

# Rotary

The Official Magazine of Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland

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# *Courageous love in the rubbish dumps of Manila*

*Jane Walker is the founder of the Purple Community Fund, which is transforming the lives of families who are scraping a living on the rubbish dumps of Manila. Here Jane tells the story of her incredible journey.*

**I** AM a 15-year-old girl, homeless, too young to collect benefits, and with a sufficient amount of trauma behind me to severely cloud my perception about life, people and relationships. My life back then was all about survival.

I worked from the ground up in the newspaper industry and swam to the lofty heights of senior management, managing the sales of 28 newspapers in the Midlands and West Country. All this, while my personal life sank into one of fear, isolation and desperate loneliness.

In 1996, aged 33, I started to question the purpose of my life. Selling papers didn't feel as fulfilling as it used to be and I couldn't shake the feeling that there was more to life than my current experiences.

I took a sabbatical from work and travelled to the Philippines to think about my future.

In Manila, the first thing I did was to read a newspaper. I read stories about families living in broken down shanties and their homes demolished by bulldozers to make way for new roads.

I wanted to see for myself what a squatter area looked like. I jumped in a taxi and asked him to take me to worst

squatter area he knew. The driver wasn't keen. He said it was not safe for white women. I promised to stay inside the taxi, but as soon as we arrived in the Tondo district of Manila and I saw the shanty housing, I jumped out for a closer look.

I couldn't believe how families could live in these tiny, dark shacks. They were no bigger than a small garden shed, with no electricity, running water or sanitation.

The walls were made with secondhand pieces of wood nailed together with rusty sheets of corrugated metal and an old truck tyre to secure the roof. I felt sick to my stomach to think that entire families were calling these shacks their homes. It hurts to say this, but even our animals live in a better conditions than these families.

I saw two little boys, one dragging a sack behind him, the other swinging a metal hook. I was curious what they were doing and followed them up a dirt track.

I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Some of the children were as young as two years of age, knee-deep in rubbish, their little bodies covered in cuts and dirt.

They were picking up pieces of plastic and putting them in sacks. The smell from the dump site was so putrid it was difficult to breathe without wincing. Rotting food,



hospital waste, decaying carcasses from the abattoirs. All the while, toxic fires and smoke filled the air.

There was nothing dignified about this place. But oddly, this was the place where I had my epiphany moment. That moment when I knew I had a choice to help or walk away, a choice that would change the direction for the rest of my life.

When I looked at the faces of the children, I realised they were destined to spend their entire lives living and working in other people's rubbish, unable to change their own futures. That feeling of hopelessness reminded me how I felt when I was a child, of not being able to stop or change something horrible that what was



*Young children living on the rubbish dump in Manila are exposed to unparalleled squalor*

happening to me. It took me back to a place in my own childhood, a place that I had tried for years to forget.

My childhood was complicated, separated by the courts from my sister who went to live with her abusive father.

We remained apart until I was eight-years-old when the courts granted my mother custody. Although I was well provided for, the essential ingredients for a happy secure childhood were definitely missing. The situation in my family was tense. My father's temper was often out of control, my mother was emotionally unstable and had attempted suicide which, at the age of 12, I had also tried.

When I was 15, my parents gave me an



*“I couldn’t believe how families could live in these tiny, dark shacks. They were no bigger than a small garden shed with no electricity, running water or sanitation.”*

ultimatum to live with my aunt and uncle in Cornwall, or they would hand me over to Social Services because they no longer wanted me to live with them. I, of course,

opted to stay with my aunt.

A fresh start, I thought, which ended quickly when my uncle raped me. So I ended up in Bournemouth, Dorset, homeless and alone.

I was lucky. I managed to find a job as a live-in chambermaid in a hotel and, because of that opportunity; I was saved from the untold horrors of living on the streets.

Of course, I was haunted by the ghosts of my past, but I found my escape in hard work and, with the aid of recreational drugs and drink, that helped get me through.

Back on the dump site, I looked at these children and could almost feel ➡

their despair and hopelessness.

I knew that if I walked away and wished them well, I would be no different from the teachers who didn't report the bruises, or the doctors who ignored my eating disorder, or the social worker who didn't believe my stories, and the policewoman who advised me to run away because my uncle would abuse me again.

I was now the professional. If I had walked away – wouldn't I be the same as all those professionals who had a choice to help me, but who decided not to?

I felt out of my depth, unqualified to help, and maybe the easiest thing to do would have been to walk away, but I knew I would regret that decision. If I cared enough, I would find the courage to try.



*“I felt out of my depth, unqualified to help, and maybe the easiest thing to do would have been to walk away.”*

I returned to England to learn why there were so many child workers in the Philippines, and what could be done to help the children and their families have a better life.

So I decided to build a small day care centre for 60 children in Tondo using my savings. But I knew this wasn't going to change the children's lives so, in 2002, I started my own charity, The Purple Community Fund, to raise money to send them to school. ➔



Children earn around 8p to gather 1kg of used plastic bottles

# Please help us grow

For 10 years, Jane Walker was a member of the London Rotary in Mayfair, and also Makati Nielsen Rotary in the Philippines. Later this month, when she moves back to Manila for good, Jane intends to rejoin a club in the Philippines' capital.

“We have been working with Rotary as far back as 2003,” explained Jane. “Rotary has funded a lot of our capital expenditure such as for two school buses and for solar panels.

“Rotary has also provided funds for sewing machines to make school uniforms, and helped with buying school equipment, such as computers and tablets.

“Most recently, Rotary helped to find £2,000 to fund shoemaking machinery. We have also worked closely with Ian Parker's Rotary charity ‘Literacy in a Box’ and have been recipients of Rotary's Christmas shoeboxes.”

Rotarians across Great Britain & Ireland have become firm supporters of the Purple Community Fund.

In 2016, Dennis Meadus, a retired teacher from Rotary Portsmouth & Southsea, raised \$70,000 to send three teachers to Manila to carry out teacher training. And earlier this year, the material from a banner used for the Rotary District 1110 conference in Jersey, was adapted as a tarpaulin for some of the homes flooded from tropical monsoons.

When Jane arrives in Manila in December, one of her first tasks will be to push through a project for a new multi-purpose building on 4,000 square metres of land which the Philippines' government has given the charity. This will be used to provide employment opportunities for another 50 men and women in the capital.

“Our shoe-making project is going from strength to strength making 100% recycled school shoes from the inner tubes of truck tyres and aeroplane tyres. We hope to expand this, so that we can employ 40 fathers,” added Jane.

“We are building a new gym to start a martial arts academy and provide keep fit, as well as a space for the scout and guides to run their community programmes.

“Our most ambitious project is to purchase a machine which recycles any grade plastic into fuel to clean landfill sites. It will be the first machine of its kind in the Philippines.”

What more can Rotary do? Jane replied: “Keep funding us, so we can grow with confidence.” ●

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*Despite the awful conditions in Tondo, there is a sense of community and hope among those who live there*

My sister Andrea was touched by the stories I told her and she decided to help me fund-raise as well.

I went back to the Philippines and asked the parents what they wanted me to do for them. They directed me to an old disused warehouse and suggested I start a school for their children.

We cleaned the building and painted the walls. We bought second-hand pieces

worming drink for them.

It was here that I made my first major mistake. I de-wormed over 200 children on a Thursday, so you can imagine what happened when they came to school the next day. Suffice to say, we always worm on a Friday now!

The children kept missing days from school to go to work. I didn't understand why this was happening so I decided to move onto the dump site and live with the families to learn more about their lives.

This is where I learned that wonderful things happen when we learn to live and love courageously. I learnt that nothing is as it first seems.

I thought the children were forced to work by their parents, but I learnt that it was the children who decided to help their parents. They understood that if they don't work, they don't eat, and so children at a very young age were bearing the weight of adulthood on their young shoulders.

It was robbing them of their childhoods, and yet the children were not resentful, they all worked together as a team.

When I worked on the dump site, the parents and children showed me what

pieces of waste to collect. When they realised I didn't have much waste in my sack, they shared their waste with me.

I learnt how hard their job really was. To be bent down with your face so close to the ground, with all its smells, and staying in that position for almost 10 hours a day.

Physically, it was exhausting. I am pretty sure this is one of the worst jobs in the world. ➡



*Young children toil on the rubbish dump*

“At the end of the day, all the waste was emptied outside of their shanties and separated again into piles which could be sold for a few pennies a kilo.”

of furniture and I posted a sign advertising for teachers. I fed the children one meal a day with snacks, but after three months they were still not gaining any weight.

So I took them to a paediatrician who told me they were riddled with intestinal worms and gave me a chocolate de-



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Plastic bags littered the dumpsite and were filled with human waste, but still everyone shook open these bags in case there was something valuable inside, so I got splattered in excrement.

We soldiered on until it was dark. I was desperate for a hot bath, but instead I washed outside their shanties in a small bowl of cold water, with a piece of soap the size of 10 pence piece. When I looked up, I saw 300 Filipinos watching me.

I guess they weren't used to seeing a white woman washing outside their homes!

I learnt that despite the lack of basic services such as sanitation and running water, families were house proud. They kept their shanties and themselves immaculately clean.

At the end of the day, all the waste was emptied outside of their shanties and separated again into piles which could be

sold for a few pennies a kilo.

With this money, some rice and noodles were bought for our evening meal. We shared the evening meal on one plate and ate with our hands.

At bedtime the children wrapped up my feet in their clothes because they said the rats sometimes come in and nibble their hard skin.

All through this, the family went about their everyday life. They chatted and laughed, they cleaned up and went to sleep.

They had grown accustomed to living with the rats, the cockroaches and enormous spiders. Diarrhoea, sickness, coughs and colds, as well as skin complaints, were as much part of their lives as making a cup of tea is to us.

Soon I understood how everyone owned their possessions lightly, knowing that fire, eviction, disease or a typhoon



*Children who sift through the rubbish dump are now receiving an education*

*Jane Walker's dream is to eradicate child labour on the site*

could take away everything they have in a second.

They taught me that sometimes life is hard and sometimes it's not. Everything passes, nothing good or bad lasts forever.

It's pointless to question why, the only thing that lasts is the love they have for each other.

This was a brand new concept for me.

The families seemed to live without bitterness or blame, and I found myself able to let go of the emotions which had kept me bound to my past. I saw beauty in their lives and the lessons I had learnt freed my mind from the thoughts that had tortured me all my life.

The more time I spent with the families, the more I learned, the more I discovered many things that they had initially kept hidden from me.



For example, I learned how some of the mothers and teenage girls sold their bodies on the streets to supplement their income, also, how some families had lost children to the pimps and paedophiles who preyed on the dump sites, and how almost every family I met had lost a close family member because of untreated injuries, infection or disease.

How nearly every infant was born severely malnourished and many died. I felt their pain, in a way that even now, nearly 20 years on, has never left me.

Whenever I think about the plight of these poor Filipinos, my heart fills up with love. I become protective towards them.

I want to shield them from any more suffering because no human being should ever have to endure what they have endured and, sadly, continue to endure.

I am in awe of them, full of admiration and respect for them and want the world to see the immense beauty of their spirits.

Meeting them has changed not only my life, but my sister's too.

She gave up a well-paid job to stand by my side, and together we have made it our lives' work to create a pathway out of poverty for the children and their families.

We built the world's first school made from 80 x 40 foot recycled shipping containers to educate every child living on the dump site. Now we have educated over 16,000 children.

The school provides local employment.

We have taught a few thousand men and women new skills so they can earn a regular income and provide for their own children.

More than 100,000 people have been

treated through our poverty reduction programmes.

And we have created a brand of products made from all sorts of recycled materials which we also sell for them. This provides a regular income for parents.

None of us know the outcome of where a courageous act will take us or the impact it will have. I have come to the conclusion that courageous love not only changes the world we live in, but it also changes us. ●



To find out more about the charity, please visit:

**Purple Community Fund:**  
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# The gift of time

**Rotary GBI President**  
Donna Wallbank



**A**T this time of year, we are planning what gifts we will give our family and friends. We're thinking of what we will cook, who we are inviting to join us and when is the best time to have a party.

We have the date in our diaries for the Christmas services, the school nativities of our children, grandchildren or great grandchildren!

We wake in panic – well I do – thinking: “Have I bought enough, have I forgotten anyone?” This year I will do all the above yet again, despite knowing I should not!

In truth, we need not make the fuss, worry or panic, because we are fortunate. We have, a roof over our heads, food in cupboards and family members to be proud of. People who care, value and love us for who we are, not for what we own or can give them.

You will dress your tree and watch the twinkling lights, the decorations hanging may have a personal meaning.

My new tree decorations are made from tin-can ring pulls taken from a waste tip, where no-one would want to live or work.

When I see my twinkling lights this Christmas Eve, I will be grateful that my family have that roof, food and love.

But a simple purchase may have made a difference, not just to the planet which needs us to recycle and consider sustainability but, importantly, to the person making those items.

Someone who is maybe not living on that rubbish tip today because of this new opportunity.

I will have friends, family and colleagues to talk to, clients

sharing their thoughts all through the month and I will be surrounded by noise and excitement. How incredibly lucky am I?

Earlier this year, I met an elderly homeless lady, who I had seen a few days before. My husband Steve and I had taken some warm food, drink and toiletries to her. She thanked us for our kindness.

We sat and spoke for less than 15 minutes about nothing in particular. As we left, she thanked us enthusiastically, telling us how few people stop to speak to her because of how she looks.

It meant more to her that we gave her our time not measuring her plight negatively.

Sitting with that lady on that day, was easy. Nothing was calling me. But do we make enough free time in our busy lives?

Would five minutes a day be too much to ask, or 15 minutes once a week, to talk to someone who would otherwise remain ignored.

Your time is as valuable, but could you make time to sit and speak to someone who you do not know – just once in December?

Make it a gift to yourself as someone who you may normally pass. Your coin is not as valuable as the time you will take to value them as a human being. It is about the time you take to speak to them or to recognise their dog, since the dog may be the only thing who loves and needs them.

Your actions and time will be meaningful.

I wish you and yours season's greetings. For the gift of time that you give in Rotary service, I thank you, wishing you a healthy, happy and rewarding 2020. ●



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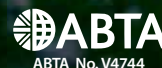


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I WOULD ask if you would consider finding room for this letter in the next issue of Rotary magazine.

It is easy to stray into the thought that the work undertaken by Rotarians is undervalued and, by some, taken for granted.

But as the letter shows, published with the writer's permission, occasionally we touch someone's life in a way which makes all the effort worthwhile.

**Paul Stephens**  
Newport Uskmouth Rotary

## Thank you Rotary

AS A family, we would like to extend to your our heartfelt thanks for the work you do with the Newport Young Carers' Group.

Our son David has total kidney failure and needs to do haemodialysis three times a week for four-and-a-half hours each time. Afterwards, he goes to work. He has been doing this for the last six years since his kidney transplant failed.

David's wife Ginny was diagnosed with progressive Multiple Sclerosis five years ago and is quite rapidly deteriorating. She is no longer able to work, and finds walking and simple household tasks difficult.

Therefore, we were extremely grateful and delighted that their son Joel, who is eight-years-old, has been recognised as a young carer recently and has been taken out with the group for the first time to meet other carers and have a fantastic time at the trampoline centre in Spytty.

We are mindful of the fact that your Rotary club financially supports this group and we would like to thank you very much for doing this. We are certain that Joel will benefit from the group in many ways, but particularly by the realisation that he is not alone with the emotional and physical pressures that are put on him.

Thank you so much.

**Jenny and Stan Griffiths**  
Newport

## Publicity challenge

I HAVE a vision: that every Rotary club in Great Britain & Ireland should have at least one prominent Rotary sign permanently on display in its town.

Rotary does so much good locally and globally. But, especially in Great Britain & Ireland, we are not very good, poor actually, at telling the Rotary story and helping the general public to understand and embrace what we do. If they knew more about our existence and what we do, which is far more than just fundraising, then we will get more people to work with us, support us and even join us, as well donating more for our great causes.

There are many ways to raise Rotary's visible profile. In Winchester, as well as having a Rotary gazebo, various flyers, business cards and using social media, we explored the idea of getting the City Council to erect a sign on a major roundabout; but the cost was far from value for money.

So we decided to procure a number of three-metre long banners, with an intentionally non-Rotary slogan - Helping Our Community. Some are displayed semi-permanently, such as outside supermarkets, occasionally taking them down or moving their position to optimise their visibility and impact.

Others we display at events. These contain a QR code, which has proved useful and that we are modern.

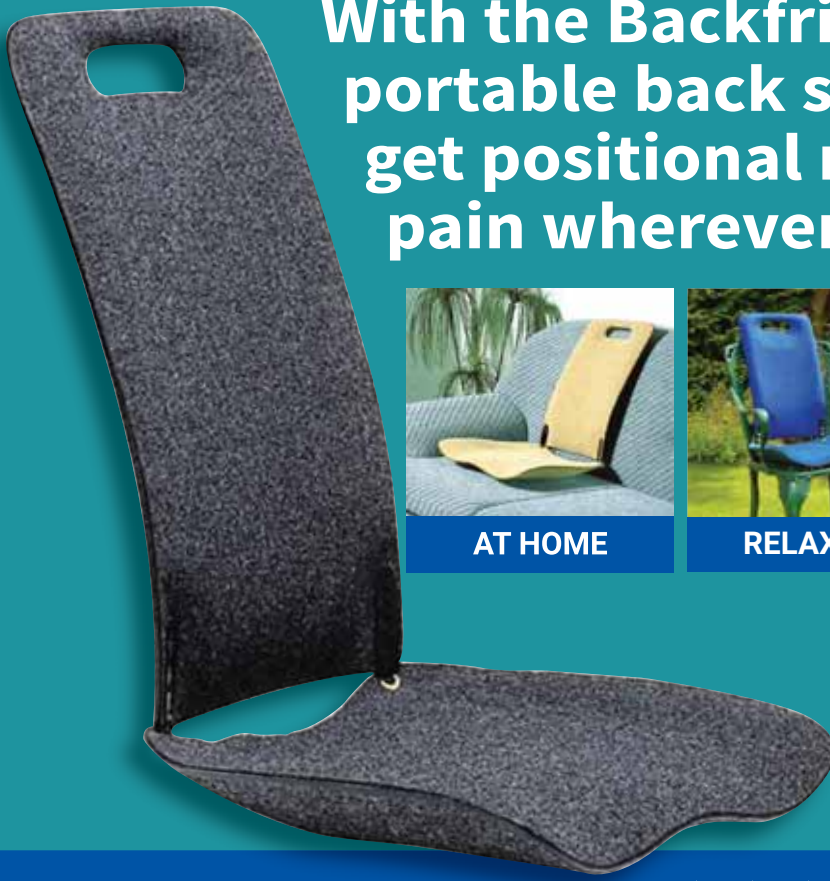
We have also developed some banners showing who we partner with, portraying an even more poignant message to the public. They aren't as expensive as you might think. The cost should be under £100.

So, my challenge is that all Rotary clubs should create and display at least one sign in their town. Will you take up this challenge?

**Richard Spalding**  
Winchester Rotary

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*Twenty eight sports were showcased at the Disability Sport Wales' 'insport' series*

STEVE JENKINS

# *Disability given a sporting chance*

*Cardiff's National Indoor Athletics Centre was the focus of activity for hundreds of youngsters, with a range of disabilities to be introduced to sport. It was all thanks to the efforts of Rotary in South Wales.*

*Images courtesy of Steve Pope SportingWales.*

**E**LEVEN years ago, a popular disability sports showcase was in danger of folding. But thanks to the support of Cardiff Bay Rotarians, Disability Sport Wales' 'insport' series is thriving.

Twenty eight disabled sports were showcased recently at the National Indoor Athletics Centre in Cardiff.

The aim of this two-day, free event is to ensure that sport is accessible to people, especially children, of all abilities by encouraging them to try out something new and discover talent which they didn't know they had.

Friday was reserved for schools and clubs when this huge arena

became filled with the noise and excitement generated by 750 children. Saturday was for families, allowing more time with the coaches to learn more about individual events.

Cardiff Bay Rotarian Phil Steele has been our link with insport from the start. He explained that Rotary became involved in 2008 following the withdrawal of a key sponsor.

Cardiff Bay Rotary stepped in to help with funding and ensure that the event could go ahead. "We've maintained that partnership every year since," said Phil. "The real pleasure for us is seeing the smiling faces of the children and showing that there are no limitations to what they can achieve and the enjoyment which

participating in sport can give.”

Disability Sport Wales’ Chief Executive Officer, Fiona Reid, is delighted with this 11-year partnership.

She said: “Rotary’s support allows us to provide the opportunities showcased and



*“A visually impaired little boy wanted to have a go, I guided him towards the target, advised him how to stand, placed the ball down and moved the club to ensure that he hit the ball.”*

participated in by so many disabled people and their families, friends, teachers, and partners.

“It is very much appreciated by us, but more importantly by the hundreds of people who come through the doors.”

In addition to breaking down the barriers and opening up a new world

of sport for many, some sportsmen and women have progressed from discovering their talent at this event to becoming elite athletes.

In turn, their achievements have become an inspiration to others such as Mia Lloyd, aged 11, from Cardigan.

In May 2017 Mia was diagnosed with a rare type of bone cancer called osteosarcoma. The primary tumour was in her left femur but had also spread to her lungs.

The treatment at the Noah’s Ark Children’s Hospital in Cardiff was tough but her parents kept on assuring her that she was very brave and that they were extremely proud of her.

She didn’t see it as being brave, she just wanted to get better and to continue to make them proud.

In the middle of treatment, she had life-saving surgery, with an above knee amputation at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham.

This operation also gave Mia the best chance of a return to the sports she loved such as golf, athletics and climbing.

She quickly learnt to walk on her



*Scaling new heights in Cardiff*

new prosthetic leg and the golf course in particular is a great place to practice – the fairways and greens are full of slopes and undulations which help to perfect her balance and gait. ➡



*Rotary has been involved in the games since 2008*



*Making a racket and having fun at Cardiff's National Indoor Athletics Centre*

Mia, now a Welsh international, is on an elite training programme and at the Cardiff showcase was passing on her own experience to encourage others.

In recent years, the event has been joined by a growing group of volunteers who spend the day as part of their employer's Corporate Social Responsibility commitment and who are pleased to wear the Rotary logo for the day.

This year it was the turn of people from Deloitte, Admiral Insurance and Lloyds Bank to help out at all the events.

Wheelchair-bound Ceri Hughes from Admiral Insurance was thrilled to have been a part of the occasion.

He said: "A visually impaired little boy wanted to have a go, I guided him towards the target, advised him how to stand,

placed the ball down and moved the club to ensure that he hit the ball.

"As he hit the ball, he scored. I told him his score and he just beamed. He handed me back the club but then pulled my arm towards him for a hug and thanked me for letting him have a go."

Southern Wales' District Governor, Peter Hamilton, was also an impressed spectator.

He said: "Without Rotary's support over many years, this event would not be running today.

"This is an excellent example of great things being achieved when Rotary partners with other organisations to deliver real benefit to our community and raise our profile in the process." ●



*Pushing yourself to do your best*



*Wheelchair basketball was hotly contested*



*Taking to the track for wheelchair racing*

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**Mark Maloney**  
Rotary President 2019/20

**A** LOHA, Rotary! There is no experience quite like attending the Rotary International Convention. Discover the true spirit of aloha and Rotary with your family, friends, and fellow Rotarians from June 6th to 10th in Honolulu.

It is the perfect setting for the entire family of Rotary to celebrate, collaborate, and connect.

The convention is the best place to find and share your aloha, which you will soon discover is much more than a greeting.

Just as Rotary is a way of life for Rotarians, aloha is a way of life for Hawaiians — one that focuses on living in harmony, being patient, treating everyone with respect, and sharing joy with your family, or 'ohana.

Our host committee has arranged some fabulous events for you and your family.

This includes a Hawaiian Culture and Lunch Boat Cruise, a two-hour tour that will feature spectacular views of Diamond Head, Waikiki, and the Kahala Gold Coast. On board, you can learn to play the ukulele, take part in hula dancing, and create your own Hawaiian flower lei.

Our 2020 convention will also be a time to celebrate Rotary's historical ties to the United Nations. June 2020 will mark the 75th anniversary of the signing of the United Nations Charter.

On the day before the start of the convention, Rotary and the UN will host our fifth joint event of 2019-20, one focused on environmental sustainability.

In addition, we are planning the greenest convention in Rotary history — and I will share more details about this in the months ahead.

But now, go to [riconvention.org](http://riconvention.org) and click the 'register' button right below the Honolulu Hawaii 2020 logo.

Early registration discount pricing ends December 15th, so do not delay.

Rotary Connects the World in no better way than at the Rotary Convention. Bring your family to meet our family.

See you in Honolulu!



**Gary C.K. Huang**  
Trustee Chair 2019/20

**N**I HAO, Rotarians! The year is almost over, and I know that you are thinking about giving gifts and making last-minute contributions. You are wondering how best to show your appreciation and love.

The answer is very simple — make your gifts to The Rotary Foundation which, in an independent analysis, was ranked number one among the world's best-known charities. For the 12th consecutive year, The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating, four stars, from Charity Navigator.

The Foundation earned the maximum of 100 points for demonstrating both strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency in Charity Navigator's August ratings.

In a letter to the Foundation, Charity Navigator notes that "only 1 per cent of the charities we evaluate have received at least 12 consecutive four-star evaluations, indicating that The Rotary Foundation outperforms other charities in America.

This exceptional designation from Charity Navigator sets the Foundation apart from its peers and demonstrates to the public its trustworthiness."

This recognition comes on top of awards won in the past several years. Rotary's commitment to eradicating polio worldwide won Best Nonprofit Act in the Hero Awards of the One Billion Acts of Peace campaign, an international global citizens' movement to tackle the world's most important issues.

And the Association of Fundraising Professionals — the world's largest network of professional fundraisers — named The Rotary Foundation the World's Outstanding Foundation, honouring our long-term achievements.

It's easy to say that we belong to one of the greatest philanthropic organisations in the world. But the truth is, your Rotary Foundation is the best.

So close out the year by giving the greatest gift of all to the world.



**Tony Black**  
RI Director 2019/21

**T**ODAY, Rotary commands respect all over the world from governments and international organisations.

World-wide, Rotarians have volunteered time and time again, demonstrating their willingness, commitment and ability to carry out projects, big and small, low-key and high profile, inexpensive to high cost.

We have been involved in many issues and projects over the years and laid down the foundations on many that have eventually been taken up by others.

I believe we should get more involved in environment projects which are wide and varied. You might have other ideas.

The discussion is for you in your clubs is where and how you want to get involved.

Many of our clubs, districts, Rotary International and Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland are changing, hopefully for the better, but only time will tell.

Old codgers like me may not look on change kindly, but if we want Rotary to keep up with the times we need to change, as long as it is for the right reasons.

We need to grow, thrive and flourish by active participation, commitment and involvement in our Rotary clubs.

We live in a fast-moving world, with modern technology allowing us to communicate in a way we could never have imagined even 10 years ago.

Let us make use of the technology in whatever format we prefer to tell the world what we do, are doing, and what we plan to do in the future. No project is too small, we just need the information out there.

On October 24th, World Polio Day saw clubs and Rotarians from around the world actively raising money and creating awareness of our pledge to eradicate the world of polio.

As we approach the finish line, we know that the last mile will be the most challenging and probably the most costly.

We must continue our hard work and commitment to ensure a polio-free world.



ANNE FORD

# Making a fresh start

*Chris Wells made a big hit at last summer's Rotary International Convention in Hamburg where he talked about his journey with Rotaract and also dealing with mental health.*



**A**T this year's Rotary International Convention in Hamburg, Chris Wells won over a general session audience with a combination of high-energy showmanship and a serious message about mental health, drawn from his own experience.

A few years after graduating from Leicester's De Montfort University in 2011 with a First Class Honours degree in Media Production, Chris found himself depressed.

"I'd felt a bit crap for months and months and months," remembered Chris, now 29. "I was bored, negative all the time, stuck, not really doing anything. It was getting scary."

Then two things happened that would change his life. First, a friend persuaded him to see a psychiatrist. Second, another friend introduced him to Jim Davies, a member of Market Harborough Rotary in Leicestershire.

Jim encouraged Chris to get involved with Rotary and suggested starting a Rotaract club. "I had no idea what to expect, but I was willing to try anything to not feel like this," he explained.

Chris dived right into Rotary, helping found the Rotaract Club of Market Harborough in 2015.

Soon, the new Market Harborough Rotaractors were participating in a canned-food drive for local food banks, holding regular pub quiz fund-raisers, and creating a support group for

young stroke patients.

The club also held a night of comedy and music to raise money for a young man who had been accepted to a prestigious course at the National Youth Theatre in London, but who couldn't afford the fees.

"I was like 'Right, we'll have a Christmas concert in the middle of June, just to confuse everyone,'" said Chris. "We raised more than enough money."

The Market Harborough Rotaractors' enthusiasm has proved contagious – several new Rotaract clubs have been formed in the district.

Meanwhile, with continuing professional help, Chris's mental health has improved. "As soon as I had a purpose that wasn't my own, life was a bit easier," he said.

Chris currently works in media for the Go Make A Difference charity, based in Loughborough.

As Chris said in his speech at the Hamburg Convention: "Rotary isn't the cure for depression and people suffering from it shouldn't feel shy about seeking out medical and professional help..."

"But for me, Rotaract truly aided in filling in some of those dark and empty spaces inside." ●

# *Volunteer Expo: Where inspiration happens*

**W**HETHER you have a cause you're passionate about, or looking for your next volunteering challenge, **Volunteer Expo** is the place to turn your passion for changing lives, into action.

Volunteer Expo is Rotary's exciting new event to connect volunteers, charities and the whole of civil society under one roof, which is coming to the **NEC in Birmingham from May 1st-3rd, 2020.**



"We're excited to be involved in Volunteer Expo to meet Rotarians seeking an impactful way to put 'service above self' and we'd like to talk with you about volunteering in your community. Stop by our booth next to Rotary Village to let us know which area your club represents and to find out about the Age UK in your area."

**Anna Croghan, Network Volunteering Programme Manager, Age UK and President, Westminster West Rotary**



"We are excited to be at Volunteer Expo and to have the opportunity to tell people about the varied roles we have for volunteers onboard the Africa Mercy. We are looking for volunteers with medical skills, technical, administrative and even catering skills. We have something for everyone."

**Christine Brown, Community Partnership Manager, Mercy Ships UK**



"Over the next few years we want to recruit hundreds of volunteer charity ambassadors to help ensure that fire fighters across the UK know all about the support we provide. Volunteer Expo 2020 provides us with a great opportunity to showcase these opportunities and hopefully attract some new volunteers."

**Mark Evans, Director of Fundraising and Engagement, The Fire Fighters' Charity**

More than 100 engaging and enlightening stands and displays will make up Volunteer Expo's main exhibition, as a showcase of everything which the volunteer sector has to offer for you to get involved with. This event is about all things volunteering. It's about all things community. Which means it's about you.

We spoke to five organisations about why they're getting involved with Volunteer Expo, which is the first event of its kind in the UK.



"We tend to over 3,000 of the most critically ill patients within six Midlands counties. This vital service could not operate without the generous and selfless support we receive from our volunteers. We are delighted to be attending Volunteer Expo, highlighting the benefits of volunteering with our charity, and how a donation of time can also help to save lives."

**Alison Hill, Volunteer Manager, Midlands Air Ambulance**



"Volunteers are integral to Marie Curie, so we are delighted to be attending Volunteer Expo to meet existing volunteers and talk to people looking for opportunities. Partnering with Marie Curie helps you make a tangible difference in your local community."

**David Grout, Head of Fundraising Volunteering, Marie Curie**

## **INTRODUCING THE MARKETPLACE!**

As part of Volunteer Expo, we want smaller charities with big ambitions to be able to promote their amazing work to a national audience, which is why we've introduced The Marketplace.

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# Mental health partnership

*One in six adults experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem in their lifetime. Rotary has committed to promoting good mental health and well-being in our communities through Public Health England.*

**R**OTARY in Great Britain and Ireland has taken its first steps to commit to tackling poor mental health across Great Britain and Ireland by signing up to the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health from Public Health England (PHE).

Working closely with PHE, they are making significant steps towards promoting good mental health and preventing mental health problems across the country.

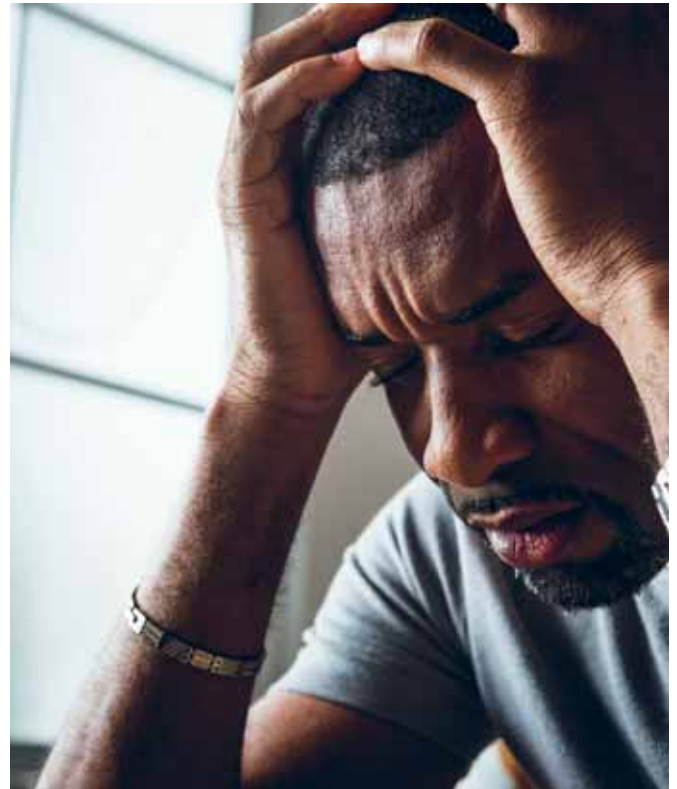
One in six adults experiences at least one diagnosable mental health problem in their lifetime. This is influenced by the environment in which we are born, grow, live and work, meaning many of these problems can be prevented.

Having good mental health is important because it can help us to be more resilient, feel good and function well, have more positive relationships with those around us and deal with difficult times now and in the future.

The Prevention Concordat marks the first time agencies across the community and care sectors have come together to make prevention a priority for mental health.

So far, over 140 organisations representing all sectors have signed up and committed to action.

The commitment from Rotary includes supporting existing local mental health groups, running Mental Health First Aid sessions; raising awareness via Rotary Health Fairs poster campaigns and a dedicated Rotarians4MentalHealth website, offering mentoring support in local schools and working with local businesses.



Donna Wallbank, President of Rotary GBI commented: “We are delighted to be pledging our commitment to the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health.

“During my time as a member of Rotary, and during the first few months of my role as national President, I’ve been fortunate enough to be involved and see a whole range of community-based projects Rotary clubs are implementing to support mental health.

“Whether it is trying to take the stress out of job hunting by giving students mock interview sessions or providing support for those living with dementia and their families.”

“Through local and national action across sectors, we can all contribute to improving mental health and wellbeing and reducing stigma for everyone.”

Promoting good mental health is everyone’s responsibility and can only be achieved if organisations – including local authorities, NHS trusts, businesses, local communities, and religious groups – work together at local and national level.

Lily Makurah, National Lead, Public Mental Health for PHE, said: “We’re delighted that Rotary has joined the growing list of organisations signing up to our Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health.

“This is designed to help communities promote good mental health and prevent mental health problems. Through local and national action across sectors, we can all contribute to improving mental health and wellbeing and reducing stigma for everyone.” If you would like further information, please contact Public England by email [publicmentalhealth@phe.gov.uk](mailto:publicmentalhealth@phe.gov.uk) ●

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*Sightbox's Angela Williams will be based in The Gambia to promote the charity*

# *Spending Christmas in The Gambia*

*Sightbox is a charity, which is transforming the lives of visually-impaired children through sports. Now ambassador Angela Williams is taking her passion for the project to another level by moving abroad.*

**A**S you're tucking into your roast dinner with all the trimmings this Christmas Day, spare a momentary thought for Angela Williams, basking in 30°C heat in the Gambian sunshine.

In November, Angela and husband Nigel ditched the cold, frosty mornings of Merseyside for the West African heat of one of the poorest nations on the continent – all to pursue a single passion, Sightbox.

Sightbox is a charity of vision, providing hope for hundreds of visually-impaired children through the power of sport.

The charity was born at St Vincent's School in Liverpool which works with visually-impaired youngsters aged between

four-years-old and 19.

The Sightbox itself is a Global Sight Tool Kit to teach children with visual impairment and blindness which can be contextualised nationally in any country".

It consists of a box of sports equipment with balls, bells and games which are played by the students with a surrounding curriculum focussed on fostering innovation and routes to employment.

"We came up with Sightbox at St Vincent's to stop the segregation of sports for the children in the developing world so they could become involved in team work, building their own confidence, and becoming independent" explained Angela.

"We wanted to enable the children to be out in the open world, to have the

opportunity to join society, rather than being stuck in a little corner and forgotten about. Inclusion is very important.

"The children at St Vincent's are not only learning the standard curriculum, but they are also engaged with a creative curriculum.

"For example, they learn ceramics, make computer games, write comics, understand simple things like mobility, working with the white cane and even reading to other people. There is no end to their talent.

"They also go out to schools with sighted children, to work with them in a 'trainers of the trainers' leadership capacity, so they get a complete balance of everything. This is known as reverse inclusion and includes many of the

sustainable development goals.”

Each Sightbox contains a goalball, a boccia grid and balls, running tethers and blindfolds, a digital talking watch and pedometer as well as various other balls with bells in and a parachute canopy.

This germ of a simple idea has spread overseas with Angela, as the charity’s ambassador, working with Rotary clubs and Inner Wheel clubs overseas to provide partnerships with visually-impaired schools in many different countries.

Linking with a Rotary club or Inner Wheel club is so important as we have then a good link for feedback.

The Rotary Club of Liverpool St.



*“We wanted to enable the children to be out in the open world, to have the opportunity to join society, rather than being stuck in a little corner and forgotten about. Inclusion is very important.”*

Vincent’s has been the supportive arm of the venture, though the charity operates in its own right. Angela has travelled the country to give many a presentation, and in two short years, the project has made such an impact already.

“The children at St Vincent’s wanted to make a change to other people’s lives,” pointed out Angela.

“They thought how can we do this with something so simple with a ball with a bell?”

“They had understood the Sightbox, they had played the games themselves, so they said right, let’s put this all together and go forward.”

Rotary’s International connections along with members of Inner Wheel have allowed Sightbox to blossom internationally.

So far, schools in Kenya, Egypt, Uganda, Pakistan, Rwanda, India, Sierra

Leone, Nepal and The Gambia, have come on board – and there are more countries in the pipeline.

One Sightbox costs £400, including packaging and shipping. All the contents made with long-lasting materials. A Sightbag for an individual child costs £40.

“The reaction has been phenomenal,” explained Angela, who is also a member of Chester Riverside Rotary and North Wirral Inner Wheel.

“I have been so moved by this. I am the ambassador for the project but I have been so overwhelmed by the commitment and seeing what happens.

“Sightbox changes the children’s lives. It is so wonderful to see a smile on their faces. I am seeing a complete, happy environment, something these children will treasure because they have not had it before.

“Sightboxes lead to all sorts of positives including employment, due to confidence building and independence.

“It is not just a box of sports, it can be music, art and other activities for them. The children can actually become the trainers.

“These children have nothing, yet they treasure this as something which has changed their lives.

“To me, that means so, so much.”

Look out for the newly invented visually impaired rugby ball – hopefully this game of VI Rugby will be seen at the next Disabled Games in Liverpool in 2021.

As for The Gambia, Angela and Nigel are spending five months close to the capital Banjul which they are using as a base to promote the project.

She spoke earlier this year at the Rotary District 9101 Assembly & Conference in the Gambian capital, which has provoked even more interest in the charity’s work.

It also gave Angela a chance to revisit children at a school and training centre close to Banjul one year after they had received the Sightbox. The changes in the children were immense. They were independent, and their confidence had grown.

“It was so humbling,” she added.

“We’re going to The Gambia for a

holiday to get away from the cold winter months, but also I want to go out and strengthen what Sightbox can do in Africa, to help these children, because there is such a need for it out there.”

Angela has recently retired from a recycling business UPM, as has former Vauxhall car worker, Nigel. Theirs was an impulse decision, the time was right, and off they went – set to return to Blighty five months’ later in the Spring.

The work has already received recognition from the Royal National Institute of Blind People, and Angela was one of Rotary’s Champions of Change earlier this year.

“A simple idea from the children in Liverpool has got so much impact.

“It’s hard for me to imagine a few years ago, that I would be doing this.

“But, I happened to be in the right place at the right time, I could see a future, so I put on my marching boots and, as I have always done in life, got on with it.” ●



*Sightbox’s Angela Williams pictured on a previous visit to The Gambia.*



To find out more about Sightbox visit:

Web: [www.sightbox.org.uk/](http://www.sightbox.org.uk/)

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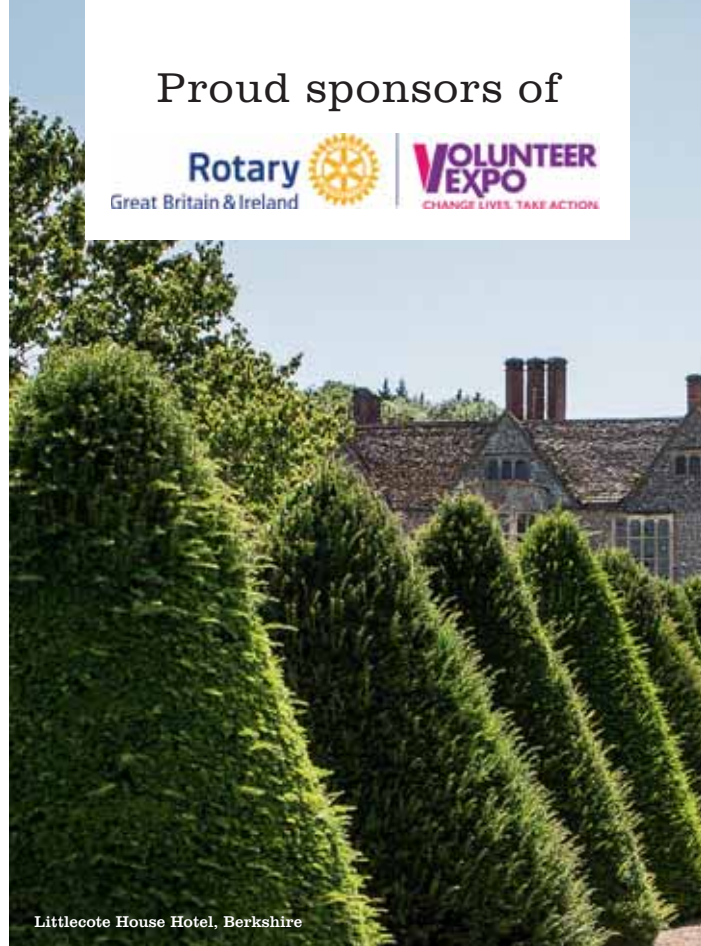
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*Prisoners at Loughan House Open Prison are being trained to work on the bikes by skilled mechanics*

AOIFE WALSH

# *Irish prisoners use skills on Rotary project*

*Rotary Ireland's 'Bikes for Africa' project has become a focal point project on the Emerald Isle, with prisoners helping to refurbish unwanted cycles, which are then shipped to Africa.*

**I**RISH prisoners are being given a purpose in up-cycling bikes, while also providing transport for African children struggling to make their way to and from school.

The Rotary-led initiative, which is supported by the Irish Prison Service, local councils and the Irish Defence Forces, has operated since 2006 and has sent over 3,000 bikes to Africa since its inception.

The scheme is run within Loughan House Open Prison in County Cavan.

The centre is only one of two prisons of its kind in Ireland. It is a low-security facility which houses male offenders that are over the age of 18 and deemed to require lower levels of security.

Loughan focuses on aiding the rehabilitation of inmates

through educational and training programmes. Prisoners are also given the opportunity to work in the polytunnels, where over 4,000 sunflowers are grown each year.

And there is also the option of working in the shed-like café alongside the polytunnels, which overlooks Lough MacNea.

Joe and Derek are two of three prisoners that spend their days working in the bike repair shop located within the grounds.

From Monday to Friday each week, the repairmen work on hundreds of broken-down bikes sent to them through collection points set up by Rotary Ireland.

Once the men have fixed enough bikes to fill a lorry, they are transferred to The Gambia in West Africa, where children living 5km or more away from their school are gifted a bike.



However, the schoolchildren are not the only ones benefiting from the scheme.

Both Joe and Derek say that working in the bike shop “keeps your mind going”, and makes the days go by quicker.

Joe says: “When you’re in a closed prison you have your regime, it’s a different experience. Being in a closed jail, you have six minutes to talk to your family on the phone. You get a visit once a week – if you’re lucky. Lucky lads get visits once a week. You’re in your cell – Jesus, how many hours a day?”

Joe continues: “To be down here, it’s a much easier way to do your sentence. I did break the law. I deserved a prison sentence. I went to prison.

“But, I also should be allowed to better myself within prison, I should be allowed



*“I think it’s great to work in conjunction with Rotary Ireland to bring and develop a project like this, and help it grow.”*

to move on after I paid my debt to society. If you work hard within a closed prison, why not be allowed to move on to the next stage of reintegration?”

In the bike shed, Joe explains how he prepares to spruce up an old bike.

He starts by pointing out a torn saddle, worn out brakes, broken bearings and a rusted chain. He gives a crash-course on to how change brake cables, which spanners are best to use, and directs me to an Allen key that’s “pretty standardised” and fits most of the bikes.

“It will probably take about an hour to do that,” he said.

“We really do it ourselves. It’s pretty easy, it’s not rocket science. If you were here and you fixed three bikes or whatever, and there was something you didn’t know how to fix and you said to Derek, ‘can you show me how to do this?’ before you know it, you’ll know your way around.”

Placed high up on a shelf is a shiny, purple High Nelly bike that has a big gold

bow stuck on its body.

“That’s an ornament. That’s here longer than I’m here. They held onto it just to look at it.”

Joe explains where the broken bikes come from, and where they go once fixed: “Basically, Rotary, they organise charity drives outside. They have a collection point, the bikes go to the collection point, they bring them here.

“We take them off the lorries, we go through them, what’s mendable, what’s not mendable – we recycle what we can off the bikes that are not fixable, and then we fix them up bike by bike.

“We have containers up there – when they’re full, we ring for a lorry. If the tyres are flat, we put new tubes in. If the rubbers are perished, we change the tyre itself.

“Brake pads, brake cables, seats if they’re torn to bits.”

The role provides prisoners with the opportunity to learn a new skill that will help them in the search for employment once they have served their sentence.

The initiative supports prisoners undertaking bike mechanic training courses which are Further Education & Training Awards Council, and City & Guilds approved.

Governor of Loughan House, Mark Lydon, said: “I think it’s a wonderful initiative. It gives our lads here the opportunity to develop a skill that is transferable to the workplace. It gives them

a sense of community and helping people that are less fortunate than themselves.

“I think it’s great to work in conjunction with Rotary Ireland to bring and develop a project like this and help it grow.”

Rotary said that they are currently looking to expand the initiative to another facility as, at the moment, Loughan House is the only prison supporting the initiative.

The facility can refurbish around 1500 bikes per year, which equates to five 40ft containers.

Rotary Assistant Governor & International Service Chair, Sean Dunne, explains that many children in The Gambia live miles away from their nearest school, and having a bike can make education much more accessible.

“Anyone that lives further than five kilometres, regardless of domination, gender, whatever – they will get a bike.

“It’s all about education and making it possible for children who would arrive after walking five kilometres in the searing heat of The Gambia.

“They get to school absolutely exhausted and for the first half hour they fall asleep. Now, they arrive in school fresh, safe and can start learning,” he said. ●



This is an edited version of an article which first appeared in the *Irish Independent*, with words and pictures published courtesy of:

**The Irish Independent**  
[www.independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie)



*Children’s and adults bikes are made new for The Gambia*

DAVE KING

# Where there's a wheelchair, there's a way

*Over the past decade, the Rotary-run charity PhysioNet has provided a fresh lease of life for specialised disabled equipment in the UK, which has then been distributed to 25 countries around the world.*

**I**T was in 2004, during a visit to the Bielave Children's Home in Sarajevo, that the seeds for the charity PhysioNet were first planted.

The charity Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) invited Peter Thompson, a Rotarian from the Knaresborough club in North Yorkshire, to visit the Bosnian capital which, less than 10 years earlier, had been besieged for 1,425 days when 13,952 people were killed, many of them civilians.

"While I was visiting the home, the volunteer physiotherapist working there asked for various items of paediatric physiotherapy equipment which could not be obtained in Bosnia," recalled Peter.

"Returning to Britain after finishing a pre-retirement job in Ethiopia, I found it surprisingly easy to collect the required items. So, in 2005, a colleague and I drove a van-load of physiotherapy equipment out to Sarajevo."

"It soon became obvious that it was possible to collect far more equipment than a single organisation could absorb," explained Peter.

"After helping HHC it also became evident that the only way of transporting equipment economically was in 40-foot shipping containers or, in Europe, by using HGV trucks."

It was apparent that PhysioNet had found a niche – a need for specialised equipment, which the charity was able to easily source.

By 2009, the first containers were sent to South Africa and Fiji, and by 2018 PhysioNet was serving 25 countries having sent out 75 container loads. In May this year, the Spinal Injury Association of Fiji received its 14th consignment from PhysioNet, which



***The charity PhysioNet is making a massive difference to people all over the world***

included mobility devices and medical consumables.

On average each container holds more than 500 items. In total, 37,270 items were dispatched abroad between 2009 and 2018, including 6,188 items of therapy equipment and 11,688 wheelchairs.

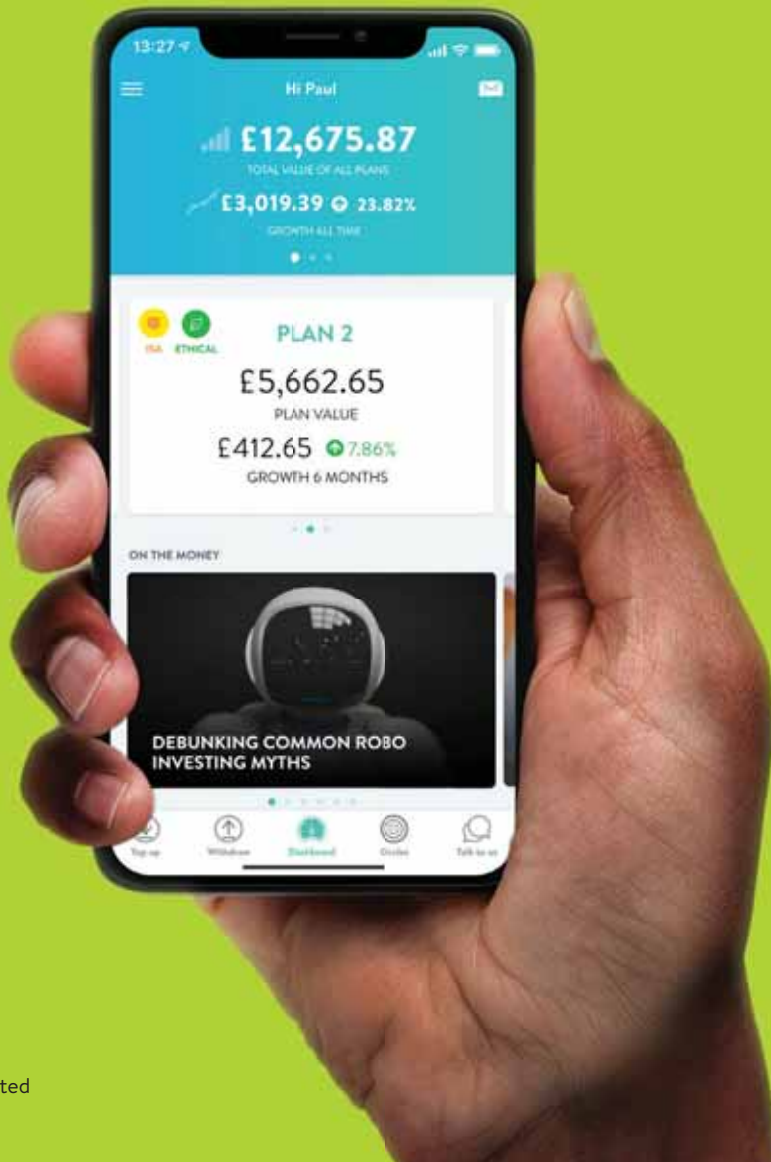
The potential saving to the often cash-strapped homes and physiotherapy centres, working with adults and children with disabilities in developing countries and Eastern Europe, is enormous. ➡



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“Therapy equipment is particularly expensive,” added Peter. “As new, these items would cost over £7 million.”

He also pointed out that, in the current spirit of being environmentally sensitive, the charity has managed to recycle around 500 tonnes of usable equipment from hospitals, special schools, wheelchair services, residential and nursing homes, companies and private individuals which would otherwise have gone to UK scrapyards.

Through collaboration with the Margaret Carey Foundation, prisoners in the UK refurbish wheelchairs for PhysioNet, before they are dispatched abroad.

“PhysioNet’s work can sometimes seem like a game of logistics and statistics but just one of many instances illustrates the charity is really about people, not just practicalities,” said Peter.

“Imogen, a seven-year-old from a school in West Yorkshire got to know about PhysioNet and very much wanted to donate her redundant paediatric chair, which she had grown out of, to a young person in another country.

“PhysioNet’s Chairman, Rotarian Mike Adams, from Horbury and Ossett Phoenix Rotary, near Wakefield, went along to the school to collect the chair and meet both Imogen and her teachers.

“To say that Imogen was excited at the thought of helping someone else, was an understatement.

“The chair was transported to our North Yorkshire depot where it was prepared for a shipment, bound for Romania. Soon after, Imogen’s chair went to a young girl named Georgiana who lives in Bucharest and attends the Maria Beatrice Centre in Romania.

“Another of our wheelchairs was sent to Zimbabwe and given to Emmanuel who was born with a disability. He is a happy little boy and with his new mode of transport he will be able to attend school.”

PhysioNet is not a Rotary charity, but it is strongly supported, both financially and in kind, by Rotarians and Rotary clubs across Great Britain & Ireland.

PhysioNet has a busy collection and

distribution hub in the South West of England where a private benefactor generously provides storage for overseas shipments, giving a very positive effect to the charity’s carbon footprint.

“I have visited Inverness Culoden Rotary Club who will be spearheading a project with the Highland NHS to recover some 4,000 redundant wheelchairs which will be recycled and dispatched directly to

“*Through collaboration with the Margaret Carey Foundation, prisoners in the UK refurbish wheelchairs for PhysioNet, before they are dispatched abroad.*”

developing countries around the world,” added Mike.

“I am hoping we will be able to work with Her Majesty’s Prison Inverness as part of a restorative justice programme to refurbish the wheelchairs.”

A further example of the Rotary partnership is in Essex, where over the last four years, Saffron Walden Rotary has been collecting surplus mobility and physiotherapy equipment from all over East Anglia, London and the Home Counties which they then deliver to the charity’s Yorkshire base.

They supply about 50% of all equipment the charity collects, undertaking the collection and deliveries in their own van. They have also donated a van for the charity’s use, supported by Rotary clubs from all over the country which have made cash donations.

PhysioNet’s volunteer healthcare professionals continue to monitor the ‘fitness for purpose’ of the equipment.

They have also made numerous visits to recipients in different countries, providing training for local physios and teachers, while helping to assemble, maintain and adjust equipment, matching

items to user needs.

In addition, and largely due to help from Rotary’s Wheelchair Foundation, a number of clubs, particularly in South Africa, have received shipments from PhysioNet.

The needs of people with disabilities overseas is great, please help.

Rotary volunteers can identify unwanted equipment in the community, help with collections, set up local collection points and financially sponsor an all-volunteer charity which has been the recipient of the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service. ●

**i** PhysioNet may not be able to help everyone in the world, but it can make the world of difference to one person.

**PhysioNet**  
[www.physionet.org.uk](http://www.physionet.org.uk)



*Georgiana with her new wheelchair*

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# PAYING TRIBUTE TO CONCORDE

It may seem like only yesterday when the majestic Concorde graced our skies – and you can recapture some of those memories with a unique exhibition at Aerospace Bristol.

Concorde was a remarkable aircraft, capable of crossing the Atlantic in less than three hours, travelling at twice the speed of sound and reaching twice the altitude of a normal passenger plane. The actual record flight from New York to London was a stunning two hours, 52 minutes and 59 seconds!

But it seems that time has flown by just as quickly.

It is in fact 16 years since the last Concorde flight touched down for the final time, in November 2003.

Tens of thousands of people gathered in Bristol, and a global TV audience watched on, as Concorde landed back home at Filton, her British birthplace.

Today, Alpha Foxtrot – the last Concorde ever to fly – is the centrepiece of Aerospace Bristol, a museum that tells the story of Bristol's world-changing aerospace industry.

Beginning in the earliest days of powered flight, Aerospace Bristol takes visitors on a journey from the Bristol Boxkite biplane to the modern day jet, exploring two World Wars, the space race, the Cold War, and, of course, Concorde, along the way.

The museum is the ideal destination for a Rotary club day out, and – new for 2020 – you can now add a Concorde Tour or a Heritage Tour to your visit.

The Concorde Tour: Learn about the supersonic superstar that is Concorde, just across the runway from where all British Concorde's were built.

As you walk around the last Concorde to be built and the last to fly, Aerospace Bristol will take you on a journey all the way from Concorde's beginnings in the 1950s to its retirement in 2003.

Learn about many of its engineering triumphs, record-breaking achievements and the social history of those who flew and worked on this ground-breaking aeroplane.

Heritage Tour: Take off on a journey through more than 100 years of Bristol's

aerospace history. Find out how a small, pioneering company manufactured some of the earliest aeroplanes at Filton, evolved over the decades to influence the course of aviation history, and shaped the world we see today. With an expert guide and Aerospace Bristol's unique collection as a backdrop, discover how Bristol changed the world.

Whether self-guided or accompanied by one of the museum's expert tour guides, visiting groups will discover aeroplanes, helicopters, missiles, engines and space technology, and explore an exhibition that tells an inspirational story of ingenious design, engineering innovation and remarkable social history.

Of course, Concorde is the star attraction. Stunningly displayed in a purpose-built hangar and with a breath-taking show projected on to the side of the supersonic jet, visitors are able to see Concorde up close and even step aboard.

To find out more and to plan your visit, go to [aerospacebristol.org/groups](https://aerospacebristol.org/groups), email [groups@aerospacebristol.org](mailto:groups@aerospacebristol.org) or call 01179 315 315 and ask for Nikki or Clare.



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*Paralympic basketball player Ade Adepitan is Rotary's polio ambassador in Great Britain & Ireland*

DAVE KING

# *You are the generation who can end polio*

*On the eve of World Polio Day, Rotary ambassador, Ade Adepitan, met university students at Wembley Stadium to help them understand the disease.*

**M**ENTION the word polio to a typical teenager, and many won't have a clue. Why should they? It's not a disease of their generation, or even their parents' generation – not like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, HIV or the ticking time bomb that is dementia.

There hasn't been a single case of polio caught in the UK since 1984, with the last outbreak in the late 1970s. Routine vaccination in the UK means that polio sits right under the radar of this lost generation.

So when Paralympian and polio sufferer, Ade Adepitan, visited university students at Wembley Stadium on the eve of World Polio

Day, it was an eye-opener.

The University Campus of Football Business (UCFB) is a unique sports education institution with campuses based at Wembley Stadium and the Etihad Stadium in Manchester.

With more than 2,000 students focused on a range of sports degree programmes, their headline sporting locations mean both under-graduates and post-graduates feast on a range of top-notch speakers from the world of sports, politics and entertainment. They are a tough audience to crack.

But Rotary's End Polio Now ambassador is a crafty communicator, a true master of the art. To the students, Nigerian-born Ade, with the winning smile, cool dreadlocks and wicked



banter, is their kind of guy.

As soon as he pushed his wheelchair up onto the platform in a room overlooking the hallowed Wembley turf, Ade's presence and personality lit up the room.

For 40 minutes, he had students spellbound by his story. Diagnosed with polio aged just 15 months, Ade carved out a new life with his family in Plaistow, East London, discovering a passion for sport.

Ade comes from the school of hard knocks. Five times in 15 years he failed to make the Great Britain wheelchair basketball team, being cut every time.

Finally, he was called up for the 2000 Sydney Paralympics and four years later won team bronze at the Athens' games.



*"He inspires you to fight for your dreams and never give up. I really connected with him."*

"It was 15 years of being told I wasn't good enough, it was 15 years of watching other players go ahead of me, 15 years of having to deal with the knock-backs and set-backs – and finally I got called up to the Sydney Paralympics. It was probably the greatest moment of my life," explained Ade.

The moral of the story told to idealistic students chasing their dreams, but with the lurking shadow of failure hiding around the corner, was not lost on the young audience.

They then watched a TV documentary featuring Ade completing a gruelling month-long wheelchair trek across Nicaragua, and left to crawl on all fours up the side of a volcano. On screen, Ade was reduced to tears in the searing heat by the sheer pain and agony. Off screen, as the students looked on, Ade looked away.

"It brought back memories from when I used to walk without a wheelchair," Ade says in the 2005 documentary, 'Beyond Boundaries'. "I had some tough times at school when people used to call me 'black monkey' and stuff like that from the way I

crawled around. It hit me hard."

This was polio in its rawest, undiluted form. This was how polio brutally ravages the human body, withering limbs and transforming someone's life.

Polio not only affects you physically, but it abuses you mentally.

"It is my job and your job to keep awareness out there so that you are the generation who ends polio," Ade told the large gathering.

This was the lightbulb moment when the students finally understood polio. No longer a word, it was a vision. And the feedback was positive.

"I didn't know a lot about polio before the talk, but Ade's visit has helped me to be more aware of the disease," said 19-year-old Londoner Ciaran McLoughlin.

"Ade was really inspirational telling his story."

"Ade is such an influential speaker," reflected 20-year-old Kirshon Wilkins, from Kent.

"He inspires you to do better than you currently are, and drive yourself to greater things, even when you doubt yourself.

"Before Ade's visit, I knew that polio was a disease which attacked your limbs and paralysed them.

"His insight made me realise how fortunate I am compared to those who are born with disabilities."

Spanish student, Raul Sanchez Borrego, 26, admitted he knew very little about Rotary before coming the UCFB, and even less about polio.

"Ade's presentation was really emotional for me," he reflected.

"I have a father with a disability and to see what Ade has achieved with polio is incredible.

"He inspires you to fight for your dreams and never give up. I really connected with him. This was the best speaker we have had at UCFB.

"Ade's visit has definitely changed the minds of a lot of the students about polio and how we treat people with disabilities.

"Ade made me realise how we complain so much in our life about the small things, when other people really struggle in this world with much more important things." ●



Ade Adepitan struck a cord with the students



Ade spoke to students at Wembley Stadium

# Finding your inner superhero!



*Ade Adepitan has broken into the world of children's books. Here Ade explains why he is donating proceeds of his latest novel to the BBC's Children in Need.*

**C**YBORG Cat and the Night Spider is the second book in my Cyborg Cat children's series. The first book, 'Cyborg Cat: Rise of the Parsons Road Gang', was published last May. 'Cyborg Cat and the Night Spider' was published in October, and there is a third one coming out next March.

Initially, I was going to write an autobiography, but then my publishers talked to me about writing children's books.

There is a real problem with getting young boys reading, especially among seven to 11-year-olds, so they wondered if I could write something which would connect with them.

There are few books out there which are representative, which tell diverse stories and with diverse characters. It made me think about when I was a kid growing up.

How many books did I read which depicted my life, or which I could connect to? They were all about other people who were not like me. And I think it is important, as kids, that we see a reflection of ourselves.

You often hear about types of books; mirror books which reflect your reality, which is important, because you have to see it to believe you can be it. And there are window books, which give you an opportunity to see into somebody else's life.

What I have tried to create is a series of books which are both mirror and window books. They are books which are mostly based on my story.

It is about a young kid from Nigeria moving to the UK, trying to fit in the 1970s and 80s with his friends, but he becomes a super hero. He discovers that he has superpowers.

This is the first book out there which has a black, disabled protagonist as the main character.

I have decided to donate the first year's profits of the 'Cyborg Cat and the Night Spider' and my fee to BBC's Children in Need, because when I was a kid they put money towards me getting my first wheelchair. If it was not them, maybe I would not be here today.

I think it is so important to support Children in Need because it helps kids who really need it in the UK, and every copy of this book will help kids like that.

It is a really funny book, a rip-roaring adventure, and the illustrations by Carl Pierce are incredible, so please support the Cyborg Cat series. I hope 'Cyborg Cat and the Night Spider' will get children all over the UK reading and inspire them to search for their inner superhero. ●



JAMES BOLTON

# UK Government's £400 million polio boost

*In November, the World Health Organisation hosted a pledging event in Abu Dhabi for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative's Endgame Strategy. Ahead of the summit, the UK Government committed major investment to a five-year worldwide plan, which aims to secure a polio-free future.*

**F**OLLOWING on from the global announcement in October that a second of three strains of wild poliovirus has now been eradicated, the UK government announced in November that it has pledged up to £400 million worth of support to help eliminate the disease for good.

The funding, which was announced by International Development Secretary, Alok Sharma, will help vaccinate more than 750 children a minute against polio.

This new package of UK aid, which will go towards the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), will support 20 million health workers and volunteers to deliver potentially life-saving vaccinations to 400 million children per year around the world between 2020 and 2023.

Polio is a debilitating disease which mainly affects children under the age of five and can cause paralysis - and even death.

The announcement has been welcomed by Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland President, Donna Wallbank. She said: "We are over the moon that this support is being given and it is another significant step in the right direction.

"It is vitally important that vaccination levels are maintained, especially in hard to reach areas which are experiencing geo-political unrest and are most at risk.

"This pledge is a huge vindication of all the effort that Rotary clubs and volunteers have made across the country by hosting events and raising awareness, not only on World Polio Day last month, but for years."

Rotary pioneered efforts to eradicate the disease over 30 years ago and since then, the formation of the GPEI, which consists of Rotary, UNICEF, the World Health Organisation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Gates Foundation, has helped the incidence of polio plummet by more than 99.9%.

Although the UK has been free from polio since the 1980s, the

country has been one of the largest governmental supporters of the GPEI, with this announcement bringing the total contribution given to ending polio to £1.7 billion since 1995.

Support of the efforts to eradicate polio have always gained significant cross-party backing, and the announcement today, prior to parliament being suspended, means the upcoming election will not affect the funding.

Minister Alok Sharma said: "We have made tremendous progress to fight this debilitating disease, but our work must continue if we are to eradicate it for ever.

"That's why I am committing fresh support to help immunise 400 million children a year around the world."

Bill Gates, Co-chair of the Gates Foundation, who joined the GPEI in 2000 said: "We have the ability to wipe polio off the face of the planet. But that will require more support.

"I'm excited to see the UK leading the way on this front. Their generosity will make a huge difference in eradicating this disease once and for all." ●



Minister Alok Sharma met polio survivor Colin Powell

Advertorial

A man with grey hair, wearing a dark blue polo shirt and a white apron, is looking down at a wooden cross mounted on a metal register. The register is dark and has the words 'CEMETERY' and 'REGISTER' in raised letters. The background is a warm, orange-brown gradient.

# The Silent Cities of World War One

By Paul Reed, Head Battlefield Guide, Leger Holidays

**WHEN** the First World War came to an end, more than a million service personnel from Britain and the Empire had died. Of these, some 750,000 had fallen on the battlefields of Belgium and France.

Along a hundred miles of what had been the Western Front, British cemeteries marked the places where the fighting had occurred. In some cases, these were a few scattered wooden crosses, in some places they were vast hillsides of the dead. Rudyard Kipling, whose only son had died in the war, described them 'silent cities of the dead' - a place where the memory of those who had fallen lived on.

But what to do with these hundreds of locations, and graves marked with simple wooden crosses? There was a desire to perpetuate their memory, but the crosses would not last forever.

Initially the plan was to replace wood with stone, but Kipling, who was a member of the then Imperial (now Commonwealth) War Graves Commission knew that from his travels through the Empire not every man or woman was necessarily a Christian. He preferred the idea of a 'memorial stone' or headstone, and this is what was adopted.

For every soldier with a marked grave, the headstone would show their Regiment or Corps cap badge, their name and military details plus date of death and religious symbol of their faith. The family could add the age, full first names and there was space for a personal inscription, although this had to be paid for.

Everything else, the erection, construction, and maintenance of the 'Silent Cities' would be paid for by the government.

Three 'experimental' cemeteries were made on the Somme

and at Le Tréport. King George V visited these in 1922 and, having given his seal of approval, permanent cemeteries were made. By the time the last one was finished in 1938, more than 2,000 had been built from the Belgian coast to beyond the Somme.

To find out more about how an entire generation was memorialised in stone, and discover more about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), join us on a unique tour to look at the history of the 'Silent Cities'.

In partnership with the CWGC, this tour will offer special visits, behind-the-scenes insights into their work, and you will get to meet their historians, young interns and gardeners. We will also learn how they continue to find and recover the dead from World War One, and what methods they use to identify them.

Leger Holidays' new Silent Cities tours is a fascinating journey through history and remembrance, so join us on this one-off tour departing in August 2020.

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# GOING BACK FOR THE ONE

**For pilot Paul Woodington, flying for MAF means going back to rescue the one. Here's his story.**

Saving lives is a big part of being a Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) pilot. I fly for MAF in the jungles of Papua New Guinea (PNG).

One day, as I was bound for Vanimo Hospital with nine patients on board, I received a radio call. A teenager in Busilmin had been badly burnt. Could I help?

Landing at Vanimo, I filled up my fuel tanks as the nine patients were transported to the hospital, and then set off to save this poor lad. However, thirty minutes into the flight, a call came saying that rain was coming in from the east.

Approaching the Highlands, the scene was terrible. Vast rain clouds shrouded Telefomin making it impossible to spot the Sepik River. This late appearance of rain demanded my reassessment of the risks on landing.

As is so often the case, after a quick talk with God, He showed me the way! The river appeared below me, through a small opening in the cloud.

I'd made it!

But then my heart sank. Where was everyone? I was on an empty airstrip. Yet again, God calmed my nerves with an answer to prayer.

I heard them before I saw them — and eventually got sight of the boy. Four strong, young men carried him up the hill in a bush stretcher they had constructed from vines and sticks.

The pain on the boy's face was beyond words. So was the look on his mother's face. We eased the stretcher into the main cabin of the plane — making sure the patient was as comfortable as possible before departure.

I cleared the valley wall on take-off and found my way to Telefomin in time to see a brief burst of sunshine directly over the hospital. The MAF ground staff were quick to unload the patient and send him to hospital.

I thought of that initial decision to make an extra effort to save a life. I thanked God for His amazing grace.

I recalled the brief look of peace on the boy's face as I told him not worry. I smiled as I thought, 'I'm so glad we don't have to ask the young man for money — I know MAF's supporters will help cover the cost of his flight.'

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DAVE KING

# Keeping girls in education

*Yorkkits are low-cost feminine hygiene bags, which provide a clever solution to encourage teenage girls in developing countries not to miss out on school.*

**I**T'S been running for six years, but the Yorkkits scheme continues to grow in popularity.

Organised by York Ainsty Rotary, they run a series of workshops at the Methodist Church Hall in Copmanthorpe, four miles south-west of York, where the volunteers produce feminine hygiene kits.

In many developing countries, many girls have no provision so can't go to school during menstruation, missing out on large parts of their education.

"Our aim is to help the girls by providing access to uninterrupted schooling," explained organiser, Issy Sanderson.

"We run workshops and use brightly patterned cottons to make up the low-cost cleverly designed kits, which are packed into attractive drawstring bags. They typically last each girl for up to three years.

"Each kit also contains panties, a wash cloth, a carry bag for soiled items, and a strong polythene zip-locked bag for washing the items in small amounts of often scarce water."

Over the past six years, York Ainsty Rotary has sent the kits to 12 African countries – Kenya, Uganda, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Eswatini, and to The Gambia. Kits have also been

sent to India, Nepal, Myanmar and Pakistan.

Issy added: "We have also sent kits to refugee camps in Europe. Some of my workshop team actually take the kits out to the projects themselves and work as volunteers in schools, orphanages, community initiatives and slums.

"In all of these places, we have seed-funded schools and self-help community groups to start making the kits themselves out of local materials.

"In all, we have sent over 2,000 kits overseas, and helped hundreds of women and girls to make their own."

Issy explained that the impact on local communities has been tremendous. It helps empower the girls and women to take charge of their own menstrual health situations. "This has also had an unexpected positive result of reducing the incidence of sexual abuse and childhood pregnancies," she added.

The volunteers gather once a month on a Saturday in Copmanthorpe, but they have also run workshops in York women's prison, the Refugee and Asylum-Seekers' project in Middlesbrough, a women's refuge in Grimsby, and at the Women's Support Centre in York.

They also run a 'Big Workshop' in York Minster once a year to make the kits, which attracts hundreds of people from



*Yorkkits make a difference around the world*



*Volunteers put together the kits*



*Teenage girls are returning to education*

all over the UK who get involved. This is always held in March, close to the date of International Women's Day.

"This, in itself, has had an amazing impact, with 100% support from the Dean and Chapter of York Minster, and spin-off in local groups requesting help to start up their own workshops," added Issy, the Immediate Past President of York Ainsty Rotary. ●

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## LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

### SIX-FIGURE PHIL

**P**HIL GODFREY has hit the six figure fund-raising mark to fight a disease which killed his wife four years ago.

Antiphospholipid syndrome (APS) is an incurable life-threatening autoimmune condition, which causes the blood to clot too quickly in veins, arteries and the brain.

Phil's late wife Christine suffered from APS for 40 years before passing away in 2015.

The Rotarian from Solihull in the West Midlands said: "I am trying to raise the profile and awareness of the disease by raising funds to make GPs more aware of the condition through training."

Phil is working in tandem with APS Support UK. He has raised £108,000 which has been used to fund the first ever Royal College of GPs' eLearning Training to help doctors have a greater understanding of the syndrome.


The major part of the money will go into a much-needed APS research fund.

Phil had originally planned to fund-raise with a walk from the Scilly Isles to the Shetlands. However, he abandoned the attempt after 350 miles because of an injured knee.

So his revised plan involved a 'Round Britain Rail Trip' in stages, talking to as many Rotary and Inner Wheel clubs as possible.

So far, he has travelled more than 27,000 miles, spoken to more than 100 Rotary clubs, with more planned for 2020. •



 For details, contact:  
**Phil Godfrey**  
philgodfrey@btinternet.com

### A CAT'S TALE

**H**AMPSHIRE Rotarians Diana Brooks and Allen Cobbold have teamed up to create a children's book which will fund days out for young carers.

"A Cat Called Smokey" was inspired by Diana's youngest granddaughter, Juno, who was aged just six-years-old.

"Juno sent me a small parcel marked 'fragile'," explained Diana, who is a member of Winchester Rotary.

"I took gently, from the tissue-laden box, a small model and held in my palm what I thought to be a cat, made lovingly by small, young hands. Fortunately, Juno's mother confirmed my thoughts!

"This was no ordinary cat. It was black, with a long, upright tail, bright yellow 'stickie out' eyes and only three legs, all in a straight row.

"Unfortunately, the middle leg was shorter than the other two, creating a problem when the poor creature tried to stand up.


"It fell down quite a lot. I realised that I had

a disabled cat on my hands - and thereby hangs the story."

The story's two main characters are called Smokey and Tortilla, and the book has been illustrated by fellow Rotarian, Allen Cobbold, who works under the name of Allen Edwards. He moved to Winchester from Kingston Rotary.

The book, which took six months to pull together, is now on sale and reaction from readers has been encouraging. "Many parents have said to me that they have enjoyed reading it to their children," explained Diana.

The cost of each book is £7, without postage, which comes to £1.97. A tenner would cover costs and make a good contribution to the charity. •

 For details, contact:  
**Mrs Diana Brooks**  
25 Eversley Gardens, Kings  
Worthy, Winchester, SO23 7GQ  
Tel: 01962 623580  
Mob: 07813 891462  
email: letterstodifor@gmail.com

### DRAGONS' DEN

**R**OTARIANS in Kent dished out hundreds of pounds to good causes at a Dragons' Den style event.

Folkestone Rotary organised the initiative, inviting charitable organisations to enter the competition and demonstrate their charitable work. The club then makes a contribution to support their good cause.

Among those organisations taking part were the town's Air Cadets who wanted £500 to buy polo shirts with the squadron and Rotary's logo for a common sense of belonging when not in uniform.

The charity Touchbase Care wanted £300 to turn a piece of land into a garden which would be maintained by young people with additional needs to grow seasonal vegetables.

And, among a number of schools which took part, St Peter's Church of England Primary School wanted £250 to create props for a drama production to entertain residents of a local care home. •

## ALL ABOARD!



**A** ROTARY club in East Sussex has decided to promote itself in a unique way – by adopting a railway station!

Martello Rotary in Seaford has signed a partnership agreement to adopt the town's railway station on the South Downs.

It means the Rotary club will be able to put up branding around the station to tell rail passengers about the work it does in the community.

A partnership agreement was recently signed by Andy Gardner, station manager at Seaford Station, on behalf of Govia Thameslink Railway, and Rodney Reed, President of Rotary Martello Seaford.

Station Partnerships are groups of volunteers who come together to adopt a station, in this instance Seaford Station.

Working in conjunction with the Sussex Community Rail Partnership, the Seaford initiative aims to make the railway station feel more attractive and serve as a focal point for residents and visitors.

The Seaford Station Partnership plans to engage the community with a set of 'Seaford Through The Ages' murals to brighten up the station.

There are also plans to provide flower boxes – all with Rotary branding.

Andy Gardner said he was delighted with the partnership with Martello Rotary. He said: "One of the pleasures of this role is seeing bridges built between the railway and the communities that we serve.

"I am really looking forward to the colourful improvements that are planned, with volunteers from the local community helping at the station and pupils from local schools being able to enjoy seeing their artwork on display." •

## VISIT BHUTAN

**F**EW Rotarians will have had the opportunity to visit the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan, because of its remoteness and the cost of getting there.

But now Rotarians in Great Britain & Ireland are being invited to attend a four-night International Rotary conference in the Buddhist nation which takes place from July 27th-31st 2020.

The invitation is being extended by the Rotary Club of Thimphu, the only Rotary club in the country.

According to John Gisbey from Sandwich Rotary in Kent, and who is working with the Bhutan Rotarians to promote the conference, the Thimphu club's main focus for projects is in

education, health and in the agricultural sectors.

Normally, the cost of a trip to Bhutan would fetch up to £8,000. This is due to a tourist tax of \$250 a day, plus a \$65 tariff.

The Rotary Club of Thimphu has arranged with the Royal Government of Bhutan a waiver of these costs which would put the cost of the trip close to £2,000.

In addition to the conference there will be a full cultural programme, with all transportation included, but no mountain trekking. •

 For details, contact:

**John Gisbey**  
john.gisbey@gmail.com  
or call 0797 971 3229

## CATCHING THEM YOUNG!

**F**IVE-year-old Austin Brennan became Lytham Rotary's youngest speaker when he told members just why he wanted to raise funds for defibrillators in the town.

Mum Katey also came along with Austin to the Lancashire Rotary club to talk about the congenital heart defect - Tetralogy of Fallot - with which Austin was born, resulting in him undergoing major heart surgery at three months.

The family raised funds three years ago for a defibrillator for a local play park.

And when Austin heard earlier this year that it had saved the life of a two-year-old girl, he asked if they could raise money for more equipment.

Thanks to a JustGiving page and a charity cycle ride which Austin took part in, they have now raised funds for two further defibs to be placed in their home area of Ansdell in Lytham.

When Lytham Rotary members were alerted to the appeal they quickly stepped in to make up the shortfall to purchase



one machine, but Austin didn't want to stop there as his success resulted in a further boost to purchase a second one.

Members were so impressed by their young speaker that Austin went away with even further funds. Obviously a Rotarian of the future. •

## CHARITY ABSEIL MAKES £1 MILLION

**T**HE £1 million landmark has been reached from a charity abseil off the Forth Bridge in Scotland, which has been organised for the past 10 years by South Queensferry Rotary.

This year, 334 intrepid volunteers dropped 165 feet from the world famous landmark in aid of good causes.

The iconic position of the Forth Rail Bridge, which now has World Heritage Site status, attracts people from all over Scotland, the UK and further afield keen, not only to support charity, but to experience the thrill of abseiling from one of the best-known structures in the world.

The principle charities to benefit this year were the Edinburgh Children's Hospital Charity and Strathcarron Hospice. This year's event alone raised £120,000.

Abseilers of all ages, dressed in a range of colourful outfits descended from the bridge to the beach watched by friends and supporters.

Safety is always the top priority and the technical aspects of the abseil are in the



expert hands of the Glasgow Climbing Centre. And safety on the bridge is enforced by Balfour Beatty under the auspices of Network Rail.

Over the years, through increasingly sophisticated systems, efficiency has increased, but so have the challenges facing the organisers.

For example, due to the ever-increasing number of cruise ship visits to Queensferry, when abseils can't be held because of volume of traffic, the problem of selecting a Sunday when the tide is right is becoming ever more difficult. •

## LIGHTING UP BLACKPOOL

**A**S one of the UK's tourist hotspots, Blackpool brings £1.4 billion to the town's economy.

Now visitors to this iconic seaside resort, with the Blackpool Tower and the illuminations overlooking the Pleasure Beach, are being welcomed by a sign sponsored by the town's Rotary clubs.

The four clubs, namely Blackpool, Blackpool South, Blackpool Sunrise and Blackpool Palatine have been holding joint meetings and ventures for the last three years.

Angela Butcher, President of Blackpool Palatine admitted it wasn't easy to make this simple concept a reality.

Working with the Blackpool Illuminations Department, a design was agreed, keeping the sign simple with a website contact should anyone seeing the sign wish to join Rotary, and with each of the four clubs contributing £250 towards the cost, the go ahead was given.

Angela Butcher added: "It has been an amazing project which is now complete. Millions of visitors view the illuminations each year so what better way to promote Rotary, for all clubs throughout the country?

"The sign is in a prime position, chosen by the Blackpool Illuminations Department, but sited just before the beautiful tableaux at the north end of the lights. It is a lasting legacy created by the Blackpool clubs." •

## HOSPITAL HANDOVER



**A** MAJOR Rotary-led project to refurbish a hospital in Uganda has been completed with a handover ceremony to mark the occasion.

The Freda Carr Hospital in Ngora has had a strong association with Rotary in the Thames Valley.

Reading Matins Rotary was at the forefront of a \$216,000 project to refurbish the maternity ward, operating theatre and water tower at the hospital, which lies in eastern Uganda.

The project was supported by a Global Grant from The Rotary Foundation, with contributions from nine Rotary clubs, five Rotary Districts, Rotary Doctor Bank GB&I and the Water & Sanitation Rotarian Action Group. The key partner in Uganda was Kampala Central Rotary.

The hospital, which was built in the 1920s, has been the focus of a number of Rotary Vocational Training Team visits of UK doctors, midwives and paediatricians.

They are committed to visiting every six months over the next three years to teach essential life-saving skills to healthcare staff and students at the Nurse Training School. •



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## MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH DEMENTIA

**P**AST District Governor, Brenda Parsons, has been instrumental in creating more than 300 Dementia Friends this past year.

Brenda, who is a member of Orpington Crofton Rotary in Kent, has been a firm advocate of the Alzheimer's Society scheme, started in 2013.

During Brenda's year as District Governor, many clubs provided activities for those living with dementia such as planting trees at a dementia unit in Tenterden, organising 'Opening Doors' on a dementia day of action at Rochester Cathedral, holding tea parties for those with dementia, as well as raising money for the Alzheimer's Society.

Minster On Sea Rotary on the Isle of Sheppey has supported young people in

their local secondary school where they have been running a Dementia Café.

Other clubs have been visiting companies raising awareness and a Satellite Rotary Club in Orpington, along with another Orpington club have completed a series of Memory Boxes for younger guests at the local day centre.

Animals are known to combat loneliness, social isolation and supporting people living with dementia. And while those living with complex needs, or who live in a care home may not be able to care for a real pet, robotic cats are now proving to be a winner.

South Ribble Rotary in Lancashire has donated a robot cat called Phyllis to Leyland Day Centre. The cat is equipped with touch sensors and Artificial

Intelligence technology to closely mimic the sounds, moves and feel of a real cat.

"For people with dementia, cats like this will bring great comfort and stimulation," said Caroline Wilson from the Leyland Day Centre. "For some it brings back memories of a cat they may have had in the past.

"For health and safety reasons, having a real cat running round the centre would not be safe, but Phyllis is going to be a good cat to have at the Leyland Centre."

In Worcestershire, Worcester Vigornia Rotary has donated a robotic cat to Riversides School, which looks after children with special needs.

The cat has been used in one-to-one therapy sessions, and the feedback from the school has been excellent. •

## BEATING BREAST CANCER

**N**ORWICH'S five Rotary clubs are working together to support the Boudicca Breast Cancer Appeal at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (NNUH).

The clubs have run a craft fair in Norwich, a charity walk on the Norfolk Broads, a summer party and a Grand Ball in Norwich.

The clubs have also partnered with the NNUH Charity, Desira Motor Group, East Bilney Coachworks and Suzuki UK to raffle a brand new Suzuki.

There are plans to establish a new breast cancer assessment unit at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital to give potential sufferers a one-stop shop utilising the most up-to-date diagnostic equipment.

To do this, the charity is raising £800,000 to provide equipment and to modify the hospital. So far, the Rotary clubs have raised around £16,000 since October 2018.

Chris Rees, President of Norwich Centenary, said "It is great working closely with all the Norwich clubs and we've all pulled together for this really important charity.

"It's really encouraging to see what can be done when clubs work together - we would love other Rotarians to support us and be in with a chance of winning this wonderful prize."

Pictured in the photos are representatives of the five Norwich Rotary clubs, the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital CEO and business leaders from Desira and East Bilney. •

## PEACE PROJECT FLOURISHES

**A**FTER months of planning, a Rotary-inspired peace garden has been completed in Buckinghamshire.

The peace garden at Penny's Corner in Bourne End in Buckinghamshire was completed in time for the official dedication on World Peace Day.

It was originally conceived by Bourne End & Cookham Rotary as a way of celebrating the centenary of the end of the First World War, as well as enhancing this focal point for the village.

The Rotary club worked closely with Wooburn & Bourne End Parish Council, who own the site. Plans quickly evolved to encompass the wider aspects of peace, since the official parish war memorial for wreath-laying already existed in Wooburn and only one memorial is permitted in each parish.

Following the demolition of the Nags Head Hotel, it had been cultivated as a parish open space

by former council chairman Penny Walsh and her husband Brian.

Eventually it was bought by the Parish Council and officially named Penny's Corner.

It was entirely fitting then that the Peace Garden, intended for quiet contemplation around the Centenary clock, became an enhancement of this treasured open space.

This has been a community project, jointly financed by the Parish Council and Rotary, with anonymous donations from well-wishers.

The Rotary club organised a 'Poem for Peace' competition for the local community, to be held annually, with an etched copy of each winning entry having pride of place on the stone plinth.

Bourne End & Cookham Rotary was fortunate in being awarded two grants, totalling £2,400, from Rotary Thames Valley District (1090) to bridge the funding gaps. •

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# and finally...

with Managing Editor Dave King

[editor@rotarygb.org](mailto:editor@rotarygb.org)

## Recycle your magazine

**S**O, if this is the first time you've picked up a copy of *Rotary* magazine, then welcome to the end!

This month, a copy of the magazine should have dropped through every Rotarian's letterbox in Great Britain & Ireland. It's something I have been pushing for since becoming editor two years ago, because I believe the magazine is one of the best marketing tools Rotary has.

Print is dead, chorus the new-age radicals. Everything is published on the internet, they chime. In fact, so much of it is at Rotary, where our digital-first policy ensures our website – [www.rotarygb.org](http://www.rotarygb.org) – is updated almost daily.

But guess what, print is holding its own. Especially magazine circulations in the UK, as more people prefer the longer-form read. Readers love print for its in-depth analysis, its strong use of images and being able to switch off your laptop or tablet to enjoy a good read.

Advertisers love it too because of print's longer shelf-life and greater engagement. So don't kill us off just yet. In fact, we've only just begun!

Besides ensuring every Rotarian receives a copy, *Rotary* magazine has been selected as a suitable publication to appear in business airport lounges in London,

Dublin, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. It will be distributed in Virgin Trains' first-class lounges and southern cruise ports.

With each issue, 5,000 magazines will be distributed as part of Rotary's marketing efforts to attract new members.

In fact, when you have finished reading your *Rotary* magazine, why not put a sticker on the front cover with your club's details, including a contact number or address, and deposit the latest issue in your local library, doctor's surgery or community centre for others to read.

Have copies on display at events you attend, or during meetings. Make the most of this resource which is telling Rotary's story and the impact we make.

Inevitably, there has been some backlash from the green brigade, who believe we shouldn't bother with a magazine at all, but post everything online and save the planet.

One charming Rotarian described *Rotary* magazine as "a waste of money and trees", adding: "I am afraid that in light of the high profile that attends to the issue of global warming and the limited resources of our planet, this sort of action only reinforces the image of Rotary as an out of touch even anachronistic organisation."

At *Rotary* magazine, we take our environmental responsibilities very

seriously, as does the publishing industry globally. We are environmentally-friendly, acutely aware of the carbon footprint *Rotary* magazine has at every point of the supply chain.

We are reducing the environmental impact by using Forest Stewardship Council certified paper, which is 100% recyclable, along with the recycled poly wrap you received with this magazine.

We use sustainable inks, and distribute the magazine using a scheme called 'downstream access'. With each issue, *Rotary* magazine goes to central sorting offices, which reduces carbon emissions as fewer transportation trips are required.

Perish the day when the printed word is no longer available. As someone who is currently teaching journalists of the future, my biggest challenge is students' literacy levels, pulling them away from the dreary text-speak world of digital media.

Read a book, read a newspaper, read a magazine, I tell them.

So please, help Rotary protect the environment for future generations by recycling your magazine, by either giving it to someone, or by popping it into your recycling bin. And in doing so, use *Rotary* magazine as a marketing tool to tell the Rotary story and grow your club.

The message is – **Read it & Leave it!** ●

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