

# Rotary

APRIL | MAY 2023

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# Rotary



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## Welcome

**W**HENEVER there are times of crisis, Rotary can be relied upon to step up to the plate. This has been a thread running consistently throughout its 118-year history. This was particularly apparent during the First World War when Rotary clubs rallied with serious amounts of fund-raising, supporting refugees and casualties, organising entertainment for the troops and, after the war, helping soldiers find employment. Of course, many Rotarians gave the ultimate sacrifice in defence of their country.

Recently we have witnessed Rotary at the forefront of volunteering during the Covid pandemic, never mind our pedigree as one of the first organisations to respond to humanitarian crises around the world.

With Ukraine, Turkey and Syria in mind, this month's issue focuses on Rotary's ethos of making a difference in the modern world.

It's not tokenism. It is getting our hands dirty by not just being the first to get involved, but often the last to leave.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has prompted an amazing response from Rotarians globally, with The Rotary Foundation awarding nearly \$15 million in disaster response grants to more than 270 districts worldwide.

Each of these projects has had a direct bearing on coping with the enormity of the humanitarian disaster which has followed in the wake of war in eastern Europe.

In Great Britain & Ireland, the response has been similarly rapid, with two people in particular, Allan Smith and John Philip, the driving forces behind the Rotary Ukraine Taskforce, ensuring the right aid is getting to those who need it most. With them, Allan and John have galvanised a team whose energy shows no sign of abating.

In these pages, we reflect on the work of the Ukraine Taskforce over the past 14

months, and take a Ukrainian viewpoint on the impact of that work.

As was written in a magazine editorial about the conflict exactly a year ago, the conflict in Ukraine is not a short-term issue, Rotary is going to need to be in the thick of things long after peace breaks out - if ever it will. You can be sure Rotary will be holding firm to help with rebuilding.

What this month's magazine documents is the wide variety of activities with which Rotary clubs and districts have been engaged with, making a massive difference to those enduring the conflict in eastern Europe, and also those families who have sought refuge in these isles.

The creativity and the level of support given is both inspiring and extraordinary.

Now, in recent months, Rotarians have also rallied to the call for humanitarian relief following the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. The scenes of devastation and the scale of human tragedy are appalling.

ShelterBox, a charity which was formed at the turn of the Millennium by a Cornish Rotary club, is at the forefront of relief efforts in the region - as they have been for more than two decades around the world.

As Rotarians, we should be proud of what ShelterBox does so professionally and with such speed to provide aid to those most in need. They work in tandem with other humanitarian agencies and are respected leaders on the front line of relief efforts. Their amazing work in Turkey and Syria is detailed in these pages.

The stories from Ukraine, along with Turkey and Syria, are heartbreakingly sad.

The world can be a cruel place sometimes. However, thank heavens for organisations such as Rotary - reliable, impactful, and there till the end.

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

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# A REFUGEE'S TALE

The Ukrainian city of Mariupol came under siege by the Russians withstanding constant bombardment. This is one story of one family who managed to flee the terror to establish a new life in England

STORY BY **ANNA FEDORENKO**





**O**VER the past year, our local churches have often been the meeting places for Ukrainian refugee guests. This is where Dieter Shaw, a Rotarian from Amersham in Buckinghamshire first met Ganna.

The story of her flight to England is one of thousands as we watch the war in Eastern Europe from a safe distance.

But as the ongoing Ukraine war diminishes in our collective awareness, it is worth remembering the struggles which still threatens the lives of those wishing to escape the inferno and, once safety has been achieved, how they often face another struggle for shelter.

### HERE IS ANNA'S STORY:

My name is Anna Fedorenko. I, my husband and our eight-year-old autistic son were born and lived all our lives in Mariupol by the Azov Sea. My mother, Maria, also lived in retirement in the city in a block of flats where all the residents were close friends.

We had a good life. I was a wedding planner, my husband was a videographer.

When the war started we couldn't leave the city because we didn't have a car and we couldn't leave behind my blind mother-in-law.

For a month we lived under constant bombardment with no electricity or heating in sub-zero temperatures inside our flats. We only ate once or twice a day as we had very little food and drained the radiators for water to drink.

We hid in the basement whenever we heard airplanes as we knew that meant more bombs would fall and only slept on the floor. We tried to sit in the hallway with neighbours to generate body heat together to keep warm.

We ate, slept and walked in the same clothes and were unable to wash during this time. All the trees in our street were cut down because people had to cook on open fires in the street.

Being outside was dangerous and two new cemeteries appeared behind our block. The constant bombardment and rocket fire caused many buildings to be destroyed or catch fire so it was a miracle that ours did not catch fire as well.

On March 23rd last year we decided to leave Mariupol on foot. Everything we passed was destroyed. We lived in a

flat in Dnipro for a week but then that was bombed too. We moved to Odesa to wait for our British visas but then rockets hit that city and I just thought "Really, again?!"

My mother, Maria, was in a different part of Mariupol and we couldn't reach her. She was living in the basement of her block of flats with another 150 people - her neighbours.

There was some food available as a bombed-out food shop was in the vicinity, but it was very dangerous to go and get the food.

My mother-in-law's house was hit, and she was buried by parts of the house falling on her. She was pulled out from the rubble. In a month my mother's house and basement burnt down.

My younger brother who lived in Kyiv bought a car and drove to Mariupol to rescue my mother and my mother-in-law.

He risked his life to save them, took them out of the occupied city. A week later he died in Kyiv, the cause of death has not been established.

My mother-in-law now is in Odesa with her daughter. My mother's block of flats was badly damaged and now she has seen photos showing that it has

been bulldozed by the Russians who are building "show houses" in the area for propaganda purposes.

Finally, we got to England and were housed by our wonderful sponsors, the Barretts, and Maria was nearby in another house.

After six months, our sponsors were unable to continue to house us but we have just been moved into a house in High Wycombe with a new sponsor and so my mom Maria can be together with me and my son. We have a home again for six months.

Now we are applying to schools which will be able to support my son Mark and give him stability and then I hope to be able to work. My husband got to Ireland and was issued a visa for the UK last August.

Unfortunately, the local council has said it is impossible to find housing with my husband, so at the moment we are still apart, and he is living in Ireland. I don't know when my son can see his father.

My greatest fear is being homeless and losing everything again. I have only one dream which is the same as my whole country that we will win, because good always triumphs over evil. ●







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# Stannah

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# A HOST'S TALE

STORY BY GILL AND ROLAND LAWRENCE |



**S**INCE November 2022, we have become the hosts and sponsors of Anna, her son Mark aged 8 and her mother Maria, at our home in High Wycombe.

Last March, we registered with the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and in the summer we were approached by the Buckinghamshire liaison team looking for new sponsors for a number of Ukrainian families who were coming to the end of their first six months in England.

They thought our location and accommodation might well be suitable for Anna, Mark and Maria, and enable them to be housed together as a family.

Importantly, the team were able to visit us to meet us and see our house, and to put us in direct contact with the family's previous sponsors.

Then, when we were comfortable with what we had learnt about them, and before either side had made a commitment, they brought the family to

meet us and see our house and location.

We liked the family immediately, they liked us, and they moved in with us a week later. Fortunately, Anna speaks good English which was a very great help.

We have found the family delightful guests and friends. They have been very flexible, appreciative and easy to share our house with, in particular our kitchen/breakfast room.

They are very helpful, and amazingly cheerful most of the time despite the horrors they have been through.

The family has settled in well and Mark has started at The Disraeli School in High Wycombe, which was able to take him, and has a good reputation.

So far things are going well, and Mark's grasp of English after nine months is amazing - as is his skill at building complex Lego models.

For both my wife and myself, the experience to date has been extremely positive and enjoyable.

It has widened our horizons and provided us with a new challenge. We realise the longer-term future for Anna and her family is completely uncertain as their home city of Mariupol has been almost completely destroyed and the war continues to rage.

We are content to provide them with a temporary refuge.

We do encourage other Rotarians to consider taking in a Ukrainian family.

From our perspective the fact of our being second hosts, and the help and support provided by the excellent Buckinghamshire Council liaison team, has made the process relatively simple, and greatly reduced the risk of the placement proving unsuccessful. ●

*Roland Lawrence is a member of the Rotary Club of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. His wife Gill is a member and treasurer of the Inner Wheel Club of High Wycombe.*



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# £6 MILLION FOR UKRAINE

Jersey Rotarian Allan Smith is heading up Rotary GB&I's Ukraine Taskforce and describes the progress which has been made over the past year.

**M**ORE than a year ago, along with the rest of the population I was horrified by the scenes on TV of Russia invading Ukraine.

I was surprised, but pleased, to receive a telephone call from Amanda Watkin, General Secretary of Rotary GB&I, asking me to lead a team of experienced Rotarians in the Rotary GB&I Ukraine Crisis Taskforce.

At our first meeting the initial challenge was to agree our purpose which was to provide a Rotary co-ordinated approach to the current Ukraine crisis, especially to displaced people both leaving and within the Ukraine and communicate to Rotarians throughout UK and Ireland.

I was very fortunate in having a very talented team of Rotarians and the delegation of responsibilities was in line with their experience, including Past District Governor Dr John Philip, Chair of the Rotary International Fellowship of

Healthcare Professionals, who would lead the healthcare response.

James Onions, national co-ordinator of the Rotary GB&I Inter Country Committee (ICC), and Tata Glick, leader of the Ukraine ICC would liaise with ICC members in Ukraine and bordering countries.

Mike Parry would liaise with The Rotary Foundation, Peter King would liaise with the Rotary GB&I Resilience co-leads, Roger Stent would lead with Selwyn Foreman as our liaison with all district governors, with Selwyn also Taskforce Secretary.

Jannine Birtwistle would lead our communications including our bulletin in conjunction with myself and we decided to meet weekly to distribute a weekly bulletin.

We reported to Cheryl Berry, lead of the Rotary GB&I Humanitarian Team.

Our first challenge was to gain first-hand information on how Rotary GB&I could help in healthcare and assist the

huge wave of refugees fleeing Ukraine.

John Philip, through the healthcare fellowship, gained immediate information that tourniquets for wounded civilians were urgently needed, James Onions and Tata Glick contacted the ICC members in Ukraine and bordering countries to ensure we met the need on the ground and not what we thought they needed.

The second challenge was to identify safe bank accounts for districts and clubs to donate funds.

Rotary International arranged secure district accounts in bordering countries since it was considered too dangerous to advise clubs to send funds direct to the Ukraine District account.

Once the Ukrainian army had stabilised the military situation, we felt it was safe to advise clubs to send funds direct to District 2232 GB pound account.

The third challenge was to effectively communicate with Rotary districts, clubs and Rotarians which we achieved through a weekly bulletin, as well as a Facebook





page and a most informative Mind Map.

Action was what was needed, and Rotary throughout Great Britain and Ireland responded magnificently.

During March, enough money was donated to the healthcare fellowship to purchase 5000 tourniquets costing €30,600. Trucks of supplies were leaving on an almost daily basis resolving any border administration issues.

The Rotary Foundation launched Disaster Response Grants and we urged districts to apply for these \$25,000 (£19,000) grants to support Ukraine guests who were starting to arrive in the UK. We liaised with the Rotary GB&I Resilience Team and invited contributions to our weekly bulletin.

During May we held our first joint Taskforce meeting with the Ukraine Taskforce, a huge step forward enabling us to hear on a weekly basis the needs of the Ukraine people.

In July, the Ukraine Taskforce members led by Serhiy Zavadsky highlighted the urgent need to start

planning for the very cold winters.

Many Ukrainians had lost their homes and were living and sleeping in the open air. They needed shelter for the winter so the Moshchun Modular home project was launched by the Ukraine District throughout Rotary worldwide.

We urged Rotary districts and clubs to respond with the homes initially costing £10,000 or \$12,500 each.

By the end of the year Rotary GB&I had raised over \$350,000 enabling 28 modular homes to be built.

By September we appealed to help Ukraine “feed the world” through removing Russian mines and ordinance by purchasing two magnetometers and software for reconnaissance of fertile land, and to make safe at a cost of €41,000.

Within days, District 1145 came forward with the money.

During November, as the Ukraine disaster deepened with the increased missile attacks, we launched appeals for generators through donations or by clubs and districts delivering directly.

This is an ongoing campaign receiving outstanding support. We appealed for warm clothing and further support for shelter.

The continuing need for support of Ukraine has never been so important.

We have recognised that occasionally donating to the Ukraine District has, in a small number of cases, been challenging.

We are therefore very grateful to three districts in Rotary GB&I for allowing us to collect funds in one of their accounts strictly controlled by their treasurer. This will mean all our projects will have a UK bank account for funds to be received.

May I on behalf of the Rotary GB&I Ukraine Crisis Taskforce thank every district, club and Rotarian for their magnificent support which we conservatively believe has totalled in excess of £6 million.

We will continue to help the desperate people of the Ukraine but can only do this with the continuing outstanding support of all Rotarians. ●



# REBUILDING UKRAINE WITH ROTARY

STORY BY **SERGIY ZAVADSKYI, ROTARY CLUB OF KYIV-CITY, UKRAINE, CO-ORDINATOR OF THE MOSHCHUN RECOVERY PROJECT & LEADER OF THE ROTARY UKRAINE TEAM, WORKING WITH THE ROTARY GB&I TASKFORCE**



**I**HATE war. I hate those who initiate, support or do nothing to stop it.

My country is struggling from Russian aggression, and last February it came full scale to my own city of Kyiv.

A year ago, I was forced to flee from my own city with my wife and four grandchildren to escape the violence and death. My younger son joined the army to defend his family and the country, and every day we pray for him.

What has kept me reasonably balanced this whole year of war has been my Rotary service to others. I am very tired now, but I cannot allow myself to stop serving others in need, those suffering in more tragic and horrible situations than me.

I am happy that we have been getting such strong support from all over the world, from many Rotarians, Rotary clubs and districts. It comes and comes and comes.

God bless all those Rotarians who are helping us here to survive, to struggle and defend our freedom to live as we want.

Rotary in Ukraine has selected as one of our big projects the small village of Moshchun, near Kyiv.

Moshchun is not mentioned as often by the international media as Mariupol, Bucha, Irpin or Hostomel, but it is an heroic village where the fighting was very intense, but where Russian troops were stopped from their goal of attacking and occupying Kyiv city.

More than 70% of the houses in Moshchun were completely or significantly destroyed.

When I visited Moshchun for the first time after the fighting, I saw an apocalyptic picture of ruins and ash.

A dead village with just a few local people who were frustrated, lost, and with very little hope for the future.

My Rotary Club Kyiv-City started a project with the Rotary Club of Ivano-Frankivsk from western Ukraine and a local charity established with a mission of Moshchun's recovery – 'UA Dream fund'.

We have selected a reliable, local producer of modular homes, and decided

that we will not create a separate camp of modular homes, but install each modular house at the plot of land of each family.

This has saved time, side-stepped bureaucratic procedures to allocate the land, provide electricity and water, with families able to live on their own land and step-by-step build their own permanent house.

I am so proud and happy that with the support of Rotary districts, clubs and Rotarians from Great Britain & Ireland, and from many other countries, we have installed already 100 temporary modular houses allowing 300 people to survive on their own land, and rebuild their lives.

A quarter of these modular houses have been funded through Rotary GB&I.

By helping to recover Moshchun village, we are showing a positive example to help to recover the whole of Ukraine!

Thank you, Rotarians from Great Britain & Ireland. ●

[www.facebook.com/moshchun.recovery](https://www.facebook.com/moshchun.recovery)



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# BUILDING THE BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP

STORY BY JAMES ONIONS, ROTARY GB&I INTER-COUNTRY COMMITTEE CO-ORDINATOR |



**A**s war began in February 2022, members of our Inter County Committees (ICC) with Ukraine and Moldova were presenting over Zoom at a District 1130/1145 Peace event.

Maryna Dolzhenko, the ICC's Great Britain & Ireland Ukraine lead in Ukraine, courageously continued presenting from Kyiv as attacks commenced.

She discussed the Rotary Peace Garden which had just been created by clubs in Kyiv and London. Dirk Lustig covered programmes which had been planned by Rotary to clear mines in Eastern Ukraine left from the 2014 war, a project encompassing an area nearly half the size of Wales.

ICC is all about developing working relationships nation to nation – ours were already in place with Moldova and were well developed with Ukraine. The foundations for great support were solid and used to set up our Ukraine Taskforce.

Very rapidly we supported Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, to absorb the hundreds of thousands of refugees passing through. With only 100 Rotarians

in eight clubs, their task was challenging.

Our ICC, led by Past Rotary GB&I President, Peter King, helped Moldovan Rotarians organise shelter and essential succour for 5,000 of the 95,000 refugees who stayed.

With local supplies in Moldova rapidly exhausted, Districts 1145 and 1200 financed shipments of essentials to the Moldovan capital, Chisinau. Local Rotarians distributed these goods travelling food bank style. Their efforts were covered on Moldovan TV and the two lead clubs – E-Club of Moldova International and Chisinau Triumph – received letters of thanks from Moldova's President.

As we built our taskforce through ICC contacts in Ukraine, particularly Sergii Zavadskyi, we were the first nation to work with Ukraine's Taskforce and commenced weekly meetings. Close, trusted relationships from ICC throughout Ukraine enable us to work together productively. A year on, those relationships have served us well.

As Rotary International Director and Vice-President, Nicki Scott, said: "ICC is like Friendship Exchange on steroids with

a very long-term relationship."

Our Peace Park in Kyiv was cared for even during the first months of the war, becoming a symbol of their desire for peace. We all hear the warm thanks from Ukrainian people for the UK's support, who have noticed how Rotarians from Rotary GB&I have been a part of that.

Demonstrating to all the people of Ukraine the support provided by communities in Great Britain & Ireland, benches have been placed in the popular Shevchenko Park in Kyiv.

ICC leader in Ukraine, Maryna Dolzhenko, led this reminding the people of Ukraine that people of other countries, and not just governments, are with them.

Robin Jowit, an honorary member of Kew Gardens Rotary Club, was recently in Kyiv to research the impact of the war on children and their education and was photographed sitting on one of the benches.

One year on, very brave people continue to resist aggression showing both resilience and innovation. A new project with Dirk Lustig to detect and destroy mines, in an area now the size of England, is commencing. ●





# MAKING A HOME FROM HOME

STORY BY **CHERYLE BERRY, TEAM LEAD HUMANITARIAN SERVICE, ROTARY GB&I,**  
& **JANNINE BIRTWISTLE, DEPUTY TEAM LEAD HUMANITARIAN SERVICE, ROTARY GB&I**

**R**OTARIANS across Great Britain and Ireland have united to welcome our Ukrainian guests, helping with their immediate and longer-term needs. They have used their networks, skills and experience, often at very short notice, to provide a wide range of resources and support.

Rotarians are pleased to do whatever they can knowing the stress of the trauma experienced by our guests and understand their ongoing concerns and sadness for all those in Ukraine will be with them for many years to come.

The Rotarian network of Rotary district resilience officers in Great Britain and Ireland, led by Brenda Parsons and Peter Dowse, have coordinated many of the activities.

Here are just a few examples to give an idea of the extent of our Rotary help:

- ✔ Clothing, toiletries, toys, furniture and household goods have been collected and distributed by Rotarians, Rotary clubs and Rotary districts.
- ✔ Rotarians working with estate agents have identified affordable housing for those leaving their initial host accommodation.
- ✔ Translating medical and educational documents into relevant languages.

- ✔ Ensuring vaccinations such as Covid and polio are up to date.
- ✔ Registering with local GPs and enrolling at local schools.
- ✔ Working with Rotary GB&I partner, Bipolar UK, to produce a directory of mental health services, translated into required languages.
- ✔ The Rotary Club of Dronfield distributed personal journals in Ukrainian and English to help guests record their experiences to work through their feelings and emotions. This is a simple way of overcoming the trauma of the conflict, helping integration with their new community.
- ✔ Issuing free phone cards for contact with relatives and friends.
- ✔ Providing laptops for communication and translation.
- ✔ Arranging regular coffee mornings and social meetings for Ukrainian guests and their hosts.
- ✔ Setting up summer activities for young Ukrainians at sports centres and outdoor activity centres.
- ✔ In Derbyshire there are plans for leadership and team-building activities throughout the year.
- ✔ Celebrating Ukraine Independence Day, including traditional music, dancing and food, working with Ukrainian groups.
- ✔ Holding Christmas parties and distributing Christmas hampers and toys.
- ✔ Addressing the gaps in 'English as a second language' provision by setting up conversation classes in libraries and community centres.
- ✔ Distributing arts and crafts materials to enable hobbies to be continued or new ones started.
- ✔ Holding environmental workshops on recycling and textiles reuse.
- ✔ Helping people retrain and/or continue their careers and professions, such as in Rotherham a Ukrainian guest, who was a plumber, is being equipped with the necessary tools to continue his trade.

We thank everyone for their tremendous determination to help as many of our Ukrainian guests as possible alongside all the other work Rotarians do in their communities.

Rotarians across Great Britain & Ireland are continuing their support to our Ukrainian guests wherever, whenever and however they can, and there are exciting plans for the future. ●



# MEDICAL CARE FOR THE FRONT LINE

Newbury Rotarian, John Philip, Chair of the International Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals assesses the impact of their work in Ukraine.

STORY BY **JOHN PHILIP, CHAIR OF THE INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**



**M**Y regular contact with medical colleagues in Ukraine causes me huge challenges. When they tell me stories of mothers giving birth in cold bunkers, of vulnerable premature babies gasping for breath, of the millions of children internally displaced and traumatised by the war – all on top of the horrendous injuries suffered by soldiers and civilians, I feel numb.

A year on there is no sign of an end to this tragedy.

I worry about the thousands of innocent victims of this war. I also worry about my medical colleagues. How long can they cope with the pressure? What would be the consequences if they burn out? Who is caring for them? What is happening to the training of new doctors and other health professionals?

I find it impossible to 'prioritise' the medical needs of the people of Ukraine. How do you choose between the lives of a soldier with blast injuries, a civilian with crushed limbs, a pregnant woman in labour in a bunker and a disabled youngster in an institution?

Who is involved in rehabilitation of those who have suffered life changing injuries?

There has never been a war such as this where a superpower has with impunity targeted a small country's civilians and civilian infrastructures for so long. It is difficult to quantify the extent of the suffering.

Rotarians have responded with speed - most of the medical aid we deliver is at the request of the Rotarian doctors in Ukraine - some of whom are members of the Ukrainian branch of the Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals.

They have shown amazing resilience perhaps helped by the knowledge that the Fellowship, from the second week of the war has stood by them.

It has been an honour for me to coordinate, since the very beginning of the war, medical aid from Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland and beyond for Ukraine. I'm amazed at the generosity of Rotarians and others.

We have so far supplied £350,000 worth medical aid - including 20,000 tourniquets, orthopaedic instruments to treat 'poly trauma', Neopuff incubators to help new-born babies to 23 cities.



In December, I travelled 1,350 miles, from my home in Newbury across the channel, through France, Germany and Poland to the Ukrainian border town of Tomaszow Lubelski to hand over 120 boxes of vital medical equipment to colleagues from Ukraine.

The boxes were packed tight into two vans driven by two Scottish colleagues - my role was mainly navigating.

The reason I felt compelled to make this journey was because the medical equipment was purchased by donations from Rotarians and well-wishers - it was highly specialised equipment for 37 maternity hospitals.

I could not simply rely on someone else to take responsibility for this.

So long as the war continues pregnant women will face increasing risk - so will new-born babies. We would like to see a coordinated effort to support pregnant women and new-born babies.

With the increased risk of premature and low birthweight babies born in less-than-ideal conditions, there is an increased risk of them suffering various medical problems including oxygen starvation. This could result in mental or physical disability.

Ukraine has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world. Its population has declined since the 1990s. With a generation of young people growing up with physical and mental trauma,

the long-term impact to the country is unthinkable. The children are the future, protecting the children must be one of our top priorities.

Our current focus is on supplying Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) wraps to a number of maternity hospitals. KMC includes keeping small (pre-term) babies skin-to-skin with their mother (or another family member). Studies of KMC report increased survival, decreased infection, improved nutrition and growth and possible improved development.

The wraps are being manufactured in Moldova and distributed internally by 'Early Birds', a parent association in Ukraine. They have identified 30 hospitals where the wraps are most needed. It is estimated that an average of 300 to 600 infants per month will benefit.

We are also supplying small, knitted hats to complement KMC. Such hats for new-born babies may be life-saving.

Their heads are relatively larger than bodies compared to older children and adults and a large source of potentially risky heat loss.

I've been overwhelmed by the response from Rotarians and friends who have been knitting baby hats and sending them to me. They will soon be worn by vulnerable new-borns in Ukraine!

The Fellowship has launched a project reaching out to Children in Need in Ukraine to assess the impact of the war on their mental health and explore how we may help them.

Many children have been killed or injured, many have lost parents and siblings, their homes, schools and playgrounds. We have been told that some have been kidnapped and trafficked. No child should ever have to bear that kind of suffering. They need mental and physical support urgently.

We're grateful to Rotarians in Ukraine who keep us informed of the changing situations in their country.

The real time stories we hear from them are the worst example of man's cruelty to man.

These stories are evidence of the collapse of the international order as we knew it before February 24th, 2022.

The stories need to be told and retold, as we seek to do in whatever way we can, to stir the hearts and minds of people all over the world. ●



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# PUTTING IN THE HOURS FOR UKRAINE

Counting up the work of Rotarians in Great Britain & Ireland over the past year to support the people of Ukraine.

| STORY BY **DAVE KING** |

**I**N just over a year, Rotarians in Great Britain & Ireland have raised more than £6 million in humanitarian aid towards Ukraine, and provided volunteering hours which have amounted to more than ten years.

That's the result of a Rotary GB&I survey which received feedback from over 400 clubs across the region about their work in support of Ukraine.

Internationally, Rotarians and donors have rallied to raise over £12.1 million via The Rotary Foundation's

global appeal, while in Great Britain & Ireland £412,000 has been raised for Rotary Foundation UK's appeal.

Further, there's been an estimated £6 million of cash and goods donated to all sources as part of the Ukrainian humanitarian appeal.

This latest survey serves as a snapshot of how and on what scale Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland has responded so rapidly to the crisis in Eastern Europe.

Chief among Rotary's activities has been fund-raising, but also creating

awareness of the work of Rotary.

**Portadown Rotary** in Northern Ireland held a four-day fund-raiser to create awareness of ShelterBox and how they work throughout the world assisting people through disasters. As a result, two ShelterBoxes were provided for Ukraine.

In North Wales, **Abergavenny Rotary** sent £2,000 to Rotary's Disasters Emergency Committee when the conflict started, and later raised a further £3,500 through a series of street collections.

They sent the money to Jaroslaw Rotary Club on the Poland-Ukraine



border which was used for food and medical supplies for refugees fleeing into Poland and some of it was sent to a city 200 miles south of Kyiv on the Dnipro river.

Three Abergavenny Rotarians visited Jaroslaw last summer, and the club also sent five Ukrainian youngsters on the Rotary Youth Leadership Award camp, funded by a Foundation District Response Grant.

For other Rotary clubs, collecting goods – both medical and humanitarian – has been a key part of their work.

**Fleetwood Rotary** in Lancashire manned a collection point at the shopping centre where they filled a 40-foot container with bedding, cooking utensils and pharmaceutical products which International Aid delivered.

**Blythe Bridge Rotary** in Staffordshire supported a village effort to send two lorry loads of goods into Poland. One of the Rotarians has Ukrainian family, and through that connection they were able to deliver medical goods direct to Kyiv hospital.

In Hampshire, **Rushmoor** and **Farnborough Rotary** Clubs joined forces to collect 750 large binbags of warm clothing.

**Oldmeldrum & District** in Aberdeenshire invited a Ukrainian Rotary club president to speak to them, and as a result provided 127 black bags of items to be transported to Eastern Europe.

Also in Scotland, Inverness's three Rotary clubs (**Inverness, Culloden, Loch Ness**) and Inverness Inner Wheel provided a range of warm clothing and bedding, established a shoebox appeal to provide toiletries and personal items, along with unwanted medical aids which were transported to Ukraine. Through donations, they were also able to purchase a generator.

At home, supporting Ukrainian refugees who have fled to these isles has been a focal point. Many Rotarians have hosted families, while clubs themselves have supported them. At **Brookmans Park** in Hertfordshire, one Rotarian took in a Ukrainian family, while the family who run the restaurant where the club meets transported humanitarian aid they had collected to the border with Slovenia.



**Colchester Forum Rotary** in Essex supported Ukrainian families by supplying computers and at **Cardiff Llanishen** they bought 20 Chromebooks to support children living in hotels in the Welsh capital.

The **E-club Southwest Peninsula** used a Rotary Foundation Grant to provide a laptop for a Ukrainian doctor, Olena Subocheva, to improve her English and become a settled part of the community.

**Hebden Bridge Rotary** in West Yorkshire and **Rutland Rotary** in the East Midlands are both offering English

lessons for refugees. While in Suffolk, two Rotarians who are members of the **Woodbridge Ukraine Hub** are providing regular English classes and practical support to those living in the area.

In the West Midlands, **Moseley and Sparkbrook Rotary** partnered with a Ukrainian community organisation to buy travel passes along with warm winter coats for teenagers, plus Christmas presents for youngsters.

**Lewes Rotary** in East Sussex also sent warm clothing to Ukraine.

Similarly in **St Machar Aberdeen**, Rotarians provided household cleaning materials for ten homes used by families coming to the Scottish city. They have also donated winter coats and jackets along with various footwear.

At **Clonmel Rotary** in the Republic of Ireland, they ran a Ukrainian relief centre for 55 displaced persons for 12 weeks. The Rotarians raised €9,000 to buy materials to support their resettlement. An additional €5,000 was sent to a Rotary account to support people in their country.

**Dronfield Rotary** in Derbyshire has been particularly industrious by raising money to send to a partner club, Warsaw Wilanow in Poland, and set up Dronfield Homes for Ukraine, providing a welcome pack and information for refugees. Interestingly, as a registered charity, Dronfield Rotary applied to Vodafone UK and received free SIM cards which have been sent to families. ●



# SUPPORTING UKRAINE SPECIAL

## LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

### ULTRASOUND SCANNER TO CHERKASY

**F**ROM the money they have raised from different charity events over the course of 2022, Rotary Royal Wootton Bassett & District, Wiltshire purchased a portable ultrasound scanner unit to send to Cherkasy Hospital in Ukraine.

The ultrasound scanner was transported into Ukraine and forwarded on to Nina, Secretary of the Rotary club in Cherkasy who Royal Wootton Bassett & District had been using as a contact, to present to the hospital there on its behalf.

The shipment to Cherkasy also included dental restorative materials which was well received by the stomatology department at the hospital.

Clothing, blankets, log burners and a generator, all donated to Rotary Royal Wootton Bassett & District by local residents, were included in the shipment to give to the people of Cherkasy.

Nina is also the Chief of Diagnostics at Cherkasy Hospital so she and Dr Zadorozhnyi, Director of the hospital, were delighted to receive the shipment. ●



### GIVING UKRAINIANS A VOICE



**R**OTARY clubs in Enfield have been helping a North London Ukrainian Hub set up by Yevgeniya Pozigun, a Ukrainian who has lived in London for 15 years and who wanted to assist Ukrainian refugees arriving in London.

As well as organising clothing collections and providing assistance with finding new housing, one of the main ways Rotarians in Enfield have been able to help is by providing English language conversation classes.

Steve Vincent - a member of Enfield Chase Rotary - is a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) qualified English Language teacher and has been providing conversation classes three times a week to those who wish to

improve their communication skills.

Steve has benefitted from help provided by other local Rotarians who have supported the classes and have interacted with the refugees individually too.

Steve commented: "I have heard some horrific tales of war from some of these women, and yet here they are learning a foreign language, adapting to our culture, finding schools for their children, applying for jobs and successfully coming to terms with Universal Credit administration.

"These are truly remarkable people and deserve every possible help I and others can provide." ●

### BRITISH AND US CLUBS JOIN FORCES

**T**HANKS to an emergency grant and the exceptional dedication of a few Rotarians, Whitstable Rotary successfully helped the Cherry Creek Rotary Club of Denver Colorado and the Ukraine Unity Rotary Club of Lviv distribute over 9500 brand new thermal items across Ukraine.

Whitstable Rotarian Kim Foster met Steve Sidelnyk of the Ukraine Unity Rotary Club through a project supporting Ukrainian families in Whitstable, with

Steve introducing Kim to Cindy Chase, President of Cherry Creek Rotary.

Cherry Creek Rotary applied for a \$25,000 emergency grant that it was Whitstable Rotary's job to then receive, administer the same and then give to Rotarian Antony Preston - a member of Ukraine Unity Rotary.

Antony found and bought all the clothes from UK wholesalers and arranged for two 4x4's and an HGV to transport it all to Ukraine. ●



## NO ONE GOES WITHOUT A GIFT



**T**HE Rotary Club of Bedford's Ukrainian Support Project started in July 2022 and adapts its services to the evolving needs of Ukrainian refugees living in the Bedford area.

Club President Brian Garner's research into transport of humanitarian aid to Ukraine led him to Jeremy Fish, CEO of Ardent Hire Solutions, a plant hire company, and creator of the Plant & Hire Aid Alliance, a trade group working together to transport badly-needed support items to Ukraine.

Jeremy had received requests for Christmas presents from sources in

Ukraine via the Rotary Club of Kosice in Slovakia, which is acting as a distribution hub, and asked Brian if Rotary could provide gifts for the children in Ukraine.

Brian approached KidsOut, frequent and long-term collaborators with Rotary, for help and the organisation did not disappoint, providing 7,000 presents at short notice.

Bedford Rotary then got a team of volunteers together to help wrap, load and gift the presents to children all over Ukraine with the assistance of The Charity Fund of Support and Development of Ukraine. ●

## AMBULANCE AID TO UKRAINE

**I**SABEL Langdon of the Coventry Phoenix Rotary Club recently took on the challenge of driving two ambulances full of essential medical supplies and medication to the Poland/Ukraine border.

Together with another three drivers, Isabel was delivering the ambulances on behalf of Ambulance Aid and Ukrainian Medical Aid.

The project is overseen by Coventry-based Ukrainian born GP Tania Hebert, who coordinates the collection of medical supplies and the volunteers who sort and pack them.

Coventry Phoenix Rotary had been working with Tania and a team of volunteers for months to collect the medical supplies that Isabel would be transporting.

The journey took around 28 hours, with the drivers taking turns at the wheel and trying to catch some sleep in between driving shifts.

Once the ambulances were safely delivered, the four drivers travelled to Krakow where they enjoyed a welcome sleep in a hotel.

The next morning, everyone had the opportunity to look round the city before returning to the UK in the evening. ●

## STAYING CONNECTED

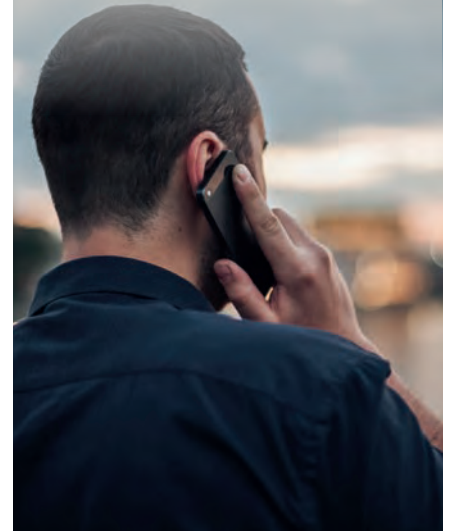
**T**HE Rotary Club of Spalding and Welland, Lincolnshire, has teamed up with the charity Mobiles 4 Ukraine to encourage donations of unwanted mobile phones and tablets.

The idea came after members of Spalding and Welland Rotary heard a talk from a Ukrainian lady at Grantham Rotary Club where she revealed her home in Irpin had been destroyed by bombing, leaving her and her family as refugees.

Mobiles 4 Ukraine refurbish and recycle the phones and tablets donated to them and then distribute them to Ukrainians both back in Ukraine and those sheltering in foreign countries.

A club spokesman told Spalding Today: "The club is teaming up with Mobiles 4 Ukraine to make a real difference to the ordinary folk of Ukraine in their continuing unimaginable plight as they still stand strong against their invaders.

"The donated mobile devices will be processed, sorted and resold by Ukrainian mums who desperately need jobs to help support their families." ●



## WATER TO UKRAINE

**W**ATER Survival Box has been working hard for over a year to make sure those affected by the Ukraine conflict have access to clean water.

The charity is totally run by volunteers from the Rotary Club of Chelwood Bridge and its focus is providing the equipment needed to purify water for victims of natural or man-made disasters.

A standard box sent out by Water Survival Box contains safe drinking water and a water purification kit as well as tools, water carriers, kitchen utensils, bandages and a female hygiene kit.

Water Survival Box has so far sent seven loads of aid from their resources over to Ukraine which Rotary Club Ukraine Unity, based in Lviv, has received and distributed.

Amongst the resources sent include over 1,000 water filters, with a further 400 waiting to be transported to affected areas.

Overall, Water Survival Box estimates the resources sent to Ukraine since the conflict started, to be worth over £120,000. ●



## AMBULANCE SUPPORT



**I**N Eastern England, the Rotary Club of Cambridge has recently bought two ambulances to aid the victims of the war in Ukraine.

The club initially planned to buy just one ambulance, however, in a matter of months they had raised enough money to buy two ambulances.

The funds were predominantly raised with a Christmas carol concert and a fashion show at ESSE Retail & Therapy based in the Cambridgeshire village of Melbourn.

In less than a year, the club has donated more than £28,000 to support Ukraine in various projects.

Sergii Savytskyi, from the Rotary club in Kharkiv, Ukraine, explained: “One ambulance will work with the hospital in Kharkiv city, and the other ambulance will work with the hospital in eastern Ukraine near the frontline zone.”

Neil Whiteside, President of the Rotary Club of Cambridge, said: “As always, the people of Cambridge have stepped up to the mark and supported the Rotary Club of Cambridge’s efforts to help those suffering in Ukraine.

“And while we have managed to raise an enormous sum of money so far, we will continue to help in whatever ways we can.” ●

## IT'S IN THE BAG!

**L**EATHERHEAD Rotary Club in Surrey, recently sent out an appeal for donations of warm winter clothing for people in Ukraine and the local community did not disappoint.

In less than two weeks, the club was able to fill 600 bags with a range of new and recycled items, from coats and jumpers to blankets, sleeping bags and duvets.

Two large vans subsequently came to a central collection point in Hampshire from where they were transported across Europe to local Rotary clubs in Poland and the Czech

Republic, who then took them across the border into Ukraine.

Leatherhead Rotary member Graham Ryding, who coordinated the collection on behalf of the club, said they had been overwhelmed by the response to the appeal, especially the number of local residents who gave up their time to help club members sort and bag the donated items.

Graham added: “We would especially like to thank the Swan Centre in Leatherhead, for very kindly donating the use of one of its retail units as a base for the collection and sorting.” ●



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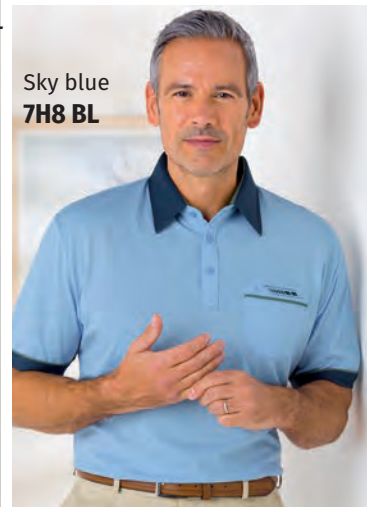
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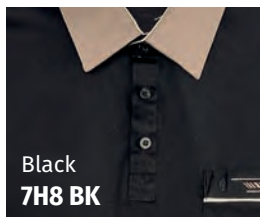
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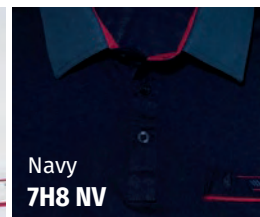
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## 2023 DEPARTURE DATES & COACH PICK UP POINTS

### NORTH WEST

#### Monday 10th July

Bromborough, Birkenhead, Wallasey, Liverpool, Maghull, Formby, Southport, Charnock Richard Services

#### Tuesday 18th July

Whitehaven, Workington, Cockermouth, Keswick, Penrith, Carlisle (Irving's), Carlisle

### YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

#### Sunday 11th June

Hull, Beverley, Driffield, Bridlington, Filey, Scarborough, West Ayton, Pickering, Helmsley

### EAST MIDLANDS

#### Sunday 11th June

Boston, Sleaford, Lincoln, Retford, Bawtry

#### Sunday 11th June

Long Eaton, Derby, Ripley, Alfreton, Clay Cross, Chesterfield

#### Tuesday 20th June

Aylsham, North Walsham, Cromer, Sheringham, Holt, Fakenham, Kings Lynn (South), Gedney

#### Friday 14th July

Leighton Buzzard, Milton Keynes, Towcester, Nothampton

#### Thursday 27th July

Lowestoft, Gorleston (James Paget Hospital), Gorleston (Central) Great Yarmouth, Acle, Norwich (Central), Norwich (Costessey), Gedney

### WEST MIDLANDS

#### Monday 10th July

Rugby, Hinckley, Atherstone, Tamworth, Lichfield, Rugeley

### WALES

#### Thursday 27th July

Port Talbot, Swansea, Neath, Glyn Neath, Hirwaun, Aberdare, Merthyr Tydfil

### EAST ENGLAND

#### Tuesday 20th June

Stevage, Letchworth, Baldock, Biggleswade, Sandy, St Neots, Peterborough Services

#### Tuesday 20th June

Aylsham, North Walsham, Cromer, Sheringham, Holt, Fakenham, Kings Lynn (South), Gedney

#### Friday 14th July

Haverhill, Horseheath, Linton, Saffron Walden, Sawston, Cambridge, Cambridge Services, Peterborough Services

#### Friday 14th July

Leighton Buzzard, Milton Keynes, Towcester, Nothampton

#### Thursday 27th July

Sheerness (Kent), Sittingbourne, Maidstone, Birchanger Services

#### Thursday 27th July

Lowestoft, Gorleston (James Paget Hospital), Gorleston (Central) Great Yarmouth, Acle, Norwich (Central), Norwich (Costessey), Gedney

#### Monday 31st July

Woodbridge, Ipswich, Hadleigh Suffolk, Boxford, Newton Green, Sudbury, Long Melford, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Cambridge Services

### SOUTH EAST

#### Friday 14th July

Eastbourne, Pevensey Bay, Little Common, Bexhill, St Leonards, Hastings, Hurst Green

#### Friday 14th July

Leighton Buzzard, Milton Keynes, Towcester, Nothampton

#### Tuesday 18th July

Southampton (Soton), Southampton (Bitterne), Southampton (Eastleigh), Basingstoke, Newbury

#### Thursday 27th July

Sheerness (Kent), Sittingbourne, Maidstone, Birchanger Services

#### Monday 31st July

Maidenhead, Marlow, High Wycombe, Amersham, Chesham, Aylesbury

### SOUTH WEST

#### Tuesday 20th June

Wellington, Taunton, Bridgwater, Highbridge, Burnham-On-Sea, Weston-Super-Mare, Worle

#### Monday 10th July

Frome, Warminster, Westbury, Trowbridge, Melksham, Corsham

#### Monday 31st July

Exmouth, Budleigh Salterton, Sidmouth, Honiton, Seaton, Axminster, Chard, Ilminster, Sedgemoor Services





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# JENNIFER JONES

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT 2022/23**

## INTRODUCING THE ROTARY YOUTH NETWORK

**H**OW do you take the best from the worst? None of us will forget how the pandemic altered our world and our lives. Each of us had to traverse this period of uncertainty, and no one had a free pass from the effects.

I personally believe this has created space for a different kind of global leadership — one that is courageous, empathetic, and vulnerable. I met my good friend Anniela Carracedo online in early 2020. She is one such leader, and I'm thrilled to turn this month's column over to her. ●

### | Jennifer Jones

*In March 2020, I had a panic attack. I couldn't breathe, and I felt a terrible pain in my chest.*

*It had been a few days since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and I was in the middle of my year as a Rotary Youth Exchange student in the United States. Think about it: an 18-year-old girl stuck in a different country, with a foreign language, with people she had only met six months before. It was scary.*

*But I am familiar with uncertainty. I was born and raised in Venezuela, which is going through one of the worst humanitarian and political crises in the Western Hemisphere. But my mom always said, "Challenges are nothing more than needs that require a solution."*

*I called up my Interact and Youth Exchange friends. Together, we organised an online meeting to share projects and get inspired by what everyone else was doing during the quarantine. In that first meeting, we had 70 people, mainly students, from 17 countries.*

*From that beginning, we built an online platform for Rotary youths worldwide to share their experiences and inspire others with project ideas during isolation. We looked for mentors and supporters who would help our group connect young people, share cultures, and open new collaborative opportunities for international service projects. We called it Rotary Interactive Quarantine, or RIQ.*

*After only a year, we engaged with more than 5,000 students from 80 countries. Several of our team members became district Interact representatives and district committee members, and some of us even serve on Rotary International councils.*

*Eventually, quarantine restrictions were being lifted, and the needs of our participants were changing. At our last official meeting as RIQ, Past RI President Barry Rassin inspired us to create even bigger change, so we transformed RIQ into the Rotary Youth Network, or RYN.*

*A few of our members, including me, were selected to serve on the inaugural Interact Advisory Council, where we presented our vision for youth in Rotary to the RI Board of Directors.*

*Our presentation to the Board inspired President Jennifer and her team to create a Youth Advisory Council in Rotary International, which I am honoured to serve as a co-chair.*

*The Rotary Youth Network officially launched during a breakout session at the 2022 Rotary International Convention in Houston.*

*Five of us, who had participated in Interact, Youth Exchange, and Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, travelled across continents to launch an organisation we had kicked off online two years before. The convention was also the first time we had met in person.*

*When my friends and I finished our talk, we realised more than 500 people were giving us a standing ovation. Tears filled our eyes, and the feeling of excitement and accomplishment took over.*

*Who would have thought that a panic attack would lead to this? ●*

### | Anniela Carracedo

Rotary Club of Bay St. Louis, Mississippi  
District 6840 Rotaract chair-elect



# ANNOUNCING The Commemorative King's Coronation Medal

**AWARD**, in support of SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, is proud to announce the striking of the Commemorative King's Coronation Medal to commemorate the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III on the 6th of May 2023, a truly historic occasion in British history.

Apply today and receive a FREE official King's Coronation Lapel Badge worth £7.95.



### Eligibility

Available to all veterans who served the crown to commemorate the King's Coronation and those who are currently serving members of the Armed Forces, Emergency Services personnel (paid, retained or voluntary), Prison Service, Police Community Support Officers, holders of the Victoria Cross and George Cross and members of the Royal Household. Next of kin and direct descendants may also apply. The miniature medal and all other items are available without restriction.

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**Obverse:** The obverse of the highly polished medal depicts the symbols of monarchy, the Crown, the Orb and the Sceptre surrounded by the wording THE CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY CHARLES III and the date 6th MAY 2023.

**Reverse:** On the reverse the stylishly designed Charles III cypher is surrounded by the wording PROTECTOR OF ALL FAITHS to reflect the King's desire to protect the free practise of all faiths in this country and the date of the coronation.

**Ribbon:** The two broad rich purple stripes representing royalty are edged by two patriotic red stripes representing power, leadership and courage while the centre green stripe reflects the King's interest in the environment, sustainability and peace.

**Medal Engraving:** Your service number, rank, name & initials and service or regiment can be professionally engraved on the edge of the medal..

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Code	Description	Price
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NIEC	Nickel Clasps (cost per clasp)	£9.00
KCMM	Miniature Medal	£17.50
KCRB	Ribbon Bar	£6.00
FMPP	Personalised Medal Presentation Case	£14.50
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**NICKI SCOTT**  
RI DIRECTOR  
2021-23

## PAKISTAN VISIT WAS AN EYE-OPENER

IN December 2022, I was blessed with the opportunity to visit Pakistan. I saw today's frontline efforts in our fight to End Polio in one of the two last endemic countries in the world, Afghanistan being the other. I went from wanting to believe we will finally eradicate polio to coming away KNOWING, without doubt, that together WE WILL! I learned how technology has enhanced our efforts significantly. Improvements include:

- A huge screen showing the real-time location of every polio vaccination team at the National Emergency Operations Centre in Islamabad;
- Every inhabited building is identified in advance and the dates and numbers of vaccines administered are recorded;
- Detailed record keeping and analysis in Karachi covers the remote villages;
- At the Permanent Transport Points on the main highway all buses are stopped for the polio teams to run onboard, find the children under 5, administer two drops of lifesaving polio vaccine and record where they live.

The devastating impact of the summer 2022 catastrophic floods was still very evident. I saw many families living on mud banks between flooded plains with little to no shelter facing cold and dark winter nights, their homes, livestock and crops washed away. Local Rotarians were working hard to help meet their basic needs including food, livestock and clean water to drink, but the situation was overwhelming.

After such severe floods, the devastation doesn't end when the contaminated water subsides. The force of the flood waters washes the fertile topsoil away leaving a barren land where nothing will grow.

It was so clear to me, that our Rotary network must do all we can to help rebuild villages and communities in Pakistan and help meet basic needs including child immunisations and access to healthcare. These are all intrinsically linked to ensuring our work to end polio is not impacted, or worse still, set back.

Director Faiz Kidwai, the first Rotary International Director from Pakistan, is committed to this vision working with a team of experts to design independent, long term sustainable smart villages combining ancient tribal wisdom with modern day technology and techniques. Considerable funding is needed from local corporate donors and non-profit agencies as well as Rotary Global Grants.

Director Faiz also oversees Rotary efforts in Afghanistan. His extremely valuable and deep understanding of local cultures and physical environments there and in Pakistan will help ensure we achieve our top humanitarian goal as expeditiously as possible.

Will you and your club consider how you can contribute to leaving such a phenomenal legacy for future generations of children everywhere? ●



**IAN RISELEY**  
ROTARY FOUNDATION  
TRUSTEE CHAIR

## THINK BIG, ACT BIG

IN a letter to his brother Theo in 1874, Vincent Van Gogh wrote: "If you truly love nature, you will find beauty everywhere."

You can see Van Gogh's love of the natural world in his paintings: luminous sunflowers, gnarled olive trees, and the starry night sky over a Provençal village. When you see nature through Van Gogh's eyes or through your own, such as during a trip to the park or a beach, you can't help but stop to appreciate it. And when you love nature, you also want to take care of it.

April is Environmental Month for Rotary, and Earth Day is the 22nd. Marking the occasion with local projects such as roadside cleanups is fantastic and makes a difference. Consider also thinking big about protecting the environment — one of Rotary's seven areas of focus — by partnering with other clubs and districts on a larger-scale project funded through The Rotary Foundation.

The more our clubs work together on larger projects, the more we accomplish. Supported by a Foundation global grant, Rotary clubs in Pennsylvania and Brazil teamed up to provide plastic-processing equipment for a waste pickers cooperative in the city of Rio Claro. The workers, who recover recyclables from trash, increased their income by 50 percent and expanded the cooperative, while contributing to a cleaner environment.

Acting big is also one of the main ideas behind the Foundation's Programmes of Scale. With each \$2 million grant distributed over a programme's three- to five-year duration, the work done on the ground scales up to fulfill the potential for long-term sustainable change.

The 2021-22 Programmes of Scale recipient, Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria, is hard at work right now on solutions aimed at reducing the country's maternal and neonatal mortality rates.

Programmes of Scale grants are among the most exciting developments of Rotary and its Foundation in recent years. They will have a big impact on the world. Remember that Programmes of Scale grants take nothing away from your Foundation grant projects; the money invested is a relatively small portion of the Foundation's total.

In addition, The Rotary Foundation designed Programmes of Scale to foster greater partnerships, which can include co-funding the initiative.

So, think big this month — about the environment and about global grants and Programmes of Scale — and you will see that, when it comes to the good we can do through our Foundation, the "starry night" sky's the limit. ●





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



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

## DELIVERING THOSE GOLDEN NUGGETS!

**W**E are now eight months into the Rotary year and I was thinking of some practical aspects of our lovely organisation which I could reference.

I have been in Rotary for nearly 30 years and have always been keen to pick out golden nuggets which really make me feel proud and really hit home as to what Rotary can do.

My kids are now 21 and 19. I can remember when they were no size bringing them to Rotary Ireland District Conferences.

The conference teams were extremely supportive of us bringing Grace and Ross and looked forward to seeing them every year. They would be very good, sitting in the audience and listening to the speakers.

One really does not think any more about it. Each year goes by, they get into their teens and are not so comfortable coming along saying “not cool Daddy”.

My daughter is now a third-year medical student at Queens University Belfast, looking to do a Master’s degree in Global and International Health next year.

She shared with me her personal statement as part of the application process and I was totally blown away by the references to Rotary in what she had been exposed to, the work we do, our seven areas of focus and, of course, our work with polio eradication.

If that was not enough, I can remember getting a recent call out of the blue from Grace. As parents, we know it is usually wanting something, nothing about how are you?

Anyway, on this occasion Grace was buzzing from being in the hospital ward and having had a long chat with a patient who has polio and was being treated after a fall.

I could just imagine her having the conversation and being knowledgeable about polio from her years being associated with Rotary.

If Grace does get accepted for her one-year Master’s course it will mean going to one of six partner universities in Thailand, India, Canada, Colombia, Sudan and Norway for the last part of the course.

I am sure we all have golden nuggets and it is through communicating our stories that we are able to cross boundaries and connect people from which membership opportunities develop. ●

## IS OUR FUTURE EXCITING OR SCARY?

**W**E hear much on the news about artificial intelligence (AI) but being so intrinsically bound-up as a ‘people’ business it’s hard to see how AI might play its part in helping our fantastic organisation. I thought it might be interesting to find out how AI could help a membership organisation such as Rotary and learnt it can assist in a variety of ways, such as:

**Personalisation:** AI can help membership organisations provide personalised experiences to their members by analysing their preferences, interests, and behaviour patterns. AI can then use this data to offer tailored content, products, and services that meet the specific needs of each member.

**Membership retention:** AI can help membership organisations identify members who are at risk of leaving and intervene before it happens. By analysing data such as member engagement, attendance, and feedback, AI can provide insights into why members are disengaging and suggest ways to re-engage them.

**Marketing and communication:** AI can help membership organisations improve their marketing and communication efforts by analysing member data to determine the best channels and messaging to use. AI can also help automate marketing and communication tasks, such as sending personalised emails or social media messages.

**Event planning:** AI can help membership organisations plan and execute events by providing insights into member preferences and behaviours. AI can also help with event logistics, such as venue selection and scheduling, to ensure that events are well-attended and meet member expectations.

**Data analysis and decision-making:** AI can help membership organisations analyse large amounts of data to identify trends and make informed decisions. For example, AI can analyse member feedback to identify common concerns or areas for improvement or predict which products or services will be most popular among members.

Overall, AI can help membership organisations improve member engagement and retention, streamline operations, and make more data-driven decisions.

What an exciting revelation and guess what, this information was auto-generated using an amazing piece of AI called ChatGPT! Without doubt the world continues to evolve and Rotary is learning how to match that rate of evolution to remain relevant and connect with both current and future members.

Our digital infrastructure investment is designed to help you have the best member experience possible and to feel confident bringing the next generations into membership presenting a modern ‘face’ to our organisation.

We would love to hear your thoughts around digital systems and services that might benefit you or your club so we can continue to meet your needs. Drop a note to

[membership@rotarygb.org](mailto:membership@rotarygb.org) ●

# Letters to the editor

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

## Defibrillator success

MEMBERS of Whickham Rotary were delighted to read the article about Rotary North East's initiative to promote defibrillators in the region (*Rotary*, February). At Whickham Rotary, we are very proud of our defibrillator community project which has been over ten years in the making.

Our very first defibrillator, which was designed to be used in wet conditions, was installed at the local swimming baths and had to be used within a few weeks.

Fortunately, the gentleman recovered and was later able to visit the club with his wife to express their thanks.

The club realised that whilst a limited number of some defibrillators were available in local shops or businesses, they were only available during opening hours.

So, over a short period of time, the club installed four more defibrillators at various outdoor locations within Whickham so they could be accessed 24 hours a day. Some of these needed to be used, some successfully and unfortunately some not.

We also facilitated the installation of internal defibrillators in local schools and contributed financially, also helping organisations with our knowledge and expertise in their installation and operation. We are currently further investigating the possibility of installing more external defibrillators in the more outlying areas around Whickham.

### | Stuart Trotter

Whickham Rotary, Tyne & Wear

## Ukraine dove

LAST year at Volunteer Expo I was given a Ukraine/Rotary badge with a dove of peace on it. I am looking for the producer/supplier to buy some for this district to use for collections and thank you gifts.

Please could you put this request in the 'Letters' page, I am sure someone out there knows where they come from. Thank you.

### | Francis Hodge

International Service & Ukraine Lead  
– District 1120, Rotary in the South East. Hailsham Rotary, East Sussex.  
Contact: [francis.hodge@outlook.com](mailto:francis.hodge@outlook.com)

## Old logo wins

I AGREE with my Rotary colleagues in Crewkerne, Rugby and Rhyl and feel that Rotary has simply lost its way with this new logo.

My near-blind friend can discern no benefit in the new logo so it seems that the change is not driven by the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, or its equivalent in Illinois.

District Public Image conveners are obliged to reinforce the corporate style and those of us running club websites try to comply.

But the big question in my mind is whether 1.4 million Rotarians will now be expected to change their blue and gold lapel badges, to which the answer is obvious - so I'm afraid that the old logo is going to win!

### | John C Hutchison

Lochaber Rotary, Invernesshire.





## Silver salver poser

I WAS reading your letters page (*Rotary*, December), and the comments from David Andrew about the beginnings of Rotary in 1911.

Passed from my grandfather to my mother, to Dad and now to me I have a larger silver salver. Dad, rather impatiently, told me that he felt the money spent on this would have been better donated to charity!

He was pretty certain that the salver had been created as a celebration for some notable event for the local Rotary branch.

The salver is dated 1916 and hallmarked in London. The maker, as far as I can discover, was Harrison Brothers and Howson of Sheffield. I suspect a number were produced and bought by signatories/members.

Engraved on the salver are numerous signatures including those of my grandfather and great-grandfather, H. Oswald Dumayne and Alfred Woollacott.

The salver carries no Rotary logo which is perplexing, but it may not have been created by then. There are 45 other signatures.

My grandmother was a member of the Kingston-on-Thames Inner Wheel in Surrey which suggests that this was the branch to which both my ancestors belonged. My grandfather was a dentist in Wandsworth and my great-grandfather (my grandmother's father) a

businessman who lived in New Malden.

I would be so interested to know if it in fact was produced to celebrate a notable event, perhaps when the branch was chartered. Has anyone else got a similar salver?

Does it help add some history to Rotary in the UK? Please email me if you have an answer at:

[chris.hale@ntlworld.com](mailto:chris.hale@ntlworld.com)

My wife is a dedicated Rotarian who has worked tirelessly in St Albans and I am wheeled out to help where that is needed. So, we have a long history with the organisation, one way or another.

**| Chris Hale**  
St Albans, Hertfordshire



## Raving about Rotary Radio

HOW many Rotarians are aware that we have a radio station that is dedicated to good music, good company and Rotary news from around the world?

The station was formed four years ago by a group of volunteers from the Rotary Club of Sittingbourne Invicta in Kent and has a studio in the town.

The station plays a good variety of music interspersed with Rotary news, twenty four hours a day 365 days a year, worldwide via the internet, from their web page: via mobile phone from the Rotary from Rotary Radio App

(downloadable from the app store) or by the Amazon device by asking 'Alexa' to play Rotary Radio UK or just RRUK.

The station is listened to from over 160 countries around the world; not only by Rotarians but the general public who are being informed and educated about Rotary and the good work that Rotary clubs do.

For more information go to their website at [www.rotaryradiouk.org](http://www.rotaryradiouk.org)

**| Terry De la Fuente**  
Rotary Club of Swadlincote, Derbyshire

## No 'the' in Ukraine

IN the 'Welcome' article on page 3 of February's *Rotary* magazine, editor Dave King refers to Ukraine as 'the Ukraine'.

When I welcomed my Ukrainian guest last May I did the same.

However she quickly corrected me. She explained that the Ukraine refers to an area that was part of the USSR but since the declaration of independence in 1991 they were an independent country called Ukraine (no the)!

**| Madaleine Binning**  
Billericay Town Rotary Club, Essex

## Less is more!

DAVID Powell, Roy Tebbutt and Grahame Wiggin raise the issues of climate and environmental concerns which have rapidly worsened over my lifetime starting in the 1950s (*Rotary*, February).

None of the gentlemen seem to connect these with the concurrent exponential rise in the human population from two billion to over eight billion and the linked increasing consumption of everything.

Perhaps slowing and even reversing human population growth would do the same for climate change and environmental degradation over the next 70 odd years.

Less is more! Worth a try— better than what big business has planned for us. A potential Rotary International initiative perhaps which in essence is simple and cheap if only our global politicians could be persuaded to give it a try.

If I am right or wrong the world will have more space for happier people. A win either way. If human activities carry on regardless the world will probably have a whole lot more unhappy people suffering the consequences. Something to reflect upon.

**| Rob Elliott**  
Morrison Rotary Club, Swansea.

## Cruellest cut

I WAS interested to read the article 'Supporting Disabled in Zimbabwe' in the February/March edition of *'Rotary'*.

It highlights the work of Wheelchair Foundation UK (WFUK), with the founder Milton Frary (a past district governor of District 1040, which is Rotary in Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire) in the picture.

Readers may be interested to know that WFUK has recently merged with PhysioNet and Milton has joined the PhysioNet board as a Trustee.

PhysioNet was founded by Rotarian Peter Thompson in 2005 and currently ships around twelve 40ft containers each year to developing countries across the world.

Shipments comprise medical hardware and mobility items and, since last summer, six artic loads of humanitarian items have gone to Ukraine.

These loads have been financed by Rotary grants and include blankets, hospital beds and pretty much everything else in between.

One of these shipments was covered by a regional BBC news programme and, when interviewed, I made particular reference to Rotary's essential involvement. Unfortunately, that part was cut out of the broadcast.

### | David Kaye

President, Rotary Club of Knaresborough, North Yorkshire.  
Chairman, PhysioNet

## Rotaract memories

THE article in the December/January issue of *Rotary* says that Rotaract was officially inaugurated in the USA in 1968 for young adults aged between 18 and 30. In England in the 1970s, the age limit was 18 to 28. I know, as I was one of the many Rotaractors of the club that I was in at the time, who had to leave at 29.

### | Chris Shaw

Farnborough Rotary Club, Hampshire



## Doubling the money

A DAY or two after the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, I received an email from an organisation called The Big Give. It offered to double my donation, drawing on funding from unnamed philanthropists and foundations.

Since the Disasters Emergency Committee, which includes organisations such as Save the Children, Oxfam and CAFOD and 12 others, is linked with it, I duly did so.

You will notice that I have not given through any Rotary channel or Shelterbox, so my contribution will not

be Rotary-badged. Some readers will think this is a shame. I just think that, faced with such a horrific event and ongoing need, any chance to double our donations should be taken.

What are the chances of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland becoming affiliated with the Disasters Emergency Committee and thus with the Big Give?

We are, after all, among the world's largest humanitarian organisations.

### | John Young

Rotary Club of Coventry Jubilee, Warwickshire

## Got a storage problem

I DON'T think I know of any Rotary club that doesn't have - or hasn't had - a problem with storage of club assets.

From pop-up roller banners and gazebos... to promotional material and historical archives. Things that are needed every week. Articles that are wanted now and again. Possessions with an urgent relevance every blue moon.

The result is usually a decentralised collection of random resource centres scattered among willing members' garages, sheds, attics and spare rooms.

There lie the boxed items waiting to be needed. Objects laying dormant, waiting for someone to ask where they are or who has got them. Little lost treasures. Major historical artefacts. They all need a

home and everyone needs to know where they are should they eventually be called to higher service.

Now what I want to know is ... what ideal solutions have been discovered?

What's the answer? (Short of having that gem of a member with a spare centrally-heated barn on their vast country estate where they can store the club's expanding collection of essential assets and memorabilia.)

My breath is bated because I just know that somewhere there has to be answers. Come on Rotary GB&I ... share your secrets!

### | Graham King

Whitchurch Rotary, Shropshire



Every issue, *Rotary* magazine publishes a series of letters from Rotarians featuring a number of topical issues. We welcome your letters on any subject to do with Rotary. Submissions should be no more than 250 words long. If you would like to contribute please write including your name and address and then emailing: [editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org) or post to: *Rotary* magazine, Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B496PB. The comments made on this page do not necessarily represent the views of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, and Rotarians.

## Is Rotary protecting the environment?

TWO things in February's *Rotary* magazine struck me - the letter from David Head (RC Rugby Dunsmore) and the article, "Petrolheads", about the Rotary Retro Automobile Fellowship.

In general, Rotarians are, or have been, successful in their careers and can afford the pleasures of travel, larger than average homes (often characterful and difficult to heat) and bigger, more exciting vehicles, with significant amounts of energy invested in making them.

I'd venture that the average Rotarian uses more energy than the average person.

My former club had an active environmental group, and we did some useful work planting trees, and improving open spaces, often in less salubrious parts of the city where they

were appreciated by local people.

Sometimes, nine or ten Rotary volunteers arriving at the work site from homes several miles away drove up in six or seven cars.

Improving local environments was useful in many ways, but it will take many years for the trees we planted to use the carbon dioxide we'd emitted in planting them. If they ever do.

An important question, to which I have no answer so far, is this: how can we influence Rotarians and others to change their lifestyles to be less energy intensive? Unless we do, Rotary's cause to protect the environment is window dressing and little more.

### | Philip Hetherington

Rotary Club of Cuckfield Lindfield & Haywards Heath, West Sussex.

## Friendly networking – serious charity work

I WAS interested to read the comments about our image – it was good to see that I was not alone in my thoughts (*Rotary*, February).

It should be recognised that we do have a problem with dwindling membership as we are getting older and not getting new younger people to join us and the 'anaemic wheel' which looks like a bikers' club, plus any photos of members being led by what I call 'old buffers in chains' (hardly any ladies!) together with lunch time meetings when working members have difficulty in attending, hardly help.

To cap it all, as Steve Wood points out in his letter, once in the club there is the toe-curling statement about the objects of Rotary to be read out!

So, what to do? The objects are surely not just to raise money but enjoy a networking event and do our charity work so we should advertise that fact which could be done in

two ways and as most corporate organisations would do. Ideally the logo should give an indication of what they do, and certainly if not, have strap line that does.

For us we should add the word club to make it Rotary club with a strap line underneath along the lines of 'Friendly networking – serious charity work'.

This is just a rough thought on the strap line that could be bettered, but you get the idea, and it immediately tells people that we are a club and what we do.

Just some thoughts, but I will not be holding my breath as I am sure there will still be talking of dwindling membership some time into the future, which is a pity.

### | Martin Wellings

Rotary Club of Eastbourne AM, East Sussex.

## Bland logo

IN response to Derek Phoenix's letter: 'Insipid Looking Wheel' (*Rotary* December 2022) I suspect he may not be in the minority!

Responsible for club publicity I reluctantly complied with the revised Rotary Wheel, even though I considered it to be a mistake.

Was this change meant to help increase public awareness and raise the profile of Rotary? If so, did anyone measure its effectiveness?

What we now have is a bland logo which melts into the background: the previous blue and gold wheel was far more striking and instantly recognisable.

### | Rod Brocklehurst

Rotary Club of Rhyl, Denbighshire, North Wales

## A good read

HELLO dear fellow Rotarians, and greetings from the Rotary Club of Larnaca in Cyprus!

A quick note to bring to your attention a book that has just been released in the UK which I have just read and which I found exceedingly interesting, not least because it mentions Rotary as well as certain other international organisations.

The book is called 'Fangs of Deception' by T.K. Orbelyan. I can best describe the book as a fictionalised non-fiction, and it deals with the major issues faced by the world today, from the pandemic/vaccines to the war in Ukraine and other subjects.

I thought you might want to read it and know of its contents.

### | Tigran Kalaydjian

Rotary Club of Larnaca, Cyprus

# Rotary profile

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

## Profile:

**Name:** Joyce Fraser

**Rotary Club:** Bromley, Greater London

JOYCE Fraser is a member of Bromley Rotary Club, and in February she was presented with an OBE for her work with the Black Heroes Foundation, which was set up by her late husband, Flip Fraser.

The investiture took place at Windsor Castle in January heralding a busy year with plans to stage a theatre production entitled 'The story of Flip Fraser – A Windrush story'.

The production marks 75 years since the ship the 'Empire Windrush' docked at Tilbury Docks with one of the first large groups of post-war Caribbean settlers. The play is due to be performed at Battersea Arts Centre in June as part of the Wandsworth Arts Fringe Festival.



## Q | BLACK HEROES FOUNDATION WAS YOUR HUSBAND'S IDEA - HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?

Peter Randolph Fraser, aka Flip Fraser, created the iconic show Black Heroes in the Hall of Fame in the late 1980s. It was the first show of its kind, during the era of Black History Month being launched in the UK. Its tag line was "5,000 years of history in one night of theatre".

Twenty years later it was still performing, with a huge international following. The era of Facebook arrived, and in 2013 Flip set up the Facebook page for 'Black Heroes in the Hall of Fame' which he named the Black Heroes Foundation.

His vision was a concept that involved much more than the stage show. It was about going into the community, working with schools and universities, running workshops and putting on exhibitions. Unfortunately, Flip passed away in 2014. On the call of people at his funeral, I decided to preserve his legacy and in 2016 launched the charity the Black Heroes Foundation (BHF) to fulfil his vision.

## Q | WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION ALL ABOUT?

What is the Foundation all about? We bring joy, confidence and pride by using the arts to tell the stories of Black Heroes to entertain, educate and empower people.

The Black Heroes Foundation (BHF) is a community-based organisation for the development and promotion of talent, together with cultural and artistic initiatives in the community focusing on youth, education, training, personal development, health and well-being, and social mobility.

We seek to develop cultural awareness and recognition of black achievement, promoting a world where black heroes are acknowledged, respected



and celebrated. We seek to improve the provision of cultural experiences which develop self-knowledge, self-esteem, confidence, well-being, pride and empowerment of the black community through positive engagement with black culture, art and identity.

The raising of awareness is not just for black people but also for everyone else to learn, acknowledge and celebrate the richness black people have brought to the world.

**Q | WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK THE BLACK HEROES FOUNDATION HAS MADE?**

Using art and entertainment, BHF connects and engages a varied and diverse audience expanding their thinking, widening their perspective and expanding their knowledge of black history and the impact it has had and is having on the world and world history.

Here are some events and activities we have created and delivered:

- Work with schools in Wandsworth and Southwark engaging over 500 children.
- Work with Windrush generation and provision of online support during Covid with more than 700 people attending weekly events.
- Production of award-winning series the 'Black Heroes Soul Food Café' during the first year of the Foundation's launch, recognised by the Prime Minister's Points of Light Award.
- Black Heroes at the Gallery Exhibition, Waterloo Place, over 1,000 visitors.

- Creation and production of the film 'The Story of Sam King MBE'. He was a Second World War veteran, founder of the Windrush Foundation and the first Mayor of Southwark.
- Creation and production of the play 'The Story of Claudia Jones'. She was an activist and producer of the first West Indian Carnival in London which was started as a reaction to the Notting Hill race riots and murder of Kelso Cochrane in 1959.
- Creation and production of the play 'The Story of John Archer'. He was the first Black mayor in London, becoming Mayor of Battersea in 1913.

**Q | WHAT IMPACT DID THE BLACK LIVES MATTER (BLM) MOVEMENT HAVE ON THE FOUNDATION?**

This world-wide movement has raised awareness of the plight of black people and the many injustices that they face, it has raised awareness of racism and how deeply embedded it is in western culture.

Many organisations have pledged to embrace and develop equality, diversity and inclusion in their organisations. We have had an increase in the number of corporates approaching us for the delivery of events during Black History Month.

**Q | DO YOU THINK BLM HAS BEEN A POSITIVE MOVEMENT TO RACIAL EQUALITY?**

This raising of awareness and putting racism on the agenda has been positive. However, much more is needed in order to facilitate and make the required cultural change take place.

**Q | WHERE DOES ROTARY FIT WITHIN YOUR WORK, AND THAT OF DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION?**

The very fact that I am a member of the Rotary Club in Bromley is an outcome of the club's efforts to be more inclusive and embrace diverse cultures.

Members of the club have attended and supported events hosted by BHF, and Bromley Rotary Club has hosted several presentations about the work we do. This engagement with the Rotary club is an important part of BHF's mission to bring the stories of black heroes and the work that we do to groups outside of the black community.

**Q | IS THERE MORE WHICH ROTARY COULD DO?**

I look forward to our future endeavours with the Rotary club partnering on some of our events and providing support to our projects. This will further contribute to Rotary's equality, diversity and inclusion policy, improving members' understanding of different cultures and their contributions to society, improving engagement, introducing Rotary to new audiences and possible members.

**Q | WHAT DO YOU THINK FLIP WOULD BE THINKING OF YOU RIGHT NOW?**

I think that he is smiling, pleased that his legacy is living on.

| Information |

[www.facebook.com/blackheroeshalloffame](https://www.facebook.com/blackheroeshalloffame)  
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The  
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# FROM RESPONSE TO RECOVERY

The Rotary Foundation has established dedicated funds to support those impacted by the war in Ukraine, flooding in Pakistan and the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

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# HOW DOES THE ROTARY FOUNDATION HELP WHEN DISASTER STRIKES?

**W**ITH more than 1.4 million members worldwide, Rotary is well placed and equipped to help communities recover wherever disaster strikes. Working closely with other organisations that specialise in disaster relief, Rotary members lead projects to support every phase of a community's recovery.

## ROTARY SUPPORTS THREE PHASES OF RELIEF:

### Immediate response

Local clubs offer helping hands and supplies.

### Short-term assistance

Clubs and districts provide funds and materials to re-establish day-to-day operations. The Rotary Foundation has established a number of Disaster Response Funds (DRFs) to finance this work. At districts' discretion, these projects can also be supported by use of District Grants.

### Long-term rebuilding

Clubs plan and implement projects that rebuild and develop affected communities. This work is supported by both District and Global Grants.

Traditionally, Rotary has seen its role mostly in the last of these areas with grants from The Rotary Foundation being aligned towards those ends. However, many members felt this limited our ability to help communities in the shorter term when natural disasters strike.

In April 2019, the TRF Trustees agreed to the creation of a general Disaster Response Fund and associated disaster response grants, initially as a three-year pilot.

This is now a permanent Rotary Foundation offering. Initially it was set up as one fund, with grants available towards recovery from natural disasters in any area of the world.

In February 2022, the world was impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The TRF Trustees decided that Rotary's response could best be supported



by some easing of the requirements for a grant from the DRF.

Whilst the war is not a natural disaster, help would be offered via a segregated fund. That led to the Ukraine DRF, which rapidly grew to over \$15m, that has now all been distributed to projects in Ukraine and for supporting displaced Ukrainians.

### Following the success of that campaign, in the early part of 2023 the Trustees decided to launch three new Disaster Response Funds:

#### Ukraine

Following much the same guidelines as for the previous year, all districts can apply for disaster response grants from this fund.

#### Pakistan floods

Responding to the 2022 widespread flooding in Pakistan. Only Pakistan districts D3271, D3272, can apply to this Disaster Response Fund, but Rotarians elsewhere are encouraged both to donate and to work with the Pakistani districts.

#### Turkey/Syria earthquake

Following the recent devastating earthquakes. Only the four districts in the region (D2420, D2430, D2440, D2452) can apply for disaster response grants to support Turkey/Syria, but again Rotarians elsewhere are encouraged both to donate and work with these districts.

To give to any of the Rotary Disaster Response Funds go to the Donate page on the Rotary GB&I website [www.rotarygbi.org/donate](http://www.rotarygbi.org/donate) and choose any of the funds of The Rotary Foundation.

The funds for **Ukraine** and **Pakistan** will accept contributions until 31st December 2023. Grants will be awarded until 30th June 2024, or earlier if all funds have been expended.

For **Turkey/Syria**, donations made using the main Disaster Response Fund link will be prioritised for Turkey/Syria for a limited time, after which donations will be used to support disasters worldwide. ●

# Rotary Marketplace

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



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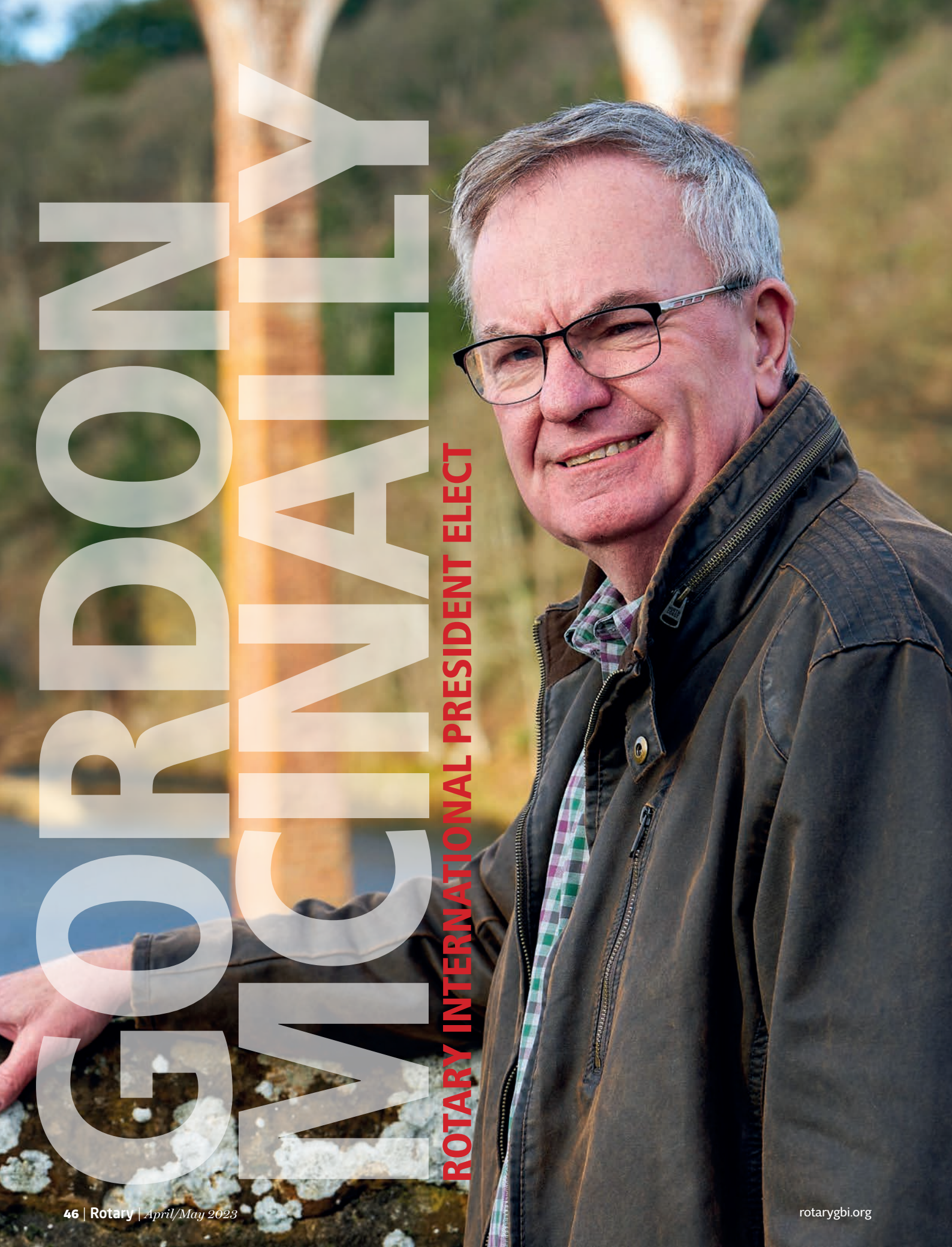
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# GORDON SMY

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT ELECT**



# YOU ASKED, GORDON MCINALLY ANSWERED.

Responding to your questions, Rotary's president-elect says he plans to lead with caring as his core value.

If you ask Gordon McNally anything about his upcoming year as Rotary International president, he'll immediately stop you. "It's not about my year. It's about one of Rotary's years," he corrects. "I'm a great believer in continuity, and I don't see the years in isolation."

On a blustery October day, Gordon sat down with six members of Rotary's communications team in Evanston to take questions gathered via social media from Rotary members around the world.

He has a quick sense of humour and an easy banter that filled the room with laughter as a film crew set up boom mikes, cameras, and lights.

In introducing himself as a member of the Rotary Club of South Queensferry, he quipped about his distinctive speech: "Despite the lack of an accent, I am Scottish, and very proud of that fact."

Gordon's Scottish heritage is apparent in his office, where a brightly coloured landscape painting by the Scottish artist John Lowrie Morrison adorns a wall. Scotland isn't always as dreary as it is typically depicted, he notes.

"Sometimes it's a very bright place."

In fact, there are a lot of stereotypes about Scotland that Gordon is looking to move past. "The tartan, the plaid, it's very traditional, very stereotypical," he says.

His presidential tie, instead, was inspired by the bright colours used by Morrison, his favourite artist, along with the colours in the shell from Thailand that helped inspire his presidential theme.

Among other colourful curiosities in Gordon's office is a giant cardboard rendition of his head, which he received after a Rotary Institute in Minneapolis. Visitors are keen to hold it up for social media selfies. "I think they get more sense out of the head than they do out of me," he says with a laugh.

Gordon joined the South Queensferry club when he was 26 years old. He and his wife, Heather, had recently gotten married and wanted to put down roots in the community outside of Edinburgh.

A farmer they had met invited them to a Rotary social event and then to a couple of Rotary meetings, and before

McNally knew it, he was on the road to Rotary membership. (Heather McNally is also a Rotarian, belonging to the Borderlands satellite club of the Rotary Club of Selkirk.)

"I couldn't see how a dentist working in isolation in Edinburgh could make a huge difference in the world," he recalls. "But I very quickly realised that by being part of Rotary, I could, and I did."

He would like to use his year — scratch that, the 2023-24 Rotary year — to spotlight mental health, an issue that has touched his family directly and that is all too often kept under wraps.

Gordon is an ambassador for Bipolar UK, an organisation which supports people with the illness as well as their families and caregivers. Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland recently launched a partnership with the organisation to bring members' skills to help build a more robust network of support groups around the country.

"I'm a big believer in using Rotary members' skills, rather than just their chequebooks," he says. 🔄

**"I'D PROBABLY BE AN INCISOR, BECAUSE THAT'S THE FIRST TOOTH THAT DOES THE WORK. YOU DON'T SHOVE ANYTHING STRAIGHT TO THE VERY BACK. YOU LEAD WITH YOUR INCISORS, AND I LIKE TO THINK I LEAD FROM THE FRONT."**

The following is a condensed version of the interview with Gordon last October. Watch the full conversation at [rotary.org/mcinallytownhall](https://rotary.org/mcinallytownhall).

**Q | WHAT ARE YOUR CORE VALUES, AND HOW DO THEY SHAPE HOW YOU LEAD?**

*Natarajan Sundaresan, Rotary Club of Koothapakkam, India.*

My core value can be expressed in one word, and that is "caring." I like to think that I care for people. Professionally as a dentist, I cared for people for many, many years. It's something that was instilled in me by my parents. It's something that we have instilled in our own children. And the great thing is I now see it being instilled in our grandchildren. I think if the world was a more caring place, a kinder place, then it would be a much happier place and a much more peaceful place. Peace is one of the issues that I particularly want to see us move forward.

**Q | HOW CAN WE REIGNITE MEMBERS OF ROTARY WHO APPEAR TO HAVE "LOST THEIR SPARK"?**

*Jannine and Paul Birtwistle, Rotary Club of Guernsey.*

I know Jannine and Paul very well, and it's nice to receive a question from them. I think the way to reignite the lost spark in certain members of Rotary is to make sure that the Rotary club experience is as good as it can be, and suits everybody. It's not a case of one-size-fits-all. Some

clubs will want to meet in a country club and spend 2.5 hours over lunch. Other clubs will want to meet for 45 minutes on a Saturday morning over coffee and a bagel, and then get out and do service.

It all comes down to the service.

We are a membership organisation and a service organisation. It's not an either/or. We need to be out there doing service, because not only will we enjoy that more, we will also see more people want to come and join us because they can see us.

**Q | WHAT CONCRETE PLANS DOES ROTARY HAVE TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE IN 2023-24?**

*Abdur Rahman, Rotary Club of Secunderabad, India.*

One of the big projects that we're working on at the moment is planting mangroves in various places around the world, and there are many others. But we have to remember that Rotary, on its own, will not be able to solve the problem of climate change. We need to work at the level we are capable of working at and encourage and advocate governments around the world to ensure that we address the issue of climate change going forward.

**Q | HOW CAN WE MOTIVATE MORE ROTARACTORS TO JOIN ROTARY CLUBS?**

*Dale Kerns, Rotary Club of North East, Maryland.*

We need to bring them into Rotary clubs as Rotaractors and allow them to help shape the club going forward.





We talk about mentoring. But there's reverse mentoring, as well. We can learn so much from Rotaractors. One of the most successful places in the world at integrating Rotaractors into Rotary is in Hong Kong. They move seamlessly from Rotaract into Rotary. As a result, there's hardly a division. They have a wonderful way of integrating Rotaract and Rotary together. Both sides gain so much from that. People say that Rotaract is the future of Rotary, but it's actually the present.

**Q | WHAT YOUTH PROGRAMMES ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU?**

*Lindy Beatie, Rotary Club of Penn Valley, California.*

I'm a great fan of RYLA Rotary Youth Leadership Awards. We have seen very successful RYLAs in our part of the world. If you take a high school student with potential to a RYLA experience, the change that can take place is amazing. Sometimes the quiet, introverted young students who go to a RYLA experience have, by the end of it, found themselves and are blossoming. It's important we send people with potential to the RYLA experience — not the highfliers, because they're going to fly high anyway. It's the people we have the potential to develop.

I'm also a great believer in Rotary

Youth Exchange. I'm delighted that we are now in a position to reignite the youth exchange programme. Just over the past few weeks, I've seen young people flying all around the world for what will be a life-changing experience. That comes back to the whole issue of creating a more peaceful world. Because if we can take young people and let them meet other young people and live in other cultures for a year, then we realise that basically we're all the same people. There is no need for conflict because we're all trying to pull in the same direction, and we all desire the same thing.

**Q | ROTARY KEEPS CREATING NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND LAUNCHING NEW PROJECTS. HOW CAN WE ENSURE CONTINUITY AS ONE PRESIDENT TAKES OVER FROM ANOTHER?**

*Marissa De Luna, Rotary Club of Sweetwater San Diego, California.*

When I talk about continuity, I don't just mean doing the same old things year after year after year. What I mean is a process of continually moving forward, continually improving. To do that, we need to be looking at different projects and at different initiatives, because at any given time, there are different needs and different demands being placed on

us. So I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. I think we can be part of new projects, and we can look at doing new things. But we can still be practising continuity, in that we're taking it forward in the long term and not rushing to conclude things in the space of any one presidential term.

**Q | WHAT IS THE BIGGEST POTENTIAL YOU SEE IN ROTARY AS AN ORGANISATION THAT HAS NOT BEEN FULLY REALISED?**

*Claudia Arizmendi, Rotary Club of Hermosillo Milenio, Mexico.*

We saw a great increase in volunteerism during the pandemic. I think we have a great opportunity to connect with those people and encourage them to carry on volunteering through Rotary. I believe it's in everybody's nature to care for other people. If we can bring that out of people, and if we can build on the spirit of care that we saw during the pandemic, what a wonderful legacy. About 6.5 million people died as a result of COVID around the world, and so they must not die in vain. If we can connect with the people who reignited their spirit of volunteering during that period, then we will have achieved something. 🎯





*You can't gather a group of journalists and not allow them to ask a few questions of their own. Here's what Rotary magazine's editors wanted to know:*

**Q | TELL US ABOUT YOUR PRESIDENTIAL THEME.**

The theme is going to be Create Hope in the World. I'm a great believer that everything starts with hope. While I was in Thailand inaugurating a village that Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland had built after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, I met a lady. She looked to be about 70 or 80 years of age, and it turned out she was only about 50. She had lost everything in the tsunami. Her house had been destroyed. And as I looked around her house, there was nothing else there. This was a new home, but she had lost everything. But she insisted I take a seashell that she had saved for over 30 years. She said, "I had lost everything, including hope. But Rotary has given me hope to continue." And I have this shell to this day. If people don't have hope, then they will never be able to make their way forward. It's a call to action: Create Hope in the World.

**Q | WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?**

In terms of continuity, we want to carry

on empowering girls and women. Also, we're going to be encouraging people to do virtual exchanges. That will speak to peacebuilding from the ground up. It's not about stopping wars; it's about stopping wars from starting. Prevention is better than cure. Almost every one of our areas of focus has the potential to do that.

The third thing is a mental health initiative. Coming out of the pandemic, there are a lot of people who are struggling with poor mental health. I think it's the next pandemic. I've got experience with friends who have suffered poor mental health. I guess we've all suffered through poor mental health on occasions. Rotary has to be big enough and brave enough to enter that space and to start talking about where we can make a difference. At the most basic level, it's just opening up the conversation about mental health and helping people get access to any professional help that they might need, and then supporting them through that journey.

I lost my brother to suicide. It's still very painful. I share this not to get people's sympathy, but to make people realise that everybody is affected by this sort of thing. We can't sweep it under the carpet. As a global network of 1.4 million people, we do have an opportunity to make a difference in making it less of a taboo and less of a stigma.

**Q | YOU HAVE ALSO SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF ROTARY IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THAT EXPERIENCE THAT YOU'LL BRING TO THIS ROLE?**

I learned how to sleep in different beds every two or three days — I travelled a great deal during that year around Britain and Ireland. I learned that Rotary clubs are all different, and that everybody has a different interest. Not everybody is as passionate as I am — I'd sometimes feel I'm a bit of a zealot. But everybody has something. And the secret is to tap into people's interests and to make sure that they're allowed to do things that they want to do. That speaks to bringing members in as well. We don't bring members in and then tell them what they need to do. We bring members in and ask them what Rotary can do for them.

**Q | YOU'RE A DENTIST. IF YOU WERE A TOOTH, WHICH WOULD YOU BE?**

I'd probably be an incisor, because that's the first tooth that does the work. You don't shove anything straight to the very back. You lead with your incisors, and I like to think I lead from the front. That said, an incisor is no more important than any other tooth, all are equally important in the eating process. ●



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# SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB

| BY CATHERINE THORNHILL, HEAD BOOKWORM AT THE SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB |

If you love books and love making a difference around the world, then the ShelterBox Book Club is perfect for you. Every story we read is inspired by the people that ShelterBox supports around the world after disaster, and the money raised through our members' subscriptions helps us to provide emergency shelter for even more families.

## EXPLORE THE CULTURE OF SYRIA

AS our ShelterBox response teams work through the night to get aid to families in Turkey and Syria following the devastating earthquakes, our ShelterBox Book Club members are about to embark on a journey into the history and culture of Syria with our next book.

This is the enthralling story of two people living out parallel stories hundreds of years apart.

In 2011, the peace of the Syrian city of Homs is disturbed by protests and shelling. A young Syrian-American girl, Nour, flees across the Levant and North Africa in search of safety with her mother and sister. 800 years

before, Rawiya, disguised as a boy and apprenticed to a famous map maker, set out on an epic quest to chart the globe, following the very same route.

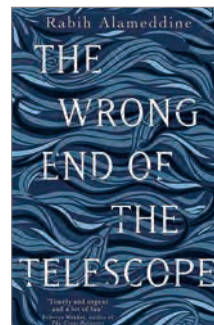
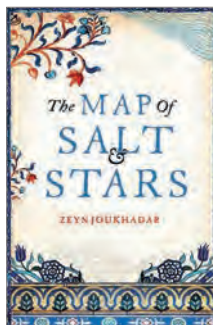
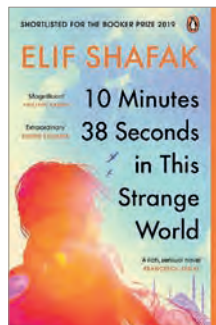
As both voyages stretch across south-west Asia and north Africa we encounter ferocious beasts, man-made boundaries, epic battles, smugglers, real historical figures, and an enduring sense of hope.

The rich tales of these two heroines coming of age in perilous times interweave beautifully. They shine a light on a country in turmoil, human resilience, and the power of stories. As readers we get to uncover a magical and historically rich culture beyond

stereotypes and current events.

While our teams in Syria and Turkey work tirelessly with our partners, including Rotary, it feels really important to keep in mind the people behind the statistics. For more details on our response to the horrifying earthquakes read our article on page 58.

Here's some of our members' recommendations of amazing books from both Turkey and Syria to help you get a flavour of the culture behind the headlines:



Sign up today using the reference code **ROTARY-APRIL** and get a free book when you join. [www.shelterbox.org/book-club](http://www.shelterbox.org/book-club)



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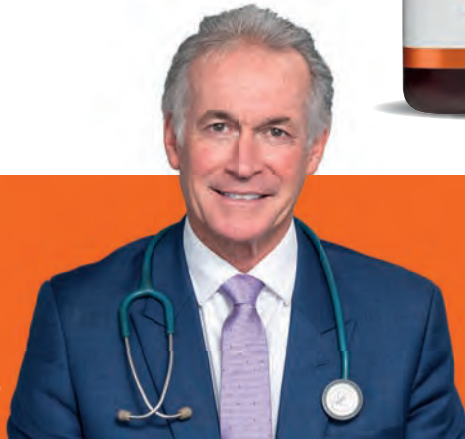
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ROTARY



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# Giving shelter

The Rotary-supported charity ShelterBox has been at the forefront of relief efforts in Syria and Turkey since the powerful earthquake which devastated both countries in February.

| STORY BY **CARRIE GARRAD, SHELTERBOX** |

**S**HELTERBOX continues to scale up its response to help people affected by a series of powerful earthquakes that left hundreds of thousands of people without adequate shelter across Turkey and Syria.

The international disaster relief charity, which was begun by Rotary in Cornwall, has more than 20 years of experience in disaster relief, including earthquake responses, yet its teams have not witnessed destruction on the sheer scale they're seeing in Turkey before.

Within 72 hours of the earthquakes, that have claimed the lives of more than 50,000 people across the two countries, ShelterBox had an emergency response team in Turkey. A month on and an unknown number of people remain unaccounted for beneath the rubble.

The cold is presenting an immediate risk to life to people who survived - either too afraid to return home, or with no home to go back to.

People in Turkey and Syria are already receiving ShelterBox aid, including essential items such as tents, blankets, mattresses, and winter coats for children, with more on the way.

The items will help people surviving through this ongoing nightmare, protecting them from the bitter temperatures, preventing the spread of disease, and providing some privacy, as they get back on their feet.

In Turkey, ShelterBox is working in partnership with Rotary and closely with local communities and officials to ensure key services alongside shelter provision.

In addition to the charity's first stocks of tents imported soon after the earthquakes, more tents and other

essential items like blankets, mattresses, stoves, and solar lights are being distributed to communities in Hatay.

ShelterBox Emergency Response Manager, Dave Raybould, says: "The circumstances in Turkey are very challenging and our long-standing relationship with Rotary has been pivotal in helping us make progress.

"The powerful combination of Rotarians with strong networks and local knowledge coupled with 20 years of ShelterBox expertise in delivering emergency shelter support means that we are able to provide the right support at the right time for people affected by the earthquakes.

"Incredible Rotary members in Turkey have made a huge difference to how we are operating. ShelterBox and Rotary are working together dynamically in the face of immense need."

Rotary is supporting the earthquakes response being led by the Government of Turkey, coordinated through AFAD and with the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC). Rotary is working closely with, and has permission from, AFAD to operate in some of the affected areas.

Organisations without this specific type of registration, like ShelterBox, need to work through locally based partners.

This is possible for ShelterBox through its long-standing partnership with Rotary. It is this valued and vital partnership, combined with a shared vision to help people who need it most after disaster and a huge effort from all involved, that is driving the response forward in Turkey.

Rotary districts are working together to support communities across the region, as well as making crucial introductions



for ShelterBox response teams with local leaders and authorities. Local Rotaract members have been supporting ShelterBox with translation and local liaison as they provide training to local authority members ahead of the next tent distributions.

As well as supporting ShelterBox to help people in rural areas and design a longer-term recovery project to support the rehabilitation and onward education of children, Rotary continues to manage multiple projects – immediate food, clothing and hygiene deliveries, a mobile hospital project and a commitment to a ‘container city’.

At least two million people have lost their homes in Turkey and more than 80,000 people in Syria have been displaced – many not for the first time.

A well-coordinated response is vital in such a complex and huge crisis.

With shelter remaining a priority need across Turkey and Syria, ShelterBox is working with multiple in-country partners to support as many people as possible.

They are being supported around the clock by ShelterBox teams in the UK and around the world, and a huge supply chain effort continues.

ShelterBox has been supporting people affected by the conflict in Syria for more than 10 years.

Refugees and internally displaced people who had fled from conflict in Syria have been uprooted once more leaving them without shelter again.

With nearly 3 million people already displaced by the war, communities are facing multiple threats, including harsh living conditions, powerful aftershocks, freezing temperatures, and diseases like cholera. And the conflict continues.

As part of its conflict response, ShelterBox worked with ReliefAid, and has been working with them to distribute children’s winter coats following the earthquakes. With them ShelterBox is also working to provide blankets and mattresses to thousands of people newly arriving at camps.

As well as tents, high thermal blankets, and mattresses, ShelterBox

will be supplying people in northern Syria with solar lights, water carriers, and multi-purpose cash with its partner Bahar. Cash assistance gives people who have been left with very little the flexibility to get what essential items they need.

ShelterBox is continuing to move aid across the border to its partner Bahar and the first truck containing tents from its warehouse in Belgium has now arrived.

ShelterBox strategically pre-positions aid all over the world to help get crucial supplies to disaster affected communities as quickly as it can. More are due in the next week and will likely help shelter people in north-west Aleppo.

ShelterBox has an emergency fundraising appeal to help people affected by the earthquakes and other disasters around the world. ●

### Information

For more information about its response, visit [www.shelterbox.org](http://www.shelterbox.org)







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# A GIN-TASTIC FELLOWSHIP

Gin is one of the most popular drinks in the world, and it is also the theme of a Rotary Fellowship.

| STORY BY **MALCOLM HALLEWELL** |



**R**OTARY Fellowships are international groups which share a common passion. Being part of a fellowship is a fun way to make friends around the world and one of those is to explore gins of the world.

The fellowship came about after a discussion between a few Rotarians at the Rotary International (RI) Convention in Hamburg in 2019 when it was suggested that gin would be a great way to attract fellowship from around the world.

On returning home, a survey was undertaken via Facebook to see if there was enough interest from at least 25 supporters from at least five different countries to be able to apply to RI.

The Rotary Fellowship of Gin is one of a number of drinking fellowships which exist within Rotary. The others are beer, palmwine, rum, wine and whisky.

This fellowship has an active Facebook group where we share discoveries and information about gins. We share craft gins from all over the world, gin recipe cocktails, favourite botanicals, how to make a compound gin and how to cook with gin.

We also hold monthly Gintastic meet-ups via Zoom to have fun and learn something about gin. We rotate meeting times so that people in each time zone have the opportunity to participate.

Typically, we have a guest distiller speak about their gin process and products. We also discuss ideas, get insights, and play the occasional game.

Gin comes in so many exotic flavours. My personal favourite is Tanqueray Sevilla, however, with so many standard gins and now so many flavours, the choice is becoming very interesting. I would be

surprised if you got many similar answers if a survey was carried out among all the membership.

We held our first in-person gin fellowship activity at the Rotary International Convention in Houston last year when we enjoyed a sampling of local gin. There are now plans for a repeat in Melbourne this May. This will happen at each future convention.

Rotarians are also people of action who provide service by supporting communities and collaborating internationally on projects.

Since gin production and consumption also depend on clean water, the Rotary Fellowship of Gin also supports clean water, sanitation, and hygiene programmes by raising funds and supporting projects worldwide.

Clean water, sanitation, and hygiene education are basic necessities for a healthy environment and a productive life.

In 2022-23, we are supporting Aquabox with their project to provide clean water filters for Ukraine. A portion of dues goes to projects for clean water, with this being our first. We have so far provided funds to send 60 family water filters.

When people have access to clean water and sanitation, waterborne diseases decrease, children stay healthier and attend school more regularly, and mothers can spend less time carrying water and more time helping their families.

Through water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programmes, Rotary's people of action mobilises resources, forms partnerships, and invests in infrastructure and training which yields long-term change.

This fellowship operates in accordance with RI policy, but is not an

agency of, or controlled by RI. Currently we have 84 members drawn from: Australia, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Norway, the Philippines, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden, the United States and Wales. We also have over 500 followers on Facebook.

We have six honorary members: Juliet and Ian Riseley, Suzanne and Holgar Knaack, and Jennifer Jones and Nick Krayacich.

The board consists of six members and we are looking to extend to have regional members who can arrange additional 'Gintastic' sessions locally.

As the group continues to expand and grow, gin fellowship members may want to host regional gin-related events as well.

The Rotary Fellowship of Gin is a group dedicated to promoting gin as an opportunity for fellowship. There is nothing special about gin, it is the same as any other drink - you either like it or you don't. The aim of the fellowship is to enjoy fellowship with those of similar interests in a topic.

Basically, as for any fellowship, the Gin Fellowship allows for fun, friendship and fellowship. If you take Houston Convention, those attending met up for an evening, had a lot of good fun and banter, whilst enjoying each other's company with attendees from a number of different countries.

We are hoping to have a booth at Melbourne and will be arranging another fellowship gathering at a gin bar there also. ●

## GIN FACT FILE

- While gin may be the national spirit of England, the spirit originated in Holland.
- During the Dutch Independence War, gin was given to soldiers and referred to as "Dutch Courage."
- The Royal Navy mixed gin with lime juice to prevent scurvy, the lack of vitamin C. This drink would soon be known as the Gimlet.



### Information |

To join visit [ginfellowship.org](http://ginfellowship.org) or email Malcolm Hallewell, Secretary/Membership Officer: [rotary1150@gmail.com](mailto:rotary1150@gmail.com)

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# ROTARY SOCIAL

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

| STORY BY **GEORGE BICKNELL** |

 [TWITTER](#) | [FACEBOOK](#) | [YOUTUBE](#) | [INSTAGRAM](#)



## ROTARY NEONATAL PROJECT IN UKRAINE

Rotary is supporting 30,000 mothers and babies in Ukraine with vital medical aid after identifying a ten-fold increase in oxygen deprivation in new-borns since the war began. Head over to Rotary's YouTube channel for a video detailing this incredible project led by the Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals.

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## ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF UKRAINE WAR

24th February marks one year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. On Rotary GB&I's Twitter, you can find a dedicated thread that goes through what members of Rotary GB&I have been doing to help support Ukrainians affected by the war, including giving over 100,000 volunteer hours.

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## TURKEY/SYRIA EARTHQUAKE EXPLANATION

Following the earthquakes that devastated southern Turkey and northern Syria, charities backed and partnered by Rotary are responding. ShelterBox, Rotary's international project partner in disaster relief, uploaded an interview with Dr. Sam Hughes and Sam Hewitt to their Facebook page providing a better understanding of why the recent earthquakes were so devastating.

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## INTRODUCING ROTARY DIRECT MEMBERSHIP

Direct membership gives individuals the chance to join Rotary as an organisation, meaning you aren't limited to just one club and you can work across multiple projects. Find out more about this exciting new model of Rotary in our interview with Tim Mason on our YouTube channel.

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## A NEW TIMELINE FOR ROTARY DAY

23rd February marks the anniversary of the day Rotary was founded. To mark the occasion, Rotary International released a new video on their Twitter that displays Rotary's timeline as well as exploring how Rotary's global network of 1.4 million members continues to make positive change.

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## JENNIFER JONES VISITS REFUGEE SETTLEMENT

Rotary International President Jennifer Jones recently visited Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda alongside actress Sibongile Mlambo. Watch the video on Jennifer Jones' Instagram page to meet the people behind the projects that foster community and connection at one of the world's largest refugee settlements.

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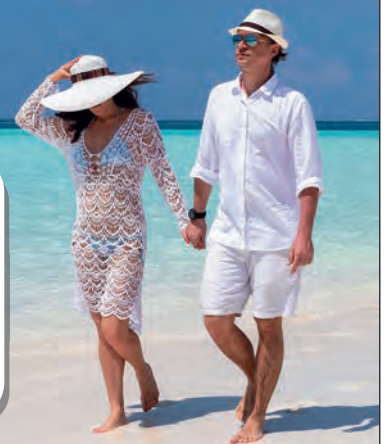
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# and finally...

From Managing Editor Dave King  
[editor@rotarygbi.org](mailto:editor@rotarygbi.org)

## OH I DO LIKE TO BE BESIDE THE SEASIDE!

**W**HISPER it quietly, but I rather miss those old-fashioned Rotary annual conferences by the sea.

A century-old annual gathering of the clans from across the British Isles for a weekend of networking, education, gathering new ideas, re-enforcing key messages, forward planning and those two 'f' words – fun and fellowship.

I've just returned from a stimulating weekend at the University of Warwick campus – 88 miles from the closest beach at Weston-super-Mare – attending the Leadership Development Forum with 250 Rotarians from across the nation.

For two days, we shared ideas and experiences, discussed ways of growing Rotary, reflected on various forms of Rotary membership and looked ahead to the exciting cluster initiative which Rotary GB&I is piloting.

It was corking, providing a much-needed boost to my Rotary mojo. At several points of the weekend I reflected how it was a shame this was not a national event so more Rotarians could engage.

Torquay five years ago was the last national conference in its old format when Princess Anne visited the Devon Riviera.

Pragmatically it was decided to venture down the Volunteer Expo route just as Covid intervened. No longer a Rotary-only event, but this was the UK's National Volunteering Show which partnered with other organisations.

I hosted the first online event in

2021, and last year, Birmingham's NEC staged a three-day Volunteer Expo, which also included an Action Summit with incoming Rotary International President, Jennifer Jones.

There are no plans for a Volunteer Expo this year, in fact the only national Rotary event is an Action Summit being planned by incoming Rotary International Director, Eve Conway, in Manchester this September.

And that, I think, is a big shame.

One of the most interesting sessions in Warwick was a discussion hosted by current RI Director, Nicki Scott, with the incoming district governors serving South Wales (1150), Avon & Somerset (1100), Devon and Cornwall (both 1175) whose districts will become one of six clusters – Southern Wales & SW England – operating in Rotary GB&I.

Clusters are not a way of getting rid of districts, reducing the role or influence of the district governor or adding additional bureaucracy.

Instead the discussion focused how these four Rotary districts were already collaborating for greater impact, making Rotary leadership easier and making better use of specialist support.

It really is a case of better together. And next year, at Sandy Park, home of Exeter Chiefs Rugby Club, the south-west cluster will hold one conference, saving considerably on cost but making a greater impact.

Rotary GB&I is testing this model for RI as a five-year regional pilot and it makes perfect sense – a regional pilot

based on 109 years of experience with a bottom line of growing Rotary.

These are bumpy times for the good ship Rotary with membership declining and membership retention an issue – 50% of Rotarians leave after two years.

But we are all in the same boat and it is important Rotarians work together.

I drove away from Warwick hugely excited, galvanised by the messages, and invigorated by those I met – many long-time friends, but new ones too.

Not everyone can afford or has the time to go to a Rotary International Convention, and these cluster conferences are definitely the best way forward.

My message to the Rotary Board is think seriously about reintroducing the annual conference, bringing Rotarians together once a year as a focal point for all.

It doesn't have to be by the sea – Warwick is nice and central – but the value will be immense, especially to those new to Rotary who can see what a dynamic organisation we are. ●

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CORKING,  
PROVIDING A  
MUCH-NEEDED  
BOOST TO MY  
ROTARY MOJO."**





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