

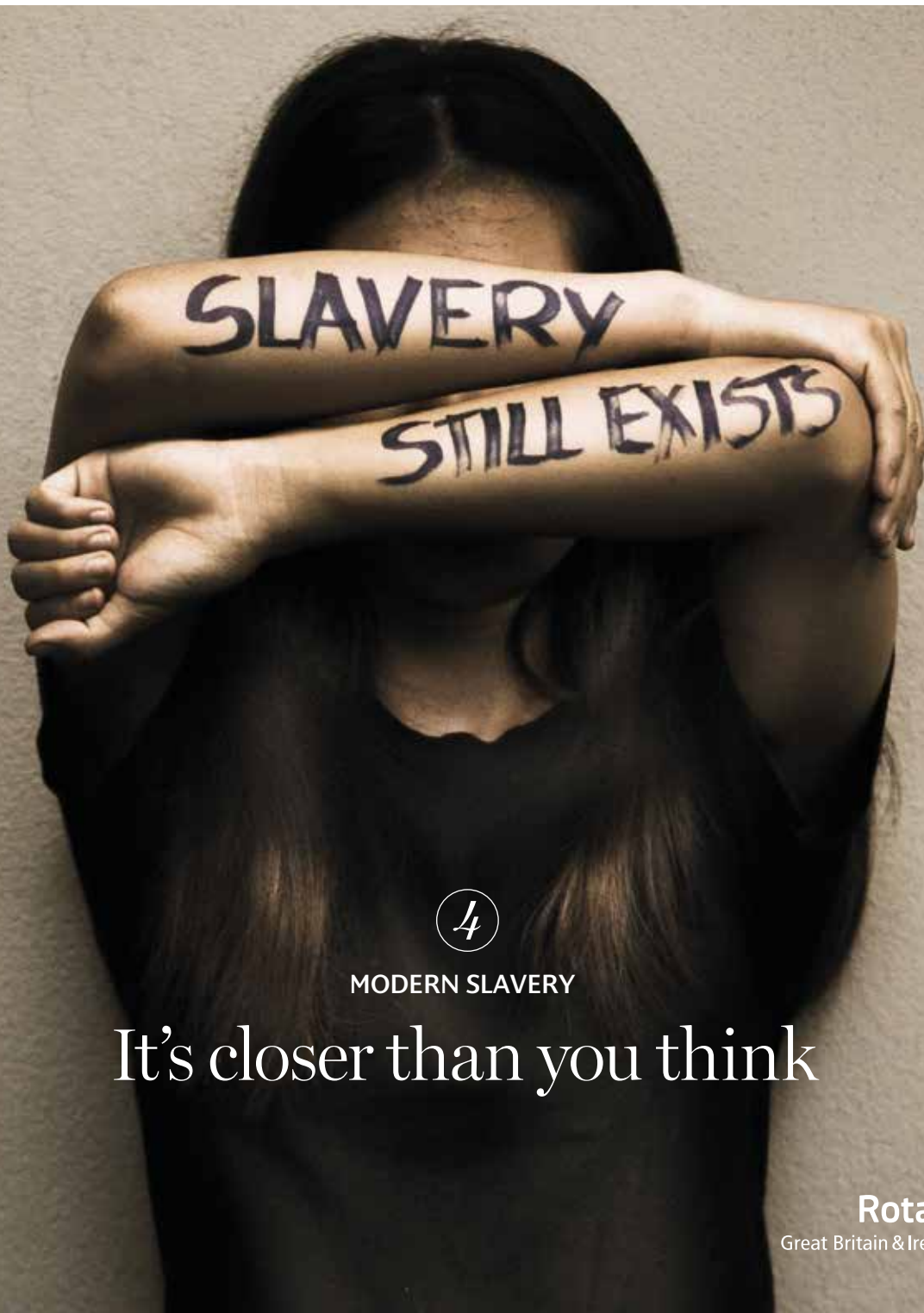
Rotary

The Official Magazine of Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland

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April/May 2019



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MODERN SLAVERY

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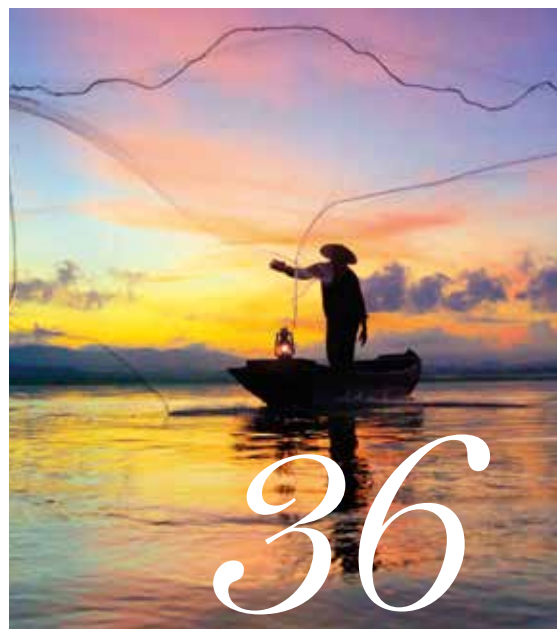
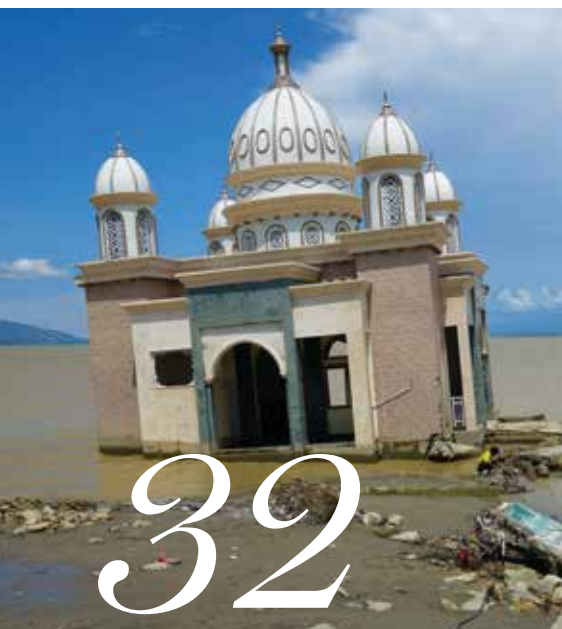
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COVER STORY

Modern Slavery

Telling the story of modern slavery in a modern world.



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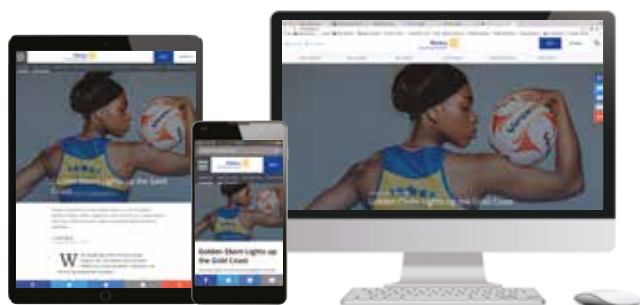
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EVEN MORE ONLINE



A blight on society

It is estimated 45.8 million people worldwide are trapped in some form of slavery, with estimates reckoning 14,000 victims are living in the UK. May's Rotary Conference and Showcase in Nottingham will host a modern slavery symposium. In a series of articles, Dave King looks at this blight on modern society.

WALKING down a quiet, leafy street in London, you wouldn't cast a second glance at the ordinary-looking, three-storey town house.

Outside, life goes on as normal – children are playing in the park, a young couple are laden with bags of shopping and the postman is doing his rounds.

Life goes on as normal. But for the occupants of Caritas Bakhita House, life is anything but. For the dozen women living here, their lives have been turned upside down as victims of modern slavery. This is their sanctuary, this is their safe-house.

"The point of Bakhita House is to give each guest who arrives here a better life in the future, and to help them to develop that," explained service manager, Karen Anstiss.

"They come through the door, often very broken, very traumatised and with no hope. We put a care package around them, through our team and the volunteers.

"We help them to find a way that they can move on and have a much better life.

"To find an independence that they have never had before.

"Most of the women who come to us have never had control of what they wear, or what they do on a daily basis; things that you and I accept as normal.

"You and I, if we are hungry, might go to a supermarket and get a sandwich or buy ourselves a coffee. They don't even make those simple decisions.

"So, it is about caring for a person, and giving them back the strength to become their own person, to make their own decisions, to step away from being controlled, to find that life that a lot of us take for granted."

The project is named after St Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

Bakhita House was set up by the Catholic Church, opening its doors in June 2015. It has strong links with Rotary and the Rotarian Action Group Against Slavery.

Since 2015, it has hosted 100 women from 35 countries, aged between 17 and 68, and provided a home for six newborn babies – all conceived through rape.

Referrals will sometimes come from the police, but also from other agencies like the British Red Cross, social services, the National Health Service, the Helen Bamber Foundation, other charities and from safe houses under the Government's National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

The NRM identifies victims of human trafficking or modern slavery, and ensures they receive appropriate support.

According to Karen Anstiss, who was a policewoman for 31 years, with her last posting working with the Metropolitan Police's kidnapping and human trafficking team, the women come from a multitude of backgrounds.

She said: "Except for organ donation, we have had every type of trafficking – sexual exploitation and domestic slavery, crime and benefit fraud, major crime, sham marriages, everything across the scale.

"Some have absolutely no schooling whatsoever so they can only speak their own language, to a woman who speaks four languages, who was at university doing banking and finance when she was trafficked.

"Every single one of them has had a different level of needs in some way."

The women have access to a range of support including English and maths lessons, healthcare and counselling, legal

advice, education and employment help, therapeutic activities, as well as sports, gym and dance.

They are all fed and clothed, and receive an allowance of £40 a week.

Each reacts differently the moment they walk through the anonymous door in the anonymous street for the first time.

Some become hermits in their rooms, others need to get outside to enjoy their newly-found freedom.

"One day we had a 24-year-old who had been trafficked since she was 15 to a brothel in Brixton," said Karen. "She was fed drugs and controlled by drugs. Then, when she was nearly 19, they let her go because she was no longer any use to them.

"This woman only knew one thing, which was to support herself through the sex industry. She did not believe anybody could help her. But when she got a bit older, she realised she needed to get out.

"She had been in the UK a long time, her English was perfect, and yet she was very tough because that was how she had learnt to live. She was a fighter. It was how she stayed alive, so she came in.

"Two days later, another woman walked through the door who had never been educated and could only speak one language.

"She had been taken on as a domestic servant when she was 16. She brought up the children in that family. They brought her to the UK as a domestic servant and she was found sleeping under the table, that was her bed, and she was 65. Her whole life had been controlled by that family.

"The two women are so different, so you cannot predict how they are going to behave or what plan to put in operation when that door opens."

The length of stay can be anything ►



from three months to a year. It is like living in a community where the women cook and participate in activities.

Whether the deep-seated psychological scars ever heal is uncertain. However, the time spent at Bakhita House is focussed on giving control back to those who have been controlled for years by getting them back on their feet and towards a better life.

Some will leave the country at the end of their stay. No-one is forced home, and of the 93, 26 have returned to their families.

Others will be entitled to benefits and local housing, while a few go to asylum-seeking accommodation.

A few stay in touch with Karen and the teams, others choose to start afresh.

How many fall back into modern slavery once they leave the sanctuary of Bakhita House is uncertain, but a few undoubtedly will because of the need to earn money and provide for their families back home.

Karen added: "I cannot say, hand on heart, that everyone who has left here has had a wonderful life, because there will be a desperation from some of these people to work.

"That is why they often come in the first place, to provide for their families. People don't want to be trafficked, they

want to help their families and this is where it all stems from.

"They come to the UK because they believe the money is going back to their families. We live in a great country where there are foodbanks, benefits, and hundreds of charities to help people with nothing.

"Yet you go to some of these countries and there is nothing. And that is the simple end of the story."

According to Karen, what Rotary can do is to open the world's eyes to modern slavery, in the same way that the organisation provided momentum towards eradicating polio.

Awareness is crucial since slavery can be right under your nose at any time; in nail bars, the construction industry, car washes and fruit picking.

Raising awareness, said Karen, is crucial because often it leads to action.

If you don't know about a problem you can't care about it, if you don't care about the problem you'll never act and if you don't act then, inevitably, the problem will continue to exist or become even worse.

It is such a cash rich industry.

In 2009, 15% of trafficked victims were men, now that figure has risen to 49%. A female in a sex industry paid off her debt of £35,000 within four months. Today, you

can buy a slave for as cheaply as £40 with profits for the traffickers as high as 400%.

Karen added: "I don't think modern slavery can be eradicated totally because I think it often comes from poverty and greed.

"You can't change people who are greedy and with the best will in the world we are never going to solve worldwide poverty. I just hope that with everybody who comes through the door we can help a little bit." ●

i To find out more visit:
caritaswestminster.org.uk/bakhitahouse

Before Sleeping

*by Ingrid**

*You feel bad, angry, upset,
Don't worry, better days will come again.*

*Maybe those days will never come again,
But don't forget to hope.*

*Hope, what is it? The only way to
believe, It's maybe a lie.*

*But it's better than to feel nothing,
And maybe that hope that you feel ...
Is the only way to believe.
Do I believe?*

*I forgot to believe, to love and to be loved,
But we can be reborn, feel, be bad.*

*Be angry, be upset, love, breathe.
To feel everything or nothing,
But anyway, it's your life, my life.*

*Keep it, love it, don't hurt it.
And if the others push you, hit you,
destroy you, Get up and be reborn, rebuild.*

*Don't let anyone be your shadow,
Make your own shadow,
And never forget to HOPE.*

**Written by a Bakhita House guest, whose
name was changed for confidentiality.*



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Rotary GBI President
Debbie Hodge

Rotarians: you are the inspiration

ROTARIANS see a world where people come together to take action that brings lasting change in their community, across the world and in themselves.

This coming together and taking action is the hallmark of many of Rotary's projects, but there are two initiatives I want to highlight.

The first is the eradication of polio. It began with one man and now has a partnership group that includes the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Centre for Communicable Diseases.

Working together, polio is almost eradicated – with only Afghanistan and Pakistan reporting cases in recent months.

Vaccination programmes continue and when the children receive their 'polio drops' they have their little finger nail painted purple.

Purple has become the colour of the End Polio Now campaign, and in February, thousands of purple crocuses bloom, having been planted on World Polio Day

in October – reminding the world that Rotary is still working to make history and eradicate polio.

New venues last autumn for planting crocuses were Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Lilleshall and Bisham Abbey.

Working together with the ground staff, new links have been forged that will serve to share Rotary's story of polio eradication with generations of people who have never heard of this crippling disease –



“Purple has become the colour of the End Polio Now campaign, and in February, thousands of purple crocuses bloom, having been planted on World Polio Day.”

the young sports men and women who use these national sporting centres of excellence.

The second initiative is the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery.

It is a sad indictment that there are more people enslaved today than in the transatlantic slave trade.

Rotarians have come together to share information, raise awareness and take action in projects that support those who have been enslaved. They are also working with communities to remove the conditions that contribute to slavery – be that conflict, poverty or environmental crisis.

Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, working with the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham, will be looking at how, working with others, in local communities we can help those communities become 'slave free'.

This will be explored at the Rotary Great Britain & Ireland Showcase in Nottingham in May.

Working together is the way to get things done.

Around the world and in our local communities, Rotary is stepping up to find solutions to the big and small problems – from feeding the hungry by working with Rise Against Hunger, providing clean water by working on Sand Dam projects, and supporting communities in times of conflict and natural disasters by working with ShelterBox and Disaster Aid.

As well as giving support to those with dementia and their carers, Rotary supports literacy programmes in schools, and strives to build peaceful communities through a variety of peace projects.

This, and more, will also be on show at the Rotary Showcase in Nottingham from May 10th- 12th.

Rotarians are being the inspiration and getting people together to make a difference – if you are not yet in touch with your local club do look them up, and you too can be part of a movement that is changing the world! ●



Debbie Hodge planting crocus corms at Stoke Mandeville



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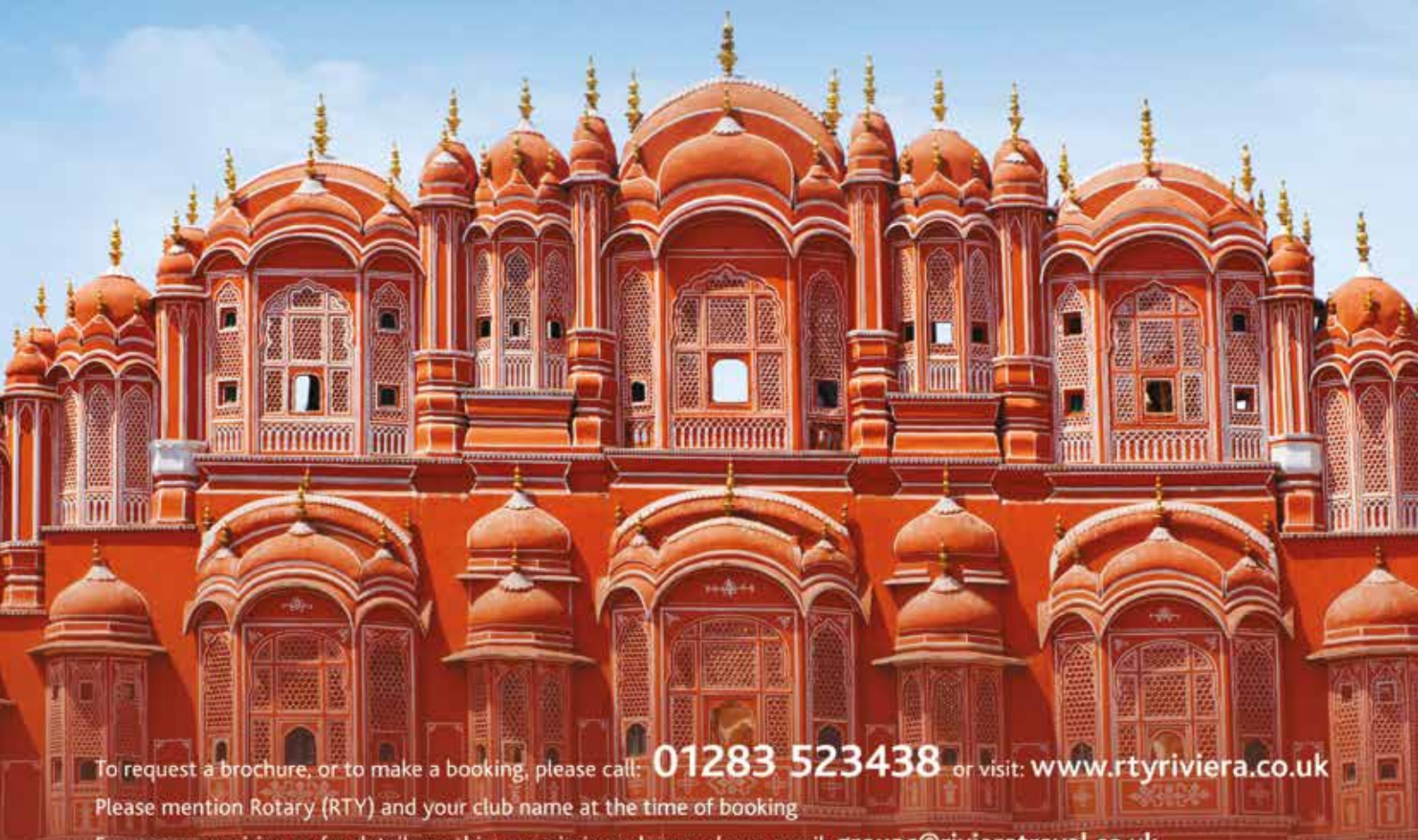


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On the front line

At any one time, there are more than a thousand police operations tackling modern slavery. Detective Superintendent Andrew Munday is the man charged with bringing to justice those who are exploiting the vulnerable.

FACT FILE

MODERN SLAVERY

- There are currently at least 1,138 live modern slavery police operations being undertaken across the UK.
- These involve over 2,200 potential victims.
- Some 368 of the 1,138 operations involve potential victims under the age of 18 (or aged under 18 at the time of the crime).
- Of these operations, 449 (39%) involve sexual exploitation, 323 (28%) labour exploitation (most frequently car washes, construction/manual labour, food industry, factories, nail bars & agriculture), 274 (24%) criminal exploitation (drug dealing, cannabis cultivation, fraud, money laundering, theft), 78 (7%) domestic servitude, 3 forced/sham marriages.

Source: Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit report, November 2018.

THE seaside resort of Exmouth is a haven for holidaymakers every summer, serving as the gateway to the spectacular Jurassic Coastline.

However, the picturesque Devon town is also the unlikely focal point for a major police operation cracking down on modern slavery across the country.

Detective Superintendent Andrew Munday is a man with more than 20 years' police experience and who now heads up a 70-strong team at the national Modern Slavery Police Transformation Unit.

Coincidentally, at the beginning of his police career in the West Midlands, Andrew was sponsored by Rotary Coventry on a Group Study Exchange to Bangalore, India for six weeks. "I have always had a high regard and respect for the work which Rotary does," he said.

However, now his focus is tackling modern slavery, a phenomenon which preys on vulnerable people, is hidden from plain sight, and often relies on incredible bravery from the victim to end it and prosecute the perpetrator.

"As far as UK plc is concerned, modern slavery is an exceptional threat to the stability of the United Kingdom," Andrew explained.

"Sexual exploitation remains the largest area we deal with, followed by labour exploitation and then criminal

exploitation. In very small levels, but with exceedingly high harm, we are seeing domestic servitude and forced marriages.

"With sexual exploitation, there is a prevalence now that a lot of sex workers use adult services websites to engage with customers. This is a big difference to 20 years ago, and even 10 years ago, where there was a high incidence and prevalence of sex workers doing their businesses on the streets, in neighbourhoods and estates.

"We are finding use of the internet assists offenders who seek to exploit vulnerable women.

"Offenders move the victims around the UK, which adds to the disruption and confusion of the exploited, who can't set down roots, they are disorientated, but this frustrates the evidential value.

"If someone was suspicious and the woman disappears two weeks later, it is difficult to investigate where the woman has moved onto."

The modern slavery unit is backed by £8.5 million of Government funding.

What the Exmouth team is faced with is a sophisticated business, built on financial gain, where the rewards are huge for those who exploit.

At any one time, the modern slavery unit is running more than a thousand 'live' operations across England and Wales, based on tips from the public or an intelligence-led investigation – all



tasked with the single aim of bringing the exploiters to justice. But it's not easy.

"Our priority, always, is the victim," stressed Andrew.

"Sometimes, a prosecution is not the safest option for the victim. Their priority is to be looked after, and they would not want to support a prosecution for a wide variety and often compelling reasons."

The harm many of those exploited is extreme. Many Vietnamese victims are trafficked overland, either through Iran and Syria, or north via China, Russia and into Europe. It can take them a year to reach the UK.

When they have managed to escape the grip of their captors, many of these traumatised victims don't want to go back home. They know they will still owe huge

debts reaching to tens of thousands of dollars, and where their only option would be being re-trafficked.

And yet, here's the surprising statistic: forget the perception that modern slavery is a plight born by foreigners - last year the majority of victims were UK nationals.

Here, drugs supply is the chief driver, even with children, and colloquially referred to as county lines.

Whatever the mode of exploitation, it remains a shocking phenomenon. Fixed on a spectrum of crime, alongside the most extreme, violent crimes, Detective Superintendent Andrew Munday places modern slavery right at the highest end.

He explained: "This crime is individual. The suffering and harm is not momentarily. Take wounding, for example.

This is a finite incident with a start and a finish, perhaps a tight timescale of a couple of hours.

"With modern slavery, victims are mentally incarcerated for years, they are stripped of their dignity and personality, it dehumanises them. It is an extreme crime.

"As a detective, you can't help but be affected. To think what awful circumstances these people have been through is chilling in the extreme.

"It is hard to understand what awful experiences the victims have been through and just how callous and malicious the offenders are to do that for such a long time.

"It is not a one-off incident. This is months and years of a determined attack on an individual. It is awful." ●

Eradicating Modern Slavery?

*Is Rotary powerless to help the scourge of society that is modern slavery?
Mark Little, a Rotarian from Norwich, and Chairman and Founder of the
Rotarian Action Group against Slavery (RAGAS), explains what he believes
the organisation can do.*

MANY people labour under the comforting myth that slavery is a thing of the past and that the practice ceased with the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the American Civil War.

Others see the problem from a different perspective. They believe that modern slavery is a new phenomenon which is only restricted to countries such as India, China, Pakistan and North Korea.

The reality is that whilst the laws permitting slavery have been repealed everywhere, people around the world continue to be brutalised, broken, exploited and enslaved through violence or the threat of violence.

Making something illegal doesn't make it cease to exist. Making something illegal only causes it to vanish from view. Behind closed doors, in remote places and right under our noses, slavery has continued throughout the 19th, 20th and 21st century, making people rich, feeding our lifestyles and burning up lives.

According to the International Labour Organization and Walk Free's Global Slavery Index, it is estimated that there were at least 40 million people enslaved worldwide in 2016 and one in four of these were children.

As modern slavery is a global problem it can best be combatted on a global basis.

Rotary International is a global organisation of 1.2 million members in over 33,000 clubs and in 200 plus countries.

This global organisation has been hugely instrumental in almost eradicating polio from the face of the globe.

If we Rotarians can achieve this feat with polio, we can surely make a significant contribution to the eradication of the modern slavery virus.

As Rotarians we each have a responsibility to end this obnoxious crime against humanity once and for all.

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: "If we are neutral in situations of injustice, we have already chosen the side of the oppressor."

But how can we Rotarians help in this struggle? Well, as a first step we can educate ourselves about modern slavery and

help others become aware of the problem.

We can give or organise presentations. We can urge our political representatives to promote and/or strengthen anti-slavery and anti-trafficking laws.

We can urge businesses to check their supply chains for slave produced goods.

We can provide anti-slavery bodies with funds to support their work.

As consumers we can restrict our purchases to fairly traded goods.

As Rotarians we can become paid up members of the Rotarian Action Group against Slavery (RAGAS), whose aims are ►



Mark Little at a slavery rescue mission in Thailand

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raising awareness of the nature and extent of slavery and encouraging Rotarians to support and work with anti-slavery organisations to protect the vulnerable from slavery and its consequences.

RAGAS raises awareness by producing regular newsletters which are issued to supporters and members in over 66 countries. We organise anti-slavery booths and breakout sessions at Rotary International conventions and Rotary district conferences, communicate via social media, maintain a website which provides resource materials and project opportunities for clubs to consider, as well as organising and speaking at human trafficking and slavery conferences.

Supporting the work of anti-slavery organisations is a crucial part of the work of RAGAS. These organisations know how to set slaves free, they know how to rehabilitate the survivors, how to teach them about their rights, how to ensure that they do not return to enslavement and how to reintegrate them back into their homes and communities.

What they find difficult is how to mobilise funds which will extend their

“*Making something illegal doesn't make it cease to exist. Making something illegal only causes it to vanish from view.*”

work further. This is where RAGAS and its members are helping.

The Rotarian Action Group is currently working to develop partnerships and promote other anti-slavery bodies to provide global cohesion and impact.

This is being achieved through initiating, participating in and funding anti-slavery projects at home and abroad.

Thus the Rotarian Action Group and its members have completed anti-slavery projects in combination with grass root organisations such as Bachpan Bachao Andolan (India), South East Asia Coalition against Child Servitude (India), Free the Slaves (USA), RC Diocese of Allahabad and Eastern Himalayas (India), Rescue Mission

for Children (Thailand), Wulugu (Ghana), Asha Nepal, Maiti Nepal and Shakti Samuha (Nepal), YouCanFreeUs (India).

In addition, the group has supported and helped to fund projects initiated by organisations such as Polaris (USA), Mekong Club (SE Asia) and Anti-Slavery International (England).

Further details of some of these projects can be viewed on the Action Group's website, which is: www.ragas.online

Today, we Rotarians have a choice on this issue of 'modern slavery'.

We can either despair that exploitation is an age old problem, that human nature will never change, that in any case slavery is a problem for government and then do nothing.

Or we can abide by the tenets of the Four-Way Test, Part 2 of the Object of Rotary and Gandhi's maxim - "be the change that you want to see in the world" - and then do our utmost to end this evil practice. ●

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Bringing hope to the children of Grenfell

The horrific fire which ravaged Grenfell Tower in 2017 shocked a nation. Dick Nathan, Chair of Trustees for the London Rotary District, describes how Rotary helped rebuild a community in West London, where 72 people lost their lives in the 24-storey block of flats.

THE generosity of Rotarians has brought new hope to a school located near the Grenfell Tower.

Following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire on June 14th 2017, many Rotarians donated funds to the Rotary Charity Fund (District 1130) with a view to helping the people who had suffered from the disaster.

The funds came in promptly and generously, and they were supplemented by Rotarians in the London Rotary District who had been equally disturbed by the events that night.

The funds were stored in an interest-bearing account whilst the trustees set

about finding a project which could use the £15,300 that had been raised. The task was not easy.

There were organisations who wanted more money than we had - in some cases a lot more! There were professional advisers who wanted Rotary to pay all the money to them, as there would be no chance of recouping their fees from the Grenfell Community. There was 'aid competition' as well.

There were ambitious plans in terms of rebuilding and refurbishing accommodation, but our sum would not do much more than touch the surface of those plans. There were also Rotarians who wanted the money given to charities

which were finding it difficult to spend what the public had donated.

The trustees held firm. They were determined that Rotary should leave an identifiable, positive token on the community and not be absorbed into another organisation's efforts without leaving a trace.

After several false starts, a friend of Rotary suggested the trustees set up a visit to the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School.

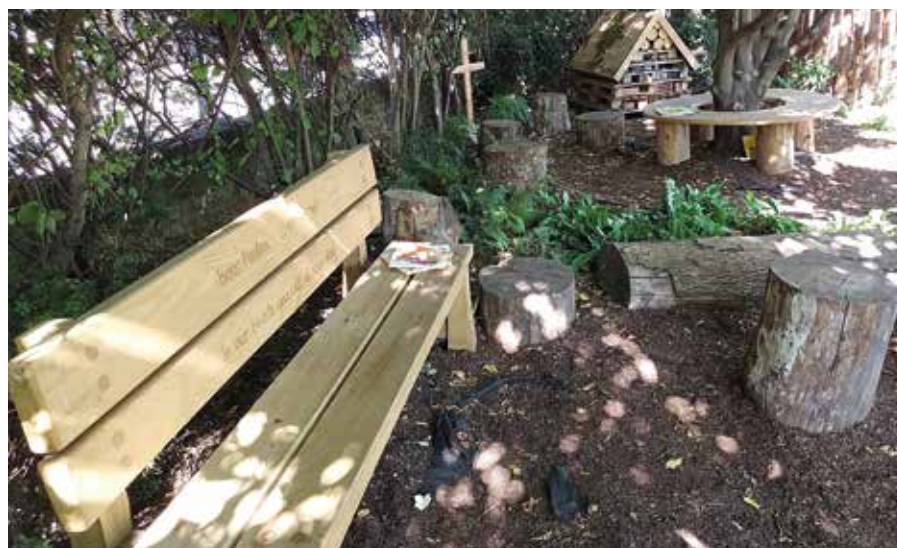
The school had been deeply affected by the disaster. Located just 120 metres from the Grenfell Tower, two current pupils had been lost in the fire, past pupils had died, and the relatives of pupils had also been lost.

One of the school's buildings had also been damaged by burning debris falling on its roof. Around 70% of the school's pupils had seen the flames. Furthermore, the school lost 50% of its staff who were finding the whole experience too stressful.

Rotary was able to negotiate with the school's management that they would take on some of the expenditure associated with the school's plans.

The total plans were well beyond Rotary's reach, requiring approximately £10 million, but the trustees successfully negotiated purchasing IT equipment which the school wanted to replace.

The cheque for £10,900 for the IT equipment was presented to the school in January 2019 at a special presentation to the pupils in the school playground. The only word the pupils could utter on seeing



The school now has a garden of reflection to remember two pupils who lost their lives



The school stands in the shadow of Grenfell Tower

the cheque was 'wow'.

The equipment will all be badged having been provided by Rotarians across Great Britain and Ireland.

Rotarians will also give service by refurbishing and restoring some of the playground equipment, as well as developing a vegetable and herb growing area as a teaching aid for the inner-city children.

One of the projects is to develop this playground fence. Behind the fence is the Garden of Hope where there are shrines to the two pupils who were lost in the fire.

Pupils can come into the garden at any time for a moment of quiet reflection.

The school is hoping that Rotary can improve the fence so that footballs and tennis balls no longer come into the Garden of Hope from the playground.

The school also developed a 'Classroom of the Future' back in 2003 - the idea was to have a futuristic space based on state-of-the-art building techniques that would inspire the pupils. It is a space with full and bright daylight for most of the day and has been used for counselling pupils suffering from stress.

During the Grenfell Tower fire, debris fell through the polythene covering requiring eight strips to be added to the roof. Sadly, the classroom has been overtaken by the future now, and there are plans for demolition and replacement.

Once the warmer weather arrives, there will be plenty of opportunities for local Rotarians to provide service over the weekend whilst the pupils are away from school.

The pupils benefitting from the IT equipment will likely be joining the job market in about 2030 - a year of great interest to Rotary. Rotarians can rest assured that their donations will be helping inner-city youngsters prepare for the world of the future.

The projects concentrate on Rotary serving humanity, they demonstrate Rotary making a difference, the refurbished playground equipment as well as the vegetable and herb gardens will be the inspiration many city children require, and with improved IT equipment provided by Rotary, the children will see that Rotary connects the world. ●

FACT FILE

GRENFELL FIRE

- The fire which destroyed Grenfell Tower in June 2017 was one of the UK's worst modern disasters.
- Just before 1am on June 14th, fire broke out in the kitchen of a fourth floor flat at the North Kensington tower block. Within minutes, the fire had raced up the exterior of the building and then spread to all four sides. By 3am, most of the upper floors were well alight. Seventy-two people died in the fire.
- One of the youngest victims was six-month-old baby, Leena Belkadi, who died in her mother's arms as she tried to escape. The oldest victim is believed to be 84-year-old Sheila Smith from the 16th floor, who had lived in Grenfell Tower for 34 years.



Leaders of tomorrow

IN the shadow of Brexit, 24 students aged between 16 and 18 from across the island of Ireland have competed in one of Rotary Ireland's longest-running projects, the Youth Leadership Development Competition.

This has been running for over 20 years and saw the winning students have the experience of a lifetime, giving them a real taste of what it's like to make decisions and to lead.

The students began their trip by visiting Stormont in Belfast, the EU Office and Dáil Éireann in Dublin and finally, the EU Parliament in Strasbourg where they took part in the Euroscola event.

These 'leaders of tomorrow', discussed the issues of today and set forth a vision for the future that they will be proud to be a part of. The final 24 competed against more than 1,000 young people from across the island of Ireland to secure themselves a place on this trip of a lifetime.

Spanning five days, the students further developed their debating and leadership skills, made new friends along with important contacts, and also gained a platform to speak at a time when their future is at stake.

Topics up for debate included: the environment; human rights and security; European elections; migration and integration; youth employment and of



"The final 24 competed against more than 1,000 young people from across the island of Ireland to secure themselves a place on this trip of a lifetime."

course the future of Europe with Brexit featuring heavily.

Past competitors have included Simon Harris TD and Robert Troy TD, along with BBC journalist Claire Savage, so it's fair to say they are being given the opportunity of a lifetime.

Speaking at the event, Monica Robertson District Governor of Rotary Ireland said: "The winning 24 students impressed judges with their confidence, knowledge and desire to win.

"Each and every one of them performed incredibly well and I believe got a lot out of the experience, it was a pleasure to meet these young people, many of whom I'm sure will be our leaders of tomorrow and will help to shape a better future for everyone."

Euroscola is an annual event which offers the winners an immersive experience

in the debating Chamber of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, allowing them to learn about European integration by experiencing it first-hand.

Over 600 students from the 28 EU Member States get the chance to become Members of the European Parliament for the day.

They took to the floor in plenary and committee sessions to debate and vote on resolutions on current affairs.

In 2019, a new element was added which allowed one student the opportunity to become a journalist for the trip, responsible for covering the event by taking pictures, conducting interviews and compiling a report on the event.

Rotary in Ireland consists of 74 clubs across Ireland - north and south - and is made up of determined 'people of action' from all walks of life who are pushing the boundaries of what can be achieved both locally and internationally.

Youth development is just one of the areas in which Rotary is making a difference.

There are over 1,800 Rotarians in Ireland who have raised millions for charity and helped change the lives of hundreds of thousands of people worldwide. ●

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✓ CONTINENTAL TOURS

- 3 or 4 European tours each year;
- Popular destinations include France, Germany.

✓ INTERCONTINENTAL TOURS

- Fly/hire tours held every few years;
- Destinations like South Africa, New Zealand, North America.

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Time for a cuppa at The Worry Tree Café

The Worry Tree Café was the inspiration of Millie Corke to help those with mental health issues. Dave King caught up with Millie who explains the journey she has been on.

Story of the Worry Tree

A carpenter helping me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough day on the job. A flat tyre made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit and now his ancient truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet the family. As we walked towards the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When he opened the door, the carpenter underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles, he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterwards, he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me.

So I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier. "Oh, that's my worry tree," he replied. "I know I can't help having worries on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don't belong at home with my wife and the children. "So I just hang up my worries on the tree every night when I come home.

Then, in the morning, I pick them up again. "Funny thing is," he smiled. "When I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren't as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

MILLIE Corke was a primary school teacher in her twenties who loved her job but who was secretly falling into the well of despair.

She sought a release and decided to take her own life. "I was 28-years-old working with Year 6 pupils at the primary school, and though I loved my job, I was getting lower and lower," she recalled.

"I asked for some help, and they said I could take some time off work with stress.

"I remember driving home from work thinking if I drove my car into that ditch and died, no-one would care. I felt dying would make my life easier."

Chillingly, Millie chose the moment to take her own life only once her class of 10 and 11-year-olds at the Suffolk school had completed their SATs exams.

She didn't want her death to impact on their results. The attempt failed.

"I felt devastated when I woke up. I thought dying was the right thing to do.

"I remember hearing and sensing a white noise, a peaceful white noise telling me it was time to go."

Millie, who had also sought solace with drink, tried unsuccessfully twice more. She tells this desperate story with a twinge of emotion in her voice.

Diagnosed with borderline personality disorder, Millie describes the condition as having an inability to form relationships, a constant fear of abandonment, with a need to self-harm.

It affects about one in 100 people in the UK. But, in living to tell the tale Millie,

now 32, has used the episode as a turning point in her life.

Millie and her family, including father Nick who is a Past President of Rotary Framlingham and a former District Governor, were acutely aware of how difficult it is to access mental health support.

Less than 12 months after finishing treatment at the Priory Hospital Chelmsford, she set up The Worry Tree Café in her hometown of Framlingham in Suffolk in May 2017.

Millie knew she was the subject of gossip in the village, so she took to the social media platform Facebook to tell them what was happening.

It was at that moment that she decided she had to do something to tackle the loneliness and stigma surrounding mental health.

"I figured that if I feel this way, then other people must do too," she explained.

"I will never forget what my counsellor Julia said to me on one of our first meetings, 'Get busy living or get busy dying' from the film Shawshank Redemption, I chose living."

And so, with the help of a colouring pencil, a piece of paper and the knowledge that something had to be done to help others suffering from mental health so they didn't feel alone, The Worry Tree Café was born in the family garden in Framlingham.

Based at the Mills Meadow Day Care Centre in Framlingham, situated north-east of Ipswich and half way between the Suffolk/Norfolk border, this has become a



The Worry Tree Café was born in the family garden in Framlingham.



Worries are written down and tied to the tree

haven for those with mental health issues.

The concept is simple. For two hours each week, Millie and her small team of volunteers organise tea, coffee and biscuits where anyone affected by mental health – either directly or indirectly – can drop in.

The environment is warm, friendly, and non-judgemental.

The most common reason for attending is loneliness, but the café also supports people dealing with grief, depression, and a variety of other issues.

The café has already attracted celebrity support. Singer Ed Sheeran, who attended the same school as Millie, has become the charity's patron.

In backing the project, he said: "I am happy to support Amelia's vision of a Worry Tree Café.

"This will be a safe, welcoming, friendly haven where people can talk freely and without judgement about their experience of mental health issues and share ideas which have helped them cope both day to day and in dark times.

"Framlingham is a wonderfully friendly town, but most of us shy away from discussing such personal things."

There is now another Worry Tree Café



"I remember driving home from work thinking if I drove my car into that ditch and died, no-one would care. I felt dying would make my life easier."

operating in nearby Leiston, and further venues are being targeted in the Suffolk towns of Wickham Market, Woodbridge and Martlesham.

A number of Rotarians act as volunteers at the café, and Millie is also in discussions with Rotarians in Cambridge and Swansea about setting up similar ventures.

Among the volunteers in Framlingham are those who first came to the café initially seeking help and who have turned their lives around.

Millie isn't totally through the woods just yet. She had a 'blip' last summer, but knows she has the support and the mental strength to battle through.

In being public about her story, she

dismisses any thoughts of being brave, but instead is thankful that something positive has come out of her experience.

She said: "It's amazing to see how successful this has become.

"This is all about the volunteers and the people who have got the guts to walk through the door.

"Don't get me wrong, mental health is not something easily fixed, but I have found through secure, safe group sessions and one-to-ones, that just being given the chance to listen and talk to others who amazingly think and feel like you, has helped me on my journey.

"Now I want to offer that ear to others." ●



For mental health advice visit: mind.org.uk

To find out more about The Worry Tree Café visit: facebook.com/TheWorryTreeCafe/

It's You, You, You!

Alicia Reade has been a member of Doncaster Rotary since 2015. She is a self-employed songwriter, a music teacher and an IT Consultant. Last year, she undertook an unusual project for her district, and here she tells her story.

I LOVE it when my skills and interests overlap into one project and I found myself in a unique situation last year.

As part of the conference team for District 1220, which covers clubs in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, my talents lie with public relations so previously I had taken care of sorting the website and producing a promotional video.

The time came around to prepare for the 2019 conference which takes place in Scarborough this October. All was falling into place with the video, but I wondered if I could bring my musical skills into play.

My New Year's resolution was to focus on my song-writing. I had written and recorded many songs around the Millennium, but had failed to do anything with them. With this in mind, I felt up for the challenge to write and record an original song for the 2019 District Conference whose theme is 'The Difference is You'.

District Governor Elect, David Hood, whose conference it will be this October,

“I hope that Rotarians and non-Rotarians will find the song and video inspirational and that it will encourage attendance at our exciting conference this October. I hope to see you there!”

definitely wanted a Scottish feel to the song with the inclusion of bagpipes. I was excited by the challenge!

One of David's great ideas is to get attendees to play an active part in the conference. So, I asked clubs in the district to contribute short videos of themselves pointing and shouting 'YOU YOU YOU' towards the camera, in order to include them in the video and soundtrack!

It was a last minute idea with the promotional video being broadcast at the 2018 conference, but many clubs surprised

and delighted me with their fast and inventive responses.

I used my home recording equipment to play the tracks into a music program on my laptop via my digital piano.

This process is called multitracking. I record one part, in this case the baseline, using an electric bass guitar sound, then change the sound and layer the next instrumental track on top, such as the accordion track. It sounds like several people all playing at once.

After most of the music tracks were completed, I then recorded the vocals – first the main vocal and then the backing vocals, as I sang multiple times in harmonies on each different track. Added to this mix was the wonderful 'YOU YOU YOU' recordings from the clubs.

Finally, a sound engineer mixed and mastered the tracks making it ready for broadcast and download.

I completed the promotional video using the club videos from around the district, plus much-welcomed contributions from David Hood and our speakers.


I hope that Rotarians and non-Rotarians will find the song and video inspirational and that it will encourage attendance at our exciting conference this October. I hope to see you there!

'The Difference is You' is available from any music download site (such as Apple Music, Amazon Music, Google Play, etc.).

Alicia is donating 60% of the profit from downloads to her Rotary district and other Rotary causes. ●



Alicia playing at local event

 You can hear the song via Spotify, YouTube and other streaming sites:
www.reade-music.com or
www.1220conference.co.uk

A heart-safe environment

The Rotary Saving Lives project is on a mission to make sure we all have access to defibrillators across Gloucestershire and beyond.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE is a large, semi-rural county, with one city, a handful of moderately-sized towns and a myriad of small villages, hamlets and communities, interspersed by rivers, valleys and hills, narrow roads and lanes, but few major roads.

Notwithstanding its beauty, Gloucestershire can be a nightmare for emergency services which need vital rapid access across the county to situations when lives may be in danger.

This is a particularly major problem for instances of sudden cardiac arrest, a major killer of people of all ages, and where victims require rapid treatment with a heart defibrillator within a few minutes if they are to have any chance of surviving.

Only about 10% of those afflicted may recover because of this.

Paramedics of the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SWASFT) have uniquely difficult problems of access in many parts of Gloucestershire, particularly where Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) are few and far between, and where narrow roads, traffic, including agricultural vehicles and topography, may hamper an ambulance arriving quickly enough.

Nearly 10 years ago, this problem was addressed by Kevin Dickens, the community responder officer for Gloucestershire, working in association with Rotary Cheltenham Cleve Vale – and the Rotary Saving Lives Project was set up.

The initiative set an objective of installing AEDs in secondary schools and colleges that had sports centres and facilities, also used by the general public throughout the county and which were located in semi-rural areas, where rapid access for ambulances and paramedics to emergencies might be hampered by geographic factors.

The project has subsequently expanded its scope by bringing in other Rotary clubs from the east, west and south of the

county, with locations beyond, to address defibrillator placements in clubs and societies, county council facilities, and rural communities.

More recently, special needs and primary schools have been included in the list of placements. Moreover, vital guidance in what can be done to help the victims quickly has been given to people of all ages.

On February 26th, the donation of the 50th AED under the Rotary Saving Lives Project was presented to a local Gloucestershire rugby club.

This was celebrated at a District Rotary and SWASFT evening event at the Hatherley Manor Hotel & Spa in Gloucester, and was supported by local businesses and the community.

This function, at which the coach of Gloucester Rugby, Johan Ackermann, was the guest speaker, also raised awareness of the importance of creating 'heart-safe' environments in our communities and schools, and to emphasise what can be achieved by working in partnership with our emergency services.

The evening featured an interview with a survivor of a sudden cardiac arrest


due to the speedy intervention of his two daughters, illustrating that awareness of what people of all ages need to have in emergency situations during the critical time before an ambulance first arrives.

The event was an opportunity to show how Rotary clubs, working in partnership with SWASFT, can augment their vital work in the community, as well as to show a continuing commitment.

Rotary clubs within District 1100 continue to work in partnership with SWASFT variously; for example, funds were raised for the Public Heart Appeal at a Gloucester rugby match at Kingsholm.

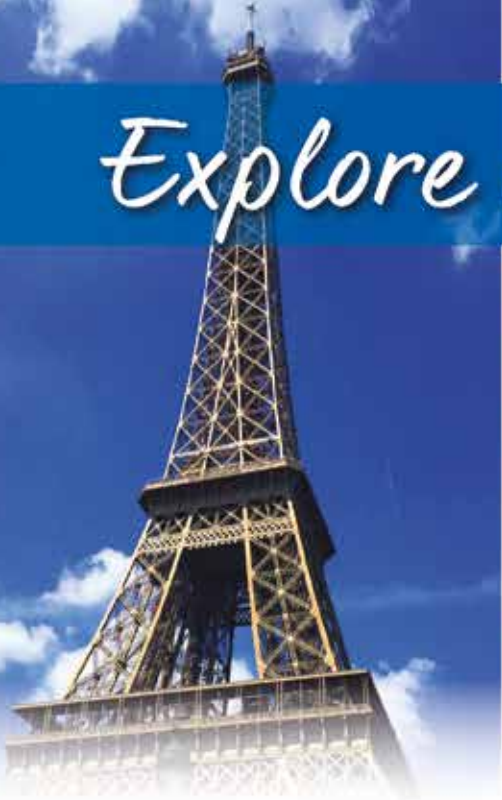
This is a new initiative involving SWASFT, Gloucestershire Constabulary and the Licensed Premises Association, placing AEDs in licensed premises across the county.

The Rotary Saving Lives Project has received awards and commendations, including from Rotary International and HeartSafe. ●

 This article was first published in the February edition of *Cotswold Life*.



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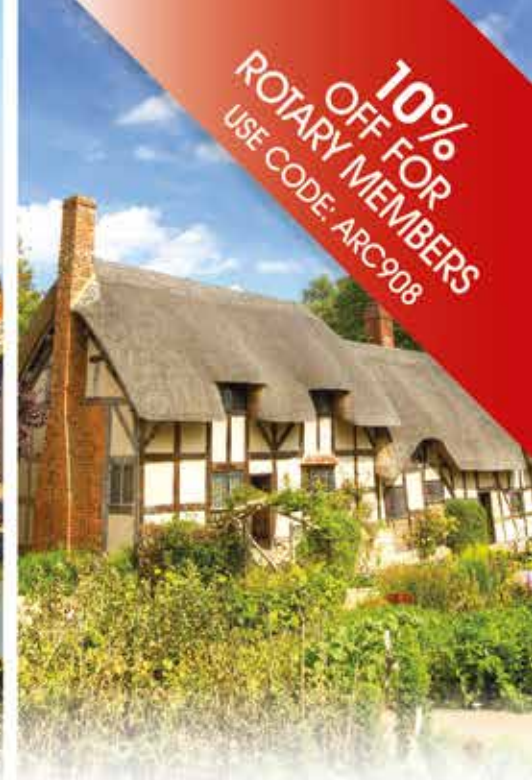
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Lost the meaning

THE letter published in February's *Rotary* magazine has lost the whole object of Rotary.

The badge that we wear with pride states 'service above self'. It means personal service by every Rotarian wearing it.

The three problems mentioned in the letter (prisons, domestic violence and homelessness) are all areas that we can make a contribution to and not by handing out money.

Since our polio plus project, we, as an organisation, have adopted the view that money-raising is the service it gives and that, in my opinion, is the cause of our membership problems.

Having been a member for 52 years, I have seen the changes. The object was always when you find a need, look for the solution with membership, solve it and then pass this on to others to continue.

With homelessness, for many years I have been involved by forming an Emmaus group. If we had one in every town, the problem would be almost solved.

Personal service is stopping and talking to those on the street, asking how can we help, finding places that can make a difference - and there are many.

Buy someone a breakfast and hear how we as a nation treat the poor, uneducated and mentally depressed. We should be grateful we are not there.

As role models, Rotarians can help in many ways. Having served 33 years as a magistrate, I realise that the problems start with the way children are supported from a very early age. Unable to read or write, they end up in prison and on the street homeless.

The article 'Rotary behind bars' (*Rotary* magazine, October 2018) delivers a message that there are many ways we can give personal service to help those in need.

We can visit and talk to them, give guidance and encouragement, and leave with the feeling that you have made a difference. Your personal service makes your Rotary membership worthwhile.

Archie Johnstone JP
Rotary Club of Rochester

Puzzled at global grant

I WAS interested to read the article in the February edition of *Rotary* entitled 'Creating a Brighter Future'.

Recently, I have been preparing an application for a global grant and, some years ago, I was treated with radiotherapy after cancer surgery, so I feel I know a bit about the subject matter.

I am puzzled, therefore, to read that the global grant adds to funds already raised by a project run by a charity called Brighter Futures.

The understanding I have of global grants is that they should be Rotarian-led and that Rotarians should play a considerable part in their implementation and that funds are not simply added to projects run by other organisations.

Nor should fundraising be the only aspect of Rotarian involvement.

Despite careful reading of your article, I cannot find any mention of how Rotarians in either the host club or the international club will be involved in running this project other than fund raising.

I understand the trauma of cancer including travelling to other locations which can be time-consuming and difficult.

In addition, I can understand that local people may wish to raise funds to supplement the NHS provision.

I cannot understand how this global grant fits the published criteria to receive assistance from Rotary Foundation funds.

Perhaps someone would explain.

Catherine Chorley
Rotary Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay

Global grant funding explained

REGARDING the eligibility of the recently-approved global grant providing a LINAC Accelerator to the new radiotherapy centre at the Great Western Hospital in Swindon, Catherine Chorley's understanding is correct.

Global grants should be Rotarian-led and include Rotarian participation, and they should not simply be used to fund another organisation's project.

This specific global grant project is unique because the aim of the project was to provide a very expensive piece of medical

equipment that a global grant on its own would not be able to cover.

The provision of medical equipment is eligible for global grant funding under Disease Prevention and Treatment, as outlined in the Areas of Focus policy statements.

Due to the need for medical equipment to be supported by the local health infrastructure and operated by medical professionals, we see different levels of Rotarian participation in these projects. However, the necessity of Rotarians initiating, controlling, and managing the global grant project is still required.

For this global grant project, the Rotarian sponsors identified the need of a LINAC Accelerator machine for the new radiotherapy centre planned in Swindon.

However, since this machine costs over £2.1 million, it would not be possible for a global grant alone to fully fund the piece of medical equipment. Therefore, it was necessary for the Rotarians to partner with another organisation to provide the full funding.

As the official charity of the Great Western Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Brighter Futures was responsible for raising the funds required to complete the new radiotherapy centre and became a partner for the project.

Thus, Brighter Futures acted as a co-operating organisation for the global grant. It signed a memorandum of understanding with the Rotarian sponsors, including confirmation that the global grant to provide the LINAC Accelerator was initiated, controlled and managed by the sponsor Rotary clubs.

The use of grant funds for this project will still be fully managed by the Rotarians, and will be directly used to purchase the LINAC machine, rather than simply handed over to Brighter Futures' larger fund-raising amount.

We have invested time to confirm the Rotarians have an active part in the project activities and influence in all aspects of the project, including the initial planning, fund-raising and from implementation to completion, with as much involvement as if Rotary was funding the full cost of the LINAC Accelerator.

Due to the reasons listed it was determined by The Rotary Foundation Trustees that the project met the requirements for a global grant and

properly met a community need in Disease Prevention and Treatment.

Abby McNear
Rotary Grants Manager,
The Rotary Foundation

Stamp of approval

I AM writing to you on behalf of Bone Cancer Research Trust and our stamp appeal. Rotary Hadleigh Castle in Benfleet, Essex, has already starting collecting for us – and they are such a great group.

We are DESPERATE for used and new postage stamps from the UK and overseas; any amount, at any time of the year is very much appreciated. We also need horizon labels, stamp collections and anything philatelic.

This is a new challenge for us as a fund-raiser, so please pass on our details to anyone and everyone. We are aiming to raise at least £25,000 in 2019, so every stamp sent to us is a step in the right direction.

Primary bone cancer can occur at any age, but affects mostly children, teenagers, young adults and the elderly. On average, 12 people every week are diagnosed across the UK and Ireland.

Please help us to raise awareness as well as funds just by sending in something that you would normally put out into the rubbish bin.

Terri Bush,
Volunteer Stamp Appeal Co-ordinator
Bone Cancer Research Trust,
10, Feast Field, Horsforth, Leeds LS18 4TJ
Email: terri.volunteer@bcrt.org

What should be Rotary's remit?

I COULD not help but accept the invitation to write in after having read the February issue of Rotary magazine, which raises a very important moot point with respect to what issues should be within Rotary's remit?

I sincerely believe my opinion may

resonate with the issue raised as I have just joined Church and Oswaldtwistle Rotary Club as a full member. Although I may be inexperienced as a member, my motivations for joining should make a contribution to the debate generated.

Before joining my club I attended a number of meetings to get a flavour of the current make-up of Rotary and to my amazement, my previously held perception of finding retired cigar smoking men in armchairs disappeared instantly.

Instead, I found a diverse and an inclusive club, where everyone is genuinely considered and is treated as a family member.

The diversity didn't just exist in membership but in thought and commitment as well. Contemporary issues are regularly discussed and a testament to that was when an experienced member sat next to me and started to discuss the exact issues surrounding this debate.

Rotary has done wonderful work locally, regionally and internationally, and the noble causes are too many to cite, with some being the hallmarks of the organisation.

I am sure everyone can appreciate that some issues can be complex. However, we are living in a changed world where individual, community and societal problems are changing and increasing. Unless these problems are dealt with, whether by direct aid, raising awareness or simply educating, there is a danger that Rotary would become in-congruent with its philosophy.

I look forward to reading future issues of Rotary magazine highlighting some contemporary issues. In my humble opinion, we cannot have bandwidths restraining our remit, otherwise we will not be able address the growth of complex and far-reaching problems on the horizon such as mental health and the misuse overuse of mobile phones.

It is the existence of this continuity of challenge, irrespective of number or complexity of problems.

Tass Hussain
Church and Oswaldtwistle Rotary

Lorin's story had to be heard

I picked up a copy of February's issue of Rotary magazine this morning after glimpsing the cover at the entrance to my gym in London, and retracing my steps to read it.

So moved was I by the Breck Bednar piece on internet grooming, which I was gripped by reading over an early lunch break and then seeking solace to take the time to digest it, that I felt compelled to write in to say thank you to your magazine for the brave, insightful feature.

And thank you to Lorin LaFave for the fearfully brave, inspirationally strong and informative interview, and for setting up The Breck Foundation.

We have a 10-year-old boy, an only child, who is hauntingly similar to Breck's description, and this is my worst nightmare.

Yet he is in a school Minecraft group not dissimilar to Breck's, and he races home, to jog through his homework, chores and dinner to get online and listen to the older boys on YouTube showing how to craft online worlds.

It is a relief to know where to turn, should we ever need to. For a long time I have been asking similar questions in the back of my mind, and hoping schools would inform parents should, God forbid, we ever fear a case of online grooming.

I absolutely hope that his school will sit up and take notice too and the story be widely told across the young parenting community in London and the UK.

Thank you for sharing it. As a 41-year-old mother it meant I reached out and read your issue, having hitherto believed you were targeted at middle-aged men.

It would be great to hear Lorin speaking at more high profile events in London. The government should be sitting up and taking notice, as a voice of a generation of concerned parents and mothers.

Louise Hall, London W14

We welcome your letters on any subject to do with Rotary. Submissions should not be more than 250 words long. Please include your name and address. Email: editor@rotarygbi.org or post to: Rotary magazine, Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PB. The comments made on this page do not necessarily represent the views of Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland and Rotarians.



Barry Rassin
Rotary President 2018/19

EVERY two minutes, somewhere in the world, a woman dies from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Babies whose mothers die within the first six weeks of their lives are far more likely to die than babies whose mothers survive.

As I've travelled around the world I've met families for whom these aren't simply tragic statistics. I've also met people devoting themselves to help mothers and children — and because of them, I'm hopeful.

Because so many of those people are Rotarians, I'm also proud. April is Maternal and Child Health Month in Rotary, a perfect time to tell you about some things Rotarians are doing that will make you proud too.

Last autumn, I visited a hospital in the town of Jekabpils, in Latvia. It's a modern hospital. The doctors and nurses are caring, dedicated, and skilled. But, despite their hard work, the maternal mortality rate had remained stubbornly high, due to a lack of vital diagnostic equipment and incubators.

And that's where Rotary came in as 21 clubs from around the world joined forces for a global grant that provided what the hospital required. In September, when I walked into the maternity ward, I saw state-of-the-art equipment, and I met patients who were getting the care that they needed — and that every mother and child in the world deserves to have.

In Brazil, club members worked with Rotarians in Japan on a global grant project that dramatically increased the capacity of an overstretched neonatal intensive care unit. New incubators, monitors, and other equipment have enabled the local hospital to save many more babies' lives each year.

In Mongolia, a vocational training team from New Zealand organised instruction in emergency response techniques for doctors and midwives, set up a programme that taught midwives modern best practices, and researched and wrote a culturally relevant childbirth education manual.

That's what I mean when I talk about transformational service, and it's what Rotarians do best. Because of our networks, which span the globe; our community presence, which allows us to see what's most needed; and our expertise, which encompasses countless skills and professions, we're able to serve in a manner that has no equal. And we're able to Be the Inspiration as we help those who need us most. ●



Ron D. Burton
Trustee Chair 2018/19

AS we begin the last quarter of the Rotary year, our thoughts turn to ensuring a strong finish.

I hope that your goal has been to make your club stronger than it was at the beginning of the year.

All clubs depend on members to do their part so the club doesn't just survive, but thrive. But for that to happen, each member must contribute to that success every day of the year.

It is important that we identify potential new members and sponsor them, that we reach out to former members and invite them back. Above all, whether they are new members or returning members, we must mentor and engage them to make them strong members of our club.

We must roll up our sleeves and work on club projects, district projects, and global projects, because nothing creates fellowship more than working together with other members of your club.

We must also support The Rotary Foundation. Doing good in the world doesn't just happen. In addition to having the people to carry out projects, we must also have the funds to make them viable.

That's where each of us comes in.

We, our partners, and our beneficiaries are the sources for those funds.

I hope each member will make our Foundation a charity of choice so we can continue to change lives and improve the world. For the cost of just two "crafted" lattes a month, one can become a \$100-per-year contributor to the Foundation.

That is a small amount to pay for all the good our Foundation does. And giving to our Foundation has never been easier.

You can make your contribution securely and conveniently anytime at rotary.org/donate. I plan to go online this month and make another contribution. I challenge each of you to do the same. ●



Brian Stoyel
RI Director 2017-19

HOW time flies. No sooner have I put pen to paper and pressed send, than the request came through for the next column of *Rotary* magazine. In that time, there have been meetings, conferences, district and club visits, plus two talking points: polio and where will Rotary be in five years' time?

With polio, we are nearly there! And yes, there are bound to be highs and lows when tackling any significant task, but we must maintain momentum, keep praising success and raise funds to complete the mission.

With Rotary in five years, the previous resolutions and forthcoming Council on Legislation enactments should be a very good guide as to where we could be.

But, of course, legislation is one thing, moving decisions into action within our clubs and their membership is quite something else.

So many clubs continue as they have done for so many years without embracing change by being innovative and flexible.

Do we really want to see all the work which Rotary has been involved with over the past 114 years fall into neglect and disrepair?

We all need to take stock.

Having partaken and enjoyed Rotary activity, I don't think anyone wishes to be the one to turn off the light.

Success is within our grasp. Embrace Rotary2, establish satellite clubs, enjoy innovation and encourage flexibility within clubs, support district continuity teams and attend district and club council meetings — be part of the change.

If you have not already heard, our organisation age profile makes us vulnerable to extinction, remember that much talked-about, flightless bird the Dodo!

I have been engrossed in numerous online and face-to-face Council on Legislation meetings. These provide a wonderful insight into our world, understanding where strict understanding of regulations need to be addressed — more flexible meeting arrangements, younger members needed, reduced fees for older and young Rotarians.

In reality, how can we hope to satisfy the needs of so many? Be realistic, Rotary is a fantastic, worldwide, humanitarian, respected, thoughtful, and caring organisation, and being a part of it requires enjoyment, participation, finance and time.

A final few words often repeated around the New Year period: "I joined a fitness club, but haven't seen any improvement. No-one mentioned I had to make a regular effort!" ●



50 YEARS OF LOCAL SUPPORT

Every day, around 50 people in the UK are told they have Parkinson's

Raise vital funds in our 50th anniversary year and help make a difference.
Call today for your pack :

Fundraising@parkinsons.org.uk
020 7963 3912

Parkinson's UK is the operating name of the Parkinson's Disease Society of the United Kingdom. A charity registered in England and Wales and in Scotland (SC037554).



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FIND A CURE.
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Happy birthday Parkinson's UK

This year marks 50 years since the Parkinson's Disease Society, now Parkinson's UK, was founded in a one-room office in Putney, London. Since then, the charity has been single-minded in its purpose to find a cure and improve life for everyone affected by Parkinson's – a condition which can devastate lives.

THE vital work which Parkinson's UK does is completely dependent on donations.

But thankfully, to date, nearly 250 Rotary clubs across Great Britain and Ireland have helped with the charity's mission to find a cure and improve the lives of people with Parkinson's by raising over £157,000.

So what is Parkinson's and what more can be done to help? Here is a helpful guide:

One in 37 of us will be diagnosed with Parkinson's in our lifetime. It is a progressive neurological condition that causes problems in the brain and gets worse over time.

Parkinson's is an extremely complex condition, it has over 40 symptoms and affects everyone completely differently -

making it harder to diagnose.

The three main symptoms of Parkinson's are tremor, muscle stiffness and slowness of movement.

But it's important to stress that not everyone will experience all of these.

Some of the less well-known symptoms are stress and anxiety, chronic pain and fatigue, loss of smell and changes in digestion or sleep.

Research suggests that 80% of people who have had Parkinson's for 10 years will develop dementia. This is because the condition spreads from parts of the brain involved with movement to other areas that are needed for thinking and memory.

We don't yet know exactly why people get Parkinson's, but researchers think it's a combination of genetic and environmental factors that combine and eventually lead to the condition.

How can Rotary clubs make a difference?

The money raised by Rotarians has been invested in research to find the causes of the condition, so the charity can develop ways to spot it earlier and new treatments to slow, stop or even reverse its effects in the future.

In the past 50 years, vital discoveries have been made that have revolutionised our understanding of Parkinson's and the brain.

Now, thanks to this progress,



Parkinson's scientists at work in laboratories on a mission to find a cure



Parkinson's team of advisors are on hand to advise families

breakthrough new treatments are being tested in clinical trials that have the potential to slow, stop or even reverse Parkinson's.

These include stem cell therapies which aim to use healthy, living cells to replace or repair the damage in the brains of people with Parkinson's.

The charity is also investigating repurposing drugs that are already approved to treat other conditions - including diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure - to understand their potential benefits for Parkinson's.

The more the charity is able to invest in research, the faster it will be able to deliver, so Parkinson's UK is working hard to raise the funds we need to drive things forward faster.

Support for people when they need it most

Parkinson's UK's vital support services are there for those affected by the condition and the money raised by Rotarians has a crucial role to play here too.

The helpline is the frontline of the charity's support system, and last year it answered over 30,000 calls from people UK-wide in desperate need of help, providing them with the specific information and advice they need.

The money has also helped to fund Parkinson's UK's specialist Parkinson's nurses who are located across the country to help people better manage their medication and symptoms.

And Parkinson's UK's local advisers, who provide emotional, practical and financial support visited 4,500 people in their homes last year.

Alongside all this, Parkinson's UK facilitates 365 local groups which provide a sense of social belonging where many have become isolated due to their condition.

Can your club help?

Rotary clubs have helped to make a huge difference to the lives of people with Parkinson's over the past 50 years, and now Parkinson's UK is encouraging more clubs to get involved.

Steve Parkin is a member of the Ashford Rotary Club in Kent and has helped to raise thousands of pounds for Parkinson's UK.

He said: "I was President of the Ashford Rotary Club in 2017 and I nominated Parkinson's UK as our charity to support for that year.

"I decided to support the charity because I'm aware of the impact Parkinson's has on people's lives and how serious the condition is.

"My mother was a nurse and she supported people with Parkinson's for many years, and I knew another Rotarian who had the condition and eventually he passed away.

"Our club managed to raise £4,000 for Parkinson's UK which went towards supporting people affected by Parkinson's in the area.

"My wife and I have since become members of the local Parkinson's UK branch. It's been great to help where we can and I'll be the group's Chairman from April this year.

"I'd really encourage other Rotary clubs to get involved and support Parkinson's UK.

"As a member of the local Parkinson's UK group, I've seen first hand the importance of supporting people with Parkinson's to help improve the lives of everyone affected." ●



To find out how your Rotary club can support Parkinson's UK, please visit:

parkinsons.org.uk/fundraising

For a special anniversary fundraising pack please call:

020 7963 3912 or email:

fundraising@parkinsons.org.uk

A disaster in the Ring of Fire

Disaster Aid UK & Ireland is a project which has been nurtured by Rotary Denton & Audenshaw in Greater Manchester. It is a member of the Disaster Aid International Group. Volunteer Matt Gemmell describes what it was like to be among the first on the scene following the devastating tsunami and earthquake in Indonesia last autumn.

ACCORDING to the latest FIFA world rankings, Indonesia is placed 159th of 211 footballing countries. Given what we saw recently on the island of Sulawesi, that situation is unlikely to change soon.

Every football pitch and piece of unoccupied land was being used for camps and temporary housing following the disastrous tsunami and earthquake which devastated the coastal city of Palu.

Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world with over 225 million people living in an archipelago of 17,000 islands. The islands straddle the Equator and the 'Ring of Fire' which circles the Pacific Ocean causing frequent volcanic activity, earthquakes and tsunamis.

At around 6pm on Friday, September 28th, an earthquake centred 80km out at sea, north of Palu, created a tsunami which struck the city with little warning.

As the tsunami flattened the coastal areas, the earthquake caused havoc further inland, damaging and destroying buildings as well as infrastructure.

More than 2,000 people were killed, over 1,300 were declared missing, and 212,000 people displaced from their homes.

So what did Disaster Aid International's country partners do?

An initial assessment was carried out by Di Holland, an experienced Disaster Aid

“At around 6pm on Friday, September 28th, an earthquake centred 80km out at sea, north of Palu, created a tsunami which struck the city with little warning.”

response team leader from Australia, four weeks after the disaster struck.

This was followed by a shipment of tents and family survival kits from Malaysia, along with SkyHydrant water filters brought in from the UK & Ireland, and Australia. This was all overseen by our first deployment team of Andrew Gunn and Phil Gribble from Australia.

Then, under the care of a second deployment team from the UK & Ireland Craig Roberts and I, carried a consignment of Sawyer water filters.

The SkyHydrants and Sawyer water filters differ greatly in size, but they essentially consist of the same technology by using hollow membrane fibres to

trap sediment and bacteria, and deliver immediately potable water.

On arrival in Palu, Craig and I were subjected to the culture shock of a new environment. The streets were dusty, with no real pavements. They were lined with small shacks and stalls selling fried chicken and glass bottles with brightly coloured liquid, which turned out to be petrol for the armada of mopeds and motor cycles competing for space with cars and vans.

It was virtually impossible to cross the road. There were even cows and chickens wandering about in the melee.

In those first few minutes of our deployment, the trepidation and apprehension evaporated. It was no longer alien, just different and certainly exotic.

All of the sights and smells were overlaid by the sound of the call to prayer from the proliferation of mosques or 'masjid' in Indonesian Bahasa, the official language.

There seemed to be a masjid almost within touching distance everywhere and the amplified prayer calls were entrancing and very evocative and I was smitten.

The Indonesians have a word 'bule' which means 'white foreigner'. It doesn't seem to be derogatory and I often heard children shouting it in pure bravado and, when I waved, they would come over and become my shadows whilst I was in their village. ►





One of the Disaster Aid team playing football at the camp in Indonesia

Our guide, translator and general fixer was Ronal, a remarkable 21-year-old student, and our driver was Ronal's best friend, Gilbert. Virtually no-one spoke English, but somehow Ronal got us into meetings with important stakeholders co-ordinating the disaster response for a variety of agencies.

One of the things that is very important in work of this nature is to involve the local population in all aspects of the venture, both in planning and implementation. Disaster Aid International does not give people hand-outs or charity, we give them a hand-up to help themselves.

The first of the SkyHydrants that we installed was memorable. We needed a large water tank to be repurposed and turned into the holding tank for the filtered clean water, but the inside of the tank was very dirty with sediment.

However, with the tank on its side and an adult spraying a hose, the boys scrubbed the interior of the tank until it was sparkling clean.

They had the time of their lives and really enjoyed themselves but, more importantly, felt useful helping their community to help itself.

This type of local involvement, allowing the affected population to be fully involved in the planning and implementation of the aid, was critical to our success.

With several installations, the residents did the hands-on installation under our

watchful eyes which was crucial for their self-esteem, knowing that they helped in their own recovery.

Using Ronal's indispensable services, we had numerous meetings with stakeholders providing us with leads of possible locations for our water filters.

At this point in the timeline of the response to the disaster, many people were still living in camps, some makeshift and fairly basic, whilst other camps were more organised but essentially still under canvas.

A number of organisations and NGOs, including Rotary clubs from all over Indonesia, were constructing temporary housing camps and these were springing up at an incredible speed.

Constructed of a skeleton of light aluminium bars, not unlike Meccano, and then cladded and divided into basic rooms, these 'Huntara' are intended to house families until proper housing can be constructed, perhaps up to a year later.

Our strategy was to try and install our SkyHydrant filters in areas of greatest need to have the maximum impact for the health of the people. In total, along with Disaster Aid Australia, we installed eight SkyHydrant water filters to camps and communities in the Palu area.

As well as health, clean water impacts on wealth, as boiling is no longer required, saving fuel, and there is no longer the need to buy expensive and wasteful bottled water.

It is important when deploying that we

do not become 'disaster tourists' but equally for a small charity relying on donations, it is important to document the horror and be able to use this to solicit funds for the current and future activity in a crowded market.

Craig and I took many photographs, some of which were circulated on social media. The damage was horrific and each image represents at least one human tragedy.

The tsunami devastated everything in Palu. Ships were thrown ashore, hotels, houses and shopping malls were completely destroyed. An important road bridge on the coastal road was severed and a beautiful masjid built above the water with a walkway from the shore wrecked.

The most horrific and upsetting damage we saw was when we accidentally stumbled on a small village, south of Palu.

The road ended in a 20-foot drop. The road was buckled and twisted, as houses on either side were grotesquely distorted with huge deep holes and craters in the ground.

One can only imagine the horror of trying to protect and keep your family together during this disaster.

As we left, we saw gravestones being prepared. All were dated 28 September 2018; a truly poignant and haunting sight. ●

 Disaster Aid UK & Ireland:
disasteraiduk.org



Most recently, with the support of Rotary clubs from across the UK & Ireland, we were able to bring much needed relief to the survivors of an earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia, and floods in India.



Supplies of tents, water filters, and other materials bought locally, all helped bring comfort and reassurance to those who lost their homes in Sulawesi (Indonesia), and water filters and clean buckets saved countless people from water borne diseases after the flooding in Kerala (India).

For more information, or to arrange a speaker, please contact us.

Email: admin@disasteraiduk.org Tel: +44 (0)161 336 9528

www.disasteraiduk.org



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MATTHEW COLLINS

For 10 Years Matthew Collins was the low-budget traveller on BBC tv's The Travel Show. Each week he was given a travel challenge (anything from visiting a French nudist camp, to travelling to Spain with his leg in plaster).

He then became a single dad - raising two boys alone and surviving by writing about their travel adventures (bussing around Florida, driving across America, crossing Canada with three borrowed grannies). He then did an MA in Voice Studies. **Today he teaches Voicework and runs Shakespeare workshops in prisons.**

He also gives talk on: Travel, The Voice, Speaking Shakespeare, and the Challenges of 21st Century Maleness.

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Teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime

Gareth Cheesman from Rotary Llantwit Major in South Wales has enjoyed close ties with the Philippines since visiting the country as a Group Study Exchange team leader in 2012. When a devastating typhoon decimated the south-east Asian country a year later, Gareth was at the forefront of a Rotary project to help fishermen who had lost their boats in the storm. Here he tells the story.

IMAGINE trying to survive typhoon winds hitting 150mph. Because that was the plight which faced millions of Filipinos whose homes stood in the way of the Super Typhoon Haiyan.

Known locally as Typhoon Yolanda, this vicious storm killed at least 6,300 people, destroying a million homes and affecting 11 million people. This tropical cyclone was the strongest ever recorded.

Rotary's forte is responding swiftly to these devastating natural disasters, and clubs across the globe joined forces in 2013 after Haiyan had wreaked its havoc.

For Rotarians in South Wales, they share a close affinity with the Philippines through a reciprocal Group Study Exchange in the region of Western Visayas, which bore the brunt of Haiyan.

Clubs within South Wales, along with Inner Wheel and Rotaract, managed to raise around \$100,000 once District and Rotary

Foundation multipliers were taken into account.

And working closely with Rotarians in the Philippines, they identified a small community which had lost much of its livelihood when fishing boats were destroyed in the typhoon.

Santa Rita is about two hours' drive from Panay island's capital city, Iloilo. It is a community of around 300 households, many of whose homes were damaged.

Most families were engaged in small-scale fishing close to the shore, providing food and some cash from sales of surplus catch which was sold in a nearby community market. Super Typhoon Haiyan had put paid to that.

So the Rotarians decided to fund fishing boats, motors and sets of nets to around 50 families – about 17% of the community. Their plans also included reviving the co-operative, which would own the boats, and make sufficient profit

to repair or replace boats and equipment. This could possibly increase the number of vessels, and also provide some financial bursaries for children to attend school.

Rotary Iloilo became the project host and, using local contacts, partnered with the University of San Agustin which was instrumental in providing business expertise and training for the project.

Both the Municipal Government of Anilao and the Philippines' Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources assisted and advised throughout.

And so, last November, the project's dreams came to fruition, when the 55 fishing boats were blessed by a local chaplain, and a few weeks later, there was an official handover of the boats to the Santa Rita Fisherfolks' Association, featuring Rotarians from both the Philippines and South Wales. ●



“The Rotary project is most beneficial to my family. We’ve waited for long to recover our means of livelihood. Typhoon Yolanda took away everything nearly six years ago. It’s only now that we are able to go fishing daily again because of the Rotary project. Now I have a source to buy our basic needs, particularly our staple food, rice, and to give my grandchild a school allowance.”

Fisherman Eddie Demavivas, married, with two children and one grandchild

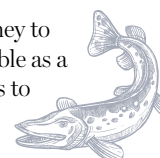


“The Anilao Fishing Project of Rotary has given hope to us, as we try to be back on our feet again after the super typhoon. Now we are assured that we will have our basic family maintenance needs – rice, coffee, sugar, soap, cooking oil, etc. We can also buy the school supplies of our children and grandchildren. We are very thankful to Rotary.”

Melinda Calzado, married, with five children and two grandchildren living with them

“The Rotary project is a big help to us. If we can go out to sea, our catch brings food to our tables, and gives us money to buy our household needs. Through the trainings we undertook, we have learned how to make our livelihood sustainable as a community so that we don’t only work for today, but for the coming years. The Rotary project has empowered us to secure the future of our children and even of our grandchildren. Thank you Rotary.”

Fisherman’s wife Erma Salderon, who is also a Barangay councillor



LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND



THE MADCAP YORKSHIREMAN!



ROTARY member Ken Robertshaw likes a challenge. The madcap Yorkshireman has kayaked 2,350 miles down the Mississippi, and suffered near frostbite while dog sledging some 200 miles above the Arctic Circle – all for charity.

Now Ken, who is a member of Rotary Halifax, has his sights set on a different sort of adventure, cycling down US Highway 1 from Maine to Florida. This time, he is raising money for the Theodora Children's Charity.

Ken explained: "I have been a long-time supporter of the charity and its aim

of bringing fun and laughter to children who are unfortunate enough to be undergoing hospital or hospice stays."

The Arctic trip raised £12,000 which enabled Theodora Children's Charity to be established at the Leeds General Infirmary.

And then the Mississippi trip in 2014 has realised over £100K over the last 4.5 years and has ensured that the Giggle Doctors keep appearing, not just at Bradford and Leeds but around the country.

US Highway 1 rises at the Canadian border and was part of the first federal highway system in the USA in the 1920s.

The route runs through the 13 States down the east coast terminating at Key West. At this point the road is 90 miles from Havana, Cuba and over 1,000 from Washington DC.

Ken is planning to begin the cycle trip in July, and is taking eight weeks to cover the 2,500 mile route – coincidentally, it is

the 25th year of the Theodora Children's Charity.

Ken explained: "I shall be covering 300 miles per week at a rate of 60 miles per day and plan to finish each week in a town that has a Rotary club.

"I am in the process of contacting these clubs to ask if they can help at the weekends, which will be rest days.

"I need to use Saturday as a rest/repair/clean day, but on the Sunday I will be inviting the 'host' club to organise a small ride of 25 miles around a park or similar at which I will propose to them that they use this as a fund-raising event for their club or charity of choice and a chance for young people to meet the 'crazy Englishman'." ●

i For more details, email: ken@therobertshaws.me or visit: www.facebook.com/cyclingrouteone

BACK TO SCHOOL



ROTARY Yeovil is celebrating after reaching its £64,000 fund-raising target to build a brand new school in earthquake-ravaged Nepal.

It has taken the Somerset club a little over 18 months to raise the money to build a brand new, six-classroom school in the mountainous Sindhupalchok District that was struck by the earthquake of 2015.

The Yeovil club was helped by other clubs in the local Rotary district, together with a number of groups and organisations that have each made considerable contributions to the appeal.

Rotary Yeovil President, Caroline Ansell said that despite the terrible earthquake of four years ago, which killed nearly 9,000 people and made around 3.5 million people homeless in the Himalayan country, what Rotary had achieved would provide a legacy for the region.

The Mondo Foundation has supported the project and they will be channelling the funds to Nepal to ensure the school project is completed.

Stephen Carrick-Davies, CEO of the Mondo Foundation, said: "This is an amazing achievement and everyone who has contributed should be so proud that

they have supported the Yeovil Rotary Club with its appeal.

"They used to say it takes a whole village to raise a child, but this project demonstrates that our global village can play its part and this school will help transform the lives of children and future generations."

Having now reached the target for building, fitting out and equipping the school itself - including teacher training - the Yeovil club is continuing its fund-raising efforts in order provide the school's first 200 pupils with a 'School in a Bag' rucksack and its contents.

"With each school bag costing £20, to fund 200 will require an additional £4,000 being raised," explained Caroline.

"We hope, that by the time the school opens its doors in the summer, we will have not only provided the building and its infrastructure, but the equipment the children will need too.

"It completes the package perfectly and endorses the link between this project, our club and the School in a Bag charity." ●

i For further information visit: www.hungryplanet.com

EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

A CHARITABLE education project in South Africa has massively reduced costs thanks to an innovative partnership with a supermarket chain in the country.

Rotary Northampton Becket has been involved in the Classroom Box project in Malawi and the Eastern Cape province of South Africa since 2008, sourcing basic education materials and shipping them to Africa where they have been distributed by local Rotary clubs.

However, shipping costs have increased dramatically. So, to reduce this, the Midlands club has negotiated a deal with Shoprite Holdings Ltd, the number one supermarket group in South Africa.

It has agreed to sell the Rotary club materials at cost price, and transport them to Malawi and the Eastern Cape free of charge, as part of their regular deliveries.

Trustee John Saynor revealed that it had taken the charity seven years to distribute the first 600 boxes, but with the assistance of Shoprite, only three years to distribute the next 1800. He said that the number of pupils assisted was now over 100,000.

He said: "The net effect is that we are now able to assist many more schoolchildren than before."

Whilst the cost of a box will vary depending on exchange rates, on average, a box will cost £20, a far cry from the £60 when transport was from the UK. ●

i For further information, contact: John Saynor at netsaynor@msn.com



FOOTBALL CRAZY

THREE Rotary clubs in Surrey have joined forces to sponsor a girls' football team.

The Rotary Clubs of Dorking, Dorking Deepdene and Ashted have lent their support to Mole Valley Girls Football Club, under the banner of Mole Valley Rotary.

The deal will provide £1,500 this season and next, with a possibility of continuing into the future. In return, the football club is sporting the Rotary logo on the shirt sleeves of each team, and also on other items of kit.

Although the football club has worn the Rotary logo on their sleeves for most of this season, around two dozen Rotarians were at Meadowbank Stadium in Dorking to officially kick-start their sponsorship.

They watched in delight as the ladies' team, who are second in the Surrey County Women's League, convincingly beat third-placed rivals Wandgas 5-0.

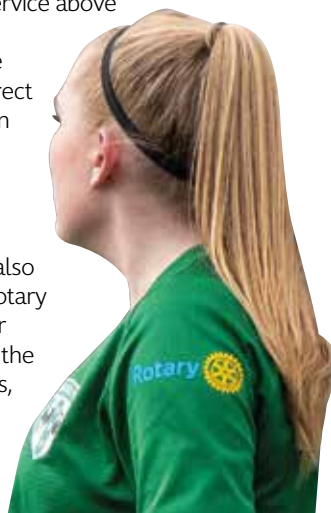
John Thom, from Rotary Dorking, said that the idea of working with the football club was to showcase the range of youth competitions and opportunities which Rotary offers to a wider audience than the schools they currently work with.

He said: "Women's football is thriving throughout Great Britain, and Mole Valley Girls Football Club is a prime example of the enthusiasm and talent looking for an outlet.

"We are thrilled to be able to help them go further faster, to promote themselves better and more widely, as well as improve and attract new players.

"If we can do this, by showing the good which Rotary can do for all ages, then we will have been faithful to our key maxim of service above self.

"We are keen to correct the common image held of Rotary as 'older men meeting for lunch', and also introduce Rotary to a younger audience of the girls' parents, who we see as prime Rotary2 material." ●



ON YER BIKE!



LUTTERWORTH Sports Centre in Leicestershire played host for a third year to Lutterworth Rotary Club's 'Spin into Spring' Indoor Cycling event.

The club teamed up again with spinning instructor Richard Stannard to run six one-hour spinning sessions giving cyclists a 'virtual trip' around some of the world's more famous cycle rides, all with musical accompaniment.

The event itself was a fundraiser for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, Rainbows and other Rotary-supported charities, with around £2,500 expected to have been raised.

President of Lutterworth Rotary Club, Mark Thompson, said: "The Indoor Bike Ride has been a great event to be involved in again.

"Not only does it raise a lot of money for some good causes but it encourages people to keep fit and acts as another way in which the community can come together and have some fun." ●

BREAKING DOWN LANGUAGE BARRIERS

A ROTARY club in the West Midlands is supporting a literacy project at a school where many of the children and their families speak English as a second language.

Rotary Stourbridge is working with Wollescote Primary School to support an innovative project to establish a Story Sack Library.

Wollescote Primary School serves an area of high deprivation, with over 80% of children speaking English as an additional language.

The majority of children are of Pakistani Heritage. A recent and increasing number of children are of Romanian and Gypsy Roma Heritage.

Few families access public libraries and a significant number of mothers do not read English, relying on older siblings

or relatives to teach reading skills to their children.

The school has recently introduced a successful play and stay programme for mothers with young children.

This targets mothers with little or no English. The programme supports their understanding of English and identifies how they can help their child with speaking, listening and readiness for reading.

The club has been working with the school, to establish a Story Sack library, for parents attending play and stay provision.

Rotary Stourbridge has been awarded a grant from Rotary International for £250 to support the Story Sack project, a further £250 has been added from the club.

A Story Sack is a large cloth bag, containing a high quality picture book with supporting activities and materials to bring the story to life, which do not rely on the

ability to read English.

These materials or resources include puppets, sort toys of the main characters, artefacts relating to items in the story and picture, letter or word recognition games.

Once established, the parents' 50p weekly donation to play and stay provision will allow for any replenishment of resources due to wear and tear.

To buy each fully-equipped Story Sack costs £50. The Story Sack Library requires 10 Story Sacks.

Rotary Stourbridge has been involved with Wollescote Primary School since 2011, and has an active Young Rotarians club with over 20 members at any one time. ●

A man and a woman in business attire are looking at a tablet together. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. The woman is on the right, wearing a dark blazer over a white shirt, with sunglasses perched on her head. They are both smiling and looking at the tablet. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting like a cafe.

TOGETHER, WE CONNECT

Rotary provides valuable opportunities for individuals to network, make connections and build relationships, all while giving something back to the community – that's what People of Action do.

rotarygbi.org

Rotary  PEOPLE OF ACTION

THE RIGHT TO SIGHT



ROTARIANS in Ireland are joining forces to strengthen an appeal which aims to eradicate all curable blindness on the African continent.

In Africa, more than seven million people suffer from needless blindness. More than half of this is due to cataracts.

However, using new surgical technology, patients with cataracts can regain their sight, and blindness can be cured by a 10-minute operation costing 25 Euros.

This has drawn the attention of Rotary clubs across Ireland who are backing the Right to Sight campaign.

As part of a co-ordinated appeal, Rotary Ireland is asking clubs to make a minimum £200/€250 contribution which would give the power of sight to 1,000 people.

Rotary Lisburn has been at the forefront of the campaign by helping to provide a state-of-the art fundus camera which can take images of the eye without the need for eye drops.

Anyone can use the camera, and these images can be sent by computer to the cloud where surgeons as far away as Ireland assess the treatment needed.

The Right to Sight charity is being driven by eye specialists to empower African eye surgeons to use cutting edge technology to eliminate needless blindness on the continent.

So far 260,000 people have regained sight through a simple cataract operation enabled through Right to Sight since 2005. ●

ALAN'S MISSION



IT has taken one man's commitment and passion over the past decade to transform the lives of thousands of children in Africa.

Rotarian Alan Wolstencroft's charity has recently funded more than 1,300 textbooks to a school in Sierra Leone which has been the focal point of his fund-raising efforts.

The books will fill a new library which has been built at the Liverpool Community School in the Waterloo district of the nation's capital, Freetown.

And now the target is to provide science equipment and laptop computers for a new laboratory which has been completed, where electricity has recently been installed.

"Alan's Africa" is a project which is backed by his Rotary club in Banbury in Oxfordshire, which has been a strong financial supporter of the initiative. Alan has also generated considerable funding

through a network of supporters raising £225,600 since 2007.

Since 2007, Alan has worked with a number of schools in Sierra Leone, providing tens of thousands of pounds worth of school equipment and uniform. The link with the Liverpool Community School was forged in 2013.

The school receives no government funding and it has never been able to afford the luxury of buying textbooks. That issue has now been addressed with the 1,300 books bought from a local supplier which are suitable for the national curriculum in Sierra Leone.

Alan added: "We intend to purchase more books in the future and we also need to buy all the equipment for the laboratory and, with the advent of electricity, we hope to purchase a number of laptops." ●

i For more information visit:
alansafrika.co.uk
alanwooly@msn.com

BOOKWORMS!

ROTARIANS in Slough are on target to have donated 10,000 dictionaries to primary schools in the Berkshire town by 2020.

Rotary Slough has been involved with the Dictionary 4 Life project since 2008.

"We started the project 11 years ago to just one school, but for the past nine years the Rotary club has donated to all 13 primary schools in Slough," explained club secretary, Robin Weathersbee.

"In 2020, we shall have donated a total of 10,000 dictionaries at a retail value of over £120,000.

"The cost to Rotary is just £3.50 a book, and we cover this with District Foundation Grants and help from a local charity.

"We think this is the best project we

do - to see the delight on the pupils' faces when they are given their dictionary is wonderful.

"For some, this is the first book they have personally owned."

Robin added that the teachers were also behind the scheme since this helps with the National Curriculum studies.

The dictionaries are given to Year 4 students, who are eight-years-old, since this gives them two years' experience before they move to secondary school.

"Some think that computers provide all the information children need, but these books give far more than a computer can," added Robin.

"We would urge all Rotary clubs to become involved in this project." ●

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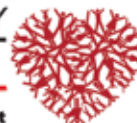
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FORE!

NEVER mind the Ryder Cup and The Open, all golfing eyes are fixed on the 33rd RIBI Rotary Golf Club Championship which tees off later on this year.

The Leicestershire Golf Club, situated on the outskirts of Leicester, will host this year's competition on September 2nd. It will consist of two-person Rotary club teams fighting it out for the team title, and an individual competition.

The deadline for entries is April 30th. Championship organiser, Simon Gravett, admitted that because of falling support in recent years, the format of the tournament has been revised to stimulate more entries.

"We've set the initial deadline for entries for April 30th when a decision about the viability of the event will be taken," he said. ●

i For more information, contact Simon or Tony on:
07801 860 141
07711 824 173



LEAVING A ROTARY LEGACY

SINCE it was established more than a century ago, The Rotary Foundation has sat at the very heart of the organisation's work around the globe.

Every year, millions of pounds are used to fund numerous Rotary projects which are improving the lives of others around the world.

In fact, The Rotary Foundation has spent more than £2.35 billion on life-changing, sustainable projects across the world.

But in order to support this great work, it is dependent on donations from Rotary members, their clubs and the general public.

One key area is legacies, where Rotarians ensure that, through their will, the work of the Foundation continues beyond their lifetime.

The Rotary Foundation of the United Kingdom (RFUK) has recently received a significant legacy from a Dorset Rotarian.

David Cundy, who was a founder member of Rotary Highcliffe-on-Sea, died in December 2016 and has left a generous legacy of more than £80,000 to The Rotary Foundation.

When the south coast club chartered in December 1977, David was manager of the Midland Bank. He was an active Rotarian who became Rotary Highcliffe-on-Sea's Club President in 1991.

Steve Munns from the RFUK Trustees said: "David's Rotary involvement was

much the same as most Rotarians, however he and his wife Valerie also took the opportunity to attend the occasional international convention.

"Perhaps it was these events which opened David's interest in the programmes of The Rotary Foundation."

Wife Valerie died in March 2016, and David passed away nine months later.

A gift to Rotary's endowment ensures a strong future for The Rotary Foundation by providing a continuous stream of income that will fund the charity's programmes in perpetuity.

Gifts are invested, and the spendable earnings are used to support the World Fund, or can be directed towards a programme that you have designated.

Steve Munns added: "The Rotary Foundation has a long-established commitment to projects throughout the world and needs continued funding to further its work. Rotary's tomorrow, depends on what you do today." ●

The
Rotary
Foundation



i To find out more about legacies and supporting The Rotary Foundation, rotarygbi.org/donate

JOINED UP THINKING

ROTARY clubs from across Wiltshire have joined forces to fund an exciting mobile education centre.

Eleven clubs from across the county raised £12,000 and successfully applied for a grant of £30,000 from The Rotary Foundation to fund a new mobile classroom for Life Education Centre (Wiltshire). This provides children aged between four to 11-years-old with the knowledge and skills needed to make the right decisions in life.

The programme includes education on health, relationships and well-being.

Life Education Wiltshire works in association with the Coram charity which works with children and young people, along with schools and parents to deliver a series of sessions linked to the National Curriculum.

They use a specially designed, high-tech mobile classroom and highly trained educators.

The mobile classroom and its specialist educators are essential in giving the children an exciting experience and enable difficult topics such as managing risks from exposure to drugs and alcohol, the internet

and personal relationships to be addressed in a sensitive and protective environment.

Volunteers from the Rotary Clubs of Royal Wootton Bassett & District, Bradford on Avon and Salisbury have been responsible for managing the Wiltshire Life Education 'Keeping Children Safe' programme, as well as towing and installing the classroom in Wiltshire primary schools for over 20 years.

This academic year alone, Life Education Wiltshire will support nearly 12,000 children in around 80 county schools. ●

A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE



WHAT a way to celebrate your 70th birthday – completing a gruelling 52-day charity walk along the South West Coastal Path.

But that was the staggering feat achieved by Rotarian, Chris Dowse, who has managed to raise £13,500 in the process.

The walk started at Minehead in Somerset and finished at South Haven Point in Dorset, a total of 630 miles and the longest natural trail in Britain.

Over a period of three months, Chris ticked off various sections of the coastal path, calling in to Land's End, before finishing on the date of his landmark birthday.

On average, Chris walked 12.3 miles a day, carrying with him helium polio and prostate cancer balloons to promote his fund-raising.

What makes the achievement even more staggering is that Chris lives in Scotland, in the Perthshire village of Comrie – more than 500 miles from Devon and Cornwall, and is a member of Rotary Crieff. Following the walk, the club made him a Multiple Paul Harris Fellow for the achievement.

Chris chose the South West Coastal Path because he was looking for a challenge. "At 630 miles and 115,000 feet of ascent, it was something which I was not at all sure I could achieve," he admitted.

"But I was determined to do unless I was forced to stop by something out of my control, and if that happened I planned to return to complete.

"My greatest fear was hurting myself in some way, which happily didn't happen – not even a single blister!

"The amazing generosity of numerous people was humbling and this has altered my view of human nature."

The retired farmer chose to fund-raise for Prostate Cancer UK and Rotary's End Polio Now campaign, because he had prostate cancer 10 years ago, and through his association with Rotary. ●

PROSTATE SUCCESS

ROTARY Lichfield St. Chad in the Midlands has been raising awareness of prostate cancer.

The Staffordshire-based club staged a free prostate screening check at the Cathedral Hotel for men from the city.

Jyoti Shah, a consultant urologist from Burton NHS Hospitals Trust, and her colleague Sarah Minns, a Macmillan Advanced Nurse Practitioner, devoted a whole day of their own time to provide a service which many men find it difficult to confront.

The session was so popular that it was fully booked a month ahead of the event, when 39 men went through a PSA

blood test, together with an examination of the prostate. It takes only ten minutes, but it could save a life.

David Cross, President of the club, said: "This is a fine example of how Rotary works directly in the community; identifying a need and offering the means to solve it.

"We shall be running this programme again next year." ●



**PROSTATE
CANCER UK**

RAY'S ON THE RUN AGAIN!

THE countdown is on for Rotarian Ray Johnson as he bids to complete his 19th successive London Marathon.

So far Ray, who is a member of Folkestone Rotary, has raised more than £75,000 for the Kent Association for the Blind, and in excess of £6,000 for Cancer Research.

Now his sights are set on increasing those numbers when he starts off from Greenwich to the finish beside Buckingham Palace on April 28th.

Ray is hoping for cooler weather next month. Last year, he suffered in the heat and his finish time was slightly slower at 5 hours 4 minutes. His best time was 3 hours 23 minutes which was run in 2002.

He said: "Last year it was particularly hard going from as early as mile 8, but thankfully I picked up shortly afterwards.

"I am already in training for this year's event. I know I can't beat this 2002 time, but I am sure I can certainly raise more money for charity – and that encourages me tremendously.

"Just the other day I completed a training run of 23 miles from Sandgate Hill to Bonnington church and back.

Already I am on my way having raised over £700 so far for this year's race." ●



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and finally...

with Managing Editor, Dave King
editor@rotarygbi.org

There's nothing modern about slavery

DRIVING home from town this morning, I passed one of those old garage forecourts which now serves as a car wash.

Business was brisk with a queue of cars patiently waiting for the production line of soap, wash and clean from half a dozen men equipped with chamois leathers and hoses.

Only the day before, I had interviewed Detective Superintendent Andrew Munday, who heads up the police's national modern slavery unit.

This followed a visit to the London safe house which is home to a dozen women, many traumatised, and all victims of trafficking.

From both sets of interviews, I really was shocked by the scale of the problem in this country – moreso the jaw-dropping fact that the majority of victims are British nationals.

How can this be happening under our own noses? I thought slavery had long since ended in 1807 when William Wilberforce paved the way for the slave trade to be abolished.

Fast forward to 2019, when Det Supt Munday talked about car washes, even nail bars which populate most towns, as well as the construction and agriculture industries.

All are target areas for those who seek to fester this most heinous of crimes.

So while the police message, understandably, is that we have a duty to be vigilant about modern slavery, how can the public be certain what is a legitimate business – and what is not?

"The fact that four or five men are cleaning a car for 30 or 40 minutes, and it costs just £5, surely it is down to the social awareness of the public to question this, and not do it," suggested Andrew.

Because of the difficulty securing prosecutions through a lack of substantial evidence, plus an understandable desire to protect the victims, it seems as if the police have a thankless task.

But it was encouraging to hear Det Supt Munday suggest that modern slavery can be reduced significantly, and public attitude would help in that fight.

He reflected how the public now treats those who drink and drive. It is socially unacceptable, and a big reason for the reduction in recent years has been through social awareness and peer pressure.

"It is having the due diligence to differentiate between what is a lawful and appropriate business, to acting in a situation which causes concern," added the police chief.

"For example, there are a number

of lawful bona fide, well run and very professional car washes, and their employees may be international and speak little English, which is not an issue.

"But I would hazard a guess that for those which are professional and lawful, the clothing of the individuals will be appropriate to the circumstances and the amount charged would reflect somebody receiving a fair wage.

"Whereas the ones with the most scrutiny are where you find the clothing is awful, where workers are out in freezing conditions or driving rain, and wearing scant clothing.

"We have had cases of people wearing flip flops in the winter, walking through standing water."

Rotary can certainly play a part in helping to educate and inform – a role which we have been doing in many areas for over a century.

You can't expect the public to police the whole of society, but surely the first step is social awareness, saying to yourself 'that can't be right' – and report it.

More often than not, it isn't right when given closer scrutiny. ●



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