



**THE ROTARY FOUNDATION  
OF ROTARY INTERNATIONAL**



**Lend a Hand**

# **Group Study Exchange 2004**

**DISTRICT 9830 TASMANIA  
AUSTRALIA**

**to**

**DISTRICT 2400 SWEDEN**



**District 9830 GSE Team  
with  
District 2400 GSE Committee**



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# Executive Summary

## **The exchange program**

In the first half of 2004, a Group Study Exchange program took place between District 9830, Tasmania, Australia and District 2400, Sweden. The four-week exchange visits involved a Rotarian team leader and four non-Rotarian team members from each District. The D2400 team led by PP Anders Johansson visited Tasmania from 6 March 2004 to 4 April 2004 and the D9830 team led by AG James Wilcox departed for Sweden on 16 April 2004 and it concluded the exchange in Copenhagen, Denmark on 15 May 2004.

## **Rotary districts**

The Districts were well matched which was a very significant factor that contributed to the success of both exchange visits. D9830 covers the island state of Tasmania and D2400 covers a similar sized but larger populated area in southern Sweden. The regions share similarities in industries such as forestry, agriculture and aquaculture. District 9830 Tasmania has 50 clubs with 1,520 Rotarians and District 2400 Sweden has 57 clubs with some 3,200 Rotarians. The majority of clubs in D9830 have evening dinner meetings whereas the majority of clubs in D2400 have lunchtime meetings.

## **D9830 GSE team**

The Team Leader was AG James Wilcox and the selected team members were Susan Dando, Sarah Foster, Aaron Millar and Fiona Smith. Dale Hall-Bowden (nominated by the Rotary Club of Central Launceston) was the reserve team member and AG Ian Shuey (Rotary Club of Hobart) was the Reserve Team Leader.

## **District 2400 team**

A significant advantage that we had during the preparation stage was the presence of the visiting D2400 GSE team in our District. The team, led by PP Anders Johansson, provided us with valuable insights into the Swedish culture and lifestyle and gave us good advice on what we could expect during the exchange visit. The members of both teams were also able to meet on several occasions during our travels in Sweden.

## **District 9830 assistance**

Chairman PP Terry Lobban was always available to provide any help that was required. Terry's extensive knowledge of GSE and positive input were extremely valuable during the pre-departure period and his assistance was greatly appreciated by the team.

The support and encouragement from DG Kevin Shadbolt and DGE Muriel Heron was always forthcoming and was welcomed by the team. The advice and assistance from past team leaders (Robin Archer and Arthur Talbot in particular) was available whenever it was required. Their cooperative approach and willingness to help was very beneficial to the team and to me. They provided examples of presentations and other team materials, which saved us considerable time.

We obtained tremendous confidence through the positive input from many Rotarians within D9830 and greatly appreciated the support and financial assistance provided to each of us by our nominating Rotary clubs.

## **District 2400 GSE Committee**

Chairman PDG Jöran Hultman provided a high level of support to the team both prior to and during the exchange. The D2400 GSE Committee undertook a very active role in the organisation and conduct of the program and its members were always available to assist our team and to ensure the program progressed according to plan. The co-operation and involvement of the D2400 GSE Committee members and Area/Club Coordinators was most valuable, was extremely well received by our team and it helped to ensure the success of the exchange.

## **The itinerary**

A detailed itinerary prepared by the D2400 GSE Committee provided great variety, covered a wide range of relevant educational and vocational experiences, and presented a valuable insight into the culture and lifestyle of the people of southern Sweden. There was ample time for us to interact with our hosts and there were also a good number of social events that included all hosts and team members. These social occasions were an excellent way for the team to get to meet other hosts and to continue to develop stronger friendships with each other.

## **Host families**

Team members had eight host families each during the exchange, with the exception of Aaron and Susan who both had nine host families. All families were very welcoming and did everything possible to ensure that our stays with them were enjoyable. Their hospitality and friendship was exceptional.

## **Presentations**

The team gave presentations to eight Rotary meetings that had an estimated total attendance of 500 Rotarians representing 28 clubs and to the District Conference that was attended by close to 200 people. We also provided a presentation to an invited audience that included Count Carl-Johan Bernadotte, the son of former King Gustov VI Adolf of Sweden and uncle of the current Queen of Denmark. Aaron Millar was invited to attend an English class at a College in Alvesta and spoke to more than 60 students about life in Tasmania.

The team also gave a farewell presentation in Växjö and auctioned an assortment of soft-filled toy Tasmanian animals that raised 5,100 SEK (approximately AUS\$1,000) for D2400 Rotary Foundation.

The presentations were exceedingly well received by all audiences and drew many complements about the professional and lively manner in which they were delivered.

## **The royal wedding**

The itinerary provided for us to end the exchange in Copenhagen so that we could be present for the wedding of Mary Donaldson, a fellow Tasmanian, to Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik. This was a high point on which to end a magnificent exchange visit.

## **Achievement of goals**

The goals and objectives of Group Study Exchange were achieved to a high degree through this program. The team members benefited from exposure to their respective vocations and clearly enhanced their leadership and teamwork skills. The team also willingly accepted the challenges presented by the cultural variations that we encountered. It is considered that we gained most from our interactions with the Swedish people, particularly the Rotarians, partners and families that either hosted us or were prepared to be involved with our visit.

# Team Member Profiles

## **James WILCOX (Team Leader)**

James is 47, and lives in Longford, which is close to Launceston in the north of Tasmania. He has been married to Kathy, who is a Medical Scientist, for 22 years.

He has been a member of the Rotary Club Longford for 18 years, serving as Club President in 1996/97 and also as Club Secretary for 9 years. James has significant service at District level, including involvement with Youth Exchange Program, Tasmania/China Friendship Exchange visits, New Zealand/Australia Matched Student Exchange, Group Study Exchange, and he is currently Assistant Governor.

James is a Workplace Relations Officer in Human Resources at the University of Tasmania where he has been employed since 1998. James has a Diploma of Business (Human Resources). He is active within his local community and is currently a Director and Treasurer of an aged and community care facility in Longford.

## **Susan DANDO**

Susan is 29, and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Bellerive. She lives in Hobart, and is a public servant working at the Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources in Road Safety Policy. Her work involves providing advice and developing policy on major road safety areas, looking both at driver/community behaviour and road infrastructure.

Susan has a combined Arts/Law degree, with honours in politics and law. In 1999 she studied at Oxford in the United Kingdom for three years as a Rhodes Scholar, where she lived at Magdalen College and did a Masters in Law (looking at government regulation) and an MBA.

Outside work, Susan enjoys playing and coaching netball, learning sign language, and is a lover of art history.

## **Sarah FOSTER**

Sarah is 29, and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Longford. She lives in Launceston with her husband James. Sarah has a Bachelor of Applied Science in Medical Laboratory Science and works at the Launceston General Hospital as a Medical Scientist specialising in Microbiology. She is the Secretary and Treasurer of the Australian Society for Microbiology, Tasmania Branch.

Sarah is a keen and talented sportswoman and has represented Tasmania in Indoor Hockey and was selected in the Australian Indoor Hockey team that played New Zealand in 1999. She has also been successful at Highland Dancing and has passed her Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing examination, enabling her to adjudicate competitions worldwide. Sarah has a keen interest in sewing and in genealogy.

## **Aaron MILLAR**

Aaron turned 26 during the exchange visit, and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Sorell. He lives with his fiancé Melissa at Murdunna, a small country town on route to the historic site of Port Arthur, some 60 km south of Tasmania's capital city, Hobart.

Aaron holds an Advanced Diploma in Electrical Engineering and a Diploma in Computer Aided Drafting. He works for a small firm based on the Hobart waterfront and is responsible for the design, documentation, tendering and contract administration of building services for a variety of building projects, including network cabling, fire detection, security, and general light and power systems.

Aaron is a member of the Dunalley volunteer fire brigade and also teaches Adult Education 4-wheel drive courses. In his spare time Aaron enjoys outdoor activities including bushwalking, motorcycle riding and fishing.

## **Fiona SMITH**

Fiona is 32 and was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Ulverstone West. She is a Police Officer attached to the Forensic Services Section at Burnie Police Headquarters on the North West Coast of Tasmania.

As a Crime Scene Examiner, Fiona attends crime scenes and collects and processes a wide range of evidence, including finger-printing, photography, videography, collecting DNA, paint analysis, shoeprint and vehicle tyre impressions. The type of scenes she attends includes burglary, stealing, rape, sexual assault, homicides, serious and fatal motor vehicle accidents, bush, industrial and workplace accidents, sudden deaths including suicides and infant death syndrome, drug offences, and stolen motor vehicles.

Fiona also has a secondary role as a Police Negotiator and is trained on both a State and National level in counter terrorism.

She lives at Ulverstone on Tasmania's north west coast. She is married to Chris and they have a four year old daughter Matilda, a three year old son Jonah, and two dogs and a cat.

Fiona's recreational interests include rowing surf boats for the Ulverstone Surf Lifesaving Club. Her crew are the reigning State Champions and represented Tasmania at the national titles in Victoria during January 2004. She enjoys running, swimming, going to the gym, water-skiing, bushwalking, mini-triathlons and most outdoor activities. Her personal interests include photography, spending time with family and friends, working around the house, entertaining, and craft activities.

# District GSE Committees

## District 9830 Tasmania

Kevin SHADBOLT, District Governor 2003-04

Lew PRETORIUS, Rotary Foundation District Chairman

Terry LOBBAN, GSE Committee Chairman

Bill LETHBORG

Graeme LITTLE

Max SKIRVING

Wayne WALLACE

John WATTS

Jim BAADE

## District 2400 Sweden

Laila Andersson, District Governor 2003-04

Percy DAHLMAN, Rotary Foundation District Chairman

Jöran HULTMAN, GSE Committee Chairman

Liliann BJERSTRÖM

Anders CARELL

Annemargreth JOHANSSON

Olof LINDQUIST

Per NEANDER

Torgil RUNDCRANTZ

Anders RÅNGE

Selma SEDELIUS

Carin WIBÄCK

Arne JÖNHILL

# Host Rotary Clubs

<b>18 - 22 April 2004</b>	<b>Ljungby</b> Ljungby RC, Ljungby-Kungshögen RC
<b>22 April 2004</b>	<b>Markaryd</b> Markaryd RC
<b>22 - 24 April 2004</b>	<b>Laholm</b> Laholm RC and Laholmsbukten RC
<b>24 - 27 April 2004</b>	<b>Halmstad</b> Halmstad RC, Halmstad -Tylösand RC, Halmstad-Gamletull RC, Halmstad-Norreport RC and Halmstad-Tre Hjärtan RC
<b>27 April – 1 May 2004</b>	<b>Ängelholm &amp; Båstad</b> Båstad RC, Ängelholm RC, Ängelholm-Luntertun RC, and Ängelholm-Rönne RC
<b>1 - 5 May 2004</b>	<b>Kristianstad</b> Kristianstad RC, Kristianstad-Gärds RC, Kristianstad-Hammarshus RC, Kristianstad-Vä RC and Kristianstad-Åhus RC
<b>5 - 8 May 2004</b>	<b>Karlskrona</b> Karlskrona RC, Karlskrona af Chapman RC, Karlskrona Rosenbom RC, and Aurora RC
<b>8 - 9 May 2004</b>	<b>District Conference at Ronneby</b>
<b>9 - 11 May 2004</b>	<b>Alvesta</b> Alvesta RC
<b>11 - 13 May 2004</b>	<b>Växjö</b> Växjö RC, Växjö-S:t Sigfrid RC, Växjö Tegnér RC, and Växjö-Öjaby
<b>14 May 2004</b>	<b>Copenhagen</b> Copenhagen RC

# Team Leader's Report

I have been involved with GSE for approximately 15 years, both by hosting GSE participants and more recently as a past member of the District GSE Committee. My application to be a GSE Team Leader was due to an interest to experience first-hand the lifestyle and culture of another country that could best be gained by the format and program of GSE visits.

The assistance provided by DG Kevin Shadbolt, GSE Chairman Terry Lobban and past GSE Team Leaders Robin Archer and Arthur Talbot was extremely valuable in guiding our team in its preparation for the exchange. Each member of the team was committed to the exchange visit, which was evident during the preparation, was most obvious during the visit, and has continued since our return.

My expectations for the visit to D2400 were high and the exchange exceeded those expectations. I was confident that our team would be excellent ambassadors for District 9830 and for Tasmania and in my opinion their performance during the exchange visit was exceptional. I was impressed and continually surprised by their endeavors during the visit, which went beyond anything that could have been expected. At the team's Farewell Dinner, D2400 GSE Chairman PDG Jöran Hultman agreed that the team had been excellent ambassadors and made the observation that each member had given something special to the exchange – they had given their inner self.

## Team member selection

The District GSE Committee invited all clubs within D9830 to seek out appropriate applicants for the exchange with D2400. The District GSE Committee organised a selection day for 9 November 2004 that was attended by all nine candidates nominated by Rotary clubs. Past GSE team leaders and team members assisted the District GSE Committee to conduct an integrated program that included information sessions, group discussions, short presentations and individual interviews.

A panel that comprised the District Governor, District Governor Elect, GSE Chairman and the GSE Team Leader selected the following team members: Susan Dando, Sarah Foster, Aaron Millar and Fiona Smith. Dale Hall-Bowden (nominated by the Rotary Club of Central Launceston) was selected as the reserve team member.

It is important to note that PP Ian Shuey (Rotary Club of Hobart) was selected as Reserve Team Leader. Ian was involved to some extent in helping the team to prepare and he attended two of the orientation/preparation days.

## Orientation/Preparation

The team had approximately five months to prepare but we were always mindful that Christmas/New Year and Easter holidays would reduce the available time needed to complete our preparations for the exchange visit that was scheduled to depart on Friday 16 April 2004.

Initial preparations started immediately following team selection and were carried out mainly via email and telephone communication. The first meeting of the team was on Sunday 7 December 2003, which was also attended by GSE Chairman Terry Lobban and Reserve Team Leader Ian Shuey. The Reserve Team Member, Dale Hall-Bowden, was also present and for all purposes was considered to be a part of the team. Dale was included in all stages of the orientation/preparation and willingly took on a number of tasks.

At this initial meeting, we reviewed the materials available from the Rotary Foundation website which I considered a valuable resource to help prepare the team for the exchange. As Team Leader, I found the *GSE Program Guide for Rotarians* a good reference for planning orientation sessions and for providing team members with a detailed outline of Group Study Exchange. All team members were provided with a copy of the *GSE Team Handbook* and this was used extensively at pre-departure orientation sessions and more generally during the preparation phase to ensure that tasks were completed in the appropriate timeframe.

We also developed a detailed action list that was based on input from past GSE team leaders and members. This action list was used constantly to ensure that all appropriate tasks were being undertaken according to a timeframe that had been agreed by the team.

The team, and some family members, attended a retreat at Currawong Lakes, in the eastern highlands, during the Australia Day long-weekend. This was a very beneficial exercise that allowed us to get to know each other and to progress much of the work that was already well underway, including designing the presentations that we would give at Rotary meetings and at the District 2400 Conference.

A further meeting was held in late February to finalise the team uniform, gifts to be sent to Sweden, to check the final version of the team leaflet and business cards prior to printing, discuss the District 9830 *Code of Conduct and Harassment Policy* and to establish team goals, rules etc.

The team also attended the District 9830 Conference in mid-March that was another great opportunity for us to get to know and understand each other. Our partners also attended the Conference Dinner, which helped them to meet other team members and to understand a little more about the adventure the team was undertaking.

All team members visited their nominating clubs prior to their departure. This gave them an opportunity to witness how Rotary operates in Tasmania and to gain some knowledge on the types of activities and projects carried out by our clubs. All nominating clubs provided a financial contribution to their GSE team member, which was sincerely appreciated.

Team members conducted research on the host district particularly in regard to vocational possibilities and industry visits that were likely to take place. This research was intensified once the host GSE Committee provided a copy of the itinerary. Receiving an advance copy of the itinerary, even in early draft form, was a great advantage in preparing for the exchange.

A significant advantage that we had during the preparation stage was the presence of the visiting D2400 GSE Team in our District. I encouraged our team to attend club meetings where the Swedish team was giving presentations and to mix with them at the District 9830 Conference and Dinner. The friendly and positive attitude of the visiting Swedish team gave us great confidence that we would be well received and cared for in Sweden. I appreciated the assistance of the Swedish team and in particular the constructive comments of their Team Leader, Anders Johansson.

The assistance of Linda Sesta of American Express [the agent for Rotary International Travel Service] must be acknowledged. Linda was clear and direct in any communication and ensured that our travel documentation was available well before our departure date.

I appreciated the advice and assistance that past team leaders (Robin Archer and Arthur Talbot in particular) were able to provide whenever I sought it out. Their cooperative approach and willingness to help was very beneficial to the team and to me. They were always careful to clarify any advice or information with a statement that whilst GSE experiences will have many similarities there will be unique and wonderful differences. They provided examples of presentations and other team materials, which saved us considerable time.

The D9830 GSE Chairman, PP Terry Lobban, was readily available to attend our orientation/preparation sessions and to provide any help that was required. Terry's extensive knowledge of GSE and positive input were invaluable during the pre-departure period and this assistance was clearly a significant factor in the success of our exchange.

## **The Rotary Districts**

The Rotary Districts were well matched which was a very significant contributing factor in the success of both exchange visits.

District 9830 Tasmania has 50 clubs with 1,520 Rotarians and District 2400 Sweden has 57 clubs with some 3,200 Rotarians. The majority of clubs in D9830 have evening dinner meetings whereas the majority of clubs in D2400 have lunchtime meetings. There is a notable difference in the ages of Rotarians with the average age in D2400 being estimated at some 10-15 years older than in D9830. Another significant difference is that there are a larger number and variety of community service projects undertaken by Rotary clubs in Tasmania. The Swedish social welfare system provides a high level of support to individual and community needs, which means that there is not the same level of support required from community service organisations like Rotary.

District 9830 covers the island state of Tasmania, which has an area of 68,000 square kilometers and a population of 480,000 people. District 2400 includes the counties of Kronoberg, Blekinge, part of Skåne and the southern half of Halland in the south of Sweden. The population of the District is about 750,000 people. The regions share similarities in industries such as forestry, agriculture and aquaculture. There appears to be a higher number of larger manufacturing industries in the Swedish district and a clear strategy to develop further industry – something that Tasmania aspires to.

## **District 2400 GSE Committee**

GSE Chairman PDG Jöran Hultman provided a high level of support to the team both prior to and during the exchange. He maintained email contact with both our GSE Chairman and with me prior to the exchange to keep us informed about the arrangements that were being put in place for our visit. Jöran was clearly interested in providing our team with an experience that would be relevant, informative and exciting. He ensured that we received a copy of the program some two weeks prior to our departure, which provided us with assurance about the program that had been arranged.

The D2400 GSE Committee undertook a very active role in the organisation and conduct of the program and its members were always available to assist our team and to ensure the program progressed according to plan. The co-operation and involvement of the D2400 GSE Committee members and Area/Club Coordinators was most valuable, was extremely well received by our team and it helped ensure the success of the exchange.

During our first full day in Sweden we met with the D2400 GSE Committee for an informal lunch, personal introductions and a review of the itinerary. Almost all of the eleven GSE Committee members were present together with D2400 GSE Team Leader Anders Johansson. Their personal warmth, generosity and keen interest in our wellbeing was very evident to us.

## **The itinerary**

The itinerary prepared by the D2400 GSE Committee provided great variety, covered a wide range of relevant activities and presented a valuable insight into the culture and lifestyle of the people of southern Sweden.

A more detailed outline of the itinerary is included later in the report [pages 20-21] and it can be seen that we had a very full four week program. There was ample time for us to interact with our hosts and there were also a good number of social events that included all hosts and team members. These social occasions were an excellent way for the team to get to meet other hosts and to continue to get to know each other.

The itinerary did not include any significant time for the mid-term break and this is one issue that I would encourage GSE Committees to consider for future exchanges. In respect of a four-week exchange, I believe that a break involving an overnight stay would be ideal and would be appreciated by all team members as an opportunity to relax and refresh.

At a very early stage during the organising of our exchange, GSE Chairman Jöran Hultman identified that the end of our exchange visit would coincide with the wedding of Mary Donaldson, a fellow Tasmanian, to Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik. Jöran understood our interest in this event and was therefore very keen for us to be in Copenhagen on the day of the wedding. The itinerary provided for us to end the exchange in Copenhagen and for DG Laila Anderson, Jöran, and GSE Committee member Carin Wibäck to transport us to Copenhagen and spend the final two days with us. This is just one example of the extraordinary lengths that the D2400 GSE Committee went to in order to provide an exciting itinerary for our exchange.

## **Host families**

Host families were very welcoming of our team members and did everything possible to ensure that our stays with them were enjoyable. Their hospitality and friendship was exceptional. It was evident that good relationships quickly developed between the hosts and team members and there were frequently sad goodbyes when it was time to leave and move to a new club.

As mentioned above, there was ample opportunity for the team members and hosts to spend time with each other and for us all to come together as a group, which enabled team members to develop stronger friendships with each other and importantly to get to know other hosts.

Team members had eight host families each during the exchange, with the exception of Aaron and Susan who both had nine host families. Some may consider this involved moving families too often but our team had few concerns, which was largely due to the ability of all hosts to make us feel welcome and assist us to quickly settle-in to new environments.

## **Vocational, educational and cultural experiences**

Prior to the exchange I had limited knowledge of Sweden's history, geography, government, industries etc. Neither did I have a full understanding of its people, their culture and lifestyle. The itinerary provided a good balance between these areas of interest and also included opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

I now have a more detailed understanding and greater interest in Sweden and its people, especially in respect to the southern area of Sweden that we visited. I have a strong respect for the Swedish people and believe that I understand their culture and appreciate their lifestyle. Importantly, I recognise that there are many similarities between the people of Sweden and Tasmania with regard to our culture, beliefs and concerns.

I was able to meet and have detailed discussions with a number of human resources practitioners during my individual vocational visits. This included people working in municipal and county administrations and also within the higher education sector in which I am employed.

These discussions were very beneficial and provided me with an opportunity to learn about industrial and employment related policies and practices that apply in a more socialist society than we have in Australia. I believe that the many group visits we made to other businesses and factories were also a valuable professional opportunity as I was able to see and experience the management practices, organisational processes and working conditions that apply in a variety of industries and in companies of varying sizes.

## **Presentations at Rotary meetings**

The team gave presentations to eight Rotary meetings, which involved one evening meeting in Ljungby and the remainder being lunchtime meetings. The majority of meetings were open to members of Rotary clubs within the respective area and it is estimated that a total of 500 Rotarians representing 28 clubs were present at the meetings. In addition, we provided a presentation to an invited audience in Båstad that included Count Carl-Johan Bernadotte, the son of former King Gustav VI Adolf of Sweden and uncle of the current Queen of Denmark.

The presentations were exceedingly well received by all audiences and drew many complements about the professional and lively manner in which they were delivered. The 30 minute PowerPoint presentation treated the audience to a tour of Tasmania and included personal and vocational details on each member of the team. The presentation also included details on some of the Rotary projects being undertaken at District and Club level in Tasmania and these items were varied throughout the exchange visit to provide a wide coverage.

We had obtained from Tourism Tasmania a large quantity of booklets titled *Tasmania, beyond imagination*. The booklet provides a wide variety of information about Tasmania that is presented in a brief and easy to read format. We were able to present each person that attended our presentations with a booklet and with a leaflet that contains details of our team. In addition, each Rotary Club President was presented with an Australian flag provided to our team by members of State and Federal parliament.

The team also gave a farewell presentation in Växjö to a dinner attended by 34 people who were mainly hosts and D2400 GSE Committee members. It was a very enjoyable dinner that was highlighted by a warm and humorous review of our four weeks in Sweden.

During our pre-departure preparations the team had decided to take with us an assortment of soft-filled toy Tasmanian animals to be used during our presentations. Rotarians and hosts were very interested in these animals and so it was decided to auction them at the farewell dinner. The proceeds from the auction, which was conducted by Anders Johansson, far exceeded our expectations by raising 5,100 SEK (approximately AUS\$1,000) that the team donated to D2400 Rotary Foundation.

## **District Conference**

We were allocated 25 minutes for our presentation to the District Conference held at Ronneby, which was attended by close to 200 people. The presentation was tailored to meet a larger, more formal audience and was exceptionally well received.

GSE Chairman PDG Jöran Hultman requested our team to meet with Anders Johansson and members of his team during the Saturday afternoon to discuss our respective exchange visits with a view to identifying problems and if possible to develop ideas to make GSE a more appropriate and worthwhile experience. A summary of those discussions has since been provided to the GSE Chairman in D2400 and D9830.

The Conference Dinner and post-dinner entertainment were great opportunities for the team to meet and mix with Rotarians and to renew friendships with the Rotarians and hosts that we had met earlier in our travels.

## **Following the exchange visit**

At the end of the GSE visit, Aaron Millar and Fiona Smith returned immediately home to Tasmania. The other three team members extended their stays and travelled independently through Scandinavia and Europe. This opportunity to visit new places and experience different cultures is an important aspect of the GSE program which should not be overlooked.

Upon our return to Tasmania an email was forwarded to all Rotary clubs advising that the team was keen to attend club meetings as guest speakers. The response has been astonishing and currently we have either attended, or are scheduled to attend, 32 of the 50 clubs within the District to give presentations on our GSE visit to D2400 Sweden. Whenever possible we have attended meetings in pairs and on one occasion four of the team were able to give a presentation. It is encouraging that many clubs have chosen to hold partners/guests nights which has expanded the number and range of people that we have addressed. Presentations have also been provided to work and interest groups such as Tasmania Police and Tasmania Fire Service. The feedback from the meetings has been very positive both in regard to the quality of the presentations and about the value of Group Study Exchange.

Members of the team, particularly Fiona Smith, have been successful in having articles about the GSE visit published in local newspapers and in work magazines. Copies of these articles are included as attachments to the report.

It is particularly satisfying to see that the friendships that developed between team members have continued since our return. There is still constant communication between us some months after the end of the exchange and we take any possible chance to meet with each other.

## **Achievement of goals of GSE**

I am convinced that the goals and objectives of Group Study Exchange have been achieved to a high degree through this program.

The team members obviously gained important insights into their respective vocations and this is already having, and will continue to have, an impact on their careers. I note that in the individual team member reports, Susan Dando, Aaron Millar and Fiona Smith have made specific mention of the importance of the vocational visits and have brought back ideas for implementation within their workplaces and professions.

The development of leadership and teamwork skills of the team members has been evident through the preparation stage, during the visit and also since our return. I have been impressed by the improved public speaking skills of the team members with marked improvement in some cases.

The team benefited greatly from the challenges presented by the cultural variations that inevitably occur during GSE visits. We eagerly embraced the different experiences, food, drinks and traditions encountered during the four weeks of the exchange and during the additional travel periods where applicable.

I believe that we gained most from the opportunity we had to meet some incredible Swedish people, particularly the Rotarians, partners and families that either hosted us or were prepared to be involved with our visit. Their caring friendship and goodwill will always be remembered. I am sure that we all developed increased confidence in being able to meet, develop rapport and communicate with people from different backgrounds; in terms of ages, occupations and interests.

**James Wilcox**

GSE Team Leader

D9830 GSE Team to D2400 Sweden

# Team Member Reports

## Susan DANDO

At the age of seventeen, the Rotary Club of North Hobart sponsored me to spend two incredible weeks at the National Science Summer School in Canberra. I promptly rewarded their belief in me by deciding that I didn't want to be a scientist (the Club thankfully agreed that it was better to know sooner rather than later!) and embarked on a law degree, and more than ten years later found myself working as a public servant in the area of road safety. Having reached the ripe old age of twenty-nine, I thought it was fairly safe to assume that the only trips I'd be having from now on would be self-funded (and hence sometime into the future!).

But no! This time it was the Rotary Club of Bellerive to the rescue, with an offer of sponsorship for the Group Study Exchange trip to Sweden. With Sweden a world leader in road safety practices the opportunity was a fantastic one, both personally and for my workplace. Having returned from an incredible four weeks away, I can once again thank Rotary for giving me a set of personal and professional experiences that have widened my horizons and greatly enriched my life. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Rotary Club of Bellerive, the Group Study Exchange Committees in Tasmania and Sweden's District 2400, my wonderful host families, those who spent such considerable time with me on my vocational days and during our team activities, our team leader James Wilcox for his sincere and generous care and leadership, and my team mates Aaron, Fiona and Sarah for their friendship and camaraderie before, during and after the wonderful trip.

### The Team and pre-Trip Nerves

Right from the outset I was more than a little daunted by the requirements of the Exchange. It might be the norm for rock stars and politicians, but spending the majority of your day on show, being in the pockets of four other people (who are virtual strangers when you start out), and moving from A to B every couple of hours or days is not the sort of thing an average person can even imagine. Everyone would like to think that they have the sensitivity, patience and team spirit to handle it with panache, but you never really know until you've been put to the test, and the GSE was certainly going to be that!

From the beginning it was clear that I was travelling with a fantastic bunch of people, and that dealing with the intensity of the schedule would be one of the major learning experiences of the trip. It was evident from our time together preparing and during the first strange and disorienting few days in Sweden that I was in a team where things would be handled with humour and honesty, and that we would learn as much from each other as from the trip itself. Almost instantly my apprehension was replaced by excitement and a knowledge that I would come out of the other end of the trip with an appreciation of some personal shortcomings ("Me? A control freak?") and a new-found ability to really step back and enjoy the moment.

### The Itinerary

The itinerary certainly was jam-packed, but I'd be hard-pressed to pick something I would have left out. The amount of effort involved in organising the activities, and the time and energy people gave to us, was at times overwhelming. It is a very humbling experience to have people give so much to make sure you enjoy your trip and see the best that their country has to offer. A passing comment about how I loved Scandinavian furniture translated to a special trip to Hansson's Furniture, where I got to sit in a particular chair I've always dreamed (and still dream) of owning. Another comment about loving art resulted in a visit to an artist's studio to meet the artist and see special pieces of his work for private buyers.

Before the trip I knew little about Sweden other than road safety, Abba and Volvo. The activities gave me a real insight into a new country – its government, community, business, culture, sense of humour, and history. The only area where I felt a bit in the dark was the language. The English of the average Swede is so fantastic that we barely learned any Swedish but “thank you” – and were unfairly congratulated at every occasion for managing that!

## **Host Families**

That said, my enthusiasm to learn some Swedish was affected somewhat when two of my host “sisters” taught me a range of phrases that (after I proudly recounted them at the dinner table) turned out to be profane in the extreme! This, however, sums up how quickly we were embraced by our hosts and treated like part of the family. With smorgasbords, schnapps and singing provided at every stop, the experience of living in the homes of Rotarians and their families was amazing. Although we were only with a family for a few days at a time, leaving was always very sad – even though we knew we were moving to another place where we’d be equally welcomed and made to feel at home.

At every stop I was looked after as if I was staying with my own family (well, probably better), and it was with my hosts that I learned many of the little things about a country that you don’t get to know as an average tourist. I tasted the local delicacies (it turns out moose and reindeer are delicious, and I’m very partial to the pickled herring!), learned that “Skol” said before a drink means “Cheers” rather than “Skull” (and that schnapps is very potent), and that even if you’ve got a terrible voice you’re expected to sing for your supper (a task that is made much easier by a few schnapps I might add!). I’m so grateful for the kindness and generosity of my families, and hope that if they are in Australia that they receive the same level of hospitality that we were afforded.

## **Vocational Days**

The vocational days were definitely a highlight of my trip. Road safety in Sweden is a blueprint for other nations, and the way in which they translate their policies into action was of great interest to me. I spent time with the Alvesta chief town planner, Ängelholm policy makers, the Halmstad traffic police, the Managing Director of Folksam Auto (an insurance agency that specialises in road safety) in Växjö, and the Swedish National Road Authority in Kristianstad. It was an invaluable opportunity to gather important information for my work, and I made contacts that I use on a weekly basis now that I’ve returned to work in Tasmania. To take an entire day out of work to spend time with a stranger from overseas with a million questions is a very big ask, and I appreciate how generous with their time and knowledge those involved in my vocational days were.

## **Returning Home**

It must sometimes be difficult to determine just how much GSE contributes to the everyday life of participants when they return home. I can say with certainty that the benefits to my workplace from the vocational visits are enormous – I gained a level of knowledge that can only be acquired through real experience, and made contacts that are of ongoing help to policy-making in Tasmania. In terms of personal benefits, it is hard to overstate how important the GSE is to me. I had a wonderful trip, made fantastic friends, and had experiences I could not have dreamed of. Why be a rock star or politician when you can have much better experiences on GSE?! I am very grateful for the opportunity, and once again thank my team leader and team mates, the Rotary Foundation and the Rotarians of District 9830 and 2400 for this fantastic experience.

## **Susan Dando**

D9830 GSE Team to D2400 Sweden

## **Sarah FOSTER**

Spending a year overseas in 1993 would have to be up until present time, one of the biggest highlights of my life. The opportunity to experience a country with such diverse culture to our own, is such a rare opportunity for any person and one perhaps that I was a little timid and at the last minute somewhat apprehensive of. That year as a Rotary Youth Exchange student, although I would not know it at the time, was the grounding for my internal desire to learn about different cultures and languages.

After 1993, I believed the only contact I would experience with another country (other than Germany) would be as one of those backpackers, lugging a pack two-thirds of my size and inhabiting every youth hostel known to man on either side of the equator. However, when asked in general conversation by a colleague "So Sarah, how would you like to go Sweden?", of course my immediate response was "When do we leave?". I was told all it required was a simple written application, an interview and you're off!

In theory, the whole application process sounded dead easy and I was slightly reluctant considering the ease of obtaining a "spot" on the team. As the telling day drew closer, and my Rotary Club informed me of what was involved, the body temperature rose, the sweat appeared and the heartbeat raced. On a personal note, I found the selection day quite stressful, however quite reflective of my time in Sweden (which was ultimately to prevail). Seven hours of smiling, listening attentively and making out you are the nicest, sweetest person on Earth. Sweden here we come.....

Four months of preparation was an ideal period of time in which to team-bond, prepare our presentations and organise what we planned to take. Our preparation went smoothly not only because all team members were extremely accommodating, but primarily due to the leadership and organisational behaviour shown to us by our team leader, James Wilcox. James organised a schedule so that all members knew what needed to be done and when. His dedication and leadership are a credit to the success of our exchange.

Exchanges such as GSE are a successful operation when the GSE Committee in a district works hand in hand with the Rotary Clubs involved and as a result with the host families. Whilst in District 2400, I was lucky enough to share households and make lifelong friends with 8 Rotarian families. Although I only had one family with children still at home, I found the "childless" family situation very comfortable and somewhat more relaxed. All of my host families were tremendous, extremely amiable and very proud of their country. The opportunity to experience the Swedish culture, food and daily life by living in a host family was one I will appreciate and cherish forever.

In summarising my experiences it is hard to highlight areas that were superior to others. Four weeks of dining on exquisite Swedish cuisine, visiting Swedish industries, living in Swedish families and learning about 4 other people from my own homeland is an experience that cannot be written in one or two pages. Our program whilst in Sweden was very full, varied and extremely interesting and I thank the Rotary District of 2400 for their preparation and thought regarding this.

Rotary International through the Rotary Foundation's GSE program has yet again broadened my horizons and inspired me to eat new foods and meet new people. I thank the Rotary District 9830 dearly for the opportunity of a lifetime and my hosting district, Rotary District 2400, for my making my (our) trip unforgettable and inspirational. To my team, as individuals you are amazing people, as a team we were awesome. Thanks for the memories.

**Sarah Foster**

D9830 GSE Team to D2400 Sweden

## Aaron MILLAR

“Are you interested in doing some international travel?” asked a business owner in the same town as my parent’s business. “Well... I haven’t seen much of Australia yet” came my reply. How grateful am I now that Mr. John Davis, a Rotarian in the small town of Dunalley saw me as being a suitable candidate for the GSE program of the Rotary Foundation.

Selection involved the writing of an essay and a gruelling day of interviews, shaking hands, smiling, and generally attempting to show that I should be one of the four team members set to the task that lay ahead. I realise now, how little I knew then about that task and what it really represented as an experience to learn about another culture and my occupation as it is carried out on the opposite side of the globe.

Our trip began on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2004 when we caught a very cold 6:00 am flight out of Launceston Airport. A quick stop in Melbourne and an overnight stop in Japan and we were soon jet lagged to the max and flying into Copenhagen. We had 160 days from selection to take off and even with a number of team meetings and a study preparation weekend, I honestly believe that the true forming of our team started when we stepped on that plane. The team selection process was obviously extremely effective as there were no major issues between team members and following our trip to Sweden we all remain very good friends who experienced something that only other GSE team members can comprehend.

The people of Sweden are generally friendly, kind, and share similar humour and concerns as people from Australia. My hosts were certainly no exception to this rule. Their efforts were at times simply amazing. One of my hosts had borrowed a SAAB motor car from their local dealer so that I could experience a ride in “a great Swedish built vehicle”. Another host had only been a Rotarian for 2 weeks prior to opening up his home for my welcome. I found it hardest to be in homes with children, only because I knew that every 4 days we would be moving on and I would have to wish them farewell. However I would not have traded the experience of enjoying the Swedish family life for an easier departure. I spent my 26<sup>th</sup> birthday with a family of 2 children who sang me Happy Birthday in Swedish around the breakfast table; a very simple experience, but one that I will remember on every birthday that follows.

My itinerary was generally well planned and vocational days were of great value and education. Whilst in Sweden I presented one fire brigade chief with a plaque on behalf of the Tasmanian Fire Service and told him of the recent celebrations for the 120th year anniversary of the Hobart Fire Brigade. It was coincidental that their brigade had celebrated its 200th year anniversary in 2003. As a token of my visit the chief requested that I bring back a book to Tasmania, which I have since presented to our fire service.

I would like to make one suggestion with regard to setting each GSE itinerary. My recommendation is to leave one day toward the end of the itinerary free for each team member to return to one aspect that they have seen or experienced during the GSE, to enable them to complete additional investigation into that item. This item could be nominated by each team member at the mid-term break, so that plans can be made to return or find out more about that particular aspect. I know that within our team all team members said “Oh I wish I could just have a little more time to go back and find out more about .....

As an electrical consultant I was able to obtain education from every building that contained electric power and lighting. One of my most valuable experiences was a tour of a heating manufacturer who used wasted heat from exhaust steam to produce house heating. I have since briefed a group of architects in Tasmania on this technology and we continue our investigations into the viability of that technology in our part of the world.

Our month in Sweden was well planned to fit around the wedding of Mary Donaldson in Denmark, and before coming home we spent two days in Copenhagen and proudly wandered through the city streets with Tasmanian flags draped across our shoulders. This in itself was a marvellous cultural experience, one that I'm sure will not be equalled soon.

Today I sit at my computer feeling quite fortunate that I was selected not only as a team member for the GSE program but as a member in a team of fine, friendly, intelligent and considerate people. I commit a large portion of credit to our Rotarian team leader James Wilcox, whose skills in organisation and guidance cleared the way for the best experience possible. I have made 4 life long friends in my fellow team members and I continue to meet new friends through the Rotary 9830 District.

For a young fella from Dunalley, my trip to Sweden certainly was an educational and exciting adventure and I can only hope that many other business professionals get the opportunity to participate in this fantastic program.

**Aaron Millar**

D9830 GSE Team to D2400 Sweden

## **Fiona SMITH**

When I was a student at college I was selected to participate in a youth exchange program to the USA for a year, and I can honestly say that one of my only regrets in life was passing up this opportunity, as I decided to pursue a career with Tasmania Police instead. I have been a Police Officer for almost 13 years.

A lot has happened in my life since that time – I am married with a 4 year old daughter and a 3 year old son, 2 dogs and a cat. I am a Crime Scene Examiner in the Forensic Services Section at Burnie Police Head Quarters and I am also a Police Negotiator. I have my 'dream job' and have always yearned to experience police work in another country. Part of my job entails community presentations and I did one for the Rotary Club of Ulverstone West, got onto the subject of GSE and as a result they offered to sponsor me for a GSE trip to District 2400 in Sweden in April 2004.

I thought I would apply for the GSE, not expecting to be selected, making myself known to the selection panel and hoping to make a lasting impression so then when I re-applied in a couple of years time when my children were a bit older, I would be remembered and selected.

Surprisingly I was one of 5 team members selected that day. Talk about mixed emotions!!! I went home and cried, not knowing how I would be able to leave my children for a month to travel to the other side of the world and even considered withdrawing from the team. I believe fate prevailed, and with family support I accepted that I was off to Sweden.

With only 160 days from selection day till we departed, over a busy time of year – Christmas, New Year, two interstate rowing trips, a week away for a work exercise, - I accepted the fact that I was not going to be awarded "Mother of The Year 2004"!! Time with the family was precious.

I knew from our first meeting that I was going to be a member of a team of wonderful people. I believe our different personalities is what made our team gel from day one. A preparation and bonding weekend away sharing accommodation reiterated that we could make the most of each situation, compromise, share, be creative and work together as a team, and this was evident throughout our time spent in Sweden together.

The District 2400 GSE Committee were absolutely wonderful and I am truly grateful for their friendship, commitment, and effort that they put into our itinerary. We were on the go from early in the morning to very late at night. Stamina is essential! Bedtime for me was after midnight every night. I loved visiting industries and places that a tourist would not normally see, especially those relevant to me including the Magistrates Court, prison, childcare centre and police stations.

The Vocational Days were the highlight of my trip, as I knew they would be. I could have easily spent the whole month doing police work in Sweden and still have been happy. I spent time with the Forensic Services, Drug Squad, Bomb Squad, Negotiation Unit and even forfeited some sleep and worked a night shift with the Uniform Police. I have made some great friends and contacts and exchanged ideas with the Swedish police, and I am currently in the process of hopefully implementing a fingerprint technique, which I learnt in Sweden, to Tasmania Police.

I was extremely fortunate to have fantastic host families. I enjoyed living as the Swedes do and was lucky to experience life living in the country, in a small town, by the sea, in the city and even in a castle! I don't think I'll want to stay in a hotel ever again. My hosts all treated me like a daughter and welcomed me into their homes, and the hardest part of my GSE experience was saying goodbye to them, with tears on quite a few occasions, but I do hope to see some of them in the future.

The food was great (which resulted in me not being able to do the zip of my skirt up towards the end of the trip). The people spoke fluent English, so there were no communication problems and I found the Swedes to be very relaxed people.

Attending the Rotary meetings did not take long to get accustomed to and I loved seeing the reactions on the faces of the Rotarians during our PowerPoint presentation of Tasmania. They were absolutely in awe of our beautiful island state, and I felt very proud to be an ambassador for Tasmania and Rotary.

Attending the Danish Royal Wedding was the most perfect way to end a trip of a lifetime. I have made friends for life and was 'in mourning' for the rest of my team when I arrived home after spending almost every day for a month with them. I am grateful for their friendship and support, and thank the Rotary Club of Ulverstone West, the Rotarians of Districts 9830 and 2400, the Rotary Foundation and Tasmania Police for this awesome opportunity and wonderful memories. I hope that one day, when my children are older, I will join Rotary and give back to them what they have given me.

**Fiona Smith**

D9830 GSE Team to D2400 Sweden

# Itinerary for GSE Visit

The itinerary prepared by the D2400 GSE Committee provided great variety, covered a wide range of relevant activities and presented a valuable insight into the culture and lifestyle of the people of southern Sweden. The itinerary provided a great variety of activities, including:

## **Educational visits**

- Educational Training Centre of Swedish Forest Industries
- Musan Day Care Centre - it has a cultural development profile
- Halmstad Armed Forces School
- Karlskrona Naval Museum
- Växjö University

## **Government visits**

- Ljungby Magistrates Court
- Police Authority of Halland
- Skåne Regional Council
- Municipality of Karlskrona
- Växjö Municipal Office

## **Industry visits**

- Strålfors Svenska – paper printing and printing logistics company
- Electrolux Laundry Systems – manufacturers of commercial clothes washing systems
- NIBE Heat Pump Centre and NIBE Stoves
- Ågård pig farm – large scale pork production farm
- Hallandsås Tunnel construction – presentation on the building of twin-track railway tunnel
- Old Hosiery Mill – makers of socks and hosiery
- Hansson's Furniture – Nordic furniture design
- Absolut Vodka factory
- Karlskrona Telecom City
- Black Rocks diabase quarry – quarrying of black quartz rock unique to the region
- Wida Timber softwood processing mill
- IKEA international headquarters and super store
- Water Boys irrigation specialists

## **Cultural activities**

- Ljungberg Museum – paintings by Swedish artist Sven Ljungberg
- Museum of the Legends – Swedish fairy tales
- Swedish Tennis Museum – tour of museum and visit to outdoor tennis courts
- Country Tailor – national traditional costume maker
- Sofia Nilsson clay cuckoo handicraft and exhibition
- Walpurgis Night – bonfires and singing to welcome the arrival of spring
- Student's of Lund University ceremony for Rector Magnificus with male choir

## **Recreational activities**

- Tree planting in a cypress forest
- Target and trap shooting
- Golf driving range and golf course
- Hovs Hallar nature reserve
- Skåne Djurpark animal reserve
- Sauna and swimming

# Individual Vocational Visits

The itinerary provided for approximately three and a half individual vocational days, which was somewhat less than we were expecting.

All members of the Team considered that the vocational visits were extremely beneficial and to a large extent met their expectations. It is considered that there needs to be more coordination between Area/Club Coordinators to ensure that a wide range of experiences is provided and to limit the possibility of duplication.

## James Wilcox

- **Centre for Information Logistics** in Ljungby  
Information management
- **Halmstad University**  
International programs
- **Halland County Office** in Halmstad  
County administration
- **Kristianstad Municipality**  
Municipal administration  
Personnel administration
- **Växjö University**  
Personnel administration

## Susan Dando

- **Municipality of Alvesta**  
Traffic planning
- **Folksam Auto** in Växjö  
Insurance agency specialising in road safety
- **Police Authority of Halland**  
Traffic policing and vehicle safety
- **Ängelholm City Council**  
Noise pollution related traffic planning
- **Swedish National Road Authority** in Kristianstad  
National road safety policy

## **Sarah Foster**

- **Ljungby Hospital**  
Microbiology, theatre and endoscopy
- **Halmstad Hospital**  
Microbiology, transfusion and mycology
- **Lund University Hospital**  
Microbiology techniques
- **Kristianstad Hospital**  
Microbiology, bench reading

## **Aaron Millar**

- **Ljungby Municipality**  
Rubbish disposal and building control,  
Fire Brigade
- **NEA Contractors**  
Inspection of electrical installations
- **Halmstad Fire Brigade**  
Tour of hospital and airport fire response facilities
- **Angelholm Fire Brigade**  
Tour of emergency response centre  
and brigade facility

## **Fiona Smith**

- **Ljungby Police Station**  
Visit down-sized Police Headquarters
- **Växjö Police Headquarters**  
Negotiation Unit, Forensic Services
- **Halmstad Police Headquarters**  
Nightshift, General Duties & Patrol  
Communications Section
- **Police Authority of Halland**  
Station Tour, Forensic Services
- **Laholm Police Headquarters**  
Forensic Services, Drug Squad,  
Bomb Response Group
- **Malmo Police Headquarters**  
Forensic Services
- **Kristianstad Police Headquarters**  
Station Tour
- **Växjö University**  
Police Academy visit