

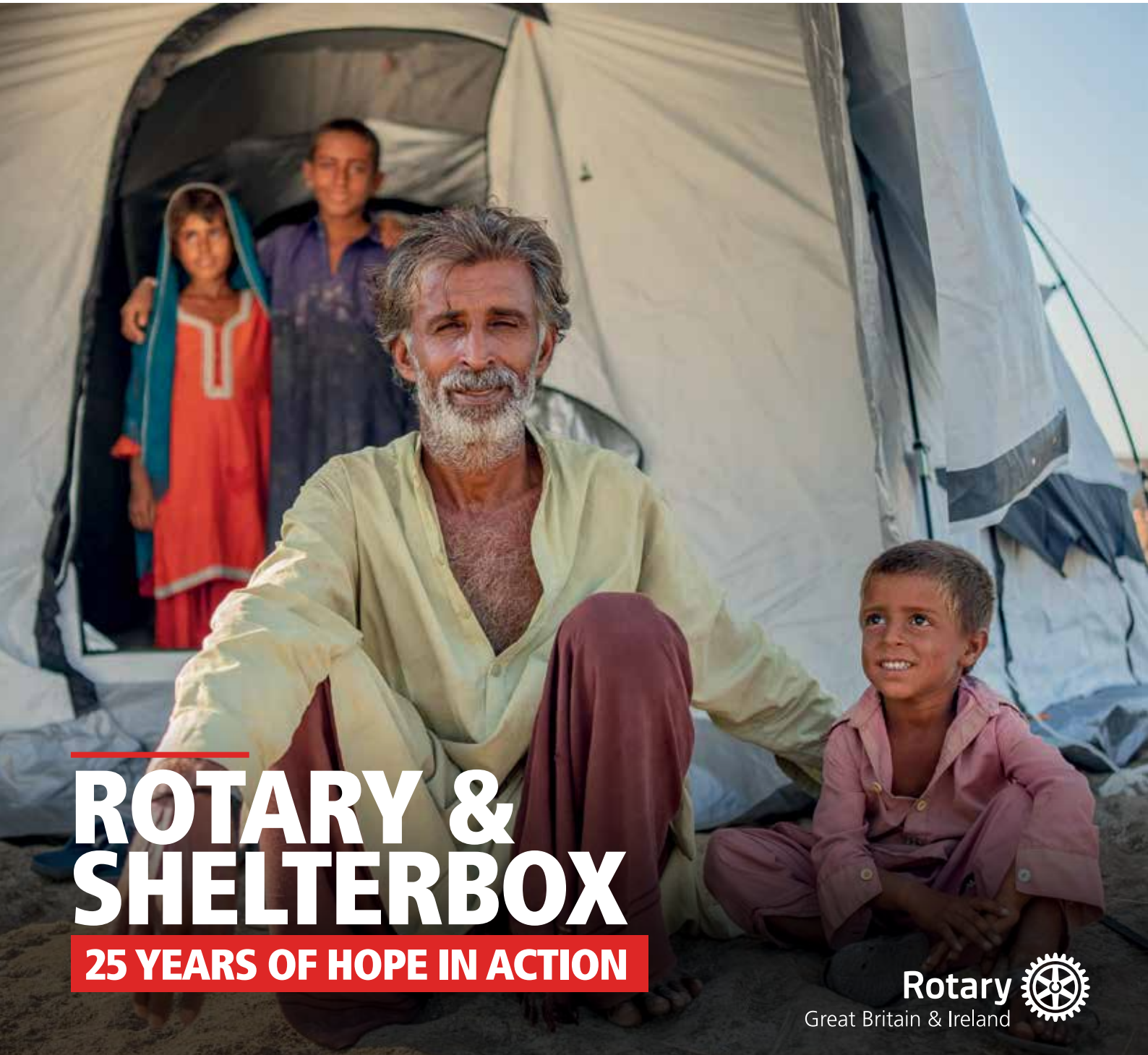
Rotary

MAGAZINE



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SUMMER 2025
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ROTARY & SHELTERBOX

25 YEARS OF HOPE IN ACTION



END OF AN ERA

Marking 110 years of Rotary Magazine in print

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Contact us

EDITOR: Dave King
editor@rotarygbi.org

PUBLISHER: Contently Limited
contentlylondon.co.uk

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Martin Tandy
martin.tandy@rotarygbi.org


ADVERTISING SALES AGENCY:
CPL One, Rory Fear
rory.fear@cplone.co.uk
01727 739181

ROTARY IN GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND
Kinwarton Road, Alcester,
Warwickshire B49 6PB
01789 765 411
rotarygbi.org


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Digital magazine



Welcome

SO, this is the final issue of *Rotary Magazine*, ending a 110-year connection to the print edition of the oldest regional Rotary magazine in the world.

We will be transitioning solely to *Rotary Digital* magazine from August, and you can read the background to this move on pages 6 and 7.

In the meantime, we are going to finish this issue with a flourish.

As ShelterBox marks its 25th anniversary, it is perhaps timely and necessary to reflect on the profound impact of the charity's enduring partnership with Rotary International.

What began as a modest Millennium project by the Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard in Cornwall in 2000 has since evolved into a globally-recognised humanitarian alliance - one which exemplifies the power of strategic collaboration, grassroots mobilisation, and a sustained commitment to humanitarian relief.

In this issue of *Rotary Magazine*, we showcase the work of ShelterBox and its reach across the world to provide emergency shelter and essential supplies to families who have lost everything to disaster or conflict.

This very simple concept, which was hatched in a garage by Rotarian Tom Henderson, a quarter of a century ago, where he came up with the concept of the green box, has aligned seamlessly with Rotary's ethos of service above self.

Let's not lose sight either that Rotary's involvement has been instrumental in legitimising and embedding ShelterBox's presence in some of the most complex humanitarian contexts across the world.

And although Rotary has grown in stature and recognised by the

international community for the work that it has been doing around polio for the past 40 years, it is also important to remember the significant global role which Rotary and ShelterBox have shared with providing humanitarian relief on such a scale and with immediacy.

We have been working against the tightest of deadlines for this final print issue with the visit of Stephanie Urchick to Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the Isle of Man at the tail-end of her term as President of Rotary International.

It has been 23 years since an RI President visited Ireland from where Stephanie flew from on June 13 at the end of her 11-day visit to the British Isles, before heading on to the Rotary International Convention in Calgary.

While in Scotland, Stephanie learnt that incoming President, Mário César Martins de Camargo had suddenly resigned citing personal and business reasons.

This is the third time in Rotary history that the RI Board of Directors have had to find a replacement. In 2017, the 2018-19 President-elect Sam F. Owori passed away unexpectedly. And in 2019, President-nominee Sushil Gupta resigned for health reasons.

Now we welcome Francesco Arezzo, a member of the Rotary Club of Ragusa, from Sicily in Italy, as the new RI President for 2025-26.

He took office on July 1 and attended the Convention in Calgary. Never was the 'Unite for Good' Presidential message, first intended for Mário's term of office, more appropriate for Rotary than right now.

Dave King
Editor, *Rotary Magazine*

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magazine.rotarygbi.org

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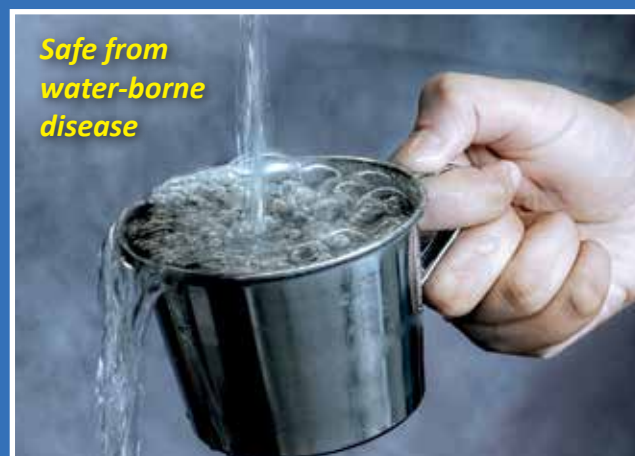
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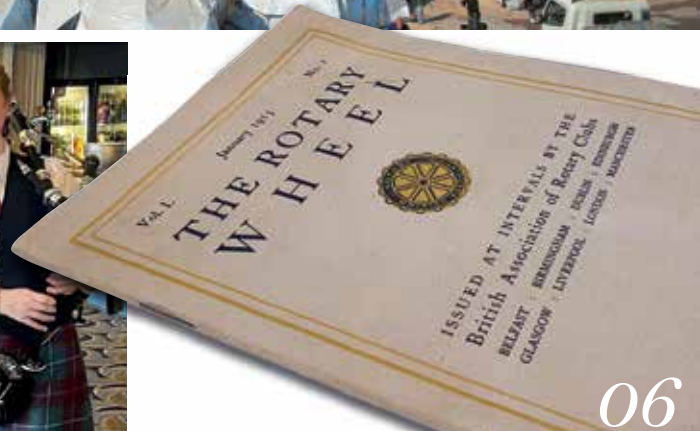
Water
Survival Box

CREATING HOPE

...one box at a time!

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1915-2025

THE END OF

A Print eRa

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

WITH a mixture of fond nostalgia and forward-looking optimism, I write to inform you that this will be the final edition of our printed magazine.

After decades of inspiring service stories, member highlights, and Rotary milestones delivered in ink and paper, we are turning a page - literally and metaphorically. This will be the last print edition of *Rotary Magazine*, ending a 110-year legacy.

The Rotary Wheel was first published in 1915 just a year after the formation of the British Association of Rotary Clubs. It is the oldest regional Rotary magazine in the world, following in the footsteps of *The National Rotarian* which was first published in Chicago in 1911.

Since then, *The Rotary Wheel* has evolved through various name changes and formats to today's *Rotary Magazine*.

For more than a century, the print magazine has been read by Rotarians across Great Britain and Ireland chronicling the story of the organisation and the impact its members have made worldwide.

Rotary Magazine has long served as a vital bridge between clubs and communities, capturing the spirit of Rotary. It has been a witness to Rotarians providing support to communities and soldiers during two World Wars.

Rotary Magazine has been a steadfast campaigner for Rotary's polio eradication initiative which was launched exactly 40 years ago. Its pages have also reflected Rotary's modernisation through the inclusion of women in 1989, and the adoption of a more flexible approach with different models of membership.

I have stated previously in these pages my passion for print, expressing a belief that in this hurly-burly digital age there is still room for the sobering presence

and reassuring reflective stability of the printed format.

Further, I have argued how the print magazine is our best marketing tool to promote Rotary to the wider community and grow membership. Its easily accessible, evergreen content stands the test of time.

A recent survey of Rotarians from these isles, which was published in the April issue of the magazine, bears testament to that fact.

90%
Said they regularly read *Rotary Magazine* in print and *Rotary Digital*, with a quarter reading 'cover to cover'.

76%
Said the magazine helped them better understand the world of Rotary.

75%
Rated the magazine as 'excellent' or 'good'.

So, it would be hypocritical of me to state that I am comfortable with the decision, because I am not. With the North Star membership initiative looking to grow Rotary, the printed magazine would have helped towards that goal.

However, what is undisputed is the rocketing cost of publishing *Rotary Magazine*. It is why we moved from a bi-monthly issue to a quarterly edition in January 2024.

The eye-watering six-figure distribution costs each year are an absolute killer to an association which is tackling declining revenues, while trying to stabilise and grow membership.

So as Rotary itself strives to grow, adapt, and modernise, it has become clear

that the digital format offers opportunities which the printed page cannot.

WHAT NEXT?

Well *Rotary Digital* will now become the mainstay of Rotary's communications with its monthly publication. You will continue to receive monthly updates via email. If you've not read *Rotary Digital* before, I urge you to connect at magazine.rotarygbi.org

Since launching the digital edition 18 months ago, it has established itself as a popular format.

Rotary Digital presents an opportunity to expand Rotary's reach to an even wider demographic. We can share compelling stories through video, link directly to service projects, offer real-time updates, and include voices from all over the world - instantly.

My goal as editor is that *Rotary Digital* becomes a living, breathing platform which reflects the vibrancy and diversity of Rotary as it exists today.

We plan to embrace the latest digital technologies with significant changes expected over the next 12 months.

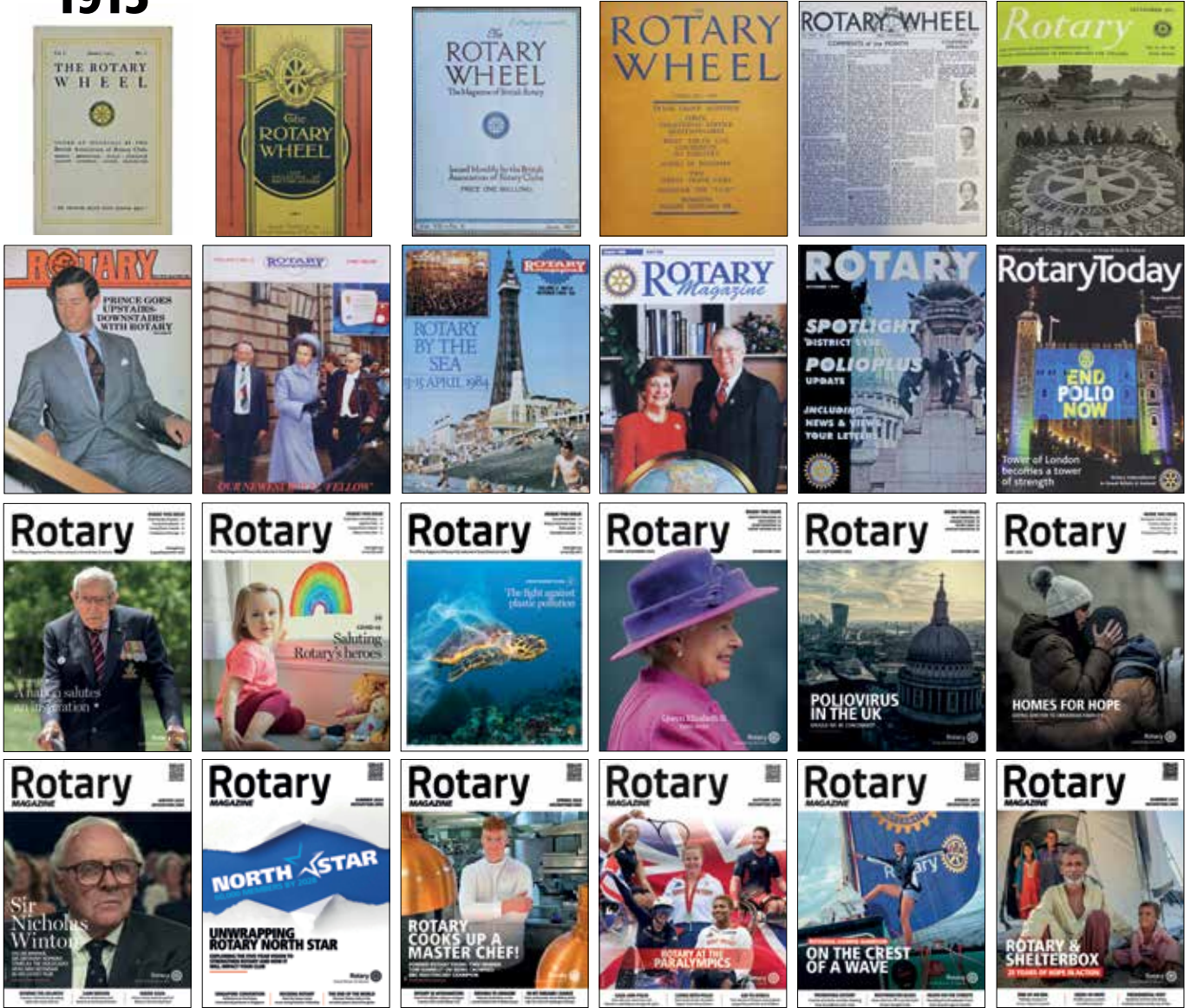
This transition also supports one of Rotary's most pressing priorities: membership growth. Younger generations live their lives online. If we are to attract new members and inspire the next wave of Rotarians, then we must meet them where they are.

A digital publication does not just report on Rotary, it invites participation.

It allows readers to act, to connect, and share with ease. Through smartphones, tablets and laptops we can tell our stories not just to our current members, but prospective ones too.

Our aim must be to grow the product, encourage more Rotarians to feel comfortable with the format and establish *Rotary Digital* as a must-read product

1915



2025

which you can share with friends and family.

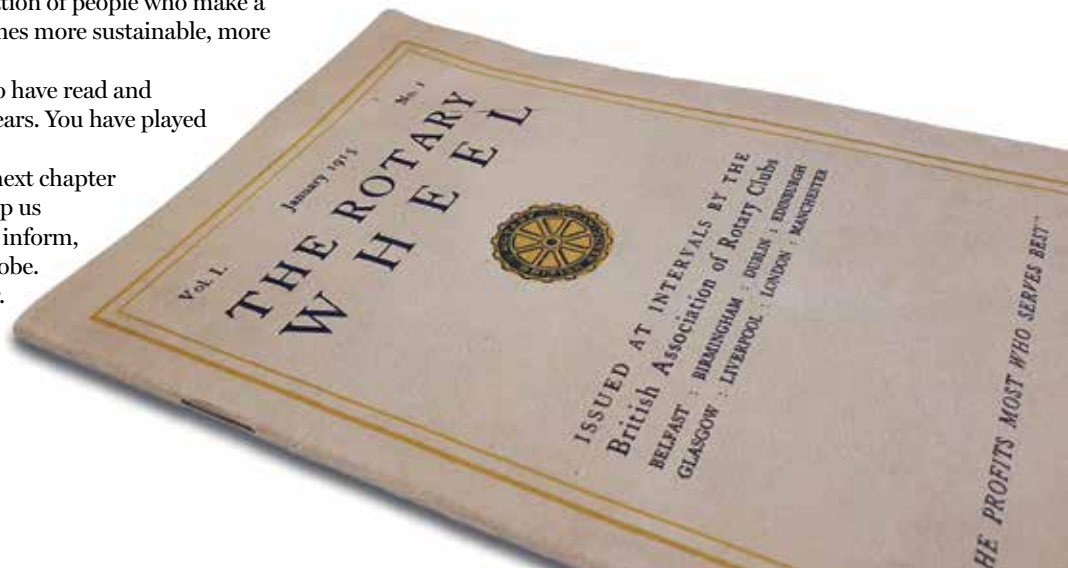
Critical to this goal will be greater engagement with Rotarians and Rotary clubs in telling your stories through your words and videos.

We remain committed to the same editorial excellence, the same mission of service, and the same celebration of people who make a difference. But now, our platform becomes more sustainable, more inclusive, and more interactive.

Let me close by thanking those who have read and contributed to this magazine over the years. You have played a key role in amplifying Rotary's voice.

Now, I invite you to join us in this next chapter - digitally. Subscribe, share, engage. Help us ensure that *Rotary Digital* continues to inform, inspire, and ignite service around the globe.

The story of Rotary is far from over. In fact, it's about to be more widely read than ever before. ●



Rotary

DIGITAL

YOU'RE JUST ONE CLICK AWAY ROTARY MAGAZINE

As we bid farewell to our printed magazine, here are some of the upcoming stories to look forward to in our next monthly **Rotary Digital**

WHAT'S IN ROTARY DIGITAL

THERE is so much more to **Rotary Digital** which includes plenty of exclusive content which you won't read in the printed magazine.

Here, you can read inspiring stories and catch up with video content, as well as directly engage with some of the content.

These are some of the exclusive highlights in the July's **Rotary Digital**.

- Meet Tom Henderson, the founding father of ShelterBox in 2000 while a member of Helston Lizard Rotary in Cornwall.
- News of Dublin being shortlisted to host the Rotary International Convention in either 2029 or 2031.
- Catch-up with the progress of Thirsk Rotarian, Jasmine Harrison, currently in the South Pacific, who is sailing around the world.
- News of Rotarians honoured in the King's Birthday Honours List.
- Seven pages of fresh People of Action stories from Rotary clubs across Great Britain & Ireland.
- A special report on Rotary GB&I's first Impact Day for enterprise members.
- Introducing Seamus Grant, The Rotary Foundation's Major Gifts Officer for Rotary GB&I.
- Judith Diment, Vice Chair of Rotary International's PolioPlus Committee, reports from the World Health Assembly in Geneva.
- International stories from Lebanon, Rwanda, the Philippines and Italy.
- Plus, more letters to the editor which you won't find in the print magazine.
- Reports from Calgary, Canada, of the Rotary International Convention.
- Revealing the winners of more Rotary youth competitions.
- A first word from the recently-elected Rotary International President, Francesco Arrezzo.
- Plus many of your print favourites including letters to the editor and People of Action pages.

This digital-first edition will allow us to break stories in real time and give more room to share stories which matter.

So we invite you to explore, engage and enjoy to help Rotary reach further, connect faster, and grow stronger.

Let's shape this new chapter together. ●



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THE NEXT DISASTER IS NOT A MATTER OF IF, BUT WHEN.

Our pre-positioned stock enabled us to provide tents quickly when Hurricane Beryl hit the Caribbean, and get shelter aid to people in Gaza, caught up in conflict.

Now we need your Rotary club's help as we prepare and restock our strategically located warehouses around the world.

By raising the amount it costs to provide typical packages of emergency shelter aid, you'll make sure we're ready to support those who lose their homes to the next disaster.

**Help us to be there when people
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THANK YOU FROM SHELTERBOX



| SANJ SRIKANTHAN |
SHELTERBOX CEO

THE past 12 months have been challenging for ShelterBox, reflecting the scale of the current global humanitarian crisis. With 120 million people forced to flee their homes due to conflict and extreme weather, a number which has tripled since our founding 25 years ago, the need for our vital work has never been greater.

Amidst the challenges, there is a profound sense of pride in what we have achieved. Since our inception through the work and passion of a small group of Rotarians, we have supported over three million people recovering from disaster or conflict. This milestone is a testament to the dedication and compassion of everyone involved, including so many Rotary members worldwide, and it inspires us to continue our efforts to bring hope and relief to those in need.

Our partnership with Rotary continues to make a significant impact across the globe. We have supported thousands of families enduring the impact of conflict in the Middle East, including Lebanon and Gaza; work that has only been made possible through collaboration with Rotary in Jordan.

Our partnership with Rotary District 7030 provided essential life-saving aid after Hurricane Beryl swept through the Caribbean. Ongoing collaborative work with Rotary in the Philippines has enabled us to support thousands of people after six tropical storms swept through the country.

Recently in Myanmar, information and support from Rotary members in Thailand and Myanmar has been vital in our response to the earthquake in the complex setting of the conflict.

Many of these crises are compounded by the effects of our changing climate, as extreme weather events add to the challenges of survival in conflict zones. To adapt to a changing world, we are constantly exploring new ways to meet the growing needs of those affected by crises. We are balancing our ability to respond to long-term conflicts and climate change-induced disasters, while also evolving and innovating to reduce our environmental impact.

By prepositioning aid in regions at greater risk of extreme weather events

or earthquakes, we can respond more quickly when disaster strikes.

Our dedication to adapting and improving ensures that we can offer the best possible support to those in need, no matter the challenges we face. 2025 marks a significant milestone for ShelterBox — 25 years of unwavering dedication to responding to earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and conflicts. It's been 25 years of providing emergency shelter to families in extreme need, and 25 years of a remarkable relationship with Rotary that has made all of this possible.

I hope that the articles in this issue of *Rotary Magazine* show you how vital our partnership with Rotary is around the world. Rotary members are fellow humanitarians who are part of the joint effort to see people recover after disaster.

Whether raising awareness and fund-raising; assisting with needs assessments or logistics in-country; or introducing us to important local authorities, we value your involvement.

It's thanks to our supporters and our unique long-standing partnership with Rotary International, that we can make the necessary commitment to working with communities in their long-term recovery into the future.

Together, we have brought hope and relief to countless families, and we look forward to continuing this essential work in the years to come. ●





SHELTERBOX

TURNING 25

This year marks 25 years of ShelterBox, a milestone powered by the incredible impact of Rotary members worldwide. Their dedication through volunteering, fund-raising, donating, and partnering on projects has been truly transformational. In partnership with Rotary clubs and districts, ShelterBox has supported more than three million people in over 100 countries across the globe.

2000

IT ALL began with a simple, yet powerful idea from one small Rotary club. The Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard in Cornwall initiated a millennium project with the humble goal of reaching a few dozen families each year. Through endless hours of volunteering, dedicated Rotary members packed boxes of aid to be sent all over the world. Their unwavering commitment and hard work gathered the momentum needed to bring us to where we are today.

This incredible journey, fuelled by the passion and dedication of Rotary members, has allowed ShelterBox to make a profound impact on millions of lives. It is a testament to the power of community and the difference that can be made when we come together with a shared purpose.



2001

ShelterBox's first response was to the devastating Gujarat earthquake in India, known locally as the Bhuj earthquake. This catastrophic event destroyed nearly 400,000 homes, leaving countless families in desperate need.

2004

The Boxing Day tsunami was one of the deadliest disasters of the 21st century, claiming over 250,000 lives and leaving nearly two million people homeless across 14 countries. In the face of such immense tragedy, a massive surge of support from around the world enabled ShelterBox's team to launch their largest ever response.



2015



After a devastating earthquake in Nepal, mountain villages were left in ruins, and the collaboration with Rotary and Rotaract members was crucial.

They provided damage reports and made essential introductions to local government officials and communities.

ShelterBox was then able to support tens of thousands of people with shelter aid, including shelter kits, emergency dome tents, and corrugated iron sheets.

2017

Rotary members played a crucial role in helping us establish ShelterBox Operations Philippines (SBOP). Rotarians provided local warehouse space, enabling ShelterBox to reach people in the region more quickly and benefit from the invaluable power of local knowledge.

2020

After two powerful hurricanes, Iota and Eta, swept through Central America one after the other, ShelterBox joined forces with the Rotary Club of San Pedro Sula and Habitat for Humanity Honduras to support thousands of displaced people in Honduras.

"THANKS TO ROTARY AND SBOP, RESPONSE TIMES WERE QUICK AS THE AID WAS PREPOSITIONED IN A WAREHOUSE IN CEBU."



2022

Led by ShelterBox Operations Philippines (SBOP) and working closely with the Rotary Club of Cebu, District 3860, and Rotary Clubs on Bohol, ShelterBox teams collaborated to distribute shelter kits, timber, and corrugated iron sheeting to help people repair and reconstruct homes lost to Typhoon Rai in the Philippines. Thanks to Rotary and SBOP, response times were quick as the aid was prepositioned in a warehouse in Cebu.

2023

In 2023, ShelterBox collaborated with Rotary as part of a three-part arrangement with The Grand Atlas Foundation, a local NGO introduced to us by Rotary partners, to support people affected by the earthquake in Morocco. Working closely with local communities and Rotary volunteers, they distributed emergency dome tents, along with solar lights, blankets, and kitchen sets, to communities in some of the most remote villages of the Atlas Mountains. ●



TOGETHER WITH ROTARY, SHELTERBOX CAN DO MORE

ShelterBox's supporters, volunteers, and partners are the driving force behind the charity's efforts, and it's only with Rotary's continued support that they will be able to scale up and reach more people after disasters. ShelterBox want to say thank you for being a part of this journey and for helping ensure no-one is left without shelter after a disaster.

ROTARY DIGITAL 

Meet the Rotarian whose inspiration started ShelterBox in the July edition of Rotary Digital.

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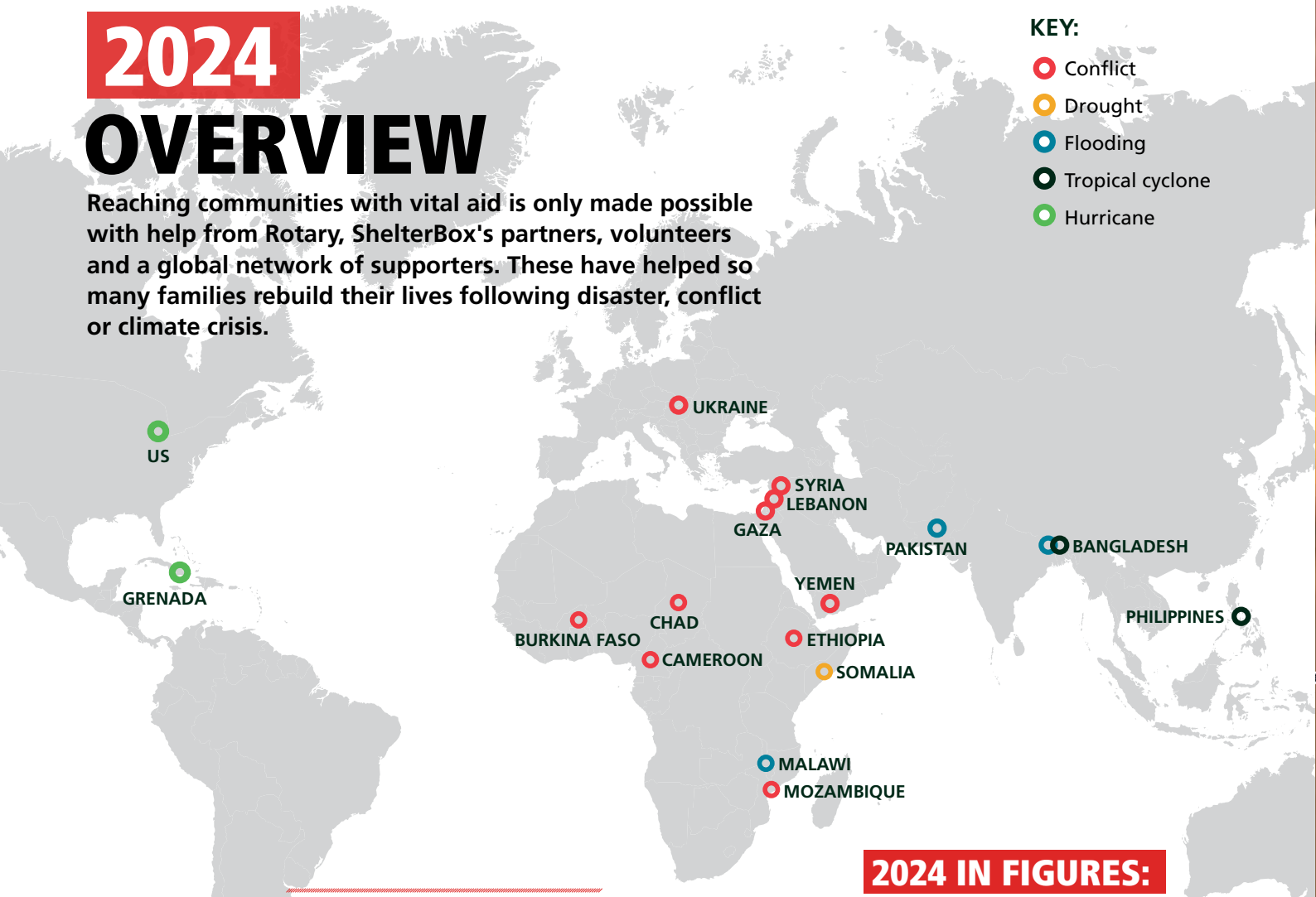
2024

OVERVIEW

Reaching communities with vital aid is only made possible with help from Rotary, ShelterBox's partners, volunteers and a global network of supporters. These have helped so many families rebuild their lives following disaster, conflict or climate crisis.

KEY:

- Conflict
- Drought
- Flooding
- Tropical cyclone
- Hurricane



LAST YEAR, SHELTERBOX REACHED THE MILESTONE OF SUPPORTING OVER THREE MILLION PEOPLE SINCE THE CHARITY WAS FOUNDED IN 2000.

2024 IN FIGURES:

270,000
PEOPLE

54,000*
FAMILIES

THANKS TO ITS SUPPORTERS, SHELTERBOX HAS BEEN ABLE TO WORK IN 17 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES OR REGIONS, AFTER:



HURRICANES



FLOODING



CONFLICT



DROUGHT



TROPICAL CYCLONES

*Assuming 5 people per family

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GAZA



Despite the difficulties of getting aid into war-torn Gaza, ShelterBox has managed to support more than 15,000 people with emergency shelters since the conflict began in October 2023.

| STORY BY **NATALIE SOLVELAND** |
SHELTERBOX INTERNATIONAL TEAM

GAZA is one of the most densely populated pieces of land on Earth. Over 1.9 million – 9 out of 10 people – have been displaced across the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, many of these multiple times. More than 80% of homes have been damaged or destroyed.

Only a tiny fraction of the territory has remained untouched. It is widely regarded that the humanitarian response in Gaza is the most challenging in the world. Borders that had been open have been closed at short notice and agencies have had to divert their aid to alternative routes. Aid convoys inside Gaza have been attacked. The north of the territory has been cut off from the south for months. Despite the challenges, we have formed partnerships, delivered aid, and

supported people in Gaza when they need it most.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

To mitigate against some of the extreme risks involved in sending aid into an active conflict zone, we are working with multiple partners across different aid routes. Our partner, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), a British NGO, has a longstanding presence in Gaza and therefore a strong network in the territory.

Another partner, Social Development Forum (SDF), is identifying communities in need, managing warehouse storage and movement of aid items, as well as distributions, and project monitoring alongside MAP. PARC (Agricultural Development Association), a Palestinian NGO that has been very active in its response to the current conflict, is also

supporting with aid distributions.

The Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC) has a formalised partnership with MAP, and has managed the aid pipeline through Egypt, enabling us to import goods into Egypt, to then be delivered into Gaza alongside locally procured aid.

Our partnership with Rotary has been essential in helping to facilitate the movement and storage of our aid items into Gaza from Jordan, alongside the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organisation (JHCO).

JHCO manages the aid pipeline through Jordan and our partnership with Rotary has been central in facilitating this relationship and securing the necessary warehouse space for our aid. Through our partnership with JHCO, we have been able to import goods into Jordan, store them, and move them onwards into Gaza.

A PHASED RESPONSE

PHASE ONE

We focused on providing emergency shelter items, such as tarpaulins and rope which people use to construct makeshift shelters, as well as essential household items such as mattresses, blankets and kitchen sets.

“THE LONGSTANDING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SHELTERBOX AND ROTARY INTERNATIONAL IS TRULY A TESTAMENT TO WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WHEN ORGANISATIONS ALIGN THEIR MISSIONS FOR THE GREATER GOOD.”

PHASE TWO

To meet emergency shelter needs, we provided tents to affected communities. These tents were sent from around the world to reach Gaza. With MAP, the tents travelled from Belgium into Port Said in Egypt and onwards to Gaza. Hundreds of pre-positioned tents were also sent via Jordan to the north of Gaza, coming from our warehouses in Dubai and Pakistan. With the ceasefire that came into effect on January 19 2025, routes that had previously been blocked opened up and we were able to resume the delivery of aid.

However, since March 2, 2025, Israeli authorities have halted the entry of essential supplies into the region. This has led to a worsening humanitarian crisis, with aid trucks stranded outside Gaza. The fragile ceasefire had brought hope to vulnerable families in desperate need of safe shelter. Many people who had just returned to their destroyed homes are once again being displaced.

We have more aid in Jordan and Dubai ready to go, and enough tents to shelter thousands more people, but at time of print, we are unable to move it because of the restrictions. With our partners in Gaza, and thanks to the help of generous individuals and Rotary clubs, so far we have supported over 15,000 people with emergency shelter aid and essential household items since October 2023. ●



AMANY

Amany lives in a makeshift tent in a displacement site in the middle of the Gaza Strip. Her husband was a paramedic, but was killed saving others, and she now lives alone with her children after a dramatic journey of displacement. The one comfort Amany and other displaced residents share is that they are not alone. ShelterBox, with support from Rotary, and in partnership with MAP and SDF, have supported Amany and her community with life saving emergency tents and essential household items.

“THE AID WE RECEIVE THROUGH SHELTERBOX AND SDF IS A BEACON OF HOPE, WHICH MAKES OUR LIFE BETTER AND ENABLES US TO FACE THE CHALLENGES WE HAVE.”



READY TO RESPOND

ShelterBox's stock is held in strategic locations around the world. The charity also reserves stocks of aid with suppliers in key locations. ShelterBox's focus on preparedness means that it has key aid items ready and available to be dispatched at short notice following a disaster. These simple items change lives. They help families find hope again.

HURRICANE ETA AND IOTA, HONDURAS, 2021



HURRICANE BERYL – GRENADA, 2024



EARTHQUAKE, MOROCCO, 2023



CONFLICT, UKRAINE, 2024



EARTHQUAKE, TÜRKIYE, 2023



CONFLICT, SYRIA, 2024



CONFLICT, CHAD, 2024



CONFLICT, YEMEN, 2024



DROUGHT, ETHIOPIA, 2024



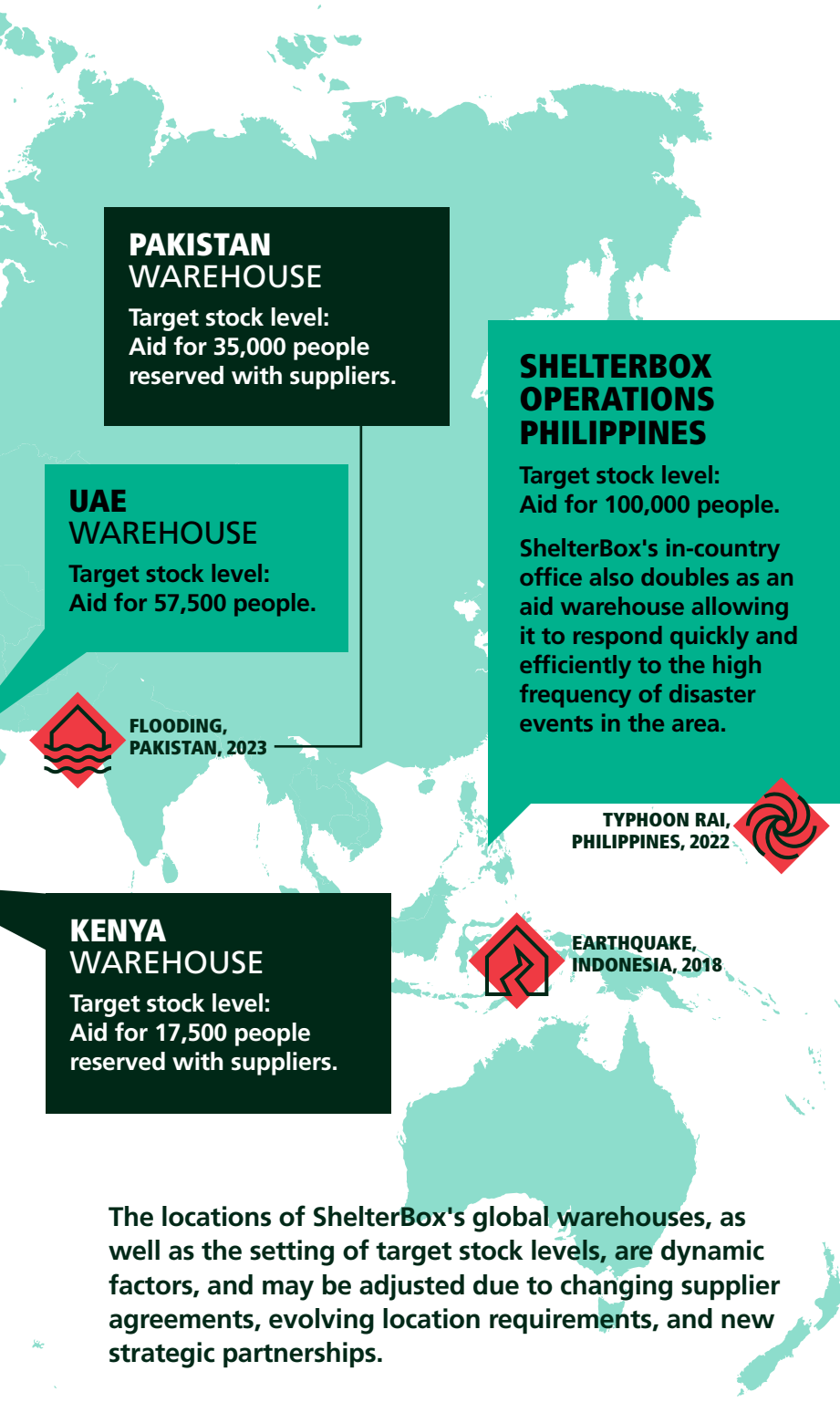
FLOODING, MALAWI, 2024



BELGIUM WAREHOUSE
Target stock level:
Aid for 22,500 people.

PANAMA WAREHOUSE
Target stock level:
Aid for 22,500 people.

GHANA WAREHOUSE
Target stock level:
Aid for 15,000 people.



PAKISTAN WAREHOUSE

Target stock level:
Aid for 35,000 people reserved with suppliers.

UAE WAREHOUSE

Target stock level:
Aid for 57,500 people.

SHELTERBOX OPERATIONS PHILIPPINES

Target stock level:
Aid for 100,000 people.

ShelterBox's in-country office also doubles as an aid warehouse allowing it to respond quickly and efficiently to the high frequency of disaster events in the area.

KENYA WAREHOUSE

Target stock level:
Aid for 17,500 people reserved with suppliers.

FLOODING, PAKISTAN, 2023

TYPHOON RAI, PHILIPPINES, 2022

EARTHQUAKE, INDONESIA, 2018



The locations of ShelterBox's global warehouses, as well as the setting of target stock levels, are dynamic factors, and may be adjusted due to changing supplier agreements, evolving location requirements, and new strategic partnerships.

NURTURE WHAT MATTERS.

This summer, stay strong for what matters most.

You've worked hard to enjoy life – now it's time to live it fully. Whether it's keeping up with the grandkids, staying active outdoors, or simply moving with ease, you deserve to feel your best.

Turmeric+ is formulated to support joint comfort and everyday energy.

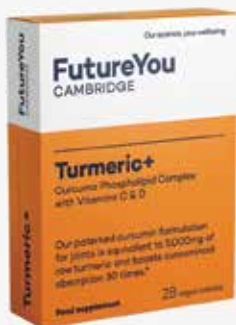
Because when your body moves better, everything else follows – your mood, your drive, your ability to do what you love.

Make this your most active, enjoyable summer yet. Start today – and give your future self something to thank you for.



Turmeric+

- **30 times more absorbable than standard turmeric:** Powered by the patented Meriva® formula.
- **Science-backed:** Backed by 40+ human studies and Informed Sport certified.
- **Includes essential vitamins:** C and D to support healthy bones, muscles and joints.





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**NINE OF THE
WORLD'S TEN MOST
NEGLECTED CRISES
ARE IN AFRICA**

SHELTERBOX ACROSS AFRICA

WITH conflicts in the Middle East dominating the headlines in 2024, here's a closer look at how ShelterBox has supported communities affected by violent conflict and climate change across Africa.

MOZAMBIQUE: CONFLICT

ShelterBox's work is integrated with a European Union Directorate General for European Civil Protection funded project to support communities affected by the crisis in northern Mozambique.

As part of a consortium with other NGOs, ShelterBox and CARE Mozambique supported over 6,000 internally displaced families with shelter materials and emergency household items such as blankets, kitchen sets, solar lights, and mosquito nets.

ShelterBox also started its first 'preparedness' project in Mozambique, pre-shipping aid items in June and storing with our partner CARE.

This meant that when Cyclone Chido struck in December, they could respond quickly to support people affected by the tropical storm.

CAMEROON: CONFLICT

Throughout 2024, ShelterBox supported over 10,000 displaced families in the Far North region of Cameroon with a range of emergency and durable shelter plus household items, community tool kits, kitchen sets, mosquito nets and

sleeping mats.

Continued, widespread flooding in the far north of Cameroon has exacerbated the situation - the worst seen by the region in decades. With ShelterBox partner, Public Concern, it is supporting affected families with emergency shelter. Communities are also being supported in how to build flood defences around newly built shelters.

CHAD: CONFLICT

ShelterBox is working in partnership with the Association Help-Tchad pour le Développement (AHTD), a national Chadian NGO. Their current project looks to improve the living conditions and support the recovery of at least 5,000 families living in eastern Chad who are affected by the Sudan crisis.

They are ensuring that families have essential household items, personal

hygiene items and improved shelter.

As part of this work, ShelterBox also aims to build AHTD's capacity in shelter assistance so that they are better placed to respond to current and future shelter needs in Chad.

BURKINA FASO: CONFLICT

In partnership with the German-based charity HELP, ShelterBox supported over 1,000 families newly displaced by conflict with durable shelter and household items. The project focused on the construction of Sahelian tents, a design which makes use of tarpaulins stretched over a metal frame.

They include a concrete base to protect from flooding and improve levels of hygiene. ShelterBox also supported 400 families with mosquito nets and solar lights from pre-positioned stock from its warehouse in Ghana. ●





On July 1, 2024, Hurricane Beryl flattened parts of the Caribbean after making landfall as a Category 5 storm. Winds of up to 160mph barreled through island nations, destroying homes, uprooting trees, and bringing down power lines.

| STORY BY **JOHN CLEVERLEY** |
ROTARY COMMUNICATIONS & EVENTS

SHELTERBOX partnered with Rotary District 7030 to get emergency aid to hard-to-reach communities on the islands of Grenada. From damage assessments to networking, Rotary partners were instrumental in facilitating our response.

Past District Governors David Alexander and Sonya Alleyne hired a light aircraft to fly over the affected islands to assess the damage.

Their flight took them over the different islands of Grenada, including the less densely populated Petite Martinique and Carriacou.

Their assessments provided vital insight into Beryl's path of destruction

and informed the detail of our response.

When the ShelterBox team arrived, Rotary partners provided invaluable networking with local communities and disaster management agencies. This included members of Rotary District 7030 Disaster Relief Team, with whom ShelterBox worked closely with for the duration of the response.

REACHING HIDDEN COMMUNITIES

To ensure that ShelterBox was reaching 'hidden communities' that were most in need, their team recorded a short advert for the local radio station, Wave FM.

This received a high level of response, with people calling our hotline to report their situation and needs to the team. ShelterBox heard that many

families were sheltering in neighbour's homes in very cramped conditions. Others were sheltering in community buildings such as schools.

THE JOURNEY OF AID

The emergency aid item package came from prepositioned stock at ShelterBox's warehouse in Panama.

The Rotary Club of Grenada agreed to be consignees and helped with customs checks, ensuring a smooth process. The aid was sent to Barbados on a gift-in-kind flight provided by Airlink, and then into cargo hold space to Grenada, donated by Virgin Airways. A ferry completed the transport of ShelterBox aid to the islands of Petite Martinique and Carriacou.



"DEVASTATION IN CARRIACOU AND PETITE MARTINIQUE WAS SO EXTENSIVE THE PRIME MINISTER OF GRENADA CLAIMED THE ISLAND HAD BEEN FLATTENED IN JUST HALF AN HOUR."

DISTRIBUTIONS

The ShelterBox team was then supported with the distribution of aid and putting up of tents by local communities and volunteers from Rotary, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Latter-day Saints Charities Australia, and the local authority National Disaster Management Authority, who were all provided with the necessary ShelterBox training.

Over the course of two weeks, the team worked in different locations to complete the distribution of tents, mosquito nets, solar lights, and kitchen sets.

Tents provide emergency shelter whilst islanders repair and rebuild their existing houses. Solar lights and kitchen sets help families recover a sense of normality again.

As Grenada has a tropical climate, mosquito nets were vital in keeping people safe from dengue fever which can be carried by mosquitos in the Caribbean. Rotary also kindly donated each household some mosquito repellent, as local communities reported that a new type of larger mosquito had migrated to the islands with the hurricane.

NEXT STEPS

Whilst in Grenada, ShelterBox's team took the opportunity to support preparedness efforts by building further connections with local stakeholders, including Rotary.

The Rotary clubs of Grenada continue to support the Grenadian communities in various ways through their ongoing programmes, including helping people to re-roof their buildings so they can get back into their homes as soon as possible. ●



"TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF GRENADA YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO DONATE YOUR TIME IN TIMES LIKE THIS, MAKE THE SACRIFICE, THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A ROTARIAN - TO DO SERVICE ABOVE SELF."



ShelterBox

GET INVOLVED IN 2025

This year, there are so many ways you can support ShelterBox's mission, from leaving a gift in your will, to hosting a Tea in a Tent event with your Rotary club.

TAKE PART IN STOCK THE BOX

Help us be ready for the next disaster through our Stock the Box Appeals, in summer and winter. Your club's support will mean we can re-stock our pre-positioned emergency shelter aid. Plus, a supporter has kindly pledged to match donations up to a total of £25,000!

Find out more and sign up at: [SHELTERBOX.ORG/STOCKTHEBOX](https://shelterbox.org/stockthebox)

LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

Would you like your legacy to be helping more families survive disaster? If so, please consider leaving a gift to ShelterBox in your Will.

For more information, just email KEANAREED@SHELTERBOX.ORG or call us directly on 0300 0300 500 and ask for Keana.

ORGANISE A TEA IN A TENT

Could you gather people under a shelter (think a gazebo, canopy or even a marquee!) to enjoy tea, cake and tasty treats? Whether it's in your garden, a public park or by the sea, your tea could raise vital funds for our work

Find out more and sign up at: [SHELTERBOX.ORG/TEA](https://shelterbox.org/tea)



IMPACT UPDATE



For more information on ShelterBox's disaster responses and see the impact of your club's donations around the world, sign up to ShelterBox emails.

[SHELTERBOX.ORG/EMAILS](https://shelterbox.org/emails)

Watch a video to share with your club about ShelterBox's 25th year, and to see a timeline of key responses since the year 2000.

[SHELTERBOX.ORG/25-YEARS-OF-SHELTERBOX](https://shelterbox.org/25-years-of-shelterbox)



The
Rotary
Foundation



REMEMBER ROTARY

*Everyone has a legacy.
Share yours today.*

A gift today, will transform lives tomorrow and beyond. Your generosity and dedication will keep Rotary effective for generations to come.

Specify where your legacy will be spent or direct it to our World Fund to be used where the need is greatest.

When the time is right for you:

- Explore options with a Rotary Gift Officer by emailing: rfuk@rotarygbi.org
- Discuss your intention to remember Rotary with your professional legal adviser



rotarygbi.org/donate



Rotary Foundation
of the United Kingdom

Charity number 1002059



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

Clefts are 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.

For the past 25+ years, Smile Train's sustainable model has been empowering local medical professionals with training, funding, and resources to provide free, high-quality cleft care to children in their own communities. It's how we've sponsored more than 2 million life-changing surgeries so far, and we won't stop until every person in need with a cleft has access to the care they deserve.

Smile Train is no less committed to treating the whole patient through programmes that provide access to vital non-surgical comprehensive cleft care treatments. These include nutrition services, orthodontic and general dental care, speech therapy, and emotional support, all intended to ensure long-term, successful rehabilitation for our patients.



OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- **2M+** 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.

Book a Speaker for a Meeting!

Learn more about the work of Smile Train and how your Rotary Club can help to change the world one smile at a time.

To book a speaker your meeting contact Jonathan by emailing

ukinfo@smiletrain.org or

calling **0113 841 8101**.



Unmasking Savannah's Smile

Anna was elated to discover she was pregnant. She couldn't wait to have a second child to smother with motherly love. She felt this way even when, one month before her baby's birth, something shocking showed up on the ultrasound.

Savannah had a cleft.

It was entirely unexpected. Both Anna and her husband had seen people with clefts before but never knew much about them. No one in their family had ever had a cleft. Where could it have come from? Anna worried it was somehow her fault but knew she would love Savannah with her entire heart no matter what.

Once Savannah was born, Anna scoured the city for any help she could find but met only dead ends and shut doors.

Though desperate and beyond exhausted from caring for a child who struggled to eat, she did not lose hope. At last, when Savannah was nine months old, Anna found what she had been searching for — and more than even she had ever dared imagine. A local social worker pointed her to Smile Train partner care centre Mabuhay Deseret Foundation, where he assured her Savannah would receive all the cleft treatments she would ever need, 100% free.

Anna scooped up Savannah and ran to the foundation. The cleft team patiently answered all her questions: Savannah's cleft was not her fault or her husband's.

There was no catch: Thanks to Smile Train's generous donors, all the medical care — including not only multiple surgeries but also speech therapy, orthodontics, and other interventions — her daughter needed to smile and thrive really would be completely free.

But this was spring 2020. Anna's familiar feelings of helplessness returned as the COVID-19 pandemic threatened to stop Savannah's cleft journey before it ever really began. Still, her family refused to give up helping her however they could, and neither did the team at Mabuhay Deseret. They constantly checked in on them, offering any advice they could for keeping physically and mentally healthy during those trying times.

Perhaps their most healing intervention was the promise they made: They would always be there. As soon as it was safe, Savannah would receive the cleft surgery she so needed.

They were as good as their word. A few weeks shy of her third birthday, the local authorities determined that in-person care was safe again and Savannah received her cleft lip surgery. Though the team had earned her trust, Anna still couldn't help but fret in the waiting room.

When they wheeled her out, her parents were over the moon. They couldn't believe her transformation in just over an hour!

Now, Savannah loves playing outside. Instead of gawking at her cleft, neighbours are awestruck by her glowing smile. Savannah is also a budding creative. When she isn't running around, she's showing off her latest dance moves or practising her writing. Her parents can't wait to see what she'll do next.

The whole family is extraordinarily thankful to Smile Train and Mabuhay Deseret Foundation. With their help, Savannah gets to look in the mirror every day and see a bright smile. And an even brighter future.

WHY WE GROW UNITING FOR GOOD IN ROTARY

| STORY BY **HEATHER STUART** |

CHAIR OF THE ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND BOARD, 2025-26

**"I'M STEPPING INTO A
ROLE ALREADY SHAPED
BY BOLD LEADERSHIP
AND DEEP COMMITMENT
FROM GARTH ARNOLD,
ROBERT MORRIS, AND
NITESH JOSHI."**

ROTARY has always been about what we do together – not just roles or responsibilities, but people, purpose, and possibility.

As incoming Chair of the Rotary GB&I Board, I am stepping into a role already shaped by bold leadership and deep commitment from my predecessors; Garth Arnold, Robert Morris, and Nitesh Joshi.

Alongside Bob Maskall as Chair Elect, Joy Palmer-Cooper as Chair Nominee, and the whole Board, I am looking forward to continuing that journey with all of you – a journey not of change for change's sake, but of growth, improvement, and renewed energy.

We are at a pivotal moment, not only for Rotary in these islands, but as part of a global movement for good.

Our North Star strategy to reach 60,000 members by 2028 is ambitious, yes, but is necessary. It gives us direction, purpose, and it's already showing results.

Had we stood still, we would be on track to fall to just 22,000 members by 2028. But instead:

For the first time in years, our membership figures are heading in the right direction. That's momentum, and a reminder that Rotary is moving with the times, not away from its values but closer to its mission.

**MORE WAYS TO JOIN,
MORE WAYS TO BELONG**

This progress is partly thanks to increased flexibility. Today, there are four ways to be part of Rotary: Club, Corporate, Direct, and Enterprise. These pathways reflect the realities of modern life; fast-paced, diverse, and always evolving.

We've welcomed over 500 direct members, 300 corporate members, and entire staff teams through enterprise membership. One organisation alone brought nearly 50 new Rotarians into the fold.

Our Corporate 1000 campaign encouraged every club to recruit one corporate member. If just half of our clubs take on one new corporate member, that's 750 new members, and 750 more ways to deliver service, fellowship, and impact. That's just one example...

**NEW MEMBERS UP 6%
MEMBER LOSSES DOWN 9%
RETENTION UP 5%**

**NEW JOINERS ARE, ON AVERAGE, 10 YEARS YOUNGER
MORE WOMEN ARE JOINING THAN EVER BEFORE**



STRENGTHENING OUR CLUBS

We also know traditional clubs remain Rotary's beating heart. However many face pressures – declining numbers, reduced availability, or fatigue after years of dedicated service.

If we don't act, we risk losing 7,500 club members over the next three years.

That's not inevitable, but it is a call to action. We need to make clubs more welcoming, more adaptable, and more compelling places to belong.

That's why we're developing a Club 100 initiative, aiming to create around four new clubs in every district during 2025/26, totalling 100 new clubs in Great Britain and Ireland. The goal is to help clubs remain vibrant, visible and relevant long into the future.

IT'S NOT ABOUT NUMBERS – IT'S ABOUT PURPOSE

Let's be clear: growth isn't about counting heads. It's about increasing our capacity to serve and delivering on our mission, the reason we are all here.

More members means more hands for projects, more ideas, more voices in advocacy, and more friendships forged through shared purpose.

New members bring fresh energy, perspectives, skills and networks – all of

which help us deliver greater impact in our communities.

I often return to what I think of as our four Ps: Projects. Partnerships. Philanthropy. People. That's the heartbeat of who we are, and what we do.

SO WHAT'S YOUR 'WHY'?

To grow, we must remember our 'why'. Why are we in Rotary? What keeps us coming back? And how do we share that sense of purpose with others?

For me, it's simple: I can't bear the thought of this extraordinary organisation, so uniquely global and local, not being here in another 100 years, changing lives as only Rotary can. I believe in Rotary's mission.

And I believe we can grow in relevance, in impact, in size, and in joy.

We often talk about service, and rightly so, but let's also talk about friendship, laughter and community. Rotary should be a place where people come to do good and feel good – to grow together and enjoy the journey.

UNITE FOR GOOD – TOGETHER

This year, the Board will continue to work closely with districts, clusters, and Special Advisor Teams to provide the tools, data and support which you, our

members, will need.

But reaching 60,000 members is not the Board's responsibility alone. Every one of us is a co-owner of that target, and every one of us can play a part.

As we near the final stages of Rotary's historic journey to end polio, we are reminded of what's possible when we unite with purpose. We started that mission – and we will finish it.

Let's bring that same determination to building Rotary's future; one that is vibrant, diverse, generous, and enduring.

We are in the right place, at the right time, with the right people. The rest is up to us. Let's continue to Unite for Good – together.

As American author Norman Vincent Peale once wrote: "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars." ●

ROTARY DIGITAL

Watch the full video interview with Heather Stuart in July's Rotary Digital.

magazine.rotarygbi.org



TAKE A CLOSER LOOK



HOLGER KNAACK
ROTARY FOUNDATION TRUSTEE CHAIR

WHEN you joined Rotary, chances are it was because you wanted to make a lasting difference. Arch Klumph felt the same way.

When he proposed The Rotary Foundation in 1917, he envisioned more than just a fund. He saw an enduring vehicle for Rotary members to serve their communities and create lasting change.

More than a century later, that vision thrives, thanks to your dedication and to the Foundation's unique structure, which empowers members to identify and solve global problems at every level.

Today, I am not asking you for a donation. Instead, I invite you to look at The Rotary Foundation with fresh eyes.

Imagine a charity governed by its own members. A global mission carried out by those very members.

A foundation that reflects the shared values of its members — ensuring clean water and literacy for all, eradicating the scourge of polio, building local economies through entrepreneurship, and making the world more peaceful through conflict resolution training.

"ROTARY IS NOT GOING ANYWHERE, BECAUSE ROTARY IS EVERYWHERE!"

Doesn't this sound like an interesting charity? The Rotary Foundation is trusted around the world because we have earned that trust.

After our successful Programs of Scale initiative in Zambia, the Gates Foundation and World Vision invited us to lead again — resulting in the \$30 million Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge across four African nations.

We are efficient, strategic, and guided by dedicated professional staff and

passionate volunteers. Our Foundation consistently receives top marks from Charity Navigator.

And the Gates Foundation matches our \$50 million annual commitment to polio eradication 2-to-1, depositing \$100 million into our account each year. That is trust, delivered.

Even in conflict zones, we are there. In Gaza, a single confirmed polio case triggered a humanitarian pause in the war, allowing health workers to vaccinate children and quell an outbreak.

Rotary helped fund that urgent response. Once again, we proved to be a reliable partner in a crisis.

We can be proud that we made a difference. Now we look ahead to our ambitious \$500 million fundraising goal for 2025–26. We can reach it together, as we boldly support a Foundation that is doing bold things.

Rotary is not going anywhere, because Rotary is everywhere! That is our strength. That is our unique opportunity.

Be part of the legacy of The Rotary Foundation. It is one that Arch Klumph would be proud of. It is a legacy that has changed the world and will continue to do so, as long as we are all part of it. ●

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Carol Doyle, Surrey

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Mr & Mrs Bailey-Webb, Warsash

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Mr and Mrs Davies Somerset

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Anne Bird, Bristol

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Mr & Mrs Barber, Wells



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**RI PRESIDENT: STEPHANIE URCHICK
VISITS ROTARY GB&I**

Ireland

IRISH EYES SMILING FOR STEPHANIE

In June, for one of her last events as Rotary International President, Stephanie Urchick undertook a whirlwind tour of the British Isles. Flying into Dublin from Chicago, Stephanie toured Ireland before flying onto Scotland, the Isle of Man, and then completing her mammoth 11-day trip in Wales.

| STORY BY **GARTH ARNOLD** |

STEPHANIE Urchick became the first serving Rotary International President to visit Ireland in 23 years.

She was met at Dublin Airport by District Governor Seamus Parle and Assistant Governor, Marie Mullooly where they travelled to the Grand Hotel in Malahide, just north of the capital, where she had informal discussions about some of the District's flagship projects.

This included the Just1Life project, a road safety programme targeting 16 to 18-year-olds, and the annual Youth Leadership Development Competition where up to two dozen students to participate in the Euroscola (European Youth Parliament) in Strasbourg.

Stephanie also heard about the Tree of Remembrance project which captures the essence of the Christmas spirit, providing a heartfelt way of remembering loved ones during the festive season, while also raising money for good causes.

There were also discussions around Rotary Great Britain & Ireland's Direct Membership model and Rotary Foundation projects from Ireland.

Stephanie was joined by Past District Governor and current District

Foundation Chair, Howard Caskie; Immediate Past District Governor, Kenny Fisher; Inaugural Past Chair of the Regional Board at Rotary GB&I, Garth Arnold; District Governor-Elect, Michael Fleming; RI Director, Eve Conway and a recent new member through the Direct Membership model, Ekaterine Sterling, who explained how the initiative was working.

The following day, Stephanie met colleagues from the Dublin and Belfast Rotary clubs, and online Rotarians from San Antonio in Texas to talk about the Seeds of Hope initiative which is supported by 40 Rotary Clubs across 12 countries.

This is a unique Northern Ireland based peace-building programme, which trains young adults from youth organisations in conflict resolution, peace building and civic leadership.

It has received a significant financial boost after securing funding from Rotary International (*see pages 70-71 for more details*).

Stephanie said Rotary's growing involvement and support for Seeds Of Hope reflected Rotary's commitment to

positive peace.

She later travelled north to visit an Alzheimer's Centre and St Mary's Special School as part of local project by the Rotary Club of Navan in County Meath. Ann Marie Russell of the Meath Branch of the Alzheimer's Society of Ireland praised the "vital and overwhelming support" of the Rotary Club of Navan.

Since the Meath Branch of the Alzheimer's Society was set up in 1992, the Rotary Club of Navan has supported them with the purchase of two minibuses, refurbishment of their kitchen and each year it helps to maintain the gardens.

The Rotary Club of Navan's link with The Rotary Foundation has supported the realisation of each of the projects.

Maria Corredor, principal of St Mary's Special School, also praised the support of the Navan Rotarians. Since 1997, the Rotary club has financially supported the development of the school's playground.

"This playground has become a





cherished space for our students, fostering joy and creativity in their daily play,” explained Marie.

“The Rotary club has also provided us with a mobile sensory room, which has been instrumental in supporting our students' diverse needs. This equipment has made a real difference in enhancing learning experiences and ensuring that every child can thrive.”

The St Mary’s principal also highlighted how the Rotary Club of Navan had supported the children’s outings to memorable places like Tayto Park and Dublin Zoo.

The final event of the RI President’s visit to Ireland was a gathering of District Rotarians at the Ardboyne Hotel in Navan.

Earlier, several Youth Leadership Winners had met Stephanie sharing their insights on the competition, their experiences, and the transformative impact it has had on their lives.

The Rotary Ireland Youth

Leadership Development Competition, in partnership with the European Parliament Euroscola programme, offers an extraordinary opportunity for 16 and 17-year-old students to step into the heart of European democracy at the EU Parliament’s Hemicycle in Strasbourg.

This programme allows participants to gain firsthand an understanding of how the European Parliament functions; engaging in debates, proposing amendments, voting, and adopting resolutions on pressing European issues, just like elected members of the European Parliament.

For 35 years, Rotary Ireland has proudly organised this competition, witnessing its profound influence in shaping today’s leaders and tomorrow’s visionaries.

Among previous participants of the Youth Leadership Development competition is Simon Harris, the Fine Gael politician who served as Taoiseach (Prime Minister) from 2024 to 2025, and

is now Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister).

Following this inspiring discussion, attendees moved to the function room for a ‘meet and greet’ with RI President Stephanie and over 130 Rotarians from across the District.

The gathering was graced by the welcome of Alan Nelson, President of the Rotary Club of Navan, and District Governor Seamus Parle.

During this auspicious occasion, President Stephanie, alongside Seamus Parle, presented several prestigious Paul Harris Awards.

Recipients included Jacqueline McCormack, past Club President; Ian McGowan Smyth, past Assistant District Governor and past Club President; Garth Arnold, past inaugural Chair of the Rotary GB&I Board, who received a Five Sapphire Award; and Marie Mullooly, Assistant Governor, honoured with a One Sapphire Award. ●



**RI PRESIDENT: STEPHANIE URCHICK
VISITS ROTARY GB&I**

Scotland

SCOTTISH HOMECOMING FOR STEPHANIE

THERE was something of a Scottish homecoming for Rotary International President, Stephanie Urchick, during a four-day tour of the country.

Stephanie belongs to McMurray Rotary Club in Pennsylvania, USA, a town which owes its name to farming families, notably Levi McMurray, who had emigrated from Scotland during the 18th and early 19th centuries and settled there.

She also took the opportunity to visit the grave of Jean Thomson Harris, the wife of Rotary founder Paul Harris, who died in 1963 and is buried in Newington Cemetery in Edinburgh.

The RI President was welcome in Aberdeen by North Scotland District Governor, Brian Stewart, and his wife Sally, and later attended a reception hosted by the Deputy Lord Provost, Ron McKail, a member of Aberdeen St Nicholas Rotary Club.

While there, Stephanie heard from Lyndsey Fettes, President of Aberdeen Bon Accord, describe their community project installing a swing for wheelchair users in a park, and from John Allan, President of Alloa Rotary Club, reflecting on his journey from Rotaract to Rotary. She also presented an RI Service Above Self award to Fraserburgh Rotarian, John Anderson.

Next day, Stephanie travelled to Elgin where she was transported to the

1700s and the Jacobite Rebellions with a performance by the RotaKids who brought their Jacobite history project to life with a 35-minute following their visit to Culloden.

In Elgin, Stephanie met Interactors, Rotaractors and Rotarians who talked about their projects including the Youth Café, where the Interact club is based, which is open during the day as a café and is then transformed into a youth centre in the evening.

Later, Stephanie met more Rotarians from Aberdeenshire including Leah Rae from Rotary in Alford and District who was sponsored on a Rotary Youth Leadership Award Programme. Leah was so taken by Rotary and its values that she joined the club. The RI President was also entertained by finalists from the district Young Musician competition who played several pieces on bagpipes and classical guitar.

Next day, on her way to meet up with the Scotland South district in South Queensferry, Stephanie stopped off in Dundee to meet Rotarians from Dundee and Fife and hear about projects in that area, including a 100-mile sponsored hike which members recently completed, a Kids Operating Room project that is just getting off the ground, and the Warm Spaces project.

The second part of the tour began against the iconic backdrop of the Forth Bridge where Stephanie was met by South

Scotland District Governor, Narek Bido, along with Immediate Past RI President, Gordon McNally, and his wife Heather.

Photographs captured the moment beneath the bridge, symbolising connection - a fitting metaphor for Rotary's work across communities and continents.

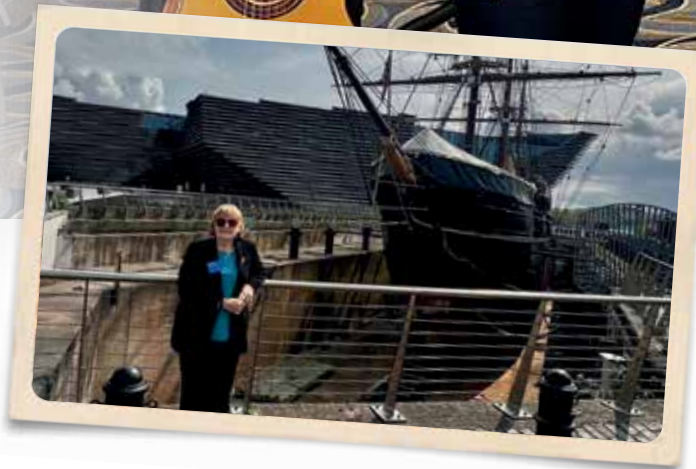
From South Queensferry, the delegation moved to the nearby village of Dalmeny, where Stephanie unveiled a new memorial bench dedicated to the late Lord Rosebery, Neil Primrose, joined by Lady Rosebery, representing the family. Inside Dalmeny Kirk Hall, local Rotarians shared the success of the club's environmental initiatives, including nine raised planters built on the village green.

The Officer's Mess at historic Edinburgh Castle was the setting for a small dinner with district leaders. Stephanie addressed the group, reflecting on the strength of Scottish Rotary, the importance of continuity in leadership, and the need for clubs to remain active, visible, and flexible.

The following morning, Stephanie paid a moving visit to Newington Cemetery to lay flowers at the grave of Jean Thomson Harris, a pioneering influence in Rotary history.

"Every photo that had Paul Harris sitting at a table, Jean was standing behind him," she recalled.

"She has been a powerful force in Rotary since the beginning. Even though



women weren't admitted to Rotary until 1989, we've always been there - and it started with Jean Harris."

From there, the delegation travelled to Dumfries to witness one of the most innovative projects in the district: the Rotary Club of Lockerbie's collaboration with His Majesty's Prison Dumfries. This powerful initiative has empowered inmates by offering them employability skills through vocational training and environmental improvement, including building raised beds with the support of businesses such as James Jones & Sons, ICL, and McDermid Supply Company.

During the visit, President Stephanie met with the HMP Dumfries Governor and Deputy Governor, Lord Lieutenant of Dumfries, Fiona Armstrong, along with Rotarians from the Rotary clubs of Lockerbie and Dumfries. She presented the Prison Governor with their Rotary Corporate Member plaque from the Rotary Club of Lockerbie.

Later, at the Alona Hotel in

"SHE ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE GRAVE OF JEAN THOMSON HARRIS, THE WIFE OF ROTARY FOUNDER PAUL HARRIS."

Motherwell, Rotarians from across the district gathered for a hybrid event - attending both in-person and via Zoom - where the RI President stressed the importance of adopting Rotary's Action Plan, not as a theoretical document, but a practical roadmap to transform clubs into agile, thriving communities of service.

On the final day of the Scotland leg of her British Isles tour, Stephanie began with sightseeing in Edinburgh and concluded her journey in Glasgow.

At the 'House for an Art Lover', she shared lunch with the members of the

District Continuity team before heading to one of the most impactful community service initiatives of the region, the Wheely Boat project at Castle Semple.

There she was welcomed by Assistant Governor, Andrew Macleman, and members of the Rotary club of Gryffe Valley

The Wheely Boat provides accessible water-based experiences for those with mobility challenges. During her visit, President Stephanie observed the boat in action as it served a group of wheelchair-using schoolchildren and their carers. ●

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**RI PRESIDENT: STEPHANIE URCHICK
VISITS ROTARY GB&I**



Isle of Man

RI PRESIDENT PROMISES: I'LL BE BACK!

STEPHANIE Urchick broke new ground by becoming the first sitting Rotary International President to visit the Isle of Man.

Rotary has three clubs on the island; Douglas, Onchan and Rushen & Western Mann, with the Rotary Club of Douglas celebrating its centenary last year.

Stephanie spent two days on the Isle of Man, flying in from Edinburgh, before heading off to Bristol and onto Wales during her British Isles' tour.

One of the highlights was a lunch reception hosted by the Lieutenant Governor of the Isle of Man, Sir John Lorimer, accompanied by Lady Phillipa, at Government House. Among the guests was Sir Miles Walker, who was Chief Minister for the Isle of Man for ten years and is also a Rotarian.

Prior to the lunch, the RI President and a group of 11 Rotarians were treated to a visit to the Mayor's Parlour in Douglas accompanied by new Mayor, Councillor Steven Crellin, another current Rotarian, who talked about the history of the island and the 'Three Legs of Mann'.

Among the group were District Governor, Jean Billingsley, Rotary

Director Eve Conway, Assistant Governor John Shepley, and District Public Image Lead, James Anderton.

Following the lunch, they took a tour of the Hairpin Woodland Park, which is Douglas Rotary Club's major centenary project in association with the Manx Wildlife Trust.

Hairpin Woodland Park is the gateway to Ramsey Forest, and Douglas Rotary Club have been raising funds to create this woodland park with native woodland, wetlands, meadows and a forest garden to showcase sustainability, wildlife and carbon capture.

There will be interactive interpretation, play areas for young people to discover more about the Island's natural history, and extensive pathways for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy this wonderful place.

The main entrance to Hairpin Woodland Park will be at the Ramsey Hairpin on the world-famous TT motorcycling course. It will include discrete car and cycle parking and a welcome pavilion for visitors to meet and find out more about the local area.

Money raised by Douglas Rotary Club will fund infrastructure development such as education spaces, interpretation features and footpaths,

and enable the planting of more than ten thousand trees.

The RI President also attended a reception at the Manx Museum which included not only Rotarians but many of Rotary's charity partners.

Douglas Rotary Club's President, Nick Watson, Rushen & Western Mann Rotary Club President, Mark Gilson, and Onchan Rotary Club President- Elect, Joshua Quinn, welcomed Stephanie.

She spoke about 'The Magic of Rotary', membership and the Action Plan, and the perception of Rotary as 'ROMEOS' (Rich Old Men Eating Out).

Stephanie's final duty was to present Rotary Stars Awards at Scoill Vallajeelt Primary School in Douglas to children nominated by their teachers for helping others.

Jan Billingsley, District Governor for 1285 which covers 62 clubs in North-West England and the Isle of Man, said: "Rotary is at the heart of the island community in the Isle of Man, partnering with charities, schools, community groups and government.

"Seeing this together with the warm welcome and hospitality we received makes me proud to be a Rotarian and part of the Rotary family.

"I would like to thank the Isle of



Man Rotarians, particularly Howard Callow for their excellent event organisation.

“The highlight for me was the Hairpin Woodland Park, not only as an environmental project but also for community partnership and the sheer scale of this as a club project.

“Douglas Rotary Club started this as their centenary project last year, and they are well on their way to raising £100,000. So far, they have planted about 2,000 trees over a couple of large fields and are just getting started.”

In an interview with Manx Radio just before she left, Stephanie Urchick said she was delighted to be visiting the island. “One of my jobs (as RI President) is to motivate and inspire Rotarians. I cannot do that if I sit in my office,” she said.

“So, I have managed to spend time traveling during my year, and this is a

"THIS IS A SPECIAL VISIT TO THE ISLE OF MAN, BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND I AM THE FIRST SITTING PRESIDENT TO VISIT, WHICH IS AMAZING."

special visit to the Isle of Man, because I understand I am the first sitting President to visit, which is amazing.

“We have three Rotary clubs here who are part of my Rotary family, so I’m delighted to be here.

“Rotary has organisational goals of being diverse and equitable and inclusive, and all of those things lead us to the concept of belonging.

“Well, the three Rotary clubs on the Isle of Man belong to Rotary and I want them to feel part of our organisation.”

The RI President’s trip to the Isle of Man was blessed with sunshine.

“What I have seen here has been marvellous,” she added.

“The weather has been marvellous, and we had a chance to drive around the island. It really is a beautiful spot.

“I’ve told some of my hosts that this is my first trip to the Isle of Man, but I don’t think it’s going to be my last.” ●

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**RI PRESIDENT: STEPHANIE URCHICK
VISITS ROTARY GB&I**

Wales

WELSH ROTARY AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

| STORY BY **MAGGIE HUGHES** |

THE Rotary Club of Henllys is a small and friendly team of Rotarians based around Cwmbran which was Stephanie Urchick's first stopping point on her two-day visit to Wales.

The four clubs covering Torfaen; Cwmbran Vale, Henllys, Newport St. Woolos and Pontypool plus the Croesyceiliog School Interact Club, welcomed the Rotary International President when each club shared the impact of their projects both locally and internationally.

President of Henllys Rotary Club, Pritti Davies, said: "Hearing President Stephanie speak about Rotary's Action Plan and our shared vision for lasting change was both motivating and energising. Her warmth, insight, and genuine interest in each club's work made the evening feel incredibly special.

"It was a night to remember."

Stephanie is a keen follower of the Pittsburgh Steelers American Football team. One Interactor had done her research to paint a pebble with the Steelers' NFL logo which she presented to Stephanie.

The Bryn Farm Community House in Brynmawr was set up on the Bryn Farm Estate in 2010 as a warm and friendly space.

Gifted by Tai Calon Housing Association, it has served as a space for people of all ages to join in with the activities, or just have a cup of tea or coffee and meet with others.

The House is now run by a team of enthusiastic volunteers, most notably from Brynmawr Rotary Club, who are passionate about helping to support the needs of people living in the community.

They provide so much for the community, from a food bank to organising life-changing activities for the young people, including activities and lunches during the school holidays.

The project is run by former Rotary Great Britain & Ireland President, Donna Wallbank, and fellow Brynmawr Rotarian, Michelle Hurter.

The Brynfarm Community House was full as the Brynmawr family of Rotary welcomed Stephanie.

Representatives from the community including local councillors, Gwent Police, Tai Calon Community Housing, business representatives plus members of Brynmawr RotaKids, Interact, Rotaract and Rotary described how they work together in the community.

Deputy Chief Constable Nicky Brain told Stephanie: "The police appreciate how the work of Brynmawr Rotary has helped to build the development and

confidence of the children, plus the confidence of the community.

"At every visit, I am inspired and humbled by their dedication.

"I wish that the Brynmawr Rotary community house could be replicated in every town throughout Gwent and beyond."

RI President Stephanie, District Governor Malcolm Hallewell and Donna unveiled a Rotary peace pole to mark the RI President's visit. At a dinner later that evening, Donna and Michelle were presented with the District Governor's Service Above Self Awards.

Another Rotary project Stephanie visited was the Rhondda Rotary Community Shop. Together with a band of volunteers, the shop is run by Rotarian Jan Lyons, wife of Rhondda Rotary President, Martin Lyons.

What is different is that when local organisations need to raise money for their projects, Rhondda Rotary allows them to run the shop for up to a week and keep all the profits to fund their projects.

Carol Bettany helped raise money for her foster son's rugby team and says "this is a shop like no other" and has stayed as a regular volunteer. One shop volunteer, Gerald Rose, explained: "I belong to a gardening club which needed to purchase a rotavator. We did this by taking over the



shop for a week to raise the funds.”
 Another beneficiary of the Community Shop was Karrian Collinson who told Stephanie how her son’s football team enlisted the help of parents who manned the shop and raised enough money to purchase a new football kit, water bottles and hats.

As a result of this, Karrian’s partner, who is involved with a veterans’ charity supporting those with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, was also able to raise funds they required to carry on and expand their work. Karrian also continues to volunteer in the shop.

President Martin Lyons said: “We can’t believe it’s 12 years since we opened our first shop. We started out with the intention of running it for six months as a bit of fun and to raise some funds and the profile of Rhondda Rotary.”

Recently, a saxophone and several acoustic guitars were donated to the shop. But this is where this shop is so different. Instead of selling to raise

"THE POLICE APPRECIATE HOW THE WORK OF BRYNMAWR ROTARY HAS HELPED TO BUILD THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIDENCE OF THE CHILDREN, PLUS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE COMMUNITY."

money for Rhondda Rotary, members are donating these instruments to the music department of the comprehensive school.

A Rotary Foundation dinner was held in Cwmbran in Stephanie’s honour where MS Jane Hutt, the Minister for Social Justice and Leader of the Senedd (Welsh Government) welcomed the RI President to Wales. She said how much the Welsh Government appreciated the vast amount of volunteering carried out by Rotarians.

Members of Abergavenny Rotary and Cardiff Bay Rotary clubs gave presentations on their recently completed

Global Grants projects, and District Governor Malcolm Hallewell presented several awards including End Polio Now Certificate to Subrahmanyam Ganesh and Merthyr Tydfil Rotary Club.

Paul Harris Sapphires were presented to Rob Fry and Hayley Ridge Evans for their work on the Rotary Youth Leadership Programme, along with District Treasurer Nicky Holland and Past District Governor, Maggie Hughes.

To mark her visit to Wales, President Stephanie as presented with a traditional Welsh wooden love spoon. ●

SKY'S THE LIMIT FOR BIG SPACE CANCER PROJECT

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

ROTARIAN Gillian Haywood has survived breast cancer twice in 12 years, and is now actively involved in fundraising for a new cancer centre in Cheltenham.

Gillian, who has just completed her term as President of the Rotary Club of Cotswold Tyndale, is spearheading Rotary's contribution to the Big Space Cancer Project which aims to improve facilities at the Cheltenham Oncology Centre in Gloucestershire.

The plan is to transform the cancer care facility at Cheltenham General Hospital with a modern, well-lit building which has space for the treatment and recovery of cancer patients, including therapeutic gardens, coupled with research facilities.

The current building is old and inadequate, with small, dark consultation rooms. Gillian is advocating for better facilities and is actively involved in fundraising efforts.

Almost £8.5 million has been raised from Government funding and donations, but an additional £9 million is still needed to complete the project.

"The new cancer centre has got to be somewhere you feel safe, secure and comfortable, because it can be a very traumatic experience being given bad news," explained Gillian.

"The little rooms are like little boxes with no windows. The lighting is not brilliant. You're sitting there with someone telling you how your life is going to change and then the walls are

seemingly coming in on you.

"These fabulous people at the Cheltenham Oncology Centre have saved my life twice and are keeping me going. I am now enjoying a very full and active life.

"How do you say thank you for that? Well, my way is to galvanise others to raise the money to create this environment so that those patients coming after me will have a better experience."

Gillian is heading a District-wide campaign to raise the extra money using the full force of The Rotary Foundation.

Rotary District 1100 stretches from Herefordshire and Worcestershire in the north, via parts of Wiltshire in the east, Gloucestershire either side of the Severn, Chepstow and Monmouth in Wales, and down through Bristol into part of North Somerset.

The Cheltenham Oncology Centre provides cancer treatment for one million people across south-west England, with 5,000 new patients each year, rising annually by 8%.

The infrastructure and facilities of the centre are over 25 years old. They are rapidly becoming unfit to meet the needs of patients and staff in both capacity and quality.

According to Gillian, the ageing building already has a negative impact on the mental health of cancer patients and their loved ones.

Many of the care provision issues of the dilapidated and inadequate infrastructure will be addressed by a Cheltenham and Gloucester Hospitals' charity campaign to raise £17.5 million

for a new building through the Big Space Cancer Project.

"By investing in improved support services, comfortable surroundings and patient-focussed furnishings, I know this could be life-changing for thousands of people," added Gillian.

"Without the care and information which I received from support staff on everything from car parking to wigs to skincare, as well as a listening ear, my cancer journey would have been so much more daunting.

"By improving signposting, access and privacy, many more patients will benefit from the holistic care available at such a difficult and frightening time."

Knowing the scale of the challenge, and the opportunity to make a real difference, Gillian has spoken to other Rotary clubs about her ambitions. This has resulted in District 1110 working towards creating a \$350,000 (£260,000) Global Grant project.

In addition, the project team has formed a close alliance with the NHS hospital project team with Kevin McNamara, Chief Executive of the NHS Foundation Trust, a former Rotary Scholar.

Having started the Rotary campaign in September 2024, 14 Rotary clubs and other organisations have already raised \$78,000 (£58,000) and they hope to raise a further \$130,000 (£96,500) before submitting the Global Grant application to the Rotary Foundation.

District Designated Funds of \$35,000 (£26,000) have been earmarked



“THE NEW CANCER CENTRE HAS GOT TO BE SOMEWHERE YOU FEEL SAFE, SECURE AND COMFORTABLE, BECAUSE IT CAN BE A VERY TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE BEING GIVEN BAD NEWS.”

for the project by District 1100.

The District 1100 team is now reaching out to the wider Rotary community to reach their goal.

Gillian explained: “We hope that other clubs and districts will share our view that this is a landmark project worthy of their financial support.

“All donations are welcome and, in particular, we would appreciate any District Designated Funds allocations so that the project can fully benefit from the

Rotary Foundation’s 80% match, a key enabler to our \$350,000 goal.

“The regional nature of the project belies the potential that it gives other Districts, locally and internationally, the opportunity to raise Rotary’s profile and support an increasingly high-profile medical area.” ●

FIND OUT MORE


For more information, visit rotarybigspacecancer.org

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INSPIRING OUR FUTURE LEADERS

| STORY BY **NANA OPARE** |

IN May, Rotary celebrated Youth Month so it is reasonably topical to highlight the Rotary eClub of Young Professionals (ReCYP).

Established nearly a year ago by District 1145 (part of Greater London, Surrey, East and West Sussex, Hampshire), it aims to empower young professionals to take on leadership roles within their communities, fostering goodwill and peace through fellowship with fellow business professionals.

Our vision is to build a vibrant, inclusive network of young professionals who collaborate virtually to address community needs, innovate service projects, and make lasting connections that transcend traditional club boundaries.

One year on, ReCYP has delivered various projects and hosted educational webinars and social events for awareness,

fundraising, and networking.

For instance, we organised a fund-raiser walk for Cancer Research, achieving about five million steps in one week from over 25 participants.

We supported Breast Cancer Week by promoting the event and raising community awareness and currently run a webinar series on trending business topics. The club also plans to create an online multicultural recipe book featuring global cuisines.

The club targets young professionals eager to make a difference. It provides a welcoming environment for individuals at various career stages, whether they are just starting out or are established in their fields.

ReCYP currently boasts a diverse membership of young graduates, each of whom has previously experienced a touch of Rotary through one of our youth

programmes – Rotary Youth Leadership Award or Rotary Youth competitions - or having a parent involvement in Rotary.

CLUB ORGANISATION

The club currently holds monthly virtual meetings on the last Wednesday of each month, updating members, brainstorming sessions and planning service initiatives.

In addition, each month we host webinars and special events, such as guest speaker sessions and interactive workshops. These sessions are open to anyone interested in the topic or wanting to participate, no matter the location.

Every quarter, club members gather in person for social events, such as a recent bowling outing in Kingston-upon-Thames in Surrey.

As the club gains its footing, ReCYP anticipates collaborating with traditional

clubs to develop more dynamic projects and volunteer for international outreach efforts, with each project aimed at making a tangible impact.

RETENTION STRATEGY

ReCYP's format has successfully leveraged technology to unite members from diverse backgrounds and locations. This virtual method allows the club to connect with young professionals who might find it difficult to join traditional Rotary clubs due to time constraints or geographical challenges.

Two main factors have accounted for the success of ReCYP to date.

- **Flexibility:** Recognising that young professionals often juggle busy careers and personal lives, ReCYP is structured around virtual meetings and events. This digital model allows members to participate regardless of their physical location.
- **Accessibility:** With no geographic constraints, ReCYP welcomes members from diverse backgrounds and regions. This inclusivity enriches the community by bringing together varied perspectives and expertise.

TOOLS USED FOR ENGAGEMENT

Embracing digital communication tools and social media, ReCYP fosters interactive networking, real-time collaboration, and dynamic project planning, all in an online environment,

for example achieving five million steps for the step for cancer.

CALLING ALL YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

Joining the Rotary eClub of Young Professionals can be a transformative experience for several reasons including networking. The eClub serves as a powerful networking tool, helping members to build professional relationships that often extend beyond the digital sphere.

With members hailing from different parts of the world, the club is a melting pot of ideas and cultural insights, enriching discussions and project approaches. ReCYP is currently hosting in London another Rotarian from Argentina as part of the Rotary Friendship Exchange.

The Rotary eClub of Young Professionals embodies a modern approach to service and leadership.

By embracing digital tools and fostering an inclusive, global community, it not only upholds Rotary's timeless values but also adapts them to meet the challenges and opportunities of today's interconnected world. ●

FIND OUT MORE

For more information, contact: rotaryyp23@gmail.com



ALARA SERDAR
CLUB PRESIDENT

CAREER: TRADER

I recently graduated from Royal Holloway, University of London, with a degree in Psychology and Criminology.

I currently work as a Trader in a family business, buying and selling, conducting market analysis and research, and maintaining supplier relationships.

"I OFFICIALLY JOINED ROTARY BY FOUNDING AN INTERACT CLUB IN MY TEENS, THEN PROGRESSED TO ROTARACT, AND NOW I AM A ROTARIAN."

INTERESTS

I am passionate about sports, traveling, exploring cultures and reading psychology and personal development.

I love the sea, music, and photography in my free time.

WHY ROTARY?

My Rotary journey began before I could speak, attending meetings with my family at just two months old. Surrounded by Rotary values, I developed my character and community service understanding.

I officially joined Rotary by founding an Interact Club in my teens, then progressed to Rotaract, and now I am a Rotarian. Rotary is more than an organisation; it's a lifelong community offering opportunities to impact lives and grow personally and professionally. Each project or event helps me grow as a leader and global citizen. Rotary enables me to make a difference, build international friendships, and be part of something greater. It's where passion meets purpose. ●

"IN A DRAMATIC TURN OF EVENTS, JUST WEEKS BEFORE THE END OF THE ROTARY YEAR, ITALIAN FRANCESCO AREZZO WAS SELECTED AS ROTARY INTERNATIONAL'S PRESIDENT FOR 2025/26."



FRANCESCO AREZZO ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 2025/26

FRANCESCO STEPS UP NEW RI PRESIDENT

In a dramatic turn of events just weeks before the end of the Rotary year, Italian Francesco Arezzo was selected as Rotary International's President for 2025/26.

Francesco, a member of the Rotary Club of Ragusa in Sicily, was announced as the new RI President on June 14, little more than two weeks before he was due to take office on July 1.

RI moved swiftly following the unexpected resignation of President-elect, Mário César Martins de Camargo.

The Brazilian, who is a member of the Rotary Club of Santo André in São Paulo, wrote to RI President Stephanie Urchick on June 8 announcing his resignation as President-elect, stating he would not serve as President.

Mário cited personal reasons and business obligations, but indicated he would continue to be an active Rotary member and serve his community.

Stephanie received Mário's resignation email while in Scotland on her British Isles tour where she was involved in discussions with the RI Board and staff in Chicago about the process to find a late replacement.

It is only the third time this has

happened in Rotary history.

In 2017, the 2018-19 President-elect Sam F. Owori from Uganda passed away unexpectedly. And in 2019, President-nominee Sushil Gupta from India resigned for health reasons.

Following Mário's resignation, Stephanie wrote: "We greatly appreciate Mário's 45 years of leadership and service to our organisation and the tremendous pride his nomination created among Brazilian Rotary members.

"I am certain that Mário will leverage his experience and will continue to contribute to the growth of Rotary in Brazil and around the world.

"I want to thank Mário and Denise for their hard work and dedication to Rotary over the past 20 months. We wish Mário well."

RI's Board of Directors met on June 14 to choose a 2025-26 Rotary President. Later that day, Francesco Arezzo was confirmed as their choice.

Francesco is an orthodontist in private practice. He is active internationally as a member of the Italian, European, and American orthodontics associations.

He is vice president of the National

Association of Italian Dentists for the province of Ragusa and was the founder and head for seven years of the delegation for Ragusa of the National Trust for Italy.

Francesco is a Knight of Honor and Devotion in Obedience within the Sovereign Order of Malta.

A Rotary member for more than 30 years, Francesco has served as vice chair of the Joint Strategic Planning Committee and as an RI director, learning facilitator, and as district conference presidential representative.

Arezzo is a Benefactor of The Rotary Foundation. He is married to Anna Maria Criscione, an entrepreneur in the tourism field. They have two children.

The 2025-26 presidential message, announced at the 2025 Rotary International Assembly in February, will remain as 'Unite for Good' which calls on Rotarians to be a force for unity in a world increasingly divided by politics, geography, and ideology.

The RI President for 2026-27 will be Sangkoo Yun from the Rotary Club of Sae Hanyang, Seoul, in South Korea. He was formally elected at the RI Convention in Calgary last month, and his term as RI President begins on July 1, 2026. ●

THE GSS STORY A ROTARY SUCCESS

**GSS SAYS THANKS TO ROTARY FOUNDATION, ROTARY DISTRICTS,
AND UK ROTARY CLUBS FOR YOUR INVALIABLE SUPPORT.**

Global Sight Solutions (GSS) is a registered charity initiated by members of the then Guildford RC back in the 90's. Its mind-set being to team up with Rotary Clubs in the developing world and together establish Rotary Eye hospitals which serve the poor by providing free eye care to those in need.

There are estimated to be 700 million people, human beings, who suffer this predicament.



GSS would have achieved only a fraction of what it has, without the significant financial gearing enabled by deploying a **Rotary Foundation Global Grant**.

In turn they would not have been able to access Grant funds without the support which Rotary Districts provide to the Clubs who support GSS.

The first time costs of the essential medical equipment required to kit out a Rotary Eye hospital is \$90,000. This can be triggered via a Global Grant by donations from UK Clubs totalling 'just' £12,000

GSS has utilised around 100 Matching/Global Grants since its inception, enabling close to 70 Rotary Eye Hospitals. A total Grant value of approximately \$3,000,000

To maximise this funding none of GSS's Trustees or District Ambassadors claim any expenses regardless of whether UK or International travel is required.

Incidentally visits to potential hospital sites are always made and once a hospital is up and running a second visit is made.

With the exception of visits abroad for training purposes only local surgeons are used in these hospitals. ie No foreign surgeons are used.

Each hospital offers a full range of eye care and between them around 1.8 million free cataract operations have been carried out over the years.

The author of this piece, now a Trustee, has been involved since 2012, primarily as chief fundraiser, and since 2012 around 900 presentations on GSS have been made resulting in almost 1000 donations being received. Several donors making more than one contribution.

On behalf of those who can now see because of GSS's efforts, **THANK YOU** to all involved whether it be donors, Districts or The Rotary Foundation.

**So unashamedly Global Sight Solutions say once again:-
THANK YOU TO ROTARY FOUNDATION, ROTARY DISTRICTS,
AND UK ROTARY CLUBS FOR YOUR INVALIABLE SUPPORT.**

If you would like more information, or leaflets, or to book a presentation, for which there is no charge email either info@globalsightsolutions.org or john.miles13@btinternet.com , or call 01483 481856.

Charity No:- 11127630

Website:- www.globalsightsolutions.org

Donations:- <https://www.globalsightsolutions.org/donate>





Readers' letters

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

Migration – the facts

SEVERAL people wrote to the Spring edition of the *Rotary Magazine* to complain about “the appalling front cover of the Winter edition”, that had shown refugees crossing the English Channel in a small boat.

What was appalling was not the cover of the Winter magazine, but the attitude of some Rotarians to refugees and the lack of understanding of the issue.

Following these letters I contacted Kent Refugee Action Network for information so I could better understand the problem.

They helpfully provided me with some background to the issue, including stories of people who have fled conflict zones. From reading these stories, crossing the busiest shipping lane in the world in a small boat is clearly a final act of desperation; something most Rotarians in this country can know nothing of.

According to the Migration Observatory at Oxford University, most people who arrive in the UK by small boat subsequently apply for asylum, around 94% of those who arrived

between 2018 and the end of September 2024 did so. Of those who received an initial decision, around 70% were granted protection, similar to the grant rate for all asylum applications. This suggests that most arriving in small boats are not “illegal” as they have been assessed as needing protection.

One of the letters in the Spring 2025 edition suggests that, by publishing a picture of a small boat, and a report on the work of Rotary clubs in supporting refugees, “the magazine is sending the worst possible message to Rotarian readership and the public at large, the effect of which on our membership remain to be seen”.

If the writer thinks that Rotary should not be about supporting the most disadvantaged and marginalised, then I certainly would not want to be part of such an organisation.

Does the writer want caring Rotarians to leave the organisation or does he want Rotary to be about looking after people just like us?

| Rev David Gray
Rotary Club of Chippenham, Wiltshire.

Proud to help the less fortunate

THANK you for the postscript you put in the letters page about immigration in the Spring issue of *Rotary Magazine*.

Personally I felt two of the letters published were not very nice and do not paint a good picture of a compassionate, non-political international organisation.

The suggestions that people fleeing Afghanistan and Syria have nothing to be afraid of in their home countries, and that Rotary membership could suffer as a result of being kind to a few migrants, are both egregious and absurd.

Thankfully I felt that the gentleman from the Cockermouth club’s letter was far more nuanced and realistic.

I have very occasionally met Rotarians who are disdainful of our humanitarian and social justice campaigns.

I think they need to remind themselves what Rotary International is actually for. Stories of clubs helping the less fortunate make me proud to be a Rotarian and keen to recommend Rotary to others.

| Rob Chilton
Rotary Club of Rochdale,
Greater Manchester.



Proud to be an immigrant

THIRTY years ago, I joined Rotary which I believe was one of the best decisions in my life. I found not only new, long-lasting friendships within my club but also unforgettable welcome and fun when visiting Rotary clubs all over the World during business trips and holidays.

The ethics of Rotary in respect of service, care for others and help as well of support for those who are in need are highly valued.

Having received your latest *Rotary Magazine* (Spring 2025) though has more than disappointed me. In fact I am disgusted!

In my mind Rotary is not, has not and will not be a propaganda organisation. Our involvement is never, nor will it ever be guided by propaganda or politics.

Nevertheless you printed a one-sided and quite disgusting letter of a Rotary

member referring to immigrants into the UK as well as two responses - of which one was semi-apologetic, the other one quite doubtful, but not as crude.

Let me be clear, I too am an immigrant. I came into the UK some 52 years ago, I built my life up here, happily married. I have two nationalities by now, I was Assistant District Governor for five years in Kent and I am currently President of my wonderful Rotary club for the second time in 10 years.

There is no place in Rotary to make nonsensical statements nor unproven accusations full of prejudice, nor is our magazine a political mouthpiece for anyone. That's why I will apologise for the unwelcome letter which I doubt can be expected by the person who wrote it.

| Reinhard Stille
Rotary Club of Maidstone, Kent.

What are we to do with our banners?

I AM probably a bit late to the party but I can't understand why clubs have to abandon their designs that are shown on our individual banners and logos.

When I joined Rotary many years ago, I found the banners we had accumulated were both colourful and interesting. I found the variety and individuality a reminder that this was a club that encompassed the globe.

Our own logo featured a canal cruiser passing under the bridge that links the two communities of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade and was designed by one of our members.

Every year the two Anglican churches in the town host a Christmas Tree Festival and local groups are asked to decorate a tree that says something about their organisation.

Last year the theme chosen was 'Friendship'. What better way of showing the span of friendship that Rotary promotes than in the banners we have had to tuck away as they are not compliant.

They show how Rotary connects with the town or city in which they do business.

Our collection has banners with huge elephants from a South African club, one from Coventry depicts the Cathedral and Lady Godiva whilst one that particularly caught my eye was the one from Alloway which features 'Tam o' Shanter'.

I don't know why we should meddle with something that has been an outward show of not only our local involvement, but how Rotary enables its worldwide clubs to celebrate their connection with their hometown.

| David Edwards
Rotary Club of Leighton-Linslade, Bedfordshire.



Visit **Rotary Digital** to read more letters.
magazine.rotarygbi.org

Linking South Africa

AS the project co-ordinator of the Great Britain & Ireland / South Africa Inter-Country Committee, I am seeking the help of Rotary clubs.

South Africa is one of most popular areas that clubs support within Rotary International, so the committee is trying to tabulate the projects and global grants which are being carried out in the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa.

Secondly, the committee members are collecting and transporting the following: disability Equipment (wheelchairs, walking frames, walking sticks etc), spectacles and hearing aids.

Please email information about your Rotary club's work in South Africa to: malmesbury@tiscali.co.uk

| Ray Sanderson
Rotary Club of Royal Wootton Bassett & District, Wiltshire.

Supporting Rotary Jaipur Limb

CAN you help Rotary Jaipur Limb make a difference? It started in Jaipur, India, as a local project in 1984 and has grown to cover many disadvantaged regions in the world. Rotary Jaipur Limb gives hope and the chance of a better life to people who have lost a limb.

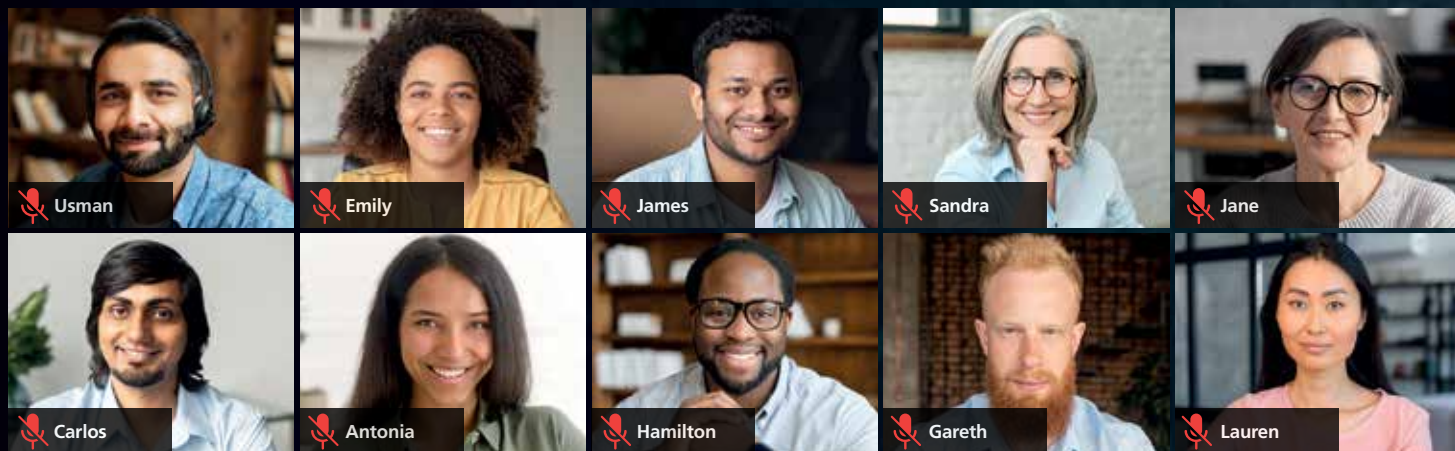
Our principal activity is the raising of funds to finance limb camps and limb centres in Africa, the Indian sub-continent and in other areas in need of help, as determined by the trustees.

In our history, successful projects have been carried out in Benin, Ghana, Haiti, India, the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Tanzania.

Rotary Jaipur Limb is now seeking a new team member to help oversee our projects in Africa.

If you think you can help with Africa or any other aspect of our work, please contact me at: brian@stoyel.co.uk

| Brian Stoyel,
Chairman Rotary Jaipur Limb UK



COVID CHANGED ROTARY FOR THE BETTER

| STORY BY GLYN MON HUGHES |

IMAGINE sitting a history exam in 2125 and writing about the benefits of last century’s Covid pandemic.

An impossible, even ridiculous, task. But there is someone who has a curiously different approach. Cue Martin Brocklebank who will say – controversially, no doubt – that Covid was probably the best thing that happened to Rotary.

“It forced a lot of traditional clubs to do one of three things,” said Martin.

“They could close, because they were fragile anyway. They could do nothing other than just keep in touch by phone. Or they could embrace online technology, like Zoom.”

In reality, the embryo Fellowship had been in existence for a number of years, having been started by a Philippines-based Rotarian when there were only around 200 eClubs worldwide.

Around five years ago, Martin took

the chair and began a process of reform, including building a new website and putting up a revised Facebook and other social media pages.

“Prior to Covid, people would be asking ‘what are these things called eClubs?’,” recalled Martin, a founder member of the eClub of Innovation,

Traditional clubs just could not get their heads around it, either in person or on-line. They would always ask three questions: How do you do fellowship? How do you do projects? And what real club do you belong to?

“Post Covid, comments have changed from ‘what’s an eClub?’ to ‘have you seen how well we can get together on Zoom?’”

Now, there are up to 400 eClubs worldwide and, embracing online clubs which are not designated as eClubs, the number is probably around 700.

Once it became clear that eClubs were here to stay, the first move towards

today’s Fellowship was a name change to the perhaps slightly clunky Global Fellowship in a Digital World. But it was the website rebrand which added the strapline of Rotary eClub Fellowship.

“I’ve worked with our secretary Brian Carmichael and we’ve defined the Fellowship,” said Martin. “Our mission is to be an enabler, a springboard towards growing connections, communication and collaboration between online clubs. And we embrace all clubs that use modern technology.

“But I think that when you move from being a traditional Rotary club to an eClub, you find ways of actually delivering what you promise in a lot of different ways.

“A traditional club is in a matrix of time and place, meeting at the same time in the same place. eClubs can meet at the same time, but in a different place.

“Our club has 55 members in 22





“THEY COULD CLOSE, BECAUSE THEY WERE FRAGILE, ANYWAY. THEY COULD DO NOTHING OTHER THAN JUST KEEP IN TOUCH BY PHONE. OR THEY COULD EMBRACE ONLINE TECHNOLOGY, LIKE ZOOM.”

countries and we meet anytime 365/24/7 but also on a Wednesday night when we have a speaker.

“But, by embracing the differences presented by an eClub, you can’t follow the same pattern as a traditional land-based club.”

Recognising those differences has proved to be a great focus point for the eClub Fellowship, in turn enhancing members’ experiences of the digital world, creating and sharing best practices and increasing Rotary membership, engagement and effectiveness.

“We’re not just a Fellowship based on the internet,” noted Martin. “We want to create communities of best practice, supporting each other with different ideas and engaging members through different platforms.”

There are even tentative explorations being undertaken alongside Rotary International to use virtual reality to

allow club inductions to take place in a virtual space.

There’s a resource library being built up where members can access a vast range of information about Rotarian activities which will include, eventually, every issue of The Rotarian magazine, first published in 1911.

The aim is for every member to be able to communicate through WhatsApp, Teams, Zoom, Messenger – whatever feels most comfortable – “a technical holocracy, a shared experience,” according to Martin.

Most recently, the fellowship promoted its first eConference, in collaboration with the District Governor and Assistant District Governor of District 1320.

“We got a much better response than I anticipated” said Martin.

“We had 450 registrations. A lot of people register in case they want to

go on the day, some forget, some don’t turn up. The result was that we had 200 people on-line on the day and it was a real springboard to connect, collaborate and communicate. We’ve had a number of people wishing to join.”

The success of this venture was noted by Rushton Hurley, a member of the eClub of Silicon Valley. He helped Martin establish his own club. Now Martin is about to make a presentation to the Silicon Valley club to explain the concept of the Fellowship.

In the early days, Martin explained to sceptics that when microwaves first came out, there were those who said they’d never catch on. “But they did and mostly they sit next to the traditional oven, so it shows the new and the old can live together,” he added. ●



Chat



Record



Breakout Rooms



Reactions

End



A CRITICAL TIME FOR POLIO

STORY BY **JAMES CARMICHAEL** |
ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND END POLIO NOW SPECIALIST

AS of May 28, there were 12 cases of polio reported. These cases, caused by the ‘wild’ or naturally occurring virus, are best understood as the outcome of one ‘pool’ of viral infection across Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Cases of polio caused by the circulating vaccine-derived form of the virus continue to occur; so far this year there have been 55 cases. But there has been a steady decline in infections over the last few years. This is a result of the great efforts of front-line teams and the use of the new Novo Vaccine which has proved very effective.

A case of polio was identified in Papua New Guinea recently. This has been linked to previous cases in Indonesia and was caused by the circulating vaccine-based virus. The child concerned has not suffered from paralysis - the majority of polio cases do not involve paralysis - but was identified due in no small part by the extensive monitoring and testing processes which the polio eradication campaign has helped to create.

Because of cases such as this, many argue that we cannot win the battle to eradicate polio, but the evidence suggests otherwise. The single case of polio discovered in Gaza in 2024, for example has not led to a major outbreak because of

an effective and intensive intervention to vaccinate thousands of children.

A truly remarkable effort but the situation in the area remains critical and the WHO has expressed the urgent need for a cease fire and the lifting of restrictions on humanitarian aid.

There have been efforts made in the past to eradicate diseases which have failed at the final hurdle; escalating costs, and the demands of other crises and challenges, diverted funds and robbed efforts of support.

Indeed, many have argued that attempts to eradicate major infectious diseases like polio are misguided and an inappropriate use of resources.

Those arguments are still voiced, in spite of the successes of the polio eradication campaign and the huge impact it has had. As we near the point of total elimination of the disease, costs escalate and sceptics of one kind or another raise criticisms and question the very idea that polio can be eliminated.

However, and in spite of recent difficulties over funding, the WHO remains committed to the task of eradicating polio. At the recent World Health Assembly in Geneva, member states expressed their continuing support and determination. Indeed, Judith Diment, Chair of Rotary International’s

Polio Advocacy Committee made it clear that Rotary remains steadfastly committed to the campaign and urged all the member states to remain “resourceful, resilient and resolved”.

Although the financial contribution made by Rotary International towards the success of the eradication campaign is not as great as the sums dedicated by a number of member states, the voice of Rotary remains a potent force.

Our advocacy, our commitment to this task has a real impact around the world and helps to sustain and encourage the efforts of others.

We are at a crossroads in terms of global health. And at this critical stage, the withdrawal of support by the United States has left the WHO facing major financial issues, necessitating the closure of branches, reduction of staffing levels and funding for a variety of initiatives. Inevitably this will affect the capacity of the WHO to pursue the global polio eradication campaign.

It becomes more critical than ever for every Rotarian, every Rotary club, every district, to step up their efforts to raise funds – and awareness - of the importance of our campaign to End Polio Now.

“Now is the time to stay the course, ensuring that no child, anywhere, is left vulnerable to this preventable disease.” ●

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IT'S ALL IN THE MIND

| STORY BY **SUE CAMPBELL** |

IT'S a fast-moving, frantic world for many. Family, health, work, just trying to keep up can all combine to a cycle of anxiety, stress, unhappiness...

There are of course ways of helping, and one has gained increasing popularity.

Mindfulness gained mainstream attention in the west in the 1960s, particularly in America, but in the 90s mindfulness exploded onto Western cultural consciousness. It's part of wellbeing and is even taught in schools.

So what is mindfulness?

One definition – from mental health charity Mind – says it's 'a technique

you can learn which involves noticing what's happening in the present, without judgement.

It aims to help people become more self-aware, feel calmer and less stressed, more able to choose how to respond to thoughts and feelings, cope with difficult or unhelpful thoughts and be kinder to themselves.

Colin Jay, from Gloucestershire, now living in County Durham, has taught mindfulness for more than 20 years. He smiles as he says: "It gives you permission to care about yourself, be selfish sometimes, and not treat that as a negative."

Colin is a mental health trust chaplain, who regularly delivers NHS funded courses to health care workers, or others who care for people all the time.

He adds: "Mindfulness can be a formal practice, involving meditation, or informal, living in the moment while you walk the dog, do the dishes, brush your teeth."

Colin says it's a way of paying attention to things as they are at the moment, with "curiosity and kindness".

"We spend a lot of time going over past and looking to the future. We can constantly try and problem solve, which can lead to a disconnect and end up with

“BEING IN THE MOMENT MEANS YOU WAKE UP AND REALLY TASTE YOUR MORNING CUP OF TEA, LISTEN TO THE BIRDS, PUT DOWN THE PHONE – BE WITH YOURSELF AND GIVE YOURSELF SPACE. IT’S PERHAPS A WISER WAY OF LIVING IN THE WORLD.”

a stress response. The mind gets pulled around, which can trigger depression and anxiety.”

Colin’s eight week mindfulness courses teach practices and exercises to learn to notice your experiences.

“Being in the moment means you wake up and really taste your morning cup of tea, listen to the birds, put down the phone – be with yourself and give yourself space. It’s perhaps a wiser way of living in the world.”

Colin is the first to admit it’s not for everyone. “For a few people on the course a couple will say it’s pleasant, but not for them, others will get something out of it, but a number will find that it changes their lives.”

So what about mindset? While mindset and mindfulness are related, they are distinct concepts.

Mindfulness focuses on present-moment awareness and non-judgmental observation of thoughts and feelings, while mindset encompasses a person’s beliefs and attitudes about themselves and the world.

Tracy Freeman is CEO of a north-east England organisation which houses a range of practical, free facilities and activities to help people navigate life events and difficulties.

“All my life I suffered from imposter syndrome. I never thought I was good enough. I mean, what on earth was I doing being a CEO?”

“I spent my life people-pleasing and feeling guilt. I remember as a child, my older sisters always had to take me with them and I still had that residual guilt about being the reason they couldn’t go out without me.”

Tracy came to mindset after feeling overwhelmed by life. She did a taster session introduction and thought – this is it.

“I would give until there was nothing

left to give. It made me realise the trigger was that long-forgotten guilt, which led to this need to please.

“I think differently about myself now. I can prioritise and not feel the overwhelming pressure of needing to do everything there and then, and to be everything to everybody.”

Tracy went on to introduce a lottery funded mindset programme into her organisation.

One of the participants in Tracy’s course was Adele Morris, who is a development manager for NHS funded mental health programmes, a job which she says the mindset programme helped her secure.

Adele started working life as a hairdresser.

“My mother didn’t want me to do it – she said I was more intelligent than ‘just’ being a hairdresser, a job I spent 20 years doing.

“So I put up a screen. I made myself the butt of my own jokes. I would joke about my weight before anyone else could. I couldn’t let anyone see who I really was.”

The course was a revelation for Adele. She was encouraged to do it by her boss, but had no idea how it would change her.

“The facilitator got me straight away

“She realised within 20 minutes that she knew I was sick of not being able to be me, and I was in tears.

“She insisted I do homework about how I felt, and I still refer to that now.”

Many of us spend a lot of time looking backwards, worrying about the future and perhaps not enough time in the present.

So remember to be kind to yourself. As well as kind to others. ●

FIND OUT MORE ➔

To find out more, please visit:
mind.org.uk

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ROTARY FOUNDATION TRANSFORMING LIVES

STORY BY **TOM HUNT & CHERYL LAW** |

ENDOWMENT & MAJOR GIFT ADVISORS, ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

THE Rotary Foundation is Rotary's charity which has the power to transform lives in this country and around the world.

Through the power of giving, Rotary clubs can use District and Global Grants in partnership with Rotarians across the globe to create significant projects which make a difference.

Here are some practical illustrations:

DISTRICT GRANTS

SUPPORTING WHEEL POWER

Wendover & District Rotary Club is based in Buckinghamshire with many members volunteering at Wheel Power events at Stoke Mandeville Stadium – the home of the Paralympics.

Wheel Power approached the club to help rejuvenate a patio area for wheelchair users at the stadium.

It was a huge job which took six months just to fix the surface. The club installed 12 large oak half barrels filled with plants and supplied recycled tables which could stand up to the rigours of being bashed by wheelchairs. Each table had the Rotary logo with the club name on it, costing over £600 each.

The Wendover club raised £1,000 through a District grant matched with

District Designated Funds. For additional funds, they approached local Rotary clubs for support. The project was complete in time for the lighting of the Paralympic flame to travel to Paris for the 2024 Paralympics, and the project received the endorsements of Paralympians Dame Tanni Grey Thompson and Sophie Christiansen.

BIKES FOR SCHOOLS

When a Suffolk primary school wanted to start a Bike Library Scheme, the **Rotary Club of Lowestoft East Point** jumped at the chance to get involved.

This is where children can borrow the bikes to get to school after they and their parents sign a contract with the school to look after and maintain them. The bike has to be returned once the child leaves school.

Through Suffolk County Council's Active Living Fund, funding was found to buy the bikes - however helmets, high visibility jackets, bike locks and cycling proficiency training had to be financed.

So, with a Rotary District Grant, as well as support from businesses including Mandarin Cycles, Asda and Lowestoft Rising, the Rotary club was able to source the equipment, and the training course was provided. Rotarian Paul Tabiner

provided the link between the school and the businesses to ensure the project ran smoothly.

As a bonus, the children were invited to start off the last leg of the Tour of Britain cycle race which began on Lowestoft seafront, with Rotarians acting as marshals.

BRINGING POWER TO KENYA

Last year, the **Rotary Club of Stort Valley** in Essex launched a project to enhance the quality of life in rural communities of Kajaïdo, in southern Kenya.

Many families in off-grid communities without electricity rely on kerosene lamps for lighting, which are not only costly but also pose health risks due to indoor air pollution and fire. Furthermore, limited access to information and communication hampers community development.

Using a £1,700 Rotary District Grant coupled with £2,000 from club funds, the club funded the purchase of Biolite solar lights, phone chargers and radios to provide sustainable light sources and information access to communities which lacked mains electricity.

The result is an improved quality of life, with families reporting better living conditions, a reduced reliance on



kerosene, and improved safety at night.

It has also driven educational benefits with children able to study longer in well-lit environments, leading to improved academic achievement.

The project included a training component on solar technology maintenance, ensuring that community members could independently care for their lights and radios.

The Rotary District Grant not only improved energy access but also empowered the community through education and information.

This case study highlights the importance of innovative solutions in rural development and the potential of Rotary initiatives to create lasting change.

GLOBAL GRANTS

MATERNITY UNIT IN KENYA

A \$52,435 project for a new maternity unit for Bomani-Malde Dispensary and Rural Health Centre in Kilifi County, Kenya, was part funded by a Global Grant provided by The Rotary Foundation, managed jointly between the **Rotary clubs of Uppingham** in Rutland and Mtwapa in Kenya.

The funding included donations from Rotary clubs within District 1070 (East Midlands), clubs from the Netherlands, USA and Canada, as well as a German medical association, a Swiss women's group and some private individuals.

"KENYA RANKS AMONG THE COUNTRIES WITH THE HIGHEST MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES IN THE WORLD."

Kenya ranks among the countries with the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. In Kilifi County, up to 25 women die each month through pregnancy-related problems.

Almost all these deaths are preventable with appropriate care.

Through the Rotary project, the new maternity unit was equipped with the latest equipment. The project provided ante-natal, natal and post-natal health education and care.

With the help of the nearby North Coast Medical Training College, it provided refresher training in basic life support and management of acute complications during labour and delivery.

The project took four years from inception to delivery and the new maternity unit has been a tremendous success.

Uppingham Rotary have continued to support the unit by using a District Grant to provide a solar powered battery back-up lighting unit to ensure that treatment can continue during the frequent power interruptions.

TOILETS IN GHANA


David Aspinall from **Edgbaston Convention Rotary** in Birmingham led a \$48,000 project with Accra Ridge Rotary in Ghana to provide segregated washrooms and toilet facilities at a school which focused on teaching disadvantaged children.

In 2017 two members of Edgbaston Convention Rotary, plus an Inner Wheel member, visited the school which had 60 children being taught in classrooms funded by a Dutch charity.

However, the school only had two toilets and an outside sink, so the West Midlands Rotarians embarked on a project funded by a series of fund-raising initiatives.

A £10,000 donation to The Rotary Foundation by Edgbaston Convention Rotary, a 50% District Designated Fund contribution from Rotary District 1060 (West Midlands), plus a World Fund contribution by Rotary International provided the required finance.

The washrooms were completed in four months and were ready by March 2024, comprising toilets, showers, urinals and wash basins with running water and power.

The Ipswich River in Massachusetts was listed as one of the most endangered in the USA. Working with the Ipswich River and Watersheds Association, the Rotary club of Ipswich Rowley, USA, applied for a Global Grant in July 2021 



“THE ROTARY GLOBAL GRANT ENABLED THE AFRICAN SAND DAM FOUNDATION TO BUILD TWO SAND DAMS IN KEY LOCATIONS.”

to provide training, networking and resources to significantly reduce water use throughout the region.

Through a long-standing relationship with **Ipswich East Rotary Club** in Suffolk, they became the project's international sponsor.

International funding from Ipswich East and District 1080 (East Anglia) Designated Funds, providing the required 15% of the budget. Approval was given in September 2022 and in February 2025 the final report was signed off.

SAND DAMS IN KENYA

In Kenya, water scarcity is a pressing challenge, particularly in rural areas where populations rely on seasonal rainfall.

Women and children often spend hours collecting water from distant sources, and the water available is typically contaminated. The community, primarily dependent on agriculture, suffers from crop failures due to lack of irrigation, leading to food insecurity and economic hardship.

In 2024, a Rotary Global Grant of \$92,300 was awarded to fund the construction of two sand dams in the arid region of Kajaido County. **Harlow Tye Rotary Club** in Essex was the international sponsor, joining forces with Nairobi North Rotary.

Sand dams are an innovative and sustainable water harvesting solution. These dams, constructed across seasonal riverbeds, allow water to seep through the sand and store it for use during dry

periods. They provide a reliable, clean water source which benefits not only human populations but also livestock and agricultural activities.

The Rotary Global Grant enabled the African Sand Dam Foundation to build two sand dams in key locations, directly impacting over 5,000 residents.

The total cost was \$45,000 per dam which included seed provision, agricultural equipment and training.

The Rotary Global Grant has successfully empowered rural Kenyan communities, enhancing water security, public health, and local livelihoods through the solution of sand dams.

WATER IN NEPAL

Across Nepal the effects of the 2015 earthquake are still taking their toll.

In hilly Siurani Bhanjyang in Kavre District south of Kathmandu 1,380 people and two schools have lost their water source, resulting in a five-hour trek from the main road.

Elgin Rotary Club in Scotland stepped in to work with the Nepal for Water Health Group and the Kathmandu-based Rotary Club of Boudha on a \$78,700 Global Grant project to provide 6.3 kilometres of piping, 226 taps, along with health and hygiene training.

Elgin is ably supported by **East Sutherland, Forres, Inverkeithing and Dalgety Bay, Oldmeldrum Rotary clubs** in Scotland and **Durham Rotary Club**. Boudha Rotary secured local government support to build a 10km road to the main road.

Despite Covid, the work was completed in 2023. The water supply is freely available to all, the hillsides are full of crops and animals graze contentedly. Vegetables are now grown for home use and the markets, while a new health centre has opened.

DISASTER RESPONSE GRANT SPORT CAMP FOR UKRAINIANS

In 2022, thanks to the support of a Rotary Disaster Response Grant, **Royden Revolve Rotary Club** in the Wirral, partnered with Thorndale Lawn Tennis Club to deliver a summer sports camp for Ukrainians who had fled the war and were living in Merseyside.

This initiative exemplifies the Rotary Foundation's commitment to supporting communities in times of need, fostering resilience, and creating lasting positive change.

Over four weeks in August 2022, 30 children per day participated in a structured sports camp held at Thorndale Lawn Tennis Club. The focus was on the children in Liverpool and Wirral who had been displaced from Ukraine.

The impact of this project extended beyond the children. Parents benefited from much-needed free time to seek employment, attend English language classes, and integrate into their new communities.

The camp not only fostered friendships among the children but also helped parents build supportive networks, making their transition to life in the UK smoother and less isolating. ●

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH ROTARY GRANTS

Rotary members around the world have access to different kinds of grants from The Rotary Foundation to support service projects, offer scholarships, and organise other activities that make a difference in their own communities and far away. Explore four grant options that can help turn your vision into reality.



MORE INFORMATION:
rotary.org/grants

	DISTRICT GRANTS	GLOBAL GRANTS	DISASTER RESPONSE GRANTS	PROGRAMMES OF SCALE GRANTS
How do we use these?	These can address community needs in alignment with the Foundation's mission.	These support larger, international projects that align with an area of focus. They can also support scholarships and vocational training teams.	These support relief and recovery efforts in communities affected by natural disasters. They can be used to provide basic items like water, food, medicine, and clothing.	These competitive grants allow Rotary members to work with experienced partners and expand proven activities that align with an area of focus to make a significant impact.
What's the time frame?	These are for short-term activities that have a limited scope.	Use these for longer-term, sustainable projects that address needs identified in a community assessment.	Your district works with local entities on relief or recovery activities within six months of a disaster.	These evidence-based, sustainable, and measurable programmes are implemented over three to five years.
Do we need a partner?	No, but it's often a good idea to work with other local organisations.	You need to work with another club or district, either as the host sponsor or international sponsor.	No, but your district should collaborate with local organisations to meet critical needs.	You need to work with implementing and investment partners outside Rotary and should also collaborate with other Rotary entities.
Who can apply?	A district, which can distribute funds to clubs	Clubs and districts	A district	A club or district
Do we need to be qualified to apply for grants?	Your district needs to be qualified.	Both sponsors need to be qualified.	Your district needs to be qualified.	The club or district leading the programme needs to be qualified.
What funding is available?	Your district can seek up to 50% of its District Designated Funds allocated for that year.	Global grants have a minimum project budget of US\$30,000. You can ask for up to US\$400,000 from the World Fund.	Districts can get up to US\$25,000 if the Disaster Response Fund has funds available.	One US\$2 million grant may be awarded each year. Sponsors need to secure US\$500,000 from one or more investment partners outside Rotary.
How and when do we apply?	Your district applies by 15 May of the Rotary year for which you're requesting funds. Your club applies to the district.	Clubs and districts can apply throughout the year.	Your district applies within six months of the disaster.	Your club or district submits a concept note by 1 August. Select programmes are invited to develop a full proposal that is due in January of the following year.



DISASTER RECOVERY TRUST SUSTAINABLE R

Since 2007, the Rotary Great Britain & Ireland Disaster Recovery Trust has helped channel significant sums of money donated by Rotarians and their clubs to worthwhile aid projects.

| STORY BY TOM GRIFFIN |

ROTARIANS have always responded magnificently to disasters, wherever they occur.

Many have generously given to organisations who are the immediate responders, helping those left hungry, homeless or injured. Organisations like ShelterBox, The Red Cross, Médecins sans Frontières and The Disaster Emergency Committee.

Other Rotarians have given practical hands-on assistance at the site of the disaster.

It is a fact of life, however, that quite quickly after a disaster, this humanitarian catastrophe disappears from the front pages of our newspapers and television screens, and the event, as well as those affected by it, slowly fade from our consciousness.

For many caught up in a disaster, however, the consequences, the pain, the loss, the displacement endure for weeks, months – maybe even years – thereafter.

When disaster strikes, the immediate consequences are in the public eye; the long-term suffering which often follows is

not. That's where the Rotary Great Britain and Ireland Disaster Recovery Trust comes in.

The clue is in the name. Our mission is to help communities recover from cataclysmic events.

The Trust was established in 2007 and since then we have helped channel significant sums of money donated by Rotarians and Rotary clubs in Great Britain & Ireland to worthwhile recovery projects.

The original catalyst which led to the setting up of the Trust was widespread flooding in the UK.

Between 2007 and 2010, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Rotarians in these islands, the Trust was able to make grants exceeding £1million to recovery projects. Now our remit is worldwide.

Although, over the last few years, UK flood-related projects have for whatever reason largely dried up (no pun intended) – although we still have adequate sums available to help worthwhile initiatives – our work assisting those affected by

disasters in other countries has not slackened.

Recent examples have included helping communities recover from the devastation caused by hurricanes in the Caribbean, torrential rains in Tanzania, flooding in India and Nepal, and the terrible Australian bushfires.

The way we operate is quite simple.

If Rotary clubs in these islands suggest we should open an appeal in respect of an event, we shall do so, and then make contact with Rotary clubs or Rotary leaders in the affected country or countries to identify eligible, worthwhile projects.

We will work with clubs in Great Britain & Ireland who have eligible recovery projects where we can give additional financial support.

One example of the latter relates to severe flooding in Kerala, India.

Many small communities were destroyed with the loss of 300 lives. Recovery and reconstruction of the communities occurred but the water supplies from underground sources had



HELP ROTARY MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THOSE IN NEED.

The **Rotary Foundation** transforms donations into projects that change lives. With your help, we can continue to make a difference in your community and around the world.



[ROTARYGBI.ORG/DONATE](https://rotarygbi.org/donate)

The **Rotary Foundation** 



been contaminated.

Rotarians from the Heritage Club of Cochin designed a pilot project to supply and test one reverse Osmosis water purification station. It was a success, and the club made a global grant application to install 20 such stations.

To achieve this major Global Grant project, the club enlisted the support of the Rotary Club of Weston-super Mare as the international partner.

The Disaster Recovery Trust engaged with the project as Rotarians in the UK had donated significant funds to support the recovery of the communities.

The Cochin Heritage club raised significant funds from their own communities and gained business support to achieve the result.

The Rotary Foundation approved the grant and work started in 2021 on a project costing \$240,000.

The project has been supervised by Rotarians from the Cochin Heritage club who have also met regularly with the leaders of the local communities to negotiate access, and ease concerns.

Villages now have their first safe drinking water in over five years. Water had been delivered by bowser fortnightly for the previous 5 years.

That's just one example, but it serves to illustrate the difference we can make together.

We will only award grants where the projects:

- Benefit communities (not individuals) affected by the disaster – for example, by helping rebuild or replace schools, health centres, community facilities or by helping those communities be more resilient and able better to face future events
- Relate to a natural disaster – we don't deal with the aftermath of war
- Have significant Rotary input

So, the next time you pick up your newspaper or click on an online news feed to read of some terrible natural event, by all means think about how you can help bring immediate relief to those left destitute.

But also give a little thought to the long term, and how you can help a community in the longer term. ●

FIND OUT MORE 

For more details email:

disasterrecoverytrust@rotarygbi.org



Aquabox

CLEAN WATER IN A CRISIS

A story of Rotary collaboration.

When a plan comes together amazing results can happen.

Following an earthquake in south east Turkey and northern Syria in 2023, Hand in Hand for Aid and Development (HiHFAD) were supporting camps for families fleeing from the ongoing conflicts in Syria and for those seeking refuge from the earthquake.

HiHFAD reached out to Aquabox asking for a shipment of water filters and Aqua-Aid boxes to support these families who, in many cases, did not have access to safe drinking water or adequate living conditions.

The Rotary Club of Stade provided a generous donation to pay for the aid, and then asked MSC shipping if they would help with logistics. MSC foundation kindly provided a 40ft container for Aquabox and Water Survival Box to fill with 300 Aid boxes, 420 family filters and 20 community filters and arranged the shipment of the full container to Mersin, Turkey.

The collaboration between five organisations: The Rotary Club of Stade, MSC, HiHFAD, Aquabox, and Water Survival Box worked very well. In all over 15,000 people were provided with clean water and the means of building shelters, cooking and hygiene for 3000 family members.



Loading the MSC container at Aquabox



Delivering an Aqua-Aid box in the camp



The aid box even provided for the children



aquabox.org Tel: 01629 825178

Aquabox, Unit 10, Cromford Hill, Wirksworth, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3QL



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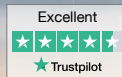


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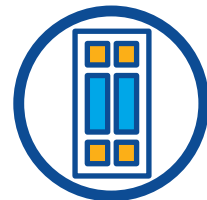
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Rotary 
Great Britain & Ireland



Get reading with Rotary

A warm welcome to the Rotary Book Club where we will travel the length and breadth of the Earth, move through space and time, solve mysteries, and laugh and cry together.

| BECKY TURNER |

OUR sixth book, ‘The Gustav Sonata’ by Rose Tremain is set in Switzerland, over a period from before the Second World War to the early 2000s.

We first meet Gustav as a young child, being brought up by his widowed mother Emilie. We follow him through his life, and the story is generally one of hardship and sadness although there are strong themes of friendship and love.

We learn about Gustav’s father’s life and death, how his parents met and how Gustav and Emilie end up living a very basic existence in a small apartment. Switzerland is a relatively unusual setting for a wartime book and provides a different and interesting perspective.

Tremain explains the plight of the Jews trying to escape into Switzerland through Gustav’s father Erik’s job as Assistant Police Chief and challenges the reader to reflect on what they would do in the same situation – a terrible



dilemma to be faced with, which tears Erik apart and costs him his livelihood, his home and changes the course of his and his family’s whole lives.

So, what is this book really about? I would encourage you all when (or after) reading a book to ask yourselves this question - it helps to identify and unfold

the underlying themes of a story. There are a lot in this one, from grief, regret, anger, abuse, unfaithfulness, betrayal, jealousy, parental expectations, and sexuality, to love and friendship, to name some of them!

Tremain delivers a well-researched historical context, with a very good description of place – whether of the small town of Matzlingen or the lush scenery of Davos.

The story is almost unremittingly sad, and at some points it seems without hope. The characters develop beautifully, with Tremain again challenging our initial perceptions of them as their backstories unfold – for example Gustav’s mother Emilie at first appears unsympathetic, shallow and unlikeable but when we understand what she has been through, she becomes much more rounded, and we start to wonder whether she ever had the chance of a happy life.

The fact that Gustav was named after his miscarried sibling is rather



“SWITZERLAND IS A RELATIVELY UNUSUAL SETTING FOR A WARTIME BOOK AND PROVIDES A DIFFERENT AND INTERESTING PERSPECTIVE.”

strange and not really explained; he is always therefore by definition in the shadow of the first Gustav. Despite the unhappiness and darkness, there is also a continuous theme of love and friendship, starting the day that Gustav meets Anton.

Throughout Gustav’s life, his friendship with the generally rather self-centred Anton is a constant, as is his love for Anton’s parents.

When Anton leaves Matzingen, chasing the fame he craves, Gustav remains close to Armin and Adriana, and he also has some rather touching friendships with Lottie Erdmann and Colonel Ashley-Norton, showing his loyal, caring nature. When Gustav hears the truth about Erik and Lottie’s relationship, he has the choice of whether to resent her but chooses not to. To me this is again challenging the reader. How would you react in that situation?

Gustav’s friendship with Anton blossoms into love and it is only towards the end of the book, after Anton’s breakdown that they become a couple.

Given the sadness throughout the book, the ending is perhaps unusual and unexpected and some of our readers found it almost too neat and tidy.

Personally, I love the ending - after all the heartbreak, I’m pleased to see Gustav and Anton happily settled together. Gustav’s deeply caring nature results in him selling his hotel and setting up home in Davos with Anton and Adriana.

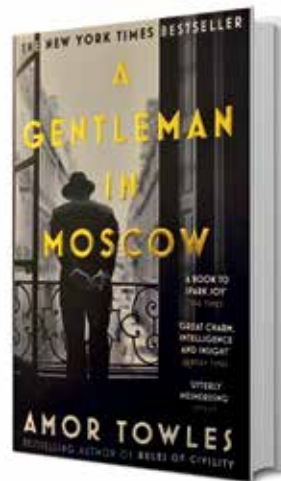
What did our readers think?

One absolutely loved it, calling it “a wonderful, beautiful rollercoaster. I am so glad I read it...and

will definitely be reading it again.”

Another found it “ok and easily digested...enjoyed the pace and the main protagonists of the story were well crafted but I found it hard to warm to them.”

The verdict in our Kings Hill Rotary Club Book Club was that it was a beautifully written story with much to think about – one of us even felt that the book was really about the first baby Gustav and the effect his spectre had on the lives of the characters.



SEND REVIEWS BY AUGUST 15



The scores on the doors ranged from 6 to 10 with an average of 8.

Our next book is **A Gentleman in Moscow** by Amor Towles.

This was made into a limited series starring Ewan McGregor last year and it’s always interesting to compare the TV drama to the book. I’m really looking forward to hearing your views on it; if you haven’t yet managed to read any of our books, this could be the perfect one to start with! Please send me your thoughts by August 15.

Conclave by Robert Harris was the clear winner in the votes for our eighth book. It is of course highly topical and with the film recently also released, why not gather a group of your friends to discuss the book, watch the film and send me your thoughts?

You have plenty of time to send me your views by November 15.

I am excited to be speaking to Norwich St Edmund Rotary Club in September and also at the joint Districts 1120 and 1130 District Conference in Eastbourne this October. Please do get in touch if you’re looking for a speaker. ●

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A Suitable Boy
By Vikram Seth

The Second Sight of Zachary Cloudesley
By Sean Lusk

A Christmas Carol
By Charles Dickens

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bookclub@rotarygbi.org



A NEW CHAPTER IN ROTARY MEMBERSHIP

STORY BY **MARY ADAMS** |
SOUTHERN WALES HUB CO-ORDINATOR FOR DIRECT MEMBERSHIP

LAST October, Rotary in Southern Wales launched the District 1150 Direct Membership Hub, a fresh initiative to energise Rotary's growth and relevance. Having served as District Governor in 2023/4, I embraced the role of Hub Co-ordinator to maintain momentum, and what a journey it has been.

Initially modest, the hub quickly gained traction, attracting 16 new and existing members, many with personal connections to Rotary or Rotary alumni.

Notably, membership defied current trends in Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, with three members under 40, including the youngest, a 30-year-old dentist.

What is evident is the power of innovative approaches to membership and the importance of community and purpose in Rotary's ongoing evolution.

A highlight was Regina Reyes, one of our newest members, who proposed an Impact Day to introduce others to Direct Membership. She arranged a centrally located Cardiff hotel, secured sponsorship, and provided a complimentary lunch.

The event was electric; by day's end, we had signed up 10 new members,

creating an atmosphere unlike any I've experienced in a decade of Rotary service.

Many new members hailed from the Philippines, some former Rotarians who had moved to the UK.

Their stories underscored their already strong commitment to community service; one had helped perform cleft palate surgeries as a student nurse.

They embraced Rotary's core values naturally, seeing giving back and networking as integral parts of their lives, echoing Paul Harris's original vision in Chicago in 1905.

Distinguished guests included Tim Mason, Rotary International's Special Adviser for Direct Membership, and his wife Janice, along with District Governor Malcolm Hallewell and Governor Elect, Ian Hughes, who witnessed the vibrant enthusiasm firsthand.

We engaged in speed dating activities, fostering quick, meaningful connections among attendees.

Our sponsor, Megaworld International, contributed significantly. Ceilo, a farmer's daughter from the Philippines now serving on the Royal College of Nurses' Congress Panel, even

joined Rotary after the event.

Direct Membership model is designed to complement, rather than replace, traditional Rotary clubs.

It is particularly suited for individuals with busy schedules who wish to contribute in small, meaningful ways, such as participating in a coffee meets, a litter pick, or children's activities that foster community engagement, fun, and friendship.

Additionally, Direct Membership offers flexibility for members who may need to step back from regular Rotary commitments due to work or family obligations, allowing them to continue their service in a more adaptable way.

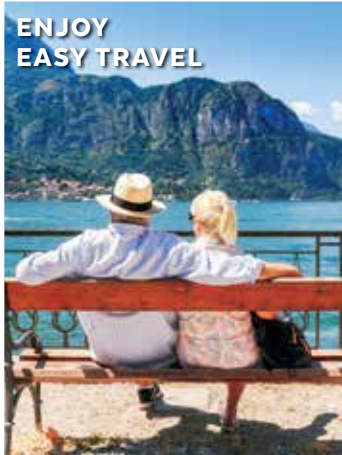
While it may not suit everyone, for some, this approach provides an ideal opportunity to stay involved and make a positive impact despite changing circumstances.

This experience affirms that Rotary must evolve to meet the needs of a busy 21st-century world.

Direct Membership in Great Britain & Ireland is a promising model, attracting those eager to give back while fitting Rotary into their lives. ●



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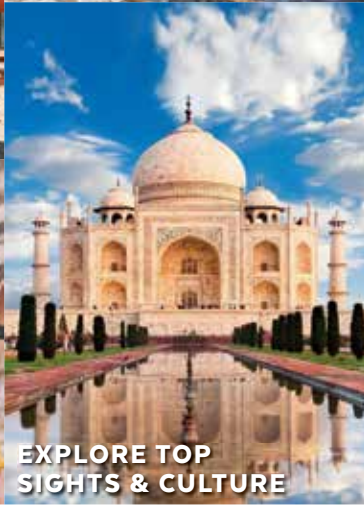
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Holiday Departure Months: 2025 ● 2026 ●

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J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



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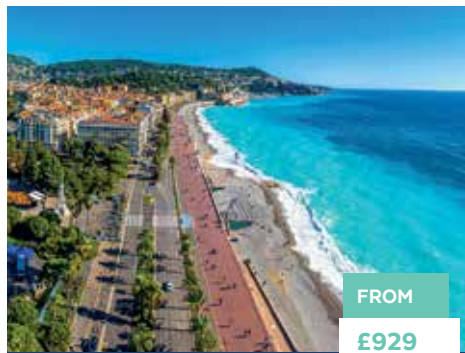
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Holiday Departure Months: 2025 ● 2026 ●

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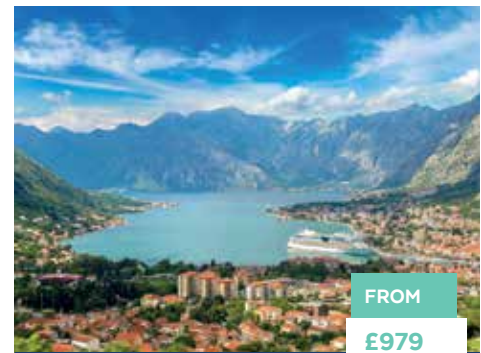
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- A full day excursion to Antibes and Nice

Holiday Departure Months: 2025 ● 2026 ●

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



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- A full day excursion to Perast and Kotor including a boat trip on Boka Bay

Holiday Departure Months: 2025 ● 2026 ●

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D



PLANTING SEEDS OF HOPE

| STORY BY J.C CLAPSADDLE |
ROTARY CLUB OF SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

ROTARY International has awarded a \$158,000 Global Grant to the Seeds of Hope International Peace Leadership Academy in Northern Ireland, a unique programme which trains young adults in conflict resolution, peace building and civic leadership.

The initiative was created through a partnership of the Rotary Club of San Antonio in the United States, Belfast, Londonderry, Dublin and Clonmel Rotary clubs in Ireland, along with The Hague Rotary Club in the Netherlands.

The Seeds of Hope Academy is hosted at Corrymeela Community Campus, an organisation founded to promote peace and reconciliation in 1965. The programme had a successful test run in 2023-24, and has now been awarded \$158,000 by Rotary International to pursue its second-year

pilot semester in 2025-26 featuring 30 students from marginalised and divided communities.

Participants will study at Corrymeela and learn from international experts, including faculty from Ulster University, Trinity College Dublin, Waseda University in Japan, and the University of Notre Dame. Future sessions seek to train upwards of 90 students each academic year.

The Academy is based at Ballycastle, a stunningly beautiful location in County Antrim, Northern Ireland. It is situated on the north-easternmost coastal tip of Ireland, in the Antrim Coast and Glens Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has been used as a film backdrop for several episodes of 'Games of Thrones'.

Jack McGuire, a San Antonio Rotarian and driving force behind the programme, put it simply: "This programme answers Rotary's goals to

promote peace through action.

"What makes this special is the way clubs from across Ireland, the UK, the Netherlands, and Texas are coming together - not just to talk about peace, but to make it real.

"This will be a model for reconciliation efforts around the world."

Hosted by the Corrymeela Community in Ballycastle, Northern Ireland, the Academy is unlike most academic peace fellowships. Seeds of Hope focuses on young leaders aged between 18 and 27 who are already working in their communities.

They are often volunteers or informal peace advocates.

Many come from segregated or underserved areas, and while they may not have academic credentials, they bring lived experience, authenticity, and a deep personal stake in reconciliation.

The Academy equips them with



tools, strategies, and mentorship to return home as more confident, impactful leaders of peace.

“There is something deeply special about Corrymeela Community,” added Jack McGuire, a philanthropist, and one of the programme’s principal visionaries.

“It’s not just the location is stunningly beautiful or that it sits on the northernmost tip of the island, what makes it special is its legacy. This is a hallowed ground for peacebuilders.

And now, Rotary is training the next generation of peace growers right here.”

For nearly three decades between the 1960s and 1990s, Northern Ireland was gripped by sectarian conflict between predominantly Protestant Unionist communities and largely Catholic Nationalist communities.

The era, known as The Troubles, was brutally violent, leaving thousands dead and many more traumatised. The end of violence came with the signing of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Today, peace exists. Bullets have stopped flying, but the root causes of conflict and injustice still linger, and the people are not fully united.

Many communities remain socially and physically divided, with 60-foot high “peace walls” still separating Catholics from Protestants in some neighbourhoods.

Only about 8% of Northern Irish students attend integrated schools where children of different faiths learn together.

Most children are still educated in schools aligned with one tradition or the other, Catholic or Protestant, reinforcing inherited divisions.

Some neighbourhoods remain tense, where flags, murals, and even kerb paint still signal sectarian identity.

In spite of this, Northern Ireland remains calm. The country is still navigating peace, and is doing so better than most nations. Much of this is thanks to the Corrymeela Community, hosts of the Seeds of Hope International Leadership Academy.

Students who attend Corrymeela’s Seeds of Hope Academy will not only learn of Rotary’s philosophy of Positive Peace, they will develop practical skills in public communication, organisational management, and leadership to effectively serve their communities.

The academy emphasises peace application in which students are to apply what they learn to difficult, real-world situations.

“Peacebuilding is hard work. Very hard work,” said Ken Nixon of the Rotary Club of Belfast, the project’s host club.

“Peace requires action and courage.

“So, we teach young leaders how to have the hard conversations, how to build trust where it’s been broken, and how to stand up and take the lead when no one agrees on the way forward.

“Hosting this programme here, in Northern Ireland, is deeply personal for many of us,” said Ken. “We’ve learned

some hard lessons in Northern Ireland. Our Seeds of Hope Academy makes sure those lessons are shared at home and abroad.”

The Seeds of Hope international Leadership Academy is backed by over 40 Rotary clubs across 12 countries.

It reflects Rotary’s growing focus on Positive Peace - which is not just the absence of violence, but the presence of justice, reconciliation, opportunity, and inclusion.

Ken Nixon explained that although the current Academy students are Irish and UK residents, they are often immigrants - or new arrivals in Irish parlance - who have fled violence in their own countries only to face exclusion in their new country.

The Seeds of Hope programme has had students native to Somalia, Ukraine, Lithuania, Nigeria, South Africa, and Turkey. The initiative is truly international.

Texas Rotarian Jack McGuire has great aspirations for the Seeds of Hope Academy. He sees this Northern Irish story as a living laboratory - a place where peace not only happened, but can be studied, supported, and even exported.

“Northern Ireland is a living laboratory for peace makers. But this isn’t just Northern Ireland’s story. This is a global story - and Rotary is helping to write the next chapter.” ●

**ALL MEMBERS OF ROTARY ARE PEOPLE OF ACTION,
HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE PROJECTS FROM
AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND.**

POETRY IN MOTION



IF YOU had been in the audience at Oldham's Queen Elizabeth Hall in March this year, you would have heard squawking chickens, rapping grans and seen walking iguanos.

This was all part of the 39th Oldham Primary Schools Choral Speaking Festival organised by the Rotary Club of Oldham Metro.

The festival was the brainchild of one of our founder members John Cleary who was a teacher in the borough.

John's idea was circulated amongst the schools and the first festival took place in April 1985 when 754 children took part.

This year 2,600 children participated over three days in what has become the largest poetry event for children in Europe and the second largest in the world.

Since its inauguration more than 63,000 children aged from 4 to 11 have

taken part.

There are three different categories, infant, lower junior and upper junior.

The rules are simple: all groups must be entered as whole classes, not an elite group drawn up from different classes, nor only the best from any one class.

There is a wide range of poetry performed at each festival but one characteristic has been consistent throughout all of them – humour.

Poetry such as 'The Dog Ate My Homework' and 'Best Rappin' Gran' are regularly included in the schools' performances, although older classics such as 'If' by Rudyard Kipling and 'From a Railway Bridge' by Robert Louis Stevenson are also performed.

The quality of performance is exceptional. It is difficult to believe that the children are at primary school. They include emotion, actions, props and even full costumes.

The event is a festival, not a competition; you just need to see the look of joy on the faces of the children who have performed on stage in front of an audience.

There is an adjudicator who listens to every performance and makes written comments intended to help the classes improve their standard.

There are nine awards for the best performances and commendation certificates for classes that don't win trophies but are of a very high standard.

One headteacher in a school where English is not the first language for many pupils emphasised the benefits of choral speaking explaining that pupils learning English verse then gain confidence of performing the verse on a public stage but at the same time having the protection of being part of a group.

We believe that the festival is a benefit and inspiration for the children and our community which must be a key objective of Rotary. All of our members agree that it is the most rewarding and fulfilling event in our calendar.

A couple of years ago, we met TV personality, Gyles Brandreth, and made him aware of the festival. He was astonished and wrote a wonderful introduction to our programme.

Gyles wants to encourage people to launch their own choral speaking festivals around the country. If any reader would like to discuss the possibilities please contact Trevor Fielding, Gordon Russell or Garvin Crabtree ●

FIND OUT MORE 

trevor@jtbfinancial.com
Gordon.russell119@gmail.com
g.crabtree@sky.com

VINTAGE VICTORIA FUND-RAISER



RICHMOND Rotary Club in Surrey hosted a very different fund-raiser at the Richmond May Fair – a Victorian photographic studio.

The studio was able to recreate black and white Victorian photographs with visitors having their photo taken next to Victoria Peirson, who was dressed as Queen Victoria, next to an aspidistra and gramophone player.

Current Rotary club President, Dr Tony Sayer, said that the fund-raiser for ShelterBox proved a great success.

“The Victorian photographic studio was a great attraction to our Rotary work in supporting The Richmond Museum which is a local community educational

service,” he said.

“The camera I used was a wooden half plate bellows Camera Thornton Pickard 1896 that I have designed.

“I added a film holder to contain instant photograph plates using Fuji Instax Wide Film.

“I believe this is the only camera in the world of this age that can produce instant prints.

“We had great interest from the Richmond and Twickenham Photographic Society as well as a local doctor who teaches and lectures on vintage photography.” ●

ROTARY WALKS HADRIAN'S WALL

ROTARIANS from 15 clubs across the north of England set out to walk the length of Hadrian's Wall on the England-Scotland border.

The aim was to cover 84 miles in three hours to raise money for polio.

To achieve this in three hours, the wall was divided into 19 sections of roughly five miles each. Twenty-one teams from 15 Rotary clubs took part, with some sections of the wall being walked twice.

Sadly, one section of the wall took a few minutes over three hours to complete, but the event raised well over £1,500 for End Polio Now campaign which, with the Gates Foundation top-up, meant £4,500 was raised on the day.

Many Rotarians took part together with friends and relatives, with walkers ranging from 10 to 88-years-old.

Crook Rotary Club had a team of 27 walkers. Hexham Rotary covered six sections, while Church and Oswaldtwistle Rotary covered the three hilly centre sections of the wall.

Teesdale and District Eco Club covered the most distant section from Drumburgh to Bowness, while Berwick came all the way down to cover a section to the east of Carlisle.

Other Rotary clubs taking part were Alnwick, Newcastle, Cleadon & District, Tyneside, Consett, Blyth, Washington Forge, and Bassenthwaite. ●

UKRAINIAN DONATES CAR TO CAUSE

ROTARIAN Olga Koniukhova escaped to Rutland seven months after war broke out in her native Ukraine.

Now she has donated her Seat Ibiza to a women's battalion in Sumy, a city in the north-east of the country.

Through the help of humanitarian aid volunteer, Fiona Parker, the car was driven across Europe by an Australian volunteer working with the Sustain Ukraine aid group.

Fiona paid for the car to be serviced, including new tyres, and helped fill it with toys, clothes and medical equipment for children at Dnipro Hospital.

The run-around had been a Christmas gift to Olga, three months after she arrived in the UK, from Rutland resident, Hannah Chandler.

“She made a huge gift for me and my daughter, she really wanted to help Ukrainians who came to England,” said Olga, who is a member of the Ukrainian Rotary Impact Club, based in the Midlands.

“We had an agreement with her that this car would do good and help people.

“So when I decided that it should save other people's lives I contacted Fiona and she helped me to get the car to the front.” ●



HOSPITAL GARDEN REFRESH

SEBROOK Hospital in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, has benefited from the green-fingered work of Rotarians.

The hospital's courtyard is looking very impressive for both patients and staff thanks to several weekends' work organised by the Rotary Club of Wellingborough Hatton.

The Rotarians recently spent a good morning weeding, border edging, grass cutting, sweeping, emptying and clearing recycling items from the shed to the recycling centre, plus preparing ground for summer plants.

Some garden figures have been placed around the gazebo providing a focal point and a great addition to the rest area.

Over the summer, the Rotarians are planning summer planting while a patio extension will be added by the hospital. ●



Library image

LEARNING TO READ



TRENT Bridge Rotary Club has been supporting a 'Learning to Read' project in South Africa.

The Western Cape of South Africa has a large high-density community called Zwelihle of over 30,000 people, with poor housing conditions and a high level of unemployment.

The Nottingham-based club has contributed £2,500 to the project, and heard feedback recently that the initiative was going well.

Many of the young children who attend state school at the age of six cannot read or write which causes them the lag behind fellow pupils for years to come.

The objective of the 'Learning to Read' project is to create a culture of

reading in the community getting small children to love books and reading, initially in their mother tongue, before moving on to Afrikaans and English.

The money has provided books, bookshelves, tables and chairs. Trent Bridge Rotary Club continues its support to the project helping purchase puzzles, books and interactive learning materials.

The budget for the project includes the stipends paid to the teachers, as well as money for basic essentials such as soap, toilet rolls and towels, plus providing the children with a peanut butter sandwich and fruit.

District Assembly has recorded interest in matching grants for the future as another project is planned to support the Hermanus District of South Africa. ●

RAY'S 25TH MARATHON HITS £150,000 MARK

KENT Rotarian, Ray Johnson has completed his 25th London Marathon in a row raising over £150,000 for the Kent Association for the Blind over the years.

In April's stage of the prestigious event, the 61-year-old, who is a member of Folkestone Rotary Club, completed the 26.2 miles in four hours 34 minutes and 49 seconds – four seconds quicker than last year.

Ray said: "Conditions were perfect but hot, with a lot of runners walking

and as always with over 50,000 other runners joining there was a truly great atmosphere along with the spectators.

"It is always enjoyable seeing the wonderful London sights that helped me get round the course.

"Also seeing regular runners and supporters was helpful to push me on."

Ray said he was thrilled to have hit the £150,000 target of money raised over the past 25 years for the Kent Association for the Blind of which he is an ambassador. ●

EMERGENCY HOSPITAL PACKS



ROTARIANS delivered 450 essential toiletry packs to the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust Charity at the University Hospital of North Durham (UHND).

Funded by Durham Elvet Rotary, and supported by a Rotary Foundation Grant, each pack contains basic hygiene items such as shampoo, conditioner, bath and shower gel, deodorant wipes, toothbrush



and toothpaste which can be handed to those admitted to hospital in an emergency and who are often without such items.

The packs were handed over to Clare Morgan, Charity Support Officer and Richard Jones, the Charity Manager.

They thanked Rotary for this kind donation and confirmed that the packs would be divided between the Trust's two Accident and Emergency Departments sited at UHND and Darlington Memorial Hospitals. ●

“EACH PACK CONTAINS BASIC HYGIENE ITEMS SUCH AS SHAMPOO, CONDITIONER, BATH AND SHOWER GEL, DEODORANT WIPES, TOOTHBRUSH AND TOOTHPASTE.”

A RARE PAUL HARRIS HONOUR

SALTBURN Rotary Club doesn't award Paul Harris Fellowships easily.

When Rotarian Harry Simpson was presented his award by District Governor, Joy Palmer-Cooper recently, he became only the 12th recipient of a Paul Harris Fellowship in the club's 99-year history.

The award recognised Harry's significant contribution to Rotary and the North Yorkshire club.

In addition, Joy presented one of the club's long-standing members, Don Hibbert, with a certificate to mark 50 years in Rotary. ●

EASTER FUN RAISES £1,800

MAIDENHEAD Bridge Rotary Club raised £1,800 from their Easter Family Fun Day at Grenfell Park.

Around 400 people took part in a fun-filled afternoon of Easter activities, games, and community spirit.

The event is now in its 13th year and serves as a landmark event for the Berkshire-based Rotary club.

This was the first event Maidenhead Bridge Rotary Club organised, even before the club was officially chartered by Rotary International.

Over the years, it has grown into a much-loved tradition for local families, and a brilliant way to celebrate community, friendship, and fun.

A big part of the day's purpose is to showcase Grenfell Park, one of Maidenhead's beautiful green spaces that's often underused.

It is the perfect setting for families to come together, get active, and enjoy something a bit different during the school holidays.

This year, the Rotary club raised an amazing £1,800 for Daisy's Dream, which supports children and families going through bereavement or serious illness.

They also ran a special hamper prize draw that brought in another £116 for FoodShare, helping even more local people. ●



CLUB FUNDS GEESE DETERRENT

A WEST Yorkshire school has received funding from the Rotary Club of Hebden Bridge to fund a hi-tech device to stop geese from flocking to its field.

Burnley Road Academy in Mytholmroyd, Calderdale, wants to discourage geese from settling on its field as their droppings contain harmful parasites. The field is used by the school's pupils and other junior sports clubs.

As a result, Rotarians at Hebden Bridge have given the school £600 so it can buy an acoustic deterrent system called 'Goose Chase Supersonic'.

According to the manufacturer's website, the device emits distress and predator calls of Canada Geese for two minutes every 10 minutes to scare the birds from large open spaces.

A daylight sensor can ensure the system does not go off at night and the device has full volume control. It can be used in commercial premises, farms, fields, gardens, golf courses and parks.

The Rotary club said: "This innovative system will address a significant health hazard caused by Canada Geese on the school field, whose droppings contain harmful parasites that pose risks to children." ●



WARM WELCOME AT THE SHARING KITCHEN



NEWENT & District Rotary Club in Gloucestershire has become involved in a project to work with the lonely and the isolated.

The Sharing Kitchen has been running since November 2024 since when, each week, up to 30 people enjoy freshly-cooked meals, friendly conversation and a chance to take part in social activities like quizzes and games.

With a strong emphasis on healthy eating and tackling isolation, the project has become a lifeline for many in the community.

As well as offering affordable home-cooked meals, The Sharing Kitchen provides a vital link to local support services.

Organisers regularly invite representatives from partner organisations to chat with attendees and offer advice on issues such as housing, health, finances, and wellbeing.

The project is also backed by Newent Town Council and Newent and District Rotary Club, with local support playing a crucial role in helping the group grow and thrive. ●

MICHELIN CHEF VISIT

MICHELIN-star chef Marco Pierre White turned up as an unexpected guest to a Rotary cookery competition organised in Swindon, Wiltshire.

Marco paid a surprise visit to Swindon College for the competition which was being organised by the Rotary Club of Swindon North and Thamesdown.

Marco Pierre White was the youngest chef to ever earn three Michelin stars in 1995, and has trained some of the most famous chefs today, including Gordon Ramsay.

Since retiring from the kitchen in 1999, Pierre White has now become a household name as a TV chef.

This year, the 14th annual competition featured 11 Level 3 Swindon College students who created a three-course meal, with a plant-based starter.

The judging panel was made up of two professional chefs from Wadworth's Brewery and the college's food suppliers, as well as Rotary club president Steve Davison and treasurer Chris Ockwell.

But Marco Pierre White was also keen to get involved and interacted with the contestants, tasting their food and sharing his experience with the young Swindon chefs.

"The reaction from the students was just awe," said Rotary Club president Steve Davison. "They were a bit star-struck." ●

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POWER TO UKRAINE

ALLEX and Mela, two Ukrainians who have been raising awareness and money in the UK since the start of the Russian invasion of their country, had thought they were delivering a talk to Borderland Rotary Club in Oswestry, Shropshire.

Instead, the couple left the meeting with two, brand new 3kVA portable generators.

Last autumn, Borderland Rotary gave one generator to help the cause. The feedback was so positive that it was decided to donate three more.

Harry Richardson, who organised these donations on behalf of Borderland Rotary explained, “The generator that the club donated last year went straight to the front line and is being used continuously.

The problem is, there’s so much talk about ending the war, that people seem to forget the reality, Ukrainians are still fighting - and dying on the front line and there are attacks and power cuts throughout the country.”

Mela thanked the club saying, “It’s very hard to keep people interested in the war so to see such generosity is very moving.

“These generators are vital and may be used for many different things, to charge drones, phones, boil kettles, provide lighting in field hospitals or just provide power for people made homeless by the bombing. Thank you all so much for standing by us - we really appreciate your kindness.” ●



CUTTING THE QUEUE FOR THE LOO



AN appeal from a primary school in Vingungini were faced with making a break-time dash to the school’s eight toilet cubicles.

But a donation from Darlington Rotary has meant that another four can now be completed to ease the queues.

Darlington Rotary’s link with the school is Rotarian Peter Phillips. He said: “The school has about 1,200 pupils and the lack of facilities for the girls was a real issue.

“The need for new facilities was obvious, but the school has no money. Around £300 was raised elsewhere, which purchased material and the creation of a shell for the toilets.

“But £500 was needed to complete the roof, walls, plumbing and washing facilities, which Darlington Rotary has agreed to donate.”

Peter added that Darlington Rotary has supported the school over several years. “Over time, the school has grown from 100 children under a tree to 1,200 pupils in 26 classrooms. We strive to bring the facilities in line with need, so children are able to learn in decent, hygienic surroundings.” ●

DEMENTIA TOOLKITS

PANGBOURNE and Reading Abbey Rotary clubs have teamed up to donate a dementia toolkit to a care home.

The AMuSED box is a portable multi-sensory activity toolkit which was given to Braeburn Lodge Care Home in Beenham, Berkshire. The toolkit was developed by Professor Rachel McCrindle and Dr Esther Olorunda as part of a PhD project at the University of Reading.

After a successful trial run in several care homes, the Rotary Club of Pangbourne raised the funds to provide the toolkit to Braeburn Lodge. The toolkit is designed to be used by staff and residents living with dementia.

Brian Davies from Pangbourne

Rotary, Zoe from Braeburn Lodge, and Fred McCrindle from Reading Abbey Rotary Club were pictured with the toolkit at the handover. ●



ART FOR ARTS' SAKE



BELPER & Duffield Rotary Club hosted a You-Create Showcase for children in the Derbyshire towns. Saturday saw many young people from Belper, Duffield and surrounding areas display their artistic talents at the Belper & Rotary You-Create Showcase at Number 28, Belper. They also went on display during the Belper Arts Trail in May.

Drawings, pictures, photographs, crochet, songwriting and sculpture all with the theme of 'heritage' went on display at Number 28 in Belper at an event formally opened by the Mayor of Amber Valley. Independent professional judges

viewed the exhibits prior to the exhibition picking out the best of the displays.

Rotary club President, John Stamp, said, "This is the third year we have encouraged young people to display their talent and yet again we are overjoyed to see the wonderful art in this year's showcase." Very well done to everyone."

Meanwhile, Belper & Duffield Rotary Club presented a Paul Harris Fellow award to 97-year-old Allen Leighton for his work over many decades with the Air Training Corps.

Allen works as a civilian instructor with the 620 Squadron Air Training Corps and has been with them for over 50 years. ●

"THIS IS THE THIRD YEAR WE HAVE ENCOURAGED YOUNG PEOPLE TO DISPLAY THEIR TALENT AND YET AGAIN WE ARE OVERJOYED TO SEE THE WONDERFUL ART IN THIS YEAR'S SHOWCASE."

WINE AND WISDOM

OVER 120 contestants came to the William Harvey Grammar School in Folkestone to raise nearly £2,000 for Channel Rotary's local charities. Channel Rotary has been running this Wine & Wisdom evening for over 30 years.

The teams had to tackle a whole range of questions from science to sport whilst enjoying a ploughman's and good wine. The team from Folkestone Rotary Club won the competition.

A key moment of the evening was the launch of two new membership categories: 'Corporate Membership' and 'Friends' of Channel Rotary, introduced alongside the traditional 'Full Membership'.

These new categories aim to broaden the club's reach and encourage greater community involvement. ●

ST ALBANS ROTARY SWIMATHON HONOURED

THE St Albans Rotary Swimathon has been recognised for its exceptional fundraising efforts with an Innovation and Fundraising Award, presented by Annie Brewster, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire.

The award acknowledges the Swimathon's significant contributions to local charities through sport, reinforcing the positive impact of Rotary's community-driven initiatives.

The award ceremony was attended by Martin Turpin, St Albans Police Chief Inspector; Nitesh Joshi, Chairman of the Board of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland; and long-standing supporters of the event.

Launched in 2019, the St Albans Rotary Swimathon has raised thousands of pounds for local charities, bringing together swimmers of all ages and abilities to make a difference.

In April, the Swimathon raised funds to renovate the sensory reception play zone at St Albans City Hospital, creating a welcoming and engaging space for young children. ●



ROTARY DIGITAL


July's issue of Rotary Digital has even more People of Action stories from clubs across Great Britain & Ireland.

magazine.rotarygbi.org

Rotary Marketplace

Welcome to Rotary Marketplace, which offers the opportunity to sell to over 32,000 members and purchase from fellow Rotarians within this community.

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WENT to a funeral recently - events have a strange way of reminding us what really matters. Yes, they're sad, and often involve an uncomfortable pew and stewed tea. But they also shine a light on the importance of the people in our lives—family, friends, networks and those we've gathered along the way.

I met old Rotary friends - because let's be honest, none of us are getting any younger! Meeting at a funeral is like a school reunion, but with dark comedy.

Dressed in your best, conversations start with awkward hugs and "It's been too long!" followed by "So, how have you been?" as if the answer isn't obvious.

As I caught up, I realised I had known some of these characters for over 30 years. You reminisce, laughing about conferences, projects, and those who are no longer with us.

The levity is kept to a respectful whisper, because nothing says "we're still young at heart" like giggling in a funeral service.

There's conversation about Rotary's Bequest Society - which we're all members of! Legacy...chuckles about Rotary, leadership, the epic, the inept - like the charity walk lost in the hills, or the infamous conference where the keynote speaker fell asleep mid-speech.

And who could forget our charity salsa night, ending up with two members and a physio appointment following a tangled mess of limbs and laughter.

It's a bittersweet reminder that life goes on, even as we gather to say goodbye.

And as you part ways, you can't help but think maybe the next reunion should be at a less sombre occasion - like a barbecue or a beach party - because, after all, life is too short not to laugh with old friends, never mind making new ones.

Of course, staying connected takes effort. You might have to be first, you might have to sit through a few stories you've already heard (possibly several times).

But the joy of companionship, the comfort of shared history, and the simple act of being there for each other make it all worthwhile.

Networking isn't just about swapping business cards and LinkedIn connections. It's about building relationships that can support you through thick and thin.

Remember that time when you needed a last-minute speaker for your Rotary event? Or when you (or yours) were looking for a new job and a friend of a friend had the perfect lead?

That's the magic of networking.

As people get older - whatever that means to you - there are a few things you can be certain about; time becomes more precious, and there's a greater appreciation for how it's spent; prioritising meaningful activities and relationships becomes paramount.

With age (note I don't mention maturity), comes a wealth of experience and wisdom, leading to more confidence in knowledge and decision-making abilities - not just for you or me, but for our fellow Rotarians and the people we serve.

Studies (Dr. Google) shows that strong social connections lead to better physical and mental health. Our networks provide different perspectives - in Rotary and out.

Laughter, memories, and shared activities release endorphins, the body's natural stress relievers, with and without wine; and provide a sense of belonging (Maslow).

We are people of action, and anything shared - an activity, a cause, learning together, celebrating milestones, having honest conversations, and supporting each other during tough times - can all help strengthen friendships. By engaging in these activities, friendships appear; meaningful, enjoyable, and resilient.

So, call; have lunch; in the end, it's people who make life truly rich and it's too short not to laugh with friends, old and new... ●

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