

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023

## Rotas

**"I've got a little list."**

W S Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, *The Mikado* (Ko Ko)

I've recently been organising several rotas (or "rosters", for my American friends) and it's doing my head in! Getting the lists in order, so that a set of tasks is covered by the right number of people at the right time, varies between herding cats or nailing fog to a wall. Some rotas are easier to plan than others, but a few are well-nigh impossible. Aarrgghh!!!

An on-line dictionary gives the meaning of "rota" as follows:

**Rota** ['rəʊtə] **NOUN**

1. a list showing when each of a number of people has to do a particular job:  
EG "*a cleaning rota*". Compare with **roster**.

**SIMILAR:** *LIST, SCHEDULE, REGISTER, TIMETABLE, CALENDAR*

2. (THE ROTA)

the supreme ecclesiastical and secular court of the Roman Catholic Church.

Now, that's all very well if people are flexible enough to step in at a moment's notice. But it *doesn't* mention call-offs (Sorry, emergency dental appointment), mistakes (Oh, I forgot about my daughter's birthday), forgetfulness, (Was I on the list for *today*?), grumpiness (I don't like working with him), lateness (The bus broke down), illness (It's my feet again ...) and a host of other understandable but irritating human traits. And as for "the supreme ecclesiastical and secular court of the Roman Catholic Church", I think I'll leave *that* rota to others to work with ...

But there's a *good* side too. Firstly, as I mentioned recently, most rotas are filled by volunteers. So, let's be grateful that people are prepared to give up their time for a worthwhile cause, and don't let us be too irritated by the vagaries of the human condition. Second, someone said to me today: "Thanks for organising the rota for us. I know it's tough, but it's much appreciated." I liked that! And thirdly, I had a call-off in one of my rotas recently – a Covid-related issue. And within a *very* short time, someone had offered to fill the gap, and "double-up" on their part in the rota. Isn't that terrific? It looks like I'll not have to herd *these* cats after all, because they're all going together in the same direction anyway ...

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, when I take my place and play my part, help me to be grateful for the opportunity, to appreciate others doing the same and say "thank you" to the organisers too. Amen*