



**ROTARY CLUB OF LINCOLN**  
*~ The First Seventy-Five Years ~*



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## ~ The First Seventy-Five Years ~

At the time of the Club's Golden Jubilee, in 1972, Rotarian Tom Baker researched and wrote an account of its history. Now for the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary in 1997, the story has been revised and brought up-to-date by Rotarian Philip Race. Here is a record of three quarters of a century of Fellowship and Service of which, I feel, the Club can be quietly proud.

ROTARIAN FRANK BIRCH  
President, 1996-97

March 1997

## **ROTARY CLUB OF LINCOLN**

### **THE FIRST SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS**

#### **BEGINNINGS**

The idea of forming a Rotary Club for Lincoln was explored at a meeting held at the Great Northern Hotel on Tuesday evening, 16th March 1922. There were present Mr W.T. Bell J.P., in the chair, the Mayor (Councillor W.H. Kilmister), Councillor A.W. Foster, Mr Clement Newsum J.P., Mr C. Nelson, Mr J.H. Burgess, Dr W.H.B. Brooke, the Reverend C.E. Bolam, Mr H. Brader, Mr G. Gilbert, Mr H.C. Wilson J.P., Mr Louis W. Smith and Mr W. Battle Richardson. Mr Vivian Carter, the Secretary of the British Association of Rotary Clubs for Great Britain and Ireland, addressed the meeting.

The Lincoln Club was formed on the proposition of Mr Clement Newsum, who claimed that it would be 'capable of rendering service to the city and community at large such as no other organisation could do.' Mr Newsum was elected the Club's Interim President and Councillor A.W. Foster Interim Secretary. It was an enthusiastic meeting and great hopes were expressed for the new Club. The Mayor said that 'In these difficult times' (a strangely familiar ring about this phrase) 'in the Rotary movement there was that which could cement society together in a bond of brotherhood and which would remove the distrust which is so rife today between the classes.'

The meeting place chosen for the Club was the Albion Hotel. A careful selection of members was made following a meeting held at the Guildhall on 2nd June 1922. A Canon Elliot, of Leicester, came to address the meeting on 'The ideals, aims and objects of the Rotary movement.' The Bishop of Lincoln, Dr W.S. Swayne, in thanking Canon Elliot, said it was the international character of Rotary that appealed to him most. He saw a great future for Rotary. The Bishop signed an application for membership. There were thirty-nine present at the meeting and thirty-six subsequently joined the Club. A list of signatures is attached to the minute book and makes fascinating reading for anyone interested in the City's history at that period. The first officers and council were appointed on 23rd June 1922: President Clement H. Newsum J.P., Vice-President W.T. Bell J.P., Honorary Treasurer H.C. Wilson J.P., Honorary Secretary Councillor A.W. Foster,

Assistant Honorary Secretary W. Battle Richardson, Council members C. Nelson, Dr W.H.B. Brooke, J.H. Burgess, Louis W. Smith, J. Peacock Rayner and W. Cottam.

Lincoln's very first Rotary lunch was held at the Albion Hotel on Monday, 13th July 1922. Rotarian R.C Minton O.B.E., Director of Education, gave a paper on 'Psychology in relation to business.' The price of luncheon tickets was fixed at 3s. 0d., being 2s 6d. for lunch, two pence for waiters and four pence for the charity box. It was decided to hold the luncheons fortnightly.

These were times when local newspapers really did report local news in detail, and the press was represented in force. Reporters from the Lincolnshire Echo, the Lincoln Leader and the Lincolnshire Chronicle were guests of the Club. Mr Minton's paper, reported in full, was declared to be a masterly and scholarly exposition of the subject. 'Just the paper to give Rotary a send-off in Lincoln, so uplifting and elevating beyond measure.' Strong stuff. The address was subsequently submitted to Rotary Wheel, the national Rotary magazine. However, it could not be printed owing to a strike at the printers!

At this meeting the Lord Bishop, the Mayor and the Member of Parliament, Alfred T. Davies, were appointed Honorary Members. At the next lunch, the Club returned to earth when Rotarian Louis Smith spoke on 'Engineering - the obtaining of the contract.' a paper declared to contain much practical common sense.

Affiliation to Rotary International was secured in 1922. The actual delivery of the Charter was delayed for some reason and it was presented by the Rotary District Chairman on 23rd November 1923, during the course of a dinner at the Albion Hotel. The Charter was No. 1319, back-dated to 13th December 1922. It is interesting to note that no time was lost in arranging the Club's first charitable act for the benefit of the Lincoln community. Foretaste of many, this took the form of an outing to Skegness of eighty crippled children and occurred in August 1922, that is in the month after the Club was formed. Rotary spent £2. 4s. 0d. on the day.

In September 1922 it was declared desirable that badges be worn by members. The vote in favour of this was practically, but not wholly, unanimous. (What had the objectors to hide?) In October of the same year it was agreed that all papers given at meetings be printed and bound so that each member could have a copy at the end of the year. Rotary was to be taken really seriously: the standard of the

papers was excellent, but had the practice been maintained right up to the present the damage to the earth's forests would surely have been appreciable.

The first Rotary dinner was held on 10th November 1922. Tickets were 6s. 6d. each, although the cost of the meal was actually 7s. 6d. The adverse balance was met out of Club funds. Songs were given by Rotarians Wilson, Newsum and Dawson, and a recitation by Rotarian Brooke. (Some early Club traditions have not survived!). A collection for the Robin Dinner Fund for poor children realised £3. 6s. 6d.

Rotary early became involved in work at Lincoln Prison. Prison Visitors were appointed in January 1923 and in the following year Rotary provided a piano, on hire-purchase, for use at the prison. The Club became a patron of the Lincoln Juvenile Welfare Committee for a donation of two guineas annually.

The first Ladies' Night took the form of a Musical Evening at the Assembly Rooms on 5th February 1923. Tickets were to be 10s 6d each, any loss to be met out of Club funds. Objections were raised and the charge was reduced to 6s 6d. There is no record of fees being paid to the visiting entertainers, but we know that the evening showed a loss and the 'Fraternal Committee' met to arrange a function to wipe out the deficit. This failed to materialise and the debt came out of Club funds.

In 1923 the Club agreed to meet the cost of a tent for the Blind Association at the Lincolnshire County Show. There was considerable support for work among the blind, stimulated by Rotarian Canon C.E. Bolam, who was himself blind. Summer outings to Skegness were also arranged for crippled children and for the deaf and dumb. At this time Rotary had a continuing involvement in the Deaf and Dumb Movement, the Boy Scouts, Juvenile Welfare, Prison work and the Unemployed Movement. The serious unemployment of the period and its effects were reflected in Rotary providing fifty pairs of trousers for the unemployed at £12. 2s. 0d.

## **ROTARY EXTENDS IN LINCOLNSHIRE**

Rotary was beginning to spread and in 1923 Lincoln was invited to explore the possibility of promoting the formation of clubs in Grimsby, Boston, Gainsborough, Skegness and Louth - a formidable task!

At one stage Rotary even considered running candidates under its own name in the municipal elections. The District Chairman stated that he thought it would be inadvisable for Rotary Clubs to take any part in politics and it was decided that no action be taken by the Lincoln Club. Today it seems odd that the questions could ever have been raised, but clearly a new movement was still feeling its way

## **ROTARY INTERNATIONAL**

Rotary's international dimension was already becoming evident in the activities of the Lincoln Club by the end of 1923, long before world travel became as quick and easy as it is today. A Lincoln Rotarian, W.S. Dawson, was welcomed back after a journey to South Africa and brought the fraternal greetings of the Johannesburg Club the first of many global wanderings by Club members. The Secretary informed the Club that he, along with Rotarian H.A Moore, had listened by 'wireless telephony' on the previous Friday and Saturday nights and had been able to hear music and speeches from Pittsburgh, U.S.A., and it was agreed to send fraternal greetings to the Rotary Club in that city. The Dean invited Rotary to send representatives to a meeting in the Guildhall in January 1924 to consider forming a branch of the English Speaking Union. Links with France were forged and Rotarian J H Ruddock gave an interesting account of his visit to the Rotary Club of Nice. He described how he had met there a Rotarian L.G. Sloane, a President or former President of the London Rotary Club, who had promised to present the Lincoln Club with a bell, which was suitably inscribed with his name. More than seventy years later the familiar sound of Rotarian Sloane's bell, recently renovated, still calls the Club members to order at Monday lunches.

## **ROTARY AND THE LINCOLN COUNTY HOSPITAL**

In 1925 there was an appeal to the Club for a contribution to a proposed wireless set for the nurses. This received a ready response and so began an association with the County Hospital which continued for many years. A Rotary Hospital Committee was formed to co-ordinate these activities and strengthen the link. The Hospital Carnival appeared regularly as a Rotary activity and all Rotary Clubs in Lincolnshire were invited to lend their support. On one occasion Rotary paid for a band to lead community singing. To raise money for the hospital a Rotarian offered to produce a play at the Theatre Royal, Murder on the Second Floor, provided the Club would be responsible for the business side. The Hospital

Extension Committee was enthusiastically supported by Rotary. All this was, of course, some years before the coming of the National Health Service.

## **ROTARY AND LINCOLN CATHEDRAL**

A strong link with the Cathedral was also established early in the history of the Club. In 1927 negotiations took place between the Club and the BBC to broadcast a special Rotary service to be held in the Cathedral and addressed by the Bishop. It was hoped that the offering would be given to the Cathedral Restoration Fund. A cheque for the modest sum of £6 was sent to the BBC, being half the cost of 'the installation of wires' and the Post Office fees in connection with the broadcast. The event took place in February 1928, and thousands of Rotarians and others throughout the British Isles were able to hear through the medium of wireless the service broadcast from Lincoln Cathedral's Angel Choir. The necessary landline was arranged from Nottingham and the programme broadcast from the BBC's transmitter at Daventry. Listeners commented that it came through very clearly. Microphones, small boxes in appearance, were suspended before the lectern and the pulpit and over the choir. Everything was carried out exactly to time and the BBC engineer who listened on the landline at Nottingham was highly delighted with the broadcast. The address was given by Bishop Swayne, himself a keen Rotarian, who chose as his text *Jesus said, I am among you as he that serveth*. The link with the Cathedral continued and the Restoration Fund received regular support from Rotary.

## **THE CLUB'S OWN AFFAIRS**

The Club had been meeting fortnightly. However, in October 1931 it was decided, purely as an experiment and in an attempt to see whether attendances improved, to hold the lunch weekly. A two-month experimental period proved most successful and it was agreed that henceforth the Club should meet weekly, in common with many others throughout the country.

Another innovation occurred on 4th January 1932, when for the first time ladies were invited to the New Year lunch. This Ladies' Day continued for some years.

In 1932 there was much concern that the catering at the Albion Hotel was falling below the standard desired by members. (Had the ladies perhaps raised the matter tactfully with their husbands?) The Secretary was instructed to look into

the possibilities at both the great Northern Hotel and, curiously, the London and North Eastern Railway station dining room as alternative places to meet. For the convenience of speakers, it was decided to provide a reading desk. Its cost was 25/-, but at the following meeting Rotarian Green came forward with a generous offer to give the desk to the Club.

## **DEPRESSION AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

In the minutes it is clear that in the late 1920s and early 1930s there was evidence of the effects of the great economic depression affecting the country. Many members of the Club actually found it necessary to resign, and new members were being sought. In September 1928 the Club gave consideration to the subject of the migration of boy labour. Even though there was a surplus of unemployed boys in the city, others were coming in from even more depressed areas. Rotary took steps to trace the incomers and introduce them to clubs and organisations for the welfare of youths in the city. The club had a Boys' Work and Juvenile Welfare Committee, and there was evidence of close liaison with the Kirk White Newsboys' Club, where educational classes and social activities took place.

## **TEN YEARS COMPLETED**

At the end of ten years the Club was served by several committees, including a Community Service Committee, a Hospital Committee, a Fellowship and Reception Committee, a Club Service Committee, and a Programme, Speakers and Publicity Committee, together with various sub-committees dealing with special aspects of Rotary concern. The question of the meeting place of the Club was not finally resolved until 1934, when it was changed to the Saracen's Head Hotel. (Both the Saracen's Head Hotel and the Great Northern Hotel have since been demolished.) The manager of the Saracen's Head had quoted a price of 2s. 6d. for each lunch, and it was agreed to charge members 2s. 9d., threepence per head going to charity.

Members of the press still regularly attended the lunches and relations between the Club and the press were good. Excellent reports of the after-lunch addresses and Club activities appeared in both the daily and the weekly local papers. However, in 1934 a letter was received from the local branch Secretary of the National Union of Journalists criticising some remarks made by speakers and the Club's attitude to the press generally. The Secretary was instructed to write



explaining that 'Rotary lunches are not public but private meetings and speakers are not necessarily giving ' the view of the Club'. Further, the Club disagreed with some statements made in the NUJ letter. This seems to have restored good relations - and incidentally to have avoided a consequence which could otherwise have followed the branch secretary's letter, namely the loss of regular weekly free lunches enjoyed by some of its members.

Reference to the sister organisation. Round Table, occurs in minutes of 5th March 1935, when a letter was read from Doncaster Round Table requesting the assistance of the Lincoln Rotary Club in the formation of a Table in Lincoln. After enquiries had been made it was felt that the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Lincoln was fulfilling the need. When asked for their advice, R.I.B.I. expressed the opinion that young people should join Rotary and pointed out that the Lincoln Club had vacancies. In the circumstances the Secretary was instructed to write to the Doncaster Round Table saying that there did not appear to be a need for a Round Table in Lincoln.

Club members from time to time visited other Clubs in the neighbourhood and even beyond the boundaries of the County, but the first attempt to gather together representative of Clubs in the Rotary District appears to have been made in 1936, when it was decided to have an evening meeting with 'songs and entertainment and addresses and discussion, followed by further entertainment if time permitted.' The following Clubs were invited - Grimsby, Skegness, Boston, Grantham, Newark and Worksop. A visit to the Spalding Club was arranged in May 1938, the attraction being the bulb fields, then a new and expanding industry in the County. The Charter Night dinner on 25th February 1938 was held at the White Hart Hotel. This is the first reference to the White Hart's involvement with this function.

## **THE COMING OF WORLD WAR IN 1939**

### **ROTARY RESPONDS**

The impact of the outbreak of a new World War was noted in October 1939, when it was reported that an instruction had been received from R.I.B.I. that National Service was to be regarded as good and sufficient reason for non-attendance at a Rotary Club. (Quite right too, it was a fairly compelling reason for absence!) A letter was sent by the then President, Arthur Mansell, to all members of the Lincoln Club:

*'In these difficult times there is an increasing anxiety to help and support one another and to put our whole effort into the common pool to give our Club, our city and our country as much support as is individually possible to achieve success to the very great and serious undertaking which has been forced upon our government again. We are encouraged to carry on as far as possible the Club activities by the correspondence which reaches us from our District Chairman and from the Secretariat of Rotary International.'*

The letter goes on to suggest that

*'In some cases where a Rotarian is away, his wife, with the help of those employees who are not eligible for active service, may endeavour to carry on the Rotarian's business, and oftentimes those who have undertaken these new responsibilities will welcome an opportunity to have the advice and guidance of experienced businessmen who through Rotary have become old friends of the Rotarian who has gone away. Rotarians are men of initiative and those who remain in their city will find dozens of similar ways to put into practice the principles of Rotary as never before. It is important in these days to develop fellowship and goodwill and understanding, to practise thoughtfulness and helpfulness to others.'*

Rotary did in fact carry on, although with a somewhat reduced programme of activities, and maintained its regular meetings. Contributions were made to Lord Homepage's Appeal for Comforts for the Troops and to the Lincolnshire Echo's fund for a similar purpose. Contacts were established with Rotarians serving at Royal Air Force, Waddington. Some of Rotary's money was invested in National Defence Bonds. Discussion took place regarding the opening of a cinema or other methods of entertaining troops on Sundays. It was also decided to send a hamper, to cost not more than one guinea, to 'our adopted Drifter H.M.S. Lea Rigg.' To stimulate gifts to the Hospital Fund it was suggested that as a thank offering for safety every member of the Club should contribute a penny for every siren heard in Lincoln. It was pointed out that the number to date (1942) was approximately 265, so that if every member of the Club agreed, a sum of £50 would be raised immediately. There is no record as to whether this suggestion was adopted, but it is interesting in that now, more than half a century later, few would remember that Lincoln was threatened with air raids quite so frequently.

The Rotary Club had a share in the formation of an Overseas Forces Club, arranged under the auspices of the Mayor. Its premises were in Melville Street

and the Women's Voluntary Service already had a fund which would contribute to the project. The Committee appointed to run the Club had Rotarians as its chairman, secretary and treasurer, together with two members of the committee. At this time it was also decided to send regular letters to Rotarians serving in the Forces overseas, to keep them in touch with the things which were happening in Lincoln.

## **INNER WHEEL**

In 1943 the first reference to Inner Wheel appears in the minutes. In this aspect involving the womenfolk of Rotarians, Lincoln seems to have been very slow to take action. Inner Wheel had been first introduced in Manchester as long ago as 1926. An attempt was made to form an Inner Wheel Club following a District Conference in Lincoln in 1944 but it was felt, probably rightly, that most Rotarians' wives at that time were already fully occupied and it was decided not to proceed. A special Ladies' Day was arranged in 1945 to coincide with a visit to the Lincoln Rotary Club by the Radio Doctor, Dr Charles Hill, who was a frequent and very popular wartime broadcaster. The manager of the Saracen's Head was prepared to cater for an attendance of ninety or a hundred people, but when details were worked out it was found that there would be difficulty in providing sufficient supplies of meat. Members were therefore asked to assist in this direction, and the President appealed to those who were able to obtain poultry to do so and to inform him accordingly. (How the poultry was to be obtained was not specified!)

The Club's support for the Hospital and for crippled children had continued with its usual vigour despite the war. In January 1945 about fifty crippled children of the city were entertained to the pantomime Dick Whittington at the Theatre Royal and afterwards provided with a free tea by Messrs. F.W. Woolworth. Throughout the later years of the war. Rotary made the endowment of a cot at Lincoln County Hospital one of its main objectives. Regular collections were made to achieve that end. The total amount raised was £1000, a large sum in those days.

## **POST-WAR RESURGENCE**

At the Annual Meeting held on 14th May 1945 members opened by singing the National Anthem to celebrate Victory in Europe Day six days previously. It was felt immediately the war in Europe was over that visits to other Clubs should be resumed and foundation of new Clubs in other towns was considered.

Gainsborough was first on the list and an approach was made in the hope that a Club could be opened there. The Club's own Charter Night, which had not been observed during the war years, was resumed on Friday, 21st February 1945 at the Saracen's Head Hotel. Tickets were 10s. 6d each and any excess was to be defrayed from Club funds. Entertainment was provided and the cost borne by the wartime Presidents of the Club.

The Lincolnshire Echo ceased to send a reporter to the weekly meetings of the Club in 1947. Thus ended a remarkable coverage of Lincoln Rotary activities by the Echo. Ever since 1922 its columns had contained detailed reports of after-lunch speeches and Rotary news. One valuable medium of publicity was now lost. However, an invitation was continued to the Lincolnshire Chronicle to report proceedings.

Prior to 1949, surprisingly, the territorial limits of the Lincoln Club had never been defined. It was agreed in May of that year that the Club should cover the City and County Borough of Lincoln and a number of parishes within a radius of approximately five miles from the city.

## **THE CLUB IN THE 1950s**

An interesting innovation in 1950 was to invite a selected number of schoolboys to visit the Club. The headmasters of Lincoln School and the City School were consulted and two boys at a time attended the Club's weekly lunches on about twelve occasions during the year. Alongside this, a worthwhile experiment was tried in 1951, when it was decided to invite to lunch students from the colonies and other countries who were attending the Lincoln Technical College and local engineering works.

Another move in the immediate post-war years was the provision of silk table bannerettes which could be exchanged with clubs overseas. It was some time before a decision was reached, but in 1950 it was resolved to purchase two dozen bannerettes at a cost of 11s. 6d. each, to be made available for circulation abroad. This pleasant reciprocal Rotary practice has resulted in the Lincoln Club being the possessor of an astonishing 259 (at the last count) bannerettes from all over the world, evidence of our members having travelled, in some cases, to remote an' exotic destinations, and of the many visiting Rotarians from many parts of the world who have visited the Lincoln Club and presented their own

Club's bannerettes. The list of countries from which bannerettes have come is impressive. It includes all the Continents except South America. - and Antarctica!

## EUROPE

England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Eire, Scilly Isles, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus.

## NORTH AMERICA

U.S.A. (eighty-two Clubs), Canada, West Indies, Bahamas

AFRICA South Africa (18 Clubs), Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Swaziland.

## INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT

India, Pakistan

AUSTRALASIA Australia (thirty Clubs), Tasmania, New Zealand

FAR EAST Papua New Guinea, Ball, China, Hong Kong

To return to the nineteen-fifties, there was a long discussion in 1951 on the subject of Rotary Foundation Fellowships. Information in a circular from R.I.B.I. was considered by members and it was eventually decided that a contribution of £1 per member, amounting in all to £60, should be paid from the Charity Fund to the Special Fund for Rotary Foundation Fellowships. In 1952, after a visit to a Vocational Service Exhibition at Kingston-upon-Thames, it was decided to mount a Careers Exhibition in Lincoln in 1953.

The historic high tides on the Lincolnshire coast on 31st January and 1st February 1953 caused enormous flooding and damage. Immediate aid was necessary and the Lincoln Rotary Club, along with many other charitable bodies and local authorities, contributed to a Flood Relief Fund.

## **LINCOLN CIVIC TRUST IS LAUNCHED**

Following a challenging address to the Club by Alderman J.W.F. Hill (later Sir Francis Hill) on the subject of the foundation of a Civic Trust for Lincoln, the Lincoln Rotary Club decided to support the proposal. The Community Service Committee considered the matter in detail and recommended to the Club that it should be involved in the formation of the Lincoln Civic Trust. Under the Club's auspices a public meeting was held on 4th November 1953, at which the Trust was launched. The Club Council agreed to accept responsibility for payment of all the preliminary expenses incurred in the formation. The Club continues to be represented on the Council of the Trust and Rotarians have been and are prominently involved in its life. The Trust's current President is a Rotarian. In 1958 the Lincoln Club became involved in the establishment of Hovenden House, at Fleet, Lincolnshire, as a Home for the Cheshire Foundation.

## **CAROL FESTIVAL**

In December 1961 there began a most successful feature of the Rotary year. For the first time a Carol Festival was held in the Savoy cinema, now demolished and replaced by the Waterside Shopping Centre. John Bee, of Worcester, once a popular Lincoln organist, was at the 'mighty' organ, supported by school choirs and the Railway Male Voice Choir. The Mayor and Sheriff and their ladies were present. The Festival attracted over a thousand people and raised a considerable sum for local charities. This continued to be a most popular local event and remained at the cinema until the building was altered and the size of the main auditorium was greatly reduced. When this happened the event was moved to the Cathedral, where it has been held ever since. It continues to be a popular Christmas festival. The nave of the Cathedral is usually filled: indeed in one year the Rotary Committee recorded its regret that, for some reason, there could be no seating in the transepts. Considerable sums are still raised each year for charity.

## **ROTARIANS AT LEISURE**

Sport has not always featured prominently in Lincoln Rotary Club's activities. Golf competitions were held occasionally from 1936 when the spirit moved. Bowls matches between the Club and neighbouring Clubs were arranged. The golfers of what was then District 107 received a boost in 1962 with the presentation of the George Exley Golf Cup for annual competition. Lincoln won the cup in 1972 - very

satisfactorily since it was the Club's jubilee year. The cup was later mislaid, but it was eventually traced to Louth in 1978.

## **ROTARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION**

In 1963 the Club shared with Sir Francis Hill and the Lincoln Civic Trust in the presentation of silver plate for the high table at Lincoln Hall, one of the new halls of residence of Nottingham University. The Warden of Lincoln Hall attended the annual meeting of the Civic Trust on 29th May 1963 and received a silver candlestick given by the Trust and another given by the Rotary Club. In October 1963 the Club responded to an invitation by the Mayor of Lincoln to be represented at a meeting called to test the feelings of the City and County on the question of a University of Lincoln or Lincolnshire. The meeting was attended by representatives from all over the area and it was evident that there was a general desire for a University. It was a time when new universities were springing up in many provincial cities, and Lincoln's hopes initially were high. A University Promotions Committee was formed and Rotary was given two places on the small Steering Committee. Unfortunately Lincoln's bid at that time did not succeed, and the dream remained a dream for thirty years. It is good to note that now, in 1997, the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside has actually been built, on a site at Brayford, Lincoln, and was opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 11th October 1996.

## **THE CONTINENT NO LONGER CUT OFF**

There is an old story about a headline in a British newspaper, '*Fog in Channel - Continent cut off:*' Fortunately we can claim that this does not describe the Club's attitude to Rotary in Continental Europe. As already mentioned, there were several visits by Lincoln Rotarians to European Clubs in the early years, and the trend was gradually increased from the 1960s onwards; it has been continued and developed up to the present time. As long ago as 1964 an attempt was made to establish a European Contact Club. A visit to Leiden was arranged, which it was hoped would be followed by a return visit to Lincoln. This did not materialise. However, with greater ease of travel, the 1970s saw a surge forward in international contacts made by members of the Club. The International Service Committee arranged a series of visits, in some cases to seek fellowship with other Clubs, but sometimes to become better acquainted with the country visited. Destinations included Thisted (Denmark) 1969, Rotterdam (Holland) 1971,

Skagen (Denmark) 1973, Dallas (U.S.A.) 1974, Venice (Italy) 1975, Leningrad (U.S.S.R.) 1977, Florence (Italy) 1978, South Africa 1980, Delft (Holland) 1987, Amsterdam (Holland) 1992 and St Malo (France) 1994. In 1970 Lincoln provided, for the first time. Team Leaders for a Group Study Exchange with the U.S.A. Through the years the Club has welcomed Group Study Exchange visitors from many parts of the world.

In 1969/70 the International Service Committee gave a great deal of thought to the support of the national organisation known as Voluntary Service Overseas, which arranged international expeditions in which young people gave service in developing countries. A sum of £250 was raised and the cheque was presented at a summer garden party at Bishop Grosseteste College in August 1970.

Efforts to forge an established link with a Club on the Continent continued. It was reported on 16th July 1970 that links were likely with two Continental Rotary Clubs. The Rhineland Club of Neustadt wished a party of Rotarians to visit them in the following year, and it appeared that Norwegian and Danish Clubs were anxious to establish links with Lincoln. Ultimately twinning between the City of Lincoln and Neustadt was consolidated with a visit in April 1970 and a further one in the following October for their wine festival. This has proved an extremely happy and successful association and has led to continuing reciprocal visits between the two Clubs. 'Twinning' was finally formalised in 1978.

Altogether the seventies saw much new life and an expansion of Rotary activity in various directions. Funds available for good causes received a sustained boost from the imaginative lottery christened 'the Windle.' No one by the light of unaided nature can be expected to understand this title, so let it be recorded here for the informal weekly lottery, with small prizes, and at his own suggestion it was called 'The Damms Windle'. The name 'Windle' has stuck ever since. The -» funds produced, which is a member's fund rather than a charitable one, has enabled the Club to respond to local needs, sometimes when the person or object benefiting did not come within the narrow legal definition of charity.

A worthy project which reached its climax in the 1970s was the provision of a reading machine for use at the County Hospital. With it patients whose disability meant that they could not turn the pages of a book in the normal way were enabled to do so.



## **A SECOND ROTARY CLUB FOR LINCOLN**

Following first approaches made by the District Extension Officer in 1971, a great deal of time was given to the discussion, planning and, ultimately, the launching of a second Rotary Club in Lincoln. At first the idea received a lukewarm reception; it was not easy to guess whether there was room for two Rotary Clubs to prosper in a city the size of Lincoln. However, enthusiasm gradually built up and the idea of a new Club gained momentum. It became clear before the 1970s were out that a further Club would be established in the city. At one stage it was suggested that its name should be 'The Rotary Club of Lindum Colonia' but in the end 'the Rotary Club of Bailgate, Lincoln' was preferred and that was the name under which it received its Charter in 1979. Great credit is due to those members of the Lincoln Club who guided the protracted negotiations and saw the new Club off to an excellent start.

## **ROTARACT**

In 1977 there was a proposal for the formation of a Rotaract Club for the 18-30 age-group. After some delay its first meeting was held in March 1979, where twenty-five potential members attended. The new Club held its first Charter Night in October 1981. Membership continued for some years at about thirty-five. In addition to an extremely lively social programme, the Club quickly established a splendid tradition of service. One of its most prominent activities was the setting-up and opening of a Toy Library for disabled children. Representative Rotary members have continued to attend the meetings and give support. Latterly Rotaract has found it increasingly difficult to maintain its numbers; in the 18-30 age-group many young men and women move out of Lincoln in pursuit of their careers, so that there is a constant natural drain and an equally constant need to recruit new members.

## **INTERACT**

In 1983 moves were made to establish an Interact Club for the 14-18 age group. Again plans developed slowly, but in March 1985 it was reported to the Rotary Club's Council that it had 'got off to a good start.' In 1986 it had a 'healthy run of events in the past year'. Unfortunately the actual and potential members of Lincoln's Interact Club proved to be even more transient than Rotaracters. The membership was found almost exclusively at one school, Lincoln Christ's Hospital

School, and they regularly and rapidly departed to university or college. In the event it proved impracticable to keep the Club going.

### **THIRD AND FOURTH LINCOLN ROTARY CLUBS**

In May 1988 the Club in general meeting gave its approval to the formation of a third Rotary Club in Lincoln, which came to be called 'Lincoln Lindum Rotary Club.' A fourth club, called 'The Rotary Club of Lincoln Colonial' was formed in February 1997. It is the first Rotary Club in Lincoln which admits ladies to membership, and its first President is a lady. The four Lincoln Clubs share Rotary 'territory' and all continue to thrive and to serve the local community in varied ways.

### **A LINK WITH THE ROTARY CLUB OF SHEFFIELD**

The beginning of 1986 saw the commencement of what was to become a tradition of occasional visits between the Rotary Clubs of Lincoln and Sheffield. The Sheffield Club had been chartered in 1920 and was therefore by two years the senior, but the composition of the membership of the two Clubs was very similar. A happy and easy relationship was established and has been maintained.

### **THE MATTER OF GENDER**

The Lincoln Rotary Club, like two of the other three Clubs in the city, is for men only. During 1988 the Club considered a suggestion which was coming before the Rotary Council on Legislation that women should be admitted to membership. In

some American States single-sex Rotary Clubs had fallen foul of state anti-discrimination legislation. The British Sex Discrimination Act still permitted single-sex Clubs, so that so far as this country was concerned there was no compulsion. The suggested international Rotary legislation therefore provided that Rotary should admit women where obliged by the local law to do so, but that in other cases it was a matter for decision within each Club. The Rotary Club of Lincoln has so far decided not to make a change. Rightly or wrongly, a decision to do so would be acutely divisive at the present time.

## **BUT DID WE EXIST AT ALL?**

In 1988 it was discovered that the Club had lost its original 1922 Charter. This revelation left the officers feeling rather like parents who find they are unable to produce their child's birth certificate. The slightly embarrassing doubt as to whether we really existed was fortunately set at rest by our securing a replacement Charter.

## **THE CLUB'S MEMBERSHIP**

The planned membership of the Club stands at seventy, with an intended absolute ceiling of seventy-five. It is reckoned that beyond this point it would become difficult for all members to know each other, and the sense of fellowship across the Club as a whole would inevitably be weakened. There is, of course, a natural turnover of members for various reasons. (One member is reported in the Council's minutes as having resigned 'because of his age, etc.' but the meaning of 'et cetera' is mercifully not defined). Fortunately for the health of the Club lost members have been replaced by a constant flow of new members, often younger men who have helped to reduce the average age of what is one of the most senior Clubs in the Rotary movement. A wide variety of business classifications is represented. It is recognised that the Rotary Club of Lincoln should if possible include in its membership representatives of agriculture, heavy engineering and the management of the large local stores, but in each of these three cases it is now found difficult to recruit members who can regularly be spared from their responsibilities to attend at lunch-time on Mondays, when the Club meets.

## **PAUL HARRIS FELLOWS**

The Club is proud to have three senior members who each hold the honour of being 'Paul Harris Fellows'. These are Rotarians R.H. Wingad (who achieved sixty years in Rotary in 1992), F.T. Baker (who actually gave his sixtieth address to the Club in 1993), and E.H. Tutty (President of the Club in 1961-2 who attained his half-century in Rotary in 1996).

## **WHAT ARE THE CLUB'S ACHIEVEMENTS?**

A Rotary Club exists for two purposes. Fellowship and Service. Fellowship is seen in the fact that seventy or so of the leading business and professional men in and about the City of Lincoln meet constantly and know each other as friends. It is no part of the Rotary tradition that members should offer each other any preferential treatment in business. Nor do they discuss such matters when they meet. To borrow a phrase used in the Messes of the Royal Air Force, when the members assemble they reckon to 'close the hangar doors.' But when any member is in need of comfort and support, as we all are from time to time, it is instantly and warmly forthcoming. In case of illness or hospitalisation a quiet service of interest and encouragement will be performed by a member who is the Club's appointed Sick Visitor, and often by other members also.

Service is an area in which the Club can be quietly proud. The great annual Carol Festival in the Cathedral has already been mentioned. Shortly before Christmas each year hundreds of elderly or handicapped people are helped to do their Christmas shopping when, by arrangement with the Club, a number of stores in the centre of Lincoln open their doors for an evening. In some years as many as 1500 people have benefited, with help over transport and the provision of wheelchairs (complete with Rotary and Rotaract pushers) for those who need them. These arrangements have been made by the Club before every Christmas since the 1970s, when the pedestrianisation of the High Street first made them possible. During the year virtually all the members of the Club take part in a rota of drivers to convey elderly folk to the meetings of the Arthritis Care Fellowship. Numerous 'Emergency Boxes' packed with essential equipment and clothing for areas of the world which have experienced major disasters, have been filled by Rotary members and conveyed to a central assembly point in Manchester. Members of the Lincoln Club have participated fully in this project. The Club Council minutes record that a few years ago no less than one thousand boxes were sent by Rotary to the Colombian volcano disaster. For many years the Club

manned a stall at Lincoln's famous Christmas Market and by this means raised considerable sums for charitable purposes.

The following is a list, by no means complete, of good causes to which, in the past twenty years alone, members of the Lincoln Rotary Club have contributed personal service or funds or in some cases both. The list is in the order in which they are mentioned in the minutes of the Club Council and the Community Service Committee.

Rotary Foundation  
Vietnamese Refugees  
Algerian Disaster Fund  
Young Enterprise  
Eye Camps in India  
Tinned Food for Poland  
Public Speaking (Youth Speaks) competition  
Mock Job Interviews for young people  
My Job talks in schools  
Ethiopian Appeal  
Indian Gas Explosion relief  
Polio Plus Rotary World Immunisation Programme (the Club raised £1500)  
MIND  
Branston School Special Unit  
MENCAP  
WRVS  
Voluntary Service Overseas  
Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind  
Girl Guides  
St. Giles Community Group  
Portland College for the Disabled  
Children in Need  
Abbeyfield Sheltered Housing Scheme, Mount Street, Lincoln  
Jumbulance (£1500 raised by a sponsored slim!)  
Outward Bound  
Age Concern  
Lincoln Civic Trust  
Indian Tree Planting Scheme  
NSPCC  
Methodist Church Christmas Lunches for elderly and lonely people

International Vision Aid  
Sudan Disaster  
Textbooks for Africa  
St. Barnabas Hospice Trust  
Relate (formerly Marriage Guidance Council)  
Short Term Residential Unit Trust (STRUT)  
St. John Ambulance  
Salvation Army  
Royal National Lifeboat Institution  
Marie Slopes Project, Lesotho (the Club gave £1200)  
Multiple Sclerosis Research  
Lincoln Nomad Trust  
Mothers' Union (for St.Benedict's church restoration, not affiliation!)  
Age Concern  
YMCA Lincoln  
Sea Cadets Lincoln  
Scout Band  
Croatia and Bosnia Appeal  
'Starter Boxes' for new Scout troops in Eastern Europe  
'Kids' Day Out" excursions for underprivileged children  
Lincoln Talking Newspaper (for the blind)  
Dean's Eye window restoration, Lincoln Cathedral  
Water Aid  
Ranfurley Library  
Chemobyl Children  
Sewing Machines for Bangladesh  
Drugs in Primary Schools Initiative  
SENSE (Deaf/Blind and Rubella Association)  
Gdansk Appeal, Poland (children killed or injured in disastrous fire)  
RIBI Rwanda Appeal  
St. Francis School, Lincoln  
National Deaf Children's Society  
Cancer Relief McMillan Fund  
Lincolnshire Ambucopter Appeal  
Thoresway Nursery  
Intermediate Technology

Lincolnshire Disabled Games  
NCH Action for Children  
Lincolnshire Share the Care  
Mayor of Lincoln's Charities (2 years)  
Disability Lincs  
Lincoln Schools Leadership Course  
Lincoln Inventor of the Year Competition  
LIVES  
Rocksburg Lake Rotary Club (South Africa) Appeal  
Sight Savers  
British Heart Foundation  
Barnado's helpers League  
Narrowboat Trust

It is interesting to note how many of these good causes are related to needs overseas.

### **SO FAR SO GOOD, BUT....**

Lincoln Rotary Club has 'fathered' or, in the case of the Lincoln Colonia Rotary club 'grandfathered' no less than six other service and fellowship clubs in Lincoln, viz. the Inner Wheel Club for Rotary wives, the three other Lincoln Rotary Clubs, two Probus Clubs for retired men and the Lincoln Rotaract Club. All this alongside the Lincoln Rotary Club's own constant activities, adds up to a considerable volume of service to people in Lincoln and beyond. The club is not complacent, though it can surely be proud of its past record. The obligation to serve has deep practical meaning for many of its members. As is to be expected, there are occasions when all the members have reason to appreciate the hard work of a relative few, and there is always the lurking temptation to regard the Monday lunch as the be-all and end-all of an individual Rotary involvement. But every now and then some need for service is seen approaching, whether urgently or like a slow incoming tide, and is met by the members to the best of their ability. At such times the Rotary movement's motto SERVICE ABOVE SELF acquires dynamic and effective meaning. In future years there will be much still to do.

## THE SEVENTY-THREE PRESIDENTS OF THE CLUB 1922-23

|         |                       |      |                 |
|---------|-----------------------|------|-----------------|
| 1922-23 | Sir Clement H. Newsum | 1960 | B.L. Baker      |
| 1924    | W.T. Bell             | 1962 | G.R.G. Exley    |
| 1925    | C.W. Pemiell          | 1961 | E.H. Tutty      |
| 1926    | H.C. Wilson           | 1963 | J.B. Tinsley    |
| 1927    | A.W. Foster           | 1964 | R.W. Martindale |
| 1928    | H. Green              | 1965 | G.H. Kelsey     |
| 1929    | A.E. Wiles            | 1966 | J.G. Ruddock    |
| 1930    | H. Brader             | 1967 | T.A. Drabble    |
| 1931    | H.C. Thomhill         | 1968 | S. Blythman     |
| 1932    | J.H. Ruddock          | 1969 | R.W. Howick     |
| 1933    | G.H. Gilbert          | 1970 | P.H. Newlove    |
| 1934    | J.T. Kitchen          | 1971 | R.L. Stirling   |
| 1935    | G.F. Dickinson        | 1972 | A.D. Ward       |
| 1936    | R.G. Fleming          | 1973 | H. Pinder       |
| 1937    | A.S. Gee              | 1974 | F.W.A. Brogden  |
| 1938    | C.R. Spouge           | 1975 | B.H. Clifford   |
| 1939    | A.E. Mansell          | 1976 | W.W. Grimes     |
| 1940    | A.E. Mansell1         | 1977 | H. Damms        |
| 1941    | L.R. Grantham         | 1978 | J.M. Hunt       |
| 1942    | J.W. Smithson         | 1979 | J.L. Curtis     |
| 1943    | F. Simpson            | 1980 | A.S. Proud      |
| 1944    | E.B. Jackson          | 1981 | J.R. Hunter     |
| 1945    | Dr W. Sharrard        | 1982 | R.S.C. Readman  |
| 1946    | P.T. Greaves          | 1983 | J.C. Meads      |
| 1947    | G.H. Iles             | 1984 | S.J. Simth      |
| 1948    | D.F. Scott            | 1985 | P.H. Race       |
| 1949    | R.H. Wingad           | 1986 | J.B.J ackson    |
| 1950    | R.E.M. Coombes        | 1987 | L.A. Drew       |
| 1951    | L.E. Dart             | 1988 | G.A. Church     |
| 1952    | L.R. Chiplen          | 1989 | A.L. Bird       |
| 1953    | R. Towers             | 1990 | RE.P. Wright    |
| 1954    | T.A. Jackson          | 1991 | D. Berryman     |
| 1955    | J.F. Hipwood          | 1992 | T.G. Kelsey     |
| 1956    | E.S. Everitt          | 1993 | T.G. Hemck      |
| 1957    | F. Hunt               | 1994 | P. Manton       |
| 1958    | R.S. Pilkington       | 1995 | R.W. Bennison   |
| 1959    | J.C.T. Bosworth       | 1996 | F. Birch        |



