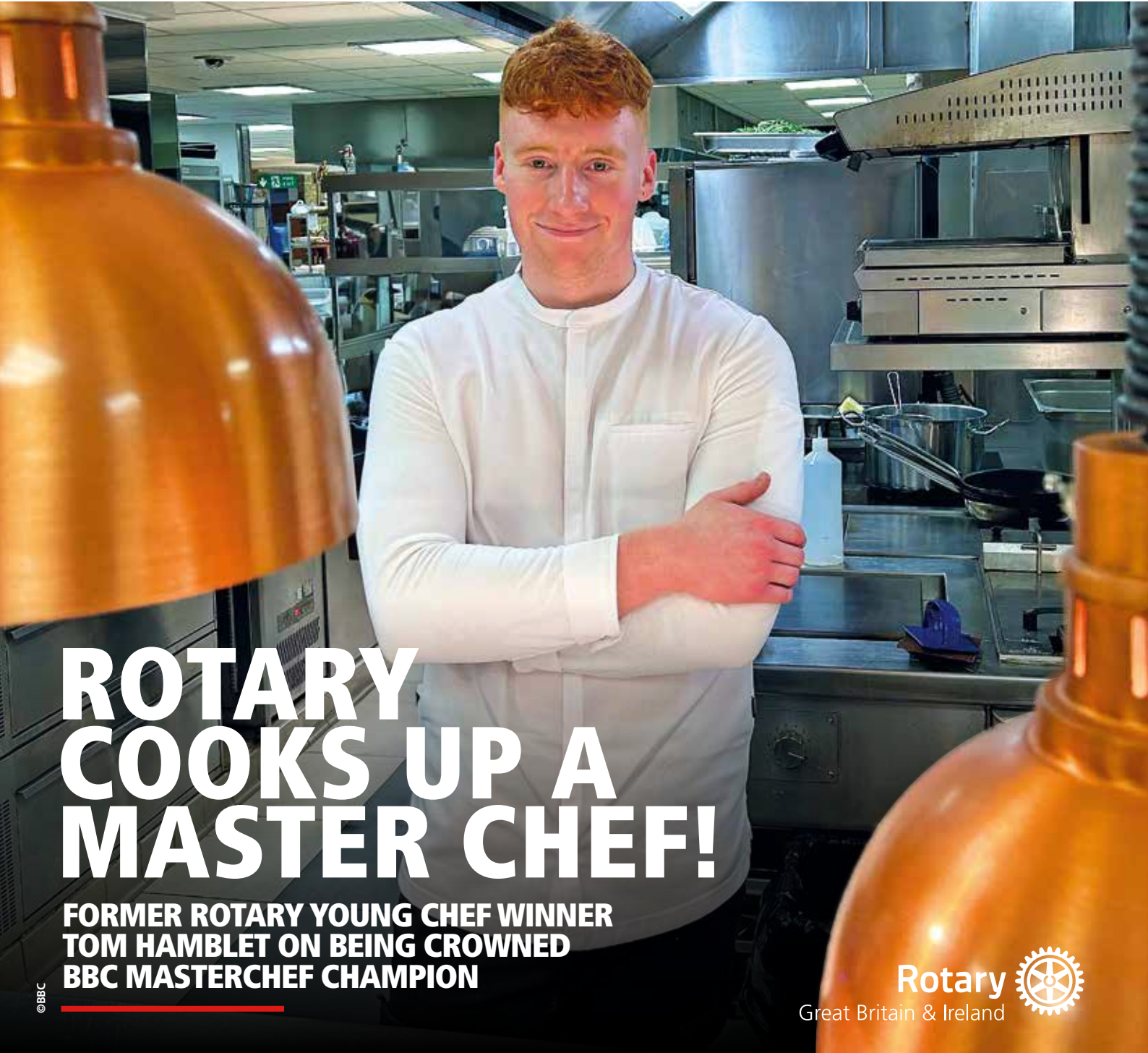


# Rotary

**MAGAZINE**



**SPRING 2024**  
**ROTARYGBI.ORG**



## ROTARY COOKS UP A MASTER CHEF!

**FORMER ROTARY YOUNG CHEF WINNER  
TOM HAMBLET ON BEING CROWNED  
BBC MASTERCHEF CHAMPION**

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**ROTARY IN AFGHANISTAN**  
How three Afghan clubs are trying to improve lives amid Taliban rule

**DRIVING TO UKRAINE**  
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# Welcome

**H**OW on earth do you get over jet-lag? Little more than 48 hours after arriving back from Chicago, my body clock is doing all sorts of handstands adapting to the six-hour time UK difference.

The reason for the visit, a two-day seminar at Rotary International headquarters in Evanston, north of Chicago which featured 25 editors of Rotary magazines from across the globe. We meet collectively every two years to look at publishing trends and learn from each other.

I presented a session on international copyright, and joined editors from Taiwan, Denmark and Brazil to discuss digitalisation - in particular, explaining what we have been doing in Great Britain & Ireland with our print magazine, the audio version, and now the launch in February of the monthly *Rotary Digital*.

It's fair to say there was universal praise from the editors for our innovative media platforms, mirrored by some very supportive comments from Rotarians in these isles via email and social media.

This month, for the first time, Rotarians will be receiving both *Rotary Magazine* through their mailbox and a link to *Rotary Digital* via email, each with their own exclusive content, as well as featuring some shared articles.

It is a familiar refrain, but I would urge you all to share this content, especially to those you know outside of the Rotary family.

If you use social media, then share

the link to *Rotary Digital* to others so they can see the fresh face of 21st century Rotary. With the magazine, why not consider "read it and leave it" at a local library, community centre, coffee shop, doctor's or dentist's waiting room or the reception of your workplace?

For visitors or prospective members to your Rotary club, give them a copy of the print magazine to take away with them. Sew those seeds of interest because you never know how that might grow.

Speaking to other editors in Evanston, it is clear how membership is a key issue, and using magazines as a membership driver has become universal. After all, they are a great marketing tool, giving understanding to the work of Rotary.

This month's print magazine features a veritable feast of articles, including a fascinating interview with MasterChef: The Professionals winner Tom Hamblet, who recalled fondly the time 10 years ago when he won Rotary Young Chef in Dundee.

The magazine also looks overseas to trouble spots in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Gaza where Rotary's humanitarian work is having a massive impact.

I hope you enjoy this month's double dose of *Rotary Magazine* and *Rotary Digital*. I am always looking out for new writers to join the fold, as well as receiving your articles, so if you are interested please get in touch at: [editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org)

**Dave King**  
Editor, *Rotary Magazine*

### Read online

Enjoy the *Rotary Magazine* online, plus more stories in *Rotary Digital*. Please visit: [magazine.rotarygbi.org](http://magazine.rotarygbi.org)

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The magazine is available as an audio experience for visually impaired readers. Please visit: [rotarygbi.org/listen](http://rotarygbi.org/listen)

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# GAZA

**URGENT APPEAL**

Emergency shelter aid items like tarpaulins, rope, blankets and mattresses will help people stay warm and save lives.

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**FROM ROTARY YOUNG CHEF TO**

**MASTERCHEF  
WINNER!**

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |



**T**OM Hamblet is feeling on top of the world. It's been four months since the likeable 24-year-old from Horsham in West Sussex lit up our television screens just before

Christmas by winning the 16th edition of BBC TV's 'MasterChef: The Professionals'.

Michelin-starred judge Marcus Wareing described Tom's food as "exquisite" during the final, while fellow judges Monica Galetti and Gregg Wallace also sang his praises.

Food critic Grace Dent insisted one of Tom's desserts was the best she had ever tasted on MasterChef.

"It has been non-stop since the final," explained Tom. "People have got so excited about MasterChef and I've received loads of supportive messages.

"During the final of MasterChef, the website where I work actually crashed. There was so much interest."

Work was at the Camellia restaurant at the South Lodge Hotel in Horsham where his dad, Lewis, is the executive chef, and mum Haley works as a pastry chef.

However, in April, Tom is taking up a three-month residency at Lainston House in Winchester, Hampshire, putting on show a menu to truly tantalise the tastebuds.

He will be serving an £85, three-course menu featuring dishes inspired by his time on the programme.

These include wood pigeon with crispy onions, celeriac rémoulade, celeriac purée, pigeon and chocolate sauce with a baked chocolate tart, blood orange and peppercorn pate de fruit, caramelised popcorn, orange gel and Tellicherry pepper ice-cream.

"I've got this residency organised, but after that I've not got anything lined up. I will see where life takes me," said Tom. "I haven't got a clear idea of what I want to do yet. I've got a few months to figure it out as I don't want to rush into anything.

"I have always been very careful with what I have selected, so I want to carry on doing that."

It was 10 years ago when Tom's culinary talents were first spotted when he won the Rotary Young Chef competition in 2014 – his first cooking competition.

The final took place at the Dundee and Angus College in Scotland when



**"IT WAS 10 YEARS AGO WHEN TOM'S CULINARY TALENTS WERE FIRST SPOTTED WHEN HE WON THE ROTARY YOUNG CHEF COMPETITION IN 2014 – HIS FIRST COOKING COMPETITION."**

the then 14-year-old, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Horsham, collected a £250 cheque from Filippo Berio, a bag of Filippo Berio products and a cookery course at Toscana Saporita's Italian Cookery School in Tuscany.

Tom's winning menu at the Rotary Young Chef final was seared scallops with mango, Jerusalem artichoke, brown butter and capers for a starter.

That was followed by roasted breast of Gressingham duck, bacon quinoa, char-grilled Wye Valley asparagus, morels and broad beans. Dessert consisted of ginger and honey cake, rhubarb, yoghurt, pistachio and almond.

"I was at school in Horsham at the time, and to win the Rotary competition was a bit of a shock," recalled Tom.

"It was my first cooking competition. I got into it through my teacher who suggested I have a go.

"Rotary Young Chef was a good experience. It was all about the practice you put in outside of the rounds. All competitions are like that, you've really got to graft, make sure your timings are

right so nothing throws you."

From Rotary Young Chef, Tom trained at Westminster Kingsway College and, after graduating there, he was offered a commis position at The Pass in Horsham. He stayed there for a year before moving onto two Michelin-starred restaurants; The Latymer, at Pennyhill Park in Surrey, and Interlude in Horsham.

It was no surprise with two professional cooks in the family that Tom would grow an appreciation of fine cuisine "My love of cooking came from my parents. Whenever they made dinner at home it was always really nice. When you're surrounded by good cooks you take to it much easier. I think the first thing my parents taught me to cook was a sausage!"

The decision to enter MasterChef was driven by the death last year of his grandfather, wanting to give his grandmother a distraction. In fact, the MasterChef trophy is housed in the family home next to the television and beside a photograph of Tom's late grandfather.

There were no auditions to get onto the show, just two phone calls and a meeting. "The show's producers look at your CV, run through a few sample dishes, but I think they are looking more at personality at the start, for sure.

"Once you get to the studios in London it was quite surreal. You see it on the telly and then to actually be there was quite a daunting feeling, especially as you knew it was being recorded. But it was a great experience.

"Marcus Wareing and Gregg Wallace were really nice. They wanted you to do well. A lot of people assume that they want the chefs to slip up, but they don't, they are really supportive.

"When you're cooking and chatting to Gregg and Marcus you almost forget about the cameras. You are so focused on what you are doing.

"MasterChef really is as you see it.

There are no people running about in the background helping you. You have a table where you put your washing up, and people take it away. But other than that, it's all down to you."

Filming took place over three weeks last summer, so Tom and his family had to keep the result a secret when the series was broadcast in the autumn.



©BBC

**“MY LOVE OF COOKING CAME FROM MY PARENTS. WHENEVER THEY MADE DINNER AT HOME IT WAS ALWAYS REALLY NICE. WHEN YOU’RE SURROUNDED BY GOOD COOKS YOU TAKE TO IT MUCH EASIER.”**

He celebrated watching the final at home with his parents, girlfriend and the family dog.

“The dishes I was most proud of were the three I served in the final,” he admitted. “I just thought they all went together on the day. That was the most amount of pressure I had been under, but it was great to nail the dishes.”

Tom’s winning menu started with a poached native lobster tail, filled with lobster claw meat in a lobster and chilli oil, topped with a lemon verbena gel, courgette balls and a creamy lobster and tomato sauce *Américaine*. Gregg told Tom: “This is a great, light dish that really packs a flavour punch.”

The main was seared beef fillet on a bed of pan-fried oyster mushrooms, served with braised beef cheek wrapped in brick pastry and topped with a poached oyster. Marcus’s verdict was: “Everything on this plate is cooked beautifully and your attention to detail is exquisite.”

Tom finished with an olive oil sponge filled with an olive oil jam, topped with a set lemon curd, *crème fraîche* cream,

fennel tops and a fennel tuile. Monica’s take on the dessert was: “It’s just a delightful way to finish your meal. I love it, love it, love it.”

Tom admitted he had learnt much about himself and widened his cooking skills against 31 other chefs during the competition, which included working in the two Michelin-starred *Alchemist* in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Head chef, Rasmus Munk, led the finalists into an immersive, breath-taking world where science, art and food collide.

The chefs had just hours to master extraordinary creative dishes as part of an epic 50-course tasting menu and deliver to a whole new level.

Asked whether he thought he could win *MasterChef*, Tom revealed: “At the start there’s 32 of you so you don’t really fancy your odds, but as we were going through the show, I was getting more and more confident. I never thought at any point ‘this is mine’. I stayed focused and didn’t get side-tracked.

“But then after the final, once I’d plated those three dishes, I took a step

back and thought ‘that’s all I can do now’. I don’t think it could have gone any better.”

The plaudits were plenty for the young chef from West Sussex. Marcus Wareing said: “From the minute that young chef stepped into this kitchen, he’s been consistent, and he’s delivered at every single level. Tom’s food today was technical, it was beautiful and, most importantly, it was delicious.”

Monica Galetti added: “I love how Tom is bringing his little modern twists, his personality, and his cheekiness into his cooking. His food has been cracking throughout, and he’s still so young.” ●

**FIND OUT MORE** 

To read Tom’s article from 2014 visit:





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# AFGHANISTAN

## THE ROTARY CHILD THAT WAS LOST

Despite the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan three years ago, Rotary's flame has continued to burn brightly as brave Rotarians seek to make life better for their country despite the restrictions.

| STORY BY **RAMEEN JAVID** |  
**FOUNDER AND CHARTER PRESIDENT,  
ROTARY CLUB OF KABUL CITY**

**O**N August 15th, 2021 everything changed in Afghanistan. After 20 years of democratic government, the Taliban entered the capital Kabul.

For the Rotary Clubs of Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad, the impact was severe. At least half, if not most of their members left the country or lost their jobs, along with their sense of security.

I was among them.

Ten days after the fall of the government in Kabul, I was aboard a plane to the United States, leaving behind a decade of work in Afghanistan. This was the second time I'd had to leave Afghanistan on political grounds.

Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, a rush of internally displaced refugees to major cities overwhelmed the three Rotary clubs' ability to make the impact we were used to.

As the banks closed, investors and foreigners left the country and Afghanistan lost 90% of its GDP in a year while mass starvation set in.

Out of desperation, people began selling their children, mostly girls, or their own kidneys to put food on the table. A country of 35 million people, of which 70% are under the age of 30, Afghanistan was once again plunged into poverty.

According to United Nations' agencies, at least 70% of the population fall under the poverty line, while crime and desperation has taken a sharp rise.

Girls over 12 years of age lost their rights to



education as girls' schools closed; banks opened but only gave \$200 per week if you were lucky enough to arrive before they opened in the morning. A new chapter of misery had begun.

Since then, more than two years have passed with no improvements. People are desperate with little aid coming through.

Rotary clubs which had 15 to 30 members in Afghanistan before the Taliban takeover, now boast between five to eight members, of which half live outside the country.

Herat Rotary Club closed temporarily because of their fear of repercussions, because Rotary can be seen as an American agency. Summary executions became commonplace as the new authorities shoot first and ask questions later.

What to do? The most practical option would be to close Rotary clubs to focus on ourselves and our families. But the spirit of Rotary, volunteerism and service above self, lives on.

As the Founder and Charter President of the Kabul City Rotary Club back in 2013, and in 2021 being elected as the next president, I gathered the remaining members for a meeting about the future of Rotary in Afghanistan. We met online as members were living in at least four different countries.

We talked about the next steps. With uncertain futures for each, members discussed the dangers of being active at this volatile time.

Most called for our Facebook page with 7,000 followers to be taken down, fearing prosecution in uncertain times. So I agreed to shut it down for now. Better to be safe than sorry.

The question now was what to do next? The first thought was to restart our weekly meetings by meeting online. The next question was how to help the desperate situation in Afghanistan?

First, we decided to promote employment by advertising Afghanistan's arts and handicraft.

Afghanistan has beautiful carpets, precious and semi-precious stones, art, glass and other handicraft. Instead of asking for aid, which makes people dependent on outside help, we believed it was better to promote Afghan artisans by selling their goods abroad.

The second thing we decided to do

was something about girls' education.

Not long after Kabul fell in August 2021, girls' schools were closed. And we knew we had to restore some dignity to people who lost their jobs.

I had the opportunity to attend a Rotary zone meeting in Prague in October 2021 where I spoke about Rotary in Afghanistan and what the crisis was like.

Afghanistan has had a Rotary club since the 1950s but, because of a lack of communication between Afghanistan Rotary clubs and our district or zone through decades of war, Afghan clubs have remained isolated from the greater Rotary family.

After my visit to Prague, I felt there needs to be more confidence building between our clubs and the Rotary family.

The first step of bringing Rotary in Afghanistan together is happening. The next step is to increase membership and add an extra Rotary club. This road is not without its enormous challenges.

We are on our way to reactivating the Herat Club and chartering an E-Club for Afghans abroad. Clubs in Afghanistan can be very active, it is just that now we are in a very difficult time. With a little

support and encouragement Afghanistan will be an active participant in the Rotary community.

It goes without saying, world politics on a global scale affects even the smallest countries. But that is life, and all we can do is to find our way based on the principles of Rotary, service above self.

Being kept away from the Rotary family for so long, Afghanistan is the child that was lost and is now finding its way back to the warm embrace of the family. Afghanistan is in a dire state and needs help immediately.

We have the enthusiasm and energy to work hard to help people. ●

**FIND OUT MORE** 

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Supporting Afghan artists



**“ACCORDING TO UNITED NATIONS’ AGENCIES, AT LEAST 70% OF THE POPULATION FALL UNDER THE POVERTY LINE, WHILE CRIME AND DESPERATION HAS TAKEN A SHARP RISE.”**





# BUILDING A FUTURE IN AFGHANISTAN

Rotary refuses to stand still in Afghanistan where the three Rotary clubs acknowledge their need is greater than ever. They have joined forces to work on a projects focused on income generation, education and health.

**T**HERE are three Rotary clubs in Afghanistan: the Rotary Club of Jalalabad, the Rotary Club of Herat and the Rotary Club of Kabul City.

Following the Taliban takeover in 2021, Afghanistan lost most of its professionals and 90% of its GDP in the first year.

The need for Rotary's work is beyond necessary. Because most of the aid agencies and foreign embassies have left, the economy is at a standstill. Poverty has increased multi-fold to the point that people are selling their children or their organs just to survive.

The three Afghan Rotary presidents formed a committee with the Rotary Club of Kabul as the Chair. To combat

the immediate needs of Afghanistan, there are three areas they are focused on: income generation, education and health.

## EDUCATION

With the closing of schools, the education system has greatly suffered for millions of students, especially girls. In April 2022, the Taliban government enacted strict laws discouraging or restricting girls' education. Girls cannot go to school past their teens or 6th grade. So Rotary is working on four projects:

### CYBER GIRLS' SCHOOL

The entire school curriculum from grades 1 to 12 has been moved online so students from across Afghanistan have access. The internet, which is relatively affordable,

covers over 80% of Afghanistan and there is sufficient access to electricity. The course content enriches the government's school curriculum but also uses curricula such as Oxford or Cambridge. Rotary is negotiating with the government for permission for girls in grades 7 or above to learn at home, but they will need to go to schools twice a year to sit exams. If they pass, they receive a high school diploma at the end of their school year. It is the only compromise which can succeed in educating the girls in Afghanistan. With the enriched online curriculum, boys will also benefit as the old government curriculum is outdated. The scheme starts from grade 7 to 12 as most girls cannot go to school after grade 6. The cost of this powerful platform is





**“FOLLOWING THE TALIBAN TAKEOVER IN 2021, AFGHANISTAN LOST MOST OF ITS PROFESSIONALS AND 90% OF ITS GDP IN THE FIRST YEAR.”**

\$5 per year per student. There are no more added costs. This is the only way that girls’ education will be accepted by the government.

**GIRLS’ ENRICHMENT PROGRAMMES**

This programme is designed to enhance education. With severe limitations on education, especially for girls, students have missed much of their education as many qualified teachers have left the country. Subjects of study would be STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) and languages to substitute what they have missed. This project favours mostly girls, but boys can also be included to supplement their poor education.

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING**

As unemployment is on the rise and food insecurity has passed 90%, people need to work independently since many larger businesses have closed down. Rotary is working with students for between six to 24 months to improve their literacy and numeracy; it teaches them a vocational skill and entrepreneurship so they can earn money and be independent. The training can be in health, beauty, crafts or engineering.

**SCHOLARSHIPS**

To promote the best and brightest students, especially girls, Rotary is promoting the Rotary Scholarship programme for students in private

schools to encourage their education. It is not a Rotary International Scholarship, but an Afghan Rotary, club or district scholarship. In addition to providing full tuition (\$250 per year per student), the grants provide them with school supplies and STEM-related materials so they can excel. All students are selected after an exam and interview by Rotarians.

**HEALTH**

With the health system broken and the economy collapsed, many people cannot afford basic health care. Rotary is proposing four projects:

**MOBILE CLINICS**

These mobile clinics will visit different places every day to see patients who don’t have access to doctors, primarily because of economic reasons.

**HEALTH ABROAD**

We are planning to organise a number of patients to go abroad for surgery, namely in India and Pakistan.

**HEALTH FUND**

A selected number of patients who are in dire need of financial assistance towards minor surgeries that can be done in Afghanistan, will be supported with the cost of their surgery. The cost will be no more than \$1,000 with doctors encouraged to perform the operation free of cost or at a significantly reduced cost. Funds would cover medicine and recovery costs.

**TRAINING DOCTORS & NURSES**

On a regular basis we plan to have healthcare professionals come to Kabul to teach short-term courses which would raise the expertise of the Afghan healthcare professionals.

**INCOME GENERATION**

To give dignity to people by allowing them to earn money through their own skills, Rotary is proposing two projects:

**ARTS & CRAFTS**

Rotary clubs around the world can purchase Afghanistan products (arts & crafts such as paintings, calligraphy, glass, silk goods, jewelry, felt, carpets, etc. as well as dried fruits, saffron, etc. all high quality and low prices) and sell them. This way, Rotary clubs raise money for themselves, and Afghan artists sell their items.

**EXHIBITIONS**

The hope is that Rotary clubs from Afghanistan would be given a free booth at various Rotary conventions to sell Afghan products. Money raised will be returned to Afghan artists.

The work of the three clubs carries tremendous vision and hope, as the Afghan Rotarians seek global support for their initiatives. To find out more, email Rameen Javid at: [rjavid@gmail.com](mailto:rjavid@gmail.com)



**GORDON  
McINALLY**  
ROTARY INTERNATIONAL  
PRESIDENT 2023/24

## THE CHANGE THAT IS WITHIN

**T**HESE are times that cry out for peace. The Middle East is in its most volatile condition in years. The war in Ukraine is the largest in Europe since World War Two, and there are armed conflicts in Sudan and parts of Central Africa. Nearly every continent is experiencing a major armed conflict.

Rotary has a vital role to play in advancing the cause of peace — I often say Rotary needs to work towards peace as aggressively as those who wish to wage war.

It's the spirit found in our vision statement: "Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves."

We must never lose track of that last call — that to bring about change in the world, we need to foster change within.

It is up to us to model peacebuilding behaviour among each other. We can do better than questioning the motives of one another and jumping to the harshest possible

**"ROTARY NEEDS TO WORK  
TOWARDS PEACE AS  
AGGRESSIVELY AS THOSE  
WHO WISH TO WAGE WAR."**

explanation. After hearing words that might strain or offend us, we have an opportunity to ask, with compassion and curiosity, the intent of those offending words. And then we have another opportunity to repair the breach.

If we wish to be a beacon to the world, let us start by being so to one another. Let's help each other find greater understanding and productive alternatives to words that cause hurt and distrust. And let's stick to our principles, but never doubt the sincerity of each other to end conflicts, not inflame them.

I'm reminded of a speech that U.S. Senator Robert Kennedy made on April 4, 1968, that dreadful day when the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated. Kennedy was in Indianapolis speaking

to an audience in a predominantly African American neighbourhood where people had yet to learn that Dr. King had been killed.

He shared the terrible news. He honoured Dr. King for all he had done for the cause of justice and peace. And then he connected with the fuming, grieving crowd by saying: "For those of you who are black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and distrust at the injustice of such an act, against all white people, I can only say that I feel in my own heart the same kind of feeling. I had a member of my family killed."

It was the first time he had spoken publicly about President John F. Kennedy's assassination.

And while many American cities exploded in violence that night, Indianapolis did not.

It is in times of crisis and despair that we need empathy most of all. Empathy is the most powerful tool of peace, and it is vital if we are to take the first brave, humble steps to Create Hope in the World. ●



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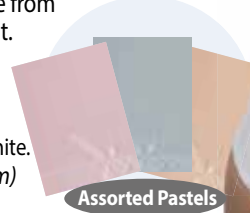
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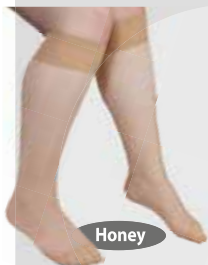
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# MAKING ROTARY FASHIONABLE!

**W**HAT began as a fashion accessory for a funeral has evolved into a successful fund-raiser for Rotary.

The Narberth and Whitland Rotary scarf story started in 2016 when incoming President Mary Adams and some fellow Rotarians were asked to form a line of honour at the funeral of a fellow Rotarian in Pembrokeshire, West Wales.

Mary, the current District Governor for Southern Wales (District 1150), explained: "All our fellow male Rotarians wore their Rotary ties, but there was nothing which made the women as instantly recognisable as Rotarians. So, I thought let's do something about it."

Mary set a challenge to a group of textile and graphic students at Pembrokeshire College in Haverfordwest working with the then Principal, Sharron Lusher, and the Head of Facilities, Cath Brooks.

The brief was to design and produce a scarf which was affordable to Rotarians.

The winning design was from Mia Hewitson-Jones which really impressed the judges and with a bit of tinkering using the expertise of graphics student, Sam Stables, a design was prepared for



production.

The biggest stumbling block was trying to find an affordable price. The most competitive UK price was £50.

It was when one of the Narberth and Whitland Rotarians was visiting his daughter in Shanghai, China, that he found Jenny Wang in 'We do Right Silk' to

**"MARY SET A CHALLENGE TO A GROUP OF TEXTILE AND GRAPHIC STUDENTS AT PEMBROKESHIRE COLLEGE IN HAVERFORDWEST."**



produce the scarf.

Approval was sought from Rotary International to licence the new scarf with the help of Jannine Birtwistle from the End Polio Now shop in Guernsey and eventually, three years after the initial idea, Mary and the team were able to place the order.

"The scarves were delivered we were all excited and then customs gave us a hefty bill for good measure," explained Mary.

Sharron Lusher, now Deputy Lieutenant of Dyfed said: "It's a huge achievement for the college students to design a scarf for Rotarians in the UK. Both students have shown talent and design flair, and we are extremely proud of the two former students at the college. It really is lovely to see the final product."

The scarves are proving popular and have been sold all over the world. Since the original green design, scarves have been produced using cerise and purple.

"We have come a long way since the original design of the scarf," added Mary.

Recipients have included Jennifer Jones, Past Rotary International President, Stephanie Urchick the RI President-Elect, and Heather McNally, wife of current RI President, Gordon McNally.

So far, 187 scarves have been sold with £1,197 donated to End Polio Now. Priced at £25 plus postage and packing, the scarves are available online at: [www.nwrotary.co.uk](http://www.nwrotary.co.uk) with all proceeds going to End Polio Now. ●

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# CHARTING

## THE ROAD TO PEACE

ROTARY EDITOR, DAVE KING, WAS AMONG DELEGATES WHO ATTENDED THE PRESIDENTIAL PEACE CONFERENCE IN LONDON LISTENING TO A HIGH-POWERED LINE-UP OF SPEAKERS.



**W**ITH a delegation from Ukraine proudly brandishing their blue and yellow flags, a reminder about the spectre of war was never far from the consciousness of those attending the Presidential Peace Conference in London this February.

Rotarians from 50 nations gathered at the International Maritime Organisation’s headquarters just over the water from the Houses of Parliament, and next door to Lambeth Palace, home to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

What those 650 delegates heard was an impressive series of speeches and presentations which tackled the subject of peace from all angles – and not the obvious approach of armed conflict.

Maria Vittoria Gargiulo, a Rotarian from Salerno in Italy, spoke about hate speech, fake news and disinformation as threats to peace. “Let us be the changemakers and the advocates to peace,” she urged, insisting education was the gateway to establishing positive peace.

In fact, education was a word which cropped up frequently from the dozen speakers in the goal towards positive peace, an expression which might be described as a tautology – after all, can there be a negative peace?

Positive peace, the definition goes, is underpinned by attitudes, institutions and structures which create and sustain peaceful societies.

“High levels of positive peace occur

where attitudes make violence less tolerated, institutions are more responsive to society’s needs, and structures underpin the non-violent resolution of grievances,” delegates were told in the conference briefing pack.

At the heart of this are the eight pillars of peace, a model constructed by the Institute for Economics & Peace whose founder, Steve Killelea, and Australian IT entrepreneur, outlined the work of the IEP, its relationship with Rotary International, and those eight pillars:

- Well-functioning governments
- Free flow of information
- Sound business environments
- Acceptance of the rights of others
- Good relations between neighbours
- Low levels of corruption
- Equitable distribution of resources
- High levels of human capital

Established in 2017 the IEP works in several areas having trained 210 Rotary activators in 65 countries to implement positive peace projects.

Steve Killelea explained that these simple, local community projects are non-political and, because they are solution-based, they build on Rotary’s values of inclusive and diverse cultures.

“Rotary provides a unique opportunity for grassroots work in communities around the world,” he insisted. “Together, we build capacity and empower Rotarians to build peace. Social

cohesion has never been so important.”

One of the most powerful presentations was delivered by Debbie Hodge, the former Rotary Great Britain & Ireland President. She was working at the British Medical Association headquarters in London in 2005, just yards from where a bus blew up on a day when four suicide bombers struck London’s transport network killing 52 people.

Debbie described tending the dying and injured amid the wreckage of the double decker bus.

“A situation in which hope is destroyed, and peace is a fantasy,” she explained. “True peace will only be realised when we are not separated from each other by fear or suspicion.

“A world which is free, equal, loving and considerate of each other.”

Curiously, Debbie drew reference to the coffee house culture as a platform for peace which the Lord Mayor of London, Michael Mainelli, had spoken about earlier in his address.

Coffee houses, the American-born British scientist and economist explained, were a London tradition stretching back to the 17th century when they played an important part in the development of the capital’s businesses.

Answering the question posed to all speakers “There will be no peace without....”, the Honorary Rotarian revealed his chosen word was ‘tolerance’.

“It is a humble, but profound word,” he said.

Mainelli said: “Tolerance is being 

**“IT’S VITAL THAT WE DO FAR MORE THAN JUST SIMPLY TALK ABOUT PEACE. THAT ISN’T TO DEMEAN THE IMPORTANCE OF TALK. IN FACT, SOMETIMES THE VERY FIRST STEP IN CREATING PEACE IS TO BE WILLING TO TALK TO ONE ANOTHER.”**



©Hiko Tanaka from the Rotary Club of London

©Hiko Tanaka from the Rotary Club of London



willing to condemn oppression and the persecution of others. There will be no peace or hope without tolerance. Maybe we should revive the coffee house tradition to disagree more agreeably.”

“Tolerance is a good fit to Rotary’s road to peace.”

Coffee aficionado and Rotary International President, Gordon McNally, pointed out that Rotary already had 36,000 “coffee houses” where Rotarians come together.

“We have the opportunity to come together to discuss important matters of the world in an unthreatening manner.”

These events have the potential to be patsy, lip-service bore-fests. But the line-up of speakers was impressive, the quality of their presentations was of the highest order, and the quality of speakers addressing different elements of peace, was refreshing and off the scale.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind, a politician who has served in two government cabinets under Margaret Thatcher and John Major asserted with conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, and tensions in Taiwan, that the world was currently living in “pretty unique and unprecedented times”.

When I later asked the former Defence Secretary what role he sees Rotary in serving peace, he responded: “Rotary is a part of civil society, and one of the great distinctions of being a democratic society and not an authoritarian dictatorship is that we positively welcome the involvement of millions of ordinary citizens, not just for their own country’s destiny but in making a contribution to the wider world.

“And Rotary is one of the best examples I can think of in that direction.”

Dr Fatou Bensouda, a former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and the current High Commissioner of The Gambia to the UK, spoke about how there could be no peace without justice.

Irina Georgieva Bokova, a former Director General of UNESCO, explained how they have shared close ties with Rotary since its founding in 1945.

“Creating hope in the world resonates with me,” she said.

“Rotarians can create the environment where positive peace can be built through sustainable activities in communities worldwide.

“Rotarians share the same philosophies of UNESCO. You have peace as the cornerstone of your mission which are the same ideals as UNESCO.”

In reflecting the importance of education along the pathway to peace, she quoted Maria Montessori on how avoiding war was the work of politics, whereas peace was the work of education.

And picking up on that point, Professor Fiona Macaulay, Director of the Rotary Peace Centre at the University of Bradford – and herself a former Rotary Scholar, spoke about the importance of women in peace-building, adding: “Peace accords last at least five years longer if women are involved when societies are more peaceful.”

Besides the hard talking, there was also music with 16-year-old Oscar Brown, a Rotaractor from St Ives in Cornwall, leading a conference sing-song with a

piece he had written entitled “Rotary Song for Peace”, and Taichi Imanishi led a rhythmic “Drumming for Peace” segment with Gordon McNally, RI Director, Eve Conway, and her predecessor, Nicki Scott, joining in with their percussion instruments.

But it was left to the Rotary International President, Gordon McNally, to both open and close the day-long conference.

In a wide-ranging speech, the Scot insisted how Rotary has a vital role in advancing the cause of peace adding: “I often say that Rotary needs to work towards peace as aggressively as do those who wish to wage war.”

McNally hoped the peace conference would be used as a “launching pad for action”.

He added: “It’s vital that we do far more than just simply talk about peace.

“That isn’t to demean the importance of talk. In fact, sometimes the very first step in creating peace is to be willing to talk to one another.

“The way we talk about peace and the way we model peace-positive behaviour is vital to the kinds of action which we are capable of taking and the impact we can ultimately deliver.”

McNally also addressed peace directly in a Rotary context, and the behaviour of Rotarians in their clubs and communities. He quoted the great Scottish writer Robert Burns who spoke of “sense and worth all over the earth”.

He said: “This spirit is apparent in Rotary’s vision statement of “Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves.”

“When it comes to lofty aspirations like these, we must never lose track of that last call, that to bring about change in the greater world, we also need to foster change within.

“For Rotary to live up to our full potential, we must do better in the way we create peaceful relations within our communities, within our clubs and within our personal relationships to promote greater understanding, member to member.” ●



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# WHERE EAGLES DARE

## BRINGING A POSITIVE PEACE TO KASHMIR

Jammu and Kashmir have been a flashpoint between India and Pakistan for over six decades, but Rotarians from across the world are trying to bring some peace and stability to the troubled region.

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

**T**HE Himalayan region of Kashmir is one of the most visually-stunning places on earth – but also among the most volatile.

Predominantly mountainous, with snow-covered peaks soaring into the clouds, Kashmir's resplendent geography features deep, narrow valleys and high, barren plateaus with thickly forested foothills.

And yet, ever since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, this north-west region has been the focus of perpetual conflict and a flashpoint between India and Pakistan.

The northern and western portions of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are administered by Pakistan, while the southern and south-eastern areas of Jammu and Kashmir are administered by India.

The Indian- and Pakistan-administered portions are divided by a “line of control” agreed in 1972, although neither country recognises it as an international country.

Adding further fuel to the fire in this disputed region, neighbouring China

has controlled the north-eastern part of Ladakh since 1962.

The nuclear-armed neighbours of India and Pakistan have fought two wars over the Muslim-majority territory which remains one of the most militarised zones in the world.

Now Rotarians are attempting to build bridges in this sensitive area with the formation a couple of years ago of the Kashmir/Ladakh Steering Committee featuring Rotary clubs from Great Britain & Ireland, the USA, Canada, Africa, and several Rotary districts in India, chaired by Saumen Ray from the Rotary Club of Calcutta.

In May 2022, a group of 25 experienced Rotarians got together to draw up a community development needs assessment with the ambitious title – “where eagles dare”.

On that team were David Johnson from the Rotary Club of London, and Gill de Warren from the Rotary Club of Battersea Park, who is secretary of the steering committee alongside chairman Saumen Ray from the Calcutta club.

“One definition of peace is that it is meant for within a community,

across various borders, and between different countries and most importantly within oneself,” explained Saumen Ray, who attended the Presidential Peace Conference in London in February.

“But it needs various catalysts and Rotary is one.

“When a community feels contented with their way of life and infrastructural facilities are available, the peace is not far. It's an ongoing process rather than a one-off achievement.”

Two years ago, those 25 experienced Rotarians from across the globe met with key Government officials in Kashmir and Ladakh to plan a vision, notably having talks with Manoj Sinha, the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir.

Gill de Warren, who is Foundation Chair at the Rotary Club of Battersea Park in London said that they identified a need for Rotary projects serving all seven areas of focus, with priorities in health, education, water and sanitation, plus the environment.

She said: “We visited Srinagar and Ladakh and found opportunities to improve the living conditions of the communities, and children in particular,





especially those living in remote mountain villages inaccessible to schools and medical care.”

One immediate requirement was the need to establish a solar-powered water pumping facility on the Indus River in Leh to boost agriculture and boost income generation for farmers.

“The idea was to make an oasis in the mountain desert,” added Ray. One of the prime movers behind the project is the Rotary Club of London.

A piece of land has been identified for the installation of solar pumps from the Indus River for growing fruits in the deserted area as income generation for the local communities. A team will be visiting Ladakh in May.

One of the biggest achievements in Kashmir of the new global Rotary partnership was the setting up last October of health camps in Srinagar and Ladakh for surgeries and eye check-ups.

Over 1,000 eye patients were screened as part of a project funded by the Rotary clubs of London and Calcutta supported by the NGO Nanritam Purulia Lokeswarananda Eye Hospital. Another eye camp is due to take place in May.

Rotarian doctors from across India conducted more than 500 surgeries during a 10-day mega surgical camp, including general surgery, laparoscopic surgery, joint replacement, laser surgery for piles and varicose veins, along with cataract surgery.

Separately, the Rotarians organised the training of 100 schoolteachers from primary schools.

David Johnson, a Past President of the Rotary Club of London, said: “This is a fantastic beginning, and we wish to support the schools with books, and

materials in Ladakh supporting education and literacy.”

Sentiments echoed by Tony Sharma, a Past District Governor of Rotary in London. “This is fabulous work. Recognition from local communities and Government bodies is essential to ensure on going sustainability and improve the living conditions of the communities.”

Further surgical camps took place in February in Rajouri and the Poonch areas of Jammu and Kashmir where there have been recent instances of volatility.

Alongside this effort, new Rotary clubs are being established in Jammu and Kashmir. “These mega medical mission camps are helping us to motivate and impress upon people of Kashmir to bring an improved quality of life in this region.

“This is an example of building positive peace in Jammu and Kashmir,” added Calcutta Rotarian, Saumen Ray.

This May, a second needs assessment will take place in Kashmir to assess progress, and in September the Rotary Club of Calcutta will be hosting an international positive peace workshop

to coincide with its 105th birthday – the oldest Rotary club in mainland Asia.

Rotary, with its international profile and proven-track record with humanitarian projects, is becoming a trusted force for good in Kashmir.

Saumen Ray added: “Our observations from many Rotary peace projects, customised to the local environment in Jammu and Kashmir, make us believe that peace comes when people are happy in their country and homes, in a safe environment, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and with the freedom and resources to educate their children.

“However, ground realities may not allow that to happen easily, as we see it in many countries in the world today.

“The committee concludes that basic support of good health care; education and income generation are some of the critical success factors that could bring us close to positive peace. This is Rotary with its expertise and proven experience of getting things done.” ●





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## ROBERT MORRIS

CHAIR OF THE BOARD  
FOR ROTARY GB&I

# A THIRST FOR LIFE AND A QUEST FOR ADVENTURE

**B**EING an active Rotarian can be interpreted in so many ways, with each of us probably capturing the essence of membership in a different way. For me, being an active Rotarian is more than simply being a member and taking part in activities of my club and wider Rotary community.

For me, it is also about how I lead my life and what I am able to do for others.

Some years ago now, a friend and member of another Rotary club told me of an amazing opportunity for personal service and personal development that he had taken part in. I was so taken by the details that I signed up and some months later found myself at the check-in area of Heathrow Airport terminal 4. I had no idea what to expect and I wasn't even sure who I was due to be meeting.

My first big clue that I was in the right place was when wheelchair users kept arriving. This group of adventurers all had spinal injuries that had left them paralysed and this trip was intended to give them back a thirst for life.

**"FOR EIGHT YEARS, MY FRIEND AND I CONTINUED TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE BACK UP TRUST, AS SELF-FUNDED SKI-BUDDIES AND HELPERS AT THEIR ASSESSMENT DAYS FOR FUTURE SKI TRIPS."**

Paraplegics and quadriplegics who were about to experience skiing on sit-skis.

Or for those with quadriplegic injury and hence limited movement, they would learn on what I came to call adapted go-carts; with mini-skis instead of wheels and levers to enhance their capability to move their arms.

But the biggest surprise was when a lady came over and said: "Hi Robert, how lovely to see you." She was a member of another local Rotary club and was to be the only direct link with Rotary that whole week. She introduced her friend,

one of that group of wheelchair users and her introduction to being on this trip.

For that week, us ski-buddies pushed wheelchairs through the snow, lifted them down to basement discos at night and helped the group to learn to balance and manoeuvre their sit-skis.

Plus, of course, we were there to act as anchors when they got out of control and began heading directly downhill at ever increasing uncontrolled speed. This was not so easy with the ex-rugby players whose bulk added to the challenge of halting their heavy equipment.

For eight years, my friend and I continued together to support The Back Up Trust, as self-funded ski-buddies and helpers at their assessment days for future ski trips. As regulars, we got permission for our wives to also come along as carers. I may not have the physical energy for those high-altitude activities now, however I have found other ways to offer my skills and interests to others in need. What are you able to offer those in need? ●



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# Steve digs deep with **TURMERIC+ GOLD**

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'The discomfort was especially noticeable at night when I was turning over from my left to right side.' Steve remembers.

'It was starting to wear me down and prevent me from running, which I love to do.

'I was looking for something to help me and I read about the Turmeric+ Gold capsules.

'I was interested that it had helped other people and I liked the science behind the supplement. I thought I'd give it a try, as frankly I had nothing to lose.

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I love my sport and am back to competing in park runs on a regular

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**'It certainly worked for me.'**

contributes to the maintenance of normal bones and maintenance of normal muscle function.

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bones and maintenance of normal muscle function.

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- Doctor's surgery
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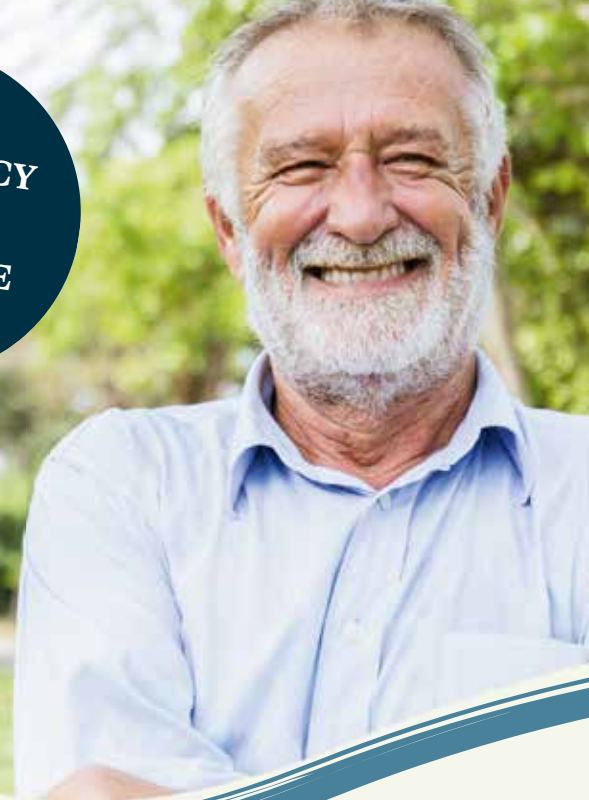


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# MAKING AN



STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

**R**OTARY is all about first impressions and making an impact – but what about the concept of an Impact club? Over the past year, a new Rotary Impact club has been established in Leicester which is running well and growing steadily. It's also very different!

There is no formality, no protocol, no meal, no set format, no club president – simply a group of like-minded people who relate to Rotary's philosophy of "service above self" who want to make a difference in their community.

The model of an Impact club was set up by Patrick Longano in the United States. The UK model is different from the ones operating in the US, where instead of having a separate club, the Impact club is an extension of the legacy club - The Rotary Club of Leicester.

According to Rotarian Diana Esho: "It's a win, win for existing and new members offering flexibility and future club growth."

Diana, who is CEO of Easy Internet Services Ltd, an online marketing company she set up in 2000, admitted she had found it increasingly difficult to commit to the regular Monday meetings.

There had been lots of talk about growing the club and its sustainability but nothing dramatic had changed.

"From the outset, I didn't want to set up a satellite club, but I wanted to maintain strong links with the legacy club. I decided to gather a group of Rotarians and friends together who started to meet in an evening at various venues."

Over five months, Diana realised the new model was working and began to have conversations with David Morris, Membership Team Lead for Rotary in the East Midlands (District 1070) and Past District Governor, Steve Howe, about its success and why this new style of meeting was working.

Not only were the new meetings proving popular, but they were attracting more business owners from the local community.

Following talks with Past President Nick Thomson and Assistant Governor, Richard Power who had also supported Diana, it was time to take the model to the next level.

But what would they call the new club? It wasn't technically a separate club but an extension of the existing club.

During his trip to the Rotary International convention in Houston in

Texas in 2022, Steve Howe heard Patrick Longano talk about Impact Groups after founding one in the US.

While he listened to Patrick speak, Steve realised that this was the style of club which Diana had set up and wished to grow.

It was then that The Rotary Club of Leicester Impact Group was given its name.

Initially, the Impact Group meetings were held in various free venues until it found its home at the Leicester University Business School, based on their campus in central Leicester.

During this time, the club redesigned its website and social media to reflect what a non-Rotarian would want to see.

Interestingly, almost all of the members of the Impact club initially found details of the new group on social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook, and also through the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce magazine.

Diana added: "Unlike the legacy club, the meetings are wholly informal with only a gentle structure to work within, which suits this new generation of Rotarians."

The Impact Group, which has 13 members and was chartered in June





**“THE GROUP PREFERS TO SUPPORT SEVERAL LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CHARITIES RATHER THAN FOCUS ON ONE MAJOR CHARITY FOR THE WHOLE ROTARY YEAR. THESE CAUSES REFLECT COMMUNITY NEEDS AROUND THE CLUB’S MEETING PLACE.”**

2023, meets in the early evening on the first and third Wednesday with most members coming directly from work.

Coffee is served and members enjoy fellowship and conversation. It proves that members need flexibility with times and the style of meetings.

Sometimes a speaker is invited, generally from a charity the club wishes to support.

The theme of most meetings is service and often explores ways in which the club can collaboratively help the local community.

Diana explained: “Members are encouraged to network and to learn about Rotary at each meeting by having a fun quiz and open, collaborative discussions.

“When guests visit, each member is asked to introduce themselves and state what they do. This helps with awkward introductions and makes guests feel welcome.

“Members also bring their children who, in their own right, have raised money for the club’s various fund-raising events. Hopefully, they’ll become Rotarians in the future.

“It’s all about Impact!”

Diana explained that the

group prefers to support several local and international charities rather than focus on one major charity for the whole Rotary year. These causes reflect community needs around the club’s meeting place.

She said: “The loose, unstructured format of the club meetings and its after-work timing, is appealing to new candidates, who enjoy this informality and lack of a rigid structure.

“Is this approach the future of Rotary? Who knows – but it’s working, and it seems to be attracting younger professionals, students and business people.” ●



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## 2024 IS GOING TO BE AN ELECTRIC YEAR

STORY BY **NORMAN HUNTER** |  
RETIRED MOTOR AND TRAVEL JOURNALIST

**O**VER 500,000 new pure-electric cars will be sold across the UK this year, according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders, bringing the total to around 1.5 million on our roads.

In 2023, record sales of new pure-electric cars (EVs) saw almost 315,000 registered meaning there are now 51% more EVs on the road than at the end of 2022. And the major car manufacturers across the globe have responded to the increasing demand for EVs by ratcheting up production of a wide range of EV-specific models for this rapidly expanding market. Billions of pounds are being

invested in new factories, including the building of battery plants here in the UK.

All this is not at all surprising as the benefits – both financially for the EV owner, the country's economy and of course the environment – are unquestionable.

In parallel, the number of high-powered EV chargers grew by 52% in 2023, to a total of almost 10,500 devices across more than 5,000 locations at the end of December. It is predicted that in 2024 this will climb substantially across all regions of the UK.

So, what else can we expect to see over the next 12 months?

According to Zapmap co-founder

Melanie Shufflebotham, more promotions and price drops from car manufacturers will come as the year progresses.

She said: "Given the lack of incentives for consumers to switch to EVs, as opposed to businesses, we may also see the government introduce some new demand-side measures.

"What's more, we can also expect to see continued growth in second-hand sales, as many of the 200,000 (new) pure-electric cars sold in 2020 move through into the used car market.

"This year will see more focus on the drivers that have been underserved so far in the transition to electric. That includes



those with accessibility needs, who have no off-street parking, or purchasing cars second-hand.”

She added: “Now, well into 2024, we remain committed to our mission of making charging simple, giving drivers the products and services for stress-free charging, whatever their needs.

“We will see an increasing number of models available, many of which will boast much greater range and/or a lower price point. There will be far more chargers for drivers, with higher power and better reliability,

“With electric car ownership growing and the market expanding, 2024 is going to be an electric year.”

### EV CHARGING OF THE FUTURE?

What’s coming is simply mind-blowing! The Scandinavians, particularly the Norwegians and Swedes, are light years ahead in charging technologies.

Already, they’ve tested and proved two innovations which are likely to change the future of EV charging.

From underground charging cables able to send electricity wirelessly to cars as they travel along motorways and main commuter routes, to simple and rapid battery replacement (instead of waiting to charge) will, it is expected, be heading our way in the not-too-distant future.

Research teams from a number of different companies worldwide, have successfully developed technologies that, within the next decade, will allow all manner of EVs including cars, trucks, and buses to charge on the move in a process called dynamic charging.

Scandinavian taxis are already using this technology in some cities. Charging is via under-road pads that can transmit electricity to receivers mounted underneath vehicles thus minimising time normally taken at charging stations.

What a way to eliminate ‘range anxiety’.

Another innovation is an automatic ‘drive-in’ battery replacement system, again developed in Norway.

The EV driver simply books a slot in advance, turns up and the EV is driven ‘robotically’ into a unit that removes the depleted battery from underneath the vehicle and replaces it with a fully charged pack – in the same time it would take to fill a tank with fuel!

It is clear that ‘range anxiety’ is well and truly a thing of the past for electric vehicle drivers now that the EV driver’s mindset is catching up with the technology. Planning the journey is essential, knowing where the charge points are en route.

However, the growth rate of the electric vehicle charging infrastructure continues accelerating to meet the needs of EV drivers with 2023 showing record installations.

January 2024 has got off to an exhilarating start following a record growth in the number of ultra-rapid chargers and high-power hubs available

for EV drivers right across the UK and this trend, according to Zapmap, looks set to continue throughout the year.

From supermarkets to motorway service stations, private businesses and Local Authority Councils to the hotel and leisure sectors (and a growing list of bus and commercial vehicle operators), EV charging is a now a fast-growing area of the country’s public network.

### GOT THE PAUA?

A tip for business EV drivers... rather than a wallet full of different charge cards, there is now a single card that can be used across thousands of charge points throughout the UK.

Scotsman, Niall Riddell started his company PAUA in 2022. North of the border, for example, PAUA cards allow access on all the charge points operated by ChargePlace Scotland.

Riddell says: “Throughout the UK we are at 43,000 connectors and 14,000 locations with over 30 network partners.

“That’s over 50% of all connectors and a mega 73% of all rapid / high powered chargers in the UK.” ●

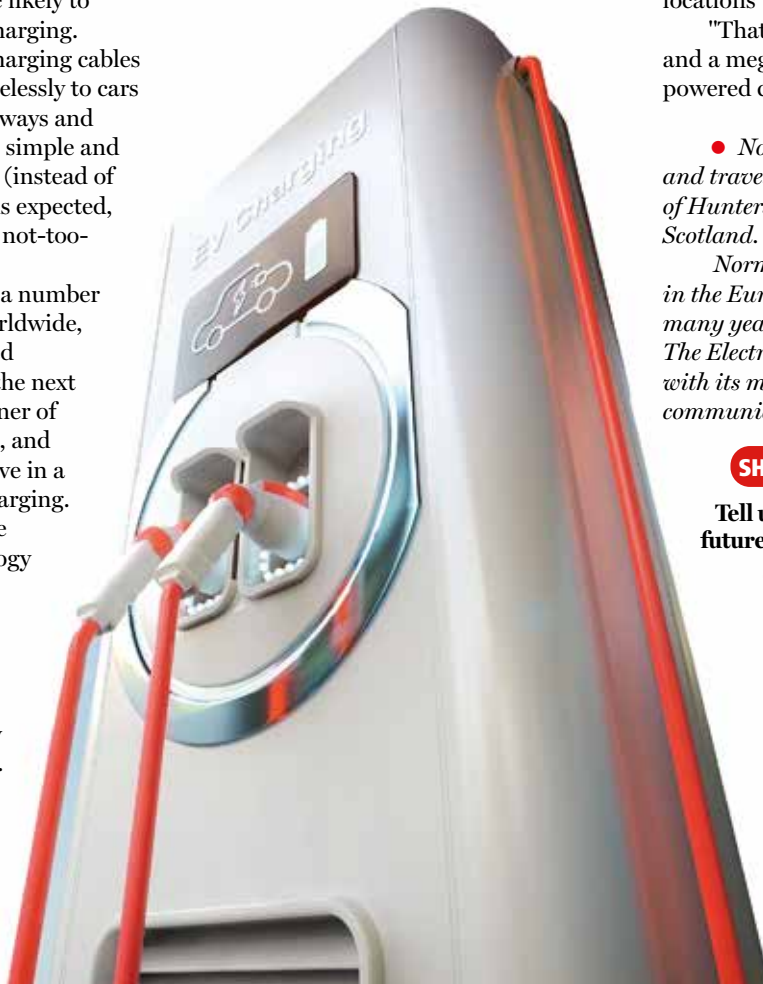
● *Norman Hunter is a retired motor and travel journalist as well as a member of Hunterston Rotary Club in Ayrshire, Scotland.*

*Norman has worked extensively in the European motoring industry for many years and most recently assisted The Electric Vehicle Association Scotland with its media, press and corporate communications.*

### SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Tell us what you think about the future of electric cars by emailing:

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





# BARRY RASSIN

**ROTARY FOUNDATION  
TRUSTEE CHAIR**

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## TO MAKE CHANGE, JUST GET STARTED

**F**OR many, The Bahamas is a place to escape colder climates, relax on white-sand beaches, and snorkel in clear, turquoise waters. For me, it's home. I grew up sailing on these waters and to this day, anytime I can, I am out on the water with family and friends. It's where my heart is.

The environmental threats my country is facing are real. Our coral reefs, vital for biodiversity, are in danger due to warming seas and pollution.

Hurricanes and tropical storms seem to get more intense with each passing year. Rising sea levels pose an existential threat to The Bahamas, eroding our beautiful coastlines as saltwater intrudes on our precious and limited freshwater resources.

Late last year, I was fortunate to represent Rotary at COP28, the United Nations climate change convention in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The consensus coming out of the

meeting was that progress on addressing climate change has been too slow.

Participants said the world needs to pick up the pace to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, help communities become more resilient to climate change, and better support countries that are most vulnerable to it.

### **ROTARY CAN BE PART OF THE SOLUTION**

As you know, protecting the environment is one of Rotary's areas of focus.

Many clubs are active in their communities with projects such as beach and roadside cleanups.

With The Rotary Foundation, you can increase your impact by pooling resources with clubs and districts around the world. Foundation grants let you put the generous contributions of your fellow Rotary members to work to make the world better.

Imagine the possibilities. Perhaps

Rotary districts in Canada and Australia could protect wetlands in New South Wales in Australia.

Rotary leaders from Brazil, India, and Taiwan could lead grant projects to train farmers in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh in sustainable agriculture. Rotary and Rotaract clubs from The Bahamas, South Africa, and New York could work with their districts to help my country restore its natural resources, one reef or mangrove at a time.

The problems our environment faces seem overwhelming until you realise that many are fixable. There are so many ways to help through Rotary. Even if we don't lead a grant or volunteer on the project, we can all help protect the environment through our giving to the Foundation.

Rotary can't save the planet all by itself. But as our progress in ending polio proves, Rotary's impact is great when we put our vision for a better world in motion, and just get started. ●







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# Readers' letters

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

## ✉ No-one wants anything but peace for Gaza

AFTER reading Stephan Stephan's letter (*Rotary Winter*), I felt the need to reply with a different perspective.

I too received calls and messages from club and district members raising serious concerns about the situation in the Middle East and Rotary International. Yes, I am Jewish, but the messages were from those of all different and non-faith beliefs.

However, their concerns were about how long it took RI and District Governors to make any statement at all. Just as on 9/11, the barbaric attacks on 7/10 in Israel were carried out by a designated "terrorist" group.

Rotary worldwide instantly came together to support Rotary in New York City after America's worst attack since Pearl Harbour. The same cannot, unfortunately, be said with regards to Israel, where this was the worst slaughter of innocent Jews since World War Two, nor the recognition of their

right, just like America did, to defend their land and people.

No one wants anything but peace for the whole area and for all peoples to live safely, without fear.

The first paragraph of the RI statement on Gaza urges all parties concerned to seek avenues to peace. The second paragraph, which apparently "indicates political bias towards Israel", is condemning a terrorist attack.

In my opinion, it does not go far enough, but I recognise RI's need to be impartial. The statement denounces violence against innocent civilians, supporting upholding international humanitarian law and sustainable long-term peace.

I do not understand how the statement can be seen as breaching the seven Areas of Focus.

**| Toni Finkel**  
Edgware & Stanmore Rotary, Middlesex

## ✉ The trend for Rotary International to issue political statements

I WRITE with some trepidation in response to Stephan Stephan's letter in the Winter edition of the *Rotary Magazine*. The comments within it express my general concerns over yet another Rotary International statement which appears to cross the boundaries of Rotary's declared non-political, non-religious status.

I joined Rotary because of this declaration.

I have nothing against any religious groups provided they don't try to force me into their way of thinking.

My view of religion is that each is a moral code to be observed by its followers. A tolerance towards all seeming to be an important caveat.

However, history shows us that most, if not all, conflicts are caused by one religion disagreeing with another, and then building a political platform around that in an attempt to justify such actions.

Asking for tolerance and understanding of each other within such a moral code invariably falls on stony ground. I took Rotary to be an occasional respite away from such conversations.

Can I ask RI's senior personnel to provide us with a meaningful statement about their political and religious neutrality, and that they will never again issue statements which contain provocative political content.

**| John Miles**  
Leatherhead Rotary Club, Surrey

## ✉ A Tommy Cooper fan!

YOUR article about Sir Anthony Hopkins taking the part of the great Rotarian, Sir Nicholas Winton, in the film 'One Life' brought back many happy memories (*Rotary Winter*).

During the 1993/94 Rotary year, Anthony Hopkins was made an Honorary Life Rotarian at a dinner in Port Talbot, Anthony Hopkins' home town, by District 1150 (which is Rotary in Southern Wales) Governor, Wally Cole. Wally was also Secretary of the Wales Lawn Tennis Association, so he

arranged Wimbledon tickets for Mrs Anthony Hopkins at the same time!

In 2008 Sir Anthony agreed to my invitation as secretary of the Tommy Cooper Society to unveil our statue of Tommy, followed by a gala lunch in Caerphilly Castle at which Sir Anthony proved not only to be a big Cooper fan but a most versatile actor by performing Tommy's gags in immaculate style.

**| Tudor Jones MBE**  
Caerphilly, Mid Glamorgan



## A Paul Harris Fellowship honours service

FOLLOWING the letter printed in the winter edition of *Rotary Magazine* “Paul Harris Fellowship disappointment” I would like to respond.

The Paul Harris Fellowship (PHF) pin has always been, first and foremost, a personal recognition for contributions to The Rotary Foundation recognising accrued contributions of \$1,000 and subsequently for each further threshold of \$1,000.

Throughout the world, PHF pins are sent to the donor automatically and Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland aligned with this process in July 2022.

Individuals receive the PHF as a recognition and a thank you from The Rotary Foundation for their generosity in supporting our charity over the years.

It is sent to them directly, together with a letter, thanking and explaining the above.

It is up to the individual whether they share this recognition with their club. Maybe doing so would lead to others to think about supporting the Foundation themselves.

I can expand a little more the original purpose of the Paul Harris Fellowship.

This was developed initially purely to recognise and thank donors of \$1,000 or more to our Rotary Foundation programmes.

Some years later, in response to requests from Rotarians, The Rotary

Foundation agreed that recipients could ask for their recognition, the Paul Harris Fellowship, to be passed on to someone else, whether a Rotarian or not, as a thank you or a recognition of service as chosen by the initial donor of the \$1,000.

Clubs in Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland often do the latter, having over the years donated more than the \$1,000 for which they were credited with points in place of an actual PHF pin – a practice that is not used in many other countries.

We believe it is important that Rotary continues to recognise and thank individual donors with a Paul Harris Fellowship for their support of our charity.

While we are comfortable with clubs wishing to use the PHF to recognise service, there are several other Rotary awards for service that would usually be more appropriate.

See the Rotary website for details: [rotarygbi.org/members/awards](https://rotarygbi.org/members/awards)

**| Michael Hodge**  
Specialist Advisor Team Lead:  
Foundation Regional Rotary  
Foundation Co-ordinator 2023/26

## Supporting the Foundation

WITH reference to Alex Ritchie's letter (*Rotary Winter*), I would like to point out that he didn't receive his third PHF from Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, but from The Rotary Foundation.

The Paul Harris Fellowship was designed by The Rotary Foundation specifically to encourage Rotarians to support their own charity. A PHF is provided by Foundation in recognition of a total donation of \$1,000.

It was decided that since not all Rotarians can afford to donate this

amount, clubs who have donated sufficient funds to Foundation may use their recognition points to award a PHF to a deserving member for service.

There are other service awards which are provided by Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, rather than by The Rotary Foundation.

**| Jo Janczak**  
Rotary Club of Burntisland  
& Kinghorn, Fife

## Wirksworth Rotary remembered

REGARDING the story about Aquabox in *Rotary Magazine* (*Rotary Winter, 2024*), the Rotary Club of Wirksworth does not exist. It ‘died’ a couple of years ago. Some past Rotarians are involved with Aquabox but now that the actual Wirksworth club no longer exists, they have handed back their charter. Otherwise, not a bad maggy!

**| Tom Moloney,**  
Rotary Club of Matlock, Derbyshire

## PHF is prestigious

I AM sorry to read that Alex Ritchie feels that his most recent PHF award is de-valued. While my own club considers a Fellowship to be a prestigious, one-off recognition of meritorious service, not everybody sees it that way – not least The Rotary Foundation!

Indeed, the very first line of the RFUK criteria states that “Paul Harris Fellowship Recognition is simply a request for recognition of a cash donation of \$1,000”. And one can be multiple PHFs (5x = sapphire pin; 3 x = ruby pin).

I once attended a club in Oregon, USA, where at least half of the members were PHFs because they had made the appropriate contributions.

Thus, there seems no reason why Honorary Rotarian Farley of BUILT Wells should not expect to be considered in due course, if the criteria are met!

**| Chris Silver**  
Rotary Club of Inverness  
Loch Ness, Highland

## Chin chin!

ROTARY International has published events for the Singapore Convention. The gin distillery visit on May 26th is nothing to do with the Rotary Fellowship of Gin who has a separate evening event on May 29th after the convention finishes.

**| Cheryl Law**  
Wendover & District Rotary,  
Buckinghamshire



## **AI has its limitations**

HAVING just seen the 'One Life' film starring Sir Anthony Hopkins, your articles on Sir Nicholas Winton and the Kindertransport children were excellent (*Rotary Magazine, Winter 2024*). I also read with interest the article on artificial intelligence by Alicia Ridout.

Whilst technology continually evolves and there is an ever-increasing requirement to adapt to new technologies, we need to recognise the need for oversight and regulatory control on these new technologies.

It's a known fact that the internet moved faster than the regulatory checks, as has also been the case with social media. In the case of social media, this is despite being aware of these oversight challenges that emerged with the expansion of the internet.

Regulatory bodies and governments appear to have taken a reactive approach rather than proactive actions, which should have been learnt and acted upon from the launch of the internet.

And now we have Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This new technology is data-driven and we have seen tremendous advances,

for example in drug discovery timelines.

As a retired pharmaceutical scientist, I applaud such advances.

However, in recognising its data limitations, AI cannot and will never be able to have its own insight and intuition as we humans do.

Sadly, when it comes to money and people, organisations invariably look for the 'cheaper' option than human beings, with the resultant well-being of human beings compromised.

Yes, use it where it helps e.g. data mining, but recognise its real limitations.

Let's hope governments and regulatory bodies take the proactive step of putting AI where it actually belongs.

The views expressed are my own personal views and not necessarily the views of other club members.

**| Colin Knight**  
Rushcliffe Rotary Club,  
Nottinghamshire

## **Digitally-excluded Rotarians**

I AM writing on behalf of my chum who has been advised by his GP and consultant orthopaedic surgeon to avoid computer use as a response to a physiological problem.

He was extremely distressed and depressed to read in the issue of *Rotary Magazine* for Winter 2024 that the magazine will be published less frequently and the quarterly issues will be supplemented by a digital magazine distributed by email.

It seems to him that the needs of digitally-excluded Rotarians are being ignored despite everybody in the club making the same contribution, through their subscriptions, to Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland.

There's also mention of "Rotary Audio" but no information in the magazine (that he could find) about the

frequency to which one should tune one's wireless set to receive it.

Rotary is trying to attract new members and retain existing ones - while the use of digital communication may appeal to young potential members it is driving away more mature Rotarians who are unable to access it.

Does Rotary care?

**| JB Ormsby**  
Hertford, Hertfordshire

### **Editor's reply**

You can discover Rotary audio by visiting: [rotarygbi.org/magazine](http://rotarygbi.org/magazine) where you can find the audio format and also download previous copies of the magazine.

## **Was it a Wellington bomber?**

MANY thanks for the excellent edition of *Rotary Magazine (Winter, 2024)* which I received in the post.

In addition to the fascinating Sir Nicholas Winton story, I was particularly interested in the RAF bomber crew story as I give talks about RAF Bomber Command.

The puzzle is what is the bomber picture intended to portray? The story is about an RAF Wellington medium bomber, but the picture is of a Luftwaffe Ju88 medium bomber in desert camouflage.

**| Chris Brockbank,**  
Rotary Winslow, Buckinghamshire

IT is unfortunate that your feature about the Belgian aircraft crash during World War Two is headed with a picture of the wrong type of aircraft, a DeHavilland Mosquito, not a Wellington, the type lost in this moving story.

As a boy at that time, I still remember seeing both types flying into action.

**| Humphrey Platts,**  
Rotary Club of Grantham, Lincolnshire

### **Editor's reply**

Thanks for your letters about the rogue Wellington which was taken from our photo library and published in error. Despite its similarity to a Wellington, eagle-eyed readers will have detected the Luftwaffe markings under the wing.

**CONTACT US** 

If you would like to contribute to the letters page, please email:

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



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# BEING A SUSTAINING MEMBER EVERY ROTARIAN, EVERY YEAR

**A**S the Endowment and Major Gifts Advisor, I am charged with finding Rotarians who wish to support our charity, The Rotary Foundation, with a substantial donation or pledge. However, this can be achieved one step at a time. Taking the first step is the hardest but can be the most rewarding.

In my article in the first edition of the Digital Magazine (*February 2024 edition*) which, I hope you have all read, I asked you all to become a Sustaining Member by donating at least **\$100** every year.

It's so easy to be a Sustaining Member – just logon to [rotarygbi.org/donate](https://rotarygbi.org/donate) and set up a monthly payment from your bank account for only **£6** per month, give permission for **25%** Gift Aid which increases your donation to **£7.50**.

Over 12 months this raises **£90** plus the current exchange rate will take you over **\$100**. It is that simple.

However, there is a smaller step option.

Analysis of contributions to the Foundation shows that there are hundreds of UK Rotarians who donate an amount, but it is less than **\$100**.

So, can I ask all of you to consider increasing this to reach the Sustaining Member level but if this is not possible for you then 'Every Rotarian Every Year' (EREY) is another option.

This is particularly relevant as the analysis shows that there are a number of members who have given around **\$25** to **\$30**.

If you make a personal annual payment of **\$25** then you become an EREY. All you have to do is visit [rotarygbi.org/donate](https://rotarygbi.org/donate)

Set up an annual deduction from your bank account for **£18** (or **£1.50** per month), permit Gift Aid of **25%** which takes your giving to **£22.50**, and the current exchange rate takes you to above **\$25**.

If your club donates **\$100** per capita, and every member makes a personal donation of **\$25** then the Club becomes an EREY Club and will receive a banner to display at meetings.

Which club will become the first to receive this coveted banner? Can I challenge every club in your district to reach this goal!

You could arrange an event to raise the **\$100** per member!

Alternatively, you could hold a weekly raffle or have a 'Happy Box' that members donate to. If you have a 'Sergeant at Arms,' then all 'fines' could go towards the total required.

Just think of the good we could do in the world if we had a district where every club qualified! Please note that only personal donations, not club donations, qualify for Gift Aid.

Turn the acorn of **\$25** into an Oak Tree of tens of thousands of dollars going towards District and Global Grants.

Think of the higher amount of District Designated Funds your club will have available to help in your local community. Think of the additional

Global Grant projects that will be possible nationally and internationally with these additional funds.

This can be achieved with just **50p** a week personal donation and the club raising just **\$100** per member.

I would love to hear from any club which is up for this challenge, and I look forward to presenting you with your EREY banner. ●

**FIND OUT MORE**

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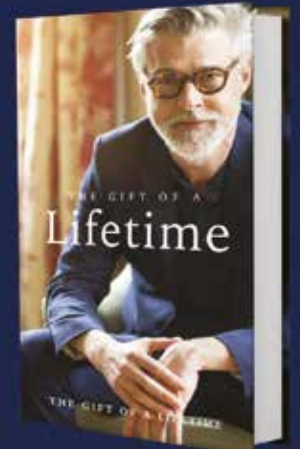
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# GOVERNMENT PRAISES END POLIO NOW CAMPAIGN

| STORY BY **DOUG WILLS** |  
**ROTARY CLUB OF LONDON**

**R**OTARY took a bow on the world stage last month. Rotary International President Gordon McNally joined a special event at the House of Commons to hear about the successful fight to rid the world of polio.

Government Minister, Andrew Mitchell, and President McNally, together with embassy commissioners from Commonwealth countries and Rotarians from the UK and around the world were told of the “remarkable progress” of Rotary’s End Polio Now campaign.

It was a poignant end to a Commonwealth week that included a service of thanksgiving at Westminster Abbey,

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Minister Mitchell told the packed event: “I adore Rotary. You are a most fantastic organisation and I have seen your work around the world. Thank you for your unwavering support over many, many years.

“Despite working in some of the most challenging environments we have reduced wild polio virus cases by more than 99 per cent. This is an enormous success. This initiative has saved over 1.5 million lives and enabled 16 million

people to walk. The absence of this initiative would have left them paralysed.

“I want to thank you for your collaboration, commitment and contributions. Rotary is an important partner for the government and the remarkable progress on polio eradication is a prime example of its impact.”

McNally had earlier told the representatives from as far afield as Pakistan to Putney: “Since the inception of our efforts, we have reached an astonishing three billion children with the polio vaccine, ensuring that even the most vulnerable, those living in conflict zones, remote areas, and whose families on the move, receive the protection they deserve.

“Perhaps, most significantly, we have averted a staggering 20 million cases of paralysis.

“To put all this into perspective, imagine that nearly one in every three individuals in the UK has been spared from the devastation of polio.

“Let’s recognise the science that says we can get this job done, let’s keep up the momentum and keep up the personal commitment as we approach the finishing line.”

Judith Diment, Vice Chair of the

International PolioPlus Committee, said: “The Commonwealth has been a key ally in the global polio eradication effort. Support from Commonwealth member states accounts for roughly one quarter of all of the global investment in polio eradication.”

She thanked Minister Mitchell for “his personal support to integrate a gender perspective into programming and increase women’s meaningful participation and decision-making. This is important work which we should all champion.”

Diment added: “As we have heard tonight, a polio free world is within our grasp, but will require our continued, deliberate support. Let’s continue to strive toward zero and together, we will End Polio once and for all.” ●

**FIND OUT MORE** ➔

To find out more about End Polio Now visit:

[rotarygbi.org/polio](https://rotarygbi.org/polio)



STORY BY GILL WEBSTER |  
 ROTARY CLUB OF NORWICH ST. EDMUND

# THE BIG INTERVIEW

**Driving into a war zone is a dangerous job, but one Norfolk Rotarian has been making regular trips to deliver humanitarian aid to Ukraine.**



**Name:** Scott Stones  
**Rotary Club:** Swaffham, Norfolk  
**Occupation:** Owner of Waites & Stones Haulage

**T**HE Rotary motto is Service Above Self, and nobody exemplifies this more than Scott Stones, a new Rotarian from Swaffham in Norfolk.

Scott, a 47-year-old man with a young family and a successful business, regularly takes the hazardous journey to the Donbas region of Ukraine, taking humanitarian aid to the front line.

Why does he do it and how does his partner cope knowing he is journeying through treacherous terrain, could be shot and killed at any time, in order to deliver much-needed supplies to people he doesn't know?

For Scott and partner Zoë Waites, it is the realisation of something they have wanted to do for a long time.

Waites & Stones is a haulage company carrying goods all over the UK, which also offers a storage facility for businesses and private individuals, as well as a safe place for storing caravans. A safe business in a safe part of Norfolk.

"We always wanted to help people but didn't know where to start. We have a

successful business, a happy family home and a roof over our heads. We are lucky. Many people don't have that," said Zoë.

"We do it because we can," said Scott.

"When the war in Ukraine started on February 22nd, 2022, we watched in horror. Then we heard that a local man, Ian Odgers, was looking for a trailer for the public to drop off donations, which could then be taken to the Ukrainian Embassy in London," said Scott.

The couple volunteered and it snowballed from there. They were contacted by Dorota Darnell who had co-founded the Polonia Group in Norwich and who requested that all items be taken to Poland.

The first trip taken by Scott was on March 1st, 2022. The images on television of desperate mothers and babies meant that the first container was filled with clothing, blankets and hundreds of packets of nappies and sanitary wear.

"Following that trip, I was asked if I was prepared to go to Lviv in Ukraine, about 70 kilometres from the Polish border. There, I saw women with small

children crossing the border and the men having to go back. I saw the horror of what was happening.

"I saw the frightened faces. I decided that if I was going to continue, I would do it on my terms. I have always been a bit like that," said Scott.

"It rolled from there. I started going to Kyiv taking medical aid, electrical items, as well as the other stuff.

"Good food and medicines are in very short supply unless you have money. And the ordinary people and soldiers don't have money.

"I have been ten times now and over that period I have seen small towns and villages decimated and turned to rubble.

"People are killed and those who have survived are living underground as best they can.

"Children are living with grandparents as fathers have gone to fight, many of whom are probably now dead, while mothers are either helping with the war effort or have also been killed.

"I saw one young woman walking across a field with two very small children,





**"I HAVE BEEN TEN TIMES NOW. OVER THAT PERIOD I HAVE SEEN SMALL TOWNS AND VILLAGES DECIMATED AND TURNED TO RUBBLE. PEOPLE KILLED AND THOSE WHO HAVE SURVIVED ARE LIVING UNDERGROUND AS BEST THEY CAN."**

one probably no more than two and the other about four, unwashed and thin, and her face was blank.

"She walked as drones fell around her and none of them took any notice. They were the living dead. I sometimes think those who were killed were better off."

Scott has taken six loads to Kyiv but now goes directly to the front line at Odessa, Kherson and other places in the Donbas region.

He unloads his container and transfers items to small vans and then delivers where items are needed. One container had several generators (many went to field hospitals) - these are regarded as essential as electricity supplies are sporadic.

"Since last December I have been working directly with the Moto Health Group in Odessa (*before the war it operated rather like the St John Ambulance*). It trains medics for civilian and front line work.

"Both men and women are trained. The men go to the front line, the women help those who are injured. I don't know who has the worst job."

He also works directly with Defence of Odessa 210 which helps with military supplies and assisting refugees to reach

safe areas as and when necessary. All are working in very difficult conditions and all with very little resources.

"There is a desperate need for medical and military equipment.

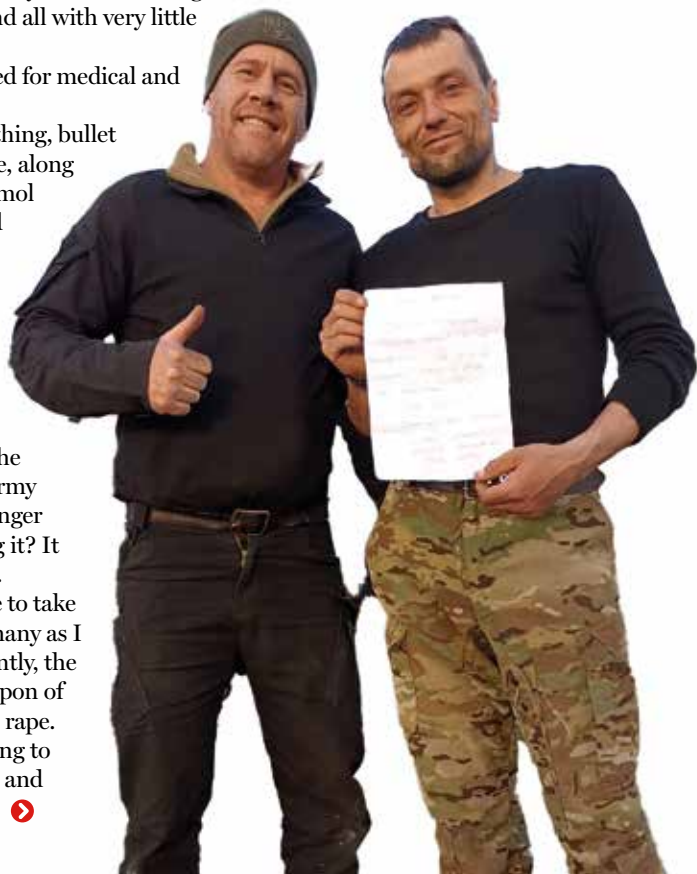
"Everyday items like clothing, bullet proof vests, boots and the like, along with medicines like paracetamol and morphine, bandages and plasters.

"Things that are thrown away or incinerated in this country are regarded as vital over there.

"The UK Government is helping the Ukrainian Government, but why can't the NHS, Police force, and the Army supply stuff which they no longer need rather than incinerating it? It could save thousands of lives.

"I was asked at one stage to take the morning-after pills - as many as I could. I queried this. Apparently, the Russian soldiers' biggest weapon of choice is rape. And continual rape.

"Some of the women going to the hospitals are so damaged and mutilated, they need surgery. 🚫





"I couldn't comprehend this. How can anybody do such a thing, and often in the presence of children!"

Reflecting on what he has witnessed in Ukraine, Scott admits that witnessing the sheer destruction and loss of life has left lasting images on his mind.

"In April the bridge I was about to cross was blown up and we had to hunker down while the local men made Molotov cocktails and threw them at the Russians.

"Another time we were attacked by drones which, thankfully, just missed us.

"Then there was the time we passed Bucha, the small village that was bombed. The smell was awful. The smell of death and destruction. You can see the pictures on television, but you can't smell pictures.

"Another time I was handed a gun as we were going through a village and was told to watch out for myself! That was scary, although I don't scare easily."

Asked about the heartwarming sights he has witnessed during his visits to Ukraine, the Swaffham Rotarian admits it is the gratitude they receive for the work which they are doing.

He added: "The smiles of the children when you give them sweets makes it worthwhile.

"Filthy hands, faces, bodies and clothes, with just clean streaks where they have been crying. And they are so happy when they see us. When you go to a seemingly destroyed village you see people crawl out from underground to meet us. A good part of an awful life.

"Then there are the soldiers I now

know. Most of the original military are now dead and the current ones come from all sorts of backgrounds and many parts of the world.

"One, Roma, was a bricklayer. During the day it is fairly peaceful and while the men have to occupy themselves waiting for nightfall. Roma paints.

"With sparse materials he paints pictures on the front line. They are amazing pictures. Then the paints go away and he holds other weapons."

Doesn't Zoë worry each time that Scott goes off that it might be the last time she sees him? She could be left by herself with three small boys, Zak 16, Zane 14 and Zander 9.

"He keeps coming back! The first two trips happened before I thought about it too much. I am a bit of a dreamer and think everything will be alright.

"So far it has been. I am very realistic about things though. Our eldest boy Zak wants to go with his dad but until he's 18 he stays here with me," she says.

Scott and Zoë are passionate about what they are doing and want to do more.

Initially they self-funded the journeys but now more people are getting to know about it they are fund-raising or donating money, although there is always a short-fall.

Scott is currently looking to buy an ex-Army truck to take to Ukraine which he will leave there to distribute aid.

The cost is likely to be in the region of £20,000, but the vehicle would enable local people to distribute aid where it is needed most. Scott would welcome direct contact from any Rotary clubs interested in supporting this venture.

Many Rotary clubs in Norfolk have raised money to help them, and have also supplied items for Scott to take with him.

The Rotary Club of Norwich St. Edmund, (one of the many clubs which have helped fund his trips and also given items) gave Scott a Paul Harris Award for his humanitarian work.

Zoë's job is collecting everything and doing all the paperwork. Scott freely admits he has no aptitude for the computer.

"I'm just a lorry driver," he admits.

"But paperwork is essential."

There must be a paper trail otherwise Scott wouldn't get into Ukraine and cross the country as he does regularly. Zoë's work is as essential as Scott's, but in a different way.

They are an amazing couple, although they would probably disagree. "We have to do what we can while we can. We are very lucky. These people have nothing." ●

**FIND OUT MORE** ➔

If you would like to get in touch with Scott or Zoë, please contact:

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# TURNING UP THE VOLUME FOR HEARING LOSS

BY JANNINE BIRTWISTLE | SPECIALIST ADVISER TEAM LEAD, HUMANITARIAN SERVICE

**A**RE you ever left out of discussions or feel hesitant to participate because you're unsure of what's being said? Does background noise make it hard for you to hear, or do others seem to mumble or slur their words? If so, you might be experiencing some level of hearing loss.

Last month's World Hearing Day focused on overcoming the challenges posed by social misperceptions and stigmatising mindsets through awareness raising and information sharing. According to the World Health Organization:

- by 2050 almost 2.5 billion people will have some degree of hearing loss
- over 1 billion young adults are at risk of permanent, avoidable hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices.

Hearing loss can vary in duration and severity ranging from temporary inconveniences to profound deafness.

It's a condition which doesn't discriminate by age, affecting individuals from infancy to adulthood and into old age.

Causes are diverse, including nutritional deficiencies, exposure to loud noises, viral infections, diseases like meningitis and chickenpox, traumatic injuries, genetic predispositions, and the natural ageing process.

Many people notice their hearing is changing but don't know what to do or simply want to ignore it.

Over time they may become increasingly isolated as it is easier to stop social activities, like Rotary, rather than

**"OVER 1 BILLION YOUNG ADULTS ARE AT RISK OF PERMANENT, AVOIDABLE HEARING LOSS DUE TO UNSAFE LISTENING PRACTICES."**

feel anxious or fearful of looking stupid.

A few years ago, as people of action, Rotarians in Rotary in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire decided to do something about it and, with district support, a new charity was born called

Hearing Ambassadors.

The charity aims to raise awareness about hearing loss, encourage people to look after their hearing health and provide support and resources for those affected by it including friends, family and colleagues.

In the UK almost half of all 12-35 year olds are exposed to unsafe levels of sounds. The charity's Sound Warriors initiative targets young people to educate them about the dangers of loud noises and how to prevent hearing loss.

Sound Warriors are young people who want to help everyone protect their hearing today to enjoy good listening tomorrow.

Together, let's take a proactive approach to help address a significant health concern affecting millions of people worldwide. ●



**FIND OUT MORE** ➔

To find out more or get involved, visit:  
[hearingambassadors.org](http://hearingambassadors.org)  
[soundwarriors.org](http://soundwarriors.org)  
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Rotary   
Great Britain & Ireland



# BIPOLAR UK: GETTING ANSWERS

Bipolar UK, a national partner to Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, is highlighting the devastating consequences of delays to bipolar diagnosis and how we can make a significant difference.

STORY BY **PETER MCLOUGHLIN** | **ROTARY BIPOLAR ECLUB**

**B**IPOLAR is the fourth largest mental health condition globally. It is more than twice as common in the UK as epilepsy, and autism. Despite this, there is no specialist care pathway for bipolar and more than 60% of people with bipolar receive no specialist treatment.

It takes an average of 9.5 years to get a diagnosis. Without timely diagnosis and management, bipolar can be a devastating condition where people take impulsive risks, massively overspend, and experience paranoid delusions which can result in the loss of jobs, homes, and lives. Someone living with bipolar is also 20 times more likely to take their own life, so diagnosis, treatment and support can be critical.

The delay to diagnosis is caused by lack of awareness of symptoms amongst the public, lack of expertise amongst clinicians and a lack of support throughout the diagnosis journey.

Bipolar UK's recent report addresses the situation and recommends cost-neutral changes that could dramatically improve the lives of those affected by bipolar.

One of the ways Rotary has supported Bipolar UK is by helping to promote their 'Could it be bipolar?' campaign. Launched in 2022, it highlights symptoms and directs people to resources on Bipolar UK's website, including a Mood Disorder Questionnaire and a Mood Tracker app.

The initial six-month campaign reached over eight million people through social media and press with over 18,000 people taking the Mood Disorder Questionnaire who could now be on a journey to a life-changing, even life-saving diagnosis.

Bipolar UK's campaign evaluation

demonstrated clear successes but also highlighted the need to focus on healthcare engagement, because a lack of knowledge amongst GPs was cited as one of the barriers to diagnosis.

In response, Bipolar UK has created a Clinical Advisory Panel to help increase engagement. They are also trialling a six-month campaign in GP surgeries in north-east England with posters highlighting symptoms in waiting rooms and letters posted to GP Practice Managers.

Bipolar UK is now looking at ways to expand the campaign to reach more young people. Students are a particular target as this is the age-range when people often first experience symptoms.

Receiving a timely diagnosis can be life-altering.

The Rotary Bipolar eClub is working with Bipolar UK to develop a global bipolar awareness project that will enable Rotary clubs to play a crucial role within their local communities.

Beginning in England and Wales the club aims to develop a scalable model, that can be implemented across the world. Through sharing information, resources, and access to peer support services, Rotary could help transform the lives of millions. ●

**FIND OUT MORE** ➔

For more details about how you can get involved, email Peter McLoughlin, Public Image Officer, Rotary Bipolar eClub.

[rotary@bipolaruk.org](mailto:rotary@bipolaruk.org)  
[bipolaruk.org](https://bipolaruk.org)



**Could it be bipolar?**  
Struggling with your mental health?  
Symptoms of bipolar can often be overlooked

- Have you experienced periods of low mood, little energy and no interest in things that you usually enjoy?
- Have there been times when you get very little sleep, have taken more risks and/or made impulsive decisions?
- Is there a history of bipolar in your family?
- Have you been told you have treatment resistant depression?
- Have you tried different formulations and doses of antidepressants that don't seem to help much, if at all?

**Find out if you might have bipolar:**

1. Scan the QR code below or visit [bipolaruk.org](https://bipolaruk.org)
2. Take the Mood Disorder Questionnaire (MDQ)
3. Download the Bipolar UK Mood Tracker app
4. Use the app to track your mood for the next few weeks
5. Make an appointment with your GP. Tell them why you're concerned, show them your mood graphs on the app and your MDQ results. They will decide if you need a referral for assessment.

For more info scan the QR code or visit: <https://www.bipolaruk.org/diagnosing-bipolar>

**Could it be bipolar?**  
Struggling with your mental health?  
Symptoms of bipolar can often be overlooked

This scale is not meant to be definitive but is an indicator of possible behaviours

10	Feelings of hopelessness and guilt, thoughts of suicide, little movement, impossible to do anything
9	Feelings of suicidal thoughts, no way out, no movement, everything is black and it will always be like this
8	Feelings of panic and anxiety, concentration difficult and memory poor, some content to read
7	Slight withdrawal from social situations, concentration less than usual, slight agitation
6	Absent in balance, no symptoms of depression or mania, life is going well and the subject is good
5	Self-esteem good, optimistic, positive and energetic, good decisions and get work done
4	Very productive, overflowing to excess (phone calls, writing, smoking, food, shopping and hobbies)
3	Inflated self-esteem, rapid thoughts and speech, numerous productive simultaneous tasks
2	Like touch with reality, inebriated, no sleep, paranoid and vindictive, reckless behaviour
1	Loss touch with reality, irrational spending, religious delusions and hallucinations

For more info scan the QR code or visit: <https://www.bipolaruk.org/diagnosing-bipolar>

# LIVING IN THE PLASTIC AGE

| STORY BY **BRIAN JONSON** |  
**ROTARY CLUB OF MARLOW BRIDGE**

**I**N the summer of 2021, with Covid still very much on our minds, the environmental group of District 1090, covering the Thames Valley, decided on a project to bring the district together. And so, the Thames Valley Clean Up was born.

The project was tied to the goals of the Rotary initiative EndPlasticSoup, with which District 1090 had forged close links with through the Dutch founder, Gert-Jan van Dommelen:

- To reduce the amount of plastic (and other debris) that gets carried into our seas and oceans.
- To raise awareness of the issues of micro plastic waste finding its way into the water table, rivers and oceans, and our food chain.
- To work with the local community and partner with other interested environmental groups including schools, many of whom have active environmental programmes.
- To respect the river users and the wildlife.
- To raise awareness of Rotary as a responsible environmental activist working with and for the community.
- To recruit new members, volunteers and friends.

With this in mind, we needed to know whether a river clean up was practical. In October 2021, with the help of Thames River Rescue, Henley Sea Cadets, Henley Mermaids and a few friends, a successful pilot was held, which received good media coverage, and Henley Rotary Club acquired some new members.

We worked with the local authorities, the Environment Agency and landowners. The local council was very helpful, offering help and advice on disposing of the collected debris.

It was decided to launch the river clean up in May 2022 when there would be minimum disruption to wildlife, the boating season on the River Thames had yet to start in earnest, and river levels were at a safe rate.

A great deal of preparatory work was put in with water-based risk assessments, along with providing help and advice for Rotary clubs looking to take part, supplying river maps and other useful information to promote the event.

We were ready to launch with flyers, newsletters, Zoom meetings and personal contacts. District 1090 was incredibly supportive. Throughout the run-up, we were talking to the Environment Agency and received lots of support from lock keepers along the River Thames.

The 2022 river clean up was spread out over 10 days, including two weekends. By mutual agreement some clubs collected outside the time frame with other clubs organising school groups or working with local community groups. The first clean up was a great success with clubs asking 'when next?'

The Environment Agency suggested that Rotary should contact Thames21, an organisation which mobilises thousands of volunteers each year to clean and green London's 400-mile network of waterways.

They were holding their second Plasticblitz in September 2022. In principle, their concept was the same - to collect litter and to raise awareness by encouraging local groups to take part.



**“THE PLASTICBLITZ HAS PROVED A HUGE SUCCESS. THAMES21 REPORT THAT NITROUS OXIDE CYLINDERS WERE DISCOVERED BY MARLOW COLLECTORS. THE STRANGEST ITEM COLLECTED WAS A PLASTIC CROCODILE HEAD.”**

There were several differences, though. The Plasticblitz was focused on the River Thames from Windsor to the estuary, with groups encouraged to register for this European Union-funded project, ‘Preventing plastic pollution’.

Rotary 1090 agreed to join with Thames21, and a separate entry process was set up for Rotary clubs, who had the option of the full scientific study or just a basic bag count.

The Plasticblitz was now extended from Hungerford in Berkshire to the Thames estuary, with each group

showing the proposed collection area on Google Maps.

Each participating group was identified with a short descriptive paragraph on the Thames21 website which was available to Rotarians, environment groups and the public.

The registration system worked well, and we were delighted to find a club from South London and one from Essex had joined the Plasticblitz via our entry registration.

In 2023, we formalised the partnership with the Environment Agency, Thames21 and Rotary in the Thames Valley. By mutual agreement the event was moved to May which would run over three weekends, one of which coincided with National Rivers Week.

The Plasticblitz was expanded to include Rotary districts in London and East Anglia.

One of the spin-offs was that the students from the media department of Reading College asked if they could make a film about the Plasticblitz which is now

available on the website.

The Plasticblitz has proved a huge success. Thames21 reports that nitrous oxide cylinders were discovered by Marlow collectors. The strangest item collected was a plastic crocodile head.

We are now looking forward to this year’s Plasticblitz which takes place from May 25th to June 9th.

If your district has not adopted the Plasticblitz then your club can join via our website where you will find everything you need to know and be able to register. ●

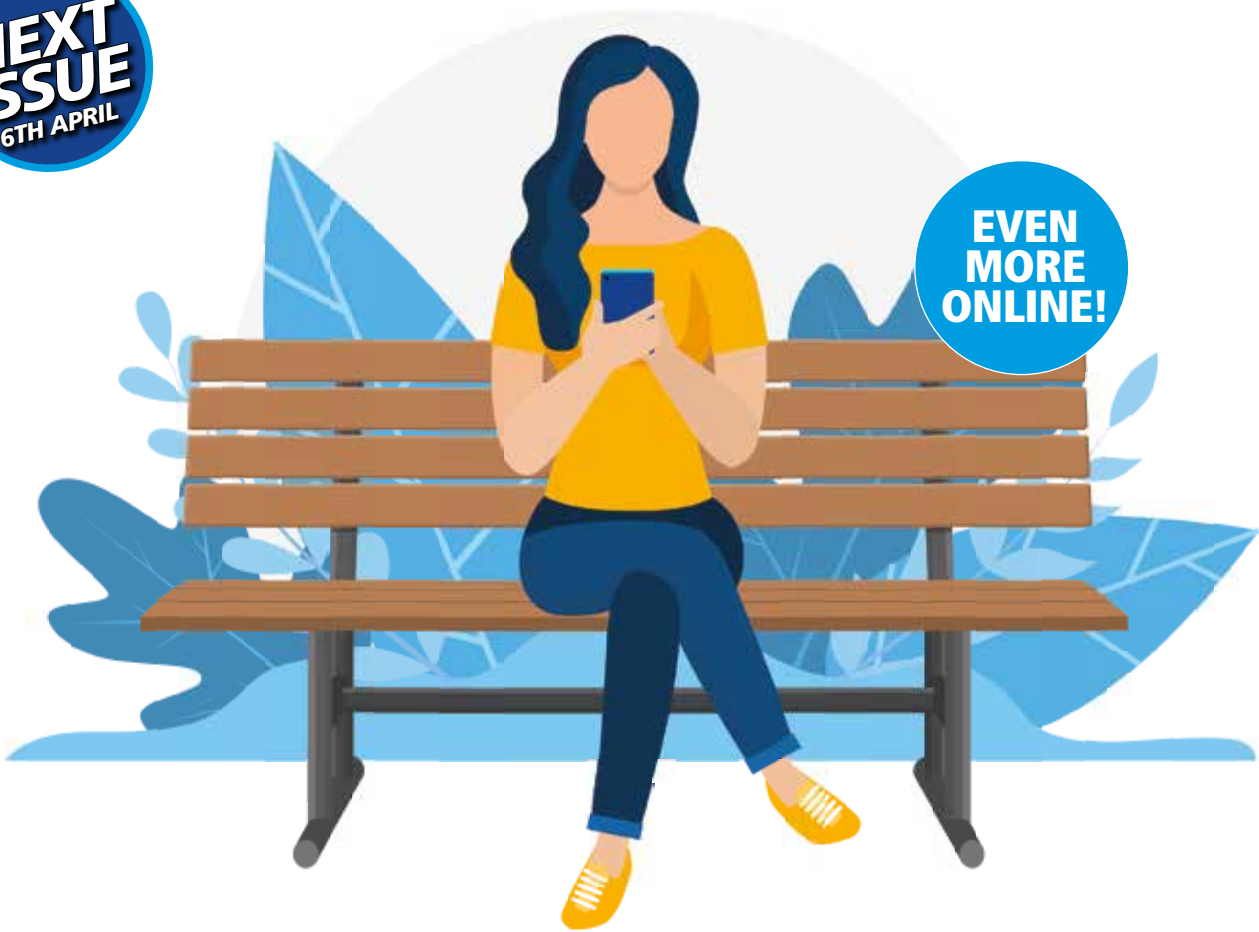
**FIND OUT MORE** 

For more information about Plasticblitz, and how to register, visit:

[rotaryplasticblitz.uk](http://rotaryplasticblitz.uk)  
[plasticblitz@gmail.com](mailto:plasticblitz@gmail.com)



**NEXT  
ISSUE**  
6TH APRIL

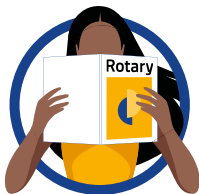


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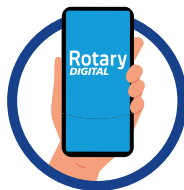
# Rotary Digital. Your monthly online magazine.

As well as your quarterly Rotary Magazine in print, delivered straight to your door, you can also enjoy Rotary Digital, a new monthly online magazine - look out for the email link in your inbox or scan the QR code.

Each publication has its own exclusive content, making both print and digital essential reading for the Rotary stories you love.



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**Rotary**   
Great Britain & Ireland





# CREATING SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES

STORY BY PHILIP DYER |  
SPECIALIST ADVISER TEAM LEAD, PUBLIC IMAGE

**R**ELECTING on the recent launch of *Rotary Digital* in February, I am thrilled to witness the strategic shift in how Rotary Great Britain & Ireland shares information to our members and beyond. The introduction of *Rotary Digital* marks a significant milestone, revolutionising the way we deliver messages, news, and updates to our Rotary community.

From its inception, *Rotary Digital* has captured my admiration with its stunning visual presentation. It seamlessly complements our much-coveted *Rotary Magazine* making both products essential reading.

This digital platform bridges a crucial gap, offering a refreshing, dynamic, and vibrant approach to delivering timely information directly to our computers, phones, and tablets and is a testament to Rotary's commitment to staying relevant in the digital age.

As part of my role as leader of the Public Image Specialist Adviser Team for Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, I naturally look at most things through a public image lens. What we have is a treasure trove of inspiring stories which may otherwise have gone unnoticed.

*Rotary Digital's* accessibility is a great feature. The ability to read articles on the go and instantly share them across various social media channels, district platforms, WhatsApp groups and club websites empowering our members to engage actively and spread Rotary's message far and wide. This aligns perfectly with our Rotary Action Plan's goal of expanding our reach with impact.

Perhaps it could be a regular feature to bring to your club meeting, where a member shares a story from *Rotary Magazine* or *Rotary Digital* that resonated, inspired to educate them?

It also acts as a handy arsenal to share with prospective members to showcase what Rotary does.

I encourage everyone to explore the previous editions of *Rotary Digital*, available at [magazine.rotarygbi.org](https://magazine.rotarygbi.org), and anticipate the email announcing the latest release at the start of each month.

While I wholeheartedly endorse *Rotary Digital* as a companion resource to our flagship *Rotary Magazine*, let us not forget the unparalleled quality and significance of our print publication.

Crafted by Managing Editor, Dave King, with regular contributors, and

meticulously curated by our dedicated Communications Team at the Rotary Support Centre, the *Rotary Magazine* continues to uphold its reputation as a beacon of excellence in Rotary print media.

Published four times a year and delivered to your doorstep, the *Rotary Magazine* covers a wide array of topics, from exclusive interviews with Rotary leaders to groundbreaking service initiatives.

As members of Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, you receive the *Rotary Magazine* and *Rotary Digital* as part of your annual subscription, a testament to the value we place on keeping our members informed and engaged.

Let us take pride in our world class print magazine whilst embracing the modernity and visual appeal of *Rotary Digital* a publication fit for a visual world. ●



READ IT HERE   
[rotarygbi.org/magazine](https://rotarygbi.org/magazine)

A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt and jeans, is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is leaning over a garden bed, working with plants. Next to her is a young girl with braided hair, wearing a red polo shirt, who is looking down at the plants. The background shows a colorful outdoor setting with trees and a banner that partially reads "NGE".

# BUILDING A FUTURE IN **NORTH STAR**

Rotary GB&I Chair-Elect, Nitesh Joshi outlines how the North Star project is going to have a big impact on Rotary in these isles.

**"NORTH STAR GREW FROM NEEDING A SOUND FUNDING CASE, YET IT IS MORE A VISION TO TRULY GROW OUR MEMBERSHIP TO 60,000 BY 2028."**





| STORY BY **NITESH JOSHI** |  
**CHAIR-ELECT, ROTARY GB&I**  
**REGIONAL BOARD**

# NORTH STAR

60,000 MEMBERS BY 2028

**O**UR great organisation has to adapt now to keep up with the vast changes happening in wider society. While becoming recognised as a Regional Pilot by Rotary International has been a boost, our new regional governance arrangements were a home-grown initiative.

Our strategic Regional Board can consider and implement long-term plans; much as you'll find in big business.

We finally have a five-year strategic plan and through continuity the Board intends to see that through.

After all, it's not a coincidence that North Star is a five-year vision.

Projects are considered through small working groups that include specific skills available in the wider membership.

Membership growth and experience sees a positive experience starting with that initial enquiry and continuing by fulfilling their desire to give something back to society through Rotary.

The communications workstream is streamlining many aspects of online information, administration and messaging, for members and the general public.

Learning and development is reviewing the whole facilitated learning programme.

Also, by locally supplementing the materials on the RI Learning Centre, we have an opportunity to get accreditation and be recognised for the skills we can offer potential future leaders in business, as much as within Rotary.

Organisational effectiveness encompasses cluster development, financial stability through different approaches as much as cost efficiency, and the complex legal plan for Incorporated status. Specialist advisors have a

greater GB&I regional focus and work collaboratively with the Support Centre.

Becoming one of two Regional Pilot areas also brought the potential for RI investment, supporting their Regional Adaptability pilots. Getting RI funding was a successful yet bumpy ride, much as with any business investment.

Detailed tasks are linked to the Action Plan and our Workstream outputs, with Key Performance Indicators to monitor progress.

North Star grew from needing a sound funding case, yet it is more a vision to truly grow our membership to 60,000 by 2028; through an expansion of business as usual, including new routes to membership, and projects to modernise the organisation and make it more appealing to modern society.

We are now into the operational phase of implementing the North Star whole and sharing the vision with district teams and your clubs.

This is complementary to, not instead of, the ongoing work of the Specialist Advisor teams, Support Centre and very much the districts. It is now for each of you to help translate the ambitious vision into a successful reality.

## OUR NEW MEMBERSHIP CHANNELS

Before explaining the new membership channels we have let's consider Rotary GB&I to be an engine with one piston firing – consider this is our traditional club membership piston which, until now, has been our only effective channel for attracting new members into Rotary.

This piston has been firing since Rotary started and, over the years, has become tired and less effective.

A few years ago Direct Membership was announced which is our ubiquitous 24 x 7 membership channel where members join online and, after payment and induction, join our Direct Members' community. Here they communicate virtually and participate in active service projects. Direct Membership is the second piston for our engine and with

over 400 current members it is taking some of the load off piston one.

Corporate Membership is our new third membership channel where clubs invite local businesses in their area to become members.

Local estate agents, health clubs, schools and even your club venue can become potential members joining your club. Corporate members bring diversity, business experience and varying backgrounds into Rotary to help sprout new ideas and re-ignite projects.

Our third piston is helping to carry our membership load along with the other two – each piston directly contributing to membership.

All of the above routes to membership permit one new member to join at a time.

Enterprise Membership is our new, exciting fourth route into Rotary GB&I and allows us to attract large businesses with more than 100 employees to join at once.

Enterprise clients benefit from working with Rotary using our branding, setting up customised “volunteer” / “impact” days, and measuring their employees' volunteer hours.

Enterprise clients are also able to fulfil their environmental and sustainability responsibilities as well as benefitting from advanced leadership and development training provided to their employees by Rotary and the online learning centre.

The newly formed Enterprise Team at our support centre will support and find Enterprise clients.

With four pistons firing and Enterprise able to recruit 100 to 1,000 members at once, our North Star goal becomes more achievable. ●

**FIND OUT MORE**



Scan the QR code to find out more about North Star

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# BE PREPARED FOR FUN AND FRIENDSHIP

Rotary and the Scouts have bonds going back to Rotary's founder, Paul Harris, 90 years ago. Today, the International Fellowship of Scouting Rotarians perpetuates that link

| STORY BY **ADRIAN FAIERS** |

**R**OTARY and Scouting/Guiding share many values, such as integrity, respect for others, taking care of the world we live in, empowering girls and wanting to make a difference and Rotarians have supported Scouting and Guiding since their inception.

Rotary founder Paul Harris was a recipient of Scouting's prestigious Silver Buffalo award in 1934.

Many current Rotarians are or have been involved with these organisations, perhaps as members or leaders themselves or maybe supporting their family members. Through their Rotary clubs, they might now be helping local groups with funding or using their expertise.

The International Fellowship of Scouting Rotarians has over 1,000 members from 45 countries.

As with any Rotary Fellowship, there are three strands of opportunities – using your passion and skills in service projects, meeting people who share your interests and finding new experiences.

Membership is open not just to Rotarians and Rotaractors but also their families.

One of the objectives of the IFSR is to provide opportunities to meet with others who share a passion for Scouting/Guiding.

One of the ways we get together is at Annual General Meetings. These are always held in an interesting place such as at Gilwell Park in East London during the annual reunion, or on a boat cruising the canals of Birmingham. During one weekend away in Poole, the AGM was held on Brownsea Island.

Husband and wife team Shirley and Adrian Faiers were Scout leaders in Middlesex for many years but, sadly, they were never part of a World Jamboree



contingent during that time.

But in 2007, the World Scout Jamboree came to Chelmsford Essex, celebrating one hundred years of Scouting, and with other members of IFSR UK they were privileged to meet Scouting Rotarians and Scouts from around the World at the IFSR booth.

The Fellowship promotes the growth and development of the Scout/Guide movement, giving active encouragement at local, national and international level.

The IFSR Community Service Award can be given by a Rotary club to a Scout or Guide unit of their choice that they wish to recognise for performing community service.

The award may be given annually to any Scout or Guide unit by any Rotary club. Recipients are selected by the Rotary club.

The Fellowship also recognises Rotary clubs that render service in support of Scout and/or Guide activities and individuals who have provided exceptionally unique service to Scouting and Rotary.

For example, Downham Market Rotary Club in Norfolk was recognised for the part they played in upgrading the local Scout and Guide Hut, not just by donating money but also by using the

members' expertise in the design and planning of a new kitchen and toilet facilities.

Ken Scott, who hails from St. Albans, remembers that a few years ago District 1260, which is Rotary in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, arranged for some Bulgarian Scouts to join an inbound Rotary Youth Exchange Camp, with local Scout families providing the home-hosting element.

William Harmsworth, the Fellowship's current Chairman, points out that both Rotary and Scouting/ Guiding are acutely aware of the need to protect our environment and to support humanitarian aid worldwide. IFSR UK is helping Rotary clubs and Scout/Guide groups to become involved in projects of this nature.

If you would like more information about joining IFSR or about IFSR awards, contact: [info@IFSRinRIBI.org](mailto:info@IFSRinRIBI.org)

The Fellowship would love to hear from Rotarians about any connections they or their clubs may have with local Scout Groups and Guide Companies.

And limited funds are currently available as a 'top up' for small local projects where clubs are working with Scouts or Guides and need a little financial help. ●

# 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.



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**"THE FELLOWSHIP PROMOTES THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCOUT/GUIDE MOVEMENT, GIVING ACTIVE ENCOURAGEMENT AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL."**

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# IN MY DREAMS I DANCE!

For polio ambassador Anne Wafula Strike, her story is one of hope after being stricken by polio aged two, to one day representing Kenya at the Paralympics

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

**W**HAT'S it like to live with polio? According to Paralympic athlete and Rotary polio ambassador, Anne Wafula Strike, her body is "like a jellyfish".

"Polio has affected me in a funny way, affecting my nervous system which has prevented some of my muscles from growing," she explained.

"Some people will have a weak hand or a weak leg, but the way polio affected my body was in an 'S' shape all the way from the top to the bottom, so some of my limbs are bigger than others.

"I've got no muscle growth on the left side of my trunk, and what is presented on the right-hand side of my body is muscle, but it does not get any signal.

"Sometimes I look at myself and say 'I've got a body like a jellyfish'."

Anne's polio journey from Kenya to Britain has been well documented in the book *'In My Dreams I Dance'*, an evocative autobiography with tales of prejudice, friendship and motherhood, leading to triumph over testing circumstances.

It is a tale of adversity, endurance and accomplishment.

From being a healthy child one day living in Mihuu, a village in western Kenya, the next this two-year-old child was regarded as an outcast by the elders, struck down by a mysterious illness which no-one knew the cause or treatment of.

"I was coming down from the river with my mother carrying small pots and mimicking what she was doing, and then as we approached the homestead

I fell down," recalled Anne. "I had developed a high temperature and my grandmother thought I'd been bitten by a snake. By the following day, I'd lost consciousness and my whole body was limp.

"They called in a witch doctor, but nothing happened. They called in the Christians who forced holy water down my throat. This went on for several months and then my dad, who was in the Army, was advised to give me up.

"They told him: 'This is a woman, she is no good, she is a second class citizen. Because she is disabled she will not amount to what the African woman is supposed to do. She won't go to the river to fetch water or firewood, and be the traditional wife'.

"But my father told the community he would not give me up. He told them: 'She is my daughter, she is my fourth, she is my blood. There's no way I would abandon my child'.

"My family were adamant they wanted to





**“MY FAMILY WERE ADAMANT THEY WANTED TO FIND A CURE FOR ME, YET THE VILLAGE HAD TRIED TO BURN DOWN MY DAD’S HOUSE, AND THEN HE WAS ADVISED BY HIS PARENTS AND ELDER BROTHERS TO JUST GO.”**

find a cure for me, yet the village had tried to burn down my dad’s house, and then he was advised by his parents and elder brothers to just go.”

So Anne’s family headed for the Kenyan capital Nairobi where British doctors at the hospital advised them she has poliomyelitis and began the long path towards giving her mobility using calipers and crutches, and with her legs in braces. Anne ended up at a school for the physically handicapped, before going onto mainstream secondary school.

As she tells her story, one she has recounted many times, she reflects on how hard it was growing up, being treated differently, and how hard her family had to fight against prejudice and hostility from others. “With a lack of knowledge, people thought my disability was contagious. I had to fight for everything.”

Anne went to university where she qualified as a teacher before falling in love and marrying a man from Newcastle.

Anne and Norman moved to Essex, and defied medical experts when she gave birth to a baby boy called Timothy.

Following the birth, Anne was looking for ways of losing weight and stumbled upon wheelchair racing.

She turned out to be pretty good, and remarkably found herself competing at the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens as a Kenyan athlete, becoming the first wheelchair racer from East Africa to compete at this prestigious event.

Anne later switched allegiance to represent Great Britain at international meetings. “England is where I first discovered wheelchair racing existed so I do feel like I am from Great Britain. I was very proud when I competed for Kenya in

Athens, so I consider myself an Essex girl from Africa!”

In 2014, Anne was awarded an MBE for services to disability sport and charity, and in recent years has become a campaigner for disabled rights.

Six years ago, while on a train, she was unable to reach a toilet in time because of her wheelchair. She lost control of her bladder and urinated into her clothing. Afterwards, Anne criticised CrossCountry trains for failing to provide a working disabled accessible toilet.

Anne has also worked closely as a Rotary ambassador joining the campaign to eliminate polio. “I live in Essex, and we had the discovery of that polio sample in North London in 2022, just 30 miles away,” she added. “This is frightening and goes to show how polio is just a few hours away from anyone.

“Rotarians are my heroes and heroines because they are still fighting this disease. Until every child in the world is vaccinated, until every child gets their booster, then we are not safe.

“And that’s why we have to make sure that parents get their children vaccinated and that the parents understand the importance of the polio vaccine.” ●

**FIND OUT MORE** ➔

To read more about Anne, including Rotary club speaker opportunities, visit: [annestrike.org](http://annestrike.org)



# JOIN ROTARY AND SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY.

Joining **Rotary** gives you the platform to make a difference through volunteering. If you’ve got a cause you’re passionate about, or a project you want to get off the ground, **Rotary** is the place to turn your ideas into action.



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Rotary 





Transforming Lives & Global Cleft Care For 25 Years

**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 1.9 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

- **1.9M+** 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](mailto: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.

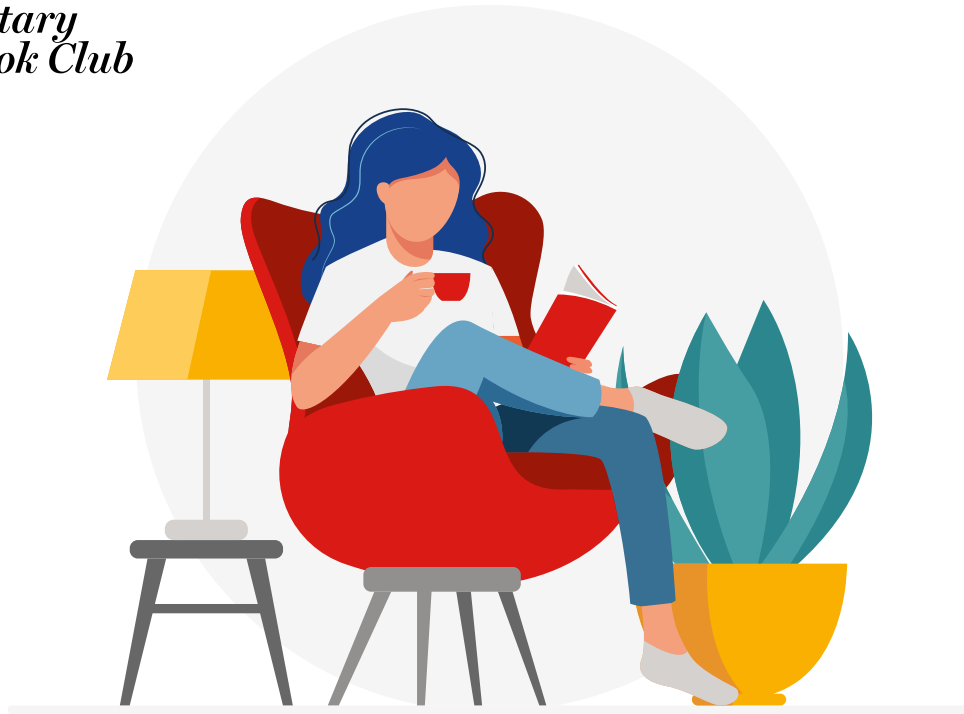
Perhaps their most healing intervention was the promise they made: They would always be there. As soon as it was safe, Savannah would receive the cleft surgery she so needed.

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.

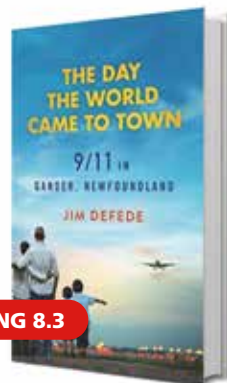


# Get reading with Rotary

A warm welcome to our second edition of 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 |



SCORING 8.3

**H**ELLO to all you Rotary Readers! Thank you to all of you who have got in touch and sent messages of support saying that you think the book club is a great idea and a very warm welcome to those who have never been in a book club before.

Our first book was **'The Day The World Came to Town' by Jim DeFede**

a non-fiction book which describes how the residents of Gander, Newfoundland came together to help the thousands of people stranded in their town when US airspace was closed on 9/11.

This book highlights the fact that there's so much that goes on that we will probably never know about – we all

remember where we were when we heard of the attacks of 9/11 and saw the TV footage, but few of us will have thought of what happened to the aircraft that were mid-flight at the time.

One of our readers was evacuated from Canary Wharf on the day, and his colleagues were stranded in the US for 3 weeks. Others of our readers have been to Gander in the past, with one spending 24 hours in Gander airport in the 1970s due to a flight delay, after having spent 2 months as a medical student in Newfoundland, where they experienced great kindness and generosity of spirit from the locals. One of our members had also flown into Gander 18 times when it was a busy international airport.

Many of you hadn't heard of the book before, so we've already hit on one of the major benefits of being a member of a book club! The words "feel good", "heartwarming", "fascinating", "riveting",



“brilliant”, “sad”, “inspiring” and “easy to read” were used, and one member’s family read it too!

Some found that it was a little difficult to keep track of the number of characters in the book, and the suggestion was made that it would have been helpful to have an appendix with the list of flights and their destinations - that would have been an interesting read in itself. It was also felt that it finished rather abruptly with the flights leaving, but that’s life – the airlines were focused on getting their planes in the air again and probably had no concept of the huge relief effort in the town.

I particularly like the observation that “the book shows just how many people and places became connected as a result of 9/11” – the experience of being diverted to Gander was truly a “sliding doors” moment for some of the passengers. The 20th anniversary edition revisits some of them and the afterword is an interesting read. Many kept in touch with those they met in Gander and formed lasting friendships.

I would challenge anyone not to be deeply moved by the story upon story of love and kindness.

Gander had a relatively high level of unemployment and social issues like alcohol and drug abuse, just like many other places, and in financial terms the residents were not well off.

That didn’t stop them opening their homes, giving whatever they had and spending all their time looking after the plane passengers – they did it straight away and without question, all for complete strangers.

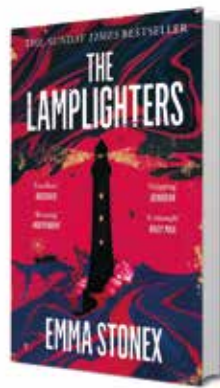
The level of organisation demonstrated was incredibly impressive too – there was excellent planning right from the word go; despite originally being told the planes would only be grounded for a few hours and that all passengers would have to remain on board, the mayor and those in charge of the airport demonstrated extraordinary foresight and put detailed and effective plans in place.

This book really highlights the importance of service organisations like Rotary. Interestingly,

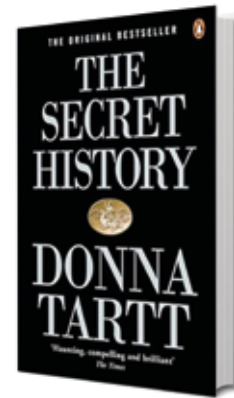
Rotary gets a mention in the musical ‘Come From Away’ but not in the book, but the contributions of the Lions are frequently talked of in the book.

I wondered whether there were any passengers who made a nuisance of themselves, although on reflection I’d rather read the positive stories anyway!

It also made me smile that a lot of people sought out the nearest pub as a refuge. Some of our readers felt that the way the book was written was in quite a journalistic fashion, but given that the author is a journalist and this is a non-fiction book, that’s not entirely surprising. It affected the scores a little, but the stories themselves shine with hope and pure goodness. Your scores ranged from 8 to 9, with an average of 8.3.



Moving on, our second book, **‘The Lamplighters’** By Emma Stonex, is a novel based on a true story. Please send me your views on it – do tell me all about what you like and don’t like by May 15, in time for me to sum it all up for the July magazine.



Drum roll please - the result of the vote for our third book is **‘The Secret History’** By Donna Tartt

I would like to thank our friends at Rotary Radio for our first book club podcast and advert. I’m happy to speak to clubs via Zoom about the book club - do get in touch if that’s of interest.

You can also keep in touch with the latest updates by liking the Rotary Book Club Facebook page.

Tell me what you think of the latest reads, and help select future books. Please keep the recommendations coming for future books for us to read.

Rotary the word over – enjoy! ●

GET IN TOUCH 

[facebook.com/rotarybookclub](https://facebook.com/rotarybookclub)



**VOTE FOR OUR FOURTH BOOK**

**‘The Perfect Golden Circle’**  
By Benjamin Myers

**‘An Equal Music’**  
By Vikram Seth

**‘Beneath a Scarlet Sky’**  
By Mark Sullivan

**VOTE HERE** 

[bookclub@rotarygbi.org](mailto:bookclub@rotarygbi.org)





# CLUBS CONNECT FOR THE CAMEROON CATALYST

**W**HAT connects a town in Lancashire, the Isle of Man and a village in Cameroon? The answer is the Cameroon Catalyst.

Cameroon Catalyst is a student-driven international development charity empowering sustainable change in rural Cameroon.

The charity was co-founded in 2009 by a team of civil engineering students at the University of Southampton in partnership with a native Cameroonian living in the UK.

For the first five years, the charity's efforts were focused on the village of Bambouti in eastern Cameroon where five projects were delivered over five years; a medical centre, a mechanical workshop, a solar electrification hub and improved mud-brick housing.

The charity then looked to support villages across the wider Eastern Region, where access to clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene was the most significant barrier to development.

Cameroon Catalyst committed to a programme of Water, Sanitation and

Hygiene (WASH) projects with which Rotary became involved.

In 2016, Tom Edwards was one of the team from Southampton who travelled to Cameroon as part of a clean water well project.

On his return he sent a request to his grandfather, Mike Edwards, for £500 towards the cost of the visit and ensuing construction works.

Mike was International Lead for the Rotary Club of Radcliffe in Lancashire. The funding was agreed, and Tom delivered a presentation to Radcliffe Rotary about the charity.

This so enthused the club that an initiative began to raise £5,000 during 2018/19 for another well.

In the end a total of £6,370 was raised – including £1,000 from a District 1285 (which is Rotary in North West England and the Isle of Man) Foundation Grant.

In 2022, it was agreed to raise £6,000 to build a ventilated latrine block when as part of the fund-raising, the club president walked coast to coast across Scotland over two weeks when, with

the support of clubs across the district, £2,400 was raised to complete the club's fund-raising target. One of the clubs to respond to the appeal was the Rotary Club of Douglas in the Isle of Man.

International Lead for the Douglas club, John Mudge, asked if they could give further financial support through funds which had been ear-marked for an international project which they had been unable to identify.

Cameroon Catalyst was a perfect fit - a properly managed charity with a track record through another Rotary club, whose needs were small enough that a few thousand pounds would make a real difference.

The two Rotary clubs have agreed to work together on the next round of fund-raising required by Cameroon Catalyst for a deep water well, with solar powered pumping and above ground water storage and distribution.

Hopefully this will be the start of a long-term partnership.

As Mike Edwards remarked: "The power of Rotary is significant when clubs work together." ●





# ROTARY 2024 **ACTION** **SUMMIT** NEWCASTLE

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Rotary   
Great Britain & Ireland





# BE PART OF THE ACTION

Eve Conway, Rotary International Director 2023-25, invites you to the Rotary Action Summit, coming to Newcastle this November.

**O**NE of the great joys of being a part of Rotary is being connected to 1.4 million other changemakers, in our local areas and around the world.

Rotary Action Summits, formerly known as Institutes, are one of the highlights of our calendars, giving us all a chance to come together, network, learn and be inspired.

This year's Action Summit heads to Newcastle, from November 8th – 10th, and I'm extending the invitation to all Rotary members across Great Britain and Ireland to experience this for yourselves.

We're excited to have Rotary leaders from across Great Britain and Ireland, and the world, joining us too.

Alongside me, our first wave of speakers includes Mário César Martins de Camargo, who takes on the role of Rotary International President from 1st July 2025. Mário, a member of the Rotary Club of Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil, has put boosting Rotary's public image high on his priorities.

As well as Mário, we'll also be joined by past RI President Holger Knaack, Trustee of The Rotary Foundation, so expect amazing examples of how the Foundation is supporting clubs in changing lives, and how it could also do the same for your club.

From closer to home, Nitesh Joshi, Chair of the Rotary GB&I Board for 2024/25 will be bringing you updates on the first year of our North Star project, our five-year plan to boost membership to 60,000 by 2028.

Not only is this an incredible opportunity to hear from and network with Rotary's senior leaders, the Action Summit is also a platform for you to share with them the amazing work you're doing in your club and community.

We want to put our clubs at the heart of this event; after all, no one does 'action' quite like the 1.4 million People of Action that make up our organisation.

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Has your club got a project you're proud of? Maybe you've done something unique to address a need in your community.

Or perhaps you've harnessed the power of The Rotary Foundation to have an impact overseas.

Then come and be part of our event programme in Newcastle. Your stories are the story of Rotary. They are the way we inspire and learn from each other, develop individually, and collectively grow our organisation.

If you or your club have something amazing to share, I encourage you to contact Roger Stent, the Action Summit

Chairman, on [roger@strlearning.co.uk](mailto:roger@strlearning.co.uk), to find out more.

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM NEWCASTLE

We have a fantastic venue in Newcastle's Stephenson Quarter, in the heart of the city. The Crowne Plaza will keep you comfortable and connected during the event.

Famed for its friendly hospitality, Newcastle is one of our region's most welcoming and vibrant cities that will entertain you before, during or after the Action Summit.

From the Angel of the North to Earl Grey's Monument and every castle, cathedral and coastline in between, the north east of England is steeped in heritage which you will have the freedom to explore.

There will be the opportunity to sign up for a range of local excursions ahead of the event to take in the local heritage, kindly hosted by the areas' Rotary clubs.

I hope to see you there. ●

**FIND OUT MORE** ➤

To find out more, view packages and book tickets:

[rotarygbi.org/newcastle24](https://rotarygbi.org/newcastle24)

# Rotary profile

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



**Name:** Mike Harvey  
**Rotary Club:** Chichester Priory  
**Occupation:** Pharmacist

## HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN ROTARY?

Working for a pharmaceutical company in Sussex in 1978, a colleague was asked to form an evening club in Worthing and wondered if I would like to take his place as he was unavailable. I went along, was welcomed, and enjoyed the fellowship. It was exciting as it was to be a newly formed club, Worthing Steyne and we would become founder members. The gathering elected its first president and club council with guidance from the then District 250 with new projects adopted.

## WHAT KEEPS YOU MOTIVATED IN ROTARY?

There must be many things over 46 years in four different clubs which have kept me going. Rotary helped when I moved to different jobs in other areas. I joined clubs in Oxfordshire and latterly back in Sussex. I became President of Sinodun Rotary Club in 1990, District Foundation Chairman and an Assistant Governor in District 1090. It was a hugely motivating experience attending a national briefing

for incoming officers in Birmingham with a superb facilitator by the name of Gordon McNally.

## WHAT IS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ROTARY PROJECT YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH?

Projects have either been to raise funds or those with hands-on help to the community. A significant fund-raiser in Sussex was Hike 4 Hospices across the South Downs Way which was supported by Rotary clubs and raised £250,000 for four hospices. The hands-on project which is sustainable is Bridging Generations, a scheme for alleviating loneliness and isolation, bringing elders of the community and students regularly together at Chichester College.

## WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FUNNIEST MOMENT IN ROTARY?

In the days when District Governors had chauffeurs to drive them to club visits, I was the DG's driver and we both arrived early at club in Brighton. There was only one member there putting out some

banners and acting as a money collector. He knew we were not members but visitors. He then said: "You've chosen a bad day to come, the DG is addressing us today!"

## WHICH THREE CELEBRITIES WOULD YOU INVITE AS GUESTS TO YOUR DINNER PARTY?

I come from Weston-Super-Mare so John Cleese, a very witty man, would be my first guest. I was not at the same school, but we were in town in the same years and could share a story or two. The school I attended had a large number of teachers from Wales and so I would invite Anthony Hopkins for his great mimicry and style. Finally, since I hope my wife will be there, then she would invite Eckhart Tolle for a spiritual dimension. ●

**CONTACT US** 

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



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

## **ROTARY JAIPUR LIMB'S NEW WORKSHOP IN RWANDA**



**L**AST October, Rotarians in the Rwandan capital of Kigali proudly watched as Past President Eddy Sebera formally pronounced the orthopaedic workshop in the Ubumwe Community Centre was open for business.

Those celebrating included many hundreds of lower-limb amputees across Rwanda who now have access to affordable 'Jaipur' limbs not accessible since 2012 when the military closed the Jaipur Limb workshop in the military hospital in Kigali, originally established in 1994.

The new workshop was initiated in 2018 by Rotarian Calle Alles, a founder member of the Rotary Club of Kigali, supported by then club President, Eddy Sebera.

The trustees of Rotary Jaipur

**"OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, THE ROTARY CLUB OF POOLE BAY IN DORSET TOOK ON THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE PROJECT."**

Limb accepted the proposal, which included a new building, donated by a local businessman, in the Ubumwe Community Centre.

This is a well-managed organisation dedicated to the care of mentally and physically handicapped, people with special needs and the underprivileged of the region around Gisenyi, Western Rwanda.

Over the next two years, the Rotary Club of Poole Bay in Dorset took on

the sponsorship of the project, major funds were committed by the WAMJ Foundation, an American not-for-profit charity, alongside District Designated Funds granted by District 1110 (Wessex, the Isle of Wight and Channel Islands) and District 9150 – an African Rotary District encompassing nine countries, including Rwanda.

A Rotary Foundation Global Grant application, submitted in 2020, was granted and paid in 2021.

Up to this point it was a typical Rotary Jaipur Limb project, but then came Covid-19 and all cross-border movement came to a halt, including the import of materials from India.

The pandemic also halted an eight-week training course planned and led by Julius Materu, a trainer from Tanzania.

During the last years of international lockdowns, and as an addition to the usual training course, the Rotary Jaipur Limb trustees pushed ahead with production of a detailed video showing the entire process of making 'below knee' and 'above knee' Jaipur limbs, one version with commentary in 'African' English and a second version with commentary in 'African' French.

These videos were made available to the Rwandan trainees prior to the training course and served as an introduction to the course.

It was not until June 2023 that the building was finished and fitted out, the major consignment of materials shipped to Dar es Salaam and transported across Tanzania.

The equipment and tools were safely delivered to Rwanda, when Rotary Jaipur Limb could, at last, organise the essential training course for Ubumwe Community Centre staff. ●



## SWIMARATHON TOPS THE £1 MILLION MARK



**T**HE Rotary Club of Grantham in Lincolnshire held their 35th "Rotary Swimarathon" in February and during the event reached the magic figure of £1 million raised since it started in 1990.

This year's event raised in excess of £40,000 with all proceeds going to charities and deserving causes in the Grantham area.

The event involves teams of six swimmers drawn from schools, businesses, and various organisations in relay for 50 minutes and raising sponsorship. This year 232 teams and nearly 1,400 participants took part over

three days.

The event which costs in the region of £12,000 to organise is all sponsored by local businesses to ensure everyone taking part receives a Swimarathon t-shirt and photographic certificate.

As a three-day event, it involves more than 600 hours of volunteering from Rotarians and friends of Rotary.

President David Burr said: "There is no doubt about it, this event is the highlight of our club and any President's year in office. The work involved by the small committee is exceptional and it will give me great delight in June to hand out the various grants." ●

## ROTARY AND LIONS LINK UP

**W**ORCESTER Rotary Club and the town's Lions Club have once again linked up to recycle unwanted spectacles for use in the developing world.

The Lions recycles around 10,000 pairs each year from its collection boxes in opticians, pharmacies and other venues across the city, with the spectacles sent to a central Lions facility in Birmingham where glasses from across the UK are sorted.

Reusable spectacles are then dispatched to the developing world, most recently Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Nigeria and Nepal. Spectacles which cannot be reused are recycled to give financial support to eye related projects in the UK and overseas.

Each year Worcester Rotary Club also

has a collection of unwanted spectacles from its members and friends, this year collecting over 1,200 pairs. These are then passed to the Worcester Lions, who arrange reuse/recycling on Rotary's behalf. ●



## YOUNGSTERS SHINE IN COMPETITIONS

**E**PSOM Rotary Club in Surrey staged a great night in February at Blenheim School for the annual French Speaking Competition for Juniors and Intermediates.

Arranged by Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning with Epsom Rotary, the event was a great example of how great young people can be.

For the Junior section the winner was Frankie Larter who gave a hugely expressive presentation and in second place was Annabelle Biginton. For the Intermediates, the winner was John Gartside and in second place Iris Aryeetey.

At Islwyn High School in Caerphilly, the Rotary District 1150 Southern Wales Young Musician final took place (pictured). The winners were Mared Phillips, sponsored by Narberth and Whitland Rotary, and Dylan Swales, sponsored by Haverfordwest Rotary Club. Both were due to compete at the Southern Wales & South West Rotary Cluster final in Cardiff at the end of March.

And in Nottinghamshire, Long Eaton School hosted the Rotary District 1220 Young Chef competition (which is Rotary in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire). The winner was 14-year-old Maria Phillips, sponsored by Burton upon Trent Rotary Club, with her two-course meal which blew the judges away.

Runner up was 15-year-old Khaira Miah aged 15, sponsored by Mansfield Rotary Club, and both go forward to the cluster round at Loughborough College in April. ●



## FRUIT AND VEG FROM TREE OF LIFE

**A** CHARITY which is a beneficiary of the Rotary Tree of Light initiative in Shropshire has revealed that the donation will help launch a fresh fruit and veg appeal. Karen Williams, project lead of foodbankPLUS based at the Barnabas Centre, Shrewsbury, made the announcement on a visit to Shrewsbury Severn Rotary Club which has given the charity £2,000.

Similar donations have also been made to Midlands Air Ambulance and the Shrewsbury Ark whose representatives also visited the club.

Karen told Rotarians that the money will help to launch a new appeal aimed at attracting businesses to finance the purchase of the fresh fruit and veg.

“We have identified a big need,” she added.

Ian Somervaille, who has been involved with the Ark for over 22 years, said the move to their current premises had meant more costs, but it had been a ‘remarkable success’ he told club members.

He said: “The move has enabled us to do more and sit down privately with individual clients and help them map out their futures. All this needs to be paid for and the charity survives almost wholly on charitable donations and grants.

“Contributions such as yours are immensely valuable,” he added.

Marcus Watkin, who represented the Air Ambulance and is the club’s youngest member, said the money was ‘absolutely crucial’ towards the massive amount needed every year to keep the Air Ambulance operating. ●



## THAT’S A WRAP!



**T**HE 2023 Wrap UP UK campaign is now all ‘wrapped up’ for this season.

Wrap Up is a project run by various Rotary clubs working in partnership with HandsOn London providing coats which go directly to people across the UK who struggle to keep warm during the winter months.

The organisation has come a long way since the first Wrap Up campaign in East Lancashire in 2018 when seven Rotary clubs and 52 volunteers supported 10 charities with 3,000 coats distributed.

Fast forward to 2023 and Wrap Up UK has grown to 22 clusters across England, Scotland and Wales with over 50 clubs and 406 volunteers involved.

This year, 29,352 coats were collected along with 290 miscellaneous items.

An amazing 172 charities were supported.

The Wrap Up project allows clubs to work together in clusters and is an ideal service project which can be undertaken for minimal cost.

The project attracted traditional-style Rotary clubs and an e-club for the first time.

Wrap Up also brings Rotary into contact with many charities.

In many cases, it also leads to Rotary and charities working together on other projects, bringing Rotary to the attention of the wider public with possible membership benefits. ●

For more information visit:

[wrapupuk.org](http://wrapupuk.org) or  
[info@wrapupuk.org](mailto:info@wrapupuk.org)

## ROTARIAN EARNS BRITISH CITIZEN AWARD

**D**ORSET Rotarian Richard Burnett has been presented with a British Citizen Award.

Richard, a member of Westbourne Rotary Club in Bournemouth, received the British Citizen Award for services to volunteering and charitable giving.

He was presented with the award at the Palace of Westminster along with 27 other individuals for their exceptional endeavours which have positively impacted communities up and down the country.

In 2017, Richard took on the organisation of the Rotary Dorset Bike Ride which had been established in 2010 with monies raised going to Cancer Research UK. More than £300,000 has been raised for the charity.

Richard took on organising this major fund-raiser because he did not want to see it collapse. He continues to organise, grow and run the event, whilst now managing his own cancer journey which is sadly life-limiting.

He cooks for Cherry Tree Garden Nursery in Bournemouth, which caters for people with mental health issues. He organised a sit-down lunch for 300 people to celebrate the late Queen’s Jubilee, which was provided free of charge.

Richard was presented with the British Citizen Award by Greg Reed, CEO from founding sponsors, Places for People, who said: “Richard is a devoted charity giver who is all about helping. All while facing his own challenges. He is an inspiration.” ●



## TALENT SHOWCASE IN DERBYSHIRE



**E**XHIBITORS, family friends and visitors were wowed by the art created by children at the 2024 You-Create Showcase, organised at Belper's Number28 community room in Derbyshire.

The Showcase started in 2023 and is organised by Belper and Duffield Rotary.

This year's event involved over 90 exhibits displayed by children and young people as individuals and 13 schools across Amber Valley in the categories of art, dance, photography, writing including songs.

Each category was judged by

professional people with the prize winners receiving gift vouchers.

The Showcase objective is to encourage children and young people to express a broad spectrum of artistic talent and, to emphasise this, categories of dance on video and song writing were included.

Rotary President, Diane Smiles said: "There is extraordinary talent on show from some very young people; without them this event would not have happened. So, a big thank-you to all the artists, writers, songwriters, photographers, cartoon drawers and dancers and the schools which enabled their students." ●

## DISABILITY FOOTBALL CLUB CASH BOOST

**B**EXHILL Rotary Club in East Sussex has given a cash boost to a disabled football club which was started by a Rotarian more than 20 years ago.

The 1066 Specials was formed back in 2003 by Bexhill Rotarian Harold Lawrence who saw the need for a football club locally for children and adults challenged by disability or special needs in a friendly and fun environment.

Regular training sessions are themed to give a stimulating and interesting experience for participants with the friendly ethos of the club helping to build confidence, self-esteem and friendships.

Bexhill Rotary Club's Immediate Past President Perry Puddefoot attended the AGM of the Trustees of the 1066 Specials Disability Football Club to present them with a cheque for £1,000.

The donation, which Perry Puddefoot

presented to 1066 Specials Chairman and Head Coach Paul Anderson, came from monies raised during Bexhill Rotary's Christmas collections.

The club is a 100% voluntary organisation. Since the 1066 Specials started, the club has made strong progress and helped many people along the way. The club has won several awards including Sussex Sports Partnership Approved Club, Football Association Standard Club Award, and the Queens Award for Voluntary Service. ●



## BUILDING A BOND WITH DEFIBRILLATOR CHARITY

**T**HE Rugby Saturday Breakfast Rotary Club has forged a partnership with a charity which is at the forefront of promoting the use of defibrillators.

It follows a talk delivered by Naomi Rees-Issitt from the OurJay Foundation last July which prompted Margaret Carvell to choose the charity for her Presidential year.

The OurJay Foundation promotes the importance of having 24/7 publicly-accessible and automated external defibrillators. The charity has been raising funds to buy and install defibrillators across Rugby and Warwickshire and further afield.

They work closely with local government organisations, community groups and businesses while also campaigning for providing first aid training.

The Rotary club has held a couple of events to raise money for the OurJay Foundation, while making Naomi and her husband Jem honorary members.

The OurJay Foundation has raised over £150,000 and installed 117 accessible defibrillators, plus 52 bleed kits, along with 33 24/7 accessible gym defibrillators and a further 16 portable defibrillators. ●



## WOKING ROTARIANS SUPPORT LITERACY IN AFRICA

**W**OKING District Rotary Club is supporting the Surrey-based African Revival charity to enlarge a significant project in Sub-Saharan Africa which aims to improve literacy amongst schoolchildren.

African Revival works in South Sudan, northern Uganda and Zambia.

In 2020, African Revival strengthened its commitment to providing schools with reading materials through a partnership with Book Aid International.

Each year, it receives over 6,000 books for distributing to some of the most remote rural community schools in Uganda and Zambia.

In early 2023, it received its first shipment of 2,000 books to Maridi, South Sudan and, once established, it hopes to extend the Read Together Project to more schools in all three regions.

Abi Dar, Programme Fund Manager for African Revival, talked to Woking District Rotary Club who pledged £2,250 towards the project.

Keith Millard, International team lead for Woking District Rotary, said: "We have supported primary schools in Woking in recent years with literacy projects for under-privileged children, so it is great that we can now provide some much-needed support to children in Sub-Saharan Africa too.

"Working with a locally-based charity is also important to us." ●



## NORDIC WALKING SUPPORT FOR PARKINSON'S SUFFERERS



**T**HE Trent Bridge Rotary Club has pledged to support a Nottingham-based Nordic walking group training for individuals with Parkinson's Disease.

Sarah McCracken, a Parkinson's Nurse Specialist and British Nordic Walking instructor spoke to members of Trent Bridge Rotary Club about her research project at the University of Nottingham.

She aims to quantify the benefit individuals with Parkinson's gain from regular exercise through Nordic walking over an extended period.

Sarah, with support from an experienced team, offers this outdoor exercise with the goal of managing the symptoms and maintaining quality of life

since there is no cure for this progressive disease.

Because falling is a constant and undesirable problem associated with Parkinson's, Nordic walking can help as the poles assist walking in a safe way. The activity can be enjoyed by all by improving confidence and managing balance.

The group, which Trent Bridge Rotary is supporting, meets every Monday at the University Park. Group members are constantly encouraged to practise the correct technique which helps them become quickly aware of their balance, posture, gait and walking speed.

The intention being to continue their well-being. ●

## CHARITY BONANZA FROM CONCERT

**N**OW into its second century, the Rotary Club of Cambridge raised £16,000 from its schools Carol Concert at West Road and fashion night at Esse in Melbourn, Cambridge.

Four Cambridge children's charities have each been given £4,000 to help with their work, including Red Balloon, The Sick Children's Trust, Blue Smile and Red Hen. ●





# SHELTERBOX APPEALING FOR ROTARY SUPPORT IN GAZA

**S**HELTERBOX has launched an urgent fundraising appeal to provide emergency shelter and other essential items to people left with nowhere to live in Gaza, and other disasters around the world.

Since the conflict began last October, up to 1.9 million people have become displaced in Gaza. That's 85% of the population with no choice but to shelter in community buildings like schools, makeshift shelters, or out in the open.

There is severe overcrowding, and disease is spreading.

The charity will be providing emergency shelter aid and other essential items to thousands of people who need it in Gaza, working in partnership with Medical Aid for Palestinians.

Emergency shelter aid items like tarpaulins, rope, and tape will mean people can make temporary repairs to damaged buildings that will help keep them watertight and protect them from the winter weather.

Chilling winter temperatures

have been putting the lives of 1.9 million displaced people at risk. Blankets, mattresses, pillows, and floor mats will help people stay warmer and save lives.

ShelterBox say they will also provide washing sets, water carriers, kitchen sets, and items like nappies, toothbrushes, sanitary items, and body/hair wash.

These are vital items for people with no belongings who are unable to return home, or people who have had their homes damaged.

The Rotary-supported charity, which was started by Rotarians in Cornwall in 2000 said: "Together with MAP, we will be procuring items in Egypt and Türkiye. The situation is complex, but we intend that our aid will reach people in the coming weeks via the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza.

"MAP is predominantly a medical organisation that was already working in Gaza before the conflict started. Working together with them, means we can get emergency shelter aid and other essential aid items into Gaza, and to

the people who need it, more quickly.

"MAP is based in London with offices in Gaza, West Bank, and Beirut. They are also partnering with others and have already delivered trucks of aid into Gaza with the International Red Cross.

"As a humanitarian organisation, ShelterBox must remain neutral and a-political. We go wherever in the world the shelter need of civilians is the highest, right now that is in Gaza.

"With your Rotary club and community's support, we can provide emergency shelter and essential items to the people who have nowhere to live in Gaza." ●

**FIND OUT MORE**

For more details about the appeal visit:

[shelterbox.org/gaza/appeal-rc](https://shelterbox.org/gaza/appeal-rc)



# Rotary Marketplace

Welcome to Rotary Marketplace, which offers the opportunity to sell to over 35,000 members and purchase from fellow Rotarians within this community.



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**AUDLEY ROTARY CLUB, STAFFORDSHIRE**

# SEEING IS BELIEVING... THE ROTARY EXPERIENCE

**A**s a you know 'I get around' – crooned the Beach Boys. I have been to clubs and districts throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and most continents.

Visiting clubs should be a given, if only to know how 'perfect' your own club is; the fun and mystery of strange rituals, dubious menus, odd conversations and questionable hygiene in uncharted territory!

Glass crunches underfoot across the dimly lit, half-flooded, ploughed field car park. You wander in hoping for a jovial group of like-minded Rotarians and, after negotiating steep stairs, you find yourself in an upper room cage fighting ring!

Greeting you at the door is one-eyed Bill, a handshake, a grunt and a missing tooth. His partner (possibly in crime) sits alongside keeping score on a battered paper, dispensing patina-covered badges.

The seating has questionable stains, taped remnants of tinsel adorn the ceiling, and the meeting starts with everyone rising without warning to sing grace led by a small dapper man on a keyboard.

A 'business' meeting begins after a 'meal' of lukewarm gruel with indiscriminate lumps, with a sad, hardened bread roll.

Entertainment was three hours of

heated debate on amending the official club banner from moss green to a striking bog-water brown, followed by two unidentified Rotarians outdoing each other demanding support for their service project. The top table was wearing chains and appeared preoccupied talking to each other. As for demographics, variety was NOT the spice of life.

Have you woken from your Rotary nightmare just yet?! But what do people honestly think when they visit our clubs? After all, impressions matter. Introductions with a smile and handshake on arrival to a warm, inviting venue.

What about the staff, food and service? Is there energy and engagement, even the sound of laughter as we enjoy ourselves? Does the meeting have purpose and dynamism or are people arguing about Rotary trivia?

Diversity I leave for another time.

To truly understand a club's spirit and become one with its culture takes numerous visitations - observe the rituals, sample the cuisine, wear ceremonial garb - and maybe even a tattoo to show commitment!

Talk with members and attend service events to complete the picture.

The first impression isn't everything, but it starts the story. And we should

periodically self-reflect on the messages we send to guests, both intentionally and unintentionally.

When we meet people, including at Rotary, find common ground and a shared laugh lifts everyone. But that first hello leaves an indelible mark. Make yours memorable for welcoming warmth which always leaves a good impression.

Expect the unexpected! Rotary is a Pandora's box of joy and experience. Every club has its own unique flavour blending fellowship and service in special ways.

And that diversity is what makes visiting rewarding.

Sure, an occasional curmudgeon, bland meal, or snoozeworthy meeting will happen. But far more often you'll discover passionate hearts joining hands to create lasting good.

We are people of action. Embrace the variety out there with a sense of humour and adventurous spirit.

Let a thousand Rotary flowers bloom in our own weird and wonderful ways. And if things get too spicy, what is life without joy amongst friends, even if we don't always see eye to eye?

Ps: Don't judge a book by its cover or a Rotary club by its first impression! Or in some cases, judge away! ●

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