary Foundation Trustees. It reached the final stage of selection but, like all of these awards, it is a very competitive process, and it is almost better to be eliminated early on. The Foundation have said that they will be in touch to suggest ways in which the impact of the non-acceptance of the project can be alleviated, but I fear that our disappointment pales into insignificance when compared to the disappointment of the thousands of people in India still having to wait for treatment of the blindness.

LR

CHARITY CURRY EVENING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 4th, 7.30 p.m. for 8 p.m.
"THE BOATER", Icknield Way
£11.00 per person

Bob Shah is arranging this in conjunction with his "Bury Park Crowd", for what he describes as "very good causes". There will be home cooked Veg and Non-veg food. Drinks from the bar. Non-Indian food can be supplied on request. There will be the usual raffle, for which prizes are requested (particularly from those who are unable to attend).

No doubt a board will go around shortly, but reservations should be made to Bob direct.

TRIPARTITE MEETING DRESDEN, SEPTEMBER 26th - 28th, 2008

We still await detailed information from Wolfsburg, but now is the time to look at the diary and make a commitment to attend. No doubt we will shortly be asked for numbers so that hotel places can be firmed up.

Dresden is a long way by road, getting on for 1000 km after crossing the channel, but is feasible as part of a longer break, with Berlin, Leipzig and Prague all within easy reach. It is possible to fly direct to Dresden, but not, it seems, from Luton. Ron Silvester is looking into the flight options. From Luton, Easyjet fly three or four times a day to Berlin, and a rental car would get you the 100 miles or so to Dresden on the autobahn. Tickets will be good value at the moment. Other possibilities are to travel to Wolfsburg or Metz and link in with their travel arrangements. It's possible that those going from Wolfsburg may travel by coach, and if they use the autobahn all the way they will pass within about 5 miles of the Berlin airport used by Easyjet. Now there's an idea! It's also possible that it could be done by rail, perhaps with an overnight stop or on a sleeper train. London - Paris - Berlin - Dresden?

But regardless of the eventual travel method, now is the time to commit, and get your name down!

2008 TRAIL RACE UPDATE from John Cook

When we held the debate on the trail race earlier this year the Club approved the race event in principle, but felt the marketing of the race should be aimed at people who would run and seek sponsorship from friends, relations and workmates, and hopefully raise a large amount of money for charity. It was agreed the two headline charities should be The Stroke Association and The Rotary Youth Trust for Luton, as well as other Rotary charities, with a 50% split of the surplus. We are hoping to get 500 runners and raise £18,000 for distribution. Your committee have agreed that the event should be confined to a 10 km run, and have chosen the only date when there isn't a clash in the local area, **Sunday September 14th.**

A mailing shot to all the members of the Chamber of Commerce asking for their help in promoting the race within their workforce, either with individual runners or a team of three, and soliciting prizes and sponsorship of the race or the teams of runners, is being prepared and will be mailed together with a poster in early May. We will also be posterizing the town and surrounding areas, and supplying business and leisure outlets with leaflets and entry forms. Your help will be needed with that. It's planned to have 8ft x 3ft posters on the main routes into town, and Machin's Solicitors and Fensome's have agreed to fund one each at a cost of £105 plus VAT. We need more. GF is in contact with Luton Borough Council regarding sites. (He also might get a banner producer to give us the banners free of charge.)

As this is being marketed as a fund raising operation we are proposing to give all runners who raise £150 or more, free entry in to a prize draw for a Kayaking experience for two bought from Red Letter Days, unless we get it sponsored. The top fundraiser aged over 25 and with a clean driving licence, will be given a Porsche Boxster for the weekend. (Providing we can obtain satisfactory insurance cover and excess cover.) If not, we suggest we give a "Red Letter" race day experience, value £100. These prizes will not be awarded until all donations have been received. We will also be giving spot prizes on the day of the race. One of our members is giving a dinner for two. We need more spot prizes.

The Stroke Association is being extremely helpful. One of their top organisers is spending a large proportion of her time carrying out the basic administration for our race. She is designing and arranging printing of posters, leaflets and letters to industry and commerce, and folding and posting

the initial mail shot. We've got to pay them printing and postage costs. She will also start following up the firms, but we as a club will need to make a few calls each over a period of several weeks, to ensure we get the best possible response. The Stroke Association are supplying us with 500 tee shirts free of charge, and we've also had an offer from the firm who gave us free tee shirts last year to supply them at cost price £350. Louise Basquill of Bonfire Design Limited is helping us. She plans to approach her clients for cash sponsorship and prizes, will possibly suggest a logo, send a press release to the media, and contact a business associate regarding the Porsche insurance.

Richard Giles is working with Jim Hannigan of Aztec Design putting together a website so that we can take entries and donations from supporters paid by credit card on-line via Paypal. Richard is also constructing a database of runners with all the details being supplied on disc to the results officer as soon as possible after the on-line closing date of August 29th. We are taking postal entries until September 6th., and on the day from 9am until 10am. As we are having to canvass entries from the local area much more energetically than hitherto, initial costs including printing and postage will be much higher than previous years. The Club agreed to give the race a priming fund of £750 to cover initial expenses. This would not be distributed, but held in the Athletics account to fund future events. If at some future date we decided to discontinue the race event, the priming fund would be repaid to the Club general fund. We have just received a donation of £100 from Vauxhall Motors Employees Charity Fund, and other avenues are being tried to get cash donations and Prizes.

I have no doubt the whole of our Club want to make this race a great success and raise a large amount of money for The "Stroke Association", Rotary Youth Trust for Luton and other Rotary charities, so it's essential to follow up our initial mail shot to local industry by making ten or a dozen calls each in the next two months, to encourage either individual or team entries, and if possible get their firms to sponsor them. We hope you will be willing to do that, and promote the race wherever possible. If we are able to make a concerted effort in marketing this event, we could raise a huge amount of money for the recipient charities.

Our Club and Inner Wheel have members who have been affected by Stroke, it's a condition that can affect all age groups, and we will be doing a very valuable job if we are able to give this charity a worthwhile contribution.

Klaus Brehmer Bärenwinkel 32 38444 Wolfsburg 23 April 2008

RC Luton North, c/o President Bill Henderson

Dear President Bill.

These days we spent together in France turned out to be a really tremendous weekend - in the positive sense of this adjective.

The place was well chosen; Chatillon is a nice village, famous for its flowers, as James (our ex NATO officer guide) underlined on Friday, and was particularly lovely on Saturday while we strolled leisurely through the market place overflowing with the freshest fruit and vegetables, and colourful flowers.

Our hotel, right in the centre of town, served an excellent typical French breakfast and on two evenings a delicious four-course dinner, very much to our taste, and excellent Burgundy wine.

And excellent too were the Beaujolais wines we tasted in the winery of Michèle and André Bodillard, and it didn't matter at all that it was cold and raining outside because we were in shelter, and the former servant's house, where we were served a rustic "coq-au-vin", was cosy and warm.

Karren, the American lady, showed not only her best in translating all the French winery explanations into English but also guided us to the peak for a comparatively good view around. Afterwards we followed her kind tea-invitation into her house, where we became aware of her special gift for remembering names; after we had given to her our names, half an hour later she gave us a farewell, addressing each of the 19 guests correctly.

The outstanding highlight was the visit to the magnificent monastery of Brou.

* *erected in the early 16th Century by Margaret of Austria, daughter of Kaiser Maximilian I, and Regent of her nephew, Kaiser Karl V*

* *The late gothic church with a wonderful lettner (the screen between the nave and choir), and the abundant choir with the three tombs for which the church was built,*

* *The three huge cloisters;*

* *and lastly the rich exposition of the historically important paintings of the region*

What has given the special flavour to these days in Chatillon, which we shall never forget, was the accommodation of our whole party in that exclusive separate annex of the hotel. There we spent the rest of the evenings in a very sociable manner - for instance, with Leslie's champagne - we had great fun.

In the end, Gisela and I want to express our particular thanks
- to Roger and Linda for their unexpected special P-G Tips
- to Bob and Daksha for their beautiful Kenyan champagne glass coasters
- to Peter and Rona, Alastair and Kay for their kindness in transporting us
- to Leslie for his willingness to take our bottles of "Morgon" with him to Luton with promises to deliver them on some weekend in Wolfsburg
- and finally again to Leslie for his preparing any detail of this weekend to make it perfect and for incorporating us, Gisela and myself, into the party.

I remain as your special member, Klaus Brehmer

PS In the train from Macon to Paris June and Richard Giles, to our mutual surprise, sat just behind us, despite booking our seats at different times. Thus we had two good hours to discuss not only the weekend, but also the problems in and between our - three - clubs.

I say, that was not a mere co-incidence.

KB

Fellowship Weekend in The Beaujolais – April 2008 From Christine Sinfield (abridged)

Following the successful visit organised by Leslie to The Loire in May 2006 he kindly offered to do another trip, this time to the Beaujolais region. All of those who went to The Loire came along together with lots of others to make up a group of 30 which also included Klaus Brehmer and Gisela.

Haydn and I travelled by car with Don and Charlie and left on Wednesday so that we could have an overnight stop at Beaune, where we met up with Bill, Mary, Bob and Daksha. After spending the morning in Beaune we then drove to Chatillon sur Chalaronne, a very quaint town where we were all to meet at Le Clos de la Tour, a separate annexe to the main hotel La Tour. As we all arrived there was great excitement to see the various rooms as they were all different and very tastefully decorated and furnished. Many rooms had an old style bath within the bedroom! We had the place to ourselves so Leslie and May had prepared a welcome cup of tea/coffee, biscuits and nibbles whilst we all assembled to discuss our various routes to the event –

they also ensured this facility was available to us throughout the weekend and kept the supplies well stocked. In the evening we gathered for a drink together before we walked to the main hotel in the town for a meal which was delicious and the dining room again very stylishly furnished. We noticed lots of labels on the lamps, ornaments and chairs at Le Clos and the main hotel had an antique style shop at the front where you could purchase any of the items. I was tempted to buy a little china white/red chicken as it represented the area.

On Friday we had breakfast, again at the main hotel and then met at the Tourist Information Office to meet with a guide who took us for a walk round the town. Whenever the guide stopped to talk about a building/area we were interrupted by a man with a leaf blower on his back followed by a road sweeper – we were obviously on their route and there was no way they were going to change. We had to guess most of what the guide was saying as it was almost impossible to hear him over the noise of the machinery! The ruins of the castle were avoided due to lots of mud which did of course mean we missed out the ramparts but I believe Charlie managed to persuade Don to do those another day.

After our walk we drove to the vineyard of André and Michèle Boddillard for some wine tasting and as they do not speak English they had asked an American neighbour, Karren, to join us so that she could interpret. André gave a brief overview of their work and then we were able to sample the various wines red, sparkling and rosé and place our orders. We were then ushered into a nearby old house where tables had been laid out for lunch and we were given a typical meal that they provide for the grapepickers in September. All extremely good and the wine they served was a gift from them. Really lovely people who made us very welcome. Afterwards about 20 of us followed Karren back home as she wanted us to meet her husband and to see her house. On the way we stopped at a viewpoint but it was raining heavily and was freezing cold so we all made a mental note to go back another time. Karren lived in a large double fronted house with a magnificent view over the countryside and managed to provide tea for all of us. Several people tried to get up to the viewpoint the next day to see the view they missed but there was a car rally on and the road was closed. I am not sure what Karren's husband thought to all these people descending on him but he was interested in our trip and also our work in Rotary. The rest of the day was free to relax.

Saturday morning we all strolled around the market in the town which was housed in a very old open market hall with large wooden pillars and had stalls of every description. The whole area was thronging with people and it was super to see such a thriving market and the hustle and bustle of the local people. There was also a model railway museum open but unfortunately when Haydn and I tried to go in it was closed so we must leave that for another time. Those who did see the museum were impressed by not only the trains but the depiction of various landmarks to do with the railway. After lunch most of us went to see the Royal Monastery of Brou which was built in 1513 in a flamboyant Gothic style with a tall roof of coloured glazed tiles (like the ones we had seen in Beaune) at the request of Margaret of Austria and it houses the tombs of her husband Philibert le Beau and his mother plus her own. The stone lattice work of the rood screen was very ornate and the wooden carving in the chancel was extremely intricate. Whilst standing outside in the sunshine (hadn't seen much of that during our trip) we were fascinated to watch a stork flying overhead with nesting material and then noticed that it was building its nest right at the top of the tower in a very exposed and precarious position.

On Saturday evening we made our way to the main hotel for dinner and had a gorgeous meal with the selection of desserts being the icing on the cake so to speak. Every course was presented so well and apart from Don being soaked in red wine by the waiter a great time was had by all.

Sunday we were all up bright and early and packed ready for our onward journeys. Haydn and I together with Don and Charlie had decided to stay overnight in Paris on our way home as Haydn and I were celebrating our 20th Wedding Anniversary – but that's another story. Home safe and sound on Monday and reflecting on a very special weekend of fellowship. I am sure everyone had a wonderful time in France and are already looking forward to the next trip! A great deal of groundwork was put in by Leslie who not only organised the event but also helped us and others in planning our route and booking hotels. We are indebted to him for making our holiday so memorable and appreciate very much all the time and effort he has put into this event not only before but also during as we were not aware of any hitches and everything went like clockwork.

Thank you to everyone who took part -
we had a marvellous time and hope you did too.

Christine Sinfield

ODE TO RICHARD GILES

On a Fellowship visit to Beaujolais
Richard Giles let two wallets stray,
The Past President of Luton North Rotary
Lost the first of the two on the T G V
"I've lost my wallet!" We said "Oh! My gosh"
As the train pulled out of Macon Loché
"On the train" he said "I felt something drop,
But did not realise 'til after our stop"
From his fleece pocket, as quick as a flash,
Gone were his credit cards and euro cash.
"It's always falling out of there" he said,
"I should have put it somewhere else instead"
Thanks to subscribing to Sentinel,
Mrs Giles did not make his life Hell.
With the help of Rotarian Leslie
Reports were made to the Gendarmerie.
On a market stall in Chatillon,
Richard bought himself another one.
However, it would not be long
Before this wallet would also be gone!
All went well until the next day
When the new wallet was found by Alastair Hay!
This one, Thank God, had not travelled far,
Only to the back seat of Alastair's car.
Once again from the pocket of his fleece
His lovely new wallet had found it's release.
So, as good Rotarians, we thought we would buy
Richard a new wallet that could not fly.
Around his neck this one can be dangled,
And if it gets lost, by June he'll be strangled!

Tony Lenton & Richard Daniells

Editor : Leslie Robertson
31, The Avenue, Luton. LU4 9AF
Telephone: 01582 617443 Fax: 01582 539892
e-mail: leslie.robertson@ntlworld.com
Club website: www.rotary1260.org/luton-north