

July 2011

I am very proud to be taking the Presidency at Flint & District Lions Club for 2011 -2012. It is an honour that I enjoyed previously in 1998-1999.

The Club is very special to me: I have been a member since 1991. However, my association with the club goes back to my birth! The club and I share the same birth month.

Unfortunately, this Lions year will be a very different one for the Flint club. It is the first year that it will be without its Charter President, Walter (Wally) Millward, who died in April. In recent years, Wally had not enjoyed good health and we had missed him and his wonderful sense of humour at our club meetings.

For many reasons, Wally was an inspiration to me in my formative years - as a teenager and subsequently as a Lion.

His fellow Charter Members, John Gregory and Ron Ellis, tell of the way Wally ensured the success of the club's first major fund raising effort in his Presidential year. He chose the St Asaph Eye Hospital Light-Coagulator Appeal as his special project. Wally indicated that he wanted to raise £500 for the appeal. The members agreed it was too much money for a young club to raise in so short a time. Wally's response was to say that, in those circumstances, the members would have to raise the money between themselves. They raised the money from the public in double quick time! Wally had read the situation, realised that the club needed encouragement and gave it! He succeeded so well that in the following year the club built the sun lounge extension to Flint Cottage Hospital that is still enjoyed by patients today.

The early Lions went to Charter nights by the coachful! On one night, returning from Liverpool Charter Night, the coach was delayed in the Mersey Tunnel whilst workmen were putting a special surface on the tunnel preparatory to its being painted.

Wally pointed it out to all on the coach including my mother. Some months later, it was time for Flint's own Charter night. Deputy District Governor Bill Gerrard of Liverpool club had phoned Wally to ask him who would be at the event who would not mind being teased. That night, Bill referred to mum as having enjoyed the Liverpool Charter so much that she was convinced the Mersey tunnel was being wallpapered! Many Governors took up that story at her expense thanks to Wally.

During my earlier Presidency, I had the honour of visiting Wally and his wife, Marion, to present them with a bouquet of flowers on their Golden Wedding Anniversary. It was a small token of the great esteem in which I held Wally.

It may be that fate has dictated that Wally will not be a club member in my year as President, but I have no doubt that he will be with us in spirit! I will do all I can to see his legacy lives on.

God bless you Wally!

Thanks for everything.

David Gregory