Rotary

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ROTARACT THE PRESENT & FUTURE OF ROTARY

DECEMBER JANUARY 2023



"The toilet we had before was always dirty because we never had water to clean it. But now WaterAid has made water and toilets available for our school and we have enough water."

Habtuma, 17, Amhara region, Ethiopia

Building foundations for the future

How can children thrive at school if they don't have clean water and toilets? In sub-Saharan Africa, over half of all schools do not have a basic water service or decent toilets. It means children spend their days thirsty, dehydrated and struggling to concentrate. It means that girls have nowhere hygienic and private to manage their periods, so often miss classes, or even drop out of school.

But we're determined to change this. By the end of March 2024, under the umbrella of the Sustainable WASH programme and in collaboration with the Millennium Water Alliance, we're planning to reach 11,000 students with access to water, sanitation and hygiene in schools in the Amhara region of Ethiopia. Habtamu's school has already seen the benefit of clean water and decent toilets, and Habtamu is proud to have also received training from WaterAid in hygiene awareness. He's now the Sanitation Minister of his school's WASH club, and trains other students on good hygiene practices.

Can your club help us reach even more schools like Habtamu's? Pledge to raise £1,000 or more towards our Ethiopia – Elevating Impact project, and we'll send your club detailed biannual reports on how your support is transforming lives. **Together, we can spark lasting change** with access to clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene. Together, we can ensure children like Habtamu realise their potential.



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Rotary

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Welcome

N Eastbourne this autumn, James Thomas, who is Rotaract's Chair for Great Britain & Ireland, was speaking at a district conference describing his own journey which started out with a Rotary club in North Wales, following in the footsteps of his grandfather.

James, who is just 25, talked about how Rotary saved his life as he coped with his own mental health struggles in his teens, and coping with epilepsy.

But at that District 1120 Conference, James spoke about Rotaract, its role within the Rotary family by making the important point: Rotaract is not about the future of Rotary, it is very much about the present.

Worldwide, there are 11,436 Rotaract clubs and 203,851 members - as of October 19. Great Britain & Ireland has 50 Rotaract clubs and around 500 members, but is growing.

Hopefully, these pages will tell you a little more about Rotaract and what it is about. After all, it stands to reason that a strong Rotaract means a stronger Rotary.

Rotaract, along with Rotary, was hit hard by the ravages of Covid losing many members and seeing clubs closing. Now is the time to rebuild with membership growth at the top of everyone's agenda.

Last September, a very successful membership summit was held online.

Hosted by Steve Martin, the membership lead for Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, the 90-minute webinar featured the Vice President of Rotary International, Nicki Scott, and Chair of the Board for GB&I, Garth Arnold, who talked about clusters and the benefits of working together.

The webinar heard inspiring stories of new clubs which have been set up in this post-Covid age and introduced the concept of the 100-day climb as a focal point for a membership drive.



The magazine is available as an audio experience for visually impaired readers. Please visit: **rotarygbi.org/listen**



There was also an interesting talk from former Rotary GB&I President, Debbie Hodge, about Rotary's values and behaviours in our clubs and how, with member retention an important part of our work, we need to make sure that Rotary is a comfortable place for everybody.

It's a theme which I have addressed in my 'And Finally' column on page 66.

The webinar was inspiring, brimming with ideas to grow Rotary, including a great presentation from the Deal Pirates, which left you feeling purposeful. They were also in Eastbourne, by the way.

I would thoroughly recommend you watch it, either individually, or set aside a club night with a discussion to follow.

Last year, Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland lost 5,080 members, but gained 2,748 members with 36 new clubs started, and a further 100 clubs in the early stages of discussion.

As Steve Martin said during the webinar: "The time for talking about setting up new clubs is over, it's time for action." Because if we do not act now, then Rotary will wither on the vine.

If you missed the webinar, it is well worth a watch to inspire you and your club to grow Rotary. You can find the YouTube link here:

bit.ly/3FHfkNk

Separately, I presented at a Rotary copyright webinar in November along with Phil Dyer and James Bolton spelling out the legal dangers of copyright. The session explained what Rotary clubs need to do with their websites and social media to avoid being hit with legal claims. If you missed the webinar, here is the YouTube link: **bit.ly/3tQNQh7**

Dave King Editor, *Rotary* Magazine



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Rotary

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HOW TO START A ROTARACT CLUB

of setting up a Rotaract club **ROTARACT AND PEACE-BUILDING**

YOUNG CITIZEN ALUMNI

Practical steps for Rotary clubs thinking

A look at a key area of Rotaract's work

Rotaract Chair for GB&I, James Thomas, explains how Rotary saved his life

How winner of Rotary's Young Citizen Awards have formed a Rotaract e-club

Rotaractor Chris Wells spotlights the success of his club in Market Harborough

WEEKEND TO REMEMBER IN DUBLIN

Rotaractors from across Great Britain & Ireland reflect on why they got involved

The story of Rotarian Garreth Murrell's plans to row across the Atlantic Ocean

The inspiring story of the Queen Elizabeth School Interact Club from Darlington

The heart-breaking story of Craig Thomas's

A profile of Blyth Valley MP, Ian Levy, who is a Rotarian in the Northumberland town

battle to overcome his stammer WHEN ROTARY AND POLITICS MIX

THE HIGHWAY TO FELLOWSHIP

Motorcycling Rotarians

Meet the International Fellowship of

THE WORLD IS YOUR OCEAN

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

FINDING MY VOICE

Rotaractors from across Europe gathered in Dublin for a weekend of fellowship I LOVE ROTARACT BECAUSE

DOGOODERY IS DOING GOOD

FEATURES

the organisation

MY ROTARACT

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NOT FUTURE LEADERS, BUT LEADERS OF THE PRESENT

ROM the opening stage of the international convention, to the newsletters sent by Rotary International, these days you can't finish a Rotary chicken dinner before hearing about Rotaract. But what exactly is it? How did it begin and why should we be talking about it?

Rotaract was officially inaugurated as a Rotary International (RI) service club programme for young adults aged between 18 and 30 in January 1968 with the first club being chartered in North Carolina, USA, in March the same year.

While this process cemented Rotaract as an official RI programme, Rotarians had been sponsoring similar initiatives for young adults since the early 1920s in the form of 23 clubs.

Rotaract was a natural evolution from Interact for youngsters aged between 12 and 18-years-old, which saw immediate success after being established in 1962. The first of these was the Interact Club of Melbourne High School in Florida, USA, which was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Melbourne.

This even inspired the name of Rotaract which is both a combination of Rotary and Interact. Although the Rotaract age range overlapped with Rotary, many young adults were simply not developed enough in their careers to join a Rotary club at the time.

Rotaract saw huge gains within a few weeks of the first club chartering.

Existing unofficial clubs rushed to apply for their own Rotaract charter, seeing the introduction of Rotaract in Europe, South Africa, and Australia.

Rotaract was a great success on the shores of Great Britain & Ireland as well, with every district having many clubs with more than 50 members. This is, in part, due to the awesome networking potential it brought to a time where the world wasn't as interconnected.

At its height, there were over 10,000 Rotaractors in Great Britain & Ireland.

However, there was a problem. Due to the high entry requirements of Rotary, most Rotaractors who passed the age of 30 still did not qualify to join. This reality resulted in an unsustainable drop off, with many leaving the organisation.

Since its inception, Rotaract was considered by RI as a Rotary club community programme. The 1990s marked a turning point in this thought process with the formation of Multidistrict Information Organisations.

Often referred to as MDIOs, these entities were established to unite Rotaractors across multiple districts, facilitate information and provide a leadership pathway to the international level.

As described by Past RI President, Rajendra Saboo, Rotaract became "partners in service".

It was this transition in language that forged the path to the elevate Rotaract campaign in 2019 which saw Rotaract becoming an official membership type of Rotary.

Rotaract now comprised 11,000 clubs with over 230,000 reported members is on a path to becoming fully integrated into Rotary as a membership type.

Rotaractors can now apply for positions on committees at every level, host a global grant and beginning next year will be paying RI dues.

The organisation is seeing an exponential increase in membership, further reinforcing the relevancy of the organisation in our modern world.

It is often said that Rotaractors are our future, that they're the leaders of tomorrow.

Rotaractors are not future leaders, they are leaders of the present.

Rotary needs Rotaract to enhance its diversity, relevancy and fulfil its commitments to the five avenues of service.

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Rotary FEATURE



HOW TO START A ROTARACT CLUB

ECOMING a Rotaractor is often said to be the best decision a young person can make, but there's no Rotaractor without a Rotaract club! You're brimming with enthusiasm to spread the Rotaract magic within your local area, but you're faced with the question of... Where do you begin?

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

The first stage of any club formation is to gather a nucleus of interested individuals.

Each community is different and as such has different needs. You may be within a bustling city full of youth groups, youth initiatives, or universities.

You may be in a quieter rural area with underserved or simply bored youth.

The approach determines the outcome and make-up of the club, its first projects and its mission statement.

Sourcing the initial group will always be the toughest part. Some methods to identify individuals can be to advertise on social media within local community groups, approach universities / colleges, approach previous Rotary youth participants (RYLA, youth competitions, Interactors) or simply tap into your club's existing network of people.

The key part around approaching

young people is to use the correct language and not operate on a "hard sell basis". Instead of preaching about what Rotaract represents and what it can offer, start with the simple concept of getting involved in a fun community project and making friends.

IDENTIFY A LEADER

You've gathered your nucleus, now what?

A group needs a young leader to drive it forward to establish deeper unity across the group, keep the momentum going and be a point of contact for any assistance.

This doesn't have to be a single person at this stage, but any individuals who are motivated and enthusiastic enough to maintain the solidity of the group.

A Rotarian's communication with the leader here is vital.

They do not need to understand the ins and outs of being a club president or be overwhelmed by responsibility.

They should be given the freedom to drive it themselves, knowing that support is just around the corner if it is needed.

At this stage, the national Rotaract team or Rotaractors within your district will be available to help support the leader to learn more about what Rotaract is.

FORMING A CLUB

After a few successful projects, more members joining and a solid base within the group, the question of officially chartering as a club may be floating around.

It's important to remember that Rotaract clubs are not Rotary clubs and as such will always operate in a different way.

Attempting to push roles, committees, annual projects onto a group may drive them away or quash enthusiasm.

A group is ready to form into a club when it is at a stage where it can sustain itself with a healthy membership base and strong leadership. If the group doesn't feel ready to take the leap into becoming a club, that's perfectly fine.

We recommend Rotaract clubs charter with a membership of 10-15 members and a few projects under their belt.

The national team or your district Rotaract representative is available to assist and guide you through any stage as you embark on your journey to start a new club. •









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ROTARACT: A CATALYST TOWARDS PEACE-BUILDING

STORY BY MARTINA LASTIKOVA, ROTARACT BRISTOL



S a service-based organisation, Rotaract has a unique opportunity to work together on every single level to support each other's efforts towards a better world. Rotaract clubs around the world are becoming a bridge to create a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Promoting peace is one of Rotary's seven areas of focus and in order to tackle the complex world of global challenges we're facing right now - we need a crossdisciplinary approach.

We need to use Rotary's alumni such as Rotary Youth Exchange, Rotary Youth Leadership Award, Global Scholars, Peace Fellows and Rotaractors to leverage their international experiences and share what they've learned in their Rotary clubs.

With over 7,600 Rotaract clubs in more than 158 countries, we have this unique opportunity to make a really big impact - we have access to this incredible global network that can connect clubs together by spreading international understanding, goodwill and peace.

We can also do this by spreading ideas of Rotaract beyond the local club reaching across regional and international borders spreading friendship, the exchange of ideas, and sharing cultural diversity. There are so many ways to do that some of which could include:

- Collaborations
- Connecting the clubs around the world
- Spreading international understanding
- Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion

· Collaborating on joint projects

Having witnessed the devastating impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, clubs in Europe saw first-hand the rapid response of Rotaractors.

The European Rotaract Information Centre's (ERIC) rapid response and mobilisation donated 15 defibrillators to Ukrainian cities and raised more than €30,000.

Rotaractors organised medical and relief supplies transportation as Rotarians all across the world established an incredible disaster help network.

They also established a fund-raiser to support a non-Rotary association quickly and efficiently.

ERIC's quick response is one of many examples of Rotaract clubs' mobilisation efforts. People often wonder what being a Rotaractor represents? The truth is that we are all change-makers who are at the centre of our communities, coming up with the most innovative solutions.

Innovative solutions require thinking outside the box.

There is a lot of conversation amongst educators about what kind of skills we need in the 21st century which translate into living in a constantly changing world.

It is fascinating what young people are becoming, shattering the glass ceilings as we know them and redefining our world!

There is this word in South Africa called 'Ubuntu', a beautiful philosophy which embodies the best that humanity has to offer. It translates: 'I am because you are'.

Nelson Mandela is an inspiration to so many in so many different ways, but he raised the profile of this word in the world by living by its example.

You are all living by the principle of Ubuntu by actively engaging in your own communities.

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JAMES THOMAS MY ROTARACT

James Thomas, who heads up Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland, discusses how first Rotary and then Rotaract have provided major influences on his life.

STORY BY DAVE KING

OR new Rotaract Chair, James Thomas, Rotary saved his life. As a teenager, he suffered the most debilitating epileptic seizures, sometimes several times a day and without warning.

"I was suicidal," admitted James. "These seizures were happening so often, they were seriously affecting my mental health. My life no longer had a purpose."

Suddenly, the seizures stopped when he was 20. But by then James had already reached out to Rotary, joining his local club in Penmaenmawr in North Wales, where his great grandfather, J.D. Thomas, had been a founding member, and his grandfather a past president.

"Rotary helped me so much. It gave me that purpose, helped me believe, made me more extrovert and helped me with basic communication skills.

"It's fair to say Rotary saved my life." James, now 25, drops this bomb right at the end of the interview.

It is unexpected, coming from a very reassured and confident young man who is now at the helm of Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland.

A lot of the interview is dominated by one man, James's grandfather, Richard Hollis, who sadly died this year.

"My grandad was fantastic, he was like a father to me," added James. "I basically entered Rotary because I wanted to spend more time with him, and I also aspired to be like him.

"He was a fantastic man. My grandad would always put people ahead of himself. He was completely selfless. He would always be the first to put his hand up to volunteer for anything. Even before I knew what Rotary was, the avenues of service and putting service above self, I learned all that from him.

"So that is what made Rotary so appealing for me because it reminded me of grandad. He was quiet, family orientated, and quite traditional.

"My grandad was also a chemist in the village, back when chemists were the backbone of communities.

"Everyone would go and talk to a chemist about the problems they had.

They're almost like a quasi-GP. He was also a Yorkshireman, who said it like it was, but was also a minor celebrity in my mind. He was a great man."

James joined Llanfairfechan & Penmaenmawr Rotary in 2017, spent three years there but quickly outgrew the club. So, James set up with Steve Martin the North Wales and North West England Passport Club – a new fluid and mobile way of doing Rotary – and was its club president for the first two years.

The club meets fortnightly and has 33 members. "We were worried that the club was going to be a Covid fad because a lot of our projects were Covid-related.

"We wondered when Covid ends, will the Passport Club survive. "But we are growing. Since we chartered, we've added corporate and associate members. We are a very flexible club."

While James was president, he also set up a Rotaract club, the E-Club of Great Britain & Ireland. "The reason I became a Rotarian first and not a Rotaractor was because there were no Rotaract clubs in my district.

"We looked at the problem and wondered if there might be more young people like me who don't have a home in Rotaract, so we thought we would create a national e-club where anyone can join."

So as the new Chair of Rotaract in these isles, James straddles the Rotaract and Rotary camps which, he believes, will be an advantage in his new role as the world moves out of Covid.

Currently there are 50 Rotaract clubs in Great Britain & Ireland with around 500 members. The plan is to grow.

"I think the health of Rotaract is pretty positive," explained James.

"We are looking to rebuild the network. A lot of clubs were historically insular who did not communicate outside of their own district.

"I want people to be talking, sharing ideas and promoting growth.

"We want to be engaging existing Rotaractors and also starting new clubs by working through Rotary to make that happen.

"I don't want Rotaract to be an after-

thought for Rotary, I want us to be at the forefront of people's minds.

"I want to see every Rotary district have at least one Rotaract club, and we have got 'help squads' which can work with Rotary clubs and Rotaractors to help start a club.

"We want to plant the seeds and see them spread."

Of course, we live in an age where, for young people especially, there is so much competition for their attention and time. Rotaract will be competing in a busy market.

James reflects on his time in Penmaenmawr and grassroots communities where there will be youngsters looking for a purpose and a sense of belonging.

Rotaract has the capacity for personal development and meeting new people.

James cites a recent trip to Uganda through Rotary where he was involved with managing a feminine hygiene project. These are opportunities which are not easily accessible to young people.

"Not being dramatic, Rotaract is about personal development and it can be a life-changing experience for a young person.

"What happened in Uganda was tangible project management experience. Equally, I can be sitting next to a person who has been in banking for 30 years – when would I get an opportunity like that?

"In the real world outside of Rotary, you don't get these opportunities which are common and not seen as anything special.

"Rotary saved my life, and I will always be grateful for that."

"I WANT TO SEE EVERY ROTARY DISTRICT HAVE AT LEAST ONE ROTARACT CLUB, AND WE HAVE GOT 'HELP SQUADS' WHICH CAN WORK WITH ROTARY CLUBS AND ROTARACTORS TO HELP START A CLUB."

YOUNG CITIZEN AWARDS ALUMNI KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH ROTARY

STORY BY ROTARY YOUNG CITIZEN AWARDS FOUNDER, EVE CONWAY



AST and present Rotary Young Citizen Award (RYCA) Winners are uniting to launch a Rotaract E-Club marking the 15th Anniversary of the Awards this year.

This exciting new venture is open to all RYCA alumni aged 18 and over and is aimed at keeping them in touch with Rotary as well as providing the opportunity to be able to network with each other.

Rotaract clubs bring together people aged 18 and older to exchange ideas with leaders in the community, develop leadership and professional skills, and have fun through service. In communities worldwide, from big cities to rural villages, Rotary and Rotaract members work side-by-side to take action through humanitarian service.

The inspirational group of founder members of the Young Citizen Awards Alumni Rotaract E-Club are passionate about being part of the Rotary family.

Among them is 19-year-old Abbie Breakwell who plays wheelchair tennis for Great Britain and is a Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland Ambassador.

She won the Rotary Young Citizen WheelPower Sports Award in 2018 after being nominated by Long Eaton Rotary. Abbie said: "It is exciting to be starting this Young Citizen Awards Alumni Rotaract E-Club and, as founder members, we would like as many alumni as possible to join us on our journey together.

"As a team, we shall have a monthly meeting online which will allow us to generate ideas and solutions for both international and national problems.

"Our aim is to put on events to raise awareness of issues around the world – and help bring about lasting change."

There will also be activities like workshops to help develop professional skills and speakers and discussions on areas of interest such as social action, mental health, education and protecting the environment as well as social events.

Founder President of the RYCA Rotaract E-Club is 21-year-old Theodor Sergiou, who won his Rotary Young Citizen Award in 2020 after being nominated by Enfield Chase Rotary and who is enthusiastic about taking on this role.

Theo was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma (cancer in both eyes) aged two and when he was four, his parents were told it was terminal. But the tumours stopped growing and although he remains partially sighted, Theo survived.

Among his many achievements, Theo has been the London representative on the UK's Youth Parliament and he is passionate about reducing knife crime.

He was recruited to the Youth Advisory Forum, the first ever youth civil service body and is the youngest person in British history to contribute to a No. 10 Cabinet meeting. Theo is now studying at Oxford University.

The Rotary Young Citizen Awards recognise outstanding, inspirational young people, individuals or a group, under the age of 25, who are helping make the world a better place.

They include the Rotary Young Citizen Environmentalist Award reflecting Rotary's new area of focus on the environment.

There is also the Rotary Young Citizen Peacemaker Award and the Sporting Hero Award.

The nomination deadline is Tuesday, February 28th, 2023. ●



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SAY MOOL AUDIENCE RATICIPATION ALERT

DOGGOODERY REALLY IS DOING GOOD

Chris Wells from Rotaract Market Harborough in Leicestershire describes his Rotaract journey of dogoodery.

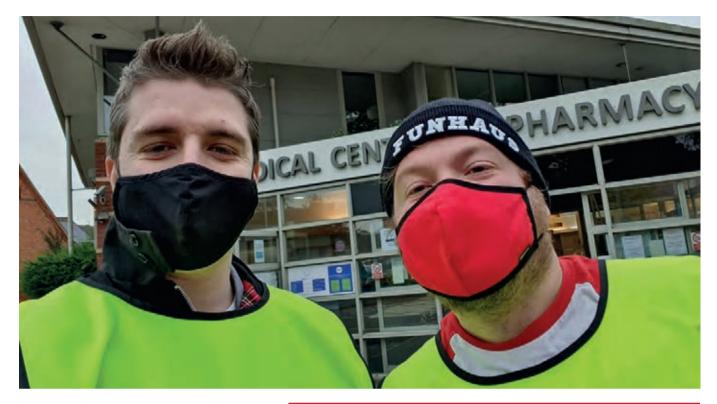
IKE most people, I had no idea what Rotary or Rotaract was before I had a Rotarian explain it to me.

It was during a chance meeting in 2015 while working at a school that Market Harborough Rotarian, Jim Davies, introduced the concept of 'service above self,' and the prospect of making new friends while doing it convinced me to start a club. We began with a festive bang, meeting at a friend's house, each of us bringing canned food for a food bank, plus any pals or strangers who may be interested in making the world a better place.

This event, paired with Jim's insistence on doing things our own way while working with others to carry the logistical load, birthed our ethos of DOGOODERY. Nothing else mattered except moving towards that distant goal of Doing Good.

Regular meetings followed, as did regular quiz events to ensure that there was always at least one future event to meet about.

Thanks to the ongoing success from the quizzes, the local carnival committee asked us to run their traditional precarnival quiz evening, an honour we had taken from the local radio station



"DURING THIS TIME, THE LOCAL ROTARY CLUB WOULD OFFER US THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH MARKET HARBOROUGH'S MEDICAL CENTRE OFFERING CROWD CONTROL FOR VACCINATIONS."

Harborough FM.

Firm evidence that our little club had now firmly established a place in the community.

Membership maintained as we moved towards more regular service projects, such as a stroke victim's support group and working with the charity Different Strokes; a mental health support group, working with the charity Rethink, as well as a partnership with the Canal & River Trust.

Stories like these would form the basis for a mainstage presentation at the 2019 Rotary International Convention in Hamburg, which made our club internationally famous and gifted me many opportunities to give talks across the globe.

But then COVID-19 happened. The beautiful thing about a strong goal is that you can adapt to whatever circumstance comes your way, even something as miserably massive as a pandemic, and DOGOODERY was no different.

My international speeches were now on the far less glamorous Zoom, but this also would empower our club to take our quizzes online, and now, thanks to our infamy, we had participants from all other the world, eventually raising nearly $\pounds500$ for The Rotary Foundation.

During this time, the local Rotary club would offer us the opportunity to work with Market Harborough's medical centre offering crowd control for vaccinations - something that saved my brain during this awful time, giving me not only a chance to get outside, but to see the vaccine recipients get younger and younger, like a progress chart for humanity.

Once the world opened up, so did Rotaract.

Thanks to the newly-formed MDIO

(multi-district information organisation), Rotaract GBI, we added to our international connections more national ones from all over the UK.

Since then, we've attended Rotaract events from Newcastle to Nottingham and hosted visitors from every corner of the country.

This wonderfully accumulated during this year's Market Harborough Carnival when we welcomed many Rotaractors from hundreds of miles to help with the DOGOODERY, that our once-local, now international, club brings.

I am now the Rotaractor who explains what service above self is and can literally show what international fellowship looks like.

Something that once felt just like words now is something we carry every day towards our goal of Doing Good. •

Rotary | FEATURE

A WEEKEND

The Irish capital played host to Rotaractors from across Europe for four days of connecting and sharing ideas.

STORY BY ARIANNA CASTRO, TYNESIDE ROTARACT



EARLY 450 Rotaractors from 38 countries gathered in Ireland this October for REM Dublin, the country's first-ever Rotaract

Europe event.

Rotaract European Meetings (REMs) are twice-annual events where Rotaractors can connect, learn and share ideas over four days.

In January this year, there was still an opening for this autumn's REM, and I saw it as the perfect opportunity to reinvigorate Rotaract after a long couple of years of the pandemic.

We chose Dublin as it boasts a strong Rotaract presence and good accessibility from Europe whilst often being an overlooked gem.

This was never going to be an easy task, with a mere ten months to plan and execute the epic event with a tiny team spread over three countries, but it was something we believed to be worth the stress.

It was while working the first shift at the registration desk on October 20th that I first saw the fruit of our manic months of work. So many happy faces greeted us and shared their excitement to be in Ireland for the first time.

Kind volunteers from across the world even helped assemble name badges and prepare for arrivals during the more intense periods.

City tours and extra activities populated the day, followed by a fancy dress welcome event in the evening, giving everyone the opportunity to form new international friendships while dressed as a zombie.

On Friday, the main conference took place. Our theme was Live Green, with sustainable business owners and academics from the UK and Ireland to discuss actions we can take as individuals and as an organisation to tackle climate change.

They shared their knowledge on soft skills, leadership, conscious consumption and misinformation/disinformation related to climate change.

Afterwards, we held a social project called Postcards of Kindness, giving attendees the opportunity to write to people in care homes across the country doing our small part to help reduce loneliness.

We closed Friday's festivities with the traditional country booth event, bringing each delegation together to passionately share their food, drink and culture with each other.

This is one of the best-loved parts of every REM, providing a sense of community and fostering international understanding. It's also great fun.

The Rotaract Europe (ERIC) meeting took place on Saturday morning, and the country representatives convened to discuss and make decisions that would affect Rotaract across Europe.

The rest of the delegates had the day to absorb the city and culture whilst our organisational team prepared for the grand finale of the REM, a fancy gala dinner at Croke Park Stadium.

At 6pm, the well-dressed Rotaractors

arrived at the impressive stadium and socialised before sitting down for their meal. We opened with a country call where all the country representatives proudly came onstage waving their flags.

The sheer number of countries on stage really highlighted the magnitude of the event and quite how many miles were travelled just to attend this conference.

Finally, we handed over the "Key to ERIC" – a symbolic wooden key passed down from event to event – to the hosts of the next REM, which will take place in Ghent, Belgium, in January 2023.

To think that we merely started with the words 'REM Dublin,' and after months of intense planning, hundreds of Rotaractors now have happy memories of Ireland, with stories they will share forever.

REM Dublin finally gave us our chance to put Great Britain & Ireland on the map of Rotaract Europe and brought a new level of enthusiasm and collaboration to our country's MDIO.

Even our small team of Rotaractors was empowered with a new energy inspired by their triumphs at the conference.

After years of low participation at Rotaract Europe events, I am proud to say we had the largest UK and Ireland delegations in recent memory.

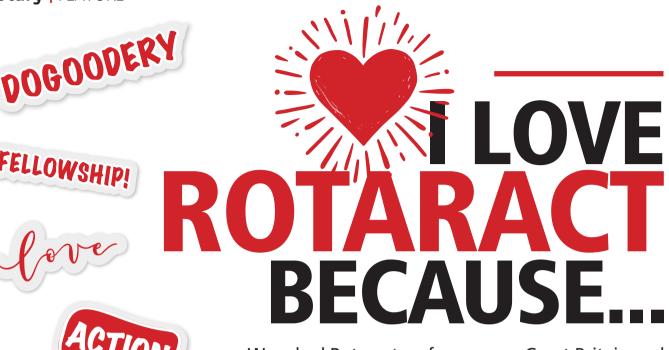
I genuinely believe this is merely the beginning of the rebirth of Rotaract in our countries, rising up to, if not beyond, what our fellow Europeans are already achieving and growing the fantastic DOGOODERY our organisations will bring in the years to come.





Rotary FEATURE

FELLOWSHIP!



1. DAVID GIBSON TYNESIDE ROTARACT

The reason I love Rotaract is that it is a great platform to socialise and network with people around my age who all have the same values and interests. I am also able to develop both my professional and leadership skills whilst supporting local and global communities through a variety of initiatives.

2. CLEMENT CHINAZA OWUAMALAM NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY ROTARACT

For me, Rotaract is an opportunity for personal development, friendship, fun, leadership and service above self. Rotaract is a lifestyle.

3. DANIELA RECKER DUBLIN CENTRAL ROTARACT

Rotaract for me is all about the community. It's great to have this international community everywhere you go giving back to their local or international communities through service above all.

4. LAUREN BYWATER MARKET HARBOROUGH ROTARACT

Rotaract gives me the opportunity to improve skills that I use in my career and

We asked Rotaractors from across Great Britain and Ireland why they are so passionate about Rotaract, and what it means to them to be part of the organisation.

gives me the chance to network with many like-minded people who want to do some good.

5.MATTHEW LEE DUBLIN CENTRAL ROTARACT

It is amazing craic and I really feel at home in Rotaract. I get to meet so many warm people who are like-minded and want to be the change they want to see in the world. I have so many fun and crazy memories. What a wonderful organisation.

6. DARREN ILIFFE MARKET HARBOROUGH ROTARACT

Rotaract is a fantastic outlet for dogoodery, which also allows and encourages fellowship and personal development. Rotaract is an open door to so many new and exciting opportunities.

7. MARTINA LASTIKOVA **BRISTOL ROTARACT**

Rotaract is such a wonderful space and platform to get to know yourself and be involved in projects you're passionate about!

8. CHIAGOZIE DESTINY PRINCE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON ROTARACT

To me, Rotaract means friendship, a

chance to give back to my community. Also, a platform to accomplish bigger and greater milestones while serving humanity.

9. JOSE RIBERA **DUBLIN CENTRAL ROTARACT**

Rotaract is having friends in every country working together to make the world better.

10. ARIANNA CASTRO TYNESIDE ROTARACT

I love Rotaract because it gives young people a platform to fight for the changes we need alongside other passionate people around the world!

11. RYLAN RAY

PETERBOROUGH ROTARACT

Rotaract is about bringing together people that are like-minded but probably wouldn't ever meet to achieve goals and to support others in ways they probably never could alone.

12. FLEUR TEN HACKEN WANDSWORTH ROTARACT

Rotaract is about action! Pulling up your sleeves and working together to give back to the community, as well as to support global initiatives.

f 🎔 🞯 💼 🖿 YouTube



THE WORLD IS YOUR

STORY BY DAVE KING

Rotarian Garreth Murrell will be tackling one of the world's toughest sporting events over Christmas by rowing across the Atlantic Ocean.

HILE you are tucking into your festive dinner on Christmas Day, spare a thought for Rotarian

Garreth Murrell.

He will be rowing in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean with three other Army veterans aboard a 29-foot boat in one of the most gruelling sporting challenges – the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge.

More people have climbed Everest and travelled in space than have rowed the huge expanse of the Atlantic Ocean.

A member of Tyneside Rotary Club in Newcastle, Garreth will be able to claim the accolade of the first Rotarian from Great Britain and Ireland – and possibly the world - to have rowed the Atlantic.

Setting off from La Gomera in the Canary Islands on December 12th, they will be crossing 3,000 miles of ocean to Antigua in the Caribbean.

Battling 40-foot waves, extreme fatigue, sleep deprivation, sea sickness, muscle wastage, along with salt sores and blisters, their minds and bodies will be put to the ultimate test.

"What will we be doing on Christmas Day? Well, not putting too fine a point on it, we'll be rowing!" explained Garreth.

"Actually, we are aiming to stop for Christmas lunch, and open a card or two plus perhaps a small present which our loved ones may put in our cabin before we depart.

"In fact, our lunch will be very festive as our skipper Jason Watkin has managed to get hold of some reindeer stew which we will be tucking into. Then it's back on the oars and on with the job."

The team of four expect to be rowing two hours on and two hours off the oars 24 hours a day for between 40 and 50 days.

Known as Team Emotive, the quartet are all drawn from military backgrounds where each have had their own mental health challenges.

They will be supporting the charity Veterans at Ease, set up by Garreth to support servicemen and women once they leave the forces.

Garreth, who was born in south Manchester, served for ten years with the Cheshire Regiment, mainly in the reconnaissance platoon.

He served two tours in Northern Ireland and then, in 1992 as part of the Cheshire Regiment vanguard, he was one of the first British soldiers serving in Bosnia under the United Nations flag.

After leaving the Army, he became a Crime Scene Investigator with Thames Valley Police and then Lancashire Constabulary, but then in 2007 Garreth's world fell apart when experiences from **(**

POWERED BY



Rotary FEATURE

his tour in Bosnia came to the forefront.

After getting help through the use of neurolinguistic programming (NLP), Garreth decided to leave the forensic world and set up Veterans at Ease where he has been the CEO and lead psychotherapist since its inception in September 2010.

Veterans at Ease provides free openended neurolinguistic psychotherapy to all members of the armed forces community, including immediate family members over the age of 18.

The charity has helped more than 500 men and women deal successfully with a number of issues ranging from depression to complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as well as thoughts of suicide.

It was the first military charity in the UK to be presented with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Married to Christina, who is also a Rotarian, and with two children, Garreth is hoping the Atlantic rowing challenge will raise awareness about mental health in the military.

"This is my one last big expedition before I retire," he explained.

"I am determined in doing this row because I want to highlight to the world that issues such as PTSD, depression and suicide in returning veterans do not need to happen.

"As chief executive of Veterans at Ease, I want to show my local community, the nation, and the world at large the positive impact which the charity has.

"All too often I see adverts on television from other charities trying to coax $\pounds 2$ a month out of viewers by utilising the negative side their beneficiaries suffer.

"I wanted to turn that on its head to show the world the positive impact of the charity and inspire people about the good work the charity does. I'm not pulling on people's heartstrings to winkle out $\pounds 2$ a month, I think that is wrong.

"Personally, I feel that the way I am doing this is a much more ethical and ecological way to attract funding from the general public and companies that have a social conscience.

"So, I decided to do this race. All I needed to do next was find three other idiots and \pounds 150,000. How hard could

that be in the current world climate and a more important question is, what could possibly go wrong?"

But Garreth and Team Emotive will be on the start line in La Gomera in December with the finish line at Nelson's Dock in Antigua's English Harbour at the forefront of their minds. This will be the ultimate test against Mother Nature with up to 43 other teams competing.

Garreth admitted feeling quite humble about being the first Rotarian from these isles to row across the Atlantic. He hopes the adventure might inspire other Rotarians too.

It's all a far cry from growing up on a Manchester council estate in the 1970s.

"I didn't even think I would get to see the Atlantic Ocean, never mind find the resources to do what I've done in my life and to then cross that ocean.

"But I truly believe that you can do anything you want to in this world as long as you're prepared to do what needs to be done to achieve it."

As for his family, the father-of-two revealed his children are more interested in a short holiday in the Caribbean to meet their dad at the end of his epic row.

"I don't think they are that bothered about meeting me at the finish line at Nelson's Dock, they just want the sun, the sand and the sea for a few days or a week perhaps," he said.

"I know they are proud of me for even attempting this crossing which is more than enough for me.

"I am lucky enough to have a wonderful wife, and two kids who are very rapidly growing up to be the most amazing adults themselves in their own right.

"I know my wife Christina has her worries about me, though she is very confident of me and my capabilities at sea with the courses I've had to undertake.

"More importantly though, she completely trusts my fellow crewmates.

"She knows that whatever happens, whatever situations we find ourselves in, they and I will keep each other as safe as possible.

"Just knowing this allows me to relax and just focus on doing what needs to be done. Which is eat, sleep, row, repeat continuously for 40 to 50 days." •

Fact File

THE JOURNEY

- Rowers will row for 2 hours and then rest for 2 hours constantly
- Each rower will burn over 10,000 calories per day
- Every day rowers are expected to consume 10 litres of water
- 800 biodegradable wipes will be used by each crew member during the crossing
- The boat will have a total of 220 days food onboard at race start
- In the 2020 race, four boats had their hulls pierced by Marlin strikes
- All rubbish will be checked on arrival in Antigua - missing rubbish will result in disqualification
- There is no toilet onboard rowers must use a bucket
- The weight of each rower's food onboard at race start will be approximately 41kg.
- In the mid-Atlantic, the closest other human beings to the team will be orbiting in the International Space Station!



Contact: garreth@veteransatease.org veteransatease.org taliskerwhiskyatlanticchallenge.com











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One Aquabox family filter can transform up to half a million litres of polluted water into clean, safe water – at a cost of less than £40. And the Aquabox filter gives effective protection against common water-borne diseases like cholera, typhoid and polio.

Aquabox is run almost entirely by volunteers – virtually all of the money you donate is spent on assembling filters, packing them with other humanitarian aid, and shipping them to people in desperate need.

Over the past 30 years, Aquabox has helped to save untold thousands of lives. And with your support, we can help to save untold thousands more!







Could your club run an Aquabox Walk for Water? Email kevin.barclay @aquabox.org to find out more.



Go to aquabox.org to find out more about our work, and to book an Aquabox speaker for your club.

ROTARY SOCIAL

Since the last edition of Rotary magazine, there have been many exciting developments and announcements in the world of Rotary and volunteering. Here is where you can find them across social media.

STORY BY GEORGE BICKNELL

Rotary 🛞



TWITTER | FACEBOOK | YOUTUBE | INSTAGRAM



WORLD POLIO DAY 2022

IN COVERSATION WITH END POLIO NOW **COORDINATORS KEITH PAVER AND** DEREK ROTHWELL

WORLD POLIO DAY 2022 INTERVIEW

To mark World Polio Day 2022, Rotary GB&I spoke to End Polio Now Coordinators Keith Paver and Derek Rothwell to find out more about the challenges and successes of Rotary's ongoing fight against polio. The full interview with Keith and Derek is available on the Rotary GB&I YouTube channel.



WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT

Governments and Global Polio Eradication Partners made a multi-billion-dollar commitment to eradicating polio at the World Health Summit whilst Rotary also renewed its fundraising partnership with the Gates Foundation. There's a video available on Rotary GB&I's Facebook page which perfectly rounds up all the news from the Summit.



NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH BIPOLAR UK

Rotary GB&I has launched a new two-year partnership with Bipolar UK with the aim of reaching and helping more people affected by bipolar. To mark World Mental Health Day 2022, Rotary GB&I put together a video summarising this exciting new partnership that can be found on the Rotary GB&I Instagram.

TWITTER | FACEBOOK | YOUTUBE | INSTAGRAM

IN 100 DAYS

At the recent Rotary Membership

challenged to take part in the

100 day climb. The challenge

is for the organisation to gain

600 members in 100 days, 25

members per district. To hear

more about this, you can now

watch the whole Summit on

YouTube.

Follow us

👩 @RotaryGBI

THE 100 DAY CLIMB

Summit, districts were



ADE ADEPITAN AND APPLE FITNESS + Rotary Great Britain and Ireland Polio Ambassador, Ade Adepitan, recently appeared on the Apple Fitness + official podcast 'Time to Walk' where he spoke about finding himself through sport and

how strength ties to vulnerability. You can hear a snippet from the episode on Ade's Instagram. TWITTER FACEBOOK YOUTUBE INSTAGRAM



TOGETHER COALITION SUPPORTS WARM WELCOME SPACES

The Together Coalition, of which Rotary GB&I is an active member of, has recently put its support behind the #warmwelcome campaign which encourages local organisations to open their doors to those struggling to heat their homes this winter. You can find out more on the Together Coalition Twitter page.

Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland



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28 Rotary December/January 2023



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HOPE FOR FIGHTING A GLOBAL SCOURGE

HILE sitting with a group of Rotary leaders outside of Lusaka, Zambia, I ask a question: "How many

of you have ever had malaria?" Every hand in the room goes up. They even begin to tell me about the first, second, or third time they experienced

the disease, one of the main causes of death and sickness in many developing countries.

They are fortunate. They have access to medical treatment and lifesaving medicines. For the people of rural Zambia, their story is very different.

On a wooden bench in a small village, I sit with Timothy and his young son Nathan. With a camera crew capturing our conversation, he tells me of the time Nathan showed signs of malaria. He brought the boy to the nearby home of a community health worker, where Nathan quickly received medicines that saved his life.

Calmly, Timothy tells me about his other son's bout with the disease a few years earlier. He had to race that son to a medical clinic more than five miles away.

Riding a bike and carrying his child on his back, he tells me, he could feel his son's legs turn cold and then his little body go limp.

As he finally entered the clinic, he screamed for help, but it was too late. The camera stops rolling, and we sit in silence. He begins to weep, and I hold him tightly. "I lost my son, I lost my son," he says.

This story is all too familiar for the families we meet over the next few days. And yet there is hope.

Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia is Rotary's first Programmes of Scale grant recipient, and it is saving lives.

Across two provinces of Zambia, 2,500 volunteer health workers have been selected by their communities. They are trained to bring medical care closer to those who need it, and they are able to diagnose and treat malaria and other ailments.



Rotary President Jennifer Jones visits Zambia in August to showcase the work of Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 2022/2

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NICKI SCOTT RI DIRECTOR 2021-23

CONTINUITY IS THE KEY

N Rotary we often talk about the need for greater continuity. This is hardly surprising in an organisation based on a model of annual leadership change on a global scale!

As volunteers, there are many potential limitations on how much time we can invest in altruistic pursuits but do we ever take enough time to reflect on how much we gain from our work as well as how much we give?

Many of you may have heard me say that, to me, "Rotary is the gift that just keeps giving"...not just to the beneficiaries of our Service Above Self in our local and global communities but also to OURSELVES!

I personally have gained so much of a sense of purpose and leadership development through giving service in Rotary. The same can also be said for my family who were also immersed in the various service projects I was part of.

Much like the Scouting organisation, Rotary offers opportunity to get involved and make a bigger difference in the world at every age: from RotaKids to Interact to Rotaract and ultimately Rotary as an adult, regardless of how old you are.

I will never forget the visual impact of seeing a lineup of Scouts on stage at District Governor David Morris' conference in Hunstanton this past March.

From a "Squirrel" aged 4 to a Beaver, then Cub, then Scout, then Explorer through to adult leaders... the message of continuity and progression was crystal clear. I found myself questioning why we cannot see that so clearly in Rotary.

We are missing an opportunity to connect the dots between the various programmes we offer.

Few Interactors become Rotaractors and even fewer Rotaractors become Rotarians.

How can we do a better job to help bridge the gaps? Surely the story of continuous personal and professional leadership development is key to being at the heart of a solution?

But then how well do we model continuity in leadership in our own clubs and districts? How often do we hear the words "my year"?!

We can achieve so much more when we cooperate and collaborate. We are #bettertogether.

The new concept of districts working together in clusters is designed to foster this culture and model the benefits of greater impact achieved to clubs to do the same.

Rotary can be extremely rewarding at every stage of life for so many reasons. Let's tell that story to others and invite them to join us so they too can enjoy the huge value Rotary contributes to both ourselves and those we serve! •



IAN RISELEY FOUNDATION TRUSTEE CHAIR

OUR SHARED VALUES

E all make hundreds if not thousands of decisions daily. Whenever I need to make an important decision, I remember the words of Roy Disney, who co-founded what became the Walt Disney Co.: "It's easy to make decisions when you know what your values are."

Each of us brings a set of personal values into our clubs. Rotary also unites by a set of core values — service, fellowship, diversity, integrity, and leadership — that guide our decisions and galvanise us to take action and, by doing so, change the world.

Another value is inextricable to Rotary: our giving spirit.

From the club members who volunteer their time for service projects to the Rotary leaders in the Arch Klumph Society who sustain our Foundation, Rotary members are among the most generous people I have ever met.

Combining our personal generosity with the countless ways Rotary affords us to give back makes us a global force for good.

In Rotary, we take it a step further. We also value good stewardship, planning, and sustainability. Not only do we give, but in Rotary we also give smart.

We know that building sustainability into our projects means their impact will be felt over the long term.

In short, through the Foundation, your gifts keep on giving.

This is why donating to The Rotary Foundation is one of the most intelligent decisions you can make.

You know that your gift will align with those values you hold dear and that it will be administered by your fellow Rotarians, who share those values.

It is quite an understatement to say that in giving to Rotary, we also receive. As someone who has been privileged to visit hundreds of Foundation projects around the world, I can tell you that the gift we get in return is priceless.

I hope you, too, will be as lucky I have been, to see the look of amazement on the face of a person at an eye clinic in Chennai, India, who now sees clearly.

The proud smiles of Guatemalan children who learned to read thanks to Rotary. Or the grateful tears of a parent in Pakistan whose child has received two drops of polio vaccine.

Then you will understand what I'm talking about. We are so fortunate to be able to serve humanity by supporting our Rotary Foundation.

During this season of giving, I thank you for your generosity to The Rotary Foundation and for all the ways you give to our great organisation. Juliet and I extend our warmest holiday greetings to you all.

f 🎔 🞯 🧰 🖿 YouTube



AMANDA WATKIN GENERAL SECRETARY FOR ROTARY GB&I

BUILDING THE TEAM

T'S been great to see the growing interest from across our membership in the roles that build our Rotary GB&I support teams. These are the teams that give information, advice and guidance to Rotary districts and clubs, complementing the full-time service teams at the Rotary Support Centre.

This year we had exceptionally high numbers of applications, showcasing not only the broad experience and knowledge of our members but their willingness to share time to help Rotary clubs develop membership, increase their impact to society supported by Rotary Foundation funding, and showing how to tell Rotary's amazing stories particularly through digital mediums.

Rotary GB&I proudly operates an open application process for all our regional appointments, including applications to the newly-established Rotary GB&I Regional Board.

This year new appointments have been confirmed for fifteen Rotarians joining the Specialist Advisor Teams (SATs) along with two new Board members and of course the Board Chair Nominee.

All take up their roles from July 1st, 2023 and join reappointed colleagues. In total we have 81 people voluntarily giving their time and talent to help Rotarians just like you!

One of the great benefits of Rotary membership is personal and professional development.

We experience this within our clubs and through service in the wider district administration and support teams.

Through Rotary we develop leadership and management skills alongside soft skills such as presentation skills and effective communication.

Online learning programmes are available for all members in the RI Learning Centre.

Learning from these training programmes is embedded when stepping up to deliver leadership and management roles in club, district or Rotary GB&I.

Each year vacancies for the broad range of available voluntary roles are advertised through newsletter communications and detailed in the members area of the rotarygbi.org website.

Applications are encouraged from all members as relevant experience comes from activities in Rotary and individual professional and personal life.

Next time you see our vacancies advertised, why not consider how you could support Rotary and send in your application! •



GARTH ARNOLD CHAIR OF THE BOARD FOR ROTARY GB&I

WORKING TOGETHER

URING our orientation workings for the new regional board, two key items stuck firmly in my head, namely membership growth and Foundation giving, which are critical to our survival as a region and globally.

In September, we held our second Membership Summit with the key aim of 'Grow Rotary' where we launched the "100-day climb" to recruit 600 new Rotarians across 100 days. This was a great catalyst to start working together in our six clusters, targeting around 100 new members per cluster.

The 'Cluster Concept' is a key part of our new governance model allowing for districts and their officers to work together in groups, providing better support to members and clubs. The clusters offer three clear opportunities:

1. For districts to share resources

- 2. To lift some workload off the district governors
- **3.** To maximise the effectiveness of central resources in delivering an activity, project, initiative, etc.

Having worked on the cluster concept since last year, we are starting to get together in our clusters.

Before we can work together, we must get together! It will take time, but it is important we embrace these changes for the positive future of Rotary.

As a new regional Board, we have been in operation just over 120 days; about a third of the way through the year and some of our initial work has come to an end by way of agreeing a way forward through four new projects following the initial set-up of the membership (business) growth, member experience and business processes workstreams:

- Conduct independent market research
- Know our customers Rotary club survey
- Value: create small focus group with the Rotary
 Support Centre & Board members
- Review & simplify all routes to membership processes

We all remember March 2020 when all our lives changed with the Covid pandemic and various lockdown measures. For many, Zoom developed as our way of staying connected and created opportunities for many organisations, Rotary included.

Many people stepped up to volunteer during the pandemic and still want to become involved; maybe not as we saw Rotary in the past, but these people can be our future and are waiting to be asked.

Remember when we work together our ability to create a difference is immense. ${ullet}$

Rotary FEATURE

Interact and make a difference

Writing letters to

the elderly during Covid lockdown.

The Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Interact Club is an amazing group of enthusiastic youngsters who are carrying out 40 projects a year in their community.

STORY BY SUE CAMPBELL

AITH and Sharon attend school in their home in Uganda and have ambitions to be teacher or a nurse. Dressed smartly, their faces beam out from pictures of them clutching bags containing clothes and other essentials.

They are the lucky ones. Most families in Uganda can't afford to send their children to school, and if there is any spare cash for education it goes to the boys.

Even if they can attend school, girls' education is often stunted through period poverty - they miss out chunks of school time because they don't have sanitary items and are forced to stay away.

It was a story which sparked a huge response from a group of young people 4,000 miles away at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College Interact in Darlington, County Durham.

Faith and Sharon are happily working towards their ambitions thanks to QE

Interact, who sponsor the girls' education and send re-useable sanitary items, clothes and school resources. It's just one of

the projects this highly successful group has undertaken. QE Interact has won the Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland national project prize three years in a row - and it's only five years old.

They undertake about 40 projects a year - some long term, such as supporting Faith and Sharon, and others one offs.

Their guiding light is QE teacher Nancy Wall, a non-Rotarian, and Paul Harris Fellow, nominated by the group's parent Rotary in Darlington.

But Nancy insists that Interact is all about the young people who make up the group.

She explained: "I love working with them. There's real enthusiasm and drive and they come up with their own fantastic ideas. And of course it's brilliant for their

wider experience and CVs."

Gending school resources to Wanda to help education

For the Interactors, they are buzzing about the impact their work is having ...

Jessica Fairley said: 'When I came to college I looked to see what I could get involved in and Interact attracted me straight away. It's something you can do between lessons, it's great fun and you're making a difference.'

Libby Aitken talks about an individual project she undertook. She explained: "I was told about a boy called Lewis. He's 18 and terminally ill, and his mental capacity is much less. And his favourite thing in the world is the giraffe.

"I like to knit, so I was asked to make Lewis a giraffe. Actually I knitted him four giraffes and he likes the feel of them on his skin. It felt great that I'd helped."

Eleanor Westlake described one of



the major award winning projects the group undertook during Covid lockdown.

Before lockdown members visited local care and residential homes to interact with residents.

She said: "When all that stopped we started writing to them by snail mail, just to let people know what was happening and to help them feel less isolated.

"We sent out around 25,000 cards at one time sending out 400 a week."

Eve Goddard recalls delivering sunflowers and daffodils to homes around Easter, when a second lockdown was biting. "It helped people feel they weren't forgotten," she pointed out.

The college has its own volunteer awards event and Interact won the £30 project prize for the period poverty drive.

But typically, the group added to it and undertook two more projects: buying goats for a village in Africa and also planting trees.

Elizabeth Wheeler said: "Buying goats means they can be bred, supply milk and eventually meat - the two we bought are called Gertrude and Bertha. The rest of the money went to planting mangrove trees in Madagascar."

Girls are largely involved in the planning and execution of projects, but Interactor Ffion Lawrence-Hall said: "It's not just about us. The boys and others come and help when it's a larger operation. It's a whole college effort."

All of those who spoke to Rotary

magazine are 17-years-old and in their second year at the college.

Newbie Mollie Presho is 16-years-old and in her first year.

"I chose QE partly because I loved the projects they're involved in, especially around empowering women, and Interact seems like the perfect way to have your ideas heard," she said.

The list of QE Interact projects seems endless – supporting baby banks in Hartlepool and Darlington, foodbanks, Darlington women's refuge with clothes, Easter eggs and Christmas presents for children, a local homeless charity by donating 150 pairs of shoes.

Supporting woman's refuge with clothes

They have been on suicide awareness courses, collected for Great North Air Ambulance and the British Heart Foundation and provided craft packs for children in Darlington Memorial Hospital.

The Darlington Interactors have paid for training for six midwives in Africa, collected books for libraries in Kenya, and sent 100 bras to Africa so women are less likely to be assaulted.

The group has been nominated and won local and regional accolades, as well the Rotary GB&I awards - the latest was the BBC Make a Difference awards.

These young people, encouraged by an inspirational teacher, are examples to us all, doing their best to make that difference – to lives in County Durham, and across the world. •





Letters to the editor

Every issue, we invite Rotarians to discuss topics featured in the magazine, or wider Rotary concerns.

Tabards are necessary

ALTHOUGH I understand your article on tabards had an element of tongue in cheek, our club feels that tabards have an important role in the work we do in the community. We also have polo shirts but their logos are much smaller and we are less easily identifiable.

Recently we have been undertaking a survey of our local rail stations asking passengers their experiences with particular regard to safety. Members approaching the public are clearly identifiable which has given people, particularly women, the confidence to talk to us. By the way, our work is being done with the agreement of the railway managers.

This is not a safety issue, but a confidence one.

A fellow club has been collecting for Ukraine outside supermarkets and again the very visible tabards have given the public confidence to donate.

Your photo shows litter picking and asking if the wearing of tabards is necessary. For us this is a clear safety issue as we collect at the roadside.

We may in your view be old fashioned but we believe the wearing of tabards certainly has a place in our club's activities.

I am sure there are areas where the wearing of tabards is not necessary but in our view clubs should be left to make their own decisions and even wearing our tabards we have been able to attract several new members this year!

Patricia Jeffery Dawn Patrol Rotary Club of Maidstone, Kent



I hate tabards with a burning passion

YOU'VE stolen my thunder. While at my previous Rotary club, Corby Phoenix, I was in constant dispute with members over my loathing of tabards.

We would stand in public with these worn-out, old, faded dinner ladies' bibs. I hate them with a burning passion.

Tabards enhance the mistaken image of us as weird old men in old fashion dress.

My club would not entertain buying some new logoed and smart hi-vis waistcoats. I got so sick of it, I bought my own and had my club name on it.

I didn't know at the time I could have used our logo legally.

There are as you say, times when we need and have to wear hi-vis, but not all of the time.

I have a selection of logoed polo shirts, and fleeces, and looking to find

a local embroidery firm to add my club name with "Rotary working for the community".

I am also pushing for a one metre high by two-metre wide heavy duty banner to display who we are and what we are doing...."Kettering Huxloe Rotary Club working for the community".

I am President next year, and I will be insisting on Rotary signs on all of the works we do around town telling people what we do instead of the one 12" square plate saying where we have dinner once a week.

I am happy to join you anytime on a picket line demonstrating against tabards!

Norman Bristow

Kettering Huxloe Rotary Club, Northamptonshire

Climate change and hurricanes

I HAVE been reading the August edition of *Rotary* magazine and excellent though it is, I am deeply disappointed and concerned to see that it barely mentions climate change.

There is the briefest of mentions on page 13 in the article on hurricanes. In this article under the sub-heading 'Does Climate Change Cause More Hurricanes' the article states 'Whilst climate change is not increasing the number of hurricanes...'

Do we really know this? I respectfully suggest that we might want to get some scientific advice on this point – and if it is incorrect perhaps publish a correction in your next edition.

Climate Change is a major cause on the Rotary International website and Protecting the Environment is a cause on the Rotary UK website. Surely it should therefore be reflected in Rotary so that readers can get information on what Rotary is doing about it.

There is now no doubt that climate change is an emergency and that the world has warmed by 1.5 degrees C.

The summer heatwaves across the northern hemisphere, the droughts and bush fires are being attributed by scientists to climate change.

Meteorologists are saying that in the UK we can expect even hotter summers in future years. How bad does it have to get before people in positions of influence sit up and take note?

What is the world going to be like in 10 years? Or five years or even two years?

David Powell

Previously Camberley Rotary, Surrey

ShelterBox response:

WE very much share Mr Powell's concerns about the negative impacts of climate change, which we have seen recently with the terrible flooding in Pakistan.

Plus, tropical storm intensity is increasing around the world, impacting millions of people in a devastating way.

An article from the Met Office explains that the strongest tropical cyclones in the North Atlantic have increased in frequency and intensity since the 1970s, but that it *is likely that tropical cyclones, globally, will either decrease in frequency or remain unchanged in future - although their intensity is set to increase.*

John Cleverley,

Rotary Marketing Officer, ShelterBox

Classic cars

IN the October issue of *Rotary* magazine, Hugh McCrea questioned the existence of a Fellowship for classic car enthusiasts.

I refer him to Antique Classic and Historic Automobile world Fellowship of Rotarians: <u>achafr.eu</u> which includes Great Britain and Ireland.

Also, nearer to home, there is the Rotary Retro Automobile Fellowship of GB&I: <u>rraf.co.uk</u>

Glynne Shackleton

Kirkcudbright Rotary Club, Dumfries & Galloway

Another classic

IN response to Hugh McCrea's letter in the October edition, there is, indeed, a Rotary Classic Car Fellowship.

It has been going since 1995, and since 2007 has organised regular tours and events around the UK, had stalls at Rotary GB&I conferences and also helped many Rotary clubs to raise funds by advising them how to organise classic car shows.

We also work closely with international partners on overseas events and I have made many Rotary friends both in the UK and Europe.

Further information can be found on the website: **www.rraf.co.uk**

I was chairman for many years and would be happy to answer any questions on the fellowship at: peter.kleyn@aol.com

Peter Kleyn Axminster Rotary Club, Devon

Sail on

DELIGHTED to see that Rotary Fellowships are getting more coverage in our Rotary magazine.

Earlier this year edition we had the inspiring story of Rotarian Tony Flinn and the Flying Rotarians; then in the last issue a letter from the Motorcycling Rotarians – and yes, I agree that finding fellowships on the GB&I website is not easy so perhaps there should be a panel on the landing page promoting both Fellowships and Action Groups.

And then, also in the latest issue, there was a piece by Robert Burns about the Yachting Rotarians. Here I must declare an interest as the current Commodore of the GB&I Region of the Yachting Rotarians!

Internationally, the Yachting Rotarians are one of the oldest and largest fellowships although in terms of size they have been overtaken by the wine or gin fellowships but there is a connection here as we certainly support the aims of these fellowships.

In Great Britain we have active fleets across the country and although we are called the Yachting Fellowship, many of our members don't have yachts, they have motorboats or canoes or sailing dinghies – or, like me, don't own a boat at all.

That doesn't matter as we all get enjoyment out of being on or close to the water as well as the positive health and wellbeing benefits.

So, to the Rotarians out there who want to be on the water and know more about the Yachting Fellowship, please get in touch, either: **robert.burns@ iyfr.net** or myself: **patrick.rotary@ btinternet.com**

Patrick Tyrrell

Regional Commodore, GB&I, International Yachting Fellowship of Rotarians, Cheadle Royal Rotary Club, Greater Manchester.



Readers' letters

Rotary began here in 1911

SOME clarification is required regarding the story 'Rotary One Century Later' (*Rotary*, October).

The Dublin, London, Manchester, and Belfast Rotary Clubs were tied in with other clubs as of 1913. The four clubs date back to 1911 despite the late receipt of the charter. We in Manchester had visits by Rotary International presidents at our 25th 50th 75th 100th anniversaries, celebrating our birthday to the 1911.

Besides these visits, we also had a visit from Paul Harris, and Paul Harris wrote to Belfast Rotary Club in January 1912 congratulating them on the club being formed in 1911.

I suspect further correspondence of the lateness of the charter certificates followed.

I suspect London, Dublin and Belfast, like us in Manchester, are very proud of our collective foundation in 1911. I had extensive correspondence with all 1911 clubs about who was first and London won!

You are clearly missing out on the history and development of the early part of the Rotary movement in the UK and Ireland.

David Andrew

Manchester Rotary Club

Rotary Conference

COULD this be the ideal location for a Rotary conference? The picture is taken from Southwold in Suffolk, in the High Street at the

junction pointing down to Victoria Street.

David Telford Saffron Walden Rotary, Essex



Insipid-looking wheel

THE article 'Rotary: One Century Later' (*Rotary*, October) was very interesting, as was the evolution of the Rotary wheel, ending in the design as we used to know it.

The 1929 Rotary Convention determined that the wheel should consist of 24 teeth and six spokes representing a real wheel, and a keyway to make sure that the wheel was productive. It also stipulated that the colours should be yellow and blue. The four blue bands within the outer radius representing the Four Avenues of Service.

I believe, and I admit I may be in minority, that Rotary International's removal of the blue bands and thus creating an insipid-looking wheel, goes against the decision of the 1929 Convention and should be reinstated.

Derek Phoenix

Rotary Club of Crewkerne, Somerset



Change is necessary

FIRST of all, I think that the August Rotary magazine was one of the best I have read.

I joined Rotary in 1997 as the founder president of a new club and spent many years in the club organising annual walking weekends in different parts of the country. I organised many different quizzes for the meetings and volunteered ceaselessly.

I joined a district committee in 1998 and became chairman of the committee two years later, eventually becoming district governor in 2010.

Also in 1998 I joined the Oxfordshire Life Education committee and organised and brought the classroom to North Oxfordshire to serve the schools there, I remained as a trustee of TV LEC until 2007.

In 2002, I walked the 180-mile Thames Path to raise funds for TV LEC and in 2011 visited every club in District 1090 (Rotary in the Thames Valley, Berks, Bucks and Middx) by bicycle, 350 miles in a week, to raise further funds for TV LEC.

We had 30 new members in 1997,

many of whom have become good friends, however we started losing some very good members and have too many members not taking office and doing very little.

Although we did have a few new younger members join, I felt that they were not made very welcome and they soon left. The club wasn't the same anymore and many of the meetings I felt are uninspiring.

After taking office as president again, a year after I decided to leave and join the Global Hub after a brief spell in the Thames Valley Satellite Club.

I now volunteer at the Salt Way Action Group, litter picking, at a country house and some Rotary events.

I am sure that many clubs have similar problems and unless they change we are not going to increase membership.

I don't expect anybody to do what I have done over the years, but this seems a stark contrast to members that do little.

Laurie Cunningham

Banbury, Oxfordshire

Readers' letters | CONTACT US

Every issue, *Rotary* magazine publishes a series of letters from Rotarians featuring a number of topical issues We welcome your letters on any subject to do with Rotary. Submissions should be no more than 250 words long. If you would like to contribute please write including your name and address and then emailing: **editor@rotarygbi.org** or post to: *Rotary* magazine, Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PB The comments made on this page do not necessarily represent the views of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, and Rotarians.

Setting exemplary standards

CAN I say how much I disagree with the proposals for a new four-way test published in October's *Rotary* magazine.

I have been a Rotarian for over 30 years and the feature that first attracted me to Rotary and still does is that Rotary seeks to operate with an outstanding ethos.

The four-way test, with its emphasis on truth and fairness underpins that ethos because it encourages standards of behaviour which are sadly absent from many areas of society today.

Whilst I don't disagree with the proposed change to the objects of Rotary, I do feel that the suggestions to replace the four-way test do not define how we should behave in seeking to achieve our objectives in the same way that the current test does.

In my opinion, it is essential

that Rotary continues to encourage exemplary standards by offering a view on how things should be done rather than just depending on a set of criteria for judging actions which are essentially a set of objectives, rather than standards.

Graham Taylor Berkhamsted Bulbourne Rotary Club, Hertfordshire

In October's issue of Rotary magazine, a letter was published regarding Rotary's Four Way Test. The article was written by David Telford from Saffron Walden Rotary, and not Alan Hawkes as stated. Geoff Cusick wrote a letter on poliovirus in London. Geoff is from Holsworthy Rotary in Devon, and not as previously stated.

Taking Pride in Rotary

I HAD a great time helping out at Surrey Pride over the August Bank Holiday (*Rotary*, October). A beautiful warm, sunny day set the scene for much conviviality and interesting conversations with people in the march, the crowd and the other stall holders.

And looking at the organisations and companies on the stands – including a firm of Guildford solicitors I'd used in the summer - it is big business. It is right for Rotary to be involved and part of it.

Many people were happy to engage in conversation and show interest in what Rotary gets up to. However, most showed interest in projects, but not in joining Rotary.

When I left home at 9am I felt quietly smart. Grey trainers, white socks, off white shorts, a dark navy polo shirt with Rotary logo and a white Tilley hat. But when the main march arrived at 11, wow! All of sudden I felt old, male, pale and stale. Should have dug out the flowery silk shirts, leis, feather boas we all have at home for party time.

Surrey Heath, our District

Governor and District Governor Elect, fortunately, were much gayer in fetching pink polo shirts.

Off I went to a sales tent for a sun hat to match my skin tones. The label said non-binary but it was colourful and lighter to wear than the Tilley hat. Noticeable indeed: a passing lady said "I'm non-binary too".

So, a lovely day, learnt a lot and started to understand the different strands of part of our country's community.

That's what Rotary is all about.

Jim Thomson

Farnborough Rotary Club, Hampshire



Read it and leave it

I THOUGHT the two letters in October's issue of Rotary magazine summarised matters brilliantly from an advertiser's view and a method of using the magazine by letting local companies have a copy.

This year the optimism of global influence after Ukraine has been shown in the magazine, replacing a lot of negative introspection.

By the way, I approve of Get Rid Of Tabards (GROTS), so do many of those who wrote in.

Richard Worsley

Chichester Priory Rotary, West Sussex.

.....

A Rotarian

What's in a name you say Well to be a Rotarian like me, I will show you the way So you can see the things that we do. The difference we make The time it will take, We help when we can Be it a child or woman or man. Not just locally but all over the world and internationally So if you want to give where we all live, Come join us and feel good Like everyone should, When you know what you have done Will really help someone, Good friends you will meet It's a real treat to be in good company. To laugh and to see How useful you will be, It's a great reaction And you feel satisfaction By being a Rotarian.

Bob Hall Abertillery and Blaina Rotary Club, Monmouthshire

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FINDING MY VOICE

Rotary has given a platform to Craig Thomas to conquer his stammer to speak confidently in public.

GREW up in the mining village of South Elmsall near Wakefield in West Yorkshire. When I was eight-yearsold, I found myself on stage in a school play. I had three lines to speak, and it was my turn to narrate this part of the play. The teachers, parents and students were all staring at the stage.

I opened my mouth to speak but nothing came out. My body started jerking and doing movements which I had not experienced. I had stammered before this moment, but this was the first time I had been conscious of being different, not being able to speak like everyone else. My life changed dramatically after this experience.

Around this time, I also had an experience that would trouble me for many years to come.

To cut a long story short, my mum used me as a pawn. Whilst having an affair, my mum would take me to her 'bit on the side's' house and leave me in the darkly lit living room whilst they spent time in the bedroom. My dad had no clue that this was happening. Why would he?

There is no way of telling if this further affected my speech. I can't recall which of the two experiences came first,



"TO ME THIS WAS MY MOUNT EVEREST, TO READ MY LITTLE BOY A BEDTIME STORY WITHOUT STAMMERING."

but what I can tell you is that both were a lethal cocktail of torment, suffering and pain for many years to come.

From eight-years old, I would be punched, kicked, and spat on. I was laughed at, ridiculed, and bullied because I could not speak properly, or at times not at all.

I was also working through that fact that I was a horrible son for hiding a dirty little secret from my dad – a man who many times had to walk a 20-mile round trip to Great Houghton Main Pit where he worked to put food on our table. The guilt was overwhelming, even as a young boy.

When I graduated to High School in Minsthorpe, as soon as I awoke every morning, I would be full of dread about having to say "15 pence please" when I got on the school bus. The students on the bus and even the bus driver on occasions would laugh at me.

The next ordeal was register where I could not always say "here sir" which would get some laughs.

It was not long after starting High School that I started cutting myself. I had a Stanley knife blade hid under my bed which I would use to cut myself.

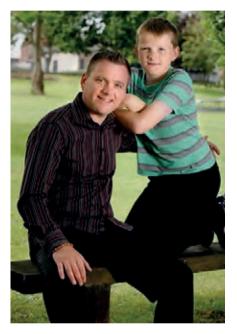
This one day was particularly difficult. I had been ridiculed and spat on, and after school I went to my bedroom got the Stanley knife blade and put it to my wrist whilst tears were streaming down my face.

I did not want to die but I could

not see a way out of my situation and my stammer and body movements were getting more and more out of control.

This happened several times but seeing as I am writing this article, I did not go through with it. Hence the name of my new venture called 'I'm Glad I Stuck Around' aimed at supporting people who are contemplating suicide.

After leaving high school and trying to make my own way in the world things took a further nosedive.



I had already started drinking heavily and using Class B drugs at school, however it wasn't long before the drugs turned to Class A and I spent time in jail.

I took menial jobs which did not stimulate me, but what else could I do?

I could hardly speak at a job interview and made involuntary head and body movements when trying to answer questions.

When I was 24, I had a son and this little beating life gave meaning to my life. I slowly started making positive changes in my life.

I had failed at everything in life up to this point, but I was determined not to fail at being a father. This meant to me at least that I had to be able to read my little boy a bedtime story something which 99% of people take for granted.

To me this was my Mount Everest – to read my little boy a bedtime story without stammering. I came across a course which helps people who stammer called The Starfish Project. It is not a cure, but it can improve how a stammerer speaks and thinks.

It was on The Starfish Project that I first heard of Rotary. The Rotary Club of Hailsham in East Sussex which sponsored and paid for people who stammer who needed financial support to go on The Starfish Project. The course lasted for three days and I made improvements.

The first thing I did when I got home was read my son a bedtime story without stammering. With tears streaming down my proud face, that moment has been my greatest achievement and it will take something miraculous to beat it.

With my confidence at an all-time high I contacted my local Rotary club in Wakefield and asked if they would like to hear my story. I am happy to inform you that I gave the speech of my life and received a standing ovation from the Rotary delegates.

I was later invited to speak at a Rotary District Conference in Bournemouth with The Starfish Project and the write up said that "Craig stole the show".

I was fortunate enough to meet David Ellis, last year's Chairman of the Executive for Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland. David has lifted me to become a highly respected motivational speaker and author. I have spoken at several Rotary conferences in the last 15 years.

Thank you to David and Denise Ellis, and Rotary, for your grace, encouragement and kindness in taking a chance on a council estate kid with a stammer who was lost in a life of drugs, alcohol and anger.

_____ | Information | _____ Contact Craig: <u>cthammond@aol.com</u>

Rotary *Marketplace*

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





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When Rotary and politics does mix

Ian Levy is the MP for Blyth Valley in Northumberland and a member of Blyth Rotary. Editor Dave King caught up with Ian at Westminster to discuss how he mixes a career in politics with his work in Rotary.

EDITOR: I understand your connection with Rotary goes back to your uncle.

IAN: Yes, my uncle Ian Wilson has been in Rotary for 42 years with the Rotary Club of Blyth in Northumberland. He has always played an active role there and was a Past President. Before I became an MP, I would go to some of the dinners and recognise people from around the town.

It was clear to see the amount of good which Rotary does in the community. Fundamentally, a lot of Rotary's aims and objectives are fantastic helping people in the community. It got to the point in 2016 when I thought I really want to get involved in this, and applied to join Rotary.

EDITOR: The nature of your job as an MP, with living and working in London for most of the week, means you can't be as involved in Rotary as much as you would like.

IAN: No, it isn't. I tend to work in London on a Monday to a Wednesday when I attend the 1922 Committee, which is held at about 5pm. Sometimes there are other meetings which follow. I tend to travel back to Blyth on Thursday morning and our Rotary club meeting is held on a Thursday, lunchtime. So, I miss it by about an hour.

When Parliament is in recess, or if, for any reason, I finish earlier on a Wednesday and can get back that night, I try to attend the Rotary club meetings.

One of the good things about this job is meeting so many really interesting folk who are willing to come and speak at the Rotary club. That's worked out really well, as we've had some good speakers at the club.

EDITOR: Does being an MP help you with being a Rotarian by better understanding what's happening in your community?

IAN: I am very, very clear that I want to keep politics out of it. A lot of people who attend the Rotary Club of Blyth will be constituents of mine. But I also understand that not everybody there voted for me. So, I've got to make sure I don't cross the line by taking politics into the Rotary club. This is something I've discussed with the President and we're both clear that politics stays out of Rotary because it could spoil it.

EDITOR: Your constituency is traditionally a fierce Labour stronghold. You broke that hold at the 2019 election.

IAN: Yes, Blyth Valley has never ever been Conservative, so I broke the mould. I stood in 2017 at the snap election when Theresa May was Prime Minister. In 2017, I took the Conservative vote from 8,000 votes to 16,000 votes, so I doubled it. But I still didn't get enough to win. But I took the seat in 2019 with a 712 majority.

EDITOR: Never mind being a Rotarian, it must be very difficult to balance being an MP and having a family life.

IAN: Yes, I've been married to Maureen for 25 years. We have a son Andrew, who is 25, and our daughter, Alice, who is 22. Andrew works for the NHS and Alice is a youth worker at a voluntary organisation. As far as juggling work and family life, I try to keep Sundays free which tends to be family and friends' time. Your holidays also become very precious.

And that's an odd one, because I still want people to feel that they can stop me in the street or while I'm getting the shopping at the supermarket. My daughter actually won't go shopping with us now because it takes so long to go around the supermarket. So many people want to chat.

EDITOR: Why did you decide to become an MP?

IAN: This reached a point in 2016 when people in Blyth felt let down. I believed they needed change; they needed jobs, better education and better public amenities. So, I'd been out for a pizza and a drink with my wife in Blyth. We were walking back when I said to Maureen: "We

Rotary | FEATURE



need to do something about this." I was sick of it. I said I needed to do something. Maureen told me: "Either shut up or do something about it." I woke up the next morning, took her a cup of tea and a slice of toast, and said I've had an idea: I'm going to be an MP!

I've always been a Conservative, but a very quiet Conservative. We had no branch in Blyth, so I didn't know who to contact or what to do. I mean, if I wanted to apply to a shop or a factory for a job, I'd write to the boss. So I took it upon myself to write a four page letter to David Cameron, addressed to Number 10 Downing Street. I told him that we had a problem in Blyth, we needed to do something about it, and I was the man. I told the Prime Minister to put me forward, and I promised to win the seat, which was a bit of a brave thing to do.

I got a reply and was summoned to a five-hour interview in Cambridge. Now, put me in front 200 people and I am happy to talk. Once you know your stuff, if you believe and you've got a passion for what you do, then you can do it. But I am profoundly dyslexic. So, I was sat at this computer and asked to write an answer to the question: You've been selected as an MP to sit in the House of Commons, what's your first question and why?

The other three candidates started typing away. I sat there and thought where is the door? In the end, the answer I put down was that I haven't come to Parliament with a pre-conceived idea. If I was elected as a Member of Parliament, it was my job to take the views of the people of Blyth Valley to Westminster and take the answers back to the people of Blyth Valley.

I just do it from the heart. I've got no intention of changing, because I am the person I am. And I think because my family have lived in Blyth for generations, I think I am very grounded.

EDITOR: Work-wise, you come from a health background.

IAN: Yes, for nearly 30 years I was working as a mental health support worker, very much on the frontline. I started on the elderly wards, worked with eating disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, rehabilitation. You name it, I've seen it. In some ways I think that gives you a good understanding of how people work. How not everybody is the same. You get to understand people from different backgrounds, you understand how the benefit system works. It gives you a good grip of reality. So, to come and do the job that I do now, these are all skills which are transferable.

EDITOR: So what is Blyth like?

IAN: Blyth is the biggest town in Northumberland. It's got the only deep water port, which is 9.5 metres deep. It was known for coal mining, and back in the 1960s, Blyth exported the largest amount of coal anywhere in Europe.

They built the second HMS Ark Royal at the Blyth shipyard. We had a coal-fired power station using fossil fuels. But all of that has gone, and for a long time Blyth became this sort of like no-man's land where everybody talked about the great market-place and history we have, with the shipbuilding and coal mines. You never forget your past. If you didn't have the past, you wouldn't be the person you are now.

EDITOR: What's it like being an MP?

IAN: It's the best job in the world. I absolutely love it. And you know why? It's because we're making a difference. I have got into this for the right reasons. Although it is a lot of hard work. I'm actually doing it. If I felt I was just treading water, I wouldn't feel I was getting the job satisfaction.

It's probably harder for my family. A prime example was my wedding anniversary. Maureen and I had been married for 25 years last year. I had a lovely hotel booked in the Lake District for our wedding anniversary with flowers and all that sort of stuff. As I went to buy a bottle of champagne, I got a phone call to say that MPs had been recalled to Parliament over the evacuation of Afghanistan. I cancelled the hotel, called my wife to tell her to come to London with me where we had a fish and chip supper for our anniversary instead.

My son Andrew believes that I'm making a difference and doing it for the right reasons. My daughter, Alice, has stood as a councillor and she's very much involved in a lot of community projects with organisations such as the Royal British Legion. I think she'll follow in her father's footsteps eventually. To do this job you've got to have the support of your family.

And I strongly believe I've got the support of Rotary, even though we come from a mixed bag. At the Rotary club there is one lady in particular, Eileen Carty, who is a Labour county councillor and also a town councillor. We knew each other before we became Rotarians and before I got into politics. Even though we are from different sides of the political spectrum, Eileen and I have got a very good bond because we work together for a common goal. We put politics aside when politics has to be put aside, and we get on to do the job as Rotarians.

EDITOR: How big is your club?

IAN: I think there's probably about 100 members. It's quite a healthy club and we've got some quite young members, both male and female. We were once an all-male club, but we have amalgamated.

EDITOR: At Rotary, are there any projects that the club's involved with?

IAN: There's one project we are working on called 'Caring for carers', making sure young carers know how to cook a meal.

EDITOR: The job of an MP can be quite fragile. You are only as good as your next election. How do you prepare yourself for that uncertainty?

IAN: If you thought about the job like that you would worry about it too much. I'm very fortunate that after 30 years working for the NHS, I could take my pension tomorrow. I'm sure I would pick up something else.

EDITOR: Is there anything which you've not done that you'd like to achieve?

IAN: I've never had that question. To be honest, there is nothing that really springs to mind. I think if I could see these projects for the regeneration of Blyth, that would be my answer.

EDITOR: How would you describe yourself?

IAN: Unstoppable. Because I've got bags of energy and I am very driven. ●

THE HIGHWAY TO OVSHIP

Gordon Johnston from the Rotary Club of St Neots describes the joy of motorcycling and the International Fellowship of Motorcycling Rotarians.

> "WE REMAIN IN GOOD SPIRITS AND, IMPORTANTLY, RECOGNISE THE VALUE OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP IN THE CRAFT OF PROGRESSIVE AND SAFE ROTARY MOTORCYCLING."

HE International Fellowship of Motorcycling Rotarians is a fellowship open to all Rotarians with an interest in motorcycling, whether it is on or off-road, racing, collecting, restoring or reminiscing. But

it's more fun if you ride with us. The Rotary Great Britain & Ireland Chapter is part of the international

fellowship. It was founded in August 1993 by Devizes Rotarian, David Lamb, following a visit to Loxton, South Australia, the

a visit to Loxton, South Australia, the previous year where he was persuaded by the Australian founding chapter to establish one in Britain.

David organised and held an inaugural meeting at a motorway service station on the Severn estuary which attracted seven interested Rotarians. It grew over the following years to a membership of well over 100 'Rotacylists'. This number has fluctuated over the years but it remains a smaller viable membership.

Some years later David went on to become the IFMR World President for two years.

Sadly time creeps up on some of our members who then go on to ride more celestial routes but we, like the rest of Rotary, are hoping to see some growth.

Maybe the cost of motorcycling generally on our congested roads in the eyes of family/relatives is a factor especially amongst younger Rotarians with their commitments.

Nonetheless, those of us active in

the chapter are a socially-cohesive band, likened to an extended but close family, who very enjoy our weekend gatherings around the UK and occasionally on the European mainland.

In the past, these adventures were more frequent but as we are all advancing in age together, we tend to stick to Britain as more distant venues and routes become more involving to organise.

Over the years, members have visited most of the European countries and joined with their chapters for tours and hospitality which have always been roaring successes.

We are occasionally joined by IFMR members from overseas chapters on our UK adventures and just recently we had the pleasure of the company of a couple from Iceland complete with their bike which had been stored in the UK.

Our weekend gatherings - of which there are usually four annually - involve hotel accommodation, great socialising by some 25 to 30 bikers, which can be more with pillions aboard, enjoying 100 to 150 miles riding on Saturday and some 60 miles on Sunday before departures homeward.

Phil Watson is our current president, and we have enjoyed the leadership of presidents from many parts of the country during our history. We remain in good spirits and, importantly, recognise the value of true friendship in the craft of progressive and safe Rotary motorcycling.

Fellowships are one of the highlights of Rotary. It is regrettable that ours in

Great Britain & Ireland seems inevitably to decline. We offer our hope that other chapters prosper as our GB&I chapter approaches its 30th anniversary next August, and we still have actively riding founder members - quite an achievement, we think!

We were delighted to have an Icelandic couple, Erla Björk and Björn Jakob, visit us recently for a weekend ride in the Trough of Bowland in Lancashire. Here's what they had to say:

"What stands out is how great it was to meet new friends from IFMR UK-Ireland chapter. Although we have never met these people, not even John who hosted us, it is as if we are old friends.

"We were so welcome and everyone was so lovely and went out of their way to get to know us and help us in every way. It certainly reminds us of the great fellowship at IFMR-Nordic, where we are surrounded by warm, wonderful and helpful friends.

"We thank everyone on the trip to the Trough of Bowland for their wonderful company."

Should you be interested in joining our Fellowship, please contact GB&I Secretary, John Crossman at: <u>railtonhouse1@gmail.com</u> or Gordon Johnston at: <u>editor.ifmr@gmail.com</u>

Both our GB&I and world websites list our histories and forthcoming events, including UK rides, plus trips to Poland and India next year, as well as contact details.







SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB

BY CATHERINE THORNHILL, HEAD BOOKWORM AT THE SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB

If you love books and love making a difference around the world, then the ShelterBox Book Club is perfect for you. Every story we read is inspired by the people that ShelterBox supports around the world.

TYPHOON BY QAISRA SHAHRAZ

Our current book Typhoon by Qaisra Shahraz is directly inspired by our ongoing work in Pakistan following the dreadful flooding earlier this year. Qaisra Shahraz is a British-Pakistani novelist, scriptwriter, and activist. Her writing is marked by contradicting and interweaving narratives.

In Typhoon she focusses on bringing three-dimensional women to the page in stories usually reserved for taboo-laden whispers. In the book we are transported to the country of her childhood. There we are immersed in the sights, sounds, and stories of communities made real through details that come from Qaisra's first-hand experience.

The story takes place in a small village warped in time by guilt. Its inhabitants still traumatised by what happened some twenty years earlier in a village trial. With the arrival of a beautiful stranger from the city a community is swept up by a typhoon-like series of events, eventually becoming buried under the emotional weight of it all.



Lalifa

Reading this book as our team were working on distributions in the Sindh region of Pakistan made us think of Lalifa who we met in September.

She is a widow, a mother, and a grandmother. She lives on a farm with her family where they have kept cows and a variety of crops for many years. When we met her, she had travelled two kilometres to request support, leaving her damaged wooden home which had been destroyed by the flooding.

Lalifa's home is one of 1.8 million houses that were ruined by the floods, which have affected around 30 million people across the whole of Pakistan. These numbers are almost too large to comprehend. To try and put it into context, the total number affected is nearly half of the population of the UK. Thanks to the amazing response to our Emergency Appeal, which a great many Rotarians contributed to, we were able to support the country within days. We are working in partnership with Islamic Relief in Pakistan and have just finished distributions to families just like Lalifa's. Our aid included tents, tarpaulins, water filters and carriers, mosquito nets, and solar lights.

The road to recovery in Pakistan will be long but thanks to our supporters, including our Book Club members, we will be there for many thousands of families searching for hope.



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ANGELA'S STORY

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UNDERSTANDING BIPOLAR

STORY BY JAMES BOLTON

OTARY in Great Britain and Ireland has joined forces with Bipolar UK as part of a new twoyear partnership.

The idea is to reach more people affected by bipolar and help them get the information and support they need to live well with the condition.

Bipolar is a severe mental health condition characterised by high and low moods. At their most extreme, the highs can lead to delusional thinking and psychosis and the lows to endless suicidal thoughts.

The partnership means that both organisations will work together to support 20% more people affected by bipolar in their first year.

This means an additional 20,000 people will get life-changing support in the next 12 months.

Rotary clubs and members across the UK will be using their networks and community connections to promote Bipolar UK's new campaign, 'Could it be bipolar?'

The campaign aims to get people who are struggling with their mental health to consider if they might have the condition.

The new resources on their website include a Mood Disorder Questionnaire to check how likely it is, a Mood Tracker app and information about getting a diagnosis.

Currently, it takes around 9.5 years for someone to receive a bipolar diagnosis, having a huge impact on people's lives, relationships, studies, careers and finances.

As well as sharing the campaign message, Rotary members across the UK will encourage their community networks to watch Bipolar UK's 20-minute 'Understanding Bipolar eLearning course'- a free resource for employers, colleagues, friends and family who want to learn about bipolar so they can understand how to support anyone they know who's living with the condition.

Gordon McInally, who will become Rotary International president in July 2023, is also an ambassador for Bipolar



The Bipolar UK Mood Scale



UK. "This partnership will help Rotary members across Great Britain and Ireland to understand more about bipolar, its symptoms and what support is available," Gordon commented.

"There are currently 1 in 50 people living with bipolar in the UK and many more who support them.

"Together, we can help shine a spotlight on bipolar and on the excellent work of Bipolar UK, helping us signpost people to its comprehensive support services so they can receive a formal diagnosis.

"People can and do live full and rewarding lives with bipolar, but the first step is accessing the right support."

Speaking about the partnership, CEO of Bipolar UK, Simon Kitchen, added: "Bipolar is a life-long severe mental health illness characterised by highs and lows.

"People living with bipolar are 20 times more likely to take their own life than someone from the general population. "We are so excited

about this partnership with Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, whose mission and aims align so well with our own. And it means we will be able to provide more people with bipolar with the tools they need to live a fulfilling life."

Bipolar UK has created a dedicated Rotary sub-site for the partnership, where you can learn more about the ambitious plans and how Rotary clubs and members can play a part in supporting people to live well with bipolar.

____ | Information | _____ <u>bipolaruk.org/rotary-resources</u>

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3D SCULPTOR - please send /email photographs for the first round of judging.

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GREETINGS CARD - design a greetings, birthday or Christmas card

Each category will be judged by a panel of professional artists who have a knowledge of each subject.

Please submit all art artwork entries as jpeg files

RULES OF ENTRY

- 1. ALL entrants for the competition must have a **DISABILITY** of some kind.
- 2. A person may only submit one entry in each category. All entries must be on the themes specified, PORTRAIT, or SUN SEA SKY, or OUTER SPACE. Other themes will be excluded from the competition by the head judge.
- 3. Each entrant will need to fill out the application form for the category he or she would like to enter. Application forms and entry instructions can be accessed and completed via our website ALL sections of the form MUST be filled in.
- 4. The COMPLETED FORM and the IMAGE jpg, must have the entrant's NAME for reference. Any JPG images or entry forms that are sent without the entrant's name will not be included.
- 5. A parent, guardian or school teacher MUST sign the application form.
- 6. Entry forms must be fully completed at www.uniqueartawards.uk. All original entries must be produced for this competition in accordance with the themes above.
- 7. Submissions must be received between 10th January and 29th March 2023.

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1st Place GOLD AWARD £750 in vouchers and £5,000 for their school / college 2nd Place SILVER AWARD £500 in vouchers and £3,000 for their school / college 3rd Place BRONZE AWARD £300 in vouchers and £2,000 for their school / college Art Teacher Award £3,000 for their schools creative arts departments

All finalists will be invited to a presentation ceremony in the Autumn of 2023 where the finalists and top three overall winners will receive their prizes.

The Mouth & Foot Painting Artists' Trust Fund Mr Tom Yendell 88 London Road Holybourne Hampshire GU34 4EL

Contact Information Further Info: info@uniqueartawards.uk Website: www.uniqueartawards.uk Telephone: 01420 887550





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'I take one a day and I'm enjoying running and cycling again.' Richard

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LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

ROTARY RAISES UKRAINIAN SPIRITS

OTARY clubs across Great Britain and Ireland have been welcoming and hosting Ukrainian refugees in the months following the war between Ukraine and Russia.

Llandudno Rotary in Wales, led by Rotarian Mike Perry, is co-ordinating initiatives designed to help the refugees feel welcome and integrate them into the local community.

The club is liaising with Meredith Levine from Friendswood Rotary Club in Houston, Texas. Representatives of the two clubs have met several times on Zoom.

The Friendswood club is engaged in a programme of providing financial support for many Ukrainian refugee initiatives through Link International - an umbrella voluntary organisation helping Ukrainians in North Wales - and Llandudno Rotary. Together with his friend Steve Ransome, Mike Perry has also organised multiple events to engage with the Ukrainian guests.

The events hosted included a bowling trip, where games were free of charge to provide an opportunity for the community to come together.

Rotarian Dan Worsley, the owner of Worsleywear clothing, has also taken an interest in supporting the initiative.

Worsleywear donated a large quantity of mixed clothing to soldiers and refugees, valued at approximately £10,000, as well as a variety of make-up products.

Dan has also been instrumental in arranging for Glan Conwy Football Club to welcome Ukrainian players. Dennis, a young boy who is training to be on the team, has spoken of his determination to be on the team.

He said: "Rotarian Dan Worsley



has been instrumental in arranging for Glan Conwy Football Club to welcome Ukrainian players."

"I will keep on training hard until I am good enough to be selected."

Many Rotary clubs across Great Britain and Ireland organised events to celebrate Ukraine's Independence Day and those Ukrainians living in their communities.

In south-east London, Bromley's Rotary clubs, led by Assistant Governor Christine Atkinson, held a family day on the grounds of The Warren in Hayes in conjunction with the Mayor of Bromley, Councillor Hannah Gray.

One of the casualties of war is happiness, and the event aimed to bring Ukrainian families together to be entertained and feel valued by their new community.

Christine Atkinson explained: "Fund-raising is a massive part of what Rotary does, but for that afternoon Rotary reminded people that it can also raise spirits."

As the event unfolded, Ukrainian guests of all ages turned up throughout the afternoon, selling artwork, food and more, while others enjoyed the stands and buying new items.

And as the day ended, staff from Bromley's Copper Ceylon restaurant handed round portions of their 'curry in a hurry' meals to Rotarians and other event helpers.

– Information

Rotary's Ukraine Appeal is still taking donations at: www.peoplesfundraising.com/ donation/Rotary-Ukraine

POOLING RESOURCES



NVERNESS'S five Rotary clubs have been working together to send valuable humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Inverness Culloden Rotary Club had initially been working with the UK-based paramedic charity, MedicsTogether, to send medical aid to Ukraine via Poland.

In July 2022, they sent three loads of medical items to Ukraine including 80 wheelchairs, 670 army blankets and numerous surgical masks, nitrile gloves, catheters, bandages and insulin syringes.

Since then, working with Inverness, Loch Ness, Culloden, and Riverside Rotary Clubs, plus the Inverness Inner Wheel Club - they have pooled resources to send basic toiletry items such as toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, and shampoo. a vanload with four wheelchairs, 20 mobility aids/crutches, 55 boxes of toiletries, 40 pairs of thick socks, 20 towels and seven boxes of various medical items, to the Scottish Borders en route to Ukraine.

In addition, £200 was sent to purchase around 100 pairs of socks in Poland. Socks will be delivered to front line soldiers, with towels and medical items going to hospitals. Wheelchairs and mobility aids will be given out as needed to soldiers and civilians.

Leading up to Christmas, the five clubs will now consult with MedicsTogether, UAFuture and Ukrainian families being accommodated at the Craigmonie Hotel in Inverness, to decide where their efforts are next best directed.

TRACTOR FACTOR



OCHFORD Hundred Vintage Tractor and Engine Club held a charity tractor run in support of Ukraine. Members of the Essex-based club have also been hosting Ukrainian families.

After raising £600, they asked the Rotary Club of Rochford to donate this on their behalf to a charity supporting Ukraine.

The Rotary club works very closely with ShelterBox, the emergency disaster relief charity which provides shelter and tools for families robbed of their homes by disaster, helping to transform despair into hope.

They have three ongoing projects going through the winter and have been supporting Ukraine since the conflict began. •

In October, Rotarians delivered

SETTING UP A HUB

INCE the start of the Ukraine war, the Rotary Club of Tormohun (Torquay) has been collecting from the public cash donations, clothing, blankets and toiletries. Several van loads have been sent to Ukraine via a local support group.

Some £5,880 in cash donations has been sent to the International Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals' Ukraine Appeal. With fading public awareness, the Rotary club promoted the need to continue support for the people of Ukraine. They are currently setting up a hub for receipt of Torbay-wide donations of food, baby supplies, sanitary, personal hygiene and medical donations, with three other Rotary clubs engaged in this - Totnes, Dartmouth and Preston.



UNIQUE ART AWARDS LAUNCH

AMPSHIRE Rotarian, Tom Yendell, is helping launch the 2023 Unique Art Awards with entries opening in January.

Tom has spent his recent years as a board member of Mouth and Foot Painting Artists' (MFPA) group.

MFPA is a partnership to provide financial support for the artists. As part of its mission MFPA has funded the annual competition, the "Unique Art Awards".

This is an opportunity for disabled children aged 7-21 to win prizes individually as well as for their school art department.

The idea for the Unique Art Awards arose when Tom was creating a small picture for a boy called Adam at an event in Bristol.

Tom recalled: "I did this card, I gave it to Adam then he took it, walked about three paces and stopped...he turned round, came back and he just said, "thank you so much for my picture, I love your uniqueness" and there it was.

"That's why the Unique Art Awards started - I wanted to try and do a national art competition for kids with uniqueness."

Information

To learn more about the competition visit: <u>uniqueartawards.uk</u>

HAKA WELCOME FOR BOOK LAUNCH



EW ZEALAND rugby legend, Zinzan Brooke and Countryfile presenter, Steve Brown, were on hand for the launch in South Wales of a children's safety book.

The Parc y Scarlets rugby ground hosted Tony and Lynn Churchill from the organisation 'OK Our Kids' for the launch of the revamped 'Watch Out' book - "A Child's Guide to Everyday Dangers", which is supported by Rotarians in South Wales.

The book has been personalised to be more suitable for children living in Wales with the help of Rhian Francis, Head of Five Roads School, Llanelli, and her pupils.

Other pages have also been changed to be more appropriate for the Rotary

district. Both the 'Watch Out' book and the series of five 'Purple Pup' books have been translated into Welsh, all organised by the Rotary in Southern Wales Public Image team.

OK Our Kids and Rotary ambassador, Steve Brown, acted as Master of Ceremonies interviewing MPs, council leaders, Rotarians, teachers and Past District Governor, Ray Bevan, who agreed the book should be made available to every child in Wales.

All Black rugby legend Zinzan Brooke, was also on hand to support the event and instructed pupils from two schools how to perform the Haka.

IN MEMORY OF THE QUEEN

N 1953, the Rotary Club of Cleckheaton & District marked the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II by creating a 'haven'. The space included a public seating area in the grounds of Cleckheaton Library.

Sadly, the inevitable happened, as time passed the original wooden benches became unsafe and had to be removed.

In order to continue its commitment to the local community and to celebrate

the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, Cleckheaton Rotary installed new metal benches in the seating area.

To commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, and in collaboration with the 'Cleckheaton in Bloom' group, the club has erected an arch to further enhance the seating area.

The arch was created by local blacksmith firm, T.K. Halford, and was installed by Cleckheaton Construction. Both companies have links to Rotary. The M.P. for Batley and Spen, Kim Leadbeater, officially inaugurated the arch at the library garden party on 3rd September, just a week before The Queen sadly passed away.

The arch and seating area will now act as a lasting memorial to Queen Elizabeth II.

BEDTIME STORIES FROM THE HIGHLANDS

VER the years, children have become used to fantastic creatures in their stories and one of the latest is Wee Roaty - bearing an uncanny resemblance to Rotary!

This is a kenspeckle and carefree bird who hails from Spain but gets windblown to Lochaber and ends up in the Highlands having larger than life encounters that will fire a youngster's imagination!

Written by one-time Lochaber Rotarian, David Anderson, with his grandson, Jack Knowles, the 60-page book has an educational thread and is illustrated by several local artists across the age range.

The reading age for the book could be around 8, though stories can of course be read to children of any age.

Usually retailing at £5, Lochaber Rotary is making these available to other clubs in packs of 10 for £30, with free postage. Please contact John Hutchison on 01397 772252.



ST HELENS BOROUGH TRAIL

OTARY St Helens, Northwest England, in partnership with the Council and other key partners has created a Heritage Trail around its famous Borough.

President of the Rotary Club, Paul Winstanley commented on the purpose of the trail and its potential impact on the community.

He said: "By creating a Heritage Trail around the Borough, it will increase the community's awareness; sense of pride of our St Helens Borough and raise young people and older generation's aspirations, it will also be a benefit to our local economy."

The plan is to have the first heritage sites in place before the Rugby World Cup in 2022.

There will be eight initial heritage sites which will include the Totally Wicked Stadium that is the home of St Helens Rugby League Club.

Tanya Wilcock, from St Helens Council, stated "As Director of Communities with responsibility to deliver on our Heritage Strategy, our partnership with Rotary St Helens allows us to deliver one of the key actions within that strategy which is Heritage Walking Trails within the Borough.

"Innovation still plays its part in St Helens Borough today and these Heritage Trails which the Council and Rotary are working on together will bring residents and visitors on a journey of discovery. This will help our young people and older generations to be inspired and to understand how their future and the future of their town continues to build on that proud heritage".



SPIRIT OF CRICKET

ROTARY sporting initiative in Erdington, West Midlands has been recognised with a national award in its first year.

The Rotary Club of Erdington has received the Inspired to Play Grass Roots Cricket Award from a project established in April to provide cricket facilities at Spring Lane Playing Fields in partnership with Changing Lives Through Rugby and Erdington RFC.

Youngsters have been able to take part in free coaching sessions on Thursday evenings as well as a school holiday scheme at the site.

They are coached by Ray Kelly from Aston Manor Cricket Club and funded by Birmingham City Council.

Chairman of the new Erdington Cricket Club CIC, Gary Dancer, said: "Rotary has supported Changing Lives Through Rugby for several years.

"We have also now provided two of the directors for this cricket venture and we use our business skills and contacts to support the project and make it work.

"We want more local young people to come along and try both cricket and rugby.

"We believe that organised sport is a very important part of educational activities, especially rugby and cricket because they require discipline and teamwork.

"These two sports are often difficult to access due to financial constraints on families. All our coaching is free to under-18s. We are open to all young people regardless of their background."



MICHAELMAS MARVEL

HOUSANDS of visitors flocked to a small village outside of Portsmouth for the 32nd Alverstoke Michaelmas Fayre.

Organised by Gosport Rotary Club, the event is reckoned to have raised more than £20,000 for good causes.

Held just days after the Queen's funeral, the feelgood factor was palpable in the village which was closed to traffic, engendering a true community spirit with more than 100 stall holders featuring small businesses and charitable organisations offering a range of crafts and memorabilia.

They were joined by a funfair on the village green, and the Parish Centre was taken over by the Girl Guides providing refreshments.

The day also featured entertainment from a choir, a jazz band plus the HMS Sultan Volunteer Band, who paraded through the village in a climax to the day, with the Gosport Mayor taking the salute.

St. Mary's Church Rector, the Reverend Andy Norris, said: "The fayre has become a village tradition with a life of its own."

Besides the money which charities and businesses raised from the fayre, further money collected by the organisers will be divided between the Mayor of Gosport's Charity Appeal, Gosport Rotary Club and the Alverstoke Parish Centre Regeneration Project.

LIGHTING UP THE SEASIDE



YME Regis Rotary Club lit up the Cobb in Dorset with over 5000 tealights, raising more than £20,000.

The event first took place in 2000 when it was set up by the local Town Crier and Assistant Harbour Master and has grown ever since.

The club took over the organisation in 2018 in order to keep the tradition going.

Over 230 volunteers gathered for the event with featured bands and morris dancers to mark the event.

Over 5000 recyclable tealight kits generously supplied by Nicola and Scott

of the Quinnell Candle Company were put in place.

As thousands gathered to watch, the candles were lit by teams of 150 people, including the RNLI, fire brigade, and Scouts, along with Axminster and Brit Valley Rotary Clubs.

This was followed by the music of 'Candle in the Wind' while the whole of the Lister Gardens became illuminated by thousands of people waving their phones.

Total donations are in excess of £20,000 which is probably the highest amount collected in a single day for one event.

.....

SCRAP ON THE WATER

BAR EXHILL Rotary Club in East Sussex had crowds lining the riverbanks in their local park to watch dozens of boats race between two ornamental lakes in the annual 'Scrapheap Challenge'.

The club had challenged the people of Bexhill to design and build their very own watercraft made from whatever materials they could lay their hands on, bring them to Egerton Park and see how they fared. The result was an increase in numbers from the previous year's event, as 34 participants competed for the 10 prizes that were on offer.

Bexhill Rotary Past President, Peter Mitchell-Davis, said: "We've had yet another successful time here at Egerton Park at this free event and all those participating and spectating seem to have enjoyed the occasion, competition and construction process. "It's a good feeling to put something like this event on for the community to take part in and enjoy."•





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MR X MAKES CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

MAGINE buying Christmas presents for 6,500 children. It sounds like an impossible task but, in South Wales, this is what happens every year with the help of Mr X and his friends.

Every year in Swansea, an anonymous Morriston Rotarian - Mr X - together with the community, collects thousands of presents to give to children.

The appeal has now branched out across the region, including Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Bridgend, Cardiff, and Carmarthenshire, with the Christmas appeal working with child support agencies, schools and over 150 refugees.

Sixty-three years ago, Mr X and his family supported a young child from a Swansea orphanage, particularly at Christmas, with friends also donating presents to the child.

The generosity was too much for one child so other orphanage children benefitted.

This evolved into a yearly event which has since grown. The principle of the appeal remains the same - no money is involved, no one person receives any credit, and every child receives a present.

The original Mr X died six years ago; however, the tradition continued as his son, who joined the Rotary Club of Morriston three years ago, took over, assisted by other Rotarians who supervise, organise and ensure the smooth running of the appeal.

The appeal works with child support agencies, schools and refuges to allocate the presents.

People drop off their gifts at local collection points and a team of drivers, many of them Rotarians, collect the donations.

A team of volunteers sort the presents to be taken to the children, for an appeal which also enjoys considerable business support.

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU



ASINGSTOKE Deane Rotary Club in Hampshire has supported Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in raising funds to purchase a £60,000 ablation machine.

An ablation machine is used by doctors to help find and fix irregular heartbeats (arrhythmias) but patients in Hampshire who needed this treatment previously had to go as far as Southampton.

Thanks to Basingstoke Deane Rotary raising £30,000 through various fund-raising activities, patients in Hampshire can now be treated closer to home, with the first procedure using the new machine recently taking place at Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital.

Alex Whitfield, Chief Executive of the HHFT said: "We are so grateful to the Basingstoke Deane Rotary Club for their generosity and support in getting this new technology into our hospitals.

"It is a great addition to the care we are able to provide and is a great example of our commitment to innovation for the benefit of our population."

Club President David Knights said: "We are all really pleased to have been able to make a difference by raising this money for such a good cause - with each pound making a big difference."

.....

HARVESTING ROTARY

WO Rotary clubs in Surrey have set up a joint allotment project that is set to help members of the community struggling for food in these difficult times.

The Rotary Club of Epsom and the Rotary Club of Ewell have started a joint allotment project which provides organically grown food for free to their local food pantry.

A dedicated team meets every Wednesday and Saturday to water and tend to the great variety of produce being grown there including spinach, tomatoes, beans, peppers, herbs, berries and lettuce just to name a few.

Currently the food is being provided to Epsom Pantry, with some of the team recently committing to delivering the produce via bicycle in an effort to be even more environmentally friendly.

The clubs recently got together at the allotment to hold a celebration of the project's impact so far with guests from both Epsom and Ewell as well as friends.

Everyone brought plates of food to share amongst the guests and there was the opportunity to view the amazing produce and arrangements the project has spawned so far.

In these economically trying times, both clubs see this as an extremely valuable project that has seen members of the community getting involved as well. Whatever happens, wherever it happens, whenever it happens, help is at hand.



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Supported by Rotary clubs in Great Britain & Ireland Editor's letter



and finally...

From Managing Editor Dave King editor@rotarygbi.org

TIME TO SHOW A BIT OF RESPECT

WAS once asked what I liked and disliked most about Rotary. My reply was the same: the people.

The good far outweighs the bad in quantum proportions.

There is an amazing goodness about Rotary when you meet such extraordinary and selfless people. I detailed this in an editorial last year about an inspiring visit to Brynmawr Rotary Club in South Wales which embodies how community-minded Rotary should be.

I felt humbled by the commitment to their community, driven not out of a sense of ego, but a desire to make a difference.

I have found much the same whenever I have visited Rotary clubs around the country, and through emails I receive daily from Rotary clubs telling their stories.

I feel inspired and positively grateful to Rotary for allowing our paths to cross.

After all, without Rotary, we would never have met. I now have friends for life.

These kind and generous folk represent the overwhelming vast majority of our organisation, with the mantra 'service above self' running rich through their veins.

But, on the flipside of the coin, there are a few who wear the badge and use Rotary as a vehicle for their own egos.

Maybe it says something of the demographic of Rotary; broadly an organisation of successful men and women, leaders who are used to doing things their own way, irrespective of the consequences, while living in their own silos.

Team-work, tolerance and understanding can be an alien attribute to these fools. But then, isn't it how you get to the top which is a measure of a person?

I have witnessed this behaviour on a few occasions in Rotary, with one friend last year subjected to the most disgraceful treatment during her term of office.

And, sadly, I have been on the receiving end of this abuse too.

When we think about the Rotary mantra of 'service above self', consider its proper meaning. Taking action in the name of Rotary for the greater good of Rotary, notwithstanding our own personal desires.

In order to grow Rotary, surely we all have to be selfless in our focus, more concerned with the wishes and needs of others than with our own.

Unfortunately, there are a few pursuing their own agendas with total disregard to wider Rotary, and they are killing their clubs and Districts as a result.

I stress, once again, from what I am witnessing, these represent a vast minority.

However, Rotary has no room for these tiring, soulless individuals. Rotary is better off without them. I say, please play your politics and take your egos elsewhere.

Even now, we should all be reminded by the values of our organisation. The Rotary Four-Way Test was adopted by Rotary International in 1943 – originally created in 1932 by Rotarian Herbert J. Taylor. Its mantra still holds good today:

- Is it the truth?
- Is it fair to all concerned?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendships?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

By the way, my friends at the Deal Pirates in Kent have a fifth test: is it fun?

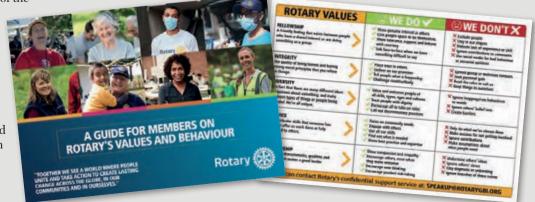
However, let me point you in the direction of the newly published guide on Rotary's values and behaviour, which is a modern and clear outline for how Rotarians should behave. There is a link below where you can obtain printed copies from the Rotary Shop.

Some would say we don't need such explicit guidance. I disagree. It's easier to ignore the unsavoury behaviour than deal with it - or even walk away. Sometimes a gentle reminder is needed.

Ultimately, it is about respect. It is also about Rotary and peace the world over. •



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