

Dear President Keith,
Dear friends of the Rotary Club of Margate,

It is my turn to congratulate you, in the name of all members of Rotary Club Ghent, for your one hundred years of existence.

But what, exactly, are we congratulating you for? Just the existence for 100 years?

I wondered. And having so many interesting conversations these last few days, I realised the following :

We still live in a time of wars (barbarian wars), of crises, of all kinds of injustice, and all kinds of discrimination.

But there are a few beacons of light, a few points of hope for humanity and one of them is certainly, and without any doubt, Rotary.

And within Rotary there are those centennial clubs, like Margate, that bravely show the way to the younger clubs.

Bravely show the way ? What on earth am I talking about ?

Well, the centennial of a club is not so much a prestige project and not so much a goal in itself (ouf, we made it) but rather the proof that despite all disputes, all discussions, all differences of opinion you may have had in your club during those last hundred years, it is possible for Rotarian friends to be brave enough to overcome them, to reconcile them, and to keep working together and to stay friends.

Dear friends, what a wonderful world it would be, if everybody on earth were capable of doing so.

So it is for this achievement of reconciliation of small and large discussions and disagreements during the last 100 years that we sincerely congratulate all the members the Rotary Club of Margate.

We thank you for your sincere and warm welcome (especially our hosts and Helen, and also Peter) and we wish you all the best for the next 100 years.

Didier van den Hove
President Rotary Club Ghent 2021-2022

Margate, 07-05-2022