Message from President Arthur Boyd

July 2009

Past President Courtenay's President's Night at Stormont was a splendid occasion and quite in keeping with the style and panache we have learned to expect from him. Ellen and I thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

May I once again thank you all for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President for the incoming year. It is a great honour to be elected the President of any Rotary Club but when that club is the Belfast Club, it is one which carries with it a real responsibility to the past, as well as the present and future.

Thank you for giving me such an excellent group of officers, council and service chairs; with their guidance and assistance and the support of all Club members, I am certain that the future of Rotary as we prepare for our centenary year is in good hands.

I am a relatively new boy to Rotary, having been involved in the club for less than 5 years, and am extremely grateful to Alan White who introduced me. I can now understand the fun, fellowship and sense of achievement that previous members of my family must have experienced in their day. My Grandfather, Hugh Boyd was a founder member of the Club and President 91 years ago, my father Stanley was President 48 years ago and my cousin David, his father Chesley (my father's twin brother) and the late Raymond Boyd also a cousin served as President.

However a little know fact is that my maternal grandfather James F McCue was President in 1929-30, exactly 80 years ago. Another little known fact was that my father Stanley and his twin brother Chesley were named after some of the American Rotarians met by Hugh Boyd in 1912, – so it seems I must have Rotary in the genes!

John Kenny the new Rotary International President has asked us to look past our own parish pump at the water, health, hunger and literacy problems of other people in the world. At the same time he has asked that we do not forget our own family of Rotary on this island, particularly those suffering from the current recession with all its implications.

Whilst the Rotary ongoing motto is 'Service above Self' , our theme for the year is that The Future of Rotary is in Your Hands' – because everything comes back to the contribution of the individual club member, our membership is 100 active Rotarians by 2012, we propose to run an alternative parallel meeting monthly for friends of Rotary, to have a bit of fun & fellowship, getting to know our new members better and to review our new Community Service opportunities locally and identify new areas of service to add to our continuing work with Mitchell House Sschool, Kids Out days etc.

Internationally we will continue our support for:

• the 'Thanks for Life' Polio Project – already Belfast has raised the equivalent of $60,000 in 2 years after adding the Bill and Melinda Gates matching sponsorship

• our own Centenary Spectacle Project for Vision Aid 100,000 specs by 1912 (currently 60,000)

• Shelterbox and Aqua Boxes, with the help of the Touring Bicycle Challenge coming soon, on behalf of emergency aid to disaster areas to improve our links with local and 1911 clubs.