



OBITER DICTA

The Bulletin of the Rotary Club of Colchester Forum

President: Andrew Crayston

www.colchesterforum.co.uk

NOVEMBER 2012



DISTRICT GOVERNOR IAN McMEEKAN BRINGS BIG CHEQUE

At our meeting on the 14th of October District Governor, Ian McMeekan presented the club with a cheque for £4000. This was the District Grant for the Meerhoff School project in which Forum is assisting the Brits Club in South Africa to provide sports facilities at a school for handicapped children. The money will be used for wheelchair tennis and basketball courts.

IRENE'S FAVOURITE CHINESE



This exquisite little gold cicada on a white jade leaf is part of the exhibition at Colchester Castle. See Irene Kettle's article on page 7.

MICHAEL JONES NEEDS PHOTOS LIKE THIS See Page 6 for details



AUTUMN LEAVES



A little bit of autumn colour shows on this fern leaf I photographed in Scotland.

CLUB MEETINGS –November 2012

- 1st COLCHESTER WALLS PROJECT – Karen Turnbull
Vote of Thanks: Louis Thorp
 - 8th FOUNDATION & FUTURE VISION
Len Nieuwenhuis *Vote of Thanks:* Robert Jacklin
 - 15th RED CROSS FIRE & EMERGENCY SUPPORT
Dawn Hopkinson *Vote of Thanks:* Barry Donovan
 - 22nd BUSINESS MEETING
Object of Rotary: Tony Blaxill
 - 29th OLYMPIC MEMORIES – Ian Dewis, David & Pauline Jones, Alan & Rita Rustage. *Vote of Thanks:* President
- EVENING MEETING WITH GUESTS – ROSE & CROWN**

CLUB MEETINGS –December 2012

- 6th MY JOB TALK – Colin Bennett
Vote of Thanks: The President
- 13th CHRISTMAS LUNCH WITH PARTNERS
- 20th NETWORKING LUNCH
- 27th NO MEETING

EDITORIAL



Editor: Bill Ward

Producing this edition of *Obiter Dicta* has been a bit of a last minute panic. I have been away on holiday in Aberdeen, visiting my daughter and her family and only returned on Sunday, just ahead of the snow!

I have relied on getting others to do reports and get photos of events while I have been away. These have all been e-mailed to me. Imagine my acute stress to arrive home and find my internet connection was not working. After trying all the operations in the manual and pressing the reset button without success I rang the help-line. After a wait of some ten minutes to be answered, a very helpful Indian gentleman quickly sorted out the problem and to my relief I was able to access all the information I needed. Please keep sending items in for me to use.

Bill Ward

PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS

Christmas is coming up fast and thanks to Ian Dewis we can look forward to an exciting start with a "Feast of Music" at Wivenhoe Church on December 8th. This is the first time we have joined forces with Grassroots and it's a great opportunity for fellowship and to introduce ourselves and what we do to a wider community. Tickets are going fast – well done Ian.

We are at a stage in the year when various projects are beginning to take shape involving "volunteers" from many parts of the club. I am very grateful to you all.

The coast to coast cycle ride is particularly exciting and thanks to John this is really coming together well with cyclists and supporters. You don't have to cycle to enjoy the fellowship of the weekend in North Wales or to meet us on route to share a drink or two. Get the dates in your diary and look at the opportunities to join us in all or part of this adventure. Perhaps cycle the last day or two to feel the pain, don't miss out.

Looking to the New Year, make a date in your diaries for Sunday 13th January 2013 for a blast of fresh air to blow away Christmas with a bite to eat and a glass of wine at lunch with Gill and I at Langenhoe. You can always miss out the blast of fresh air!

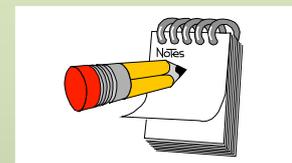
I must again finally mention the amazing progress that Jo Portway is making with sales of trivia on E.Bay. Jo has put a lot of work into this but has now generated about £300 out of a load of We need to keep the momentum of this going so that on the off chance if anybody reads these ramblings please just think about what is lying around and see if we can turn it into real money.

Yours in Rotary

Andrew Crayston

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

November	3 rd 8 th 15 th 20 th	Charity Collection – Co-op Stanway Mock Interviews – Thomas Lord Audley School Mock Interviews – Alderman Blaxill School Mock Interviews – St Helena's School
Dec	8 th 17, 18, 19 th 20 th	Saturday, Twilight Christmas Concert – St Mary's Church Wivenhoe, 4.30pm Station Collections Visit to Thursford
January 2013	13 th 23 rd 30 th	Sunday, Walk followed by Lunch at Gill and Andrew's Intermediate Youth Speaks – Town Hall Colchester Senior Youth Speaks – Town Hall Colchester
February	1 st	"Sweet Charity" Mercury Theatre plus reception beforehand.
March	2 nd	Peldon Wine Night – Peldon Village Hall (In aid of Jaipur Limb Project)
May	18 – 27 th	Cycling Watling Street. – In aid of End Polio Now.
June	23-26 th	RI Convention - Lisbon



Thursday 4th October 2012
KALEIDOSCOPE



President Andrew described the meeting as a kaleidoscope of different events instead of the usual speaker. DG Ian McMeekan was present also and took his part in the meeting.

Secretary:

On the 17th of October there would be a seminar on the Council on Legislation run by Ray Burman. Nominations were sought for 8 assistant district governors. Forum were to steward the District Conference meeting at Witham on Saturday.

90th Anniversary of the Colchester Rotary Club.

We then saw then saw a ten minute presentation from a CD made by Philip Morant School of the story of the Colchester Club from 1922 to 2012. They had moved to Jacklin's restaurant as a temporary measure in 1940 and stayed for 50 years! Copies of the CD are being sold with the proceeds going to Polio Plus.

Presentation of District Grant Cheque.

District Governor Ian McMeekan had come in person to give us the cheque for the District matching grant for £4,000. He gave the cheque to David Jones who had visited the Meerhoff School in South Africa last year and had seen the need they had to improve facilities for their handicapped students. 60 of them play wheelchair tennis and a similar number play wheelchair basketball. In association with the Brits Rotary Club Forum has provided money to assist in these projects. We have asked for a plaque to be put up in the school to commemorate the work in memory of Rodney Borgartz who worked for so many years on International projects. The school has grown and they need a new toilet facility which is now nearing completion.

W.W.

Thursday 11th October 2012
HOSPITAL SHIP HMHS REWA
Fab Casales



Fab told us the story of one doctor who served in WWI on board a hospital ship at Gallipoli and left a fascinating diary of those times and many photos and drawings which Fab used to illustrate his talk.

Doctor John Lambert

John Lambert was born in 1880 in Cambridge. He studied medicine at the London Hospital Medical School and qualified in 1904. He worked as a school doctor in Brighton. In August 1914 he joined the Royal Navy and was made a temporary Surgeon Lieutenant.

His first posting was to the shore station *HMS Ganges* at Shotley where he treated wounded from the Battle of Heligoland.

He then joined *His Majesty's Hospital Ship Rewa* which had been built as a passenger ship for the British India Navigation Company. The original captain and crew stayed with the ship and many of the seamen were Lascars (Indian seamen).

Rewa had 250 beds, 40 for officers and 210 for wounded other ranks. It had two operating theatres each with two tables. It was on *Rewa* that Dr Lambert met Nurse Lockhart whom he later married.. The ship ran aground in the Firth of Forth but was refloated and began ferrying wounded from Dunkirk to England. The wounded could be British, French and even German prisoners.

The Dardenelles

The Allies invaded the Gallipoli peninsular in April 1915. There were British, French and Anzac forces involved. The whole campaign bogged down and became a disaster. There was poor medical support ashore and wounded had to be ferried at night in small boats to avoid enemy fire.

HMHS Rewa was stationed about ¾ mile offshore. They were operating from 9am to 9pm with only occasional 5 minute breaks. When the ship was full they were sent to Malta and buried 15 at sea. On their return they rescued shipwrecked sailors from a torpedoed ship.

W.W.

Thursday 18th October 2012

Williams & Griffin Redevelopment

Rebekah Paczek



The headline was: "The Monkey is safe!" Colchester's favourite department store is about to invest £35 million on its redevelopment and everyone wants to know what will happen to the chimp on the toy department trapeze.

Lobbyist Rebekah Paczek told Forum members that the "monkey question" had loomed large at the public consultation and information meetings organised by W&G's parent company Fenwick. Rebekah reassured members about the monkey before briefly describing the redevelopment and answering questions. The store will be enlarged by 50%, bringing new brands to Colchester. Access will be greatly improved with more escalators and lifts being installed.

Rotarians appreciated the vote of confidence Fenwick had given by investing in the town.

Questions revealed some concerns about the design of the extended frontage onto High Street. Rebekah said the plans had been delayed in order that Fenwick could ensure the architect's design was right. She said the stone and glass frontage was in several units rather than one "big block". The front of the store had also been designed to complement Tudor and Victorian buildings "sandwiched" between the modern units and to respect the heritage of High Street. High quality materials will be used in the redevelopment and contracts offered to local suppliers as far as possible.

Pedestrian access from the car park will be improved.

The new-look store is expected to be finished by the end of 2015 and it will continue to trade throughout the redevelopment.

IK

Thursday 25th October

BUSINESS MEETING

President:

District Council meeting: Thanks to all those who helped.

Voters of Thanks: A reminder that if a voter of thanks is unable to attend they should arrange a deputy. Also that they are responsible for greeting and hosting speakers.

Adopt a Giraffe: Council had decided it was not a priority to support this local activity

Welfare:

Steve Ling still has problems. Brenda Gant has had her operation and is out of hospital.

Secretary: Nothing new to report

Club Service:

Names still needed for New members Evening on 26th Nov. Remembrance Sunday 11th November – Club will join Colchester Parade - 10am for 10.30 parade. Evening meeting on 29th November will be at the Rose & Crown. Speakers will be on Olympic "Games Makers

Community Service:

Tilt table Treetops now have sufficient funds to purchase a tilt table. Next Collection: Co-op Fiveways 3rd November. Practical Help: Some decorating may be arranged at the Colchester Young Carers Centre. Christmas Celebration Concert at Wivenhoe Church, now Saturday 8th December

New Generations:

Mock Job Interviews: 8 Nov. Thomas Lord Audley; 15 Nov. Alderman Blaxill; 20 Nov. St Helena.

Way Ahead 14 March Alderman Blaxill 30 Jan. St Benedict's

Youth Speaks 2013: Good response from the Schools that normally enter.

Recovery Centre visit was very good.

Rotaract. Jo & John attended their meeting on 15 Oct. at the University. Only 25 members this year.

International.

Lunch meeting on 8th November will be a Frugal Lunch in aid of Foundation. (Cheques payable to R C of CF).

Evening Meeting 31st January 2013 at Colchester Institute – speaker on Water Aid

Wine Night now rescheduled for 2nd March 2013

Meerhof School: District now paid the £4,000 Grant Treasurer had sent (SA) R.88,000 to Brits. Works are well advanced

DJP

Forum Freewheelers

PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH

On October 18th, 10 of our members enjoyed a super Ploughman's Lunch at Mary Hughes' home – so much to choose from – ending with ice cream and chocolate sauce. What more could one wish for?

It was really nice to have Mary Anne Bishop and Valerie Penfold, both - past IW members, with us.

After lunch Pauline told us a little of her experiences with David as an Olympic Games Guide. Now we have more to look forward to on the same subject at the next Rotary evening meeting.

Thanks again to Mary for all the trouble she took to make the event so enjoyable for us all.



Whilst on a weekend away Anne & David London called on Inner Wheel's founder Vice-President Susan Howarth. Susan, whose husband Peter died in December, lives outside Warrington. She is seen standing in front of a painting of the Royal Mail engine named after Peter who was formerly No.2 at the Post Office. Susan asked to be reminded to her many friends in Colchester.

SCOTLAND IN THE FALL

My thanks to Gwen Light for telling us about lunch at Mary Hughes. By all accounts it was most enjoyable and I was sorry to miss it but I was spending an autumn holiday in Scotland with Fiona and her family.

Who needs to go to New England in the fall to see the autumnal colours when one can see them in all their splendour on the Scottish hillsides. Sadly, photos in black and white cannot do justice to their beauty. A new experience for me was watching salmon braving the foaming water at the Falls of Heugh in their attempt to leap upstream to reach their spawning grounds. Another was braving the rain at Montrose Basin to watch a kingfisher sitting on a log for all of ten minutes. On the way south we stopped at Loch of the Lowes wildlife centre to learn of two osprey chicks who have been followed by satellite tracking to a reserve in south-west France. Not a bad place to spend the winter!



This heron was also keeping his eye out for salmon

Future Events

- Thurs Nov 15** Lunch at Thatcher's Arms, Mount Bures
Contact Rachel Hills
- Wed Dec 12** Christmas Celebration - Library at Milsom's
12 for 12.30. Cost £28 for three course meal.
Contact Ann Stedman.

Our best wishes for a Happy Birthday

- Nov 15th** Ann Blaxill
- 17th** Lynne Lloyd
- 29th** Pauline Jones
- Dec 18th** Rosemary Ireland

SMALL WORLD by David London

Overhearing David Boyden talking of his recent break-in reminded me of when our home was burgled whilst we were away on summer holiday. In the 1950's the village policeman - Jones - ineffectively investigated blaming bored kids. We had in the village a G.P. - also Jones - and a pharmacist - Brunning - whose claim to fame was that his grandfather had built Jumbo. The village boasted a Midland Bank, six pubs - closed on Sundays - and three chapels. For us teenagers the chapels were the only hope - apart from school - of meeting girls. This resulted in some of us joining an evening Bible study group - which caused great consternation in my family as I was also consistently top of R.E. at school! In fairness the village had a 6-day a week cinema residing in a large black and white building. This had a surround sound system - that of furious scratching - and only survived until 1962 because of an ineffective Public Health authority! The Cameo, when I subsequently found it, seemed positively palatial. Sadly two weeks before moving to Essex in 1960 some of my friends in desperation started a Young Conservative club - very brave considering the politics of the county.

The village's full title on the board at the station was Caergwrle Castle and Wells. The castle was the last of those built for Edward I in 1277 to keep an eye on the Welsh. Think Conway, Caernarvon or Harlech, only "ours" was to be more than a little knocked about - and not by bored kids! The wells was some local entrepreneur deciding in 1907 that the waters found down said well were medicinal on the same lines as Buxton or Buith. The wells, fortunately, were upstream from where the water from the baths at Llay colliery emptied into the river. The colliery, the largest in Wales, with the deepest shaft in Britain, closed in 1966 leaving two other employment options. The steel works at Shotton, where white hot ingots emerged from the rollers a mile later thin enough for "tin" cans. This closed in 1980, with the loss of over 6,000 jobs leaving just de Havilland at Hawarden which had built 5,786 Wellington bombers during the war and Comet airliners subsequently. They now make wings for the Airbus range of airliners.

I went to junior school up the road from Caergwrle at Hope - yes really - which had a Church of England. From there it was to the grammar school at Hawarden. That school's more recent claim to fame were the footballing Owen brothers and the Welsh manager Gary Speed. William Gladstone lived in the "new" Hawarden Castle - built 1752 - where he died in 1898. During his time there his butler was one John Hatfield who for reasons I have not been able to discover left in 1886 to open a "curio" shop here in St. John's Street.

Two of my closest friends whilst I was living in North Wales maintained the small world connection. Gareth came to live in Marks Tey and worked at the Essex County hospital, whilst Mervyn - who could only speak Welsh until he was five - became an architect in Stockport. Here he met Bob Juniper and John Lloyd trying to build sports halls - a remarkable coincidence we were only to discover several years later.

I wrote the above whilst away, only going to Google to infill one or two details. I then spent a fascinating hour discovering information on my then local area of which I was totally unaware. Interestingly those taking part in next year's "Battle of Watling Street", will spend a night at Prestatyn which was our nearest beach.

IDENTITY CARD PHOTOS

After comments by members of the public when the Club has been making collections it has been decided to have a photo-identity card for each member. This will then be useful at other events. Michael Jones has found someone prepared to make these cards for us but he requires a photo from each member. These should be of standard passport style format with the head, full face, occupying most of the frame and no hat. Since we are sure everyone has a digital camera can you be sure to take a photo, edit it and send it PROMPTLY by e-mail to Michael.

He will have enough work to do being involved with this project without chasing people who don't like having their photo taken. If you genuinely do not have a camera ask a friend.

ROTARY SENT ME TO CHINA

“Miss, is there a real dead body in there and is it in a glass case because it stinks?”

My eight-year-old inquisitor looked up at me expectantly as I tried to conjure up a plausible answer as magnificent as the jade burial suit we were standing next to.

The fact is, I was at least 2,000 years out of my depth here and beginning to wonder why I had volunteered for this latest Rotary challenge to put service above self. Surely shaking a collecting tin outside Tesco's, conducting mock interviews in schools or even not-quite roasting chestnuts at a freezing Castle Park Christmas market would have demonstrated my commitment to doing my bit? But no, I had to answer the call for Rotarians to act as volunteer invigilators at the Treasures of China exhibition in Colchester Castle.

The start of my week as a volunteer had been surreal; I sat around the staff table with my new Colchester Council colleagues as they munched Value biscuits, sipped tea and discussed the relative merits of Celtic and Norman swords as tools for murder. A Roman walked in, opened a locker, rooted around and then left; no one blinked an eye.

Then I had my induction; channel 22 would be mine for the three and a half hours I was in charge of my room each day, in the event of a fire there were only two exits from The Castle (the Normans weren't big on health and safety apparently) and if someone were to walk in wearing a balaclava and want to steal the treasures.....“Let me stop you there,” I said. “That's above my pay grade”. The duty officer agreed and simply suggested that in the event of an emergency of any kind I should push the red button on my personal radio. What she didn't say was that I should bring a book; it can be a lonely business guarding treasures.

Lonely that is until the school parties arrived each morning. Strictly speaking they weren't supposed to be “in China”, they were researching the Castle's many Roman exhibits, but that 2,000-year old jade burial suit was very exciting! So too was the terracotta model of a piggery with a public toilet building above it which boasted a hole in its sloping floor. I am still not sure it was a good idea for the teacher to read the caption to her class of primary school children and then to explain the ancient notion of recycling which involved pigs, poo and then pork dinner! Much giggling followed.

With all this activity my hopes of fading into the background while remaining ever alert to the possibility of an attempt to snatch these priceless artefacts from under my nose were slim.

At one stage two young men walked into my room and started looking at the walls, lights and, for all I knew, the security cameras. My finger was poised on the red button as I visualised the headlines after I foiled a Pink Panther-style heist, but then they explained they were part of the team planning the refurbishment of the Castle Museum which closes in January for 14 months. What a relief.

Although I wasn't obliged to answer questions, visitors of all ages kept on asking and I tried to help. Yes, the beautiful gowns are real, no, I don't know why the Chinese were so fond of dragons, no, I don't think they had dragons instead of dinosaurs and the ornate room heaters contained charcoal (I made that up!). During my six days on duty I met many charming and friendly people including Rotarians from all over the world.

I would certainly recommend a visit to the Treasures of China exhibition which continues until January 6 2013. The exhibition explores the rise of Imperial China from the Stone Age to the time of the last Emperor and covers 4,500 years of Chinese history. My favourite piece is a tiny and exquisite hair ornament which is a gold cicada sitting on a jade leaf and was worn by a Ming princess nearly 600 years ago. It was one of several exhibits chosen by pupils from The Gilberd School in Colchester who visited Nanjing Museum in China and helped compile the exhibition.

The visit and the exhibition were part of a unique project made possible thanks to the excellent links between Essex County Council and Jiangsu Provincial Government in China.

It was a privilege to play a tiny part in supporting the exhibition. I would urge you to make the most of this once in a lifetime chance to visit the Treasures of China while they are in Colchester.

Irene Kettle

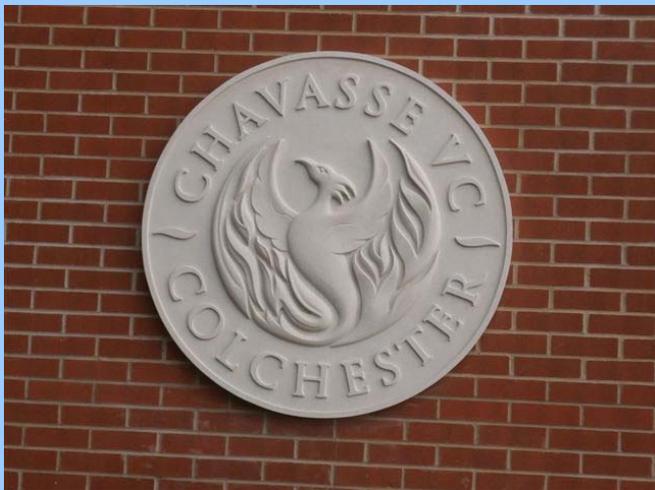


Volunteer Castle Guide, Irene Kettle guards the jade burial suit at the exhibition of Chinese treasures now showing at Colchester Castle.

These suits, made from hard jade plates, wired together with silver, were incredibly expensive as they were so slow to make. The ancient Chinese thought that to be buried in such a suit would ensure immortality both of the body and soul.

For the full story see inside on page 7.

VISIT TO THE PERSONAL RECOVERY CENTRE



Top Left: The centre is named after Noel Chavasse VC*, a doctor who won two VCs in WWI, the second posthumously.

Top Right: The Forum party pose for a photo outside the centre.

Left: Andrew Crayston with DG Ian McMeekan on an earlier visit to the centre with other Rotary Presidents.