

Rotary

MAGAZINE



SUMMER 2024
ROTARYGBI.ORG

NORTH STAR

60,000 MEMBERS BY 2028

UNWRAPPING ROTARY NORTH STAR

**EXPLORING THE FIVE-YEAR VISION TO
STRENGTHEN ROTARY AND HOW IT
WILL IMPACT YOUR CLUB**

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Great Britain & Ireland

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Welcome

THE closing strains of the Singapore Convention have faded into the distance, and judging from the early feedback this Rotary International mini United Nations was a success.

These annual jamborees are inspiring and thought-provoking, allowing for an exchange of ideas sourced from different perspectives.

This year, there was discussion about moving towards club models which focus on service, not meetings. It is all about embracing change.

Coincidentally, that is what North Star is all about. Another innovative project hatched in Great Britain and Ireland based around the four pillars of membership; traditional club, direct, enterprise and corporate. The goal: to drive Rotary membership in these isles to 60,000 by 2028.

The first time I heard about North Star in any depth was last February at the Leadership Development Forum at Warwick University.

The plan was outlined clearly, the reasons why this initiative is necessary were spelled out, with one session discussing change management.

To many, 'change management' represents an uncomfortable set of words. Yet, for many in business dealing with a rollercoaster economy over the past couple of decades, change management has been a necessary weapon in the battle for survival.

So why should we be averse to change within Rotary if the alternative to doing nothing is inevitable decline and closure?

Working as a facilitator at Warwick, several questions arose from Rotarians in the sessions:

- **Why were we not consulted about North Star beforehand?**
- **How will North Star affect me?**
- **Will this mean more work for the Assistant Governors and District Governors?**
- **Where is all that Rotary International money going?**
- **What will North Star mean to my Rotary club?**
- **How are we expected to change?**
- **We're doing all right at my club, so why should I be bothered with what's happening elsewhere?**

It was then at that Leadership Development Forum in Warwick that this edition of the magazine was born.

With my Rotary club we are already exploring corporate membership, while looking to promote Rotary with advertising on the ferry which plies its way across Portsmouth Harbour, drawing two million passengers a year.

We are talking to District about 'Grow Rotary' money which is on the table, and possibly North Star cash which is filtering down via the clusters.

What is undeniable is that we must move forward now and change.

There are no ifs or buts. If we continue along the same trajectory then Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland will be dead within the next ten to 20 years – and we will be the generation which killed Rotary because of a stubbornness to change. Is that really the legacy you want to leave?

Dave King
Editor, *Rotary Magazine*

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NORTH STAR

60,000 MEMBERS BY 2028



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NORTH STAR WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

| STORY BY **AMANDA WATKIN** |
GENERAL SECRETARY, ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

IN this edition of the *Rotary magazine*, you will find some fantastic information about the audacious goal here in Great Britain and Ireland to rebuild and surpass membership levels of some 30 plus years ago, targeting 60,000 members by 2028 – this is our North Star! Our guiding light and path to follow.

To know where we are heading, it helps to understand our past and the reason why we are where we are right now.

It feels to me that our leadership has consistently been singing the annual mantra of plus-one net gain in our clubs forever. Of course, this made sense from a futures perspective but as a member of a club which chartered with over 30 members that grew 'easily' to over 70

members by its 10th anniversary, did we listen to our leadership, or simply ride the crest of our personal wave?

I speak here as part of the leadership of that club, as part of the leadership of that district and even as part of the leadership for Rotary Great Britain and Ireland, way before taking on the role of General Secretary. We most certainly rode the crest of the wave without thinking about the inevitable crash onto the shoreline in front of us.

When we look back at the membership data, we need to lower the rose-tinted spectacles because membership has been in decline for many decades.

People pass to higher service, peoples' life priorities change and yes, people

fall out of favour with each other. The revolving door of Rotary is constantly turning, sometimes for good reason, and sometimes it could have been slowed down, or stopped.

We all have our own Rotary door(s), the one we came in through and the one we will leave by. The question for each of us is not if we leave but when and why.

As I write this piece today, my firm belief is that it will be health/death that is written on my exit door. Some of the reasons why I feel this way are shared in this edition of the magazine and, of course, in the project impact stories you will all have read in previous editions.

It's not because the stories and information are about me, but because what is being showcased is the breadth



of possibility that Rotary brings to me, the different ways I can connect with others, and how those connections lead to friendships and service which will surpass any I could find outside of Rotary.

But the question we seek to answer is why has Rotary membership declined at the pace it has over the past three decades? The answer is multi-faceted and nuanced, but let's break it down in a more simplistic way, to the three 'Cs':

1. COMPLACENCY

When you're riding high, it's easy to take your eye away from the future picture, to miss the projections given from the small indicators of the day, and to simply enjoy the moment.

We have a global structure that brings in annual change, making it difficult to retain organisational memory, even with a fair level of continuity. Each year brings new priorities, new shiny areas to focus on and of course personal perception as who wants to be the voice of concern when we are by nature an optimistic, can-do collection of good people.

Even when we were being told by a small group of people, statisticians and marketing folk alike that future sales were going to be significantly difficult, we were not collectively ready for change. No Rotary member that I have come across (and there have been thousands over the

last 20 plus years!) ever joined Rotary to help with 'sales'; they joined to fulfil a passion or need within themselves and understandably so.

Rotary is a membership organisation and when you walk through the front door you are looking to meet other like-minded people. Our vision statement says it all: 'Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves'. It does not say '... and sell that to others'!

As a result, even when we step into leadership positions as volunteers, and I am in that position via my club just as you are, we remain primarily focussed on service. Complacency is a strong term, but I'm using it to stimulate our collective thinking. We have been complacent, but that complacency has changed to concern, which leads on to the second 'C' of our story.

2. COMPETITION

Society has changed with more charities than ever being setup. According to PolicyBee, the UK had 168,893 registered charities in March 2023. At least another 20,000 not-for-profit organisations have charitable status but don't feature on the register. The Charity Commission received 8,583 applications to register a charity in 2022/23, 48% of which were successful. In the same period, 4,146 charities were removed from the register.

Why does this matter? Rotary clubs are not charities, but the majority do operate a Trust or Charitable Incorporated

Organisation (CIO or SCIO for Scotland). This means that, by default, there will be a level of competition between clubs and others undertaking work across local, national and international communities.


Of course, this 'competition' is often turned into partnership or collaborative relationship, but why would a person join Rotary rather than simply give money and/or time to a cause-specific local charity?

One answer to this question is variety. Rotary does not limit the vision of its members. If you have found an issue, assessed the need and think you have a plan, Rotary members can help you realise that vision to make lasting change.

We are not a 'cash-cow' for any particular cause, but we do raise funds and through The Rotary Foundation access grants support projects solving problems.

Wrapped into the answer above about variety, is our network. Even now as we teeter on a membership number of 33,000 people, that still represents a significant network of skill, experience, connection and enthusiasm to draw from.

But we have to make the effort to connect and to connect in positive and meaningful ways; to connect without fear of being rejected because our idea does not resonate with someone else. That's where the values and behaviours to be expected within our organisation can also set us apart from the competition. We do stand on the value foundations of Service, Fellowship, Diversity, Integrity and Leadership. How amazing is that?

Our competition though is not simply other organisations. In this technology age and fast-paced society, people have many competing demands. Family support and work to meet economic challenge come first, followed by ways to relax and de-stress such as Netflix (others are available!) and the gym. Where does Rotary fit with these competitive demands? Well, that brings us neatly onto the third 'C' of Challenge... 

3. CHALLENGE

When the world around us has changed, but we haven't, then that is a major challenge. How quickly we notice how change can be a major challenge, and our willingness to embrace that change may also be a major challenge.

In the past 20 years, the world has changed and technology use has skyrocketed. In 2002, the share of individuals across the UK using the internet stood at 56% compared to 98% in 2024.

Expectations have changed, and even if we take pre-pandemic data from 2019 we can see that non-users are predominantly in the 75+ year demographic data set at 51%, but there are zero non-users in the 25-34 year age band. As we look to Rotary's future, these people will form the major part of our membership, so we need to adapt and meet their digital expectations today.

Our challenge is the transition process, to ensure we do not disenfranchise members who have enjoyed and contributed to a very different member experience. Our clubs are integral in meeting this challenge, having plans that ensure strong member-to-member communication, with an inclusive approach to service and friendship.

On the macro-level Rotary Great

Britain and Ireland must look ahead. New approaches to membership models, service potential and network connections have been strategically mapped.

However, no matter what these plans may look like, they need collaboration and co-operation from all of us, as the existing members are a strong body with the ability to disrupt change if it challenges their experience, such that they no longer feel aligned to brand Rotary.

For North Star to work we need to trust and support one another.

We need to make room for new membership models to mature. We need to accept that not everything is known at this stage, yet we are developing policy and procedures. We are a pilot for the Rotary world and other regions are eagerly awaiting the opportunity to adapt as we have been permitted by the Rotary International Board.

In all of this though, we need to understand what the challenge of this change brings for each of us.

Human nature makes us look at the what's in it for me question (WIIFM). The overarching answer to this question is the continuation of your Rotary; it gives you a chance to expand your network, providing a strong foundation for future generations, which is part of your legacy.

If we do nothing, then the pressure on each of us as current dedicated

Rotary members will increase, with less people to deliver the support needed by communities both at home and overseas.

If we do nothing, our network of like-minded 'friends' will diminish, taking some of our personal-social benefit with it. The change management needed to show the WIIFM of North Star means taking a bit of a leap of faith to be honest. Many people want/need proof of concept and this has been given over the past three to four years with the development of the first new model of Direct Membership.

This model currently accounts for just shy of 400 members, with nearly 100 more in process. All these people are wanting to help or explore opportunities to deliver community support.

The WIIFM of this is the chance to expand your pool of volunteers and grow your network through building new relationships. We are all different and it takes time to build friendships, but it simply starts with that first conversation, so shall we take a positive challenge and commit to getting to know our new members today?

I hope you enjoy and are excited by the North Star story you'll read in this edition and will come on the journey to help grow Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland back to the dizzy heights of community engagement that's possible with 60,000 members by 2028! ●

"FOR NORTH STAR TO WORK WE NEED TO TRUST AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER. WE NEED TO MAKE ROOM FOR NEW MEMBERSHIP MODELS TO MATURE."





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HELPING MEMBERSHIP SURVIVE

Club membership has been the mainstay of Rotary since its founding in 1905, but how can clubs stay fresh and relevant to appeal to a wider community?

| STORY BY **KEN MCLENNAN** |
SPECIALIST ADVISER TEAM LEAD, MEMBERSHIP

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CLUB MEMBERSHIP?

Club membership is the principle ongoing membership model in our North Star project. It is how Rotary started and will continue to be the base for supporting all Rotarians, irrespective of membership type.

With the revolution in new club models, Rotarians have a wealth of ways to enjoy their Rotary experience.

It is that experience which ensures all models of membership thrive.

The ability to provide service to our communities is the backbone of club models, as well as supporting other membership models – Direct, Corporate and Enterprise membership.

Let's explore both of these elements.

CLUB MODELS

Club models generally have a structure with a president, secretary, treasurer, etc. and great ones have three-year, or longer, continuity plans.

There are also different types of membership. The principle one is an active, fee-paying Rotarian and this applies also to Direct, Corporate and Enterprise members.

Clubs can also have Honorary Members to recognise significant service to Rotary, either in the community or as a long-serving active member who can no longer devote their energy to Rotary.

Associate membership has been discontinued, although previous

associates can be Friends of Rotary to continue supporting our activities.

Take time to look at the Corporate Membership article on pages 12 to 13 to understand those opportunities which exist within clubs.

Our founder, Paul Harris, said that, like everything else, Rotary should be evolutionary and at times revolutionary.

At the Rotary Convention in Singapore in May this year, our CEO and General Secretary, John Hewko, outlined five areas to focus on going forward:

1. Make your club brand new: think of ways to address your club's challenges
2. Embrace new club models
3. Focus on achieving more by doing less: focus your resources on well-planned projects based on community assessments
4. Look for and find allies everywhere
5. Embrace new technologies

We will expand on each of these elements in future editions of *Rotary Magazine*, but let's pick on new club models highlighted above.

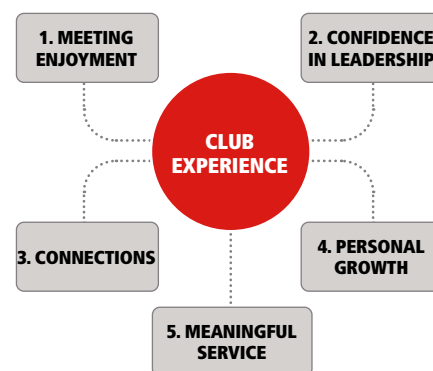
The list is endless with traditional clubs, passport clubs, impact or companion clubs, cause based clubs and e-clubs, to name but a few.

The name reflects the format, interest or different ability to support the Rotary ideals and service.

You can find more details about how these club models work from last October's *Rotary Magazine* when the theme was "Growing Rotary"

rotarygbi.org/magazine/october-november-2023

Great clubs ensure that the Rotary experience is valued and looked after. Experience can be summarised in this diagram and applied to all membership formats.



1. MEETING ENJOYMENT

Members have fun, and feel they are included and belong.

2. CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP

Members feel they have input, leaders are open to their ideas and leaders are trusted to make good decisions.

3. CONNECTIONS

Members feel that they've formed valuable relationships through Rotary.

4. PERSONAL GROWTH

Members feel their club AND Rotary offer ways to develop skills and grow.

5. MEANINGFUL SERVICE

Members feel that the service their club does makes a difference in the world and community.

GROWING CLUB MEMBERSHIP:

THE PURPOSE OF NORTH STAR

Having the right projects which inspire people, along with the best public image is critical to success.

There are three ways of growing membership – bringing in new people, ensuring Rotarians are fully engaged and starting new clubs.

BRINGING IN NEW PEOPLE

Growing membership is easy – just ask someone. In fact, ask them to bring a friend or two also so they feel supported. Ensure that first contacts are informal.

Have a coffee with them, discuss what they want out of Rotary whilst explaining

what Rotary is all about.

Working on the principle that current members are the present, and new members are the future, ask prospective members what Rotary should look like and what Rotary should feel like for them.

The format, their time availability, their passions of what they want to do should all be considered.

Rotary can be tailored to suit the ability those new Rotarians have, and what they want in terms of time and commitment.

FULLY ENGAGED

Retention is key. Ensure current Rotarians are fully engaged and getting the experience they deserve.

Regularly ask each and every Rotarian how they are, how they feel about Rotary and if anything needs to change. Mentor everyone and carry out satisfaction surveys at least annually.

'Club Health Check', 'Club Visioning', and 'Community Assessments' are just some of the tools we can use.

STARTING NEW CLUBS

This is critical to North Star's success by developing new clubs in a format which

suits the demographic of each location. Rural, urban and city areas have quite different needs and support mechanisms.

Quite often we just need to replace clubs that we lose.

A recent experience with the properly developed marketing material, personal invitations and the right style of initial engagement attracted sufficient people to start a new club at the first session.

Similarly, the new Doncaster Knights Rotary was formed in a rugby club from players who wanted to give back to the community in a structured way. The possibilities are endless.

Let's not forget, we can and do recruit people – in fact 11,000 Rotarians have been recruited in Great Britain & Ireland over the last four years.

But, it is important that, if a club format is not for them, there are other ways of "doing Rotary". ●

GET IN TOUCH 

krmcl@hotmail.com





CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP

MAKING ROTARY RELEVANT TO THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

STORY BY **JOY PALMER COOPER**

DISTRICT GOVERNOR NORTH EAST ENGLAND AND
ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND BOARD MEMBER

HOW?

can a small or medium-sized business provide opportunities for its employees to become involved in volunteering and service activities in the local community?

HOW?

can it demonstrate its commitment to corporate social responsibility?

HOW?

can it promote itself as a community-minded employer and enhance its image?

HOW?

can it open up a wealth of learning and development opportunities for its staff and enable them to use their skills and abilities to help others?

THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE:

by entering into a partnership with Rotary through the Corporate Membership route to the world of Rotary and all it has to offer. So, what is Corporate Membership

and how does it work? It is a channel of membership which allows a Rotary club to involve any business, non-profit, charity or government entity in Rotary by offering an alternative membership package to some of its employees.

In the Corporate Membership model recommended by Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, one of the company's employees is inducted as the principal member of a Rotary club, and one, two, three or four others are termed 'alternate members'.

Any of these people can attend meetings of the club and all receive information about the club and its activities.

The alternate members cannot stand for club office, and they do not have voting rights. The company only pays the subscription for the principal member which is the same level as all other individual members of the club pay.

The club is credited for one member on the Rotary database (entered as a corporate member on Rotary View). So,

in essence, this is a membership shared among a group of busy working people who do not have the time to come to meetings on a very regular basis.

The formalities of inducting corporate members are very straightforward so long as the club makes small amendments to its by-laws to indicate how the expectations and benefits of this membership type differ from traditional individual membership.

This is a route to growing membership that is 'right on the doorstep'. Any club can engage with this model very soon and very easily. At present Rotary Great Britain & Ireland has fewer than 200 corporate members.

If every club and district engaged with this route, this number could very rapidly become 2,000.

A club gains greatly. It has a new member, and the name of Rotary becomes known throughout the business. Members are attracted who would otherwise not have time to join a Rotary club.

New partnerships are created that will become known in the community.

The club is increasing resources and capacity for service and support in a wide variety of forms.

The business gains through association with our worldwide organisation and employees have access to our Learning Centre with its myriad opportunities for developing leadership and social skills.

They can engage with service and volunteering activities both locally and internationally, leading to enhancement of the businesses' profile of corporate social responsibility.

The world of business networking is opened up, and the image of the company is enhanced through its engagement in community projects.

Furthermore, the business gains significant publicity by being showcased on the Rotary club's website, in social media and other communications detailing employees' involvement in Rotary activities.

Corporate members' engagement will of course vary significantly depending on the nature of the business.

Principal and alternate members will come when they can to club meetings.

Other engagement will vary tremendously and may include helping on the ground with community activities, working with youth projects, providing speakers, joining in fund-raising and fellowship activities, offering mentoring, application of particular skills, internships and much more besides.

Whoever the businesses may be, they are embedded in the club's programme and are truly valuable partners in the promotion of the values and achievements of Rotary in any local community.

FIND OUT MORE

- *Resources relating to Corporate Membership including promotional leaflets, information on 'how it works', sample by-laws, comprehensive details of benefits for the club and the business, and the approved design for a Corporate Members' plaque may be found in a Corporate Membership toolkit located at: rotarygbi.org/members/corporate*

GROWING CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP AT ALNWICK ROTARY CLUB

THE market town of Alnwick in rural Northumberland has had a vibrant Rotary presence since 1938 but, like many clubs, it began to suffer a membership decline, reaching a low of 28 members in 2020.

At the time of writing, the club has 53 members and numbers continue to rise.

This success is due in no small measure to the introduction of the Corporate Membership model.

Its first members from local businesses were inducted a couple of years ago. The club has steadily increased this number to 13 and we are in discussion with others, representing a very wide variety of 'businesses' in the broadest sense of the term.

The club is delighted to have with us corporate members from a large garden open to the public; from a family run car sales and repair company, a highly respected 'local' food business, two museums, a theatre, the hotel where the Rotary club meets, a company specialising in broadband solutions, an Indian restaurant, the North Northumberland Hospice, a Building Society, and the high school which supports the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Interact and the Rotary youth competitions.

This range demonstrates that corporate members do not have to be substantial national or multi-national companies. They can be in any size, shape or form if they are in the locality of your Rotary club.

Engagement comes in a wide variety of ways given the variety of backgrounds.

Principal and alternate members come to club meetings when they are able to, and we certainly have no expectation that this will be on a weekly basis.

They provide some inspiring speakers and support the club in whatever ways they can. Some assist with the judging of youth competitions, with organising our 'environmental impact challenge' for young people and with providing music for special occasions.

Others come along to help with community projects including tree and crocus planting, town and beach tidying, and our major Christmas project which supports local families in need.

Some offer sponsorship and also engage in various ways with our golf day, quiz nights, and the staging of 'the last night of the proms'. All are kept fully informed of meetings and events and are fully embedded in the club's activities.

As corporate membership has grown, it has become clear that, aside from promoting Rotary widely in the community, such members have brought about changes to the club in various positive ways.

Firstly, they have brought younger people into our membership. Secondly, they have contributed to the promotion of diversity in the club.

Thirdly, their presence has promoted different thinking about what it means to be a Rotarian – slowly changing traditional thinking that all Rotarians have to be retired and sit down every week for a meal.

Corporate members are warmly welcomed and are a valued and important part of the club's 'Rotary family'.

Mark Brassell, the Director of Alnwick Garden says: "The Garden is proud to be a Rotary Corporate Member.

"We feel a lot more connected to our local community through our work with Rotary. The membership also allows us to showcase our work both to local members and the wider world of Rotary International."

Mohammed Quiyum from Sher Khan Restaurant adds: "Corporate Membership has brought us much closer to the community. Having the Rotary plaque on display is really important for our business. Visitors from all over come in and say 'aha Rotary, you are members, which is great'. We are always on standby to help with anything that Rotary is doing.

"We want to meet new people and be part of a new culture." ●

NORTH STAR, NOT JUST ANOTHER MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

| STORY BY **NICKI SCOTT** |

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT 2022/23 & DIRECTOR 2021-23

WHAT an incredible couple of years it has been since Rotary International's (RI) first female President, Jennifer Jones, picked 'Imagine' as her theme for the year and appointed me to serve as her Vice President.

I don't think I could have imagined in my wildest dreams, when I was elected as RI Director in 2019, that we would be where we are right now in Great Britain & Ireland. The innovative, transformational changes we started back then have really started to take root.

There is no doubt that the term **#bettertogether** has been proven to be true. We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who have contributed.

Not everyone jumps at embracing change, with a natural tendency to resist and stay in our comfort zones.

Having been recognised by Rotary International as one of two regional pilots in the world, the other being Zone 8 in Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific Islands, we were able to get significant changes supported by the RI Board this year.

In addition to the launch of the Regional Board, our clusters of districts have begun to collaborate and offer support to each other.

If we are to increase the perceived relevance of Rotary among the general public in the communities we serve, then we need to become much less fragmented in our efforts.

In January 2023, our Specialist Adviser Teams, formerly RI-appointed coordinator positions, were recognised by The Rotary Foundation Trustees and the RI Board, with an additional budget of \$35,000 approved to support the Humanitarian Services and Leadership Development roles.

On the back of that modest success, we decided to go big and put together

a proposal to the RI Board meeting in April 2023 for an additional \$800,000 investment over a three-year period and were over the moon that the request was granted in principle.

So, our Pilot Advisory Group of Past President, Tom Griffin; Inaugural Regional Board Chair, Garth Arnold; Regional Board Chair-Elect, Nitesh Joshi; Regional Board Chair-Nominee, Heather Stuart; RI Training Leader, Chris Davies; General Secretary, Amanda Watkin and myself as Chair, put together a detailed Rotary GB&I Growth Plan to almost double our membership back to 60,000 members by 2028.

This was approved by the GB&I Regional Board in August 2023, submitted to the Rotary International Executive Team and then approved by the full Board of Directors in October 2023.

This has now become known as our North Star pilot project.

It is important to note that the North Star pilot project is a holistic approach to growth which encompasses all four priorities of the Action Plan to increase our impact, expand our reach, enhance participant engagement and increase our ability to adapt.

It is not "just another membership drive". Essentially North Star is phase four of our ongoing transformation.

At the end of the day, we want to be sure that all the work that our Rotarians and Rotaractors have done is remembered for years to come and that Rotary gains the public recognition and perceived relevance it deserves for all the work we do to make our world a better place.

Let's all shoot for The Moon! ●

**"SHOOT FOR THE MOON,
EVEN IF YOU MISS YOU
WILL LAND AMONGST
THE STARS!"**

LES BROWN



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A NEW WAY FOR CLUBS TO THRIVE DOWN UNDER

STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

AUSTRALASIA and the Pacific Islands, who form part of Rotary International's Zone 8, are also engaged in a project to drive membership.

One of the centrepieces of the Zone 8 Regionalisation Pilot is the establishment of Rotary Community Groups, designed to foster collaboration between clubs which began on July 1st.

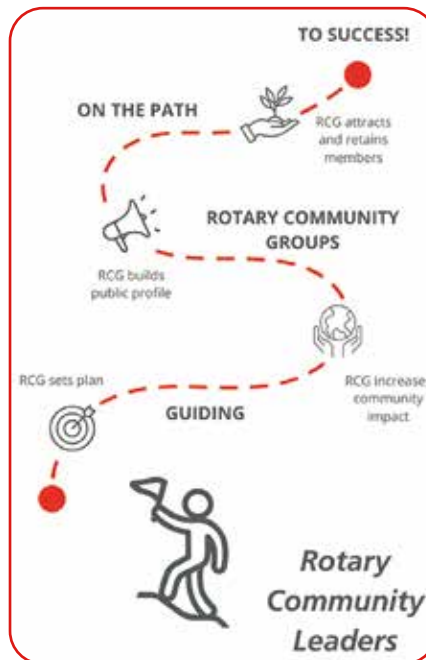
A Rotary Community Group, or RCG, is a group of Rotary and Rotaract clubs which will work together to achieve their goals.

Each RCG will be supported by a Rotary Community Leader who will empower the clubs to thrive.

By collaborating with other clubs, this can reduce their workload, increase Rotary's profile, grow membership and enhance impact.

These are some of the ideas being suggested:

- The clubs in your RCG decide the best way to increase Rotary's profile in your area is to run a joint marketing campaign. Each club contributes resources to run targeted ads on social media and advertise on a local billboard. These ads showcase the contributions your clubs have made to the local community, leading to an influx of new members.
- The clubs in your RCG realise they run similar projects with similar goals. For instance, multiple clubs run markets to raise funds for local causes. To increase the reach and impact of these efforts, your RCG decides to run a joint market.
- Each of the clubs in your RCG identify running their own website and social media pages as the biggest burden on their time and resources. To reduce the workload, your RCG decides to



run a joint website and Facebook page instead.

Rotarians Down Under are being invited to discuss within their clubs ways of collaborating and considering:

- What projects is your club passionate about? How could you work with the other clubs in your RCG to expand these projects and increase impact?
- What skills and knowledge could your club contribute to your RCG to help it succeed?
- What are some key areas your club is struggling in? How could collaborating with other clubs help?

In a wider context, the Zone 8 Regional Council has a mission to increase both Rotary and Rotaract's reach and impact by better supporting clubs so they grow year after year.

From July 2018 to June 2023 an

average of 5,000 members resigned each year in Zone 8, while 155 Rotary clubs folded. However, at the same time, they attracted around 18,000 new members, forming 48 new clubs.

Andy Rajapakse, Membership Director for the Zone 8 Regional Council, wrote: "Our declining membership is proof we're trying to sell an outdated 'product' people no longer want to buy.

"That is, many people no longer find the membership experiences we're offering through our clubs appealing.

"Our clubs are like showrooms where people take our membership experience for a test drive. Like any product, we must adapt over time to meet people's changing needs, while also retaining our core values."

The Regional Council is pursuing two key growth strategies:

1. Starting new clubs to attract new demographics.
2. Reducing member resignations and attracting new members by creating irresistible new club experiences.

Over the next 24 months, they are conducting extensive demographic research to identify distinct population groups in the Zone to start new clubs which appeal to specific interests and needs.

Their goal is to start 15 new clubs in 2024-25 and 25 clubs by 2025-26. ●

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DIRECT MEMBERSHIP ROTARY WITHOUT BORDERS

| STORY BY **TIM MASON** |
SPECIAL ADVISER TEAM LEAD, DIRECT MEMBERSHIP

WOW! We had a wonderful presentation last month at our Direct Member Drop-in Café from Rotarian Anju Bhatti from the Thames Valley Direct Member Hub. She was recommended to join Rotary by a Rotarian in India, and was able to easily join Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland this year through the Direct Membership programme.

Anju is just one example of the Rotary Direct Membership Network which is a living, breathing network of Rotary members who connect virtually and physically.

We have a forum-type space which brings people together online 24/7 and allows for full flexibility to take part in Rotary activities, compared to the fixed traditional meetings which clubs have.

Through Rotary Direct Membership, we encourage members to meet with club Rotarians and with each other at times, and for reasons, which are convenient and relevant to them.

And as a direct member, you have access to the fully online environment with seminars and workshops on the Direct Membership Network.

Whether you are at home or on holiday, you can contact the local Rotary club to join in with their events or attend meetings to further expand your Rotary knowledge, and form more connections.

Generally, club members meet on set days and at set times, completing the same projects. It's an arrangement which

suits some people, but not everyone. Direct Membership is Rotary Great Britain and Ireland's new model for a more modern membership and/or exploring membership options of Rotary.

We want Direct Membership to be a personal journey of discovery, fitting in with members' lifestyle and within an area which suits them. They are connected to Direct Member Hubs in a district so they are involved with their local community.

We seek out local projects or activities run by Rotary or others which aligns with their interests and passions. The Hubs can also assist helping them develop their own projects.



“DIRECT MEMBERSHIP PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSY PEOPLE TO EXPLORE ROTARY IN THEIR OWN TIME, WITHIN THEIR OWN CAPACITY AND IN WHATEVER WAY SUITS THEM.”

There are various online opportunities to engage with others to build relationships, such as informal meetings over coffee, online Drop-in Cafés once a month or Hub meetings.

We are developing an onboarding programme, where members can learn more about Rotary, use the Rotary International Learning Centre and, within the Rotary GB&I website, post within the members’ Hub about what they’ve been doing to learn more about Rotary activities across the network.

rotarygbi.org/members/forum

Can you remember being invited to join Rotary? I can. It was 1981 when a car accident meant regular visits to a local garage and solicitor where both invited me to join the local Rotary club in Aylsham, Norfolk.

It was quite an experience for a young youth worker to join this esteemed institution. My mentor at that time instilled in me that it was every member’s duty to seek new people to join Rotary International, an organisation dedicated to service together in the community and to be a catalyst for change.

Today John Hewko, our Rotary International General Secretary and CEO, urges us all to help grow Rotary, adopt modern technology and innovation.

In Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, we are enabling this through a number of different ways and in particular through the Direct Membership pilot.

The world has changed since 1981.

Even I have needed to join 10 different Rotary clubs since then as I moved around the country with my work. Each time I moved, this meant exploring and finding a new club. That’s why variety and flexibility is needed.

Now I no longer need to belong to a club, Direct Membership allows me to belong to Rotary International as I carry my home with me like a tortoise!

I have a passion to see Rotary grow and evolve, listening to the messages from Rotary International, following the strategies for change to become stronger

in the 21st century.

Direct Membership provides opportunities for busy people to explore Rotary in their own time, within their own capacity and in whatever way suits them. It gives us the ability to recruit, retain and refresh Rotary in these islands creatively and by keeping it flexible and inclusive.

It helps build relationships, learning experientially how Rotary can make a difference in our world, nation and community. And if it’s time for someone to leave their Rotary club, for whatever reason, then Direct Membership enables them to stay as a Rotarian where they are encouraged to continue to help wherever they are needed.

Equally, if there is a desire to set up a new type of Rotary in an area, Direct Membership helps build momentum if people become active members of Rotary, whilst bringing others together to form a new group or club.

Direct Membership is fluid, putting people first, enabling them to connect, build relationships and take action.

It keeps members linked to Rotary activity in their local area by being part of a Direct Member Hub, as well as giving the benefits of the Rotary GB&I network.

This is Rotary without borders.

By joining Rotary this way, we offer the ability to be involved, learn the ropes and be inspired.

It shows the world that Rotary is a can-do organisation doing good in our communities.

Our people-centric organisation is showing how connected people can be the magic which the world needs to make a difference. ●

FIND OUT MORE ➤

To find out more about Direct Membership visit: rotarygbi.org/direct-membership

WHAT I HAVE GAINED FROM JOINING ROTARY

STORY BY **ANJU BHATTI** |

JOINED Rotary as a friend recommended it is as a platform to network with professionals around the globe.

Following my discussions, I opted for the direct membership route which I felt suited me best as it allows me flexibility. It has allowed me to carry on with my own personal interests in my own home-grown charity, my current volunteering roles and interest in community development.

I have found that Rotary is an opening to lots of opportunities for volunteering with core initiatives set up by Rotary which are key to create a better world, the opportunities available are local, national or global initiatives.

Since joining I feel really inspired and encouraged with the discussions that I have had with my mentors Tim Mason, Marius Ciortan and fellow Rotarians on the Zoom chats with some interesting topics. My background and experience as a nurse and social work complements the ethics and values which Rotary has and it is all about making a difference to the people we serve.

Joining Rotary has allowed me opportunities to build on those existing skills and expand my personal and professional skill set with like-minded Rotarians. ●





STEPHANIE URCHICK

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL
PRESIDENT 2024/25**

SHARING THE MAGIC OF ROTARY

ROTARY is at its best when we foster a sense of inclusion and belonging in our clubs. In fact, I would go so far as to say that belonging is The Magic of Rotary itself.

With a focus on inclusivity and belonging, it is easier to be united in a common purpose. When we are committed to one another and focused on our goals, we are most effective.

Rotary's Action Plan can help.

The Action Plan comes with tools you can use to collect feedback, assess your club's strengths and weaknesses, and address challenges.

The world is changing, and our clubs can't afford to stand still. But the changes we make need to be consistent and strategic — building on one another towards a greater vision. The Action Plan can help you work towards that vision and create effective change within your club.

Following the Action Plan and addressing suggestions from the community will go a long way to fostering the sense of belonging we want all Rotary members to feel in their clubs.

That's why expanding our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is so important.

Committing ourselves to each other's well-being is the first step to expanding our reach, allowing us to spread Positive Peace in these troubled times.

Peacebuilding is one of our top priorities, and one of the most effective ways we can build peace is with our Rotary Peace Fellowships, through which peace and development professionals learn how to prevent and end conflict.

We offer the fellowships through our Rotary Peace Centres at leading



universities around the globe, where more than 1,800 Rotary Peace Fellows have graduated.

And thanks to a \$15.5 million gift from the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation, we can continue supporting peacebuilders in more regions with the next peace centre at Bahçe ehir University in Istanbul.

Opening another peace centre is a monumental achievement, and it is my great honour to invite you to celebrate at next year's Rotary Presidential Peace Conference at the Istanbul Centre. The three-day conference from February 20-22 will highlight the many ways our family of Rotary advances peacebuilding.

Registration for the conference is

officially open. I hope to see you there.

The 2025 Rotary Presidential Peace Conference has great potential for our peacebuilding efforts — but only if we have your support.

The truth is, we're not going to bring peace to the world, end polio, or grow membership by waving a wand and saying some funny words. It's up to you.

You create the magic with every project completed, every dollar donated, and every new member inducted.

I love my Rotary family and I know you do too. That's why I know that together, we can make every club and district simply irresistible.

This year, let us change the world by embracing The Magic of Rotary. ●

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NORTH STAR

BEING BRAVE, INNOVATIVE & INVENTIVE

| NITESH JOSHI |
 CHAIR, ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND BOARD

“CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP HAS BEEN AN ESTABLISHED CHANNEL OF ROTARY FOR MANY YEARS, HOWEVER IN GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND WE HAVE BEEN LOW ADOPTERS OF THIS.”

OUR North Star initiative effectively commenced in October 2023 once Rotary International (RI) approved the funding request to provide \$800,000 over three years to reverse the decline in membership in Great Britain & Ireland.

As an official pilot of RI, we have been asked to be brave, innovative, and inventive by thinking of new ways of how to expand our membership and grow Rotary in these islands.

In November 2023, Rotary GB&I announced four new channels of membership with how prospective members can join Rotary: Club, Direct, Corporate and Enterprise, with the latter two focusing on re-establishing our relationship with businesses.

We are bringing business back into Rotary and Rotary is firmly back in business.

By conducting external research and numerous surveys, the message we were hearing was businesses of all sizes were keen to be associated and work with a quality volunteer-led organisation such as Rotary.

Businesses were keen to explore how Rotary could assist them in fulfilling their corporate social responsibility, environmental and sustainability goals, and how their staff could work with us to deliver volunteer work with a pre-defined focus. We noticed two strands emerging.

The first strand was for clubs to engage and recruit local businesses to become Rotary members – known as Corporate Membership.

Corporate Membership has been an established channel of Rotary for many years; however in Great Britain and Ireland we have been low adopters of this. Consequently, we have never fully embraced this opportunity, until now.

This membership initiative is about inviting small businesses located within the local community to join a club.

This could include the venues where clubs meet, the local estate agent, restaurant or accountant firm in the area. Joy Cooper Palmer explains more about this on pages 12-13.

The second strand was for us to engage with bigger businesses.

An essential requirement for these larger companies was they wanted to work with a global, trusted organisation, one which could demonstrate how they could measure the impact of their volunteers’ activity and, as one would expect, these businesses required us to provide a clear return on investment for the money they spend with us.

From this concept Enterprise Membership was born.

The profile of an Enterprise client soon emerged: a company with between 100 to 1,000 staff which aligns its values with our values. A business that wants to partner with a global brand and one which remains acutely aware of its own



business and social responsibilities regarding the welfare of its employees and the environment.

With this in mind, the question arises: how can you help?

We are asking Rotarians to lend their support in finding new Enterprise clients by sharing their high-level contacts and relationships they have with businesses which fit this profile.

This could be a friend of yours running a large business, someone you meet regularly over lunch, or someone you know who could benefit from becoming an Enterprise client of Rotary GB&I.

All we request is you complete a simple online form when our Enterprise team will contact the prospective client to arrange a formal 'match-making' meeting, while keeping you updated.

Due to the lengthy lead-in time in acquiring an Enterprise client and the experience required to manage this relationship, Enterprise Membership is being fully managed by our Enterprise team located at the Rotary Support Centre in Alcester, Warwickshire.

This team is responsible for finding prospects, creating quotations, and

following up to convert them into becoming a Rotary GB&I client.

Enterprise Membership is a completely new type of membership not prevalent anywhere in RI so there is no road map for us to follow.

We are creating a new path laying down one stone at a time.

This is work in progress as we learn and find answers, so watch this space as we develop and nurture this new exciting channel of membership.

Anyone joining Rotary via one of our four channels is ultimately a member of Rotary GB&I who enjoys all the benefits and access this provides.

Our different channels are there to attract new, diverse members from different backgrounds; however all of those channels are equally supported and no one channel is there at the detriment of another.

Our clubs are the bedrock of Rotary, and we encourage all clubs - if they desire - to continue increasing their membership and aim to sprout new clubs within their community whether satellite, impact, e-club, cause-based or any other.

Our Rotary Great Britain & Ireland membership train has most definitely

left the station and our North Star aim to grow our membership to 60,000 by 2028 remains a key focus. It serves as a reminder of the work which collectively we all need to do over the coming years.

Though acquisition of new members is essential, we cannot and will not lose sight of our retention strategy - retaining all existing and new members so they continue to enjoy the amazing fellowship and service opportunities which Rotary provides.

This is an exciting time to be in Rotary. I feel we are in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing and with the continued support of all of our members, we will grow Rotary successfully and sustainably within Great Britain & Ireland. ●



FIND OUT MORE ➔

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'We moved into our house in December and there was so much I wanted to do. And I realised that I was utterly exhausted. I found I was doing nothing, just the absolute basics. And I was desperate.'

Then Ingrid read about a supplement called Magnesium+* developed by FutureYou Cambridge, a leading food supplement company known for making formulations backed by extensive scientific research.

'I looked at the research and I liked the science behind the supplement. I thought, right, I like this – let's try it. I'll do it for three months, and see if there's any improvement.

Now I find that, after a bit of a rest, I feel more physical energy so I can do a few things around the house. I feel rejuvenated.

I can walk more, which is

very important for me – I've got two beautiful rescue dogs, and love to have fun with them walking in the fields.'

'We've got a beautiful place here to walk – a small hill, for most people – but for me it's quite a challenge. And I can get up to the top now and look at the incredible view.'

Unlike supplements that use magnesium oxide, Magnesium+ uses a naturally-occurring mineral called magnesium lactate, which is adept at optimising and maintaining levels of magnesium in the body.



'Magnesium oxide may contain a high amount of magnesium but it's not easily released into the body,' explains Dr Miriam Ferrer PhD, head of product development at FutureYou Cambridge.

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'Within two weeks I was a different woman, with energy to spare'

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NORTH STAR REPRESENTS A CULTURE SHIFT IN ROTARY

| STORY BY **ROBERT MORRIS** |

PAST CHAIR OF THE BOARD FOR ROTARY GB&I 2023/24

THE work of the Rotary Great Britain & Ireland Board is multifaceted, reflecting the diverse activities of our great organisation. Indeed, it has been a fruitful year when, building on the first year of the Board, further substantial changes have been made and more are under way as we develop Rotary across these islands.

Chief of these is North Star which is so much more than growing our membership. It represents a culture shift, using innovative tools to enhance member experience with additional membership channels which reflect the ways people now live their lives.

It is also not separate to the wider Great Britain & Ireland strategy.

For Rotary International (RI), the funding to support North Star is an investment since more members bring more subscription income.

To get the three years of funding, it required several online presentations, with 2024/25 Chair, Nitesh Joshi, and Director Eve Conway presenting our plans in person at an RI Board meeting.

My thanks to them and everyone else involved in getting that over the line.

The cascade of the North Star vision to all Rotarians across Great Britain and Ireland commenced with the Leadership Summit last November and continued at the Leadership Development Forum earlier this year.

It is now for districts to continue sharing that vision to members. Indeed, some already have that in hand, using Board members and the Specialist Adviser Teams (SAT) to support those events.

The SAT leads and their teams are there to support you, as well as manage regional programmes. The SATs now have a holistic approach which works across their respective specialisms, and they are working directly with their counterparts at the Support Centre.



CLUSTERS

The grouping of districts into clusters, to enable them to share resources and projects is progressing.

Several clusters have held successful multi-district conferences and/or multi-district president-elect learning events, and this collaboration is growing as the benefits become evident.

INCORPORATION

Incorporation of the Association has been a major package of work undertaken this year. I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the working group and our legal advisors to bring this together.

ORIENTATION INTO ROTARY

The orientation into Rotary for prospective and newer members needs to be a coherent approach, so that all have a positive and enlightening experience,

whichever is their channel into Rotary membership.

Work on that coherent programme and development of suitable learning tools is now under way.

ROTARY VIEW

The development of the Rotary View website continues as a coherent single online administrative resource for clubs and districts. Further phases have been released during this year.

SERVICE PROJECTS DATABASE

Work has also commenced on building a service projects database. While of use to us all, this will be especially useful for members in our Direct and Enterprise channels, to identify local projects with which they can be involved. ●

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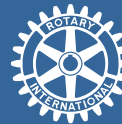
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WE ALL HAVE A SHARED OWNERSHIP OF NORTH STAR



NITESH JOSHI
CHAIR OF THE BOARD,
ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

WE are at the start of a new Rotary year and at the beginning of a pivotal journey.

A lot of the strategic groundwork has been laid down for achieving our North Star target.

This includes securing funding from Rotary International, setting up four new membership channels, gaining the collaboration of districts working effectively as clusters, and strengthening our infrastructure to support new members joining Rotary Great Britain & Ireland.

This year's focus will remain on increasing our membership through the four membership channels; Club, Corporate, Direct and Enterprise, so that each one becomes a steady contributor of new members towards the aim of 60,000 members.

We will continue to provide extensive support to districts and clubs to grow effectively in a sustainable and diverse way. With the assistance of our Specialist Advisor Teams and also the Rotary Support Centre, our goal is to add three new clubs to each district, with at least one, if not two, corporate members joining each club.

We will build the Enterprise model, working closely with our first client and learning from this

experience to take on new Enterprise clients through fresh partnerships.

Work will continue building our Direct Membership channel as a setting for members to meet in a safe and secure environment.

The Board, on behalf of Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, is responsible to Rotary International for delivering 60,000 members by 2028, providing a return on RI's investment for the approved funding.

This is a shared responsibility with every member in Rotary GB&I becoming a co-owner of our 60k target.

For Rotary in these isles, the wins from North Star are huge. North Star isn't just about adding new members.

New members bring knowledge, skills, and talent but, more importantly, they allow us to form new friendships and fellowships as we take on a greater array of service projects.

New members assist us at events,

providing a much-needed resource to take on new and bigger projects so Rotary can reach out to more people.

These new members will also open up pathways to untapped personal and business networking circles – making North Star a sustainable model for the future with the ability to adapt and evolve.

We are also reviewing our Leadership Development programmes to make Rotary leadership roles become more attractive for existing and emerging leaders.

We have a busy year ahead. I firmly believe we are in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing with the right people. Together we will create a new, vibrant, diverse and engaging Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland.

Thank you for the relentless hard work, determination, and passion you inject into each day creating 'The Magic of Rotary'. ●



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THE **BIG** INTERVIEW

Michele Berg is Deputy General Secretary of Rotary International and has been closely involved with discussions over regional pilots in Great Britain and Ireland and also Zone 8, covering Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. In conversation with Rotary Editor, Dave King, she discusses the view from Rotary International World Headquarters in Evanston.



Name: Michele Berg

Rotary Club: Evanston

Occupation: Deputy General Secretary of Rotary International

WHEN DID YOUR PATH CROSS WITH ROTARY?

I started in Rotary in 1992 just out of college. Given I had an undergraduate degree in Italian, I was looking to join an international organisation and I was really excited to work for a non-profit that had a compelling mission. Since then I have had seven different jobs in Rotary, starting off in donor services and progressively had more responsibility. I have been Deputy General Secretary since 2016.

HOW HAS ROTARY CHANGED SINCE 1992?

Oh my goodness, there have been so many changes, and I think that's kind of why I have stayed at Rotary all this time. There is always something different and new. We're always trying new things with new leadership all the time. There is nothing boring about Rotary. Since 1992 there have been big changes such as changes in technology and the way

we do Rotary. Certainly, you notice the diversity of our Board when with the first female President of Rotary International in Jennifer Jones, it was 50% female. In 1992, we had no female leaders so that has been a significant change and something which is refreshing to see.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH NORTH STAR?

Being Deputy General Secretary is like being a Chief Operating Officer at Rotary. For my job, I have direct responsibility for certain key areas in the organisation. One of those areas is strategy and I work on the action plan for the organisation. The pilots in Great Britain and Ireland and Zone 8 have come out of that strategic vision and our view for the future.

WHAT HAS THE JOURNEY BEEN LIKE FOR NORTH STAR?

We have been talking about these kinds of alternative approaches to Rotary for

many years. And I know Great Britain and Ireland has been on its own journey of changing its governance structure. We have been having a conversation with both Great Britain and Ireland and Zone 8 about changing their governance structures and support for their clubs. The pilots were formally approved by the Council On Legislation in 2022 and then by the RI Board in 2023 when business cases were presented.

SO WHAT IS THE VIEW FROM EVANSTON ON NORTH STAR?

The leadership in Great Britain and Ireland has had this vision to embrace change and try some different approaches, so you have to give credit to the leadership for their willingness to do this. We are very optimistic, and having been involved in some of the early conversations to where we are now, it's great to see the progress that's being made with the channels being explored for membership. It's not

just about new membership offerings, but there is also a desire to change the culture in Great Britain and Ireland by enhancing member experience, showing the impact and relevance to community. It is a comprehensive approach, and we are looking forward to learning from the pilot, and what might be able to be applied to other areas of the world. I know from being in the Board meeting and the presentation delivered by incoming Rotary GB&I Chair, Nitesh Joshi, that the Board is very enthusiastic about the potential here, seeing some exciting options which might be scaled for the future.

BOTH PILOTS ARE RECEIVING SUBSTANTIAL ROTARY INTERNATIONAL FUNDING AND BOTH PROJECTS WENT THROUGH SOME RIGOROUS CHECKS.

Both pilots put together pretty thorough business plans to the Board, how the solutions would address the problems, presenting very specific ideas of moving this forward with key performance indicators and quarterly updates. The Board agreed to fund both pilots from our reserves which is a very high bar requiring three-quarters of the Board's approval. The Board certainly is exercising its judgement and reviewing that to make sure this is a good investment for the future.

HOW OPTIMISTIC ARE YOU OF SUCCESS?

First of all, I like that we're able to experiment with a new approach, both for Zone 8 and Great Britain and Ireland. In Rotary we don't often get this opportunity so this is really exciting with two areas who have been given latitude to try something different. While we don't know if these interventions will work, at least we're trying something different. They give us an historic opportunity to try these interventions, evaluate them and see if it's something that we think we can implement on a broader, global scale. On

top of that, I am seeing enthusiasm and interest in Great Britain and Ireland with these membership approaches and talking about a change in culture. Focusing on this has got to be giving some forward momentum, which is really exciting.

IF ROTARY WAS A PATIENT, AND YOU WERE THE DOCTOR, WHAT SORT OF HEALTH WOULD YOU SAY ROTARY IS IN GLOBALLY IN 2024?

I think we're holding steady. I would say Rotary is healthy in many, many ways, though there are some symptoms in certain areas we would need to look at to improve our health. It's a bit like having a blood test which says your cholesterol is getting higher up the range and we need to bring it back down. Overall, we are a healthy organisation. Financially, we're healthy. Our membership is not growing, but it's flat, because it's growing in certain areas, and reducing in others. Now we have that opportunity to diagnose and make changes so that Rotary's health can be even stronger for the future.

NORTH STAR HAS A FIVE-YEAR PLAN FINISHING IN 2028, WHERE DO YOU THINK ROTARY WILL BE IN FOUR YEARS' TIME?

I predict that 2028 will be a big year for Rotary. One significant milestone relates to polio and by 2028 we want to see the interruption and certification of circulating vaccine derived polio virus, after the 2026 goal of eradicating the wild polio virus. If those projections hold, Rotary is going to be doing something completely historic for the world. There will be a lot of attention paid to Rotary's role in the eradication of polio which will be kind of a shot in the arm to show people that we are capable of this impact. Hopefully it will inspire others to join us to be part of this global organisation. By 2028, we will be able to see some of the results of these two pilots and some quick learnings whether there are some things that can be expanded. I see the organisation being more flexible

embracing this regional approach. So even those not in a pilot will be talking about changing and adapting, living our action plan to adapt to the times and being relevant. So, I'm very optimistic about where we're going in the next few years and beyond.

WHAT DOES ROTARY GIVE TO YOU?

First of all, it is the mission. I believe in the organisation. I love Rotary, it is such an amazing organisation where we continue to expand the work we're doing such as polio, which is very inspiring, and we've also started to work on these programmes of scale which are really showing promise, doing big things in the world. So Rotary's impact inspires me and keeps me at Rotary. The other big thing is the people; we have an international talented group of staff members who are very dedicated and equally committed to a mission we have in common. There are also the Rotarians from around the world who I work with and would consider as friends. That is so rewarding and inspiring. ●

FACT FILE

- Michele Berg has worked with Rotary since 1992. As Deputy General Secretary, she leads the day-to-day operations of the Secretariat, ensuring effective internal operating policies, as well as implementing strategies and programmes – including North Star.
- A graduate of Loyola University of Chicago, with a major in Italian, Michele earned her MBA from the University of Illinois in Chicago in marketing and international business.
- She is a past President of the Rotary Club of Evanston, a Major Donor, a Paul Harris Fellow, a Paul Harris Society member and a Benefactor.
- Michele is married, lives in the Chicago area, and the couple have two daughters.

“ROTARY IS HEALTHY IN MANY, MANY WAYS, THOUGH THERE ARE SOME SYMPTOMS IN CERTAIN AREAS WE WOULD NEED TO LOOK AT TO IMPROVE OUR HEALTH.”



BREAKING THE CHAINS OF SLAVERY

For more than 20 years, Mark Little from Norwich St Edmund Rotary Club has been at the forefront of Rotary's campaigning against modern slavery.

| STORY BY **GILL WEBSTER** |

It was a 'road to Damascus' moment! The year was 2001 and Mark Little was watching a Channel 4 documentary on modern slavery. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. Slavery today?

He saw a young boy of around eight who was in a rehabilitation centre in India having been rescued. The boy, Ashraf, had been a domestic slave to a high-ranking civil servant. One morning he woke, was feverish and couldn't get up.

His master didn't believe him and told him to get on with work and that he was not allowed to eat or drink for the next two days. He was caught drinking

the dregs of a milk bottle and when found, he had been branded and had 21 marks on his face.

"The nature of this global crime has dominated me ever since," said the octogenarian Rotarian from Norwich.

Following the programme, Mark, who had been born in India, travelled to the rehabilitation centre in India and met Ashraf. "I met him again in 2001 when he was recovered and an artist earning his living. So his story has a happy ending except that he doesn't know anything about his family.

"Having been there and hearing the testimony of all those children, I had to do

something. I thought I would work on it for a year and see what I could do. But it's not like that," he said.

Then there was the story of Basu who had been trafficked from the streets of Kathmandu. He had been abandoned by his mother at barely six months old, and lost his father at the age of five.

He survived on the streets and braved the local gangs for a couple of years before being nurtured in a shelter and given a life. "He was 24 when I first met him," said Mark.

His is also a happy ending as he became an author and activist warning street children of the dangers of

trafficking. (His book, *'From the streets of Kathmandu'* relates the story of his life).

But for every happy ending there are thousands of unhappy ones. And in between there are horrific stories.

The young girl, Maina, aged about nine or ten who was trafficked from Nepal to India to perform the 'Star Kiss' in a circus. The child was raised on a trapeze which she clung to by her teeth, and spun round. If she didn't fall to her death, her reward was to be raped by her master!

Or the two young cousins who were trafficked, put into separate small cells, and taught to weave. They ate slops and slept by their looms for four years. They were eventually rescued and now have their own tailoring business.

"I have hundreds of such stories. It is quite horrific that in this day and age so many children are trafficked across the world and those rescued are a tiny proportion. But it is not only children.

"Adults who are persuaded that a better life can be found for them in the West and that 'better life' very often isn't what they expect."

In March 2022, Mark organised a conference in Norwich to highlight Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. Speakers came from across the UK and also from America.

One speaker, American Carol Hart Metzker, an author and campaigner who works with her husband and daughters on projects to aid survivors of slavery and human trafficking, brought an ex-slave with her to the conference and she told her harrowing story.

"Every time I hear these stories I want to go and help the victims.

"I have been to India about 12 times to do what I can and through Rotary we have helped build and fit rehabilitation centres in different cities.

"Once you start it is difficult to get out. Although people know of slavery in the Far East, Middle East and China, they don't think it is here under their noses in the UK or in the US. Here in plain sight," he said.

Slaves are put to work in car washes, kitchens of restaurants, and in brothels.

They earn little or nothing for their labours. It is estimated that on any given day there are 122,000 slaves living and working in the UK alone and around 50 million world-wide.

"I worry about what is happening in the world right now. When you are vulnerable you can so easily be exploited and then you are enslaved.

"The only solution is raising awareness. If you don't know about it, you can't stop it.

"There are still people in this country who own slaves but they are mostly in the diplomatic service of a foreign country and are untouchable," he added.

Mark has put forward a proposal to Rotary International that the Board of Directors of Rotary International should establish an additional Area of Focus based on Human Rights.

This proposal has been agreed by Mark's Rotary Club, Norwich St. Edmund, and he hopes it will be taken up

by Rotary International.

"It is such an important area and should be part of the Rotary ideal," he added.

For all his work to highlight Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, Mark was presented with the MBE by Prince William at Windsor Castle last year. ●

"I WORRY ABOUT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW. WHEN YOU ARE VULNERABLE YOU CAN SO EASILY BE EXPLOITED AND THEN YOU ARE ENSLAVED."





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THE HIDDEN HOMELESS

Sue Campbell looks into the plight of the homeless in the UK, and particularly those under the age of 24.

PEOPLE become homeless for all sorts of different reasons. Social causes - lack of affordable housing, poverty and unemployment and a host of life events can push people onto the streets.

According to the homelessness charity Crisis, life events like a relationship breaking down, mental or physical health problems or substance misuse put people under strain.

And many become homeless simply because they can no longer afford the rent.

Research from another charity, Shelter, shows at least 309,000 people in England spent Christmas without a home last December - a stark increase of 14%, or 38,100 people, in a year.

But what is sometimes hidden in the headlines are the numbers of young people who become homeless.

Almost 136,000 young people aged 16-24 were homeless or at risk in the UK in 2022/23 according to the charity, Action for Children.

There are of course many organisations across the country dealing with youth homelessness. One of them is Tees Valley YMCA, based in Darlington, which looks after homeless young people between 16 and 25.

The reasons they become homeless can be complex and difficult. Ray was referred to the YMCA shortly before his 17th birthday - the third sibling from the same family to be referred.

He had a turbulent childhood and no contact with his parents. Vulnerable and financially exploited by people he perceived to be his friends during his support, it became apparent that he was on the Autism Spectrum.

Ray struggled to contain his emotions and would frequently lose his temper, damaging his property and himself.

It was decided that Ray needed to live in supported accommodation - the best outcome for Ray, who otherwise might have found himself on the streets.

Dion had been referred as he was no longer able to live in the family home. He has severe mental health issues, many as a result of meningitis aged 18 and was diagnosed with Emotionally Unstable

Personality Disorder.

He would prolifically self-harm, which led him to being admitted to the local mental health hospital where he was an inpatient for four weeks.

Although he could not live in the family home, he had a good family support network and initially his family managed his finances, one of the areas that he struggled with. He is currently being assessed to establish the level of support he will need longer term to enable him to move on successfully.

Keith was referred for accommodation shortly after his 17th birthday. He had been living at home but was being subjected to homophobic abuse by his step-dad.

He has been supported by the YMCA into full-time education and gained a Duke of Edinburgh Scheme Bronze Award. Keith has been a volunteer mentor for the National Citizen Service and has been a positive ambassador for the YMCA.

He has now completed a package of support and has been given an introductory tenancy in a Local Authority property.

Janine Browne is CEO of Tees Valley YMCA. Although under the national YMCA umbrella, it's an individual charity, and Janine spends a lot of time applying for funding from as many sources as possible.

Young people are mostly referred from the Local Authority and will also include unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in care.

Darlington currently has 26 young homeless people and a baby in their accommodation units. But they could have many more and the organisation is seeking to increase its number of flats.

Janine said: "Much of youth homelessness is masked by the way society treats them. There are lots of hidden homeless young people who may be sofa surfing with nowhere permanent to live.

"It is the Local Authority's responsibility to house the homeless and we get some funding for commissioned services.

"Giving young people a safe place is the priority, so that we can give them

the support at the grass roots level and enable them to live independently."

The Tees Valley YMCA Housing Support Manager is Lynn Lambert, who leads a team of support workers.

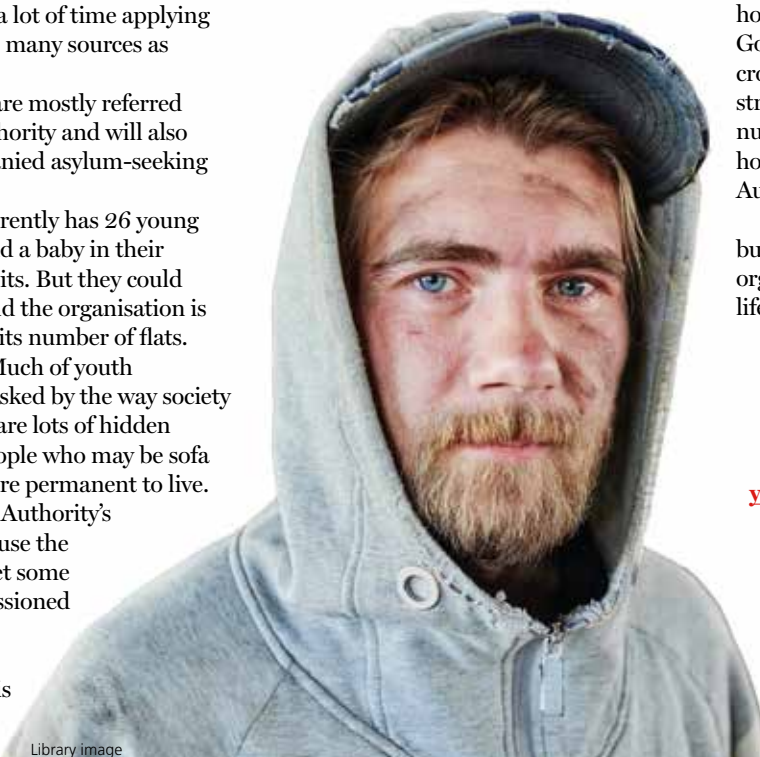
She says relationships breaking down at home are a key reason a young person could find themselves without a place to call home - especially likely if there is conflict between a young person and their parents or step-parents.



Janine Browne and Lynn Lambert

Often, a combination of factors is involved, with things escalating until the young person feels they can no longer stay, or is kicked out.

Lynn said: "Many people think of homelessness as people sleeping rough in doorways, but it is much more complex than that.



Library image

"They come from so many different backgrounds, with so many reasons - sexuality, pushing the boundaries, timekeeping, unstable family life, a change of dynamic in the household.

"When they are living in the YMCA accommodation support staff inspect their flats.

"But there can be very different values when it comes to tidiness or organisation. Some think that just making a pathway from the bed to the door through a mountain of clothes is tidy. And it may well be for them. Living in a chaotic world may be all they know."

Youth homelessness is higher in the North East than anywhere else in England, government figures suggest.

Almost one in five individuals who applied for, and were due, homeless support from their local council in the North East last year were aged 18-24 - at least 3,300 young people.

Tees Valley YMCA is doing its utmost to bring what is often the hidden homeless into a safe and positive space.

Janine added: "A safe place with four walls is our priority. The majority will never go home again. So we're helping them by stabilising and supporting them into the world of independent living."

Charities across the youth homelessness sector are calling on the Government to develop a national cross-departmental youth homelessness strategy following growing concerns about numbers of young people experiencing homelessness - and the capacity of Local Authorities to support them.

But as the crisis deepens and budgets are cut, the support provided by organisations like Tees Valley YMCA is a lifeline for many. ●

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I'M OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF ROTARACT

Outgoing Chair of Rotaract GB&I, Arianna Castro, reflects on the last year in the role.

WHEN I first stepped into the role as Chair for Rotaract in Great Britain & Ireland, I aimed to build a closer Rotaract/Rotary community, improve accessibility and inclusion, and re-energise our existing members. I am proud to say we have done exactly that.

This past year has been incredibly rewarding, teaching me invaluable lessons about teamwork, resilience, and creativity.

We kicked off the year with a team weekend in Nottingham, which helped us bond and set goals for the year.

The enthusiasm born from that weekend was infectious, giving us the energy for a whole year of Dogoodery.

Developing ideas together fostered a collaborative spirit which led to initiatives like our Rotaract awards celebrating the achievements of outstanding Rotaract clubs. Thanks to the hard work of our IT Officer, Clement Chinaza Owuamalam, and International Service Officer, Chris Mitchell.

We also developed a club grant scheme, led by myself and Treasurer Fleur ten Hacken, which launched in the spring and applications can still be made on our website - www.rotaract.org.uk

Secretary Vee Meyners set up a seamless system for managing our communications, co-ordinating our exciting partnership with ShelterBox UK.

Our national conference, held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was a personal highlight.

The theme was environmental action, and featured a range of speakers from the charity, academic, and political sectors to share their variety of perspectives and led collaborative workshops.

The volunteer fair was particularly special, connecting several organisations with our community, such as ShelterBox UK, Greenpeace, Mind, and the Star and Shadow Cinema.

To reduce our environmental impact, we served a fully vegan menu, with 150-plus delicious plant-based meals enjoyed over the weekend.

Additionally, through a tombola made almost entirely of donated prizes, we raised £115 each for The Rotary Foundation for the environment and the local host club, Rotaract Tyneside, funding new opportunities in the local Tyneside community.

Our final service project took place on Sunday, with Rotaractors painting over 30 canvases which were sold to raise funds for humanitarian

aid in Palestine. It was witnessing the outpouring of enthusiasm and creativity from the attendees which affirmed that I had achieved the goals set at the start of the year.

I feel so inspired by what we have achieved, and optimistic about the future of Rotaract.

As we hand over to the incoming officers, I look back on this year with a lot of pride and gratitude.

I am now looking forward to focusing on my local Rotaract club, making a difference in our community, and connecting with other Rotaractors.

I am excited to see what the new board achieves next year with the foundation we have laid.

With Penelope Milner as the Rotaract Chair for this year, I am certain we have a lot of great things in store for the future.

This year has shown how much we can accomplish when we work together with passion and purpose.

I am confident the work we've done will help Rotaract continue to grow and thrive in the years to come. ●



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A woman in a yellow Rotary apron is administering a vaccine to a baby held by a woman in a pink hijab. The background shows a health center with a sign that says "Polio".

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Rotary 
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ENDING POLIO

NOT SIMPLY A MEDICAL CHALLENGE

STORY BY **JAMES CARMICHAEL** |
Rotary GB&I End Polio Now Specialist

IN South Waziristan and Bajaur in February this year, Dr Abdur Rehman was working hard to realise his dream of a ‘polio-free Pakistan’ when his team was attacked. A policeman was injured, and Dr Rehman was murdered.

This brings the number of people killed in the efforts to eliminate polio in the area to 108. Many more have been injured.

Extremist factions have been operating in the area for some time. In the past, they have called for vaccination efforts to be stopped claiming that the vaccines are harmful. The vaccination effort is, they claim, a cover for spying, the vaccines are tainted with pork and are part of a western conspiracy to sterilise Muslims.

A story was circulated on social media claiming that the vaccine drops were responsible for the deaths of 14 children, which led to thousands of parents refusing to allow their children to be vaccinated.

Dr Rehman was involved in the efforts to try to combat these myths and educate parents about the benefits of

vaccination. He tried to explain the great and very real dangers facing children who are not protected against diseases such as polio.

His work was part of the enormous efforts underway in Pakistan. The government has deployed 80,000 security personnel and put 100,000 front-line workers in the field, many of them volunteers with the aim to vaccinate around 45 million children each year.

These efforts are supported by the Global Polio Initiative and, of course, Rotary plays a vital role by investing in education, funding vaccine research and production, and donating \$50 million each year to the campaign.

The challenges that must be overcome to eliminate the last vestiges of polio are very great.

But given the enormous efforts underway, the World Health Organization has stated that the wild form of the

virus can and will be eliminated by 2026.

There will still be the effort to eliminate the form of the virus caused, tragically, by the old polio vaccine.

Cases of this kind are still happening across central African countries, but the new and much safer novo vaccine has been rolled out and is having an effect. It is believed that this form of polio will be gone by 2028.

That is not to underestimate the challenges involved.

Bringing an end to polio is not simply a medical or logistical matter.

It involves complex human issues, including poverty, access to clean water, improvements to sanitation, culture issues, political unrest and violence, and much, much more.

This is the reality of the End Polio Now campaign. And it needs champions such as Dr Rehman, prepared to risk all to see a dream realised. ●



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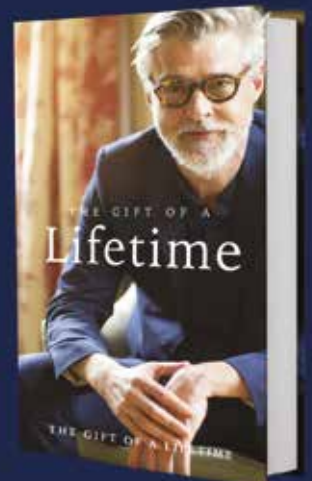
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SINGAPORE

CONVENTION

MORE than 14,000 Rotary members and participants from over 120 countries gathered in Singapore last month for the 115th annual Rotary Convention at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands.

Delegates arriving at Changi Airport and driving into the city couldn't fail to be inspired by this beautiful green city.

The small island nation wants to inspire the world with its innovations to address climate change and displays, with green creativity at almost every turn.

Plants covered building faces

and rooftops to cool the structures, mature trees were everywhere, while bougainvillea and other flowering shrubs were resplendent along all the roads, and abundant in parks accessible to every resident within a 10-minute walk.

Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of modern Singapore, was the architect behind Singapore's transformation into a premier tropical garden city.

Today, officials describe Singapore as a living laboratory aimed at reducing its carbon emissions to net zero by 2050.

Key milestones by 2030 are to plant one million trees, increase solar energy deployments by 400%, cut about a third of waste to landfills, and freeze growth of

internal-combustion vehicles.

Other environmental programmes and plans in Singapore which might energise Rotarians include 'closed-loop' water recycling to reuse every drop, the conversion of incinerated waste into sand for construction and the introduction of car-free town centres for walkers and cyclists with underground roads.

The ambitious plans also include vertical farming indoors to increase local food production, and microclimate modelling for development to strengthen wind corridors, position buildings for natural ventilation, and identify hot spots for greenery.

Singapore sees its green economy





Judith Diment MBE, Dean of the Rotary Representatives to the UN and International Organisations, and Vice Chair of the International PolioPlus Committee, reflects on the Rotary International Convention in Singapore. Photographs by Peter Croan

as an advantage that drives growth and new jobs. The convention kicked off with the opening of the House of Friendship by President Gordon McNally, with a group of colourful Chinese Dragons and musicians.

The Rotary International President said: “Rotary conventions are about bringing people together to create meaningful connections and to inspire each other to help create a more healthy, hopeful and peaceful world.”

“I am excited to reconnect with so many friends from across the globe in Singapore to celebrate in the joy we bring through our work, and to learn how we can continue to help people and communities thrive in the future.”

The House of Friendship included over 100 humanitarian projects on display highlighting the work of many clubs, Rotary Action Groups and Fellowships.

For the second year running, a centrepiece of the House of Friendship

was the Peace Park sponsored by the Jubitz Family Foundation.

At the opening of the Peace Park, Rotarian Al Jubitz joined in remotely to praise the stellar leadership of Rotary with its support of Rotary Peace Centres, and the Carter School Peace initiative. He said: “To achieve peace we need a cultural paradigm shift to reject violence.”

Alpaslan Özerdem, Dean of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, said that he was thrilled with the partnership with Rotary International.

He said: “Partnering with the Rotary community opens new opportunities for innovation and collaboration. Together, we aim to expand our footprint in peacebuilding training and practice, reaching more communities and making a significant impact worldwide.”

“This partnership will leverage Rotary’s global presence and resources to implement cutting-edge peacebuilding

modalities, offer comprehensive training programmes and foster a culture of peace in regions affected by conflict.”

Speaking at the opening of the Peace Park, Rotary President-Elect, Mário César Martins de Camargo, said “Rotarians have a duty to help achieve global peace, we can gain so much from diversity of cultures, food and mindsets.

“Respect for other people’s differences is fundamental for a peaceful world. Rotarians be a messenger for peace.”

The convention demonstrated that peace remains at the forefront of Rotary’s mission.

Viewing the flag ceremony at the opening plenary session explains why many attendees describe the convention as a “mini United Nations”.

This is reinforced by the privilege of listening to world class speakers such as Dame Graça Machel, wife of Nelson Mandela, the first Minister of Education and former First Lady of Mozambique 🇿🇼





and South Africa.

Championing inequality, women's health, girls' education and equal pay for women, Dame Graça's presentation was inspirational. She said: "The challenges of today have changed and we need to change our approach. We have the tools, means and technology.

"We need to revise the instruments of how we show solidarity.

"Don't fear those who are different, reach out and treat them as you would like to be treated. Resolve issues before they transform into violence."

It is always a pleasure to hear from Aidan O'Leary Director of Polio at the World Health Organization, who updated Rotarians on the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

It was heartening to hear how progress is being made, but he warned of complacency; as long as there is one case of polio, we are all at risk, he insisted, and we must continue to advocate and fundraise to ensure we get to zero cases.

Two important announcements were made at the convention.

The first was the award of the fourth Programme of Scale \$2 million grant to 'Partners for Water Access and Better Harvests in India' sponsored by the Rotary Club of Delhi Premier.

This project will support climate-resilient agriculture and groundwater storage to help farmers improve harvests and yields. Rotary members, experts and technical advisors will collaborate

with local and national governments to strengthen farmers' capacity at the community level in four states – Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

The second announcement was the launch of 'Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge' - a \$30 million programme in collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and World Vision, to combat deadliest childhood diseases in four African countries.

This will strengthen health systems and tackle leading childhood killers - malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhoeal diseases - in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Zambia.

"Rotary is committed to strengthening health systems and combatting diseases by empowering communities to use locally driven solutions that work," said Rotary International President, Gordon McNally.

"Together, with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and World Vision, we will invest in proven methods to help communities provide a healthier and more hopeful future in which everyone will have the opportunity to thrive."

The 'Rotary Healthy Communities Challenge' was built upon the success of the Rotary club-led Programme of Scale 'Partners for a Malaria-Free Zambia' that supported the community health workers to reduce the incidence of malaria in ten target districts within two highly affected

provinces.

With support from The Rotary Foundation, World Vision USA, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation - each contributing \$2 million - 2,500 community health workers were added to the national health system in Zambia, allowing for more effective malaria diagnosis and treatment for more than 1.3 million people.

Six outstanding Rotarians were recognised as Rotary's People of Action Champions of Impact. Two honourees worked on combatting the stigma of mental health: Bindi Rajasegaran from Malaysia, who established the National Coalition for Mental Wellbeing, and Rita Aggarwal from India, who established Wellness in a Box, which supports young people with mental health issues.

Mental health has been a focus of attention this Rotary year and it was heartening to hear in many presentations that Rotary clubs have taken up the challenge to address this global problem, particularly affecting young people.

Many global grants have been initiated helping to reduce the stigma associated with mental health while showing care and compassion for others.

It was exciting to be in Singapore to reconnect with many friends from across the world and to create many meaningful new connections.

Congratulations to President Gordon and his team for hosting a wonderful convention. ●

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GOING EVEN GREENER ON THE EMERALD ISLE

STORY BY **THOMAS O'NEILL** |

In an effort to combat the declining forest cover in Ireland, Dublin Rotary Club is leading a tree-planting initiative to revitalise the country's landscapes.

Ireland only has 11% forestry cover, less than half the expected norm in European countries.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, hardwood forests were used to provide timber for the rapid increase in Royal Navy ships, including Nelson's flagship, HMS Victory. Replanting was not in vogue during Victorian times.

With a strong commitment to environmental stewardship, the club partnered with Scouting Ireland to embark on a mission which not only brings hope but also highlights the power of community-driven action.

In 2024, the project witnessed the planting of an impressive 400 trees at the scenic lands overlooking Lough Dan, showcasing the club's unwavering dedication to environmental conservation and sustainability.

To raise funds for this project, Rotary Club Dublin created Christmas cards, with each card symbolising a planted tree and sent by purchasers to friends or

relatives.

The club collected the names of recipients, stored them in a database, and erected a plaque at the site to acknowledge all those who received the cards.

The significance of these tree planting efforts goes beyond mere numbers, serving as a testament to the enduring spirit of environmental stewardship within the Dublin community.

Each sapling nurtured into the ground embodies a collective pledge to preserve Ireland's natural heritage and foster a greener, more sustainable future for generations to come.

Thanks to the work of the Rotary Club of Dublin's tree-planting project, the site overlooking Lough Dan is flourishing into a woodland haven, thanks to the generous tree sponsorships.

Oak trees initially planted by the club in 2011 have grown into strong pillars of resilience, embodying the lasting legacy of environmental stewardship.

A recent milestone saw over 600 children actively participating in the tree planting activities at Lough Dan, a significant event poised to leave a lasting impression on the young minds involved.

As they worked to nurture native

trees into the soil, these children not only contributed to reforestation efforts but also deepened their understanding of the critical climate and biodiversity challenges facing our world today.

The weekend was filled with a flurry of activities, with children camping over Friday and Saturday, engaging in workshops focused on crafting bird and bat boxes.

Wildlife cameras captured enchanting footage of various animals frequenting the site in recent months, from deer and pine martens to badgers, otters by the lake, jays, red squirrels, and woodpeckers, underscoring the rich biodiversity of the area.

Through this multifaceted experience, Dublin Rotary Club not only nurtured a thriving woodland environment at Lough Dan but also instilled environmental awareness and conservation values in the hearts of the next generation.

The successful partnership between Rotary Club Dublin, Scouting Ireland, and the enthusiastic children highlights the transformative impact of community-driven initiatives in addressing environmental challenges and fostering a sustainable future for all. ●



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Readers' letters

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

ⓧ Electric vehicle article is overcharged

THE article in the Spring *Rotary Magazine* about electric vehicles appears slightly 'overcharged'!

Volvo estimates that an electric Volvo C40 needs to be driven around 68,400 miles to have a lower total carbon footprint than its petrol equivalent, if the former is powered by the current global electricity mix. Based on 2021 UK driving statistics, the average annual mileage is 7,400 miles.

Automakers from Ford Motor and General Motors to Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen, Jaguar Land Rover and Aston Martin are scaling back or delaying their electric vehicle plans.

Also, Tesla has reportedly cut down its electric vehicle production at its Giga Shanghai factory in China due to

sluggish growth in the sales of new-energy vehicles, tough competition and price war, according to Bloomberg.

Sir Jim Ratcliffe, founder of the INEOS Group, stated: "There is a rather fundamental drawback with the electric car. It simply doesn't do what you want a car to do. It doesn't get you from A to B reliably if you are on a long journey.

"And you have no idea whether you will be able to fill it up. Put it together and it's referred to as 'range anxiety' And it's very real."

I do agree with 'diversity' in all areas of life, but let's get back to reality, which policy makers frequently overlook.

| John Morton
Newport Rotary Club, Staffordshire

ⓧ Love the new magazine format

CONGRATULATIONS on producing the new format. I loved the width of topics which you included, and I read it from cover to cover though I did pause to take on board that terrible report from Gaza. I hope that Nabila is safe and somehow surviving (*Rotary Magazine*, Winter).

The article about Kindertransport brought to mind a book review on the same topic in the *Church Times* of January 26 this year, and the concluding thought of the reviewer: "Meanwhile, we have the memoirs in which the children of the Kindertransport speak for themselves. These make for harrowing reading. We are left with the prayer on our lips: 'Lord, give to men who are old and tougher the things that little children suffer.'"

You have set yourself a high standard with this first issue - keep going!

| Martin Jayne
Kendal Rotary Club, Cumbria.

ⓧ Great magazine!

CONGRATULATIONS on the new format. This new *Rotary* is an excellent magazine now and will be read by many from outside our membership. If this can be achieved, then hopefully we will see a boost to our numbers.

| John Fishburne
Nantwich Rotary Club, Cheshire



ⓧ Great read!

JUST finished reading the new-style magazine, well done (*Rotary Magazine*, Winter)! An amazing amount of interesting content. Great to see what lots of other clubs are doing, and I liked the article about Sir Nicholas Winton.

It was a great read all the way through.

| Alan Doggett
Hitchin Tilehouse Rotary, Hertfordshire

ⓧ Easy money with Riviera Travel

PROBABLY, like most Rotarians, I was very sceptical of the many adverts by Riviera Travel, often found on the back cover of the excellent *Rotary Magazine*. So, I thought I'd test them out.

I ended up booking two trips with Riviera Travel in 2023, telling them beforehand that I was a Rotarian.

My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed both trips and it all worked well, such that I received £1,360 from them for my Rotary club.

I am not an employee of Riviera Travel nor do I benefit from saying all this but, if you like the sort of travel they deliver, it can be a really good win for your Rotary club.

| Richard Spalding
Winchester Rotary Club, Hampshire

✉ How the Treekly app works in practice

I REFER to the article about COP28 in (*Rotary Magazine*, Winter) to congratulate Rotary members in the UAE where COP28 was held who are planting 50,000 mangrove trees in partnership with the government.

However, it is important to congratulate too the 1,451 current volunteers who are taking the Treekly challenge across Great Britain & Ireland by walking and donating to enable the planting of mainly mangrove trees in now seven countries.

In total, at 19.55 on March 19th, 2024, 168,122 trees have been planted since its launch.

The volunteers can plant trees if they complete 5,000 steps a day and can also donate. Therefore, not only are you making a contribution to the climate crisis but also helping your overall health and well-being.

My own contribution by March 19 was 6,252 trees planted and can be further analysed as follows:

- 3,591 trees in Madagascar
- 1,156 trees in Kenya
- 1,000 trees in Haiti
- 240 trees in Indonesia
- 185 trees in Mozambique
- 70 trees in Brazil
- 10 trees in Scotland



This contribution will capture 312.60 tonnes of CO2 up to 2030.

Altogether, my Rotary club has funded 6,358 trees and I estimate the total contribution of the 1,451 volunteers will be to capture 8,406.1 tonnes of CO2 up to 2030.

In addition, we are providing regeneration of natural forests that have been lost, much needed employment mainly in very poor areas and a buffer against coastal erosion among other benefits.

It shows what Rotary can achieve working individually and together and I think this achievement needs to be recognised.

| Desmond Lynch
Strabane/Lifford Rotary Club,
County Tyrone, Northern Ireland

Editor's note:
For more details about the Treekly app, visit: www.treekly.org

✉ Rotary crosses borders to honour heroes

THERE has been a gratifying response from Rotarians to my article 'Rotary crosses borders to honour heroes' (*Rotary Magazine*, Spring) in which I described a visit to Belgian Rotarians with my son and daughter to pay tribute to their grandfather who gave his life as the pilot of a Wellington bomber in 1943 while circling his burning aircraft to avoid housing.

A great deal is known about this fateful flight because three of the crew survived having spent the rest of the war as prisoners. We even know the name of the German pilot who shot them down

because he visited them in hospital.

The tail of the Wellington stands as a memorial and the Rotarians arrange a ceremony every year in memory not only of the Wellington crew but all the Allied forces who rescued them from tyranny.

I give a 20-minute talk about the incident, and this is being extremely well received by clubs. I would be happy to present this talk either on Zoom or face to face to any club. Please contact me at richard.green51@talktalk.net

| Richard Green
City of Wolverhampton Rotary Club

✉ Misperception over PHF award

I SEE the dynamic behind the presentation of a Paul Harris Fellowship recognition has once again raised its head (*Rotary Magazine*, Spring).

I had been in Rotary for many years before I properly grasped the reality of the situation and that by proudly wearing my pin when visiting a club abroad, I was merely, and wrongly, demonstrating an ability to have donated \$1000 to The Rotary Foundation.

I have to say I was a little disappointed with the wording in Michael Hodge's response in that he is "comfortable" with clubs using the PHF as a service recognition. He also points us in the direction of alternative and "more suitable" awards.

So, clubs wishing to recognise exceptional service can either: a) use a PHF in which case the recipient receives a certificate, a letter, a pin and (although no longer coming with the package) a collar; or b) download and print off a not particularly well-designed certificate.

Isn't it time Rotary International considered a system of service recognition which truly reflects a club's appreciation of exceptional service?

| Tony Cook
Dover Rotary Club, Kent

✉ What about a Rotary 1905 Star?

I BELIEVE our system of awarding a PHF for outstanding contribution to Rotary service is a far more valuable mark of recognition than merely being able to buy one for \$1,000.

Those who in our club that have been awarded one deserve the recognition for long service, and all the time and effort put into projects in the name of Rotary.

Perhaps we should create a new award, maybe the Rotary 1905 Star, which we present for service above self. We can all buy awards, but to be presented one is personal recognition.

| Roger Knight,
Dover Rotary Club, Kent

Aquabox is Rotary

IN response to Tom Moloney's letter (*Rotary Magazine*, Spring), despite the demise of the Wirksworth club, Aquabox remains a Rotary partner charity, operating as a disaster response charity and community project with strong links to Rotary clubs and Rotarians across the world.

Aquabox stays true to the Rotary ethos of 'service above self' – indeed, many of our partners in disaster and conflict zones such as Nepal and Ukraine are Rotary groups, with whom we work to ensure the safe delivery of Aquabox water filters and humanitarian aid to those most in need.

To save more lives in the aftermath of both natural and man-made disasters, Aquabox has recently completed an exciting new project, named Aquaboost, which will double the number of family filters produced by our volunteers every year.

We at Aquabox are proud of our Rotary origins, and we are working to strengthen our Rotary links.

We have recently launched an Aquabox Challenge, aimed at RotaKids and Rotary-aligned youth groups, which we believe will strengthen the links between Rotary clubs and schools and uniformed organisations, as well as raising awareness of major global issues, such as the lack of access to safe drinking water

suffered by so many communities across the world.

In addition, we are embarking on an exciting new project, supported by members of Inner Wheel in the East Midlands, to produce re-usable sanitary pads. Once we have built up a stock of these sanitary pads, they will be included in our Aqua-aid boxes.

We are always looking to strengthen our links with Rotary clubs across Great Britain & Ireland, and if you as an individual or your club would like to support our efforts, we would love to hear from you.

Simply log onto our website aquabox.org to learn more about our activities, and the ways you can support this wonderful Rotary partner charity.

If your club is ever stuck for a speaker, get in touch – we have Aquabox Ambassadors all over the country.

So although Tom Moloney is right in one respect – that sadly, the Rotary Club of Wirksworth is no more – its legacy, Aquabox, is alive and well.

And we are still very much part of the worldwide Rotary movement.

Roger Cassidy
Aquabox Chair of Trustees

Cheryle Berry
Aquabox Trustee

What's your sandwich filling?

DURING my show on Rotary Radio UK, inspired by an article in one of today's papers and on the spur of the moment, I decided to conduct a completely unscientific survey of Rotarians' favourite sandwich fillings. Answers flooded in and the list would horrify any competent dietician. This includes:

- Dripping from the Sunday roast
- Condensed milk with brown sugar
- Sugar on its own
- Crisps, mainly plain with salt
- Mashed banana with demerara sugar
- Cheese and pickle
- Any sort of pie or pasty (in a sandwich!!)

All choices required proper white bread, a thick coating of real butter and a greaseproof paper wrapping.

Given the fact that most respondents appeared to be willing to eat almost anything packed with sugar and saturated fats, it's a wonder any of them have retained their own teeth and are still alive!

However, the choice of filling appears to be heavily influenced by childhood memories and experiences.

I wonder if any other Rotarians would care to reveal their sandwich preferences?

Steve Wood
Rotary Radio UK

Nine million TikTok views

IT was interesting to see the article "Putting the fun back into fund-raising" (*Rotary Magazine*, Winter).

The first time I came across a Human Fruit Machine was in 2022 when Penzance Rotary Club in Cornwall had a stall at a local fete.

My own Rotary club, Mounts Bay, had a tombola stall but most of the amusement was coming from the Human Fruit Machine.

As Foundation Chairman for Mounts Bay Rotary Club, I wanted the club to be seen more in the public eye, by attending more local fetes and rallies, to be more attractive to new recruits and at the same time raise funds for Foundation.

I made a Human Fruit Machine which could be easily carried in a car.

I also had an old telephone bell mounted on three table legs with a one-arm bandit type lever for customers to activate the bell to start the Human Fruit Machine.

We had a very successful day at the Morvah Pasty Day, a village which is situated on the north coast of Penwith between St Just and St Ives.

It was here that a person took a video which has recently been put on Tik-Tok and now it has gone viral with over nine million views.

The video shows Jon, a member of the Mounts Bay club, with his wife and also Hugh from the Penzance club.

We had further success at the Mousehole Carnival the following weekend. Crowds of people laughed and applauded the antics of the Human Fruit Machine.

I think the Human Fruit Machine was probably the most photographed event.

Christopher Relf
Mounts Bay Rotary Club, Cornwall

CONTACT US 

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THE ENGINE THAT POWERS US



| MARK DANIEL MALONEY |
ROTARY FOUNDATION TRUSTEE CHAIR

THIS month, we begin a new journey together to celebrate The Magic of Rotary. So buckle up for an exciting trip.

If Rotary is a beautiful car that you are proud to drive, The Rotary Foundation is the engine that propels it to your chosen destination.

And it's the strengths of Rotary — especially you and our other incredible 1.4 million members — that make The Rotary Foundation powerful.

Like many new members, I knew little about The Rotary Foundation when I joined Rotary. However, everything changed in 1985 when, as incoming president of my club, I attended my first Rotary International Convention with my wife, Gay, in Kansas City, Missouri.

We will never forget the thunderous

support the audience showed for Dr. Albert Sabin, creator of the oral polio vaccine, who called upon Rotary to vaccinate the world's children.

It marked the dawn of PolioPlus, a pivotal moment in Rotary's commitment to children worldwide, and I was there!

You, as a member of Rotary, are also a part of The Rotary Foundation.

You are part of a worldwide movement that implements global grants to build sustainable systems for clean water and sanitation where there are none. You help train peacebuilders in a world plagued by unrest.

And through supporting the Foundation, you help people rebuild their lives after natural disasters.

This is the magic of The Rotary Foundation. But let's remember that magic doesn't happen on its own, which is why I am counting on your support and engagement this year.

To accomplish more good throughout the world, the Foundation trustees have set an ambitious fundraising goal of \$500 million (£393 million) for 2024-25.

Achieving this goal will require the support of everyone reading this message. It will also help us reach our goal of building the Endowment Fund to

\$2.025 billion (£1.6 billion) by 2025.

To help us keep financial support of the Foundation at the forefront throughout this year, I have developed Mark's Magical Markers — a set of specific targets to help us achieve our overall goals.

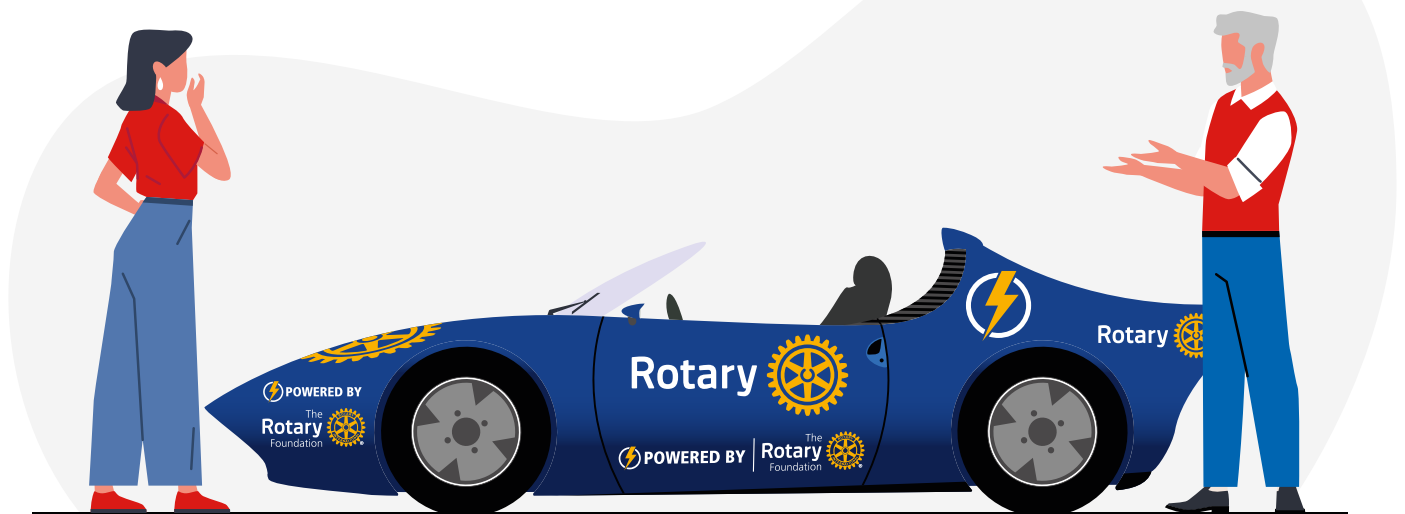
The first Magical Marker focuses on personal commitment, particularly to the Annual Fund, which supports the grants, scholarships, and vocational training teams that make the magic happen.

Please contribute what you can to the Annual Fund no later than August 31st.

This year, let's fuel the engine that takes us around the globe to do good.

Let's unleash The Magic of Rotary through the Foundation. And let's make this year an unforgettable one — for us and for the people whose lives we will touch. ●

"IF ROTARY IS A BEAUTIFUL CAR THAT YOU ARE PROUD TO DRIVE, THE ROTARY FOUNDATION IS THE ENGINE THAT PROPELS IT TO YOUR CHOSEN DESTINATION."





WATER SURVIVAL BOX REACHES NEW HEIGHTS

Water Survival Box is the initiative of Chelwood Bridge Rotary Club in Somerset providing a means of purifying water for the benefit of families who survive natural or man-made disasters.

Hugo Pike OBE, Founder, Chairman and Trustee of Water Survival Box, describes their work in Morocco since last September's earthquake.

ON September 8th last year, an earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter Scale struck the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco.

Some 3,000 people died, another 5,900 were injured and entire Berber villages were devastated. Most houses were levelled and others severely damaged. One such village was Asgoun about 65 km from Marrakesh.

Whilst the Water Survival Box team sought a partner NGO to obtain

Moroccan government permission to receive and distribute our boxes to survivors, Roger Cooper, a former Essex Rotarian, now living in Somerset, made contact.

He was due to embark on a 4x4 trekking holiday with Atlas Overland in October and asked if they could take some water survival boxes to be handed to the High Atlas Foundation (HAF) based in Marrakesh.

Eight boxes were made available, to be evaluated by the HAF team against the local needs assessment, with the

offer of a further 200 boxes should they confirm their suitability.

Obtaining the necessary permissions for UK aid to enter Morocco as humanitarian aid without incurring importation taxes took several weeks.

The consignment then travelled overland through France and Spain, on ferry into Tangier and then to Casablanca for customs examination and release to the HAF Headquarters in Marrakesh.

All 208 boxes were distributed to



"ALL 208 BOXES WERE DISTRIBUTED TO FOUR DIFFERENT VILLAGE COMMUNITIES WHICH HAD LOST THEIR HOMES AND WERE NOW LIVING UNDER CANVAS."



four different village communities which had lost their homes and were now living under canvas with such furniture and household goods as they had been able to salvage from the ruins of their former homes.

Not entirely by coincidence I had booked a short five-day break for four of us to visit Marrakesh – a city that none of us had previously visited.

In advance of our trip, I sought permission to call at the HAF Headquarters to meet their President Dr Yossef Ben-Meir and members of his team, which we did on March 21st.

The Foundation had been set up in 2000 and focuses on community-centred development programmes that equip Moroccan communities to become self-sustaining while preserving and celebrating aspects of cultural heritage.

Key programmes include the sustainable development of agricultural practices, forestry and the empowerment of women within the Berber communities in the High Atlas mountains and preservation of the Berber culture.

Members of the HAF team drove us to the village of Amizmiz in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains some 60km south of Marrakesh and 3km from Asgoun.

The tented village housing displaced families was scattered on vacant ground between the original Amizmiz homes.

They did not have access to piped water and had to collect potentially polluted water from the river.

This was where we met 'Uncle Joe' who explained his Berber name was too difficult for us to pronounce.

He was unable to use his right hand which had been broken in two places and so we shook left-handed.

Formerly a guide in the mountains 'Joe' had quite a good command of English and seemed to be the village leader. We were invited into many of

the tents to meet survivors who were proud to show us how they relied on the Water Survival Box contents such as the Grifaïd Family Water Filter to purify the river water and protect themselves from water-borne disease.

Our stainless-steel cooking pots, pans and cutlery were used daily as were the various hygiene items. We also noted how the tarpaulin, rope, tools and other survival items had been used to construct further shelter.

During our two-hour visit we saw the temporary school comprising 10 Portacabins each large enough for a class of 35, which, to cater for some 600 children, were taught in two shifts – 300 in the morning and another 300 during the afternoon.

An orphanage had been constructed to provide for the care of those children that had lost both parents.

This was a rare opportunity to meet some of the recipient families and to see how much they valued and appreciated the Water Survival Box aid. We also learnt that it had not been possible to distribute a box to each of the affected families in the four villages – with boxes being shared between families.

A second consignment of 200 boxes was entrusted to Action for Humanity, a Manchester-based NGO, partnered with the Association Scout du Maroc who distributed to another eight Berber village communities.

At the request of President Yossef Ben-Meir, the WSB Trustees plan to send another consignment of 200 boxes for distribution by the HAF team in the coming weeks. ●

The High Atlas Foundation was established in 2000 and 'focuses on community-centred development programmes that equip Moroccan communities to become self-sustaining, while preserving and celebrating aspects of cultural heritage'.

Key programmes include the sustainable development of agricultural practices, forestry and the empowerment of women within the Berber communities living in the High Atlas mountains.

FIND OUT MORE ➤

highatlasfoundation.org
watersurvivalbox.org





ROTARY ROCKS

ALL OVER THE WORLD

Rotary and heavy metal music might seem the oddest of bedfellows, but the Rotary Metalhead Fellowship is alive and banging across the world.

| STORY BY GLYN MON HUGHES |

IT'S odd to think of Rotarians greeting each other with a two-fingered gesture.

Worry not, however. It's not 'that' gesture, but the traditional 'horns up' beloved of metalheads, symbolising 'rock on' or 'good times'.

But, Rotarian metalheads - really? Definitely, as chair and founder of Rotary Metalhead Fellowship, Felix Heintz, readily explained.

"It began with friends starting a closed Facebook group of people into the aesthetic of heavy metal. I also noticed some Rotaract and Rotary friends of mine listened to this music.

"Later, a friend I knew from Rotaract days and I won tickets in the draw and went to Wacken Open Air in 2014, one of the largest heavy metal festivals in the world."

Wacken, which takes place in the wild countryside north of Hamburg, is an annual event attracting people from across the globe who are interested in heavy metal music. Maybe not the most obvious recruiting ground for new Rotarians, but Heintz was quick to soldier on.

He added: "It was during the 2018 event that I organised a Rotarian meet-up. I knew Rotary organised meet-ups in major events so I thought that if five people turned up, we'd all have a nice time drinking beer and talking about our passion for music and for Rotary. But 21 people showed up."

That success spurred Heintz, a Rotarian based in Munich, into exploring how to establish a Rotary Fellowship.

He recalled meeting the criteria for a new Fellowship which required 25 founding members from five different countries. "We got 21 people at Wacken, and I already had the Facebook group with people from different countries so, basically, it was a no-brainer."

The Fellowship launched in August 2018, when a new website and logo were designed, rules drawn up and, in December, the Rotary Board of Directors gave the go-ahead.

Growth has been little short of incredible for such a specialised area of interest. There are now 243 members from 17 countries, covering the world, from Australia to the USA, via Japan, Malaysia and Brazil and 12 countries in

Western Europe, including the UK.

Membership is open to anyone who loves metal music. Any Rotarian may, of course, join, along with family members, Rotaractors, programme participants – including Interactors, RYLA participants, Rotary Youth Exchange and Group Study Exchange participants, and so on.

Meetings are held on-line, due to the geographical spread with most communications circulating through the internal WhatsApp group. Once or twice a year, a Zoom meeting is organised for members.

"GROWTH HAS BEEN LITTLE SHORT OF INCREDIBLE FOR SUCH A SPECIALISED AREA OF INTEREST. THERE ARE NOW 243 MEMBERS FROM 17 COUNTRIES."

What about getting the word out? "We ran a booth at the Rotary International Convention in Hamburg in 2019," said Heintz. "I was hesitant knowing what the average Rotarian – at least in Germany – is like! But I received very positive feedback.

"People were eager, with a feeling that this was something that Rotary was

missing. I would never have expected that there would be a Rotary Metalhead Fellowship. It is not the first thing that comes to your mind, if you think of Rotary."

Unfortunately, the Fellowship had been scheduled to visit the 2019 Honolulu convention, but Covid scuppered that event. Nevertheless, they are still a major presence at Wacken. The festival supports young people who want to become rock or metal musicians and they succeed in arranging events all around the world.

"The communication we get there is incredible," added Heintz. "We've had metalheads there who have never been Rotarians but may have been on an exchange or something similar. It's a great opportunity to talk about Rotary to people who are not part of the Rotary family."

Heintz came to heavy metal by way of classical music. "I grew up with classical music, always listening to Mozart, Bach, Beethoven... especially during the weekends as my parents were huge fans. In heavy metal, you have the same complexity as in classical music and that is the driving force.

"Like classical music, it's highly complex and you must master your instrument in order to perform.

"It's not your classical pop song. Let's put it that way."

Yet, there are those who will judge metalheads by the way they look – many have a flamboyant dress sense - or the type of music that attracts them.

"You can be in the middle of a mosh pit and, from the outside, it looks aggressive, but if somebody steps on your feet, they'll say sorry," said Heintz.

"That's not what most people expect, but that's what happens. I can give plenty of examples of metalheads who help people in need."

Thus far, there is not a Rotarian heavy metal band, but it could come along, especially as there is a Rotarian Metalhead Fellowship anthem which was released earlier this year.

So, as Heintz said: "If you like classical music, you'll easily adapt."

Let the good times rock on... ●



FIND OUT MORE 

To get involved, please visit:
metalheadfellowship.org



Get reading with Rotary

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

| BECKY TURNER |

HELLO again to our Rotary Readers! Thank you all for your messages and feedback on **'The Lamplighters'** By Emma Stonex. I've loved reading your views and I hope you enjoy reading this article.

First of all, wonderful news that our friends from Telford Centre Rotary Club in Shropshire have set up their own reading group and held their first meeting to discuss 'The Lamplighters'!

They are going to continue discussing our books, and hopefully this is the start of something wonderful and fulfilling for them all.

So, onto the book. The bare bones of this story are based on the real-life disappearance of all three keepers from a remote lighthouse in the Outer Hebrides in 1900. They were never found, and there were strange details like stopped clocks, closed doors and a set of oilskins remaining inside. Emma Stonex took these facts and reimagined the story with

her own fictional characters; a conscious decision to be respectful to the actual keepers and their families.

Material for an intriguing story in a rather unique setting, then, so it was fascinating that your views were very polarised – many weren't keen on it, but others (me included) thought it a really good read!

The author had clearly done her homework, and her interest in lighthouses and the way of life for the keepers and their families was clear.

Several commented it was well researched including "a realistic and, at times, a rather visceral, description of the strains and claustrophobia of lighthouse keeping life." It wasn't difficult to put ourselves in the shoes of the keepers, from the curved beds to how they took it in turns to cook and the interests they developed to pass the time.

The book gives a fascinating insight into a way of life that many of us would not have given a thought to.

Why, then, didn't the story resonate with us all?

Quite a few found the ghostly elements of the story unnecessary, sinister, and off-putting.

The silver man was an odd addition to the story, and it was difficult to work out whether the mystery mechanic Sid was in fact him. He puzzled quite a few of us – one wondered whether he was "the hidden conscience of the people who see him" – quite possibly, as he seemed to know far more about Bill's thoughts and feelings than anyone else.

However, the presence of the briefcase and the mended radio also suggests a physical presence. It was a little frustrating that the author didn't either develop this or omit it completely.

Others found the ghostly references to Arthur's son strange and unnecessary; although I think we could all understand how periods of solitariness could lead to the mind playing tricks. The story could have been told perfectly well without this,



“THE BARE BONES OF THIS STORY ARE BASED ON THE REAL-LIFE DISAPPEARANCE OF ALL THREE KEEPERS FROM A REMOTE LIGHTHOUSE.”

although it was rather nice that his son came for Arthur in the end.

Quite often when reading a book, it is necessary to suspend one’s disbelief, given that creative licence is a useful tool for authors, but sometimes there are details that grate on the reader and make this difficult.

For example, one would think it a critical safety feature that the doors on a lighthouse could be opened from the outside, and some questioned that. Others found the idea of Arthur not having a spare pair of trousers and helping himself to Bill’s (thereby discovering Helen’s necklace) rather odd.

Some of our readers found the multiple first-person narrative chapters disjointed, repetitive and difficult to follow, particularly on the audio and Kindle versions. Interestingly, the author did that on purpose to highlight the confusion that the failure to communicate causes.

She gives us multiple examples of the lack of communication within the couples (Arthur and Helen after Tommy’s death) and between the couples (Jenny convinced of Helen’s affair with Bill).

Perhaps the most

surprising example was between Arthur and Bill when they were both on the lighthouse – Arthur concludes that Bill and Helen are having an affair but says nothing at all to Bill.

Although an interesting approach by the author, this narrative unfortunately fell rather flat for some of us.

Some of our readers (me included) really enjoyed the book, finding it well written and engaging, and one of us had read three of the books that the author lists in her acknowledgements!

This book, like many, can be read on a number of levels – the story itself is intriguing and different, but go deeper and there is much on human relationships, grief, guilt and obsession.

All very aptly summed up by one of our readers, who said this story looks at “complex human tragedy... failing marriages, people with dark secrets... and a compelling story that I could not leave alone.” There is much more to explore, including the persona of the Maiden herself, but my word limit says I must stop here!

Our readers scores ranged from 4 to 8 so **‘The Lamplighters’** By **Emma Stonex** scores a 6.



SCORING 6

Our third book to review is going to be **‘The Secret History’** by **Donna Tartt**.

Please send me your views and scores by **August 15th** and I will sum them up for the Autumn magazine.

For our fourth book you’ve voted for **‘The Perfect Golden Circle’** by **Benjamin Myers**.

Please send your views and scores by **November 15th** for the Winter magazine.



VOTED FOR

As you may have seen, our Facebook page is now live, but has been rather quiet.

Please have another look as I’ll now be managing it actively and it’s a good way to give your views on the book while also exchanging views with others.

Keep reading! ●

GET IN TOUCH f

facebook.com/rotarybookclub

VOTE FOR OUR FIFTH BOOK

‘All The Light We Cannot See’
Anthony Doerr

‘Under the Hornbeams’
Emma Tarlo

‘The Boy and the Dog’
Seishu Hase

VOTE HERE ➔

bookclub@rotarygbi.org



ROTARY 2024
ACTION  **SUMMIT**
NEWCASTLE

BE PART OF THE ACTION
FRIDAY 8TH - SUNDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2024



BOOK TICKETS
[ROTARYGBI.ORG/NEWCASTLE24](https://rotarygbi.org/newcastle24)

Rotary 
Great Britain & Ireland

PEACE AND WATER PARTNERSHIPS LEAD ACTION SUMMIT PROGRAMME

The Rotary Action Summit heads to Newcastle this November. We take a first look at the event programme designed to give you a taste of everything Rotary has to offer.

EVENTS where Rotarians come together serve as a wonderful reminder of why Rotary is such a powerful organisation.

They offer an opportunity to explore new ideas, to trigger ways to collaborate, and make lasting connections.

At the Rotary Action Summit in Newcastle, we're putting clubs and members at the heart of the event.

We're offering you a window to explore the wonderful world of Rotary and all it has to offer, while celebrating the achievements of clubs and their projects.

Across the Power of Rotary Day (8th November) and Action Summit Weekend (9th & 10th November) we've got 10 fantastic sessions to inspire you to take action with your club and community.

Here's a small taster of three of them:

INCREASING OUR IMPACT THROUGH POSITIVE PEACE

At a time where the world feels more unstable, Rotary's standing as an advocate for peacebuilding and conflict prevention remains as important as ever.

Our partner, the Institute for Economics & Peace, identified the 8 factors that work together to create peaceful societies, known as the Pillars of Positive Peace. These include good relations with neighbours and equitable distribution of resources.

This session will explore what practical steps we can all take to make our communities more peaceful and harmonious.

COMMUNITY ACTION FOR FRESH WATER

Having launched in January of this year, the Community Action for Fresh



Water is the flagship initiative of Rotary's partnership with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

In this session on the environment, you'll be able to discover more about how this initiative is allowing Rotary and Rotaract members to work with their local communities and partners to protect, restore, and sustain freshwater ecosystems in alignment with the environment area of focus.

ROTARY GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS

Elsewhere in this Summer edition of *Rotary* magazine you'll have read more about the membership channels that are helping our organisation grow.

There will be plenty of attention on club impact at the Action Summit,

including non-traditional club models, cause-based clubs and phoenix clubs, which have risen from the ashes of a former or closing club.

We'll also be looking closely at how Corporate membership at club level offers an untapped opportunity to take Rotary back to its roots, while welcoming in a new wave of members.

MORE SPEAKERS ANNOUNCED

A range of speakers will help bring the event to life, alongside Rotary leaders such as 2025/26 Rotary International (RI) President Mário César Martins de Camargo and Rotary Foundation Trustee and past RI President, Holger Knaack.

With peace set to be a key theme of the programme, Professor Fiona Macaulay, Director of the Rotary Peace Centre at the University of Bradford has joined our speaker line up.

A member of University of Bradford's Peace Studies department since 2005, Professor Macaulay's teaching interests include Gender, Conflict and Development and Environment, Trafficking and Crime.

The University of Bradford is one of seven Rotary Peace Centres worldwide which have trained more than 1,700 peace fellows from around the globe.

Keep an eye out for even more speakers and programme information over the coming months. ●

FIND OUT MORE

For full event information and to book your tickets, visit rotarygbi.org/newcastle24



Smile Train: Looking Back at 25 Years of Changing the World One Smile at a Time

Transforming Lives & Global Cleft Care For 25 Years

Smile Train's successes since our founding in 1999 stem from two sources: the tireless commitment of our donors and supporters and the world-changing vision of one man: our founder, Charles B. Wang.

The history of Smile Train is, as its core, a story about the power each of us has to change the world.



1999

Charles B. Wang establishes Smile Train according to a groundbreaking, sustainable 'teach a man to fish' model of empowering community healthcare professionals.



2000

Smile Train's first patient, Wang Li, receives the cleft treatment that changes her life forever in Nanjing, China.



2009

Smile Train's short film "Smile Pinki" wins the Oscar® for Best Documentary Short Subject.



2014

Smile Train sponsors our 1,000,000th cleft surgery, on a child named Osawa in Tanzania.



2024

Alim and Rajib, a father and son from a remote village in Indonesia, receive Smile Train's 2,000,000th and 2,000,001st cleft surgeries.





Alim and Rajib

The story of Smile Train's two millionth cleft surgery starts in a tiny river village in South Sumatra, Indonesia, with Alim and his son Rajib.

Alim, age 50, had to drop out of school in first grade due to unrelenting bullying. It pained him to see his son suffer like he did, even if, at 10 years old, the boy still insisted on not dropping out.

Then, in February 2024, hope came to their isolated village donning a camouflage uniform. The Indonesian Army arrived with the news the family had spent the past half century praying for: Alim and Rajib could both get free cleft surgery at their nearest hospital — and one of them would receive Smile Train's two millionth cleft surgery. The whole world was going to hear their story and marvel at their new smiles.

"Rajib should be two million," Alim insisted. "I will be the two-million-and-first."

Two million cleft surgeries are more than every other charity combined. Smile Train reached this milestone in just 25 years thanks to our unique, sustainable model of empowering local healthcare workers around the world to provide high-quality, free cleft treatment to their neighbours in need — no matter how remote — and generous gifts from people like you who understand that smiles change lives.

As we celebrate 25 years of lighting up the world with smiles, we know that another baby with a cleft is born every three minutes. And that there are still more than a million more people just like Rajib and Alim waiting for the care that will turn their cleft into a second chance at life.

Book a Speaker for a Meeting!

Learn more about the work of Smile Train and how your Rotary Club can help change the world one smile at a time. To book a speaker for your meeting contact Jonathan Roberts by emailing ukinfo@smiletrain.org or calling **0113 841 8101**.



ROTARY CLUBS

AT THE END OF THE WORLD

From St. John's to Shetland, Rotary has clubs in some of the world's most remote places.

| STORY BY **INSA FÖLSTER AND FLORIAN QUANZ, ROTARY GERMANY AND AUSTRIA** |

THERE are Rotary clubs in more than 200 countries, including some of the world's most remote locations. Indeed, it's accurate to say Rotary has spread to virtually every corner of the globe. Here, we meet six far-flung clubs and learn what they do.

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR, CANADA

St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada has five Rotary and Rotaract clubs. Founded in 1921, the 60-member Rotary Club of St. John's is the oldest in this Canadian province. "Rotary is wonderfully represented in our small city," says Ron Burke, the club's president.

The provincial capital of Newfoundland and Labrador, St. John's has just under 110,000 inhabitants. The city's Rotary clubs do not see themselves as competitors, but they pool their forces to make a difference.

Together, they created the Rotary Sunshine Park, a recreational area with a water pier, a leisure centre, and a chalet

that can be rented for overnight stays.

Networking with other clubs is especially important in an area where cities are separated by long distances. In June, District 7815 held a conference in Moncton, New Brunswick, attended by Rotarians from four provinces.

"It is expected that our district will continue these annual conferences to promote cooperation, networking, and the exchange of best practices and initiatives," Burke says.

Recently the St. John's clubs bought a house for a local organisation that aids homeless veterans. "We paid for new furniture, created a community room that will bear Rotary's name, and provided rent subsidies for residents. The club agrees that this should be a long-term project," Burke says. That should not be a problem for a club that has existed for 103 years.

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

The Rotary Club of Fairbanks, Alaska, USA is now 84 years old. The 95-member club's lunch meetings

are always well attended. "Usually, it's business relationships that lead to new memberships," says club member Jonal Lani Machos. "It's also not unusual that in a small town like Fairbanks, new members are already known beforehand."

The Rotary members are looking forward to the completion of a multi-year project in May. The club invested US\$500,000 to build a large playground.

The club maintains a close partnership with the Rotary Club of San Ignacio, Cayo, Belize. There have been mutual visits in recent years, always combined with projects. For example, the club supported the construction of sanitary facilities at several schools in and around San Ignacio.

HELGOLAND, GERMANY

Members of the Rotary Club of Helgoland, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany must travel at least two and a half hours by ship to visit another club. The nearest one is located about 60 kilometres from the island, which lies on the North Sea

coast. A total of 1,300 people live there. In such a small community, “the bond among the members is strong,” says club member Bärbel Wichmann.

The 25-member club has just celebrated its 30th anniversary. After several fundraising projects at various island festivals, the club recently gave the local school two suitcases of learning materials for “EndPlasticSoup,” an initiative of Rotary clubs across Europe.

Another project, “Food on Legs,” delivers food to seniors by handcart.

The club also worked closely with the Rotary Club of Otterndorf-Land Hadeln, Lower Saxony, Germany, to send aid to Ukraine. “We find this cooperation very enriching,” Wichmann says.

TARAWA, KIRIBATI

District 9920 includes half of Auckland, New Zealand, as well as the American territory of Samoa and the Pacific nations of the Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Samoa, Tonga, and Kiribati.

There are 53 Rotary clubs in the district, a third of which are located in the Pacific countries.

The Rotary Club of Tarawa, Kiribati, founded in 2019 on the country’s main atoll, has 10 members.

It is 2,230 kilometres from the next nearest Rotary club on the Fiji Islands, and has carried out projects worth nearly US\$2 million, including immunising children on 21 inhabited islands of the Gilbert Islands group as part of ‘Give Every Child a Future’, an initiative of Rotary Zone 8.

SAINT-PIERRE AND MIQUELON, FRANCE

The 21-member Rotary Club of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon was chartered in 1989 on a small archipelago of 6,000 inhabitants, 25 kilometres south of Newfoundland that is part of France.

It is the only French club in Canadian District 7815, which includes the four Atlantic Canadian provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Due to the isolated location, club members tend to work together with local service clubs and other associations.

In the past year, members have



Members of the Rotary Club of Tarawa, Kiribati

“DISTRICT 9920 INCLUDES HALF OF AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND, AS WELL AS THE AMERICAN TERRITORY OF SAMOA AND THE PACIFIC NATIONS OF THE COOK ISLANDS.”

organised 15 projects and events, including a bingo night in partnership with the local radio station that raised money for End Polio Now.

They also helped set up a free library in the town square.

Saint-Pierre and Miquelon will host its first district conference in 2024. The incoming governor, Roger Sévigny, is a member of the local club.

SHETLAND, UNITED KINGDOM

In 1972, the Rotary Club of Shetland, Shetland Islands, Scotland, took root on this archipelago which lies between Orkney and Norway where the North Sea meets the rugged North Atlantic.

The club is located in Lerwick, the main town and port of the archipelago, and the club meets on a Wednesday evening at the Lerwick Hotel.

“Since the nearest club is 129 kilometres away, there are no activities with other clubs,” club member Susan Stout says, with the nearest Rotary club in Orkney which is 135 miles and an eight-hour ferry journey away.

Since residents of the island travel infrequently, service is what connects the 17 members. A recent dinner raised money to support local charities.

The club capitalises on space in the public square, where they promote Rotary to the island’s 7,000 people. “We have a stand at a large local agricultural fair to advertise our club,” Stout says.

This article first appeared in Rotary Germany and Austria. ●



ROTARY AS DIVERSE AS ITS LOCATIONS

ROTARY Scotland is one of the biggest and most rural in Great Britain and Ireland, now split into two districts – Rotary Scotland North (District 1010) and Rotary Scotland South (District 1320). The clubs are as diverse as their locations.

ROTARY STORNOWAY

Stornoway, a vibrant and enterprising club with strong links to its community and schools, has up to 40 members and is the mother club to the Nicolson Institute Interact club with dozens of enthusiastic young members of the Rotary family.

ROTARY ULLAPOOL

The ferry from Lewis takes you to the beautiful west coast and Loch Broom with Ullapool the gateway to the Outer Hebrides and the Ullapool club proves that you don't need to be a big club to have the respect of the community and a finger on the pulse of that community.

ROTARY DINGWALL

An hour's drive inland through dynamic mountains and lochs and you find Dingwall, a bustling market town overlooking the Black Isle and the Cromarty Firth where the Dingwall Rotary Club has a 60-year history of

supporting good causes and is the biggest club in the area with over 60 members.

ROTARY TAIN & EASTER ROSS

Follow the coast north past the Invergordon and Nigg Oil fabrication yards and cruise liner terminals and you come to Tain and Easter Ross, the administrative capital of the area with a Royal Burgh status dating back centuries and a small but effective Rotary club.

ROTARY EAST SUTHERLAND

As you cross the Dornoch bridge into Sutherland the views change - there are mountains to admire but there is also a green and fertile coastal strip crossed by salmon rivers and dotted with some of the world's greatest golf courses - Brora and Royal Dornoch and many more superb holiday links.

The Rotary Club of East Sutherland meets alternate weeks in Royal Dornoch Golf Club where golf has been played for 400 years and in the Golspie Inn, possibly the oldest inn in Sutherland and next to the delightful Dunrobin Castle. Visitors are always welcome at either venue.

ROTARY WICK

Beyond Brora the countryside becomes perhaps more hostile as you drive over the

'Ord' to Wick and nearby John O'Groats and the Wick club meets in Mackays Hotel situated on the shortest street in the world across from the County Hospital and overlooking the once busy herring harbour.

ROTARY THURSO

Twenty miles west and the north coast town of Thurso – once the nuclear capital of Scotland sits proudly looking north to the Orkney Islands and providing the ferry service to the old Viking lands across the Pentland Firth. The club meets on a Thursday.

ROTARY ORKNEY

Orkney is magnificent and possibly the most important place for archaeology and historic sites in the UK, perhaps in Europe - a fertile group of islands with a proud history and a busy Rotary club can be found next door to the Highland Park Distillery which meets on a Thursday.

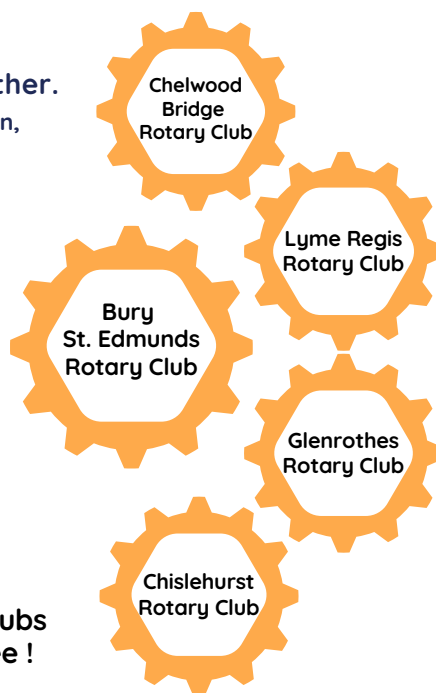
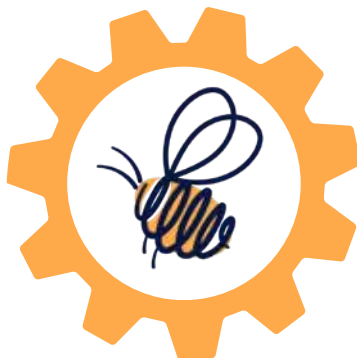
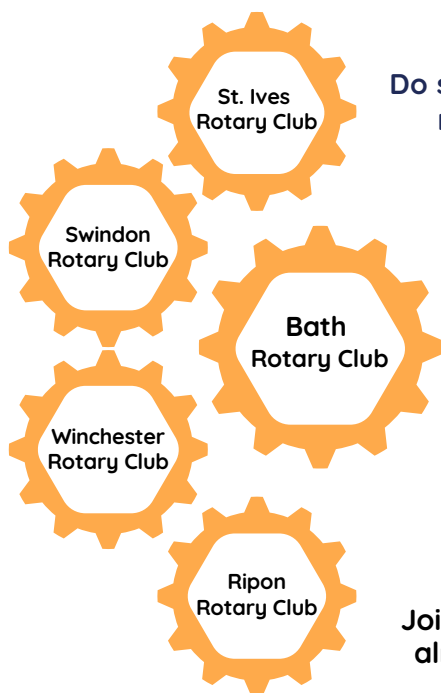
ROTARY SHETLAND

To get to Shetland you must go ferry hopping or island hopping by air from Aberdeen or Inverness but the trip is rewarding and its Rotary club is always a joy to visit. ●





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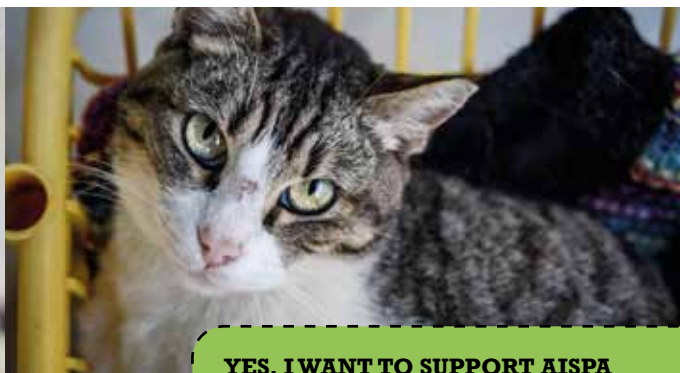
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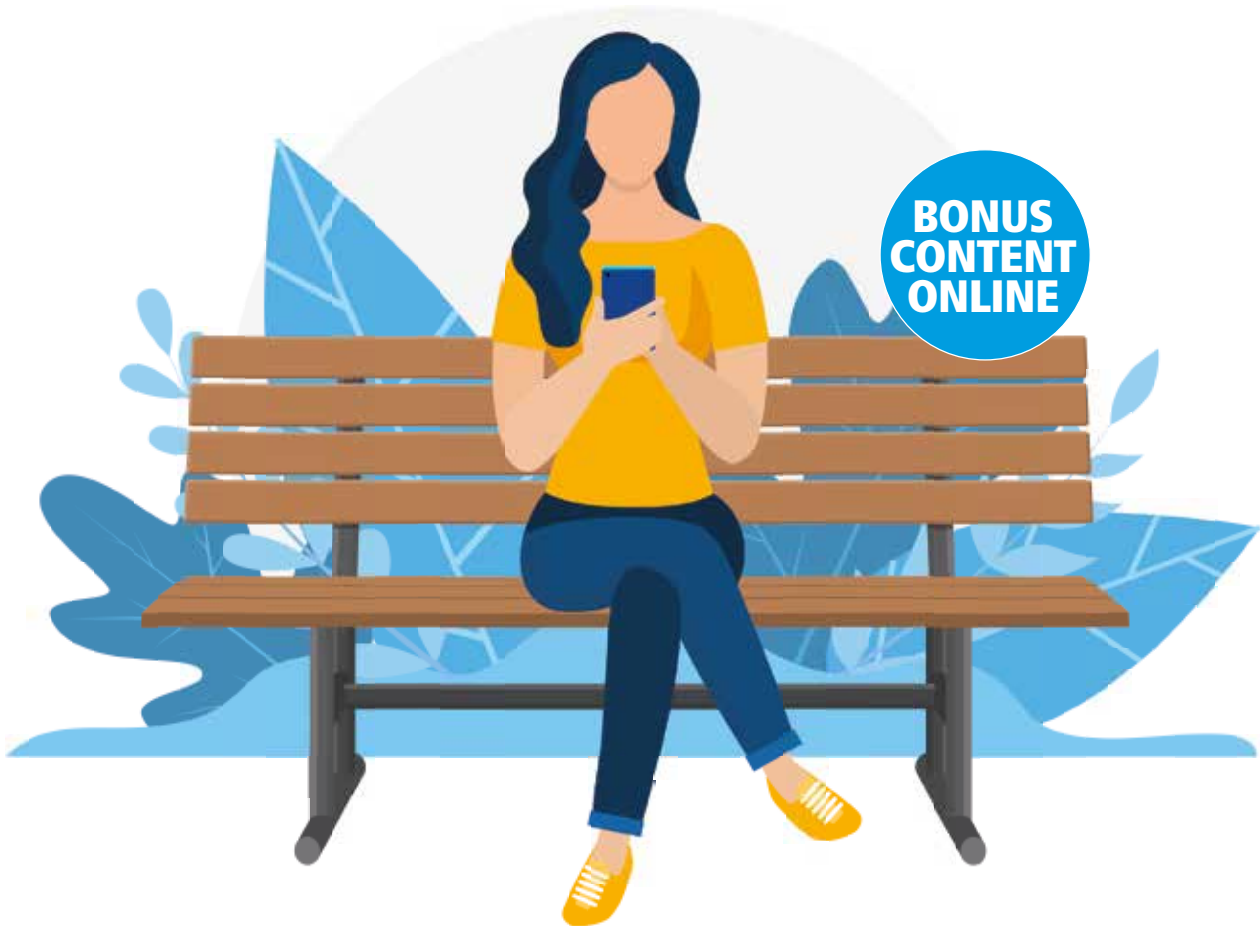
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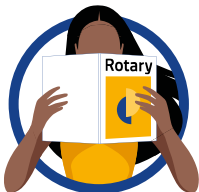
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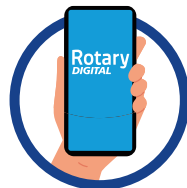


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Rotary 
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Rotary profile

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



Name: Himansu Basu

Rotary Club: Gravesham with Ebbsfleet, Kent

Occupation: Doctor, retired consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist

HOW AND WHEN DID YOU JOIN ROTARY?

As a visiting Research Fellow in Rochester, USA in 1968, I was invited by my professor to speak to his Rotary club. Ten years later, a Rotary club in Kent raised funds for my new clinic providing treatment of cervical cancer.

Then in 1980, I was invited to give a talk to Northfleet Rotary Club. I realised afterwards I made a great mistake by showing pictures of blood and damaged structures, so I was surprised when a month later they asked me to join the club. The club changed its name to the Rotary Club with Ebbsfleet in 2006 to attract members from the new Ebbsfleet Garden City and in 2021, the club merged with the Rotary Club of Gravesend to become the Rotary Club of Gravesham with Ebbsfleet.

WHY DID YOU JOIN ROTARY?

It was exciting to have lunch, listen to interesting speakers, share service opportunities with my Rotary friends. It was convenient as I had to drive past the meeting venue from one hospital to another for my work. I was engaged with many medical organisations, nationally and internationally. Rotary gave me an enjoyable escape away from medicine.

I made new friends with professionals, business leaders from the local community, also internationally through our four European contact clubs. Club social and fundraising events enhanced our friends' circle.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR ROTARY CAREER?

Networking is in my genes. The ability to network within my profession and within Rotary for over four decades has given me a wonderful opportunity to unleash our combined vocational expertise in maternal and newborn care to create effective sustainable programmes through Rotary Healthcare Professionals Fellowship and the Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health.

We undertook upskilling and capacity-building of healthcare professionals in under-served parts of the world. My dream of being able to contribute in a small way towards the global reduction of preventable maternal mortality was realised through the introduction of CALMED in 2013 and followed by introduction of TENA in 2019 (<https://www.rmchcalmed.org>).

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE ROTARY TO YOUR FRIENDS?

Rotary is a hub of like-minded people from diverse backgrounds - professionals, businesses, and community leaders. Rotarians enjoy working together, helping needy people in our locality and worldwide. If you wish to extend your circle of friends, please join Rotary.

Rotarians' mission of engagement, empowerment and enjoyment can be accomplished by working together for fundraising, sharing our vocational technical expertise (Vocational

Training Teams), scholarships or other humanitarian programmes, supported by our own charity, The Rotary Foundation.

We work to provide clean water, reduce ill-health, improve maternal and child health, improve the economy, enhance literacy, protect the environment, and create peace.

DO YOU THINK THAT ROTARY IS AN INCLUSIVE ORGANISATION?

It should be - it is our goal, but we're not quite there yet. The concept of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is the foundation on which Rotary is built and the framework which can encourage growth.

Its implementation requires a holistic top down and bottom-up approach in alignment with advice from the DEI Advisory Council and RI Board.

We need to monitor DEI implementation within clubs, and in Rotary organisations beyond (Rotary Fellowships and Rotary Action Groups).

The ongoing monitoring framework linked with registering progress of 15-20 indicators probably needs artificial intelligence to assist, rather than guesswork of a Rotarian such as myself! ●

CONTACT US

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

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

EXTRAORDINARY CARS ON TOUR FOR CHARITY



FOR the third year running, the Rotary Club of Perth organised the Perthshire Classic Car Tour across Scotland which, over the past three years, has raised more than £80,000.

In 2022, the nominated charities were Prostate Scotland and My Name's Dottie, with Prostate Scotland and Carers Trust Scotland the beneficiaries a year later.

This year, MS Society Scotland and Beat, the eating disorder charity, were the prime causes.

Previously, the tour was a popular annual event for Blairgowrie Rotary Club raising substantial funds for charity.

The tour of 80 to 100 cars takes

**"PARTICIPANTS COME
FROM THE LOCAL AREA, ALL
AROUND THE UK AND AS FAR
AWAY AS ITALY AND DUBAI."**

place on "Drive It Day", towards the end of April, and in the last three years has taken routes around Highland Perthshire.

Participants come from the local area, all around the UK and as far away as Italy and Dubai and enjoy the spectacular scenery driving along Loch Tay and through Glencoe.

Participants donate to enter and

major sponsors support the tour in a significant way. Over the years these have been The Crieff Hydro Family of Hotels, Peter Vardy Ltd, John Clark Motor Group, and The Intelligent Land Investment Group.

Also making a difference are the many business advertisers in the drivers' handbook.

The tour is also well supported by the presence of Chloe Grant, an up-and-coming young racing driver, whose father is a member of the Rotary Club of Perth.

It's a hugely successful day out starting at McDiarmid Park in Perth, breaking for lunch at the Isles of Glencoe Hotel in Ballachulish and finishing at the Crieff Hydro Hotel in Perthshire.

It's there where an end of tour dinner and awards ceremony provides an opportunity to have relaxed conversation, good food, entertaining speeches and awards surrounded by a selection of classic cars owned by Stephen Leckie, the CEO of Crieff Hydro Family of Hotels.

The tour is promoted in the local area, on social media and in the local press to highlight the spectacle of amazing vintage, classic and prestige cars travelling around the area.

With its high profile it is also another great opportunity for the Rotary movement to show how it raises money for very worthwhile causes.

Whilst organised by a small team from the Rotary Club of Perth, all members of the club are involved in making it the success it is by raffle and auction donations, communication tasks and by on the day support of the event at various locations.

In addition, Crieff Rotary Club members have each year provided good support at Crieff Hydro Hotel for the arrival of the tour cars. ●

A WHEELY GOOD DAY OUT ON ST GEORGE'S DAY



“THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE AFTERNOON, THE WHEELBARROW RACE, SAW A RECORD 19 TEAMS COMPETING.”

WHEELBARROW Racing has a long and illustrious tradition in the north-west London suburb of Pinner, dating back to at least 1840.

The Pinner Wheelbarrow Race as we know it today was started by five friends in 1963 who found it a suitable alternative to a pig race which had once been held in Pinner.

Pinner Rotary Club took over the organisation of the race about 10 years ago, under the leadership of Rotarian Jez Foster, combining it with an annual celebration of St George's Day.

Fast forward to 2024, and this is a much-anticipated community celebration. St George is also the patron saint of Scouting, so this year's event started with a parade of Scouts up the

High Street led by St George himself, together with the Mayor of Harrow, Councillor Ramji Chauhan, to renew their promise outside the 14th century Church of St John the Baptist.

Capital Connection performed excellent acapella popular songs and the Merrydowners Morris dancers provided colourful entertainment outside the historic Queen's Head pub.

Also performing were Simply Gray who have a loyal local following for their classic rock music.

The highlight of the afternoon, the Wheelbarrow Race, saw a record 19 teams competing. Rotaract was represented for the first time with Chris Mitchell and Jan Rebernik of Westminster International Rotaract

competing as the 'Westminster Warriors'.

Chris said: "It really felt like a true community tradition that we were privileged to be part of. The outfits were impressive, and we went for Westminster workers. Next year's training will need to focus more in the gym than the pub".

In connection with pubs, the St George's Day and Wheelbarrow Race celebrations mark one of the best trading days of the year for the Queen's Head.

Proprietor Sean White has been a long-standing supporter of the event and recently become a Corporate Member of Pinner Rotary.

Sean said: "I am delighted to be building a closer relationship with Rotary by becoming a Corporate Member".

Pinner Rotary deployed social media, including Facebook and Instagram, to publicise the event extensively with posts reaching 25,000 people leading up to the event.

A member of the public posted a video of the Wheelbarrow Race on TikTok which received over 50,000 likes.

The event also drew the attention of national media with a photo in *The Guardian* and a soundbite on *BBC Breakfast*. A team of over 50 volunteers worked together on the day including Rotarians from seven neighbouring clubs in Rotary Districts 1090, 1130 and 1260, which is Rotary in the Thames Valley, Berks, Buckinghamshire and Middlesex, Rotary in London, and Rotary in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, respectively.

The event raised £2,800 for charities supported by Pinner Rotary Club including Mind in Harrow and Purple Community Fund, a charity supporting the poorest of the poor in Manila, Philippines.

Pinner Rotary President, John Whitehead, said: "It was wonderful to see our Pinner community enjoying themselves and also raising much needed funds for our supported charities." ●



WATCH VIDEO 

SCOOTING COAST TO COAST



POLIO survivor, Reg Marchant, a man with close links to Rotary, has published a book about his travels around the UK to 150 lifeboat stations.

The Kent-based author was joined on the trip by wife Brenda, and friend Brian, who was in hospital with him as a child at Chailey Heritage in Lewes, East Sussex.

“I towed a caravan with my mobility scooter and Brian used his mobility car to transport the scooter, which we used to travel from one lifeboat station to another,” explained Reg.

“I do not belong to a Rotary organisation but support a friend. The idea behind the challenge came about as I realised, with a mobility scooter, I could get around far greater distances.

“This made me come up with the idea of travelling around the UK on a mobility scooter, so I decided, if I’m travelling round the coast for pleasure, it seemed a

good idea to do it for charity at the same time.”

The trip resulted in a book with proceeds going towards the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and the British Polio Fellowship.

“Polio is a disease that you catch and not something that happens at birth. I was four-years-old when I contracted polio,” added Reg. ●

‘Me, Polio and Scoot4Life’ is available from Amazon:



CHANNEL ROTARY RUNS KENT'S BIGGEST QUIZ

SOME 144 contestants flocked to The Harvey Grammar School in Folkestone to raise money for Folkestone Channel Rotary’s charities.

Channel Rotary has been running this Wine & Wisdom evening for over 30 years and this year it was a sell-out, raising more than £1,500 for Kent causes.

Dubbed as Kent’s biggest quiz, the

36 teams had to tackle a whole range of questions from science to sport whilst enjoying a ploughman’s and good wine.

Quizmaster Derek Harris, Channel’s President, said: “It was a fantastic evening with excellent support and a really fun atmosphere – what an easy and enjoyable way to raise charity funds.” ●

A FRESH APPROACH TO DRAW MEMBERS

IN a bid to boost its profile and attract new members, Pangbourne Rotary Club has produced a glossy, 32-page A4 booklet which captures the essence of Rotary.

Titled “A year in the life of Pangbourne Rotary Club”, the Berkshire-based organisation has chosen to pictorially showcase its work to the community.

Their four primary fund-raising activities are the Santa Sleigh, the Woodcote 10K run, a Pangbourne Art Exhibition which was held in April and Dragon Boat racing at the Pangbourne Fete which has enabled them to donate £44,000 to 55 worthy causes in a single year.

“We appeared in the local press over 100 times in a year and produced an exhibition of press cuttings, from which came the idea of producing a booklet to promote the club and seek new members,” explained Club President, Brian Davies.

“The result is a glossy booklet which is a behind-the-scenes look at what it is like to be a member of this fun-loving, hard-working club.

“We are always on the lookout for new members from diverse backgrounds to join us in the fun and fulfillment we get in performing these tasks, as well as other community support activities.” ●

The booklet was sponsored by the Jubilee Day Nursery in Padworth and an electronic version is available here:



ROTARY'S ENDURING FRIENDSHIPS

LOOK at the fashions from the 1980s with this group of Rotarians from Cumbria and Lancashire!

This was a Group Study Exchange from the then District 119 to District 649 in Illinois, USA led by Len Baseley. To mark that Rotary event 42 years ago, the group gathered recently for a reunion which had created enduring friendships.

“All of us agreed how much we gained in our lives and careers from visiting another culture and a wide variety of people and organisations and businesses from the Rotary Group Study Exchange,” explained David Reid, who was part of the group.

“Our trip included a visit to the State Governor, the first woman General in the US Air Force, we met the Amish community who were environmentally ahead of their time in the non-use of fossil fuels, we visited a prison and McDonnell Douglas aircraft.”

Each team member was hosted by several Rotarians and their families as the British Rotarians travelled around the district to look in depth at common issues and differences.

They visited Chicago, St Louis and then Indianapolis, touring Rotary clubs and speaking at the district conference. ●



FORGING LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA



SEA Point Rotary Club in Cape Town, South Africa, has forged close bonds with Llandudno Rotary Club in North Wales for almost a decade. The relationship has been developed by frequent visits to South Africa by Llandudno Rotary Club Member Ian Trevette and his wife Margaret, who is a member of Sea Point Rotary Club.

With the latest example of collaboration, the clubs organised a day out for 96 children aged between three and five-years-old from Khayelitsha township. For many, it was their first sight

of the sea when they visited Blue Train Park at Mouille Point, a reserved area of parkland on the coastal promenade in Cape Town.

The day out was funded by Llandudno Rotary Club from some outstanding funds held by Sea Point Rotary Club from earlier ventures.

The use of the Blue Train Park is free. Food for the day was funded by Rotarian Miriam Halday of Sea Point Rotary Club with transportation to and from Khayelitsha paid for by Llandudno Rotary Club. ●

RAISING FUNDS FOR END POLIO NOW



GENEROUS youngsters at six different primary schools in Colchester, Essex, have raised over £1400 towards Rotary's End Polio Now fund. This amount will be double-matched by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The youngsters raised the money by their contributions on their Purple Pinkie Day; when children are immunised against polio they receive a dab of purple

dye on their “pinkie” (little finger). The local youngsters had a non-uniform day when they came in purple outfits.

The attached photo shows youngsters at St. James Primary School, with their prize-winning finger puppets and teddy bears.

Meanwhile, the purple crocuses planted by the Rotary Club of Colchester in the Castle Park could be seen to be flourishing during Spring. ●

ON TOP DOWN UNDER



EASTBOURNE AM Rotarian, Alan Young, may have a fear of heights but he still managed to complete the Sydney Burrava climb over Sydney Harbour Bridge in Australia.

“It was quite an achievement as I do not have a head for heights, and will climb a ladder to about 20-feet, with trepidation,” admitted Alan.

“It was a once in a lifetime to do this, and if I was going to do this I needed an incentive.” That incentive was to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Research, and Rotary’s End Polio Now campaign.

Sydney Harbour Bridge, which was

built in 1932, stands 440 feet above sea level. Burrava is an Aboriginal word meaning “climb” or “above”.

The traditional owner of the land the bridge is built on is the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

To climb the bridge you go up four ladders and to complete the walk is 1332 steps, taking around three hours.

Alan, who is 75 and a volunteer driver with the South Central Ambulance Service, was accompanied on the climb by his wife Rachel, daughter Catriona and her friend Bee who are both on gap years, and the walk raised just over £1,000. ●

WINCHESTER BY NAME



WHAT’S in a name as the five Rotary Clubs of Winchester from England and the United States met online?

The initiative started in July 2020 when Richard Spalding became President of Winchester Rotary Club in Hampshire.

During the Covid pandemic he invited the Presidents of the four other Winchester clubs in Kentucky, Massachusetts, Tennessee and Virginia to link up via Zoom.

This was their 23rd meeting where the Rotarians share ideas.

Richard explained: “There is rarely a planned agenda and the chat ranges

from hearing about projects, fund-raising, concerns within the clubs and anything else at all.

“They are all very different, especially in size, with Winchester Virginia having 160 members! We don’t talk politics per se, though we do often have a bit of a laugh at our respective political situations.

“It’s always fun!”

In 2023, Winchester Kentucky worked with their English counterpart on a project to supply a maternity ambulance to the Great Lakes Peace Center in Uganda. At this latest meeting, all five clubs are looking to work together on an international project. ●

ROTARIANS INVITED TO DOWNING STREET

RICHARD and Sue Baker from South Holland Rotary Club based in Spalding shared the Kids for Kids 23rd birthday celebrations at Downing Street hosted by Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt.

Founded in 2001, Kids for Kids has been instrumental in lifting families out of abject poverty in Darfur, providing vital support and resources even in the face of ongoing conflict and crisis.

For over two decades Kids for Kids has worked directly with communities in Sudan, implementing sustainable projects that have strengthened entire areas.

Despite the continued conflict, the charity has been adopting village after village and there are now 110 Kids for Kids’ villages. The ethos is to provide sustainable aid such as goats, chickens, water hand pumps and education with support such as midwives and veterinary assistance.

Long-standing patron, Dame Joanna Lumley, was guest of honour and other patrons attending included broadcaster Eamonn Holmes and actor, Timothy West.

South Holland Rotary Club has supported Kids for Kids for many years and with the support of Rotary clubs in Sleaford, Lutterworth and Spalding. With a matching district grant, they have raised £6,500 for the installation of a village hand pump. ●

www.kidsforkids.org.uk



TALKING TO THE PLANTS

THEY are the green-fingered plant doctors who have been making the most of plants no longer deemed fit for sale, but may be recoverable.

Members of Kettering Huxloe Rotary Club have donated well over £1,000 worth of plants given to them by stores, along with gardening groups and Rotarians in Northamptonshire.

Norman Bristow, a member of the Rotary club's environment committee, explained: "We take the plants home, water them, give them a jolly good motivational talk, tend them and give them a new life.

"Originally, we took the plants to my wife's school, but this has expanded to include Lakelands Hospice, local care homes, sheltered housing schemes, schools for children with special needs, public spaces, and will include Corby Railway Station.

"The list is growing, and we are setting up a website where people can request plants."

The idea received an award last year as District 1070's most innovative environmental project. (District 1070 is Rotary in the Seven Counties, Eastern Central England). Kettering Huxloe Rotary Club is now collecting seeds to donate to school gardening clubs.

"This can be wildflower seeds to encourage bees to bright flowers to enhance their gardens and veg seeds to teach them where their food comes from," added Norman. ●



KARTING CHALLENGE BOOSTS CHARITIES



ROTARY Nene Valley has organised an indoor karting challenge for the past eight years and raised more than £80,000 for charities in Northamptonshire.

This year's event featured some remarkable races at the Teamworks indoor karting track with three teams completing 295 laps in the final contested over two hours.

This year's organiser Rotarian Richard Poynter added: "The race is not only about the winner, all of this year's finalists also achieved personal bests. One of the real fun elements of RoKart

is the sheer diversity of the teams that enter from all aspects of the Northampton community."

David Harding, President of Rotary Nene Valley, thanked the finals' sponsor, Michael Jones the jeweller, who had enabled them to raise this year a further £8,500 which would be used to support the refurbishment project the club is overseeing at Eve, the women's refuge.

They will continue their support to The Lewis Foundation which assists cancer patients and relatives in hospital, along with other Rotary-supported organisations. ●

A JACK OF ALL TRADES

ROTARIAN Jack Millin recently celebrated his 100th birthday and an incredible 60 years in Rotary.

The World War Two veteran lives in Stalybridge, Greater Manchester and is a member of Tameside Rotary Club.

Aged 97, Jack was presented with a plaque by the Mayor of Tameside on behalf of the Tameside Armed Services Community recognising his service to veterans and a leading role in the Veterans in Schools programme.

In 1964, Jack joined Rotary becoming the President of Ashton Rotary in 1977. As President, he used his leadership skills to build and sustain the club and took an active role in many acts of community service and fundraising projects. On the anniversary of 50 years of Rotary service, Jack accepted honorary membership of Ashton Rotary. When Ashton Rotary Club ceased,



Jack transferred to Tameside Rotary.

Meanwhile in West Sussex, Derek Gardiner has also reached his 100th birthday with 63 years' service with Worthing Rotary Club.

He continues to participate in fundraising events and over the years has been President and Chair of the International Committee.

Both Jack and Derek were presented with congratulatory letters from Rotary International President, Gordon McNally. ●

GUNS AT THE READY WITH ROTARY



YOUNG Carers, the organisation which supports youngsters who find themselves caring for others, and Borderland Rotary in Oswestry, Shropshire, arranged a visit to Black Hawk Laser Games as a day out for the carers and it was a great success.

Black Hawk is based on the Mile Oak Industrial Estate, just off Maesbury Road and the group played one of their most

popular games, Laser Tag.

Sherie Soper, from Borderland said, “They all seemed to have so much fun and really got into the games and I must thank Black Hawk for being so supportive and for providing the food – it was a great, adventurous day out and I’m sure we’ll be back there again soon”.

ROTARY JAIPUR LIMB – BRINGING HOPE & DIGNITY

AT the 26th annual mega limb camp carried out by the Rotary Club of Bangalore Peenya in India, supported by a grant from Rotary Jaipur Limb UK, 1,777 amputees and other patients suffering from deformities received life-changing support.

Some 595 artificial limbs, 551 callipers, 74 LN4 artificial hands, 510 crutches and 44 wheelchairs were made available free of charge. The men, women and children who benefitted ranged from the very young to the very elderly.

Rotary Jaipur Limb trustee and director for India, Richard Green, from Wolverhampton Rotary Club was on hand to give advice and encouragement to the dedicated team of technicians and Rotarians who worked tirelessly over five days, from 8am until 10pm.

Among the many recipients was 10-year-old Ravindra. Deformed from birth, his feet and legs were so misshapen that he could only crawl around



the ground in his village.

After he had been assessed and had plaster moulds made, the technicians were able overnight to make specially-fitted artificial limbs. Once these were attached Ravindra was able to raise himself up onto a walking frame and immediately propel himself around.

One little boy who has his dignity and hope restored. His smile tells the story.

GENERATING UKRAINE SUPPORT



BACK in October 2023, Market Rasen Rotary Club produced, with the help of Ukrainian mothers and daughters living in Lincolnshire, a 16-minute video to appeal for donations to the club’s generator purchase appeal.

The club hosted a Ukrainian lunch with 12 Ukrainian guests invited for the appeal’s launch, and since then £5,000 has been raised.

Market Rasen Rotary Club has been working with Marlow Thames Rotary Club in Buckinghamshire, and that sum has been passed onto Tony Preston from the Rotary Club of Ukraine Unity.

Tony buys equipment which is packed into donated vehicles, such as four-wheel drive trucks and ambulances, and delivered in convoy to the Rotary Club of Lviv, who then distribute the goods and vehicles within Ukraine.

CONTACT US ➔

If you have a project you would like to have featured in **People of Action**, please email:

editor@rotarygbi.org

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Trustpilot



DR GEOFF MACKEY
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CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY... REALLY

THE new improved Rotary year is upon us.

The old year, its final throes as we start again – obviously I don't mean throwing out past District Governors, Past Presidents, past anybodyes... or do I?

Unless we literally drop kick them out, which could make for a memorable handover and enliven proceedings.

The incoming team, poised... follow me they cry... we nod, then go order a drink - as is tradition. There will be new ideas, new thoughts, new service opportunities and projects. But when do we consider the past or the learnings - apart from, why people are sitting in our chair, or how much better it used to be?

Heard of the two-faced Roman God of Change? (Clue: January – new year). Janus looks both ways – to the future and to the past. We are reminded to take pride in our past and remember successes.

At the same time, we should look to the future, setting aside cherished habits to grasp new opportunities and adapt to a changing world before we become irrelevant RINOs (Rotary In Name Only). It gives perspective, takes pride in achievement, and makes change part of our Rotary story.

Janus has a key and a staff. His key unlocks doors, and the staff guides from one era to the next. Change and evolution is not simply behaving differently or growing older, it requires a change of thinking and being.

We tend to either dwell on the glory days or pretend previous years never

happened, a condition known as Rotary Amnesia Syndrome (RAS).

No need to discard all traditions and accumulated wisdom of the elders in a rush to be relevant - perspective is key.

We can evolve without amnesia! And we mark such transition with rituals and ceremonies, helping us make the necessary psychological leaps – a club assembly to prepare, a handover to start.

Rather than making animal sacrifices to Janus (a BBQ works better), we could have a ritual handover roasting...er...roast. Good-natured joking as we pass the torch.

Life tends to be about incremental change – the belt buckle one notch a year.

Do we review the Rotary year, mark ourselves and our projects against targets?

Do we create a positive spiral of improvement?

If every club President finished their year with one more member than they started...

Every President should be committed to ensuring that they leave their club better. More sociable, more service-driven and larger (not on a personal level).

I'm not talking about huge strides. I'm not talking about paradigm shifts and changes, I'm talking about small positive improvements and changes.

Continuous improvement for all of us is a certain challenge, after all some of us have been perfect for an awfully long time.

Let's be honest, our fellow Rotarian is the most imperfect thing we perfect people have ever come across, a great joy of our Association. The answer is to work with human nature.

ROTARY TACTICS TO AVOID CHANGE:

1. Burying heads in the sand while change swirls around. "New logo? Nope, haven't seen it!"
2. Always leaving early before getting volunteered for activities.
3. Feigning enthusiasm before dragging feet. "New PR initiative? I'm soooo on it!"
4. Endlessly wordsmithing and debating before any decision. "All in favour to convene an exploratory committee to investigate potentially revising anything..."
5. Waxing nostalgic about the good ol' days until everyone else nods off.
6. Give me a minute...

We all have to change and adapt, or risk being left behind or disappearing altogether. Change marches on whether we like it or not. We can stubbornly resist or bend like willows...while still respecting our roots.

What is key is people, to engage rather than alienate and learning every step of the way will leave us with a better Rotary.

With passion, patience, and a pinch of humour, imagine the new adventures we can pioneer together!

To have an improving organisation; to have a new organisation; to have a dynamic and beautiful Rotary for all our futures; it's not difficult; we just need to do it... ●

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