

Rotary

The Official Magazine of Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland

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How peace can prosper in a pandemic

The Peace Advocate Project is a charity set up by Scottish Rotarians Jean and Keith Best, from Newton Stewart Rotary, enabling young people to become peace advocates in schools and community groups. Here they tell the story behind what they have achieved in reaching out to youngsters across Great Britain and Ireland.

IT was seven years ago when the Peace Advocate Project was formed after young people told us they were well equipped with academic skills, but lacking in life skills.

Statistics showed that self-harming leading to suicide was the biggest killer of young people across the world.

Young people were lacking the skills to make informed choices when facing every day conflicts; what to wear, what to eat, how to react to bullying, joining gangs, picking up knives, using guns, and becoming radicalised.

The internet was their only coping mechanism, offering advice which often resulted in death.

The Peace Advocate Project curriculum was developed to train young people in skills to make informed choices, both for themselves and others.

Across the world, Rotary clubs are using Rotary's strategic priorities of increasing our impact, expanding our reach and enhancing participant engagement supported by a home-grown peace project with young people.

'Peace Advocate' status is achieved through interactive training sessions, as well as providing skills and strategies to empower young people to take control of their lives.

They investigate why conflict occurs in themselves, homes, schools, communities and globally.

Peace advocates create community service projects, organise conferences and facilitate those who follow. They create a sustainable programme for young people, which is led by young people.

During the first five years of its existence, the project offered face-to-face, skills-based training through a collaboration with the Rotary International Peace Fellows, Rotarians, plus school groups at home and abroad, who travelled to Mexico, Australia, Germany and the US.

Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland celebrated the difference which this project makes to young peoples' lives when they awarded the first Young Citizen Peacemaker Award to the peace advocates at Coláiste Muire, a post-primary, co-educational Catholic school which is based in Cobh, County Cork.

There, they are supported by Mallow Rotary and became the first school to be awarded the International Blue Peace School Flag.

Up until March this year, Rotary GB&I clubs and districts were supporting 30 schools in the project. This all changed with COVID-19, or so we thought.

The face-to-face training had halted, but peace advocates at the Douglas Ewart High School in Newton Stewart, Dumfries & Galloway, made us see that the peace advocate skills were so important that we had to look for another way.

The students recognised how their project to create an interactive peace garden had to be put on hold.

But their peace advocate skills not only empowered them to resolve any kind of conflict in their lives, these resources could also be used during the pandemic.

As a result, the High School students turned their attention to supporting the mental health of their school community during lockdown.

Monthly Zoom meetings were held to set up an action plan prior to launching Facebook pages raising awareness of their project.

Open to everyone, the platform focuses on mental health and well-being, while also educating about peace and helping everyone to deal with conflict.

Cara Sloan, an advanced peace advocate at Douglas Ewart High School said: "As school captain, I am sad that my final year of school was cut short.

"It has been bizarre, submitting my leaver's form via email instead of signing out of school, surrounded by my peers.



Students involved in the Peace Advocate Project

“However, the Peace Project has helped me to see the positives. It is a time to reach out to people in need.

“With all this uncertainty, it’s a time to call the people you love, learn to have a kinder, more empathetic heart, because everyone is fighting a battle.”

“HOWEVER, THE PEACE PROJECT HAS HELPED ME TO SEE THE POSITIVES. IT IS A TIME TO REACH OUT TO PEOPLE IN NEED. WITH ALL THIS UNCERTAINTY, IT’S A TIME TO CALL THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE, LEARN TO HAVE A KINDER, MORE EMPATHETIC HEART, BECAUSE EVERYONE IS FIGHTING A BATTLE.”

The peace advocates shared more than 70 daily tips on social media which are being brought into the school curriculum, trained others to become peace advocates, and shared skills online to other students.

They will deliver the programme to other students in their school.

This is an example of young people training other young people and, in turn, sharing their work.

For this outstanding service project and completion of training, the next cohort

has been awarded the first International Blue Flag standard for Peace Schools in the United Kingdom.

Archbishop Sancroft High School in Harleston, Norfolk, received the first Blue Flag in England in October, supported by District Peace Officer, Pat Webb.

Working with young people, the Peace Advocate Project has developed online virtual training: ‘Zooming for Peace’.

Successful interactive online training has been piloted in Japan and Spain.

In England, this has been organised in collaboration with Bewdley Rotary in Worcestershire and its Interact Group at Bewdley School.

The Peace Advocate Project supports a network of 30 Rotarians across Rotary GB&I, who will soon be assessing the

progress of their schools in reaching the Blue Flag standard.

Although COVID-19 has tried to control the world, our peace advocates have changed the way they work to carry on developing peace in our lives.

They make us realise that the peace advocacy skills helped them to get through a difficult time and empowered them to help others.

The peace advocates tell us how they feel this will not be the last pandemic they will have to deal with.

Hamish Sutherland, an advanced peace advocate at Douglas Ewart High School, left us with the words: “At least with the Peace Advocate skills, we feel we have a chance to take control”. ●

| info |

For more information visit:
peaceadvocateproject@btinternet.com
www.peaceadvocateproject.org

Jamming for peace

Winchester Rotarian, Luke Addison, is the European Youth Team Co-ordinator for PeaceJam. Here, he writes how youngsters are at the forefront of championing change.

PEACEJAM is an international education programme for schools and youth groups, and is the only educational programme working directly with Nobel Peace Laureates.

PeaceJam has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize nine times. Our aims are to teach and inspire a new generation to be active citizens and agents for change.

To coincide with the International Day of Peace in September, PeaceJam Europe launched a 'Campaign for an Inclusive Europe' to mobilise young people and address the most pressing issues facing our communities.

From Black Lives Matter to climate change, young people are at the forefront of championing change and we want to amplify these efforts through our 'Laureate of the Future Programme', alongside running a Pan-European conference.

Thanks to support from Winchester Rotary, PeaceJam Europe's Youth Team has created the 'Laureate of the Future Programme'. This offers young people aged between 14 and 26-years-old the opportunity to apply for a micro-grant up to the value of €200, to support their social action ideas and projects.

Over the last three years, with support from the Erasmus+ programme through the European Union, PeaceJam has expanded its programming across Europe, strengthening the ideals of peace, non-violence, inclusion and cohesion.

As part of the project, an online Pan-European conference was organised for the first time in November by the European Youth Team with support from PeaceJam in Belgium, Greece, Romania, Luxembourg, Netherlands and UK.

Featuring the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams, the online



Luke Addison

"FROM BLACK LIVES MATTER TO CLIMATE CHANGE, YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF CHAMPIONING CHANGE"

conference comprised predominantly youth-led Q&A sessions, panel discussions, interactive workshops and small group discussions which focused on education, environment, equality, health and migration.

Young people spent time brainstorming ideas to advance inclusion and promote peace in Europe.

And these ideas will be presented to the European Parliament as part of the project's final report.

In addition to learning from Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams, young people heard from other inspirational change-makers, including the KidsRights International Children's Peace Prize winner, Stuart Lawrence and prominent youth activists from across Europe.

Sara Belhay, PeaceJam UK Project Manager, said: "Many of the challenges facing young people have intensified during the pandemic, but we have an opportunity to bring young people together and show them that they can make a difference.

"Engaging the European Youth Team in the organisation of the Pan-European conference, has played an important part in placing youth voices at the centre of what we do.

"We are excited to launch the 'Campaign for an Inclusive Europe' and 'Laureate of the Future Programme' on International Day of Peace, as part of our commitment to empower young people to become active citizens and agents of change." ●

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For more information contact:
europe@peacejam.org

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After being broken in by Will Biddick, Dancing did a few weeks' training

including some light cantering and schooling. She had some time off but is now back in full work with the view of a first run in the New Year.

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The revolution of small things

Mariafernanda Burgos from Colombia is a Rotary Peace Fellow who describes her studies based at the University of Bradford.

HAVE you ever thought about what peace entails, or what peace might look like? When thinking about peace in terms of large-scale, violent conflict, it is usually associated with ceasefire and promises contained in agreements between governments and armed insurgent groups.

Although this is probably one of the most relevant steps towards a peaceful society, many agreements tend to fail because they do not fully encompass the complexity of a conflict, which has been affecting a society for generations.

As a consequence, building peace seems like a utopia; impossible and unattainable.

However, there is much to learn from small-scale initiatives which challenge the complexities of the conflict.

As a Colombian, surrounded by the oldest armed conflict in Latin America, and also as a peace-builder, I have realised that these so-called utopias are possible to reach through 'the revolution of the small things'.

Projects such as the 'Science and Innovation for Peace and Peace Insight' were two peace-building initiatives which I was proud to lead.

The aim was to strengthen the peace leadership skills of the youth population, as well as foster knowledgeable and new leaders in communities affected by conflict.

So, although in 2016 Colombia went through an historic peace process



Mariafernanda Burgos

between the government and Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), peace is not straightforward.

A focus on the next generations through inter-disciplinary projects in areas such as science and arts will be small, but necessary steps in order to walk towards peace utopias.

Nowadays, as a Rotary Peace Fellow at the University of Bradford, I have confirmed that the 'revolution of the small things' is key when pursuing peace in protracted and untreatable conflicts.

A critical thinking, fostered by academia, has allowed me to broaden my knowledge about the nuances of peace.

It has helped me to understand that we cannot expect that a 'one fits all'

approach to peace and reconciliation, where violence has been part of a society for decades.

Being a peace-builder is not about changing the world.

It is about contributing to the world through the development of creativity and insightful tools for communities, who require different strategies to transform small scale realities.

So, with this experience in the field, and influenced by the Peace Centre at the University of Bradford, my next steps will be oriented towards the consolidation of a glocal platform – one reflecting or characterised by both local and global considerations.

This is a platform where small peace initiatives around the world can shine as an example for those existing in the shaded corners, who are looking for inspiration, support and partnerships.

I want to foster glocalisation as a way of moving from the local to the global.

I want to acknowledge the particular circumstances of each context.

The revolution of the small things could then transcend borders, as it walks towards the so-called utopias. ●



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The pilots of peace

Alison Sutherland is the current District Governor for Southern Wales, and chairs the Rotary Action Group for Peace. Here, she discusses what the action group is trying to achieve in an ever-changing world.

THE Rotary Action Group for Peace was founded about 12 years ago, making slow and steady progress towards its mission of 'engagement, education, empower'.

The past year has been very exciting, following the launch of the Peacebuilder club initiative.

The idea is that each Rotary club has at least two Rotarians sitting on a peace committee in club, just like Foundation or Membership.

These Rotarians are then members of the Rotary Action Group for Peace (RAGFP). They help the club to see the areas of peace it is already doing, educate themselves as well as fellow Rotarians, within their club and district, around the area of peace.

To this end, they can access training on the Peace Academy, check out the 'eight pillars of peace' - as posted on the Institute for Economics and Peace website - and take part in training. Every Rotarian or Rotaractor is a Peacebuilder. Consequently, they and their club appear on the peace map on the RAGFP website.

The year started with around 50 Peacebuilder clubs. Numbers now exceed 200. One of the surprising, and perhaps few, positives to have come out of the

COVID-19 pandemic has been the growth of Peacebuilder clubs, probably as a result of the surge of online and virtual events.

As Chair of RAGFP, I have been hosting 'Chat with the Chair' four nights per week, which has attracted Rotarians, Peacebuilder clubs and fledgling RAGFP chapters. It's great to see how they have inspired, encouraged and helped one another by sharing ideas and projects.

The latest exciting initiative country-based chapters were borne from a conversation with Walter Gyger at the Rotary International convention in Hamburg 18 months ago.

Although, at first, RAGFP was reticent, because it didn't want to promote possible nationalism at the potential expense of unity, soon it became clear the idea was a good one.

Country-based chapters can be likened to a holding company with regional offices, which are culturally relevant to their area and, most importantly, they represent the unique issues of that area.

They work together to formulate a

strategic plan, whilst simultaneously adhering to the mission and strategic plan of the holding company.

To date, there are four chapters piloting this concept in Switzerland, Serbia, Germany and Hong Kong. Each chapter has achieved much to date.

Hong Kong has brought in over 70 new members to RAGFP and 30 new Peacebuilder clubs. Some 65 Rotarians have taken the Peace Academy training.

They hosted a Multi District Conference with Peter Kyle and myself as keynote speakers, and they are currently undertaking a series of training sessions,



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much, but other participants have made great strides for peace.

Some Rotarians are working with Karim Wasfi, a renowned cellist and conductor from Iraq.

They produced a video of Karim and the orchestras which he has set up in the war-torn areas of Iraq for World Peace Day.

Rotarians from Turkey came on the chat for advice with how to put on a conference around Gallipoli and Anzac Day this past November. RAGFP connected them with Peace Fellows, speakers and panellists.

It has been a privilege to see this group grow in stature. They have a global grant for peace as the outcome of their conference.

RAGFP has also recognised the changed status of Rotaract. A director of RAGFP, Chehab Elawar, and myself hosted an online meeting of Rotaractors from over 20 countries.

They decided they wanted to put on a virtual Global Peace Conference. This they

assisted

by

Rotarian trainers from the USA with whom

they connected through 'Chat with the Chair'.

A striking outcome for the Switzerland Chapter is the Geneva Project Incubator.

This brings together over 50 Peace Fellows, 100 Rotarians and other organisations, each working together on the various aspects of peace projects.

I am involved in the Peace Through Education segment. At the end of the event, it is anticipated that there will be 40 global grants ready for sponsorship and implementation.

Not only have the chapters achieved

did in October with Rotary International President, Holger Knaack as their keynote speaker.

Another conference has been planned for December for Europe and Africa. A third conference is planned for February for Oceania/Australasia Rotaractors.

RAGFP reduced its membership fees for Rotaractors during September and October. Rotarians sponsored groups of 20 Rotaractors. Now, over 350 Rotaractors have been brought into RAGFP.

Much support has been offered to clubs with many speaking engagements.

Reem Ghunaim, RAGFP's Executive Director, has been holding "Together for Peace" talks with a varied and distinguished list of guests.

What about the future? RAGFP exists to conduct its mission to 'engage, educate and empower' Rotarians and others in the area of peace.

We may not have all of the answers, or all the resources, but we know where to get them and how we can connect. ●

| info |

For more information visit:
rotaryactiongroupforpeace.org

The power of waging Positive Peace

Rotary International Trustee chair, K.R. Ravindran, reflects on the meaning of peace at this special time of the year.

IN late 1914, Europe was divided by hundreds of miles of trenches. British and French forces on one side were within shouting distance of German troops on the other. The Pope made a plea for a Christmas truce, but the shooting continued.

Then, on Christmas Eve, soldiers from behind British lines heard an unexpected sound — not gunfire, but singing.

Next, they heard a single voice shout out, "English soldier, merry Christmas!" followed by "English soldier, come out to join us!"

Both sides cautiously emerged over the parapet into the no man's land between the trenches. Before long, the soldiers realised that it was a real truce.

They fraternised, singing Christmas carols, exchanging souvenirs and whisky, and even taking up a friendly soccer match.

The ceasefire continued only two days before the troops returned to their trenches, resuming bloodshed for nearly four long years.

But the story of the Christmas truce reminds us that peace is possible, if we choose to accept it.

If peace can last a few days, could it not also last months or years? And how do we prevent conflict in the first place?

In his Nobel Peace Prize lecture in 1964, American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. said: "We must concentrate not merely on the negative expulsion of war, but on the positive affirmation of peace."

With Positive Peace, our society's structures, policies, and everyday attitudes and actions promote justice at all levels, sustaining a peaceful coexistence.

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A Christmas Day truce was agreed in WW1

**"THEY FRATERNISED,
SINGING CHRISTMAS
CAROLS, EXCHANGING
SOUVENIRS AND WHISKY,
AND EVEN TAKING UP A
FRIENDLY SOCCER MATCH."**

and peace we have heard on the streets in protests from Minneapolis to Paris this year.

Positive Peace, studied at our Rotary Peace Centres around the world, is not just an academic idea for the Rotary Peace Fellows.

Through Rotary's partnership with the Institute for Economics and Peace, the Rotary Positive Peace Academy offers free training to every Rotary member on

how to wage Positive Peace in every project we do at the grassroots level, including Foundation grants.

Positive Peace resonates at all levels of The Rotary Foundation.

Our literacy projects help children gain equal access to literacy, so opposing sides on an issue can understand each other better.

Through our Foundation grants that provide clean water, communities gain stability, as more children stay in school rather than fetching water for hours on end.

Our role as civil society leaders who wage Positive Peace will continue to expand, not only through partnerships and more grants, but also through our hearts, minds, and hands as we offer our gifts to make the world a better place. ●

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Keep your distance

Rotary is supporting the 'distance aware' badges which are now being worn by people across Great Britain & Ireland.

DAVE KING |

THIS was the simplest of ideas, which was hatched earlier this summer by the unlikelyst of combinations – a Baroness from the House of Lords and a doctor at a South Wales hospital.

Almost half a million COVID-19 'distance aware' badges have been produced, being worn as a polite prompt to promote social distancing.

And now, led by Rotarians in South Wales the initiative is being supported by Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland.

Last March, social shielding came into force to protect the most vulnerable. Dr Helen Iff, a Bevan Exemplar, and a core anaesthetic trainee with the Cwm Morgannwg University Health Board in Merthyr Tydfil, was one of those social distancing.

She realised the need for a polite prompt to others to maintain a respectful distance as lockdown started to ease.

Working with Baroness Finlay, her idea for a 'Distance Aware' symbol, showing a protective shield, was put together. With multi-coloured designs, the badge is now being rolled out across Wales and other parts of the UK, and it has been endorsed by both the Welsh and UK governments.

"It is something Baroness Finlay and I are both very proud of," said Helen.

"It is going to be one of these things which comes in peaks as people go out a little more.

"This is about politely prompting people. It is not saying 'you have to do this', or 'you have to do that'. It is a polite reminder which we felt that was important."

Rotary has got on board to provide Rotary-branded badges. Maggie Hughes, Secretary of Cardiff Breakfast Rotary, and Public Image Team Lead for South Wales, said the idea has been well received across the country.



She said: "My own club has distributed badges to our own members and their families who require them, especially if they were shielding and particularly friends who have been undergoing chemotherapy and other treatments.

"One Interact club has asked for a supply to be distributed to families and teachers.

"We have supplied them to a special needs school, a golf club, our local church, and to staff at a Salvation Army group which has residential bedsit facilities for young people who have either been thrown out of their homes or rescued from modern slavery."

Helen, 28, said that having Rotary's support was crucial because of the organisation's connection at so many levels. She pointed out how the badge could be used in the same way as how the Rotary-supported dementia cafés are run.

"If a business wants to encourage people to come back into their space, they can say we are a distance aware organisation. It is a positive message.

"All this negative messaging around

social distancing, and a lack of social distancing, is a really scary thing for the public.

"Giving a really positive message about social distancing will encourage people back into those spaces again."

More than 200 organisations and businesses have got involved in the scheme, each funding their own badges. Helen admitted she was amazed how quickly it had gathered pace.

"The people funding it are the people who believe in it and they believe it is going to have benefit," she added.

"The people using it are the people seeing the benefit.

"If it makes one person able to go outside and able to not be isolated, it is worth it. And if it keeps one person out of intensive care, it will have paid for itself. ●

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Rotary connects the world

They may be separated by the Atlantic Ocean, some 3,500 miles apart, but Rotary is bringing together clubs in Southampton, England, and Southampton, Canada thanks to a legacy stretching back to the Second World War.

| DAVE KING |



EIGHTY years ago, Southampton came under a rain of fire as the Luftwaffe tried to bomb the country into submission. The docks, and the nearby Supermarine factory in Woolston where the Spitfires were built, were the clear targets.

This was the Second World War in 1940, and with the south coast port in easy reach of the German airfields in France, Southampton became a strategic bombing target.

During the war, around 2,300 bombs and 470 tonnes of high explosives were dropped on the city, damaging or destroying 45,000 buildings.

A daylight raid on November 6th, 1940, targeted Southampton's Civic Centre. Hermann Goering, the head of the Luftwaffe, remarked how, from the air, the Civic Centre appeared like "a piece of cake", and he was going to "cut himself a slice".

During the raid, the building was hit with a powerful 500lb bomb, which penetrated the lower floors of the art gallery killing 35 people, including 14 children, who were having an art lesson in the basement.

Of the 57 air raids to batter the city, by far the worst was in late November 1940 when 77 people were killed and more than

300 injured. The firestorm was so fierce that the glow of burning Southampton could be seen as far away as Cherbourg on France's northern coast.

Three and a half thousand miles away from Southampton, Hampshire, across the Atlantic Ocean, lies the Canadian town of Southampton, Ontario.

Nestling on the shores of Lake Huron – a three-hour drive from Toronto, and

rumoured to have some of the best sunsets in the world.

As a Dominion of the British Empire, Canada entered the Second World War on September 10th, 1939, and over the next six years, some 1.1 million Canadians served with the Allies, with approximately 42,000 killed and another 55,000 were wounded.

In 1940, the Canadian town of



Southampton Civic Centre



Southampton felt a close affinity with their UK cousins, prompting the Rotary Club of Southampton Ontario to send the Southampton Rotary Club in the UK £200 to help residents deal with the damage from the bombings.

Today, that sum would be worth £13,000, a lot of money for the Canadian club with 15 members which had only been founded in 1938.

It's a story which has been picked up by Susan Macdonald, a member of Rotary Southampton, Ontario, a 45-strong community club.

Husband Colin is a member of Paisley Rotary, 20 minutes south of Southampton, Ontario, and has family living just on the outskirts of Southampton, Hampshire, which prompted a visit to the south coast.

"I mentioned to our President that we were planning to visit the Southampton Rotary Club in the UK, and she mentioned this link," explained Susan.

"I found out about this story and how, in 1955, to celebrate Rotary International's golden jubilee, the Southampton UK club made a recording thanking the Southampton Ontario Club for their support during the war years.

"The recording expressed how they enjoyed hosting the Canadian Armed Servicemen from Southampton, Ontario,

who would attend Rotary meetings if they were on leave in the area.

"I went through our archives and I managed to hear a copy of the recording, and also found a newspaper clipping of a story published in the *Southampton Daily Echo* from February 26th, 1955, with a half-page write-up of the Southampton Rotary Club's golden jubilee dinner, where it mentions the funds the Southampton Ontario Rotarians sent to the UK club."

When Susan and Colin visited Southampton Rotary Club, they told the story and played the 64-year-old recording. "It was interesting how some of the Rotarians recognised some of the people in the recording, which I thought was really special," she added.

"Rotary connected us because of war in 1940, Rotary connected us again in 1955 and Rotary connects us today in

"EIGHTY YEARS AGO, SOUTHAMPTON CAME UNDER A RAIN OF FIRE AS THE LUFTWAFFE TRIED TO BOMB THE COUNTRY INTO SUBMISSION. THE DOCKS, AND THE NEARBY SUPERMARINE FACTORY IN WOOLSTON WHERE THE SPITFIRES WERE BUILT, WERE THE CLEAR TARGETS."

2020, I'd like the relationship that started in war to move forward in peace."

The International Service committees of the two clubs are exploring options for fostering peace.

They are also looking at the United Nations' sponsored Peace Pole project as a platform to bring the two clubs closer – there are a quarter of a million peace poles around the world, at least one in every country bearing the message: 'May peace prevail on earth'.

"I do believe in last year's theme that "Rotary Connects the World", which is why I am so impassioned about this.

"When we do projects together, we can change the world." ●



| TOM GRIFFIN |

Rotary President of Great Britain & Ireland

Why can't it be Christmas every day?

NOW when I ask this question, I'm not suggesting a revolutionary change to the Christian calendar, nor am I proposing that our streets should permanently be decorated and resound to brass bands playing Christmas Carols.

No, Christmas is a special time – particularly for young children, agog to learn what Santa will bring; truly it comes but once a year.

What I am referring to is the description of Christmas as the “season of peace, goodwill to all men”. Why just Christmas?

Someone said to me recently that peace is “in Rotary’s DNA”.

He wasn't just referring to Rotary's honourable and significant record in the founding of the United Nations 75 years ago; nor was he referring solely to our Peace Scholarship programme.

In truth, so much of what Rotary does promotes peace.

How can a community; a society; a nation be at peace if it is locked in grinding poverty; if it lacks access to the basic essentials of life, such as clean water; if it lacks access to adequate educational or medical facilities?

Every time we undertake a humanitarian project, we are in some small way promoting peace somewhere across the globe.

Of course, the peace scholars' programme is an important vehicle through which we can promote peace; alumni of that programme are every day engaged to that end, working for

supranational bodies, governments, or non-governmental organisations.

I don't think that, generally, we recognise the contribution Rotary has made to peace and conflict resolution in this way.

But often Rotarians say to me, “but what can we do to promote peace; for example, we can't stop fighting in Syria?”

Actually, there's quite a lot every Rotarian can do – and not only through humanitarian projects; and not only through donating to The Rotary Foundation. There is conflict in our own communities, and we as Rotarians can play our part in resolving it.

There is bullying in schools and colleges – and, disquietingly, modern connectivity offers more ways for bullies to cause distress and harm, through cyber-bullying.

Rotarians can work with educational establishments to support programmes and initiatives to counter bullying, and the consequences of it for victims.

And the last edition of *Rotary* magazine told the story of how Rotarians in Tavistock are exercising leadership in their community to find a fair, balanced and inclusive solution to potential conflict over the statue of Sir Francis Drake in their town. That's the kind of leadership which Rotary can offer.

So, my Christmas-time message to you is: make every day the season of peace and goodwill to all”. ●



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A LUCKY ESCAPE

BY PUSHP VAID

On November 6th, 1986, Pushp Vaid was at the controls of a Chinook helicopter which crashed into the sea off the Shetland Islands. It was the worst ever civilian helicopter crash, killing 45 of the 47 people on board.

"THE WHOLE HELICOPTER WAS FALLING BACKWARDS TOWARDS THE SEA. THE COCKPIT, WHICH HAD TIPPED OVER AND WAS STILL ATTACHED TO THE CABIN AT THE FLOOR, SEEMED TO BE GOING STRAIGHT TOWARDS THE SEA."

It was 11.32 hours on November 6th, 1986, and I was the captain of the Chinook helicopter which crashed just two miles short of its destination, Sumburgh Airport in the Shetland Islands.

One passenger and I survived the crash. How or why we survived is a mystery. There is absolutely no explanation, just pure luck!

For a long time after the accident, I used to ask myself 'Why were the other passengers not lucky?' I guess nobody can answer that question.

When the helicopter wreckage was retrieved from the sea, the accident investigating inspector met me and wondered how I could have possibly survived and come out of it with very minor injuries.

I joined British Airways Helicopters in 1975 after leaving the Indian Air Force. In 1982 I converted on to Chinooks, the Boeing Vertol BV234, the biggest civilian helicopter in the world. By 1986, I had already flown over 2,500 hours on the Chinooks and loved every minute of it.

I had taken G-BWFC, Chinook helicopter, to Sumburgh for the week on Monday 3rd of November 1986.

We had two sets of crews flying to the Brent oil and gas fields in the East Shetland Basin, just over 100 nautical miles north-east of Sumburgh Airport.

First Officer Neville Nixon, my co-pilot, who was 43, had left Bristow Helicopters a few years earlier and given up flying to help his wife, Pauline, set up a chemist shop in York.

After three years, the shop was doing very well and he found that Pauline could



Pushp Vaid

manage the shop by herself. He loved flying and decided to come back to flying.

He joined British Airways Helicopters in the summer of 1986. Since Neville hadn't flown for nearly three years, he was very keen to fly as much as possible.

On November 6th, he was rostered to do the afternoon shift. Since morning shift did two flights and the afternoon shift did only one, Neville had swapped his shift with First Officer Mike Stanley. Sadly for him, this shift change cost him his life.

Thursday, November 6th 1986, was a beautiful day at Sumburgh Airport. The wind was light and it didn't feel cold.

I expected good flying conditions. Neville was already planning for our flight by the time I arrived that morning.

After finishing the planning, he rang up his home. That was the last time he spoke to his wife.

Mike Walton, our cabin attendant, arrived about 7.30am and went to do his checks on the helicopter. Checks included making sure that cabin was clean and all the safety equipment was on board.

Our original plan was to land at

Brent Charlie and Brent Delta – one of four platforms extracting oil and gas in the North Sea. At the last minute we were given a load to drop at Brent Alpha also. This added about ten minutes to our trip.

These ten minutes became very important when we were returning to base. We crashed just two miles and two minutes short of our destination.

Destiny? Yes.

The flight was uneventful and after landing at Brent Alpha, Charlie and Delta we set course back to Sumburgh at 10.43. We had a full complement of 44 passengers and three crew on board.

Neville was the handling pilot now, and I was doing all the paper work, plus the radio calls.

We climbed to 2,500 feet on our route back to Sumburgh. We flew in and out of clouds. The weather was very nice and we had a very pleasant flight. We talked about all sorts of things to pass the time. Neville told me about his brother who had been to India and had loved it there. All this time, our bevel ring gear in the front gear box was breaking up and we had no way of knowing of the looming disaster. ▶

| Fact file |

PUSHP VAID

Pushp Vaid is a Rotarian, and a member of Westhill & District Rotary in Aberdeenshire.

Now retired, and aged 78, he enjoys yoga and meditation, and has attended a number of courses organised by the Isha Foundation.



The retrieved Chinook helicopter

I discovered this later when I listened to the cockpit voice recorder at the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board's workshop. I could hear the noise of the gear break up for the entire 30 minutes of the tape.

About 3.5 nautical miles from the runway, we started hearing a whining noise which seemed to be getting louder.

The noise did not sound dangerous.

By now, we were only two minutes from landing, flying about 300 feet above the sea, and our speed was reducing below 100 knots.

I informed the control tower at Sumburgh that 'Foxtrot Charlie' was on finals and we were cleared to land.

After informing us that the passengers were all ready for landing, our cabin attendant had opened the cabin door and closed it behind him. I don't think he had a chance to sit down and strap himself.

A fraction of a second after he closed the door, at 11.32 to be exact, we heard a very loud bang. Suddenly the helicopter pitched up and was pointing vertically up and I could see the sky ahead of me. I had no time to give a May Day call.

We were falling backwards towards the North Sea. The helicopter, which had been travelling at about 100 knots, came to a sudden stop and was now pointing vertically up. Sadly, the whiplash effect killed at least half of the passengers.

My co-pilot probably died at that moment. As the handling pilot, he was sitting without his back touching the backrest, with the result that the whiplash

effect broke his neck. As the non-handling pilot, I had my back resting at the backrest. The whiplash effect on me was not as great, though thinking about it now, I start feeling the pain in my back.

I found out later that the whining noise was the front gear breaking up.

It was then a matter of 20 to 30 seconds before the two counter rotating rotor blades hit each other - and that was the loud bang we heard.

The rear rotor blades were shaking so much that they, along with the gearbox, weighing more than a ton, parted company from the helicopter and splashed in the water about one nautical mile away from us.

One gentleman standing about five miles away on top of a hill, near Sumburgh Airport, saw our helicopter falling towards the sea and he actually pointed out to the salvage team where to look for the rear rotor blades.

No, he didn't have a video camera!

Now there was no rear rotor. Nothing was holding the back end of the helicopter up. So the back fell and the nose was pointing up to the sky.

Sitting in the cockpit I could see the sky straight in front of me. I got the feeling we were going straight up. Instinctively I grabbed the cyclic control and pushed it all the way forward to level the helicopter. It appeared I had done an outside loop.

I felt negative G force when the helicopter seemed to move from pointing vertically up to vertically down. Now

I could see the sea in front of me. It appeared the helicopter was now rushing nose-down, vertically towards the sea.

When I pushed the cyclic stick all the way forward, the front rotor blades, which were still responding to the controls, flipped the cockpit section of the helicopter over. This probably saved the two of us who did survive.

The whole helicopter was falling backwards towards the sea. The cockpit, which had tipped over and was still attached to the cabin at the floor, seemed to be going straight towards the sea. That also meant that there was a huge hole at the top of the cabin, where the cockpit had been. This is the hole which Eric Morrans, the other survivor, was thrown out of when he was unconscious under water.

While we were falling, I was aware that everything around me was breaking up. I was thinking double time to see if there was anything I could do to save the helicopter and all of us in it. It felt as if I was in a rollercoaster ride, wishfully thinking that at the bottom, the helicopter would roll out and we would land on the water and everybody would come out.

Strange, not for a moment did I think that anybody was going to die!

The front rotor blade had chopped off the part of windscreen in front of the co-pilot. Broken bits from the windscreen were hitting me on the face. The left side of my face was all cut up and my nose was broken. Amazingly nothing hit my eye.

When we hit the water, the rear end of

"WHEN THE HELICOPTER WRECKAGE WAS RETRIEVED FROM THE SEA, THE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATING INSPECTOR MET ME AND WONDERED **HOW I COULD HAVE POSSIBLY SURVIVED AND COME OUT OF IT WITH VERY MINOR INJURIES.**"

the helicopter took all the impact. The rest of the passengers and our cabin attendant died on impact. No-one drowned.

The North Sea is pretty cold. The water temperature that day must have been around seven or eight degrees centigrade.

The cockpit, with me still in it, seemed to keep going down and down and down in the water. It must have gone down at least 30 feet below the surface, before it stopped moving.

I could see the sunlight and I knew which way I had to swim.

However, when I left the seat and started to move I discovered that I was going the wrong way. It was getting darker.

I turned around and headed towards the sunlight. I passed through the emergency window, which had blown away on impact and swam towards the surface.

Later I discovered that I had not even unbuckled my belt. When the cockpit was salvaged, we discovered that one strap had broken, but the other three were still in locked position. I have no idea how I came out of those straps.

It was a beautiful sunshine, which met me when I reached the surface. I was feeling very cold and was breathing very fast and hard. I saw what looked like a big bowl. I think it was part of the fuel tank cover. I managed to climb into it. But two seconds later a small wave tipped me over and I was back in the water.

I wasn't worried; in the back of my mind I knew the rescue helicopter would

be overhead in a few minutes. I was just waiting for them to come and pick me up.

Then a body popped up next to me and then another and another.

There must have been at least seven bodies floating close to me. They were not moving or doing anything.

That is the first time it occurred to me that perhaps some people were dead.

Then there was a lot of hydraulic fluid and broken pieces of the helicopter that were floating around in the sea near me.

I could see broken pieces everywhere.

As soon as I saw the coastguard helicopter, I waved. The helicopter hovered over me, the winchman came down, put a strap around me and winched me up.

Only one passenger, 20-year-old Eric Morrans, survived the crash. He was sitting in the front row of seats, which faces backwards.

He was facing the 42 passengers and he saw the fear of death in their faces when the helicopter was plunging vertically backwards into the sea.

Eric was just plain lucky like me. Instinctively, he zipped up his survival suit when he heard the big bang. There were a lot of broken pieces flying around in the cabin and he was rendered unconscious.

When the helicopter plunged into the water, Eric went with it. However, when he was about 30 feet under water, his survival suit, which was full of air, acted like a football under water, and threw him out through the hole behind him and towards the surface.

A wave crashed over Eric's face and woke him up and luckily, as his eyes opened, one dinghy inflated just next to him.

Eric heard the helicopter overhead and saw me being winched up. He was worried he might be left behind and started waving frantically.

He was winched up after me.

We were now both aboard the coastguard helicopter. When we arrived at the hospital, my body temperature was around 33-degree centigrade. They cut open all my clothes and wrapped me up in a tin foil space blanket to warm me up. My eyes were still closed. Suddenly I heard the doctor talking to me in Hindi, my native language. Then I knew I was still alive.

They don't speak Hindi in heaven, do they? Or maybe they do!

The mechanical failure that caused the gearbox break was a one in a million chance.

That it resulted in so many fatalities was a terrible orchestration of events.

Friends advised me not to go back to flying. After all, the company would pension me off comfortably. But I knew money wouldn't fill the hours.

Flying was all I had ever wanted to do.

By February, I was ready to fly again.

The company insisted on psychiatric checks, however, and I resumed flying in April. I was 45 when the accident happened, and flew for another 20 years before retiring. ●



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HOLGER KNAACK

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



AS I look back on 2020, I reflect on how our lives have changed. The global COVID-19 pandemic brought pain and loss to many of us. And for almost all of us, our daily lives, family time, and work also changed this year.

But we've made it to the end of this difficult year, not on our own but by reaching out to one another, as we always do in Rotary. With each passing year, I become prouder of our organisation.

I will choose to remember 2020 as a year of great change and strength for us; Rotary didn't stop, despite the pandemic. We removed obstacles, found new ways to connect, and embraced new approaches to service, such as online projects and virtual fundraising. I have invited two Rotarians to share their stories about how Rotary grew stronger this year.

When the pandemic shut everything down, our emerging e-club was already providing digital service, including internationally. Fourteen U.S. women and I, members of multiple Rotary clubs, were using WhatsApp to mentor women entrepreneurs in rural Costa Rica, helping them to grow their ecotourism business, RETUS Tours [the subject of the magazine's May cover story, "Nature & Nurture"]. The project has grown, with 30 Rotarians now providing consulting and help with the RETUS website and social media. Most importantly, we continue building relationships and empowering these women to transform their own lives, and we are doing it online. I've even helped one of the women, Rosa, prepare a presentation in English for an online international conference. While our engagement with the Costa Rican women still requires some hands-on activity, the most transformative impacts haven't had to be in person.

Liza Larson,
Rotary E-Club Engage & Rotary Club of Plano East, Texas

I was president of my club when COVID-19 hit, and many members didn't yet have Zoom. Only 10 of our 53 members participated in the first Zoom meeting during the pandemic. I thought that reaching out and getting guest speakers from around the world to engage our members would help. Many Rotary leaders, a Rotary Peace Fellow, and even RI President Holger Knaack visited virtually and spoke to our club. Meeting attendance improved, while we reduced running costs by cutting out meals. Some members who worked outside our city and had missed our meetings even rejoined

"The global COVID-19 pandemic brought pain and loss to many of us. And for almost all of us, our daily lives, family time, and work also changed this year."

us. Registering our online meetings on My Rotary enhanced contacts with clubs across the world, and the joint meeting addressed by Holger attracted more than 300 visitors. We also raised more funds as members and visitors contributed to our projects. To continue being flexible for all, we are now offering hybrid meetings. For me, 2020 has been the best year in Rotary as I've made many new friends.

Blessing Michael,
Rotary Club of Port Harcourt North, Nigeria

These stories should give us all reasons to be optimistic about Rotary in the year ahead. We are not just surviving; we are gaining strength. We are discovering how resilient our organisation truly is. We are seeing for ourselves how Rotary Opens Opportunities — even during pandemics — to grow, connect, and engage our members and the communities we serve.

From our home in Ratzeburg to yours, Susanne and I would like to bid you and your family the warmest of season's greetings. We can't wait to see the good things that 2021 will bring. ●

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K.R. Ravindran
Trustee Chair 2020/21

ON a foggy Christmas Eve in Victorian London, the old miser sits at his desk. Bitter and disillusioned with the world, Ebenezer Scrooge has only one interest: his bottom line.

He declines his nephew's invitation to Christmas dinner, refuses to support the poor and deprived, and reluctantly grants his underpaid clerk, Bob Cratchit, time off for Christmas Day.

After he arrives home, strange things begin to happen. Jacob Marley, his deceased business partner, appears as a ghost tethered to a chain, telling Scrooge to change his self-centered ways, lest he meet the same fate.

That is the premise of A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens' classic tale of a man's transformation from hardened recluse to generous humanitarian. To me, it offers valuable lessons for all, regardless of belief or time of year.

In one of my favorite passages, a spirit magically transports Scrooge to the Cratchit household.

There, he sees his clerk from a new vantage point, observing a humble but heartfelt holiday gathering.

Scrooge then understands that gifts like friendship, family, and gratitude can't be recorded into any ledger.

By the end of the story, Scrooge has learned the most important lesson of all: that as long as we are still alive, it's not too late to devote ourselves to serving humankind.

The year-end holidays are upon us. It is a time of giving and sharing, but it is not limited to our loved ones.

It is also for the people we have never met and will never see, for those who are not so fortunate as we and could use a helping hand.

The miracle of giving that Scrooge discovered on Christmas Eve is exactly what The Rotary Foundation does 365 days a year.

Our Foundation serves simultaneously as charity and performer in the field; Rotarians are on the ground, volunteering their skills and business expertise in support of grants that are funded by you.

In this way, we carry out some of Rotary's most important work, such as protecting mothers and their babies and helping communities recover from the shocks of COVID-19.

Please remember The Rotary Foundation during this season of generosity.

Remember that your gifts to the Foundation amplify our work in all areas of focus.

They are perpetuated, not just today but long after we are gone. And the Foundation will continue to work its miracles in service to others tomorrow as long as we keep supporting it today.

On behalf of The Rotary Foundation Trustees, I thank you for sending your generous contribution before December 31st. ●



Tony Black
RI Director 2019/21

WE will soon be in a new calendar year – 2021 – and all the challenges that may bring. No Christmas, Hogmanay or New Year and for many not even a chance to see family or friends, as has been the case with all other festivals. Can we even plan for the future till a vaccine becomes available?

With six months of our Rotary year to go, Rotarians are already planning for the future. The Rotary International Board of Directors is taking action to make Rotary more welcoming and diverse.

We have formed a task force to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion to help clubs attract new members regardless of gender, race, religion, age, or other factors. This will help us speed up the change we all want and need.

The selection of Jennifer E. Jones as Rotary President for 2022-23, the first woman to lead our organisation, is another step in this direction. I look forward to a future where Rotary could have a massive input into many aspects of our lives whether that be locally or internationally.

Maybe environmental projects, whether that be planting trees, decreasing plastic usage and pollution. Maybe getting involved in helping young people understand/learn about and grow fruit/vegetables/flowers.

We just need to free our minds and find something in which we as individuals or as clubs/districts can get involved.

Polio vaccination programmes around the world are starting to build back up and if we get our momentum up to speed we still have the chance to free the world of the scourge of polio, but we cannot do this without the funds that Rotarians/clubs/districts contribute on a yearly basis.

How are you all coping with virtual meetings? I find they can be tiring especially if I have too many in a week or if they take far too long – one recently was 5 ½ hours.

We just need to learn how to adapt. Because of my background as a veterinary surgeon in general practice, I believed that the COVID-19 epidemic would not be over by Christmas, but would only happen when a vaccine becomes available, hopefully by the summer of 2021.

So, I planned my year accordingly. Spring and summer were spent between gardening - and Zoom meetings and occasionally reading novels.

For the next four to six weeks I will tackle all the put-off jobs in the house - and Zoom meetings. At least my carbon footprint will have been greatly reduced.

The strange part is that I am not missing the travelling, eating out or even going to the bar and sometimes wonder if I even want to go back to that. ●

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James Innes is an entrepreneur, the author of several best-selling careers help books, and founder of the James Innes Group. A member of Rotary London, he writes candidly about his struggles with depression.

JAMES INNES

ENTREPRENEUR, AUTHOR AND FOUNDER OF THE JAMES INNES GROUP

REALLY, James. You? You're the last person I can imagine suffering from depression! You're always so fun, so lively, so positive about everything. I just don't understand how you could be depressive."

I've heard words to this effect quite a few times in my life. I don't really mind. I suppose I should take it as a compliment.

I normally just smile sweetly. But, inside, I'm saying to myself, "No. No, you don't understand, do you?"

And why should they? If you don't suffer from depression yourself or know anyone who does then, indeed, why should you understand?

The chances are, though, you almost certainly know someone who suffers from depression. The catch is that not everyone talks about it.

I have never hidden my depression; I've never had a problem with disclosing it or discussing it.

But I've never shouted it from the rooftops either; this article is definitely a 'first' for me.

Recently, I spoke at an event where I was fortunate enough to receive a health donation to a personal choice of charity.

I chose The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust, a charity best described by quoting the opening line from its website: "Our vision is of a world where people understand and talk openly about depression."

When it came to that item, I said I'd like to say a few words: "Many, if not indeed most, of you know that I suffer from depression.

Always have done – and, doubtless, always will. Depression is an illness which, well, it can be very unpleasant sometimes.

Sometimes unbearable. And it drives some people to take their own lives..."

I was stunned by how many people came up to me afterwards to comment on this relatively pretty small part of the meeting. The most touching example was: "James, I just wanted to thank you for what you said. You don't know this, obviously, but I too suffer from depression.

I think you must be only the fourth person

ROBIN WILLIAMS ONCE SAID: "ALL IT TAKES IS A BEAUTIFUL FAKE SMILE TO HIDE AN INJURED SOUL AND THEY WILL NEVER NOTICE HOW BROKEN YOU REALLY ARE."

in the world I have told."

This confession alone was reason enough for me to want to write about this important subject in Rotary magazine.

Someone else wrote to me afterwards saying: "I am so very sorry that you have been bitten by 'the black dog'. I have bitter memories and experience of it and have come out the other side none the worse, seemingly, although it felt overwhelming at the time."

Depression is nothing to be ashamed of. However, whilst we have come a long way since I was first diagnosed 25 years ago, there is still considerable stigma.

So many people choose to keep it to themselves to avoid any possible negative reaction from others. They just don't want to take the risk – and I really can't blame them.

Robin Williams once said: "All it takes is a beautiful fake smile to hide an injured soul and they will never notice how broken you really are." Indeed, it is all too easy to hide it – and yet it's so counterproductive.

It is a cliché, but a problem shared can really be a problem halved. Recent studies have shown how sociability can be immensely helpful for people experiencing depression.

I knew I was a Rotarian for a reason!

I don't want to limit this piece to talking about depression alone. I have plenty of friends who have mental health problems much more interesting than common-or-garden depression – or even some of the more exotic forms of depression!

The point I am trying hard to make is that whilst mental health problems are often invisible to others, they are very real to those who are suffering from them.

My own mental health problems are something I battle with on a daily basis – and those who find me "so fun, so lively, so positive" don't realise that this is quite simply my primary coping mechanism.

Every day it's an effort to get out of bed and face the world.

It's only by sometimes literally slapping myself round the face in the morning and forcing myself to conjure up some positive energy out of nowhere, that I am at all able to function.

I can but encourage others to speak up and share their issues of mental health. I can understand your apprehension, but I can assure you it's worth it.

It wasn't easy for me to stand up and speak from the heart about it – but every reaction I had was a positive one.

I most definitely don't think myself lucky to suffer from depression – but I do think myself lucky to be so well supported by so many good people. ●



Covid clubs are no fluke

As many Rotary clubs meet online to keep going during COVID-19, remarkably the pandemic has seen the start of a number of new clubs.

| DAVE KING |

It is definitely no fluke! At a time when several Rotary clubs have not met since last March, with some inevitably folding, the pandemic has also heralded the birth of new clubs.

Northwich Weaver Valley Rotary in Cheshire, and Reading Thames Rotary in Berkshire are two clubs to charter during the coronavirus shutdown.

The Cheshire club has 22 members, and it chartered online using Zoom in the presence of Rotary President for Great Britain & Ireland, Tom Griffin, and District Governor, David Hartley.

The club was almost ready to charter in March, then lockdown struck, but this didn't deter this determined group led by President David Buxton.

They used Zoom meetings for maximum impact with open community meetings, as well as quizzes and wine tasting evenings and weekly club sessions.

Northwich Weaver Valley has carried on helping its community, in particular the homeless. Rotarian Mark Babbington ran the Cheshire Golden Ring canal route – 97 miles in 24 hours – to raise money for Cheshire Young Carers.

This club was originally formed by contacting and inviting community and business leaders. They, in turn, used their friendship groups using WhatsApp and other mobile apps to recruit.

The new club consists of 12 men and 10 women, aged from 30 to the mid-60's.

Mike Constable, the District Membership Leader, said that Weaver Valley is modelled on their successful sister club, Wych-Malbank (Nantwich).

He said: "Already, all three clubs in Northwich have agreed an exciting collaborative agreement which presents one Rotary to the community.

"They are pooling resources, experience and the energy of the new club to refresh Rotary in Northwich and ensure a Rotary presence for the future."



Kate Hodges, District 1090 Membership Chair

"CREATING A BRAND NEW CLUB THESE DAYS, WITH COMPLETELY NEW ROTARIANS, IS QUITE EXCEPTIONAL."

In Berkshire, the Reading Thames club came together in February just before lockdown, with a couple of exploratory meetings to gauge interest.

"The majority of the members are new to Rotary, with only a few having met at the first real meeting," explained Kate Hodges, Membership Chair for District 1090 - Rotary in the Thames Valley.

"Yet they have overcome lockdown, formed a new club, raised money for the NHS and supported the community, all within a few months. This is the true spirit of Rotary."

With President Margaret Gardner at the helm, Reading Thames Rotary

chartered online in September, for an event which was attended by District Governor for 1090, Marius Hopley.

The 27-strong Reading Thames club has been active with supporting a number of local projects including the Woodley Foodbank, and the Yeldall Manor residential rehabilitation centre which, for nearly 40 years, has been helping men to overcome serious drug or alcohol addictions, and return to live new lives – drug, alcohol and crime-free.

They have also joined forces with other Reading Rotary clubs to support supermarket collections in aid of Thames Valley Air Ambulance, collecting personal protective equipment for health workers during COVID-19, and supporting the Royal Berkshire Hospital appeal.

Assistant Governor, Tony Eldridge, added: "The creation of new, flexible format low cost clubs, and particularly the introduction of enthusiastic volunteers to Rotary, is likely to be the lifeblood which we need.

"Creating a brand new club these days, with completely new Rotarians, is quite exceptional."

As a District, Rotary in the Thames Valley is also celebrating two Rotaract clubs being set up during Covid; a 30-strong club partnered by Elthorne-Hillingdon Rotary at Brunel University in West London, and one sponsored by Thatcham & District Rotary in Berkshire.

The Thatcham Rotaractors are the product of a previously very successful Interact club based at Kennet School.

Chas Cairns, who set up the Interact club, said that too many Interactors were lost to Rotary, once they left school.

"A club, such as the one we have set up, is our club's legacy to our community," he said.

"Youth is not a side issue in Rotary - it is the future of Rotary." ●



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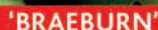
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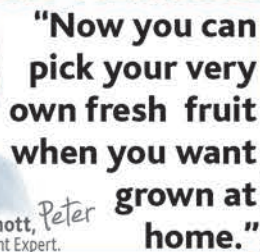
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Letter to the editor

History refreshed

THE inclusion of a semi-political article covering 'Black Lives Matter' is, in my opinion, unwarranted and not in the general ethos of Rotary.

I do not consider myself a racist having spent most of my life living abroad and have played the wonderful equalising game of cricket with and against all creeds and colours. During my various working stations, I have also worked with people from most nations and devotions.

The editor should perhaps, consider the history, not only of Great Britain, but

the world, and refresh his concept regarding the world in general before England in particular with regard to slavery.

Perhaps he has forgotten about the forays made by the population of the African North Coast into our South West Peninsular, the Southern Welsh Coast and the Southern Coast of Ireland for the purpose of supporting its own slavery commerce.

Alan Baguley
Telford Centre Rotary

Not the day to judge them

I WAS appalled to open my copy of this month's magazine (October 2020) to find a half page advert for Black Lives Matter.

Black Lives Matter is a Marxist organisation with the avowed aim of stopping capitalism, defunding the police and 'interrupting the Western nuclear family'. It also has a programme of attacking statues of people with whom it disagrees.

Surely this is not an organisation that Rotary should be associated with.

We are supposed to be non-political, providing fellowship and doing good to the wider world, not supporting violent political groups.

The article on pages 4, 5 and 6 was even more shocking, a clear attempt to besmirch the name of Sir Francis Drake. BLM has attacked Churchill and called him a racist, and now another of England's great heroes is under attack.

Rotary, along with others, have taken it upon themselves to participate in this and to prepare for schools educational materials on slavery and on Drake himself. As a result, the town of Tavistock was split on whether to retain or remove his statue.

Rotary is promoting a divisive message, it's the last thing we should be doing.

We should also be aware that not all black people support BLM. Rotary should be even-handed. I am considering whether I want to remain a Rotarian.

David Burke
Hook, Hampshire



All lives matter

OF course Black Lives Matter. All lives matter. Equally, Dave King's excellent editorial in October's issue of *Rotary* outlines the very responsible and commendable responses of Rotary clubs in Devon to conflicting local attitudes relating to statues of the late Sir Francis Drake.

Slavery, the subjection of one person to the total domination of another is an absolute abomination, and it is good that young people are concerned by this.

However, it is necessary to take a balanced and properly informed approach to such matter, and I would like to make the following points.

It is not fair to judge what happened 400 years ago through today's eyes. Time does not justify actions, but they do need to be judged in their respective timeset.

Drake, Colston, Rhodes, and many others to whom memorials have been erected were often only middlemen supplying an existing market.

They did not invade African villages and kidnap fit young people and murder any who resisted, and they did not use, and all too often abuse the slaves in their fields. Very often, their profits were used philanthropically. Equally horrible, and totally without the excuse of an historically different outlook, British prisoners of war were enslaved by the Japanese. Jews, gypsies and many other groups were taken into concentration camps by Nazi Germany, and were used as slave labour. All in my lifetime.

Why are people less concerned about these crimes than those occurring hundreds of years ago?

Finally, I try not to see people as being of any particular colour, race or creed – just as good or bad people. I wonder if Black Lives Matter, however well-intentioned, is really doing their cause a disservice by stressing colour difference.

John Sutton
Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Missing the fellowship

THE letters pages of the most recent *Rotary* magazine are peppered with correspondence encouraging Rotarians to embrace IT as a means of adapting to the current circumstances, one even going so far as to imply that virtual meetings, by replacing face-to-face get-togethers, represent the very future of our remarkable organisation.

In my opinion, fellowship is at the heart of Rotary and nothing can ever replace the friendly and good-humoured company that regular Rotary meetings offer its members.

In the light of this I was thrilled when my own club kicked off a series of imaginatively organised dinners at our usual venue which were popular with our members, entirely lawful and complied with the requirements of the hotel that hosts our meetings. Those wishing not to attend in person could do so by Zoom.

Imagine my astonishment therefore when a command was issued from on high by Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland's Governing Council stating that

'until further notice, face-to-face Rotary meetings are not permitted'.

Not unnaturally, my own club's council honoured this instruction and took the decision to cancel the planned dinners.

In the circumstances I respect it for having done so, but nevertheless I do not believe that Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland has the right to issue edicts of this nature and prevent its members from doing things that, if properly organised, are entirely legal.

Does it not realise that by preventing groups of Rotarians from enjoying the company of fellow members it is guilty of driving another nail into the coffin of the whole organisation?

The very future of which, as numerous other letters on the same pages suggest, is already under threat for various other reasons.

David Fletcher
Bedford Castle Rotary

When is a chair not a chair?

I HAVE just finished reading the October/November magazine, and as usual my spirits were lifted by the huge diversity of Rotarians and their ingenuity with service activity, fundraising, publicity, and goodwill.

I was especially impressed with the ways Rotarians have reacted to our new ways of doing business during COVID-19.

We have learned so many ways to carry on and improve what we do. RI President Holger Knaack, and the wonderful Jennifer Jones attended our District Assembly, and Rotary GB&I President Tom Griffin attended a recent meeting of my club.

How often does that happen? What an amazing organisation we belong to.

Amongst all this joy, one particular letter caught my eye. In 'Mind Your Language',

Jackie Gladden from Doncaster Rotary admonishes us for using the word 'chairman', as being old-fashioned, and with an implied sexism. In all walks of life, including Rotary, I have learned, and as I get older now advise others, not to criticise something without suggesting a suitable alternative.

Personally I find 'chair' (a piece of furniture that we sit on), or 'chairperson' political correctness gone mad.

Inner Wheel seems perfectly happy with 'chairman', and clearly accepts there is no implied sexism and it is a word in the English language that everyone understands.

The ballistic missile of my letter is to ask why on earth are we talking about this? Find an acceptable word or keep using this one - I don't care.

Utilise your time and energy on the fun, fellowship, and service of Rotary, not petty linguistics.

Thank you for such an informative and thought-provoking issue.

Simon Kalson
Lindum Lincoln Rotary

A force for community

ROTARY should be concentrating more on a national campaign to raise the public's awareness of Rotary.

We should be showing that we can still be effective whilst this pandemic runs its course. We can still meet and organise events to keep our members entertained and in some cases still hold fund-raising events. We need to blow our own trumpet more and show that we can be and really are a force for the benefit of the community.

Alan Buxton
Rayleigh Mill Rotary

It's not important

THOUSANDS are dying from COVID-19, many clubs are struggling to survive and *Rotary* magazine (October 2020) included pleas to help distressed persons all over the world.

You did however, also kindly find space for a letter where, in 237 words, the writer expressed concern about what we should call the chairperson of a meeting.

It was suggested that many would be put off spending leisure time where the word 'chairman' was used. If that is so, I fear they must be very tender souls and need to either get a life, grow up, or simply try old fashioned Christian tolerance.

Rather than having to 'clean up' (i.e. distort) our language to avoid upsetting those who insist on being offended, we should surely concentrate on those things that are truly important.

Grahame Wiggin
Wednesbury Rotary

Fund-raising has boosted our profile

THE lockdown is not something that will just be switched off. On the contrary it will be relaxed over a period of time making a definitive decision on meetings and fund-raising events very difficult.

For Rotary to attract people who have volunteered during the Covid crisis, each club will need to ensure that its profile in the community is maintained and joining Rotary and attending meetings is something that they can commit to both financially and timewise.

Membership may need to be made more affordable especially taking into account the probability that post lockdown family finances are likely to be strained.

Our fund-raising since lockdown has increased our profile in the community.

Many of our members donated the money they would normally pay for their meals and we have used the money to support the local foodbank and three other local community organisations that have been supporting vulnerable people during this crisis.

This has helped us build strong relationships with these organisations and we have received a lot of local publicity. In addition, many of our members have volunteered themselves for local community organisations - delivering prescriptions, buying and delivering food and taking people to hospital for routine appointments.

The lockdown has brought out the best in Rotary. It forced everyone in Rotary to think differently and think out of the box.

As a result, there have been some amazingly creative ideas. There have been new formats to meetings and many clubs have had higher attendance for on-line meetings than physical meetings.

So, the one big wish for Rotary after lockdown is that we are able to continue to innovate and in this way attract more and younger members to Rotary.

Steve Smith & Michael Britten
North Cotswolds Rotary

No place for BLM in the magazine

WHEN I opened the latest *Rotary* magazine (October) my immediate reaction was, 'Oh not here as well, Black Lives Matter'.

You, along with others, do not appear (I may be wrong) to understand that there is a major distinction between BLM and the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK. The latter appears to have adopted the former without understanding that the former is an established extreme left-wing Marxist, anti-police and rioting organisation. Its logo is a black block with BLM within along the lines of your page 3.

The well-meaning folk in this country supporting the sentiment do not, I hope, in the main agree with the BLM group. But so many, clearly and in my personal experience, have not realised that fact.

I cannot imagine that any Rotarian would support and take part in the destruction of historic statues and desecration of the cenotaph, or join in rioting against the police.

Nadine Pemberton in her article states "It is not the truth to say 'All Lives Matter' until you can say it is the truth that black lives matter". Really? ALL lives includes black and what about other coloured folk?

Surely Rotary must, and does, stand for all lives; black, brown, yellow and white, and any others.

Your editor's letter on the final page goes a great way towards a more balanced comment, but I still regret finding it all in *Rotary* magazine.

David Lamb
Devizes Rotary Club

There's no silver bullet

IT was with a certain amount of heart sinking feeling that I read the letters page of *Rotary* (October 2020) after being uplifted by all the articles that were informative and telling all how Rotary and Rotarians were making a positive difference in the world.

The letters included mainly negative criticism of a lack of public relations, and models of clubs which clearly did not suit the writers' needs to have a good experience.

Too many correspondents seemed to want to have their viewpoint seen as the silver bullet - if only things could be done the way they see it, all would be okay in the world.

My take on it is, first and foremost, I am proud to be a Rotarian as part of a wider team than just me. An

organisation that collectively does far more good than I could as an individual.

I happen to be a member of a club that I don't always agree with and a district that has had challenges. But, like a lot of Rotarians, my Rotary moment is without question the highlight of all Rotary experiences and friendships.

So keep the faith, keep the pride and remember some of the public read the magazine.

They don't want to read the negative, so look after your own club and don't wonder why the retention rate is poor. Be the one who they come to for good advice.

Alistair Mackintosh
Lanark Rotary

"I AM PROUD TO BE A ROTARIAN AS PART OF A WIDER TEAM THAN JUST ME. AN ORGANISATION THAT COLLECTIVELY DOES FAR MORE GOOD THAN I COULD AS AN INDIVIDUAL."

Enable Rotary Radio UK

I WAS fascinated to read the letters section in the October/November edition of *Rotary* magazine, particularly those calling for wider publicity and innovation in the field of Rotary publicity.

Rotary Radio UK will shortly reach the second anniversary of its first broadcast. We will have been available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with our blend of music, Rotary news and adverts for Rotary projects and initiatives.

We also have a library of podcasts, which will inform and entertain listeners and this is constantly expanded.

We have picked up listeners in 126 countries and the listener-base is increasing month by month.

We are an internet-based station and can be accessed via any device that connects to the internet and also the "smart speakers" currently available for in-home and in-car use. We can be found at rotaryradiouk.org or by asking Alexa to "Enable Rotary Radio UK". It's easy!

We set up the station precisely because we were concerned about the need for Rotary to tell its own story without the filter of mainstream media and because we believe radio can reach people outside Rotary who are not normally covered by magazines or websites. To paraphrase the

"mission statement" of another well-known broadcaster, we seek to inform and entertain about Rotary.

Readers may also be interested to learn we are working with a college of further education offering students the opportunity to learn the workings of a radio station, produce music programmes, jingles and short plays.

In this way they will receive a positive view of Rotary and some will stay with us and Rotary for long periods.

If individual Rotarians or clubs have a story to tell or an event to advertise they can get in touch via

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We will make adverts for Rotary events and broadcast them free of charge.

We are constantly innovating and plans for an audio version of *Rotary* magazine, are well advanced.

We exist to raise the profile of Rotary and Rotarians across the country (and beyond) and you can help us with this objective by listening to our output and encouraging family and friends to do the same.

Steve Wood

CEO - Rotary Radio UK

Jones is the name

IN 2005, Carolyn Jones of Alaska in the U.S., became the first-ever female trustee of The Rotary Foundation.

In 2022, Jennifer Jones of Ontario, Canada will become the first ever female President of Rotary International. Both these ladies have made their historical mark on our organisation.

It is my sincere hope that when the book about Rotary's second century of service is written, Jennifer Jones will not be forgotten as was Carolyn Jones when the book about the first 100 years of The Rotary Foundation 'Doing Good in the World' was published.

Carl-Wilhelm Stenhammar

Rotary Club of Göteborg

Use social media to help recruitment

I AM writing in support of John Bonington ('Better PR needed' Letters Oct/Nov 2020).

I agree wholeheartedly with John, that an organisation of the size of Rotary should be engaging professional public relations' consultants to help us recruit new members.

We all acknowledge the high average age of Rotarians, and the need to recruit younger members.

If we are to do that, then I suggest that we engage the social media skills and communications expertise of a modern PR company to reach our target audience.

Neil Whiteside

Cambridge Rotary

Shades of respect

CONGRATULATIONS on a great, informative and progressive article in *Rotary* magazine (October) 'Black Lives Matter: a sign of the times'.

Racism in history has always been with us. I can remember my mother stopping me being with a friend because he was a Roman Catholic.

Even at that early age I found it difficult to comprehend.

In the mid-1950s, I took young Jamaican girl to the cinema. After a couple of weeks, she said it was better we didn't meet. Why, because she didn't want to embarrass me.

It's not the colour of our skin that matters it's shades of respect, forgiveness and acceptance of others that truly makes a difference.

Apologies for the rant, but I feel very strongly that all lives matter.

Alan Jones

Tavistock Rotary

We keep the good news hidden

ROTARY has a fantastic story to tell, about all its achievements, but we tend to keep the good news within the Rotary family.

With the ever ageing profile of members, attracting new Rotarians must be one of the highest priorities for the organisation.

We have the financial resources to appoint a professional PR agency, or a full-time press officer and I respectfully submit that such money would be better utilisation of funds than subsidising loss-making national conferences, as has happened in the past.

If we are to appeal to the next generations of all backgrounds, we need to be seen as more dynamic, and excellent PR should be a key facet of our portfolio of offerings.

Cedric Hollinsworth

Marlborough & District Rotary



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RM02



Time to think crowdfunding

| GARTH ARNOLD |

WHOEVER thought earlier this year that we would be having our Rotary meetings on a Zoom platform; the COVID-19 pandemic has us looking at different ways of doing things. One that has started to gather momentum is crowdfunding.

One might ask; what is crowdfunding?

It is a method of raising additional funds through the collective effort of friends, family and people associated with your project.

This approach taps into the collective efforts of a large pool of individuals—primarily online via social media and crowdfunding platforms—and leverages their networks for greater reach and exposure.

It is not a new idea; in 1885 the base or pedestal of the Statue of Liberty was in part crowdfunded once the funds ran out. Joseph Pulitzer raised \$102,000 in six

months from 120,000 donors.

It is just now that technology and providers making available crowdfunding platforms have made it easier to do.

A good analogy, it is like selling tickets online for a coffee morning or film showing. You need to make it attractive and interesting for the reader.

Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland started the crowdfunding journey back in 2017, when we initially had been looking at developing our own platform.

Further research and investigation found this to be too expensive and the probability of us carrying more risk with our own platform.

We decided to research the marketplace and identified five potential providers who could provide a crowdfunding platform.

In August 2017, we signed up with GlobalGiving, a registered charity in the US and UK and it is the largest global crowdfunding community connecting non-

profits, donors and companies around the world.

There are of course other Crowdfunding Providers for example GoFundMe, JustGiving and LocalGiving.

I see these as more geared towards the individual fund raiser, more personally and family-focused.

GlobalGiving is more structured towards organisations with a project in mind.

Also, with having a large corporate partner base, they have a rigorous due diligence process so they know that the organisations they deal with are creditable and can be trusted with their contributions.

GlobalGiving offers you a digital space to share your project in a compelling way and to invite your donors to give the way they want; whether once or monthly.

With GlobalGiving being a charity, it will claim any relevant Gift Aid and pay you direct the following month.

The GlobalGiving platform has facilitated over 20 projects from Great Britain & Ireland Rotary clubs and one Fellowship (the International Fellowship of Rotarian Doctors), raising in excess now of over £100,000.

We currently have a number of projects that are still live on our GlobalGiving landing page: globalgiving.org/rotary.

GlobalGiving's process is slightly different to other providers in that your initial entry point is through one of their quarterly Accelerator Programmes which take place in September, December, March and June.

They are structured and can last for between two to three weeks. Clubs with their projects can graduate and become a full GlobalGiving Partner if they raise approximately £4,000 (\$5,000) from at least 40 donors.

GlobalGiving sees this 'goal-setting' as an incentive to kick-start the project's fund-raising and pushes you to raise more money online with further structure initiatives e.g. bonus days.

We have had 24 projects posted through the GlobalGiving platform - with various degrees of success. It is important to remember you need to work at it and we recommend you attend the live online training. Is your club thinking about how it

An example of a crowdfunding Rotary project

could raise funds from other activities that previously might have come from functions and outdoor events?

Maybe Crowdfunding is your answer. Remember you need a good project; something that the crowd can relate too.

You need a passion to help the charity or cause you wish to receive money for. Also, key is a team to help you. Remember do not expect to launch a project and money just roll in - you need to work at it! ●

info

For more information contact:

Garth Arnold

gartharnold@btinternet.com

Steve Gale

steve@thorpebayrotaryclub.org.uk

Danny Lovey

dannylovey@aol.com

Some of the crowdfunding highlights

Brentwood Rotary

£9,000 raised

Brentwood Rotary in a recent local Covid-19 project raising over £9,000 and they were selected for a Covid-19 relief grant in the UK of £19,315.

Dronfield Rotary

£9,000 raised

Dronfield Rotary has raised nearly £9,000 to provide clean water and humanitarian aid to Yemen; this project is currently live on the platform.

Four Marks & Medstead Rotary

£11,000 raised

Four Marks & Medstead Rotary is one of our first projects with over £11,000 currently raised in conjunction with Broadlands Group - Riding for the Disabled. They need funds to replace the original asbestos roof and improve the overall facilities. They also received a community grant of £5,000.

Thorpe Bay Rotary

£7,865 raised

Thorpe Bay Rotary's appeal to help the homeless of those living on the streets of South East Essex is now fully funded raising £7,865. An excellent local project.

Basildon Concord Rotary

£6,500 raised

Basildon Concord Rotary has had the highest number of donors and is currently live on the platform with over £6,500 to build classrooms for Zvamaida Primary School, in Zimbabwe.

The International Fellowship of Rotarian Doctors

£8,000 raised

The International Fellowship of Rotarian Doctors project is currently live with over £8,000 funds raised for an overseas project - classrooms and farming help for Tanzanian school kids.

Rotary Marketplace

Welcome to the all new Rotary Marketplace, which offers the opportunity to sell to over 40,000 members and purchase from fellow Rotarians within this community.

RESOURCES

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John Hare OBE

Foreword by Jane Goodall DBE

Describes a tough and dangerous journey around Lake Turkana in Kenya – a first with camels – and the tragic aftermath only 10 years later for the people living around this remote and beautiful lake. John Hare has given many talks to Rotary.

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From donations to recovery – a new chapter

Rotarians in Great Britain and Ireland have always been at the forefront helping those affected by disasters. At the heart of that work has been the Rotary GB&I Disaster Recovery Trust.

| LYNNE MARSHALL |



THE Boxing Day tsunami of 2004 was the deadliest in recorded history, devastating entire communities around the Indian Ocean. The 9.1 magnitude earthquake, which struck near the Indonesian coastline, killed more than 230,000 people in a matter of hours.

Rotarians worldwide responded with financial help. In Great Britain and Ireland, thousands of pounds was collected by Rotary GB&I with a committee set up to help distribute the funds.

However, Rotary GB&I is not a charity which meant bank interest was subject to tax. One way around this was to set up a charitable trust, so the RIBI Donations Trust, as it was then called, was established.

In 2007, the devastating floods in the north-east resulted in unprecedented donations nationwide, including £1

million raised from London Fashion Week as a result of model Naomi Campbell seeing the devastation on TV whilst in America. This money was paid into the new charity to help rebuild communities.

The Australian wildfires in 2008 was probably the first international disaster

as grants to support projects involving Rotary clubs.

They did so using Rotary Foundation guidelines as a basis to support the rebuilding of communities.

At no time was the trust an emergency fund. Since then, appeals have been launched following further flooding in the UK and Pakistan, earthquakes in Italy and Nepal, hurricanes in Haiti and the Caribbean, and cyclones in the Philippines.

Grants have supported club and district community projects, sometimes adding to

support from The Rotary Foundation.

Thousands of families living here and around the world have been helped by the generosity of Rotarians in these islands.

Moving forward, the trust later changed its name to the Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland Disaster Recovery Trust (DRT), which is more descriptive of the work it has always done at home and abroad.

"A YEAR AGO, AUSTRALIA WITNESSED THE WORST BUSHFIRES EVER, DESTROYING MANY HOMES AND BUILDINGS. ONE MASSIVE TRAGEDY WAS THE LOSS OF OVER A BILLION ANIMALS, WITH SOME ENDANGERED SPECIES PROBABLY DRIVEN TO EXTINCTION."

appeal for the trust. Trustees presented a cheque to the District Governor of an Australian district in one of the worst hit areas to provide a new community centre.

At this early stage, it became obvious that whilst the trust deed was sufficient, a code of practice and administration guidance was needed.

The trustees had always agreed that, wherever possible, funds should be given



A year ago, Australia witnessed the worst bushfires ever

Here are examples of a few projects which the DRT have been involved in recently:

Kendal: The rebuilding of the 1st Kendal Scouts HQ and Kendal Deaf Centre after they were flooded. Both are now back in community use.

Nepal: After severe earthquakes in 2015, two schools were rebuilt and repairs to other schools were carried out.

Dominica: When Hurricane Maria hit Dominica in 2017, the primary schools lost their IT learning tools. All IT learning tools have now been restored.

Kerala, India: After monsoons devastated entire villages, a project was launched to bring clean water to many desperate people. This project is so huge that it is still ongoing.

In 2020 there have been more floods in the UK and Ireland, hurricanes in the Bahamas and bushfires in Australia.

In February this year, an artificial grass facility in Hawick, Scotland, was rendered unusable due to river flooding during Storm Dennis.

The pitch was used for football, basketball and hockey, as well as by a

social outreach group for walking football for older individuals, plus exercise classes for the over-70s. The pitch is a valuable community asset to the local people and is now fully restored.

In September 2019, Hurricane Dorian made landfall on the Abaco Islands within the Bahamas with winds of over 185 mph. It killed 70 people in the Bahamas.

The trust received an application from the Rotary Club of Abaco and the Rotary Bahamas Disaster Committee to repair Aldersgate Church and school, which suffered catastrophic damage.

A project to refurbish the damaged building was completed this autumn.

A year ago, Australia witnessed the worst bushfires ever, destroying many homes and buildings. One massive tragedy was the loss of over a billion animals, with some endangered species probably driven to extinction.

The Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland Disaster Recovery Trust is currently working with District 9820 in Victoria to build and extend a community hall in a rural community in East Gippsland.

The hall would allow those without power to stay in their unaffected homes, but have access to electrical power for cooking and storing food, showering, as well as a place to gather for support.

An application has just been approved for a Rotary WASH project in Tanzania where, due to heavy rains, a boys' toilet block collapsed at a school.

The proposed structure will not only replace the toilet block, but provide a separate female facility for the convenience and protection of the girls.

All of these projects aim to bring back some happiness and normality to the lives of these communities, providing peace amongst the chaos.

The trustees are actively looking for suitable projects for funding from donations received. ●

| info |

For further information contact
Rotary GB&I Disaster Recovery Trust
Chairman, Brian Stoyel:
07768 700466 or brian@stoyel.co.uk



Amazing Grace giving back to Rotary

Rotary Young Citizen Award winner Grace O'Malley was so inspired by Rotary that she decided she had to get involved.

| EVE CONWAY |

Founder and Coordinator Rotary Young Citizen Awards

AT the age of 15, Grace O'Malley, from Lancashire, won a Rotary Young Citizen Award in 2013 for raising tens of thousands of pounds for charity with her singing.

And to demonstrate her amazing voice, she sang "Climb Every Mountain" at the end of the awards programme shown live from Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland's Conference in Harrogate on the BBC News Channel.

Now aged 22, Grace is reaching the pinnacle of her singing dreams and is training to be an opera singer, studying for a Master's Degree at the Royal College of Music in London. She is also a founder member of the new Rotaract Club of London, chartered by the Rotary Club of London in June 2020.

Grace said: "After winning a Rotary Young Citizen Award in 2013 and getting to know what Rotary does, meeting inspiring Rotarians and finding out about the incredible work that they carry out around the world to help so many people, I knew that I was going to join Rotary eventually. So to be part of Rotary now, as a Rotaractor, is amazing.



Grace O'Malley

"I was so very proud to win a Rotary Young Citizen Award. I found all the other Young Citizen Award winners so inspirational that it encouraged me to continue to raise money for charities.

"Rotary supports young people and their dreams and ambitions.

"This encourages them to use their talents to help others, to support charities and those in need."

Grace has now raised more than £100,000 for various charities, including

The Royal British Legion, hospices and cancer charities, and she continues to sing at numerous fundraising events for Rotary clubs across Great Britain and Ireland.

She organised and sang at the Rotaract Club of London's first event, a virtual Purple4Polio Prosecco Party which raised £1,100 for Rotary's End Polio Now campaign, tripled to £3,300 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's 2 to 1 pledge.

Grace also sang for Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland's virtual World Polio Day event on October 24th.

She said: "I wanted to bring music and entertainment to people during lockdown and to support Rotary's goal to eradicate polio. What Rotary has done to achieve a polio-free world is mind-blowing! Our Rotaract Club wanted to do our part in helping end polio which our club will hopefully see during its lifetime."

Grace also helped organise the Rotaract Club of London's second event 'Concert for Crisis', with Rotary International President Holger Knaack as guest speaker, which raised almost £2,500 for the UK's homeless charity Crisis.

She said: "Doing charity events and concerts made me realise that I



"SHE SANG "CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN" AT THE END OF THE AWARDS PROGRAMME SHOWN LIVE FROM ROTARY IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND'S CONFERENCE IN HARROGATE ON THE BBC NEWS CHANNEL.

loved singing for people and connecting with people which gave me the hope of becoming an opera singer.

"But now it also makes me feel I don't just want to be a singer, I want to continue to sing to raise money for charities and those in need. I feel this has always been something I was meant to do and it is not something that I want to give up."

Two other Young Citizen Award winners became Rotarians after receiving their awards.

Twenty two-year-old Digital Youth Council founder Harry McCann, a 2017 winner, became a member, at the age of 18, of the Rotary Club of Naas in Ireland, which nominated him for the award.

He's now in his third year studying for a BA in Digital Humanities and IT at University College, Cork.

He said: "Winning a Rotary Young Citizen Award introduced me to the benefits and good work that Rotary does, getting involved with the community locally and internationally.

"There were so many benefits to being part of Rotary that it was a no brainer."

Maciej Szukala, a 2010 winner at the age of 15, became a member of the Rotary Club of Wrexham Glyndwr. Maciej moved to Wrexham from Poland when he was ten-years-old and found his new life in the UK challenging. But within five years, he was an active member of his community,



Harry McCann

teaching English to migrant pupils and helping young refugees settle in.

He now runs his own business "Legal Base" helping migrants and refugees.

The Rotary Young Citizen Awards are a great way to acknowledge positive young role models in your community, either an outstanding individual or a group, under the age of 25.

They include the **Rotary Young Citizen Peacemaker Award** recognising a young person or group who have made a significant contribution by building peace and understanding, whether in their school, local community, or with a peace project internationally.

There is also the **Rotary Young**



Maciej Szukala

Citizen Sporting Hero Award to recognise the achievements and contribution of an able-bodied or DisAbility sports participant or a group, or an individual or group who is enabling others to participate in sport. ●

| info |

Guidelines and nomination form are on the Rotary GB&I website:

rotarygbi.org/projects/young-people/competitions

The deadline for nominations is February 12th 2021

LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

ROTARIAN KILLED ON SPONSORED WALK



TRIBUTES have been paid to a Northampton Rotarian who was knocked down and killed by a tractor while on a sponsored walk.

Paul Simpson, a member of Northampton Beckett Rotary, was on a solo walk of the 180-mile Offa's Dyke when he was fatally hit by the tractor on the A44 between Kington and Lyonshall.

The 66-year-old was on the fourth day of the charity trek from Chepstow to Prestatyn, when the accident happened on September 12th.

During the pandemic, Paul had been delivering to food banks in Northamptonshire, including the Northampton Hope Centre, the Weston Favell Centre Foodbank, Castle Hill and Restore Northampton.

Northampton Beckett Rotary had raised £6,000 to support this COVID-19 initiative, when demand for food banks has been at its highest in memory.

The club Past President between 2018 and 2019, who was a keen walker, decided to take on the Offa's Dyke challenge to raise further funds to support food banks

in the community.

He was well known for organising major fund-raising events in Northampton, including the annual Dragon Boat Race, which he chaired for six years, and the Santa Fun Run.

Robert Martell from Northampton Beckett, paid tribute to his colleague. He said: "We have lost a valued and highly-regarded member in tragic circumstances while supporting the work of Rotary.

"Paul, a dedicated walker, had decided that the Offa's Dyke challenge would be another way to raise further funds to support the food banks in the community.

"Sadly he did not make it, but Paul died as he had loved doing something to help his community and friends who will sorely miss him."

Paying tribute in the Northampton Chronicle & Echo, Stan Evans from Northampton Rotary said: "Paul was a great guy who did a tremendous amount of work and will be sorely missed.

"He was chairman of the Dragon Boat Race, which raised a staggering amount

of money over the years - we are talking tens of thousands of pounds."

Paul was also involved in a campaign to feed 100 people with a free Christmas dinner at the Northampton Hope Centre.

Fund-raising manager at the Hope Centre, Louise Danielczuk, told the newspaper: "Paul was an incredible support to Hope and a support to many charities across Northampton both through his work with Rotary and his own personal desire to help those less fortunate.

"His passion and enthusiasm was infectious and his drive to help others has inspired many. Hope would like to send our sincere condolences to his family and all who knew him. He will be dearly missed."

Paul leaves his wife Jane, children Helen and Graham and four grandchildren. Northampton Beckett Rotary has said it plans to arrange a memorial event in the near future.

Meanwhile, Paul's fund-raising page is remaining open for anyone who would like to contribute to his fund-raising efforts. ●

www.totalgiving.co.uk/mypage/paulsimpson2020



Paul was on a solo walk of the 180-mile Offa's Dyke



FLYING FOR LIFE SINCE 1945

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) was founded during the final days of World War II with a vision to use planes to spread peace rather than conflict. Today, MAF is the world's largest humanitarian airline, and has been transforming lives for 75 years.

Flying into 1,400 remote destinations, MAF transports emergency relief and long-term development to thousands of people for whom flying is a lifeline, not a luxury. In 1986, the Swedish Rotary clubs raised money to buy a Cessna 206 aircraft for MAF, which is still flying today. Operating in the remote villages of Tanzania, this life-saving aircraft enables essential medical services to reach isolated communities. **MAF is flying for life.**



To find out more about MAF's history and how we are celebrating, visit

www.maf-uk.org/75th

DEMENTIA CAFÉ AWARD

BARNSTAPLE Link Rotary's memory café for dementia sufferers and their carers has won a top award.

The Devon Memory Café Consortium has awarded the club's 'Memories Are Made Of This' memory café with its Quality Assurance Mark.

The award recognises the quality of how the memory café operates, providing a safe, caring, effective, and responsive service for those who attend.

The programme, which is provided at the Roundswell Community Centre, has been running since October 2017.

The award is a fitting tribute to President John Silver, who sadly died soon after the presentation.

At the time of the award, John said: "We believe that this is the first time that any Rotary club in Great Britain & Ireland has achieved a Quality Assurance Mark for its memory café programme.

"We will build on this achievement by making 'Memories Are Made Of This' even better and grander.

"Every person attending, whether a member of the programme, volunteer or those who have offered support over the past three years should take credit for this award, as they collectively made this possible."

Barnstaple Link Rotary is committed towards achieving the best quality of life for people with dementia and their carers by regularly offering a structured, non-clinical social session in an environment of safety and confidentiality. ●



FLU VACCINATION SUPPORT



IN the build-up to Christmas, Leicestershire Rotarians were busy helping a local medical centre to deliver hundreds of flu vaccinations.

The medical centre in Market Harborough had five flu clinic days on Saturdays when hundreds of patients were invited for vaccinations. With up to six nurses on duty, Rotarians guided patients to the right entrance doors and reminded them to put on their masks.

For some disabled patients, the Rotarians asked patients to stay in their car so the nurse could do the vaccination there.

Nearly 2,500 vaccinations were carried out. Julie Simpson from the medical centre said: "We were pleased to have this help outside the building. It meant we could all stay near reception, by the phones, or on clinical duties." ●



CHRISTMAS IS COMING!

AS Christmas rapidly approaches, Knighton & District Rotary in Powys, has produced a collection of six charity Christmas cards to raise money to support the local community.

The cards are based on the artworks of Leintwardine artist, Jane Wells, and modified by Rotarian, Angela Ellis.

Angela said: "I approached Jane, a well-known and respected local artist, and asked if we could use her original artwork and amend it slightly to make the images

topical. Amazingly she agreed, and I have added a facemask to each of her amusing artworks."

Rotary President Margaret Thorp said the money raised would support Mid-Wales charities.

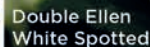
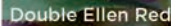
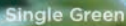
These striking Christmas cards are available from Angela Ellis by phoning 01547 540504 or emailing her on nanny. cakes@yahoo.co.uk. A pack of six is £3.50 or three packs for £10. ●



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SOUNDBURST FOR COVID

ROTARIANS Barry Phillips and Jerry Seaman from Grantham Rotary, together with John Tupper, play in a small band called Soundburst which raises funds for Rotary charities.

During COVID-19 lockdown, the band wrote and recorded three songs reflecting their emotions and hopes for the future at this difficult time.

The tracks were recorded in Grantham, but were mixed and mastered professionally in America to form the basis of an EP called '6 Feet on the Ground', reflecting social distancing measures which are now the norm.

The band hopes to sell CDs or downloaded copies of the EP to support the work of the District environment committee.

To find out more visit:
reverbNation.com/soundburst •



PRIMED FOR POLIO



STUART Perren, from Eccleshall in Staffordshire is a life-long motor sport enthusiast, who has combined his passion for four wheels with Rotary.

Stuart, a retired motor engineer and current President of Stafford Rotary, has completed a two-year long restoration of a sporting trials car.

The object of sporting trials is to climb

very steep, and often very muddy hills marked out in fields and woodland. Points are scored depending on how far the driver and a passenger can climb up the hill.

Stuart and wife Helen have competed in the trials for many years and for the new campaign, the colour scheme has been picked out to support Rotary's End Polio Now campaign, with its purple livery. •

FEEDING THE 4,000

ROTARIANS in Westbourne in Bournemouth have been rallying to the plight of the homeless in the Dorset town during COVID-19.

For the past three years, the club has been successfully running a project to use surplus food donated by one of its business partners, Harvest Fine Foods.

But when lockdown kicked in last April, the club has been supporting the homeless, who were being helped off the streets into temporary hotel accommodation.

"Since we had food supplies and a registered kitchen belonging to one of our members, where food could be prepared cheaply and within lockdown rules, we agreed to produce meals," explained Westbourne Rotary President, Lynne Abad.

Eventually, the homeless began benefitting from food parcels, with some moving into permanent accommodation.

So Westbourne Rotary teamed up with the multi-ethnic charity, Unity in Vision, to support those in the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities who were

struggling during the pandemic.

Up until October, Westbourne Rotary has supplied over 4,000 daily meals and 840 packed lunches. It will continue to maintain assistance for as long as funds allow.

Although the meals could be produced quite cheaply, there were still some ingredients that had to be purchased and packing materials. The Rotary club received £5,000 from two separate local grants, plus £6,000 from the Government and National Lottery Community Fund. This will enable Westbourne Rotary to continue to provide meals until next March. •



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BID TO BOOST TRADE

ROTARIANS in Tullamore in Leinster have launched a grant scheme for traders in the town to buy outdoor furniture to encourage more visitors to the town centre.

It follows an announcement by Offaly County Council that they will not be collecting street furniture licensing fees in a bid to help traders who have been struggling during COVID-19.

The scheme which is part of the county council's 'Town and Village Renewal Scheme - Accelerated Measure in Response to COVID-19' which is supporting businesses in Offaly, Laois and Kildare.

The street furniture initiative has the backing of the local authority, along with a number of local groups including the Offaly Local Development Company and Tullamore Chamber.

It allows traders to purchase quality furniture at a significantly reduced cost in the hope it will stimulate more economic activity in the newly revamped town centres.

"The project will create a continental style streetscape, making use of the public realm, while allowing for social distancing," said Tullamore & District Rotary on their Facebook page.

"A style of furniture has been chosen for consistency throughout the town."

In total, the Rotary club will be supplying 32 tables and 128 chairs to local businesses. The furniture is made of durable resin that is waterproof and easily sanitised without compromising the material. ●

HELPING CÔTE D'IVOIRE



ISLE of Wight Rotarian, Adrian Brewer, is a man of action who gets things done.

And since May, Adrian has been co-ordinating a project to send valuable aid to West Africa, working with his charity, The Roll Out the Barrel Trust.

His charity linked with Paddington Rotary in West London filled a 40-foot shipping container with an assortment of more than 1,000 items which will help the community in Bouaflé, working with the charity, Kweni Inc.

Now, the colourful container, its outside painted with striking images completed by artist, Tony Trowbridge, has arrived in Côte d'Ivoire.

Adrian explained: "What is inside is

essentially enough aid to help 800 people who have virtually nothing and to help set up a number of small enterprises in the Bouaflé area, such as clothes making, a cycle shop, cobbling, photography, children's clothing and charcoal manufacture.

"In addition, we have included tools to establish a group as builders. All the tools needed are in there.

"In this container are also 140 family water filters and water barrels to help with the collection of water.

"The tools are to help manage the basic mechanics of putting things together and repairing them." ●

IRISH AID TO LEBANON

ROTARY clubs across Ireland have been working together to support children in Lebanon.

Earlier this year, the clubs sent literary supplies with 400 members of the Irish Defence Forces who have been deployed to Lebanon as part of a United Nations' peacekeeping force.

Once again, clubs have responded to an appeal for more literacy equipment for primary school children living in refugee camps in South Lebanon.

Killarney Rotary is among those clubs getting involved. Anne Alcock, the club's President, said: "Rotary is very grateful for their partnership with 117th Battalion, Óglaigh na hÉireann, who will be taking this material from Killarney, and from Rotary

clubs across Ireland, when they begin their forthcoming tour to Lebanon.

"Without this support, our response to the Lebanon's Aid Appeal could not have happened, because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"Now, we can be assured that it will make a significant impact on children's lives and schooling."

Clonmel Rotary partnered with the Irish UN Veterans' Association to provide 70 boxes of medical, literacy and IT equipment for Rotary Ireland's 'Aid to Lebanon' Appeal.

Some of the medical aid will go to Beirut which was the scene in August of the devastating explosion which left 350,000 people homeless. ●



Hunger Could **DOUBLE** *in 2020*

as a result of the COVID-19 crisis

According to the United Nations, the number of people facing hunger could **DOUBLE** in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. At Rise Against Hunger, we still need to reach 1.7 million people we serve around the world with nutritious meals, grants and sustainable agriculture — that's why we need your help now more than ever! In times of uncertainty, it's even more important to come together to provide critical support for those who need it the most.

Donate or learn more about our COVID-19 Relief & Resilience Plan:
riseagainsthunger.org/covidrelief

and finally...

From Managing Editor Dave King
editor@rotarygbi.org



How can Rotary be enlightened if it hides in the shadows?

WE CAN be such hypocrites at times. Champion the rights of democracy and free speech one moment, but then wade in with bitter vitriol once a platform is provided for a subject which divides opinion.

The subject was Black Lives Matter, which featured in October's issue of *Rotary*.

"I feel there has been a great error of judgement and, at worst, to twist and subvert the principles of equality and humanitarianism to seek to represent Rotary support and endorsement of a movement that members have not had the opportunity to discuss, debate and vote on to approve this stance," wrote one Rotarian in an asthma-inducing, 51-word sentence.

"Black Lives Matter is a Marxist organisation with the avowed aim of stopping capitalism, defunding the police and 'interrupting the Western nuclear family'. They also have a programme of attacking statues of people with whom they disagree."

"Surely this is not an organisation that Rotary should be associated with?"

"We are supposed to be non-political, providing fellowship and doing good to the wider world, not supporting violent political groups," wrote another.

Placing my cards firmly on the table, there are certain aspects of Black Lives Matter which I disagree with. For example, I don't feel comfortable with the imbalanced and convenient contextualising of history. Notwithstanding the fact that racial oppression and inequality is wrong.

But should we, as Rotarians, deny others the soapbox to express opinions, even though we may disagree with them?

How can Rotary be enlightened if it hides in the shadows?

Of course, any time Rotary edges towards the flames of a controversial topic - environment and climate change, for example - up go the cries of 'it's political'.

Supplying water to drought-riddled villages is political. Blood has been spilled over this most basic of needs. Yet Rotary promotes water, sanitation and hygiene as one of its six areas of focus. The environment, will be the seventh next July.

These are all themes which resonate with today's generation. If this vocal minority continues down their overgrown path of ideals and attitudes, which are so buried in the past, then they will kill Rotary.

Who would want to join us?

Rotary, like any group, represents diverse opinions and attitudes. That's the beauty of our global organisation.

Surely we should be able to debate, test points of view and be prepared to disagree.

If we agreed all the time then we might as well become mannequins.

Sometimes the Rotary mantra of 'service above self' gets lost in platitudes. It becomes a motto, treated like wallpaper, trotted out in robotic fashion.

So think carefully about the meaning and emphasis of those three words: service ABOVE self.

The phrase was first coined in a Rotary context in 1911 by Frank Collins, a fruit merchant from Minneapolis, addressing the second Rotary Convention in Chicago.

He told delegates how his club had adopted the motto 'service not self' because it summed up what it was to be a Rotarian - helping others, instead of harnessing selfish thoughts.

The speech struck a chord with the convention, whose delegates took the motto back to their clubs. Over time, the expression evolved to 'service above self', and was officially adopted by the 1950 Rotary Convention in Detroit.

At a time of reflection at the end of this annus horribilis, let's remind ourselves why we do Rotary, and the values it instils.

- Regrettably, a decision has been made to postpone the Rotary Vision 2020 competition. We received few entries for the photographic competition. The aim is to relaunch the competition next year. ●

Rotary magazine | CONTACT US

Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland
Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PB
01789 765 411 rotarygbi.org

Editor:
Dave King
editor@rotarygbi.org

PR Officer:
pr@rotarygbi.org

Publisher:
Contently Limited
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Advertising Sales Agency:
Century One Publishing
Jack Green
01727 739 196 Jack@centuryonepublishing.uk

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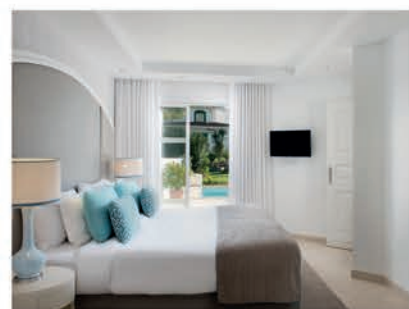
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