President Arthur Boyd's Message ~ October 2009

Congratulations to Past President Courtenay and to all club members for your contributions which resulted in the award of the Chris Croft Trophy by past DG Paul Hutchison to the Club for making the best effort in Foundation Service. This reflected all our efforts including the Harvard Glee Club concert, the TABU and Ambassadorial Scholar programs, selection of two members of the GSE exchange trip to Colorado and the fundraising for Polio Plus.

Since my last report we have had a Tallships party and I have had the pleasure of being received by the Lord Mayor in her temporary parlour and then in the renovated City Hall parlour in the company of DG Tom Murphy and then the GSE exchange team from Japan together with fellow members of the Club.

I am pleased to report that the **Thursday evening meetings** have commenced and these will continue each week until Christmas when we will review the progress of this pilot scheme..

Unfortunately we have to say farewell to Stefan Athman who has been recalled to Berlin to manage the groups flagship hotel, however he has made arrangements for us to continue to use the facilities. Whilst I have not been to every meeting , the feed back I have received has been very positive from those attending. We hope to now use these meetings to develop our service activities.

Congratulations to Past President Marnette Lyons on completing her sponsored water ski marathon. I wish her well on her trip to India in November as part of the RIBI team who will be participating in the polio immunization programme. Congratulations also to our communications officer Past President Courtenay on his article recently published in the Belfast Telegraph, copy can be seen on the website together with photographs from recent events.

Thanks to Past President Derek Baxter for looking after our Japanese guests and putting together a varied and interesting days programme for them. The second week-end in October was the District Conference in Athlone. A party of twelve Rotarians and their partners attended from Belfast together with our new Rotaract chair Donna and our outgoing Irish Ambassadorial Scholar Laura.

The programme included updates from the service chairs; presentations from Pat Cox former President of the European Parliament and Kingsley Aikins, President and CEO of the Worldwide Ireland Funds. The most interesting and topical event was an interactive panel discussion on Ethics in Business and Professions. The panel was Senator Shane Ross (Sunday Independent business editor), Kingsley Aikins, Mary O'Rourke TD and Mary Keating, senior lecturer TCD.

We later joined the Dublin Club for a very enjoyable meal and fellowship which continued in a nearby hostelry into the small hours. I am liaising with President Tony Seery regarding a proposed visit to Belfast by himself and some of his members and his invitation for a return visit by us to Dublin.

At conference we toasted absent friends remembering in particular Barrie Houston, a regular attender and organizer up until last year. His ability to keep those around him smiling with a wisecrack or joke will be sadly missed.

Yours in Rotary