

Honoured guests and my fellow Rotarians'

At least I have achieved something unusual in the 100 years, I will be the only Lincoln Rotarian to have served two consecutive years as President. When we were well advanced in my Presidency last year the club decided to appoint me for a second year and I was looking forward to a year without the Covid Problem. I thought about those Founder Members and all the troubles they had experienced before they formed our club in 1922. I had experienced a pandemic as they had and a recession which followed as they had, but I had no chance of enduring a war as they had. I got that wrong!

The Founder President Clement Henry Newsum and his wife had four children, two boys and two girls. They lost one of the daughters who died in her first month. Later their youngest son lost his life in the great war and with all the problems of the time they still found the inclination to support a Rotary Club. Their older son joined his father as a founder member, at the age of 28. In June 1935 Clement was knighted by King George V for political and public services in Lincolnshire.

Of the 34 Founder Members there were some names which are familiar today. There is one Rotarian here tonight who has a direct family link, Henry Ruddock is a member of Lincoln Colonia club and his father John (Jack) Ruddock was a member of the Lincoln Club and his great uncle James Herbert Ruddock was a founder member.

The Jackson Family, well known in Lincoln for building supplies, had G W Jackson as a Founder Member followed by presidents E B Jackson in 1944, T A Jackson in 1954 and Barry (J B) Jackson president in 1986.

Architect William Gregory Watkins was a founder member and Bob Coombes, one of his partners, was President in 1950. Tony Parker was a later member of the practice and I joined him in 1972. Tony was a member of the Rotary Club and he sadly passed away in 1980. I joined the Rotary Club in 1981 (dead mans shoes, they used to call that) and I invited Steve Bartle in partnership in 1985. Steve joined Lindum Lincoln Rotary Club and is currently their president. So there are two of us here tonight who have a direct link to one of the founder members. When you were enjoying your welcome drink in the oval room you were in a space designed by William Gregory Watkins, Willy for short.

The Rotary Club of Lincoln has had most of the Bishops of Lincoln as members or honorary Members over the whole century. The first, as a Founder Member, was The Right Reverend William Shuckburgh Swayne. In 1928 when Radio was in its infancy, Bishop Swayne set up a service in the Cathedral which was to be broadcast to the whole country. He was particularly intent on promoting Rotary and telling the listeners what it was all about. The Radio Times summarised his talk as follows..... The Rotary Motto is "Service - not Self" and Lincoln Rotarians try to carry it out by doing welfare work for poor boys and crippled children, by visiting prisons, helping the blind, the deaf and the dumb, and so on! Our Motto did start as "Service not self" and was not modified to Service above self until 1950 and took some time after that to be ratified.

In the early 1980s Rotary was helping the World Health Organisation to immunise children against Polio which was endemic in over 200 countries. When an oral vaccine was developed Rotary offered to take part in a scheme to eradicate Polio from the world. In 1986/7 POLIO PLUS was introduced and funds sought from every Rotary Club in the world, the first target amounting to about £100 per member . In Lincoln we were told that a Rotarian from a club in Worthing was on a sponsored ride to Whitley Bay and back, a distance of 901 miles. We agreed to set up a team of 10 or more to join him on his way North through Lincolnshire . Mike Robinson arrived as planned and we rode with him along the cliff edge to Hemswell Cliff where a Jacksons Lorry was waiting. Our team said their goodbyes and loaded themselves and their bikes onto the lorry. I agreed to ride on with Mike up to Scunthorpe. I then went over the Trent and returned to Lincoln . I completed 109 miles that day and raised my first contribution to the Polio campaign in the sum of £109. Mike's ride resulted in a collection of £6000 through his club in Worthing . I am pleased to tell you that some years later Mike came to Lincoln and joined Lincoln Lindum club and we still remember how we enjoyed the start of the Polio campaign.

There is one great Rotary initiative which had it's birth here in Lincolnshire. I had the privilege of being President of Lincoln club for the first time in 1994 and that was the year that Bill Huntley, a member of Alford and Mablethorpe club, was President of RI. I am delighted to remind you that there are members of that club here tonight and they will endorse what I am saying. Bill told us, before he set off to Evanston in America , that he wanted to find a way that Rotary could help to promote peace in the world. That resulted in the Peace Fellowship and we are privileged to have Bradford University as one of the seven or eight places in the world where Students enjoy taking the Masters Degree in Peace and Conflict Resolution. We enjoy The Bill Huntley Memorial Peace Seminar at Bradford University in October every year when the students and staff bring us up to date with their progress.

I will now tell you about the development of Rotary in Lincoln. Having been chartered in 1922 we went on for some time as the only Rotary Club in the city. We helped to create the Inner Wheel Club of Lincoln in 1960 but our first Rotary offspring was not until we founded the Rotary Club of Bailgate Lincoln in 1978. They, in turn, created their Inner Wheel Club in 1980 and the Rotary Club of Lindum Lincoln in 1991. There followed a period where , at long last, Rotary International decided to allow Ladies to become Rotarians but it was not mandatory. I can remember plaintiff cries of "over my dead body" when we discussed this important issue. Eventually, during my presidency I got together with the other two club presidents and we agreed to have a vote in each club on whether we should invite ladies to join us. Sadly Lincoln were only just against the idea and so were the other two clubs. We discussed the position and decided that the best solution was to create a new Dual Gender Club and so Lincoln Colonia was born in 1997 and it's first President was a female person. Only a few years later we invited ladies to Join Lincoln Club and have had a small number ever since. Currently we have only three ladies.

Diane Genders who is with us tonight was our first Lady President in 2014 and is now Vice President for the second time.

While each club has its own identity, a rich mix of local community and world wide charity has developed and when appropriate, the four clubs work together. As Mother, of Rotary in our City, As president of Lincoln Club I am proud of what the four clubs have achieved since 1922.

Please rise and raise your glasses, the toast is to the first 100 years.

Many of you will have wondered why we have invited a sculptor to talk to us tonight. I have to remind you that if you ask any Rotarian if they support the community in other ways beside Rotary you will find most of them have a list of their other responsibilities. The project which Antony is about to describe is funded by The Heslam Trust. This is a charitable trust which has purchased art for the City of Lincoln for the last 59 years. Two Chairmen in the last 50 years have been members of this Rotary Club. The late Philip Race and I have done 25 years each . The provision of a sculpture of Lincoln Mathematician George Boole is our biggest project by far and is costing 1/3 million pounds and has taken almost 6 years to complete, the last year due entirely to bureaucracy of The City of Lincoln, East Midlands Railway and Network Rail. We are optimistic that we will be on site in early June. Antony has designed the handbook and will refer to it in his talk. We hope you will take yours away afterwards as a souvenir . Honoured Guests and my fellow Rotarians, I present Antony Dufort.
