

# Rotary

JUNE | JULY 2023

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## LONELINESS

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# Rotary

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## Welcome

If you're a fan of Peter James or Jeffrey Archer novels, then you will have noticed how Rotary occasionally crops up in their novels.

Inevitably, the characters tend to come across fairly stereotypical; a businessman, who is a pillar of the community, attending a midweek Rotary lunch at the golf club who meets an untimely death on the way home. No mention of volunteering, polio, or other community work - and it tends to be an elderly man.

But was it ever thus with the public image of Rotary reflected in modern media as the bowler hat and brolley brigade typified by Dad's Army's Captain Mainwaring and the Rotary Club of Warmington-on-Sea?!

So it's interesting to note the publication of a new novel with Rotary as its central theme. 'The Club' is written by Suffolk Rotarian, James Barrett and published by Matador Books set at the fictional Rotary Club of Debenham.

James discusses his book in this month's issue of the magazine, and it makes for fascinating reading.

The book itself is a gentle, light-hearted read focused on George, who is not a typical Rotarian but who through his autism can be blunt to the point of rude. And there's Alec, who comes after George with a shotgun in a drunken rampage with disastrous results.

Amusing in parts, it's an interesting read, nonetheless, offering a different perspective on Rotary. What will non-Rotarians think about the organisation - now there's a question?!

In reviews, one described 'The Club' as "an incredibly quirky and unique tale about a small Rotary club going through serious change as the world around them moves at a pace". And another wrote:

"I'm not a member of a Rotary club but found the details in this entertaining book resonated with me, as will anyone who has ever attended committee meetings."

Maybe someone should have a word with JK Rowling to set up a fictional RotaKids club at Hogwarts!

This month's magazine covers a wide variety of topics which will hoping prompt debate and interesting. Key among these is the issue of loneliness, and often forgotten issue but one which resonates in communities everywhere.

The Age UK television advertisements in recent months have hammered home that message, which is why it is good to see Rotary clubs addressing this issue with local level projects. We focus on club projects in Chichester, West Sussex, and Bromley in south-east London, as well as reflect on the success of Memory Cafes which have sprung up around the country.

As we are about to move into a new Rotary year and think about club projects to adopt, it's worthwhile thinking about loneliness as something which is simple to deliver and could create greatest impact.

Finally, returning to literature, but I am looking for bookworms who might help me set up a Rotary book club.

Are there any Rotary clubs which organise book clubs or Rotarians who are regularly involved with a book club?

I am looking to publish a regular Rotary Book Club page in the magazine from January. If you love books, have a pretty eclectic taste with literature capable to writing about a wide variety of books which might to appeal to fellow Rotarians, then I would love to hear you.

Email me at: [editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org)

**Dave King**  
Editor, Rotary Magazine

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A photograph of three women of different ages laughing joyfully together outdoors. The woman in the center is a Black woman with braided hair, wearing a maroon t-shirt. To her left is a white woman with short grey hair wearing a yellow top. To her right is a white woman with short grey hair and glasses, wearing an orange jacket. They are all smiling broadly and looking towards each other.

# CONNECTION IS A CURE

| STORY BY DAVE KING |

Rotary clubs, experts, and governments are tackling loneliness with meaningful interactions, Rotary Editor, Dave King visits a club in West Sussex which is trying to tackle loneliness and bridging generations.



## "SOMETIMES I'M NOT SURE IF I WANT TO GO OUT, BUT WHEN I COME BACK HOME, I FEEL I'VE HAD A GOOD MORNING."

**F**OR Vera Cranmer and Sylvia Worden, two friends in their 80s, it's hard to overstate how much they look forward to their regular visits with the teenage students at a local college on England's south coast. "We savour these visits like reunions with long-lost friends," Sylvia says.

The women live independently in their homes in Chichester, a picturesque and vibrant cathedral city near the sea. But Sylvia, who once worked as a teacher there, was widowed a few years ago, and her outings in town are far less frequent. Vera, too, has had to cope with feelings of isolation.

Today, though, the two women are among a dozen elders, as they call themselves, having a lively discussion about the royal family with the students at Chichester College.

"I really enjoy the discussions with the young people. Some of them are so aspirational," says Sylvia.

"I am probably one of the younger elders there, but I've made good friends with a lady who is 92. It's a great outlet for a lot of the older residents."

Vera, 88, agrees. "Sometimes I'm not sure if I want to go out, but when I come back home, I feel I've had a good morning."

"It's nice to meet other people like myself, but it's really nice to meet the youngsters, to see a different side and come back feeling positive."

Vera once worked as an occupational therapist, specialising in caring for people with cerebral palsy.

These days, she has difficulty walking and depends on the on-demand minibus transport to get to the college. "I couldn't manage without it," she says.

Bridging Generations, a project organised by the Rotary Club of Chichester Priory, is tackling loneliness by connecting college students with older people. Every two weeks, a group of elders has coffee, cake, and a chat with students in the college canteen. Afterwards, many elders stay for lunch cooked by

catering students. The Rotary club pays for transport, while Chichester College provides the space and refreshments.

The costs are minimal, but the rewards plentiful. A 2018 report by the non-profit organisations Generations United and the Eisner Foundation indicated that intergenerational programmes are particularly effective in fostering well-being.

Among adults who participated in one such programme, 97% reported that they benefitted, with the vast majority saying they felt happy, loved, and needed.

There are benefits for younger people too. For instance, Chichester College has invited students from across campus to take part in the Bridging Generations meetings, and the project has proved a valuable tool to build students' communication and interpersonal skills.

"What has come across more than anything is the shared laughter and camaraderie, the feeling of being valued, listened to, and that you matter, whether you are 17 or 92 years old," says Rae Benn, who until recently helped facilitate the programme for the college.

Bridging Generations was the

brainchild of Rotarian Mike Harvey, who approached Chichester College in 2013 with the idea. He recognises alleviating loneliness and isolation as a significant community challenge. The quest starts with identifying those who are on their own a lot of the time and willing to reach out and seek connection.

Mike, a member of the Chichester Priory club, found participants by talking to community organisations such as Age UK and Health and Independent Living Support, which provides meals on wheels.

"Others came to us through church leaders, sheltered housing, and our own contacts," he says. "When it all comes together, seeing lonely people having good times, talking to students two or three generations below them, is so stimulating."

Exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic seclusion, loneliness has become a global public health crisis. In Britain, 5% of adults, or 2.6 million people, said in a government survey that they felt lonely "often" or "always" during a month in the pandemic's early days in 2020. About 14% felt that their well-being had been affected by feeling lonely in the past week; that's ▶



## **"AMONG ADULTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN ONE SUCH PROGRAMME, 97% REPORTED THAT THEY BENEFITTED, WITH THE VAST MAJORITY SAYING THEY FELT HAPPY, LOVED, AND NEEDED."**

about 7.4 million people across Britain whom the Office for National Statistics refers to as "the lockdown lonely".

Such is the concern in the UK that in 2018 the government appointed a minister for loneliness as part of a "Tackling Loneliness" strategy that has invested more than £50 million to work with a range of charitable partners.

Studies in Europe and the U.S. link chronic loneliness to poor physical health and an increased risk of dementia, coronary heart disease, and stroke.

Researchers have likened loneliness to high blood pressure or smoking 15 cigarettes daily as a risk factor for premature death.

A well-known Harvard University study that tracked 724 people over their entire adult lives clearly determined social relationships as the best predictor of a person's long-term physical and emotional well-being.

The connection between poor physical health and loneliness is so evident that doctors in the UK, Australia, Canada, Korea, the Netherlands, and elsewhere have adopted "social prescribing" by routinely screening their patients for loneliness and directing them to activities within their communities.

In one pilot project, health care providers managed to decrease patients' sense of loneliness by 49%.

In leading studies, several groups stand out as reporting more loneliness than others. They include those between the ages of 16 and 24 and those over 75 years old, according to the BBC Loneliness Experiment survey, as well as single and widowed people.

Women are often found to report significantly more loneliness than men, though some researchers caution that the gender difference might be due to men being more reluctant to report undesirable feelings such as loneliness. Additional risk factors for loneliness include mental illness and poor physical health.

In June 2022, at the start of

Loneliness Awareness Week, the UK government published further research that demonstrated how mental health distress can play a significant role in the onset and continuation of chronic loneliness.

The report also suggests a solution: targeted early intervention. "People experiencing chronic loneliness were shown in our study to be nearly four times more likely than people without chronic loneliness to be in mental distress," explains Sokratis Dinos, co-director of health and social care at the London-based National Centre for Social Research.

"Poor mental health can lead to difficulties connecting with others, social withdrawal, and loneliness, while loneliness can equally contribute to poor mental health. Our research highlights the benefit of targeted support for people at different life stages and community-based activities for people with shared interests to improve outcomes."

Ministers in the British government came together to draw up a revised strategic plan for targeted intervention to be published early this year, supported

by £750 million for a charity funding package.

"Loneliness can affect all of us, and the research highlights that young and disabled people, alongside those with long-term health conditions, are disproportionately affected," former Loneliness Minister, Nigel Huddleston, said in announcing the research.


"I encourage everyone to reach out to someone they think may be feeling alone or isolated. The government prioritised tackling loneliness through the pandemic, and we will now redouble our efforts to protect those most at risk."

"Loneliness is a growing issue," acknowledged Gillian Keegan, then serving as the UK's Minister for Care and Mental Health. "We're accelerating the rollout of mental health support teams in schools and expanding community services for adults and young people to make sure everyone can access support."

Since Rotary's founding purpose is for people from different backgrounds to exchange ideas and form meaningful, lifelong friendships, Rotary clubs are a natural antidote for loneliness.

They offer connections plus closer engagement with the wider community.

Researchers suggest that the quality of relationships, not the quantity, matters most. Rotary provides a sense of purpose and meaning, accompanied by the personal payback of greater self-worth.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 







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## "I AM PROBABLY ONE OF THE YOUNGER ELDERS THERE, BUT I'VE MADE GOOD FRIENDS WITH A LADY WHO IS 92. IT'S A GREAT OUTLET FOR A LOT OF THE OLDER RESIDENTS."

pandemic, when in-person meetings were curtailed, Rotary members kept connecting with older and disabled people through phone calls, running errands for them, picking up prescriptions, and even walking their dogs.

Lisa Hunter, a member of the Rotary Club of Maidenhead Bridge, received a British Empire Medal in the Queen's 2022 New Year Honours List for mobilising her club's response to families in need during the pandemic.

"Through the Rotary network, we come together to use our skills and knowledge to support each other and build up our communities," she says.

"Nowhere was this more apparent to me than at the beginning of the pandemic when our community went into lockdown and people were isolated and shut-in.

"My club formed a community response team to mobilise a network of volunteers to do what we do best: support those who need help in difficult times."

With a pool of 120 volunteers, including non-Rotary members, the club supported more than 150 households, performing more than 3,800 errands, which equated to around 6,500 volunteer hours.

Worldwide, Rotary clubs have always worked within their communities to reach out to those who feel isolated.

For instance, Rotary clubs run or otherwise support dozens of Memory Cafes across the UK. They are focal points for people with early-onset dementia as well as their caregivers to meet, play games, chat, watch films, and sing.

Originally developed in the Netherlands in the 1990s, the concept was introduced to Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland in 2008 by Tim Jones, a member of the Rotary Club of Wadebridge.

"At the time, I was working for the National Health Service managing mental health services in Cornwall," Tim says.

He heard about a Memory Cafe in nearby Launceston, thought he should find out more, and subsequently set up

the first Rotary-run Memory Cafe in Wadebridge.

The event was so successful that Tim has since helped other Rotary clubs organise Memory Cafes in their communities.

"We try to create a comfortable, failure-free environment," says Geri Parlbly, a Rotarian from Tavistock in Devon. She has been heavily involved in supporting a Memory Cafe in Tavistock, and spreading the growth of these meet-ups.

"The idea of Memory Cafes is to offer peer support. It's a simple philosophy about leaving people with a positive experience, bringing people together to support one another."

As part of his role with the National Health Service, Tim has been conducting research into the benefits of Memory Cafes. Though he has not yet published his findings, he sees evidence that socialising and engaging with others creates beneficial changes in the brain. For those with memory loss, this approach aligns with the goals of cognitive stimulation therapy.

"It is about creating positive engagement which focuses on strengths rather than weakness," Tim says.

"Psychologists found that cognitive stimulation therapy and psychosocial engagement can be as effective as the medication given to people in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease and can slow down brain deterioration."

Tim is careful not to suggest that social engagement can stop dementia.

"There is no cure for Alzheimer's disease," he says.

"But what we can do is build resilience, which evidence shows can slow down the progress of Alzheimer's and support people with other dementias. Memory Cafes are wonderful examples of sanctuaries to tackle loneliness, not just among people with dementia, but for their carers as well."

Taking care of the caregivers is an often-overlooked challenge. Another

consequence of the pandemic is an increase in the number of people who are caring for a partner, family member, or friend because of illness.

Carers UK estimates there are now more than 10 million unpaid caregivers in the United Kingdom.

They range from young adults to retirees. Since 2020, Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland has partnered with Carers UK to highlight the issue. Carers UK offers a telephone help line, regular online meetups, and an online forum where caregivers can connect to provide mutual support.

Cheryle Berry, a member of the Rotary Club of Clay Cross in Derbyshire, serves as one of the partnership leads. "Caring is often a very lonely situation, and carers can feel isolated and overwhelmed," she says.

More than 100 Rotary club ambassadors and district leads have connected thousands of caregivers in their communities to the free services of Carers UK, according to Cheryle.

"Rotarians regularly arrange online and face-to-face meetings of unpaid carers for friendship and support, including respite opportunities, Rotary friendship cafes, and activity groups across the UK," Cheryle explains.

In August 2022, Rotary launched the Rotary Million Unpaid Carers campaign with a goal to reach one million caregivers with support and advice by the end of the 2022-23 Rotary year.

Back in Chichester, Vera Cranmer and Sylvia Worden are feeling the power of face-to-face connection through their meetings at the college.

Seeing other older adults like them who are also seeking ways to cope with isolation is proof they're not alone.

"Some of the elders, like me, may not have been out for a week or two," Sylvia says. "The college meetings help us to engage with the students who help us to cope with feelings of isolation. It's also great because of the relationships we are able to form with other elders."

Vera agrees and adds, "It's a good way to spend what could be a lonely day." ●

### | Also read |

Tackling loneliness through football on page 48



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# AUTHOR HAS ROTARY IN HIS SIGHTS

James Barrett, a Rotarian from Suffolk has written a novel, *The Club*, which is all about Rotary. The novel was published earlier this year by Troubador Publishing and is focused on the fictional Rotary Club of Debenham.

## **TELL ME ABOUT YOUR ROTARY STORY**

The first thing I would say is that Rotary is a fantastic organisation and I am proud to be a small part of it.

My wife, Gillian, and I moved to Suffolk in 2007, not long after I retired. A couple of days later, friends Alan and Denise walked up the garden. We sat in the kitchen and chatted for a long time. Everything was in disarray, and we couldn't even find the kettle to proffer a cup of tea.

Alan invited me to a meeting of the Rotary Club of High Suffolk, which I attended and eventually I joined. Sometime after, I helped to found the Framlingham Rotary Club, where I was the club's first secretary and also served a term as president. Eventually, I returned to High Suffolk, but the club was

struggling and finally dissolved. I then joined my present club, Diss & District, just over the county boundary in Norfolk.

## **HAVE YOU WRITTEN MUCH IN THE PAST WHICH HAS BEEN PUBLISHED?**

No, apart from a letter in *The Times*. When I retired, I started a writing course, but I soon realised that I really wasn't interested in writing articles for magazines that I never read; it would have to be a book or nothing.

## **WHAT SPARKED THE NOTION OF WRITING A BOOK?**

I had long nurtured the ambition to write a book; lots of people do, but most never get around to it. Had it not been for lockdown, neither would I. A blank sheet of paper or PC screen can be daunting.

## **CAN YOU GIVE A SUMMARY ABOUT THE NOVEL AND THE CENTRAL CHARACTER, GEORGE?**

### **The plot**

Essentially, this is a whimsical story about a battle for the soul of the club between the incoming president and his supporters who strive for change, and the traditionalists, like George, who want things to stay the same; but darker forces come into play. Other strands of storyline bring together the disparate worlds of Rotary, a local charity, a local shoot and a village hall committee.

For very different reasons, both factions within the club want George to stand for president-elect, but he refuses because he has already served as president. In an imaginative and audacious move, Machiavellian club



## "THE VILLAIN OF THE BOOK, ALEC BARTON, AN OLD SCHOOL FRIEND OF GEORGE'S, IS ELECTED A MEMBER OF THE CLUB DESPITE FIERCE OPPOSITION FROM FIONA, A DECISION THAT WOULD HAVE DISASTROUS RAMIFICATIONS WITHIN THE CLUB."

secretary, Claire, carefully orchestrates George's election, without his knowledge. He finds out much later from club minutes, when it's too late to back out.

The villain of the book, Alec Barton, an old school friend of George's, is elected a member of the club despite fierce opposition from Fiona, a decision that would have disastrous ramifications within the club.

In a matter to do with the charity of which he is chairman, George is involved in a bizarre and hilarious escapade, which attracts the attention of national newspapers. George has to defend himself in both his club and his charity.

Misfortunes lead to George becoming acting president, and matters come to a head when the club suspends George's erstwhile friend, turned nemesis, Alec Barton, who had failed to disclose a pecuniary interest in a matter before the club. The club council wrestle with a dilemma: is a conflict of interest a moral absolute, or a matter of degree? The club suspend Alec Barton, who goes on a drunken rampage and comes after George toting a shotgun, with calamitous results. The club is now at a low ebb and faces dissolution. Can it survive?

### George, the main protagonist

George is a member of the fictional Rotary Club of Debenham in rural Suffolk. He is autistic, blunt to the point of rudeness and unable to understand body language; he's not a typical Rotarian. Despite his autism, he is highly intelligent, well-educated and successful in life. He has a fondness for Gilbert & Sullivan operettas, which provide sanctuary from a noisy and chaotic world. He is also the chairman of a small, local charity of little relevance in the modern world.



### WOULD YOU SAY DEBENHAM ROTARY CLUB IS TYPICAL OF ROTARY CLUBS IN GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND?

Rotary clubs are all different in some measure. At least, that what Rotarians who've visited more clubs than I have, usually say. Debenham Rotary Club, which is purely a figment of my imagination, is probably much like many small clubs in rural areas, apart from the drama.

### WHY ROTARY AS A THEME FOR THE BOOK?

It was Mark Twain who said 'write what you know'. Heeding that advice, I decided to write a story set in a fictional Rotary club. I had been a Rotarian for a number

of years and it was a subject with which I felt comfortable. Also, as far as I know, no one else has ever written a novel about Rotary.

### CAN YOU PINPOINT SOME OF THE IDIOSYNCRASIES ABOUT ROTARY WHICH MARK THIS BOOK?


I suppose new members are more likely to recognise Rotary's idiosyncrasies. I recall how I was impressed by the power of the Rotary bell, a good solid strike of which brought instant silence to enable the president to address the meeting without competing with the general hubbub of the room. Many clubs have dispensed with the Rotary bell and in *The Club*, this leads to calamity.

The practice of a visiting member bringing greetings from his or her president is something to which, in *The Club*, Fiona makes some withering comments.

The Rotary Constitution is prescriptive in such matters as the election of new members, the membership of club council and the election of president-elect, but clubs do not always follow them in every respect. In *The Club*, I have followed the procedures in detail to create particular storylines.

Rotarians often grumble about their dinners but tend to put up with them. In *The Club*, I have given them good dinners. It's easier in a book than in real life.

### WHO ARE THE CHARACTERS BASED ON AND HOW TRUE IS THE STORY?

The characters are all fictional, but that said, they are perhaps a mashup of people I have come across in life, with the exception of George, the main 



protagonist.

When I looked critically at the first draft of my manuscript, George, the main character, seemed too bland, and I thought long and hard about the changes that I knew I needed to make.

I had read about a real person who was autistic and had achieved a senior position in his profession, then I came across a book by Sara Gibbs, who is autistic, entitled *Drama Queen: One Autistic Woman and a Life of Unhelpful Labels*. That provided me with the makings of a character who was 'different,' but believable. I gave George an interest in the music of Gilbert & Sullivan and he seemed complete. *The Club* is a work of fiction, of course.

### **WHAT DID YOU DO IN TERMS OF RESEARCH?**

The story takes place roughly over one Rotary year, although it doesn't unfold chronologically. I have been secretary in two clubs, so I have a fairly good knowledge of the Rotary Constitution, which I consulted from time to time. I carried out some research into autism to make my main character believable and I also researched the works of Gilbert & Sullivan, as I am not so knowledgeable

**"THE CHARACTERS ARE ALL FICTIONAL, BUT THAT SAID, THEY ARE PERHAPS A MASHUP OF PEOPLE I HAVE COME ACROSS IN LIFE, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF GEORGE, THE MAIN PROTAGONIST."**

about their music as is George.

There are many pheasant shoots in Suffolk, and a local shoot and a shotgun incident feature in *The Club*. I did some research on shotguns and drew on my own experience of a local shoot.

### **HOW DO YOU THINK ROTARY WILL BE PERCEIVED BY READERS OF YOUR BOOK?**

Most people have a positive view of Rotary, even if some think that all we do is eat dinners. I hope that readers who are not Rotarians will end up with a better understanding of Rotary as a force for good. I'm sure they will recognise that the bitter disputes in the book and a dramatic shooting are not how we normally conduct ourselves.

### **DO YOU HAVE PLANS FOR A FOLLOW-UP?**

I cannot think beyond *The Club* at the moment. I hope that it achieves some modest success, but I am very aware that the world of books is a crowded market. *The Club* ends on a point which would lead naturally to another book. Whether I will write that book I cannot say at the moment. ●



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# REBUILDING AFTER **DISASTER** STRIKES



**In February, devastating earthquakes struck southern Turkey and north-west Syria killing over 50,000 and injuring many more. Ray Seager from Minster on Sea Rotary Club in Kent (pictured below) visited the region thanks to a meeting with a lady called Maya.**

**L**AST February, I heard about Maya's Community Support Group in Herne Bay, Kent and I was keen to find out more. Maya Amangeldiyeva has already been actively supporting Ukrainian refugees and was now raising aid and funds to help those stricken in Turkey.

I visited Maya in her small coffee shop in Herne Bay and was absolutely blown away by what she had achieved in very little time. Maya is not a Rotarian, she just wants to do good in her local community.

She set up an appeal to raise aid to send to Turkey without any idea of how to get it there and that's where Rotary came in. After a brief consultation with our international lead, Francis Hodge, it was agreed that District 1120 (Rotary in the South East) would fund the lorry to go to Hatay and the city of Antakya.

Maya made contact with a haulage company who have a depot in Purfleet near Dartford and a huge depot in Turkey. They delivered the aid at cost price which cost the district £4,200.

When I visited Maya, she had enough aid to fill three 40-foot lorries, but had no way of getting it to Turkey. This included winter clothes, sleeping bags, beds, medical aid, children's clothes and toiletries which had been collected from Herne Bay and across Kent.

Even local MP, Sir Roger Gale, became aware of Maya's efforts and was there helping load the lorry. We have since sent a second lorry with portable toilets which are in great need in the affected areas.

In March, Maya received a phone call from those receiving the aid in Turkey, asking if we would care to travel there to greet our lorry when it arrived and help to unload it. This was an opportunity I could not refuse.

Driving to where we would be



spending two nights sleeping in a tent was heart-breaking, breath-taking and devastating, as we drove mile after mile after mile past devastated buildings on the side of the road with people just wandering around.

On the first morning of our three-day stay in Antakya, we were taken to see a family who had very little and lived in a ramshackle tent. It was quite a warm day and unbeknown to us they had arranged breakfast, which we couldn't believe.

This family had nothing, yet they provided hard-boiled eggs, cucumber, tomatoes, honey and bread.

As we walked into their 'home' there was a young mum with her five-month-old baby daughter. I asked Maya, who speaks fluent Turkish, what the baby's name was, at this point she highlighted how the mother and four of her children had been trapped in the rubble of their home for up to 30 hours.

Her young baby was out of her reach. She was asking her five-year-old son to keep pinching the baby to make her cry so that the rescuers could hear where they were and, after 10 hours, the baby was rescued.

The mother, her five-year-old son, and 11-year-old daughter were still trapped after another 20 hours. The mother was rescued after 30 hours.

However, in that period she heard her 11-year-old daughter take her last breath as she choked on the dust.

They have never found her five-year-old son. How this woman copes every day, I have no idea.

A lot of the people we spoke to felt they had been forgotten. The scale of the disaster meant there were always going to be those who could not be helped or reached in the short-term.

Mothers were desperate for soft toys for their children. They had zero time to take anything from their homes as the earthquake struck.

It is a sobering thought that most of those killed, their bodies in the rubble were found close to the exit doors.

We went to a tented village which was occupied by Syrian immigrants.

They had very little and made it clear that this was the second time they had lost everything. The first time these refugees had fled Syria, and now they had endured this earthquake.

We met one family living under a tent. Five beds were crammed into a tiny area not much bigger than 12-foot square. The grandmother was 82-years-old, very fragile and immobile.

She spoke to us with tears in her eyes explaining how she had lived in this area all her life. The home where she lived was just yards away and uninhabitable.

She did not want to leave because this was where she was born and this was where she wanted to die. ●

# The pirates sailing Rotary to new horizons

The Deal Rotary Pirates have become one of the fastest growing Rotary clubs in the United Kingdom through their unique approach to fund-raising which has won over their local community.

STORY BY **GEORGE BICKNELL**

If the residents of any other town in the UK saw the members of The Deal Rotary Pirates striding down their streets in their usual swashbuckling attire, they may worry they've accidentally travelled back in time.

However, residents of the coastal town in Kent, have come to know the increasingly popular club as a force for good in their community and beyond, the pirate costumes only helping the interest in the club's activities.

As Club Secretary Dave 'Dandy' Lister explains: "When I'm walking down the high street with a Rotary tabard on, me being an old bloke with grey hair, people cross the road to avoid me. If I'm walking down the high street with my pirate outfit on people come across the road to meet me to find out what's going on."

Officially called the Rotary Club of The Three Castles of Deal, when the club obtained its official charter, the first club in the South-East to do so for over 10 years, Dave was the only member already a part of Rotary – a testament to the club's spectacular organic growth.

The concept started when Julie and Gary Kemp, Past-President and Project Coordinator for Deal Rotary Pirates, went to the pub to meet up with Dave, then a member of the Rotary Club of Deal, to





discuss potential fundraising projects.

Dandy suggested the pirate outfits as part of a fun-run and Julie and Gary thought the dress-up idea would work as part of a treasure hunt across town, something the couple organised back in the village where they used to live.

The treasure hunt across Deal has become an annual tradition for the club and the pirate look is now an integral part of the club's fun-loving reputation.

Gary recalls: "We liked the brand right from the very beginning, and with my background and now Julie's background as well with design and print, we created the Rotary Pirates logo, and it seems to be well-known throughout the town and beyond.

"We have been told by one or two people there were no pirates in Deal but because we're pirates, we don't worry about things like that!"

It's not all just eye-grabbing outfits though, everything Deal Rotary Pirates does is in the name of promoting Rotary's core values.

Dave explains: "We are Rotarians and we believe in service above self and all the things that Rotary brings with us.

"We do read The Five-Way Test, which is a standard Four-Way Test but the fifth one is read by a different person at each meeting, and everyone joins in on number five: will it be fun?"

Apart from the club's fun-loving attitude, something else to be admired is the level of diversity it maintains, with the club's membership being predominantly female.

Julie Kemp says of the club: "We are three quarters female, which is unusual, and that isn't something that we particularly driven for. It's just the way it's happened.

"We've got people from all walks of life, as well. It's not that everyone's a professional person or ex-professional person - we've got all walks of life as well as different ages, backgrounds and skills."

It's that mix of backgrounds and skills that Deal Rotary Pirates take special care in nurturing, with member Laurie Phillips finding that his background in PR and media training has been used to its full potential, whether it's putting together promotional films for club activities or getting club members ready to be

interviewed on local radio.

Laurie commented: "One of the values that Julie has encouraged is that people bring whatever skills or talents they've got to the party - everyone's got a value, and everyone's got something they can do."

When asked what it is that has made the club so warmly embraced by the Deal community, the different members named different elements of the club's structure such as more informal meetings, subgroups allowing different members to focus on different projects and different payment schemes that ease the burden on those most affected by the cost of living.

However, the two common themes throughout their answers are flexibility and a willingness to engage.

Laurie elaborates: "The people that have joined us, nearly everyone's joined because they've seen the values of the pirates in action.

"They haven't come because of the strong Rotary ground, which I don't think was understood at our level, they seem to come along because they recognise these are real people and friendly.

"One of Julie and Gary's values quite early on was that we wanted to make people, from day one when they walked in, feel welcome and find a structure they could engage with so they didn't have to wait to get involved."

With the club continuing to establish itself as a constant feature of local events in Deal, there's no reason why The Deal Rotary Pirates can't provide a template for other clubs to become equally treasured parts of their communities.

As Dandy eloquently puts: "We are out there for ourselves because we thoroughly enjoy it and we're out there promoting the pirates, but we are also sustaining Rotary in our local community that is very important to us." ●



# GET ON YOUR BIKE FOR ROTARY RIDE

| STORY BY **BY MICHAEL ESTERS** |  
**ROTARY CLUB OF CARLISLE & ROTARY RIDE 2023 CO-ORDINATOR**

**P**LANNING for Rotary Ride 2023 this September is well under way with the focus on raising funds and awareness for prostate cancer.

“Rotary Ride originally started in 2014/15, with a brief one-year hiatus in support of eradication of polio, it has raised vital funds supporting the four main national prostate cancer in Great Britain and Ireland; Prostate Cancer UK, Prostate Scotland, Prostate Cymru and the Irish Cancer Society.”

Following cancellations for two years due to Covid, Rotary Ride 2021 and 2022 resumed raising funds for prostate cancer.

In 2021, through events hosted by 36 Rotary clubs we raised over £30,000 and distributed more than 2,000 leaflets about prostate cancer.

In 2022, another 25 clubs hosted events raising over £20,000 and distributing a further 2,000.

Rotary Ride has raised over £50,000 for prostate cancer research and education which is an impressive amount considering less than 30 clubs are hosting Rotary Ride events.

With more than 1,500 clubs in Great Britain & Ireland, imagine the amount of funds we could raise if that number increased ten-fold.

Through Rotary Ride, this has raised the profile of Rotary and what it does in the local communities. It has also raised awareness of prostate cancer and raise funds.

Every Rotary club has been affected either directly or indirectly by prostate cancer. Whether we have lost a loved

one, members of our extended family, personal friends, members of our own Rotary club or been personally diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Here are some statistics about this cancer that affects only men who are mostly in the age-demographic of our membership in Rotary.

- Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, affecting 1 in 8 in Great Britain and Ireland sometime during their lifetime.
- More than 52,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year. That equates to approximately 140 men every day.
- Around 475,000 men within Great Britain and Ireland are living with prostate cancer or post cancer treatment, including myself a seven-year survivor.
- Prostate cancer is treatable if caught early, but sadly more than 12,000 men die from prostate cancer within Great Britain and Ireland annually. That equates to a man dying from prostate cancer every 45 minutes.
- Prostate cancer never takes a holiday, nor does it discriminate. Well known celebrities who have died of prostate cancer include radio and TV presenter, Bill Turnbull, comedian Bob Monkhouse, author James Herriot and Winston Churchill.

Everyone reading this article has heard of prostate cancer, but what is the prostate and what is prostate cancer?

- The prostate is a walnut size gland that

sits beneath the bladder and surrounds the urethra.

- Prostate cancer develops when cells in the prostate start to grow in an uncontrollable manner. Sometimes the cancer grows so slowly to not cause any problems before diagnosis, but other times like mine it grows rapidly and begins to spread.
- Early prostate cancer often has no symptoms so many men don't know that they are affected.
- Men are at risk if they are over 50, of Black ethnicity or if they have a family history of prostate cancer.

Rotary Ride 2023 planning is under way for this September. Guidance packages are now available for clubs to host an event. We have contacts with UK cycling organisations who can assist with planning and conducting an event.

Participating and hosting an event does not need to be complicated. You could sponsor a club member who is a cyclist who is cycling in an event and donate raised funds through a prostate organisation's Rotary Ride JustGiving website, like many did last year.

Last year, clubs hosted static cycle rides in the entrance of supermarkets, actual rides through their local area and other types of activities. Granted, the demographics for many Rotary clubs does not lead to many members participating in rides, but they can still support an event through marshalling, fund raising, and running an event.

The scary thing is that the age demographics of our members are the ones most susceptible to the diagnosis



of prostate cancer. That's why it is not selfish to address this cause.

Rotary Ride efforts have led to considerable engagement and awareness with the public about prostate cancer.

Rotary Ride 2023 is planned for the entire month of September, with special emphasis on the weekend of the 23rd and 24th. However, clubs are not restricted to hosting events during September. One club last year held a ride in the summer to raise funds for a local prostate cancer support group.

Contact your local cycling clubs to see if you can work with them on hosting a ride. They most likely have the knowledge needed to plan and run

a ride. Also, in the guidance package being developed is a guide from British Cycling on how to plan and run a non-competitive cycling event.

To contact the four prostate cancer organisations, use the following links:

**Prostate Cancer UK:**  
[prostatecanceruk.org](http://prostatecanceruk.org)

**Prostate Scotland:**  
[prostatescotland.org.uk](http://prostatescotland.org.uk)

**Prostate Cymru (Wales):**  
[prostatecymru.com](http://prostatecymru.com)

**Irish Cancer Society:**  
[cancer.ie/cancer-information-and-support/cancer-types/prostate-cancer](http://cancer.ie/cancer-information-and-support/cancer-types/prostate-cancer)

Each of these prostate cancer organisations has a JustGiving website your club can use to make a donation following your event.

**The Rotary Ride 2023 website is:**  
[rotarygbi.org/ride](http://rotarygbi.org/ride)

Here is where you can download our guidance package, British Cycling Guide for planning a “non-competitive” ride, access the Rotary Ride event site to post your club's event.

You can contact me at the following email address:  
[RotaryRide@rotarygbi.org](mailto:RotaryRide@rotarygbi.org)





# DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

STORY BY **TIM COWLING, FARINGDON & DISTRICT ROTARY CLUB, OXFORDSHIRE**

It is now several years since the Rotary Leadership and Management programme was developed in conjunction with the Institute of Leadership and Management. The programme, which contains 14 hours of guided learning and is centred around the planning and delivery of a project, resulting in a Level 2 award, is fully approved by the Institute.

Since its inception, nearly 200 young people have graduated for an award which can be delivered by a teacher, youth leader or suitably experienced Rotarian.

One of the programmes completed last year was at the Bourne End Academy in Buckinghamshire. Graduate Bailey Burdock said he took the course because he felt the qualification would accelerate his future career. He said: "I thoroughly enjoyed working with my team to create and contrast ideas and plans for our final assessment.

"I enjoyed how as a group we helped broaden our plans and created a close working environment with each other, working to the best of our abilities.

"The best part was seeing the effect our event at a local care home had on

our guests and feeling the sense of achievement for what we had done.

"I found it an amazing opportunity to learn more about myself and how to work with others and I'm so grateful I was presented with this opportunity."

During the last 12 months, the programme has had relevance to those with lower academic ability and Special Educational Needs. These students have not always been able to achieve the Level 2 award so in 2022, Judi Strain prepared a Level 1 programme called 'Communication and Teamwork' which gained approval from the Institute of Leadership and Management.

Teacher Rachel Adams delivered the programmes at Pitcheroak School in Redditch. She said: "Pitcheroak began our relationship with Rotary with the idea that the Leadership and Management programme would support our Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) young people to develop transferable skills for their futures.

"Post-Covid, we opened the Flexible Learning Centre, a setting focused on developing independence, life skills and preparing students for their next

steps to college, apprenticeships, or employment.

"The Leadership and Management programme inspired young people to develop their own projects and fostered all of the skills they need for the future."

Among the projects the youngsters worked on was to improve the gardens at a local care home and deliver sensory play for SEND reception children.

During the current academic year, the programme is now running in seven centres in five different districts in Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, with discussions ongoing with two more possible centres.

The exciting addition of the Level 1 'Communication and Teamwork' programme means that Rotary has the opportunity to reach a new group of students, providing them with one of the few externally approved qualifications they may achieve. ●

## Information

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# Rotary profile

Find out why our volunteers give up their time to help transform communities.

## Profile:

**Name:** David Hatcher

**Rotary Club:** Medway, Kent

**Profession:** Retired Police Officer

### HOW AND WHEN DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH ROTARY?

As I was invited to join Rotary in 1990 as a result of my interest in charity work and the fact that my Rotary club ran a week-long holiday to provide otherwise unobtainable activities for 30 seriously ill and disabled youngsters. This involved pairing the disabled children with able bodied young carers for the week, giving both youngsters insight into the life and experience of their partners. Following the sad natural death of one of our guests, I've since re-designed this to take children's hospice families to Disneyland Paris to create memories of their lifetime together. It's fulfilling experiences such as these, that make me want to share awareness of what we can achieve through membership of Rotary.

### WHEN AND WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH ROTARY RADIO UK?

At a District Council meeting in 2017 I heard the proposal from two fellow Rotarians, Steve Wood and John Robinson from Sittingbourne Invicta Rotary Club, to start an internet-based radio station, publicising the great works of Rotary around the UK and the world. Having volunteered my time as a police presenter on BBC TV Crimewatch UK for 15 years, also having made police radio programmes on our local BBC radio station, the concept seemed ideal for the propagation of good news about Rotary. So I became involved in the development



of the station and by October 2018 Rotary Radio UK was born. As a Presenter/Director, I began delivering a two-hour weekly programme about disaster response and Rotary news, interspersed with great music.

### TELL ME ABOUT YOUR PROGRAMME AND HOW MUCH PREPARATION IS INVOLVED?

As a result of my international disaster response experience and information sources available about what is happening around the world, I keep abreast of developments which enables me to provide insight for my 'Dave's Disastrous Hour' programme. This is followed with another hour-long programme of good news about Rotary, much of which comes from my experience in Rotary as a club president, as well as from the Rotary GB&I website and publications. Both programmes heavily feature music and requests from listeners, so they contain variety and interest on several levels. We welcome contributions from Rotarians about what they are doing which has prompted our monthly feature of a selected District of the Month.

### HOW CAN ROTARIANS GET INVOLVED?

One key way for Rotarians to get involved is by sending information about their initiatives, so that non-Rotarians get an idea of what Rotary is all about, also other clubs might learn from their experience.

A feature operating for a number of months is our Rotary Radio UK District of the Month. This involves contact with District Governors who record short clips of audio which I edit into clips no more than two minutes long, paying tribute to the great work being done by Rotarians in their area. We are able to raise awareness of what's being done and the benefits that Rotarians are delivering. We also give the district governor the opportunity to record a message directed to their district Rotarians, ideally to thank and inspire them in continuing the excellent work they are doing. An example of this can be viewed at [youtube/kXJVEoG3KW1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXJVEoG3KW1)

Because Rotary Radio UK is internet-based, accessible 24 hours a day via laptops, tablets, phones and smart speakers, we have listeners in over 160 countries. We can be heard via [www.rotaryradiouk.org](http://www.rotaryradiouk.org) and contacted on [rotaryradiouk@gmail.com](mailto:rotaryradiouk@gmail.com) ●

If you have a story to tell and would like to be featured in *Rotary in Profile*, email: [editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org)



# Champions Awards

## CELEBRATE WITH OUR CHAMPIONS

Celebrate unsung heroes from across Great Britain & Ireland who will be honoured at the annual Rotary Champions Awards Gala Dinner.

The Botanical Gardens in Birmingham will be our venue, taking place on Saturday 17th June 2023 from 6:30pm till late. The evening will be hosted by Good Morning Britain Des Coleman.

### TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW!

Tickets include access to the gardens, welcome drink, three course dinner and entertainment from the Birmingham Big Band.

To read the inspiring stories of this year's winners, and to book tickets visit: [rotarygbi.org/champions](https://rotarygbi.org/champions) or scan the QR code.



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**HOST:** Good Morning Britain Des Coleman

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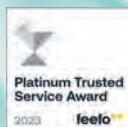
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# ROTARY SOCIAL

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** |



TWITTER | FACEBOOK | **YOUTUBE** | INSTAGRAM



## ROTARY YOUNG CITIZEN AWARDS 2023

The achievements of some outstanding young people were recently celebrated by Rotary Great Britain & Ireland at the 17th Rotary Young Citizen Awards. Find out more about all 12 of the inspiring winners and their stories by going through the Rotary Young Citizen Winners' 2023 playlist on our YouTube channel.



TWITTER | **FACEBOOK** | YOUTUBE | INSTAGRAM



## ROTARY CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2023

The Rotary Champions Awards are back for 2023 to celebrate both Rotarians and members of the public whose extraordinary efforts have impacted the lives of others. To find out more about this year's winners and how to attend this year's awards ceremony, head over to our Facebook page.



**TWITTER** | FACEBOOK | YOUTUBE | INSTAGRAM



## INTERACT PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD

Rotary International recently highlighted some of the Interact clubs that are making positive changes in their communities from across the world, from cleaning beaches in Panama to collecting for food banks in Wales. The article highlighting the work of these extraordinary youngsters can be found on Rotary International's Twitter page.



TWITTER | FACEBOOK | **YOUTUBE** | INSTAGRAM



## YOUNG CHEF NATIONAL FINAL

Six aspiring chefs aged 14-16 recently battled it out in the national final of Rotary Young Chef 2023, with some outstanding culinary skills on display that wowed an experienced judging panel. Watch the highlight video from the final, captured by Simon Monk, on the Rotary GB&I YouTube channel.



TWITTER | FACEBOOK | YOUTUBE | **INSTAGRAM**



## ROTARY CELEBRATES THE CORONATION

As Great Britain gathered to celebrate King Charles III's coronation, Rotary clubs around the country made sure to put on events that every community could enjoy. Head over to our Instagram to find out more about Rotary's relationship with the Royal Family and King Charles III through the years.



**TWITTER** | FACEBOOK | YOUTUBE | INSTAGRAM



## BIPOLAR UK MANAGEMENT COURSES

Rotary GB&I partners Bipolar UK have teamed up with the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust to provide free, online courses to help effectively self-manage bipolar in a healthy way. If this interests you, visit Bipolar UK's Twitter page to see the courses available to you.

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# Difference between life and death

According to the World Health Organisation, Timor-Leste has one of the highest malnutrition rates in the world, and there's only one nurse and midwife for every 1,000 people

District health centres offering basic medical care are scattered country-wide, but for more advanced treatment, patients must travel to 'Hospital Nacional Guido Valadares' (HNGV) in the capital Dili — the country's one and only hospital serving a population of 1.3 million people.

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) has an agreement with the Timorese government to provide the country's only air ambulance service.

## The geographical challenges

70% of Timorese live in rural areas, surrounded by mountainous terrain and bad roads.

*'During the wet season, the land isn't stable so there are landslides and roads are cut off. Rough seas can cause boat cancellations, so islanders are totally disconnected from the mainland,'* says MAF Timor-Leste Pilot Ping.

Part of Timor-Leste — Oecusse — is surrounded by neighbouring Indonesia. Without MAF, this exclave would be very difficult to reach:

*'We get a lot of medevac calls from Oecusse. Transporting critical patients overnight by boat is unimaginable, so MAF is crucial for those communities.'*

## A young life saved

Pilot Ping recalls a medevac of 6-year-old Bendito, who contracted dengue fever and nearly died.

Bendito lives on Atauro Island and without MAF's 15-minute flight, he would have had to endure a three-hour uncomfortable, unreliable ferry:

*'Bendito was bleeding from his nose, so his mother took him to the district health centre. His condition was severe, and he needed to be transferred to the main HNGV hospital.'*

Ping continues, *'When Bendito's mother saw MAF's plane landing, she was relieved that her son was going to get better treatment. Bendito would have died without proper medical care.'*

He has since made a full recovery.

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# JENNIFER JONES

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 2022/23**

## NOT GOODBYE, BUT GOOD WORK

**S**PEAKING to you through the pages of *Rotary* magazine this past year has brought me so much joy. I have especially enjoyed sharing the incredible stories of the wonderful people Nick and I have met on the Imagine Impact Tour.

From Patzún in the mountainous western highlands of Guatemala to a small village outside of Lusaka, Zambia, we have been greeted by countless people who imagine and work towards a better world.

We were inspired by teachers who imagine a better education for girls and boys facing gender-based violence, by Rotaractors in a refugee settlement who created a flour mill to provide for their families in a critical food shortage, and by brave polio workers who push tirelessly to reach every last child.

All of us have imagined Rotary this year. This means looking past what we are today and reaching for what we could be tomorrow. We imagine a Rotary that will

continue to tell our stories in impactful ways, work to reduce our carbon footprint, and focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts that lift every voice in our organisation and beyond.

Nick and I want to thank all of you for the moments we've shared and for your efforts to Imagine Rotary. And now, we look forward to continuing these efforts as we Create Hope in the World.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve with each of you. ●







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# HELP US PREPARE FOR THE NEXT DISASTER

*Together, we can be there for those that need us.  
It's not a matter of if, but when.*

Our pre-positioned stock enabled us to provide tents quickly after the earthquakes in Türkiye. Now as Hurricane season approaches, we need your club's help as we prepare and re-stock our warehouses.

Find out more at: **[shelterbox.org/stockthebox](https://shelterbox.org/stockthebox)**  
Or email us to sign up via: [rotaryrequest@shelterbox.org](mailto:rotaryrequest@shelterbox.org)



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ShelterBox

Rotary





**NICKI  
SCOTT**  
RI DIRECTOR  
2021-23

## JOIN ME TO CREATE HOPE

**A**S my term serving as Rotary International Vice President and Director closes, I truly believe our world needs Rotary now more than ever.

Rotary has been a priceless gift in my life giving me an incredible sense of purpose.

We all belong to individual Rotary clubs whilst being part of an amazing worldwide movement together making our world a better place!

Rotary clubs are at the heart of our communities, uniquely placed to understand today's challenges and needs and to work with others to build a better future for so many, including ourselves.

Whatever drives your passion to act I want to thank you for all you do in the name of Rotary.

For many years my Rotary service has been focused on leadership and organisational development for Rotary, Rotarians and Rotaractors.

I now yearn to get back to hands on service, to Create Hope in the World.

In the last issue I talked about my trip to Pakistan. I saw first-hand the desperate look in the eyes of young and old who had lost hope.

The devastating floods mean millions of people have lost their homes, their belongings, their livelihoods, their livestock, their crops, their future. 30% of flood affected areas are still under water.

Rotary is taking action and Creating Hope by empowering and enabling people to build smart villages offering a long-term sustainable future for themselves and their community.

This could be replicated and adapted in other parts of the world to be relevant to local circumstances.

Find out more at [rotarypakistanSMARTvillages.org](http://rotarypakistanSMARTvillages.org) or contact Humanitarian Service Team Lead 23/24 Jannine Birtwistle [rotaryjannine@icloud.com](mailto:rotaryjannine@icloud.com).

I am personally committed to helping Rebuild Lives and Communities for the people worst affected in Pakistan.

It was clear to me without basic needs being met, and infrastructure rebuilt, our incredible efforts to help end polio are also at risk.

Let's involve the Pakistani diaspora in our islands, help them see the impact working with Rotary can have and ultimately the value in joining our incredible organisation.

Let's do good in the world, end polio and grow Rotary all at the same time!

Will you join me to create hope? ●



**IAN  
RISELEY**  
ROTARY FOUNDATION  
TRUSTEE CHAIR

## IT'S IN YOUR HANDS

**J**UNE marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another in Rotary, a bittersweet time to reflect as we look ahead.

Looking back on this year, The Rotary Foundation accomplished a great deal.

We renewed our determination to fight polio to the end. Rotary and its partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative are implementing a strategy to stop the transmission of all wild poliovirus in the endemic countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan and the circulation of vaccine-derived poliovirus in outbreak countries.

Last October, Rotary, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the global community collectively pledged \$2.6 billion toward this plan.

We know what it takes to eradicate polio, and we have the strategies to do it. I urge all clubs to continue to take action in this historic effort by raising awareness and funds, especially around World Polio Day in October.

Also, consider joining or starting a PolioPlus Society in your club or district to collectively give a set amount each year until polio is eradicated.

Our Foundation also responded to the devastating earthquake that hit Syria and Turkey through disaster response grants that helped clubs and districts provide aid.

The Foundation continued to grow. Rotaract clubs began volunteering on and applying for Foundation grants on their own.

And our next Rotary Peace Centre, made possible by a gift from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, will be located at Bahçe ehir University in Istanbul.

To all who supported The Rotary Foundation by volunteering on grant projects or through giving, I thank you.

If you haven't yet made your gift to the Foundation, please do so online by 30 June so we can end this remarkable year on a high note and reach our goal of raising \$430 million.

We can be proud of what we have done this year, but let us never rest on our laurels; rather, let us remain persistent.

One of those who best personified persistence was Nelson Mandela.

Speaking to a crowd of global dignitaries before his 90th birthday in 2008, he said, "It is in your hands to make of our world a better one for all, especially the poor, vulnerable, and marginalised."

Changing the world is indeed in no one else's hands but our own, and helping those in need is what defines and will continue to define Rotary and its Foundation in the years ahead.

I wish incoming Trustee Chair Barry Rassin, the Trustees, and our staff continued success in making a difference through The Rotary Foundation. ●





**GARTH  
ARNOLD**  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD  
FOR ROTARY GB&I

## WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER

**R**OTARY in Great Britain & Ireland has been operating for over 100 years and the majority of that time with a President at its helm for a 12-month period.

Organisations around the world are no different and regularly need to really look at themselves to rejuvenate, adapt to world events and be appealing.

We at Rotary are no different whether we are a Rotary club, a district or the Governing Body.

Through Rotary International's regional pilots we at Rotary GB&I are privileged and delighted along with our colleagues in Australia & New Zealand to participate in the programme.

As I write this article, we are close to completing year one of a possible six-year pilot to really grow Rotary in these Islands.

Our new Regional Board comes into operation on July 1st, 2023 made up of voting and non-voting members who may have a one-, two- or three-year duration, with a three-year revolving Chair Group.

The difference is "continuity" and "accountability"; we now have the scenario of decisions being made, projects and initiatives being implemented with sustainability as a key focus with the majority of the team still in situ.

Whether you are a current Club President, President Elect, Team Lead of a District Team, incoming Youth Chair for your club or in my case current Regional Board Chair, we all should be looking forward to month 13 and 14 etc.; not a brand-new year which you call month one.

We must get away from this is "my year – one year duration".

Yes, you can add your own style and enthusiasm to things, but the key goals, projects, initiatives and direction should be the same as we all move forward; adjusting as we go along!

As our regional pilots' programme really kicks off, we must ensure we really get behind all the components so that we can test and tweak them to find the optimum model that works for us.

I felt so good at a recent club centennial celebration when we had time for some reflections that we were talking about one of the recent youth initiatives that had been run in clusters.

In the words of Henry Ford - "coming together in the beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success". ●



**AMANDA  
WATKIN**  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
FOR ROTARY GB&I

## IMPACTFUL PARTNERSHIPS

**O**UR collective support to the world can sometimes be missed when focussed on our own specific activity through our individual clubs. But recently I was in conversation with colleagues from ShelterBox, a strategic international partner for Rotary, and heard just how impactful our collective effort can be.

Born from Rotarian vision and action, ShelterBox is now a significant emergency response organisation operating on a global scale.

Rotary continues to provide considerable financial and promotional support and the most recent impact of this support has been in Pakistan where ShelterBox continues to respond to the flooding crisis.

Three emergency projects have been deployed to support those in the worst affected areas, through collaboration with Islamic Relief Worldwide and Islamic Relief Pakistan:

- Project 1 supported 1,200 households (7,033 people) across four locations in Sindh and Balochistan with an emergency shelter package including tents, tarpaulins and rope, water filters, water carriers, blankets, mattresses, mosquito nets and solar lights.
- Project 2 contributed to the self-recovery process of approximately 5,000 households in Sindh and Balochistan with cash assistance.
- Project 3 focuses on supporting families in Dadu, Sindh, to recover by providing an improved, more durable and longer-lasting shelter to allow better protection in case of future flooding. The second component of this project will pre-position emergency shelter materials ahead of the next monsoon season, to ensure a rapid emergency response.

Further, Rotary Ireland has made an incredible response to Turkey and Syria earthquakes.

Rotary coordinator Kerr Fulton-Peebles, in collaboration with Rotarians Sean and Liz Fitzgerald have encouraged a district wide approach in response to the earthquakes.

This approach has been phenomenal with so many clubs springing into action and raising £99,461.

As a Rotarian volunteer Kerr commented 'It has been such a rewarding few weeks and I am so very glad I am in the role for ShelterBox as part of Rotary'.

In 2023 to date, ShelterBox has seen a total of £1,075,401 from Rotary clubs across Rotary GB&I. To give this figure context, last year in 2022 Rotary clubs raised £834,609.

The impact of partnership working is definitely something to be celebrated; Rotary can tangibly see results and our partners are incredibly grateful for our support.

[shelterbox.org](https://shelterbox.org) ●

# Letters to the editor

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

## Be careful with words and terminology

EARLIER in the year, I sat in on the Rotary webinar on copyright hosted by Rotary magazine editor, Dave King, which I trust will help my club to avoid problems.

As a member of many years, I have seen many flyers and advertisements promoting fund-raising events, and their composition needs much care to ensure references and language are correct. Many clubs commit some of the following errors in designing flyers.

One must obviously use the up-to-date logo with an appropriate typeface and size. Some of the available material isn't easily manipulated.

### **My current concern is about words used and terminology.**

1. It is essential the potential beneficiary is given its correct name.
2. If it is a charity, check and use the full name, and its registered charity number whether in England and Wales, or Scotland.
3. Fund-raising for other beneficiaries should not, I strongly believe, be

described as 'charitable', or 'a charity quiz in aid of Xxxxx' which is not a registered charity. This is a loose and imprecise way to use this adjective. Fund-raising for an organisation not registered as a charity should perhaps be called a 'good' or 'worthy' cause.

4. More serious is the frequent use on flyers of the words 'in aid of Rotary charities', when this is clearly not the case. Rotary charities can surely only mean such charities as The Rotary Foundation, or a fund which may exist in a district, or the many charity accounts of Rotary clubs. It cannot mean a charity such as WaterAid, SmileTrain or Mary's Meals, even though these charities are frequently supported by Rotary clubs.
5. The Rotary logo or emblem is to be protected at all times and correctly used. Only Rotary clubs should have the rights to use this symbol.

### **| Arthur Spencer**

Rotary Club of Bush Hill Park,  
North London

**"AS A MEMBER OF MANY YEARS, I HAVE SEEN MANY FLYERS AND ADVERTISEMENTS PROMOTING FUND-RAISING EVENTS, AND THEIR COMPOSITION NEEDS MUCH CARE TO ENSURE REFERENCES AND LANGUAGE ARE CORRECT."**

## Happy 10th Birthday Rotary logo

OVER the past few years, there has been much written about the need to modernise Rotary meetings to attract new and younger members.

Particularly since lockdown, many clubs have embraced change by having less formal meetings, forgoing the wearing of regalia, omitting toasts, etc.

Why then is there so much fuss over the 'new' logo which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year?

After all this time, we have a generation of Rotarians who should have been brought up with the logo, which proudly shouts the name of our organisation. Instead, we have constant bickering, which is hardly the way to convince people that we are people who move with the times.

### **| Bob Chadwick**

Rotary Rochdale, Greater Manchester





## A simple thank you

AS a District Governor, we're sometimes faced with problems we weren't expecting, issues within clubs, anti-district feelings and quite often realising there aren't enough hours in a day! Then all of a sudden you get a letter like this, and it all then makes sense and explains why we do it!

Bless them for reminding me...

**| Ric Canham**

District Governor, District 1200  
(Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset)



## Donate your allowance

AS the nurses and NHS are on strike because of pay and conditions, I would like to suggest that Rotarians might donate the £600 fuel allowance to them in this time of need. And that other clubs, churches and many organisations, who could afford this payment, would donate the money to our hard-pressed nurses.

I am aware there are many others in need such as the teachers and schools, but the nurses are the most deserving at present. Besides our Rotary motto, another is: "your health is your wealth".

**| Barry Patterson**

Rotary Club of North Down,  
Bangor, Northern Ireland

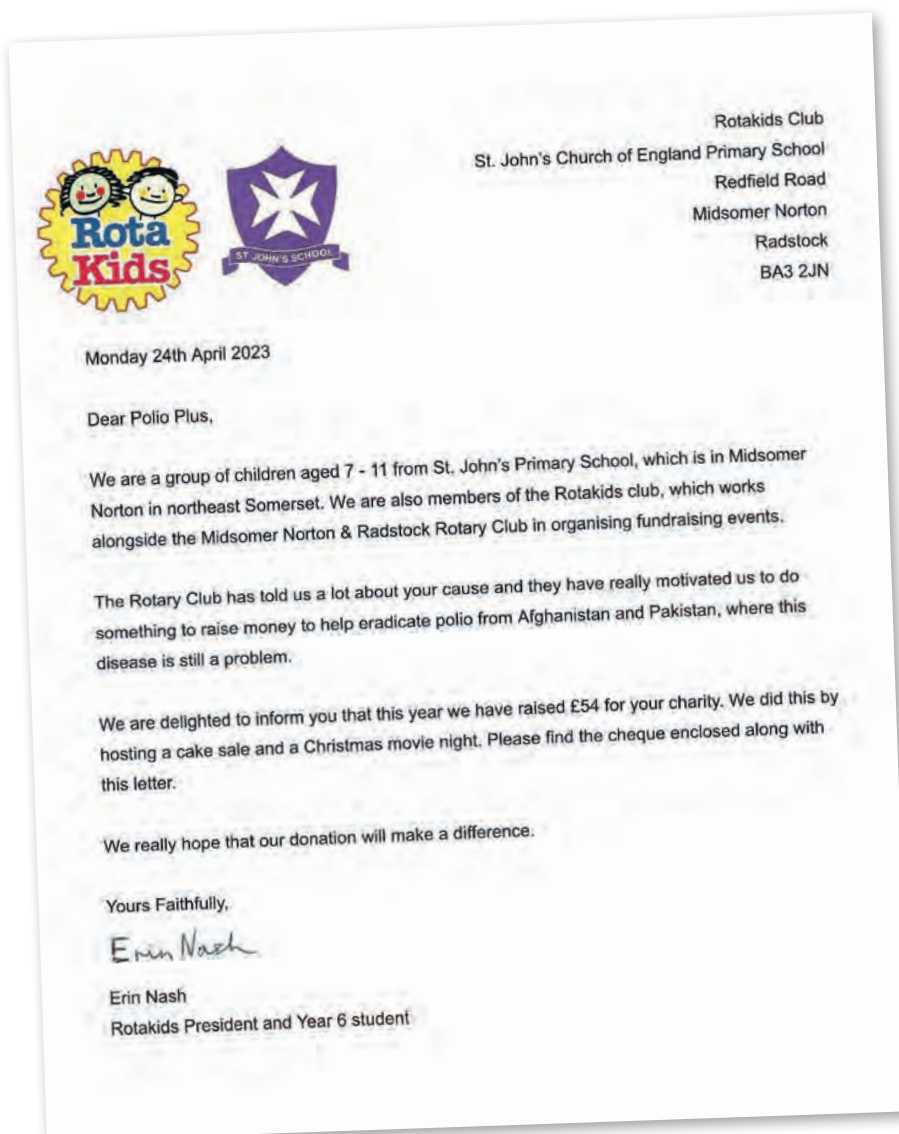
## Remembering Colin Powell

SO sad to read about the death of polio ambassador Colin Powell in the magazine (*Rotary*, February).

As our club's speaker organiser, I had the pleasure of inviting Colin to address the club. He gave an excellent talk on polio eradication and will be missed for his commitment to this project.

**| George Hudson**

Rotary Club of Burntisland  
and Kinghorn, Fife



## Working with ShelterBox

HAVING read the article about ShelterBox in the April/May edition of *Rotary* magazine I thought members may wish to hear of my engagement with ShelterBox in June 2018.

At the time I was living on the coast of Kenya and was a member of the Rotary Club of Kilifi. Sadly, that month there were horrendous floods across Kenya with many thousands of people displaced from their homes. With other Kilifi Rotarians I travelled by hired Landcruiser to an affected area.

The situation we found was terrible with refugees living under tarpaulins on the wet mud floor. On returning to Kilifi, we sat in a bar discussing what we could do for these people.

After deciding that we would collect clothing for the people, we checked the ShelterBox website and could not find any mention of the problem.

So, I phoned their number and described the situation on the Galana River. They said they had no knowledge of these floods, so I described the situation in Kenya and supplied the phone numbers of the British High Commission and the name and number of the current district governor.

A little later ShelterBox contacted me to say that an assessment team was on the way and would get in touch. This they did, and told me that they were shipping in Shelter Kits.

Some time later, I visited the area

again to find the refugees much better housed, on higher ground, using the equipment supplied and the clothing donated by the people of Kilifi and incredibly grateful for the assistance from Rotary and ShelterBox.

A happy conclusion achieved by a combination of mobile phone, internet, Rotary members and ShelterBox.

The full ShelterBox report can be seen here:

[shelterbox.org/kenya-flooding](https://shelterbox.org/kenya-flooding)

**Ian Graham**

Rotary Club of Aylsham, Norfolk

## What is Rotary's target market?

I WAS in Rouen, France, recently, and came across members of the Rotary Club of Rouen Seine fund-raising in the middle of the city. This club has a membership of only seven, but they have successfully supported a local hospital by providing equipment from its fund-raising activities.

It holds meetings in members' homes and social activities are at a minimum. Its members were quite amused at the way we go about things.

I recognise that Rotary is partly about fellowship, but it is about a lot of other things as well. If Rotary is to stay relevant and attractive to those wishing to put something back into society, it cannot go on behaving in the same way it has done for decades.

I have, for some time, seen the newly-retired as the target market for new members. They have the time to devote to community improvement, whereas most of those at work do not. Rotary needs to actively target them.

I must make it clear that these are my personal views only, not necessarily those of my club.

**David Hackett**

Rotary Club of Maidstone, Kent



## Musical Rotary

THE letter regarding Nigel Moyle's anthem prompts me to draw attention to the International Fellowship of Rotarian Musicians (*Rotary*, February). It is open to any Rotarian who likes music.

A digital new Rotary songbook is being compiled.

If Alan Reeve from the Rotary Club of Taunton would like his anthem included, he would need to join the Fellowship, submit his music and give permission for it to be published in the songbook.

Membership fees are \$35 for three years. For full details go to [IFRM.org](https://IFRM.org)

I am pleased to say my own Rotary anthem "Rotary Fellowship" is included

and I have given permission to publish it.

It is easy to sing as in the church video of its first performance where none of the audience had ever heard it before.

Here is a YouTube link to all the videos - [youtube.com/watch?v=Rta\\_4WM013g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rta_4WM013g)

I would be happy to supply any Rotary club with copies to show them at a club meeting or district conference.

There is also a brass band arrangement, which again I am pleased to supply to any club.

**Ron Carey**

Rotary Club of Lancaster Loyal, Lancashire



Every issue of Rotary magazine publishes a series of letters from Rotary members 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 email: [editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org)  
The comments made on this page do not necessarily represent the views of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, and Rotarians.

## Walk a mile for polio

DURING Covid-inspired lock downs when many clubs were doing virtual events to raise funds, I thought Rotarians could 'walk' from Alcester to the Afghanistan/Pakistan border (approximately 3,000 miles) to raise money for End Polio Now.

However, once the lock downs were lifted I thought why not cover the same mileage as a collective of all Rotarians in Rotary GB&I?

The economic issue following the pandemic was only too prevalent so I thought why not ask (and restrict) sponsors for only a £1 per mile and, if Rotarians walked a mile each in their local community they would be able to raise, not only funds, but awareness of End Polio Now and also their club's contribution in their local community.

If every district raised £3,000 which represent £1 per mile then Rotary GB&I would have £75,000 to give to polio.

Add the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation contribution the sum of £225,000 would be a significant amount and would vaccinate about half a million children.

I also thought that if every Rotarian/club walked on the same day, at the same time, throughout the country it would attract significant publicity and possibly have a membership benefit.

I suggest the date of a walk should be on or the nearest Saturday to World Polio Day of October 24th starting at 11am.

My district adopted the project, and although not all clubs took part, it raised a respectable sum of around £6,000 over two years.

I am happy to send more details to any club who is interested if they contact me on [ayejay1944@gmail.com](mailto:ayejay1944@gmail.com)

**| Arthur Jones**  
Carnforth Rotary, Lancashire



## Speaking without a stammer

IN response to Philip Brough's letter (Rotary, February) regarding overcoming a stammer, I would like to say how much I agree.

I have been a member of Wigan Speakers' Club (part of the Association of Speakers Clubs) now for over 20 years and in that time have seen many people join in order to try to overcome a stammer.

Currently one member had tried everything he knew to speak confidently. His stammer always

stood in his way. However, after about a year of speaking in a supportive environment he is now speaking on every occasion he can.

The hesitancy is barely noticeable and the joy on his face when he accepts the audience's applause is something to behold. The first steps are the hardest, but the results are amazing.

**| Gwyneth Millard**  
St Helens Rotary, Lancashire

## Who's impacting who?

A LETTER in the February edition of *Rotary* magazine headed 'Climate Action' says: "The impact on world population ranges from drought to floods and forest fires, and an increase in sea levels".

Perhaps it is more relevant to say: "The impact of world population ranges from drought to floods and forest fires, and an increase in sea levels".

**| Robbin Suffield**  
Henley-in-Arden Rotary, Warwickshire

## Matter of fact 1

MANY thanks for including Inverness in the Ukraine feature in April's issue of *Rotary* magazine. There were four Rotary clubs and Inner Wheel working together. The missing one was Inverness Riverside Rotary, and we funded two generators!

All the best and appreciate what you do for Rotary.

**| Steve Rowan**  
Rotary Club of Inverness Riverside

## Matter of fact 2

REGARDING April's 'And Finally', I hate to correct you, but the last annual Rotary conference was the 2019 event in Nottingham, which I helped organise; Torquay was, in fact, the last seaside conference.

**| John Brown**  
Finance Director Rotary Events Management (GB&I) Ltd

### | Contact us

If you would like to contribute to the letters page, please email: [editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org)

# Be part of Rotary and change the world

As Eve Conway prepares to take on the role as the Rotary International Director for the region, she discusses her goals for the next two years.

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

**E**VE CONWAY likes her Paul Harris quotes. The tradition, ethos and values of Rotary International, which was founded by the American in 1905, hold dear for the London Rotarian, who will become the new RI Director for a region which includes Great Britain & Ireland from July.

"As Paul Harris once said: 'This is a changing world; we must be prepared to change with it,'" said Eve, who takes over from North Cotswold Rotarian, Nicki

Scott, on July 1 - when Nicki's term of office as RI Vice-President also finishes.

"I care passionately about our future, but we do need to adapt.

"Certainly, here in Great Britain & Ireland we are facing the challenge of an ageing demographic. We have got fabulous Rotarians who have, and are, doing some amazing things. But we have got to look to increase our membership because it's really important for our legacy and the future of Rotary."

With declining membership numbers in Europe and North America, Eve will be part of a Rotary International Board where this crucial issue remains the number one priority. Eve, who is a member of the Rotary Club of Redbridge in north-east London, also has Spain and Portugal as part of her RI Director's brief where membership is also a key topic.

It is a complex subject with a myriad of solutions, but Eve boils it down to what she describes as "the Rotary experience" and how Rotary needs to get this right to

prosper in the future.

"Rotary has got such huge potential," she said. "But what we need to do is engage people more with being people of action and getting involved in projects, having clubs which are really vibrant.

"Not all our clubs are like that.

"Clubs need to look at being attractive and they need to reflect their community as well. You need to be relevant in your community and people need to see faces like theirs in your club. That is not always the case now.

"We are moving forward with new style clubs, with cause-based clubs - we are just about to start a bipolar one.

"We can have passport clubs, e-clubs and in America they are very big on impact clubs."

In January, while attending the Rotary International Assembly in Florida, Eve's husband Robert became seriously ill and spent several weeks in hospital. The Rotary community rallied around Eve to serve as a reminder that the organisation



**"LOOKING AT WHAT ROTARY ACHIEVES, IT IS INCREDIBLE, BUT WE NEED TO HAVE VIBRANT CLUBS, WHICH ARE DOING THINGS, THAT ARE PEOPLE OF ACTION WHO ARE BRINGING PEOPLE IN."**





is one big family, always there to support each other in times of need.

"The local Rotarians were fantastic and kept telling me: "We are family" and are here for you. I was home hosted by Past District Governor Ron Janssen, a member of Dr Phillips Rotary Club in Orlando where they have started an impact club," she added.

"They bring in working people within their club just to do projects.

"They have brought in a dozen new members within the first couple of months, with more coming in. They are a club within a club, I suppose.

"If I was looking at Rotary from the outside, you would see how we have been helping to rid the world of polio and all the amazing projects which are going on.

"As an individual, you may have desires to change the world which you can't do on your own, but be part of Rotary and you can change the world.

"Looking at what Rotary achieves, it is incredible, but we need to have vibrant

clubs, which are doing things, that are people of action who are bringing people in."

It is all a far cry for Eve who won a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois and will now be part of the RI Board sitting at Rotary Center overlooking the Chicago skyline.

Eve's Rotary CV is formidable serving as President of Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland in 2016-17, leading a Purple4Polio campaign during her term of office, and being Vice-Chair of the RI End Polio Now: Countdown to History Campaign Committee.

A BBC reporter and producer, one of Eve's proudest achievements was starting the Rotary Young Citizen Awards in association with BBC News in 2007.

Eve is organising an Action Summit in Manchester from September 15-17th which will be attracting Rotarians from across Europe – and, in the absence of

a national conference, she hopes many Rotarians from Great Britain & Ireland will attend. Among the speakers will be Stephanie Urchick, who will become Rotary International's second female President in 12 months' time, and Aidan O'Leary, the World Health Organization's Polio Eradication Director.

"The Rotary Action Summit is all about people taking action," added Eve.

"I think that is how I feel and many Rotarians feel that we have to continue to evolve. To take another Paul Harris quote 'If Rotary is to realise its proper destiny, it must be evolutionary at all times, revolutionary on occasions'.

"So that's really key to our survival.

"We cannot stand still. A lot of Rotarians are professional, business people who have had to be prepared to embrace change in their working life.

"Well in our Rotary world, we have to adapt as well because otherwise we will get left behind." ●



**Smile Train is the world's largest cleft-focused charity, with a sustainable approach to a single, solvable issue: cleft lip and palate.**

A cleft is the most common facial difference globally, affecting around 1 in 700 babies. In the UK, cleft surgery is carried out within the first 12 months of a baby's life by the National Health Service (NHS). However, hundreds of thousands of children living in resource-poor communities worldwide are not as fortunate, and do not have access to the lifesaving cleft treatment they desperately need.

An untreated cleft can lead to difficulties with eating, speaking, hearing and even breathing. Babies and their families can also experience isolation from their communities.

Smile Train's sustainable model empowers local medical professionals with training, funding, and resources to provide free cleft surgery and comprehensive cleft care to children globally. Since 1999, Smile Train has supported safe and quality cleft care for 1.5+ million children and will continue to do so until every person in need with a cleft has access to the care they deserve.

Smile Train is committed to treating the whole patient through programs that provide access to important comprehensive cleft care services. Comprehensive cleft care includes essential treatments beyond cleft surgery, such as nutrition services, orthodontic and general dental care, speech therapy and emotional support, intended to ensure long-term, successful rehabilitation for Smile Train's cleft patients.

As People of Action and with a vision of delivering a better world by creating opportunities, supporting those who need

it most and transforming lives, Rotary Great Britain and Ireland has a strong relationship with Smile Train's work. In as little as 45 minutes, a skilled Smile Train partner surgeon can perform a cleft surgery and change a child's life forever.

Since 2019, Rotary Great Britain and Ireland has raised awareness of Smile Train's work through numerous engaging talks and raised more than £25,000 through impactful fundraising activities.

These donations have given children living with untreated clefts the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life, filled with smiles.

#### OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- **1.5M+** Smile Train-supported cleft surgeries since 1999
- **2,100+** empowered medical professionals
- **1,100+** partner hospitals
- **90+** countries where Smile Train has helped children
- **Every 5 Minutes** Smile Train-supported cleft treatment helps a child in need
- **1 Goal:** To give every child with a cleft the opportunity for a healthy, productive life.

*To learn more about our work and how you can support Smile Train through your Rotary Club, please visit [smiletrain.org.uk](https://smiletrain.org.uk), email [ukinfo@smiletrain.org](mailto:ukinfo@smiletrain.org), or call 0113 841 8101.*

#### Angel Believes In Herself

The ultrasound promised a healthy baby girl. Joy and Jonathan impatiently counted down the months, weeks, then days until her due date, and when Joy went into labour, they braced themselves for their first glimpse of their second child, the rush of awe, wonder, elation she would bring.

But when they saw her at last, they felt only shock. She had a cleft.

They didn't understand. It didn't show up on the ultrasound and they didn't have any relatives with a cleft. They cried for





a moment, then pulled their new baby close. As the shock faded, they saw her for who she was.

They named her Angel.

The family scoured their town for help. They knew cleft surgery existed but figured it was far out of reach for a family of their means. Still, they never lost faith. And, thankfully, they were never alone. Though some children with clefts are rejected by their extended families, all of Angel's relatives did whatever they could to support her and her parents.

Finally, when Angel was five months old, a doctor referred them to Marikina St. Vincent General Hospital, a Smile Train partner.

They took her in right away. A thorough examination confirmed what Joy and Jonathan had feared: Their child was too underweight to undergo cleft surgery safely. So the cleft team got right to work and developed a customised plan to help her reach a healthy weight as soon as possible.

To Joy and Jonathan, that meant that after waiting five months, they would now need to wait even longer. But this waiting was different. It was still agonising, but now that it came with tangible progress toward a goal, it also brought hope. Meticulously

following the team's feeding instructions, watching Angel grow bigger and stronger each day, Joy and Jonathan started to believe — one day soon, their little girl would receive the surgery she so needed.

Seven months of hard work later, when Angel was one year old, their prayers were answered at last. Angel was a healthy weight for cleft lip surgery.

In the recovery room, Joy cried for a second time upon seeing her baby's face. This time, tears of happiness.

Angel received her second Smile Train-sponsored cleft surgery one year later, to heal her cleft palate. Now, she could smile and eat like every other child — but that could not be the end of her cleft journey.

Now seven, she will soon begin specialised speech therapy to smooth out the lingering wrinkles her cleft left in her speech. She will also require additional surgeries as she grows and her face matures.

When schoolyard bullies pounce on her for all the ways she's different, Angel rises above it. She doesn't let it get to her because, with her family and cleft team by her side from her earliest days, she's always known just how extraordinary she is.

And this care will all be free thanks to Smile Train's generous donors.

"Parents should be strong and believe in their children", Joy said. "They will go through many challenges, but no one should ever discriminate against children with clefts. They are all beautiful inside and out".

*To read more life changing stories and learn how your support can change the life of a child, visit [smiletrain.org.uk/stories](https://smiletrain.org.uk/stories).*

# infocus

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**infocus** is an online learning series. We will be joined by high quality speakers, and opening the floor to questions, to give insight into how Rotary's Areas of Focus can be brought to life in your community.

TIME: 19:00 DATE: 14TH JUNE 2023

## IN FOCUS THIS MONTH ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS

JOINED BY  
**CHARLES COX, ROBYN DAVIES AND TED FAIGLE**

HOSTED BY ASHLEY GRAY



**CHARLES COX**

FELLOWSHIP OF  
HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS



**ROBYN DAVIES**

FELLOWSHIP OF  
ROTARIAN MUSICIANS



**TED FAIGLE**

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# FINDING FUN IN FELLOWSHIP

| STORY BY **ASHLEY GRAY, FOUNDER MEMBER OF THE ROTARY FELLOWSHIP OF GIN** |

**R**OTARY Fellowships are international, independently organised groups of individuals who share a common interest in recreational activities, hobbies, professions, or cultural identity.

These groups help expand skills, foster vocational development, and enhance the Rotary experience by exploring interests while developing connections around the world and they give their members the opportunity to have fun and make new friends around the world.

Currently there are 107 Rotary Fellowships covering a very wide and diverse range of activities from: doctors to flying, from wildlife conservation to 4x4 vehicles, and from Esperanto to pickleball.

Many fellowships also use their special interests to serve others. For example, the Fellowship of Canoeing Rotarians has organised cleanups of polluted rivers, members of the International Computer Users Fellowship of Rotarians have hosted training sessions for Rotarians and the general public, and members of the Fellowship of Gin have raised funds to purchase Aquaboxes for distribution to disaster areas.

While most day-to-day fellowship activities take place online, the most successful Fellowships provide opportunities for members to meet in person.

For example, many of the sporting fellowships such as golf and cricket hold regional matches and world tournaments.

Fellowships related to travel or excursions plan trips and many fellowships often plan get-togethers at conferences and seminars.

## WHY ARE ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS SO SPECIAL?

- They help participants make lasting friendships outside their own club, district, or country.
- Enrich the Rotary experience beyond a club or district.



**"CURRENTLY THERE ARE 107 ROTARY FELLOWSHIPS COVERING A VERY WIDE AND DIVERSE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES."**

- Encourage engagement with other Rotarians, Rotaractors, programme participants, and alumni from a variety of cultures and regions.
- Unite people with a common interest from all over the world, to create a better understanding of the world.
- Allow individuals to explore new opportunities for service.
- Offer international leadership opportunities.
- Further vocational development through acquaintance with others of the same profession.
- Advance Rotary's public image and identity.
- Introduce friends and family members to Rotary.
- Offer fantastic events and activities to fellowship members.
- Help maintain members' interest in Rotary, and also attract new members.

Anyone can join a Rotary Fellowship. They do not have to be a Rotarian so it is a great way of introducing Rotary to a prospective member.

If you want to know more visit [rotary.org/fellowships](https://rotary.org/fellowships) and explore the possibilities. If you have an interest not listed then start your own fellowship. ●

### Save the date

**June 14th at 7pm on Zoom:**

As part of the 'In Focus' programme watch an 'Introduction to Rotary Fellowships', where you can hear from and chat to Fellowship members.

Also read Golfing Fellowship on page 49

# 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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# From trash to treasure

Sue Campbell reports on an educational project in The Gambia, organised by Rotarians, which began with a chance meeting at Manchester Airport.

It was meant to be just a week's holiday in the sun.

Phil and Sue Taylor had chosen The Gambia in Western Africa as a spot away from the usual tourist destinations.

But what started as week's carefree getaway ended up being a 12 year-long environmentally-friendly recycling project which has helped thousands of Gambian children and dozens of schools and nurseries.

Sue, who with Phil is a member of Cleveland Rotary in North East England, said: "It all started with a chance meeting with a Gambian man at Manchester Airport on the way out to The Gambia.

"When we got there, he took us to his home and to places away from the tourist traps. It was very different to what we had imagined, very beautiful, and although it was very poor, the people were incredibly friendly and welcoming."

One of the man's circle of friends ran a nursery on the south coast and Phil and Sue were taken to see it.

Phil said: "I think it's fair to say we were very shocked. It was very shambolic – there was no furniture, too many children, very little play equipment or toys, untrained staff."

It started a train of thought.

They knew they wanted to do something to help, and so Phil and Sue set about obtaining discarded play equipment from schools and nurseries in Cleveland, which volunteers – including their son and three grandchildren – filled what was the first of 12 containers shipped out to The Gambia in 2010.

They continue to go out there twice a year for up to a month at a time.

Sue, who was a primary school specialist consultant, said: "It wasn't just about supplying the equipment. I also started training staff. And the children, who actually didn't really know how to play."

Phil described a time when the children were given items such as toy cars, skipping ropes, hoops and building blocks. "The children were amazed. We also introduced them to a giant parachute, widely used in UK schools, which they thought was magic."

Word got out about what the Taylors were doing, and Phil and Sue visited more villages.

Sue said: "We went to a village called Gunjur where there was a large primary school. We asked the head teacher what he wanted and he said a computer. But when we asked the deputy head he said tables and chairs – just the basic needs of a school."

That meeting sent the Taylors in a different direction. Sue knew that when schools in the UK were re-equipping with new furniture, the old desks and chairs, despite being perfectly serviceable, often ended up in landfill.

"So we first asked local authorities about obtaining some, but got no response. So we went knocking on the doors of schools throughout the area and all of them were happy to help."

The Taylors recently sent their 12th container full of desks and chairs.

The furniture is stored free in a barn belonging to friends, Ian and Mandy Sullivan, and volunteers from Acklam Rugby Club and Wilton Golf Club – and their grandsons – help load and collect.

Furniture collections are done





free by QA Weld Tech, a company in Middlesbrough.

Phil totted up the figures: “I reckon we have sent 10,000 chairs and 5,000 tables, plus boxes of books, and about 20,000 children in The Gambia use them, as they have two school sessions a day.

“It gives us a great deal of satisfaction knowing that perfectly usable school furniture, which would have ended up on the scrap heap here, has a second life helping young people in a country three thousand miles away.”

As well as the furniture project, a school in Madiana has been structurally improved, extended and equipped to be a

centre for teacher training.

Other good news is that the project has become more sustainable.

Sue said: “We have changed the model, so we are now sending the containers through The Gambian Ministry for Education, with whom we have built a rapport, and are confident that the equipment will go to the right places.”

That’s not to say that the Taylors are backing away.

Phil said: “We love it there and will continue to go, and our three grandsons went with us in 2020. It’s very much part of the family tradition.”

Funding for each container – which costs about £5,000 to ship – is provided by Rotary North East District grants and money raised by an annual golf day, which this year raised £5,400.

It’s a model which could be used elsewhere, and the Taylors have a template which they are happy to share with other clubs.

Sue said: ‘It is a project which has given us great joy. There are thousands of young people whose educational and learning experience has been improved, and we hope there will be many more.’ ●





# ROTARY TACKLES ISOLATION WITH BROMLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

**N**ATIONAL League football team Bromley has joined forces with Rotary to promote a community initiative among its supporters.

Several Rotary clubs in the London Borough of Bromley have linked up to become a project partner with the Community Sports Trust, specifically for Bromley Football Club's Ravens Chat programme.

Ravens Chat is a community initiative which aims to counter loneliness and provide a link to those over the age of 50.

Every Thursday, this friendly and informal group meets at Bromley Football Club for chats and coffee mornings with guest speakers, quizzes, as well as meeting players and staff from the team.

Assistant District Governor for Rotary in Bromley, Christine Atkinson, said she was keen to create the link because it addresses a crucial issue around mental health.

She said: "Having seen the difference Ravens Chat makes to so many who

suffered from loneliness and mental health difficulties, particularly following lockdown, I am delighted that six of the Bromley Rotary Clubs have been given the opportunity to sponsor such an initiative.

"Our District Governor Elect for South East England, Ray Seager, has just returned from Rotary International Training in Orlando and came back advising us that his theme for the year will be focusing on loneliness and mental health so the timing couldn't be better.

"We are very excited for Bromley Rotarians to be part of this partnership as the synergy between us will offer many opportunities to combat loneliness."

Ray Seager agreed that mental health was a key issue which Rotary clubs could focus on at a community level.

He explained: "Many of us are affected directly and indirectly with those experiencing loneliness and mental health issues.

"We need to develop a platform to help those recognise or spot the signs that a family member or colleague needs

help. The opportunity to work with the Bromley Football Club Community Sports Trust could not be a better fit."

Head of Community at Bromley Football Club, Matt Hall, was equally delighted.

He added: "I had the pleasure of meeting Christine towards the end of last year, and it was very clear she shared our passion for the Ravens Chat project, and the values of both our organisations were very much aligned.

"Christine's passion and drive, coupled with our reach, means we will be able to work on some exciting initiatives together, and continue to strive towards reducing loneliness and social isolation in Bromley.

"We would like to extend our thanks to Rotary in Bromley, Chislehurst, Orpington, Orpington (Crofton), Ravensbourne and West Wickham for their commitment and contributions towards making this partnership possible." ●



# FORE-MIDABLE FELLOWSHIP

Introducing the Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

**W**ITH more than half of the 1,700 Rotary clubs in Great Britain & Ireland organising charity golf events each year, it's clear there is a great appeal for the game.

One of the Rotary Fellowships which is particularly popular among European members is the Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians.

Belgian Rotarian, Luc Salens, from the Rotary Club of Maldegem near Bruges, is President of the Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians (Europe). He would like to see more Rotarians join the fold.

He explained: "The overarching goal of the Fellowship is to let golfing Rotarians know that there exists a Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians."

"With membership, every golfing Rotarian can receive advance information about upcoming golf tournaments where they can participate, on great courses, with preferential, excellent organisation and a chance to discuss the hot topics of the day all whilst playing the game that they love."

Currently, there are more than 2,000 members of the European Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians which was founded in 1975 and includes 21 countries.

In Great Britain & Ireland, membership uptake has been small, so they are energetically encouraging new members to get involved. The only criteria is that you have to be a member of a Rotary club and hold a certified handicap.

The Rotary GB&I Golfing Fellowship group is now being actively promoted. Membership is free of charge via the website: [rotary.golf/uk/our-fellowship](http://rotary.golf/uk/our-fellowship) which gives members access to register club competitions and enter tournaments throughout Great Britain & Ireland,

Europe and further afield, including an invite to participate in the annual European Open Championship.

Colin Winstone from the Rotary Club of Knowle and Dorridge in the West Midlands said: "Numerous countries already have a Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians, however Great Britain & Ireland needs a boost as there are so many golfing Rotarians, but 99% of them have no idea how many clubs and districts host great tournaments on spectacular golf courses."

"Most of them do not know about the existence of the Golfing Fellowship and the benefits that can be gained."

"Meeting with fellow Rotarian golfers and playing golf on the most magnificent golf courses in Europe is within members' reach. Join us, and enjoy playing golf in Rotary friendship, that's what we promote!"

Colin pointed out how a number of Rotary clubs including Denby Dale & District in West Yorkshire, Bush Hill Park in North London, Southport Links

in Lancashire, and the Derbyshire-based Chesterfield Scarsdale have introduced creative ideas linking both fellowship and charity fundraising through the sport of golf.

In turn, these golf days have raised thousands of pounds for charity, including £21,000 which was donated to the Forget Me Not Children's Hospice in Huddersfield.

A highlight of the Golfing Fellowship is the European Open Championship which this year will be held in Marbella, Spain from November 13th to 17th.

Before then, the International Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians is organising its world championship in Rome, Italy, on the Marco Simone golf course, two months before it is to be closed for the Ryder Cup. ●



## Information

For more information, contact:  
[rotary.golf/uk/our-fellowship](http://rotary.golf/uk/our-fellowship)



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# COATS4KIDS THE POWER OF ROTARY

| STORY BY **VAL HOWE, PRESIDENT ELECT, ROTARY E-CLUB 1070** |

**B**ACK in February 2022, I was listening to the incoming Rotary International President, Jennifer Jones, speak about the power of Rotary.

Jennifer spoke passionately about what great things can happen when one Rotarian has an idea and, with the help of that person's club, other Rotarians and the wider community, amazing things can be achieved.

An example she mentioned was the Bountiful Rotary Club of Utah in the USA, who supplied primary school aged children from disadvantaged families with a brand-new warm winter coat each year.

This was all because one teacher noticed how children wearing 'charity box', second-hand coats were being bullied and teased in the playground.

He saw the effect it had on their confidence and ultimately their lack of engagement and learning.

So, this teacher and his Rotary club, in partnership with Walmart, started raising money to distribute elementary schools' vouchers to needy families who

could go to the shop and buy a coat like all the other children.

The teacher saw how the children walked a bit taller in their brand-new coats and, more importantly, the effect it had on their self-confidence and learning. That was 24 years ago, and they are still doing it.

The Rotary E-Club 1070 wanted to take on this project. The Utah Rotary club was very helpful telling us all about how their project worked.

We approached several big retailers in this country who were not keen on the voucher idea, but offered gift cards instead. However, we felt these would be open to misuse.

So being an e-club, we developed a website which carries no Rotary branding - it looks just like any other on-line shop.

The website is exclusively for families to use their vouchers so the child never knows that they are receiving this gift from Rotary, an individual, society or club who donates £25 for them to have a high-quality, warm winter coat with a hood.

We finished the first winter operations in December 2022.

The Utah club usually supplies 600 coats a year. We initially set ourselves a target of 200, but distributed 1,089 vouchers to primary schools across the entire district, which includes Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire.

We were able to do this through amazing fund-raising from District 1070's Rotary clubs, a matching grant, and several small charity grants.

Many Rotary clubs have pledged to support us again as this year when we hope to supply coats across Great Britain & Ireland.

We could never have done this without the 'Power of Rotary'. ●

## | Information |

If you would also like to join us to make a difference to a young child's life please visit: [rotaryclub1070.org](https://rotaryclub1070.org)

For more information, email: [coats4kids@rotaryclub1070.org](mailto:coats4kids@rotaryclub1070.org)



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*These helpful books mean there's nothing to fear about using smartphones - from sending a quick email to video calling your family and friends.*

- Video phone calls - a great way to keep up with family who live a long way away
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*Smart phones are quite complex, and your books speak in plain English."*

## Only half the story

That's only half the story but we don't have room to explain here. We've put together full information on the books - who they're for, what they cover and so on.

What's more the books also come with a free gift - no room to explain that here either.

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# A celebration of young achievers

| STORY BY **EVE CONWAY, AWARDS FOUNDER** |

Young people across Great Britain & Ireland have been recognised for their fantastic achievements within their communities at the Rotary Young Citizen Awards 2023.

**H**OSTED by past winners Grace O'Malley, who won in 2013, and Theo Sergiou, a 2020 winner, they presented the inspirational winners with their awards at St. Benedict's School in Alcester, Warwickshire in April.

## Meet the outstanding winners:

### **ELOISE (ELLA) PENNYCOTT**

Eighteen-year-old Ella has been recognised for raising awareness and fighting for the rights of the deaf community. Having lost her hearing at the age of 13, Ella joined the National Deaf Children's Society's young people's advisory board and formed a campaign "Deaf Works Everywhere". She has spoken in Parliament and written a play which became the first to debut at the National Theatre with British Sign Language as its primary language. **Nominated by the Brentwood & Becket Rotary Club, Essex.**

### **MATTHEW HOWARD**

For the past two years, 16-year-old Matthew has been developing GAEE UK - a youth-led charity dedicated to improving financial literacy and economic education. GAEE UK has developed a student blog and YouTube channel where they have published over 50 articles, videos and book reviews that have been read over 13,000 times. The

charity has developed online seminars introducing young people to economics beyond the A-level syllabus to prepare them for university life. **Nominated by Thorpe Bay Rotary, Essex.**

### **LONDON MAYNARD**

When he was nine-years-old, Landon wanted to give local families and children a different activity which led to him forming 'The Lego Legends', a Lego-building group at his local community centre. The Lego Legends became the fastest growing group at the community centre that a larger venue was secured to accommodate everyone. **Nominated by Bristol Breakfast Rotary.**

### **BEN KANE**

After his brother died, 17-year-old Ben has worked tirelessly over the past three years to ensure his school offers vital support to students who have recently experienced bereavement. Ben founded the Clydeview Bereavement Support Group, alongside a member of staff. The support group offers grieving students activities and one to one sessions to help them feel supported during a potentially isolating experience. **Nominated by Gourock Rotary, Renfrew, Scotland.**

### **AARYA PATIL**

In 2022, Aarya organised a 'Festival of Cultures' for over 700 students and staff at her college in Jersey featuring

workshops to display the diverse range of cultures at the college. Aarya, 15, is part of the Cultural Centre Steering Group, a working party set up by the Government of Jersey to promote cultural diversity and arts within the local community. **Nominated by Jersey Rotary Club.**

### **JASMINE HARRISON**

In 2021, Jasmine became the youngest woman to row solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Not content with just one world record, Jasmine became the first woman to swim the entire length of the UK in 2022. Jasmine's swim raised money for the marine conservation charity, Sea Shepherd UK and Surfers Against Sewage. She is a motivational public speaker encouraging young people to aspire and reach their potential whilst raising funds for ShelterBox and environmental charities. **Nominated by Thirsk Rotary, North Yorkshire.**

### **YOUNG CITIZEN ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD NINA KIRK**

Seventeen-year-old Nina has always been passionate about the environment and started a litter pick to achieve a Duke of Edinburgh Award. Her efforts led to speaking at the "Take Pride in Inverclyde" Eco Summit Workshop. She spoke to a range of MP's and environmentalists at COP 26 as a Net Zero Ambassador for the UK. **Nominated by Gourock Rotary Club, Renfrew, Scotland.**





### **YOUNG CITIZEN SPORTING HERO ALEX WILLIAMS & SERENITY SCOTT (NXT GENERATION MMA TEESSIDE)**

Seventeen-year-old Alex and 21-year-old Serenity are Brazilian jiu-jitsu champions. When Alex suffered an unprovoked attack during his first month of sixth form college and defended himself with a jiu-jitsu move, he and Serenity felt inspired to share their skills. This founded NXT Generation MMA Teesside – a club that runs self-defence sessions for under-12s. They opened their gym in December 2021 and train up to 20 children twice a week. **Nominated by Guisborough & Great Ayton Rotary, North Yorkshire.**

### **YOUNG CITIZEN PEACEMAKER AWARD YANICK MASEKO**

Nineteen-year-old Yanick has been using music as an effective way of dispelling misconceptions about autism. An autistic adult, he has broken down barriers with the success of his music on Spotify and YouTube. Yanick set up the college band Electric Stars to raise the profile of autism and act as music therapy for his peers. **Nominated by Newton-le-Willows Rotary, Merseyside.**

### **CHILDREN OF COURAGE LILIANE CUNLIFFE**

In 2020, eight-year-old Liliane was diagnosed with Absence Epilepsy. It was then discovered she has a brain deformity called Polymicrogyria. Liliane decided she wanted to support people with epilepsy. She took part in the Epilepsy Society's Challenge 100 - walking 100 miles in 100 days – completing the challenge and raising over £1,100 for the charity. **Nominated by Rugby Rotary, Warwickshire.**

### **LEWIS RENNIE**

When Lewis' younger brother Callum died from cancer, Lewis knew at just six-years-old he wanted to help others struggling with cancer. He walked 100 miles to raise money for the Big C Foundation NI set up by his dad in memory of Callum, raising £16,240 which was presented to the Big C Foundation. **Nominated by Larne Rotary, County Antrim, Northern Ireland.**

### **MAISIE ASKEW**

Twelve-year-old Maisie was diagnosed with Osteoblastoma (a benign bone tumour) in January 2021. When the tumour came back after treatment, doctors decided to treat it

as Osteosarcoma (aggressive primary bone cancer). Over the last two and a half years, she has spent several months in hospital enduring eight months of chemotherapy and surgery including one operation which lasted over two days. While undergoing chemotherapy, she started her fundraising business 'Beads Together', selling self-made bracelets and raising over £2,500 for the Children with Cancer Fund. **Nominated by Bexley Rotary, East Sussex. ●**



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## LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND



### ROTARY HELPS INSULATE UKRAINIAN HOMES

**R**OTARY is helping to further the work of Insulate Ukraine - a project looking to replace bullet and bomb-damaged windows across the country.

Through a Disaster Response Grant from The Rotary Foundation, the Rotary District of Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon connected with Mykola Stebljanko, Editor of *Rotariets Magazine* in Ukraine, and Harry Blakiston Houston, the founder of Insulate Ukraine, to find a way of covering the windows that have been blown out during the conflict with Russia.

CPR Manufacturing Ltd in Alferton, Derbyshire has now donated two tonnes of polyethylene towards making the windows and Rotarians from District 1220 (South Yorkshire and East Midlands) recently visited the factory to discover how the windows are made and to show Rotary's intentions of

supporting the project.

Harry, a PhD student at the University of Cambridge in England, devised a plastic window that is already transforming the lives of people whose homes had been damaged.

It is estimated that 10 million windows have been shattered across Ukraine due to missile strikes and gunfire, leaving homeowners barely any means of staying warm in a country where winter regularly sees sub-zero temperatures.

The windows Harry designed to solve this issue are made of polyethylene, PVC piping, pipe insulation and duct tape, creating four layers of insulation.

The windows are great insulators, let the light in, can fit to any size of window frame and are also easy to make, with Insulate Ukraine's team often holding workshops in the areas

they support to show the construction of the windows.

Speaking to BBC News, Harry said: "We're essentially empowering Ukrainians because we're giving them a way to solve this problem for themselves.

"All we have to do is show them how to build the windows and help them to get hold of the materials."

Insulate Ukraine is currently looking to expand their project across Ukraine having partnered with charities in the US, UK, Belgium and Ukraine.

Janice Fulkerson, District Governor for the Rotary District of Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon, commented: "This project is about people of action, about the power of The Rotary Foundation, and how people all over the globe connect to build peace and make a difference." ●



## ROTARIANS AND RUNNERS JOIN FORCES



**T**HE Rotary Club of Westbury, Wiltshire, joined forces with the Avon Valley Runners to host the 9th edition of their annual Imber Ultra Marathon.

Some 112 runners took part in the 33-mile race over the rough tracks of Salisbury Plain, passing through many of the local towns and villages.

Runners Ra Twilley and Una Mills won their respective categories and were presented with prizes by Marc Allum, an antiques expert and prominent feature on Antiques Roadshow.

The event was sponsored by estate agents Myddelton & Major and the local Ford car dealership, with Lidl and

Morrisons also supplying the runners with plenty of water and fruit.

The race was kicked off by the Westbury Town Crier, John Hadfield, after a brief by Avon Valley Race Coordinator Martin Bull and a speech by the Westbury Rotary President Jon Street.

Jon will soon be taking on his own challenge as he is organising a sponsored climb of Snowdon alongside three other Rotarians.

The money raised from the proposed climb of Snowdon will go towards The Rotary Foundation, charities supported by Westbury Rotary and Bristol Southmead Hospital. ●

## DERBYSHIRE GETS CREATIVE

**Y**OUNG people from across Derbyshire showed their fabulous creative talent at the recent YOU-CREATE Exhibition at Belper arranged by Belper and Duffield Rotary.

The exhibition, held at Belper's 'Number 28' community room during the half-term weekend, enabled children and young people from six schools along with a Belper Scout Group, to showcase their art.

Some 110 exhibits including art, cartoons, writing (prose and poetry) and photography went on display.

Each of the age groups; junior (up to 10), intermediate (11-13) and senior (14-17) contributed to the exhibition which wowed both judges and the many

visitors alike.

YOU-CREATE was formally opened by Pauline Latham MP who said during her opening speech: "Young people have a bad press much of the time, but you can see from what they've done here, there are some really committed and brilliant young people."

Pauline Latham MP was introduced by Rotary President Peter Hurst, who said: "The young people really worked hard to produce creative pieces in so many ways. I'm a professional photographer with an understanding of creating something interesting and I was blown away by the talent on show here at YOU-CREATE." ●

## SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT WITH SEWING

**T**HE Cheam and Sutton Rotary Club in Greater London has set up a sewing project with the aim of helping the environment and teaching local residents a new skill.

The vision for the project was to give an opportunity to people in the community who lack access to resources so they can learn important skills in sewing, repairing and making fabric items from household goods and clothing.

Cheam and Sutton Rotary applied for a grant from The National Lottery Community Fund under its 'Together for Our Planet' drive and received £5,200 to cover one year of lessons.

The students taking part in the project, which became known as 'The Tuesday Club', came from local charities like Home-Start Sutton and Sutton Mental Health Foundation.

The club made sure to make full use of local resources, hiring a nearby sewing studio and local instructor to hold the classes as well as organising the collection and repair of broken sewing machines using a local repair shop.

After nearly a year of lessons, the students are now able to confidently sew by hand as well as with a sewing machine. ●



## A SUPERHERO WITHOUT A CAPE

**R**OTARIAN Chris Davies has been presented with one of just 150 'Service Above Self' awards by Rotary International.

It is Rotary's highest award and recognises those who, through their own work, demonstrate Rotary's motto by volunteering their time and talent to help others.

The award is granted to no more than 150 Rotarians worldwide. Chris, who is a member of Market Harborough Rotary Club in Leicestershire, was described as "a superhero without a cape" by District Governor, Steve Howe, when she was presented with the award at the District 1070, which is Rotary in the Seven Counties, Eastern Central England, conference in Tamworth, Staffordshire.

Chris has held a number of key roles for Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland including Chair of the Learning & Development Team, and is a member of the first Regional Board. She has been heavily involved with training for Rotary International, alongside chairing three District Grants, as well as sourcing a Global Grant for a pain management palliative care project in Ethiopia.

"Besides being membership lead at her own club in Market Harborough, and a very effective one too, Chris is also very busy helping her church," added Steve. ●



## ROTARY SUPPORTS UKRAINE



**C**HEPSTOW & District Rotary Club is a small Rotary club which remains determined to help locally-displaced Ukrainians as well as those in Ukraine.

In 2022, the Welsh club donated £1,000 to the Red Cross Ukraine Appeal and £500 to the Rotary District 1100 (Rotary in the Midlands and South West) appeal to purchase a refurbished ambulance which was sent to Rotary in Kyiv.

At a Christmas Torchlight Carol Service at Tintern Abbey, they enabled the local Ukraine Community Hub Choir from St Briavels, comprising many children and mothers, to sing traditional Ukrainian carols for the 1,000 people

present.

At the end of the event a bucket collection raised £500 which was donated to the choir.

The club has also helped the Ukraine Community Hub financially and with donations of warm clothing.

One of the Rotary club's associate members, Guy Wilson, has been actively volunteering at the Hub, helping with transport, sourcing computers and giving support where needed.

Chepstow Rotary has been able to spread the word about what they have been achieving with discussions with the High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant and the Secretary of State for Wales. ●

## HELPING UGANDA

**T**HE Rotary Club of Southport Links has been working in tandem with the Rotary Club of Jinja in Uganda and the Australian Rotary Action Group, Food Plant Solutions.

The Food Plant Solutions Group was established in 2007, through members of the Rotary Club of Devonport North in Tasmania and based on the work of agricultural scientist, Bruce French.

The objective of Food Plant Solutions (FPS) is to combat hunger and malnutrition, and ensure food security by empowering people through education so they can make informed choices about what to plant, eat and grow to achieve a diverse, sustainable, nutritious diet.

The link between Jinja and Southport

Links Rotary Clubs was formed in 2020 with the then Club President Faustine Victor Ngarambe and David Taylor following a project supporting refurbishments at the Baltiwegomba School for Visually Impaired, a local home supported by the Jinja club.

The guidance provided by the Food Plant Solutions' 'Uganda programme' was given to women's groups during their training, supported with the picture guides and online translation.

Some 150 sets of the picture guides were printed in Kampala for Southport Links Rotary Club. These booklets were printed in English and were used by the trainers instructing the groups. ●



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## ROTARIAN BECOMES HIGH SHERIFF



**O**NE of Shropshire's best-known businesswomen and a prominent Rotarian has been installed as the county's new High Sheriff - and pledged to shine a light on the county's unsung heroes.

Mandy Thorn MBE was officially installed at a special ceremony attended by guests from across Shropshire held at St Mary's Under the Wrekin Church in Leighton in April.

Mandy said she would use her year in office to highlight the people, groups and organisations who go the extra mile to make Shropshire such a special place to work and live.

The origins of the High Sheriff office date back to Saxon times, when the 'Shire Reeve' was responsible to the King for the maintenance of law and order within the shire, or county, and for the collection and return of taxes due to the Crown. Today, there are 55 High Sheriffs serving the counties of England and Wales each year.

Whilst the duties of the role have evolved over time, supporting the Crown and the judiciary remain central elements of the role today. In addition, High Sheriffs actively lend support and encouragement to crime prevention. ●

## ROLLING BACK THE YEARS



**T**HE Alumni Association of District 1210 (Rotary in Shropshire, Staffordshire and the North West Midlands) has launched an exciting new venture to record and celebrate the history of Rotary in its district.

Known as the 'rotarYears project', the stories being shared trace the evolution of Rotary in the district through historical documents, artifacts and images that show people and events that have shaped our organisation.

The archives, located in a disused chapel near Rugeley in Staffordshire, are creating a lasting legacy that

accurately preserves Rotary's history, continually building with new material as history is being made every day, today and tomorrow.

There are three areas:

- Thousands of photos, recordings, publications and artifacts.
- Regalia and similar items that are no longer in use so that this historical treasure is kept safe for ever.
- Oral history, recording people's memories, feelings and attitudes.

District 1210 covers most of Staffordshire and Shropshire and part of the West Midlands. Every one of the 55 clubs in the district has been contacted by the Alumni Co-chair Beverley Ricketts working together with members of M&M Rotary Passport Club.

She reported that a number of replies have been received ranging from those who have nothing in their club to others who have many historical artifacts which they would like to donate it to rotarYears for safekeeping.

The City of Wolverhampton Rotary Club donated an elaborate President's chair and items celebrating its member Tom Warren who rose to become the President of Rotary International in 1945/46. ●

## STRIKE UP THE BAND!

**B**EXHILL Rotarian Vernon Findlay has been putting his woodworking skills to work to help Bexhill Heritage renovate the bandstand on Bexhill's seafront.

The bandstand in East Sussex was completed back in 1895 and purchased in due course by Earl De La Warr who surrounded the stand with an enclosure to add comfort for the public attending band performances.

In 1904 the Earl decided, after complaints from visitors of the discomfort caused by traffic and strong winds, to convert the bandstand to a shelter.

Sadly, by the twentieth century the bandstand was in a sorry state so it was leased to Bexhill Heritage in 2021 which

set about the long restoration process, which involved many volunteers including Bexhill Rotarian Vernon.

Vernon Findlay said: "My involvement with the bandstand was mainly applying my woodworking skills to make new ventilation panels as well as repairs to old timbers.

"I had to make a special jig to cut the trefoil shapes in the timber."

Vernon is now busy making coasters using some of the mahogany reclaimed from the bandstand window sills. He has already sold 20 of them with all the proceeds being passed on to a range of charitable causes including Bexhill Foodbank and Warming Up The Homeless. ●





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and finally...

EDITOR@ROTARYGBI.ORG

# THE MODERN FACE OF ROTARY

STORY BY **MANAGING EDITOR DAVE KING**

It is hard to believe that it was three years ago when we were experiencing the height of the pandemic; desperate times of isolation and exclusion with the emergence of Zoom as a means of connecting businesses and families.

It was also in 2020 when Rotary's series of *togetherTalks* began; a collection of 40-minute webinars jointly hosted by myself and Nicki Scott, supported by an impressive backroom team to produce what I believe was one of the best showcases of Rotary to a global audience.

It was the brainchild of Nicki, who I first met at a Rotary national conference in Nottingham a few years earlier. I was late for the opening plenary session, randomly grabbed a seat in the darkened auditorium, and found myself sitting next to this chatty Rotarian, just returned from a spell living in the United States, who was brimming with enthusiasm and ideas. It was a total breath of fresh air.

So fast forward to March 2020 when Nicki called me within weeks of the Covid lockdown to suggest a digital initiative connecting Rotarians during the pandemic. I was in. Within five weeks, *togetherTalks* was live at 19:05 (note the clever tie-in to the year of Rotary's birth?) with our first guest, Jennifer Jones.

Now even then, Jennifer was already someone with considerable Rotary pedigree and highly respected.

During *togetherTalks*, the Canadian spoke passionately about the power of connection through story-telling, adroitly dealing with a range of questions from the online audience, and graciously parrying questions asking when Rotary would have its first female President, and enquiries whether she would want the role?

How ironic, then, that this Rotary year has witnessed Jennifer as Rotary



International's first female President, supported by Nicki as her Vice President, whose terms come to an end on June 30.

Who would have believed that the future Vice President would be quizzing the future RI President on the first *togetherTalks* back in May 2020?

What they have formed over the past 12 months has been a formidable partnership. The fact it was an all-woman team is irrelevant. Rotary has had all-male Presidential teams for years.

What Jennifer and Nicki have achieved is to showcase the modern face of progressive Rotary where diversity, equity and inclusivity have sat at the heart of this programme of progression.

As Jennifer said in one of her first interviews: "I believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion ... begins at the top, and for us to realise growth in female membership and members under the age of forty - these demographics need to see their own reflection in leadership. I will champion double-digit growth in both

categories while never losing sight of our entire family."

With Scotland's Gordon McNally stepping into the President's role on July 1, I know from an interview which I held with him earlier this year, and which you can read in August's issue of *Rotary* magazine, that continuity of leadership within Rotary is key.

Gordon will continue to champion diversity, equity and inclusion, picking up on the empowering girls' initiative promoted by Jennifer's predecessor, Shekhar Mehta, while promoting his own campaign around mental health.

And I have no doubt that Gordon's successor, Stephanie Urchick, will pick up the baton of continuity when she becomes the second woman to take office as RI President in July 2024.

To Jennifer and Nicki, well done on a tremendous job as exemplary Rotary ambassadors, leaving behind a legacy of progression and opportunity. You have shown outstanding leadership. ●

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