

Rotary Club of Great Missenden

"A LIFE IN QUOTATIONS"

Notes prepared by Rotarian Alan Jones
for his talk to the Club on 27 Nov 2006

1. Quiet beginnings

Hillaire Belloc

From quiet homes and first beginnings
Out to the undiscovered ends
There's nothing worth the wear of winning
Save laughter and the love of friends

Mottoes and Sayings - embossed or embroidered were common in homes circa 1940.

E.g.,
'Life is a mirror, smile at her'

Grantland Rice

When the one great scorer comes to write against your name
He'll write not that you won or lost but how you played the game

Kipling 'IF'

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing their and blaming it on you
If you can keep your head when all men doubt you
But make allowance for their doubting too.....

If you can walk with Kings and keep your virtue
Or walk with crowds nor lose the common touch.....

What is more you'll be a man my son

Note - no women in Kipling's day

2. CHURCHILL

I know I'm going to make history, because I'm going to write it

Democracy is the worst system devised by the wit of man, except for all the others

On Appeasement – those who feed crocodiles, do so in the hope that they will be the last to be eaten.

Lady MP

Mr Churchill, your drunk

And you Madam are ugly, but I shall be sober tomorrow

Of Atlee

A modest man with much to be modest about

A sheep in sheeps clothing

House of Commons when Churchill was aged and no longer PM

"Your flies are open"

"Dead birds don't fall out of the nests"

Someone said of him

Winston devoted the best years of his life to preparing impromptu speeches

Ability to say so much in so few words

Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed to so many by so few

After El Alemein

Now this is not the end, it is not even the beginning of the end but it is

perhaps the end of the beginning.

Today we would call it 'the tipping point'

Political lies - 'terminological inexactitudes' -
economical with the truth

Coined the phrase "Iron Curtain"

Unattributed political comments

The House of Lords is the very model of how to care for the elderly

I don't go to the House of Lords any more

I did go once but a Bishop stole my umbrella

3 Education

Shakespeare

If music is the food of love 12th Night

Once more unto the breach Henry 5

Romeo Romeo wherefore art thou Romeo R & J

The lady doth protest too much, methinks

Parting is such sweet sorrow R & J

Now is the Winter of our discontent King R3

? Can we in our early teens really understand the quality and subtlety of Shakespeare

having experience of life.

without

Tennyson

Charge of the Light Brigade

Half a league, half a league

Half a league onwards

All in the valley of death

Rode the six hundred

Forward the Light Brigade

Was there a man dismayed

Not tho the soldier knew

Someone had blundered

Theirs not to make reply

There's not to reason why

There's but to do or die

Into the valley of death

Rode the six hundred. (there were actually 673)

Crossing the Bar ? Did Tennyson visit Salcombe

Twilight and evening bell

And after that the dark

And may there be no sadness of farewell

When I embark
For though from out our bourne of time and space
The flood may bear me far
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the Bar

4. Student Years - late 50 ies early 60 ies Cold War

MacMillan 'You've never had it so good'

Cuban Missile Crisis

Martin Luther King 'I have a dream'

JFK Ich bin ein Berliner ? a doughnut

Later Reagan 'take down this wall'

Reading at that time

Ernest Hemmingway

John Steinbeck

First world War poets Rupert Brooke Siegfried Sassoon

Rupert Brooke

If I should die think only this of me
That there is some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England

Siegfried Sassoon

If I were fierce and bald and short of breath
I'd live with scarlet majors at the base
And speed glum heroes up the road to death
And when the war is done and youth stone dead
I'd toddle safely home and die in bed

Good Morning, Good morning the General said
When we met him last week on our way to the Line
Now the soldiers he smiled at are most of 'em dead
And we're cursing his staff for incompetent swine
'He's a cheery old card' grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack

But he did for them both with his plan of attack.

Point about many sayings in our language coming from Military or Naval background

E.g.,
Knowing the ropes
A square meal
Sailing close to the wind

5. LOVE and Marriage

'Love' in Oxford Book of Quotations – more entries than 'Jones' in the Cardiff telephone directory so too big a topic to cover here.....

'First wife then thrive'

A wife is someone who gives you 2 ties for your birthday and when you wear one
She asks you why you didn't wear the other

Francis Bacon

Wives are young mens' mistresses
Companions for middle age
And old mens' nurses

A Scotsman lost his Mastercard. He refused to report his loss to the Police because the person that found it was spending less than his wife.

6 Business – World of 'Meetings bloody Meetings'

Jargon

Go for the low hanging fruit

Run the flag up the flagpole

Wake up call

Don't interrupt, I didn't interrupt when you were speaking –
Paxman/Humphrys

School of debate copied

Someone is late 'We're prompt no matter how long it takes'

Someone is having their own discussion within a larger meeting
'My meeting's going well, how's yours going ?'

Interface with Bankers, Consultants, Economists etc

A man needed a heart transplant

A priest and banker had died and their hearts were available for
transplant

The surgeon asked the man, which heart would you like

The patient chose the bankers heart – he said - 'because it has not
been used'

A businesswoman rushed into a Police Station and said

I've been raped by a Consultant

Policeman said how did you know he was a consultant

She replied ' Because I had to do all of the work myself'

An economist is someone who knows 24 ways of making love,
But has no woman.....

An economist of World renown

Says interest rates are going down

Another one who's held in awe

Says interest rates are sure to soar

And 'still a third of equal fame

Says interest rates will stay the same

Its really not the interest rate

It's the economists who fluctuate

On teamwork

'Alone we can do ordinary things
Together we can do extraordinary things'

7. Retirement

Music and Travel

Discuss 'Travel broadens the mind'

Canadian Lady Pastor 'No Alan - travel makes boring people even more boring'

Travel in Russia and Eastern Europe since the Iron Curtain disappeared.

Russian Proverb

'The only free cheese is in the mousetrap'.

Another way of saying
The recently

'There's no such thing as a free lunch'.

deceased

Milton Freedman

Tolstoy

All happy families resemble one another, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way

It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness

Amongst those who do not like travel are Lemmings.....

'Lemmings fear to travel

For weeks they mull it over

They don't mind Finland or anywhere inland

But they hate the cliffs of Dover'

Music

Sir Thomas Beecham

Good music is that which penetrates the ear with facility and quits the memory with difficulty.

There are two golden rules for an orchestra : start together and finish together. The public doesn't give a damn what goes on between

He didn't like Harpsicords – 'Like two skeletons copulating on a corrugated tin roof'

Grandparents

'I thought my life's work was done, then I became a grandmother'

8. Misquotations or things that were never said

Play it again Sam

We are the masters now

Survival of the fittest

Lead on Macduff

Elementary my dear Watson

Tomorrow is another day

No reflection on Quotations would be complete without a few from the wit of Oscar Wilde

I have nothing to declare but my genius

Work is the curse of the drinking classes

All women become like their mothers

That is their tragedy.
No man does. That's his

The English Country Gentleman galloping after a fox.
The unspeakable in full pursuit of the uneatable

9. DEATH and Memorials

Here lies the body of Harold Hake
He stepped on the gas instead of the brake

In the grave before ye (in a Cornish Churchyard)
Lies buried up a dismal story
A young maiden
She was crossed in love
And taken to the realms above
But he that crossed her
I should say
Deserves to go the other way

To encourage those 'youngsters' in their Seventies

Here lies the body of (A Great Yarmouth
Churchyard)
Sarah Bloomfield – aged 74
Cut off in blooming youth
We can but pity

Of Christopher Wren – 'If you seek a Memorial, look around.'

Hillaire Belloc again

'When I am dead, I hope it may be said
My sins were scarlet but my books were read'

Famous last words

Beethoven – 'I shall hear in heaven'

Hypochondriac – 'I told you I was ill'

Life's lessons eg. Moral of hare and tortoise

The tortoise streaked into the lead
The Hare was under stress
I made my bid and lost ten quid
A bad hare day, I guess

Je ne regret rien - no most people do regret some things in their lives....

'At the end of the day' Who first said that ? no matter what has happened in a life,
you can do about it there is nothing

Edward Fitzgerald

The moving finger writes and having writ
moves on. Not all thy piety or wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all they tears wash out a word of it.

FINISH