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2016

John's Jottings



The Newsletter from John Sayer, District Governor of Rotary International District 1210 (covering most of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Walsall and Wolverhampton)

The District Governor's Month

Another busy month, starting, on 1st August, with a visit to the Rotary Club of Wem, which is undergoing something of a renaissance with seven new members this Rotary year. It was interesting to hear how President Ted is achieving this and to meet their members and guests.

A very pleasant evening at the Aldridge Club's Gardeners Question Time was followed by the first General Council of the 2016/2017 year. General Council included various presentations – particularly regarding our campaign to End Polio Now and the Global Rewards programme – which we are assured will soon have more offers available in Britain and Ireland. (The General Council Newsletter has been published and is available on the RIBI website)

I also attended the Bon Voyage event prior to our Vocational Study Exchange (VSE) team departing for Germany. They are a good team, well led by Rtn Gary Sharpe and I am sure they will represent our District very well. The evening was held at Hadley Park Hotel, in Telford, the home of The Wrekin Club and jointly hosted by The Wrekin and Ironbridge Clubs, and was an excellent event.

(As an aside – the desserts were prepared by 'Curtis' a young man who had participated in The Wrekin Club's Young Chef competition earlier in the year.)

(The photograph shows Jo and Charlotte (back row) and Genesis and Gary in the front, all with their Polio Teddy Bears)



Towards the end of the month the District's Rotary Youth Leadership Awards event was held once again at Kibblestone Scout Camp. I was there at both the opening and closing sessions – and the positive change in the young people was immense. We owe a debt of gratitude to the organisers, led by Rtn Dave Roberts, for all that they do to make the event a success.

This will be Dave's last RYLA, after six years in the driving seat (and a few years prior as a mentor) and it was a pleasure to award him a Sapphire PHF at the Talent Night. Plans are in place to ensure that RYLA continues – under new management – and next year it will be held at Kibblestone from 13th to 18th August.



Dave Roberts was presented with a Sapphire Paul Harris Fellow Award during the RYLA Talent Night



Barbara Bashford completed many years of Service as a RYLA mentor and was presented with a Rotary Service Award

I also made a flying visit to the V-Festival Tent collection – a superb initiative organised by the RC Brewwood and particularly Rtn Mike Hampson. I understand that this year we had 250 people on the Monday evening and 150 on the Tuesday morning. Other organisations do take part, of course, including Inner Wheel, Lions, Masons and others, but the initiative is led by Rotary. Mike tells me that the value of the equipment collected this year is in the region of £90,000!

At the end of the month – it was a very early start to see our VSE team off from Birmingham Airport (who chose a 7.15 am flight?). They arrived safely and have hit the ground running – I am hearing good reports from Team Leader Gary.

On August Bank Holiday Monday I joined RC Burslem at the Music Festival in the centre of the Town. An opportunity for Club members to engage with their community, and raise awareness of Rotary.



During the month I have visited thirteen Clubs to meet the members, hear all about their successes, speak about our plans for the current Rotary year and listen to their concerns. My thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality shown to me at: Audley, Bilston and Wolverhampton West, Burslem, Kidsgrove, Leek, Sedgley and Wombourne, Shrewsbury Darwin, Stafford Castle, Stafford Knot, Tunstall, Walsall, Walsall Saddlers and Wem

District Event

Each month I intend to mention just one of the many activities which we undertake with such success in this Rotary District. This month **The Disability Sports Fun Day:**

The Fun Day is an annual event, for people with disabilities to participate in several games and sports. The emphasis is on fun, but there is a competitive element to the day, with medals for the winners of each of the competitions, which include table tennis, basket ball, boules, skittles and football.

For many years the event was held at Staffordshire University's Beaconside complex, but following the closure of that site this year we have moved to Fenton Manor Sports Complex on City Road, Stoke-on-Trent. The post code is ST4 2RR.

If you have been before, do come along again and see the event in its new surroundings. If you haven't then do come along and see what goes on, and offer to lend a hand. Brian Reilly is the District organiser for the event – do give him a call on 07780 676385 if you would like to get involved.

The event, on **Sunday 11th September**, starts at 10.00 am, and entry is free.

End Polio Now

At the time of writing (1st September) there have been just 21 cases of the wild polio virus worldwide this calendar year, 13 in Pakistan, 6 in Afghanistan and 2 in Nigeria, in the Borno state. The cases in Nigeria are particularly disappointing as they are the first cases in Africa in over two years, and the strain of the virus was last detected in the Borno region in 2011. Borno has been affected by insecurity in recent years, meaning that pockets of children may not have received vaccines and that local gaps in surveillance to detect the disease may exist, allowing the virus to continue circulating.

Local Rotary members are mobilizing to support the outbreak response in Nigeria and surrounding countries, bringing to the initiative their unique perspective as leaders who live and work in impacted communities. In addition Rotary has released a \$500,000 grant to enable a rapid response immunisation programme in the area.

The news from Nigeria just serves to reinforce the need for all Rotary members to get behind our 31 year campaign to End Polio Now – we can beat this disease and we will.

Those who have heard me speak at Club meetings, and other events, will know that I am putting a great deal of emphasis on this programme – and I thank those Clubs who have already supported our local initiatives to increase funding for the campaign. Remember that every pound that we raise is tripled by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Our awareness raising efforts continue apace – crocus corms are ordered, and will be delivered in plenty of time for planting, the crocus buttonholes have been delivered and will be distributed at District Council and the ‘Guess the mileage’ competition is up and running.

My thanks to all Clubs who are making a real effort with this campaign.

Polio Bear has been on his travels this month :



At the V-Festival ‘Clean Up’ he took a well earned rest on the wing mirror of just one of the trucks brought to the event



At Apedale he fancied a ride on one of the Donkeys!

Well Done Newport (Shropshire) Lite!

You will recall that, at District Assembly, we re-launched the Appeal from the Wheelchair Foundation UK for us to collect the barcodes from Yorkshire Tea packets. The Appeal is going well, and I would like to thank every Rotarian who is collecting the barcodes, but a massive thank you to our newest Club – Newport (Shropshire) Lite who have mounted an impressive campaign in their home Town to collect the bar codes from members of the public.



A reminder that every bar code generates a donation from Yorkshire Tea to the Wheelchair Foundation UK. A box of 80 tea bags generates a 10p donation, and it is pro-rata for larger boxes. For every £75 collected another Wheelchair is delivered to a child, teen or adult somewhere in the world who needs one but does not have the means to acquire one.

This is an Appeal that is close to my heart, so please collect your barcodes and send them to PDG Lynne Deavin.

Situation Vacant

The District Sports Team needs a member to co-ordinate the District Snooker competition.

If you would like to help please contact District Sports Officer Simon Sims

Future Events:

- Thursday 8th Sept.** **District Council (6.45 for 7.15 start)**
Mercure Hotel Penkridge
- Sunday 11th Sept** **District Disability Sports Funday**
Fenton Manor Sports Complex, Stoke-on-Trent
(contact AG Brian Reilly)
- Saturday 24th Sept** **Stafford & Stafford Knot Comedy Magic Fundraiser**
Stafford Rangers FC
(Contact: Presidents Gary Sharpe or Brian Westerman)
- Sunday 25th Sept** **Walsall Fun Run**
(Contact RC Walsall President Keith Anderson)
- Sunday 9th Oct** An Alumni event to mark the start of Alumni Reconnect Week
(Details awaited)
- Tuesday 11th Oct** **Vocational Study Exchange Team – Welcome Home**
Beverley Hotel, Walsall
- Saturday 15th Oct** **RC Newcastle under Lyme Casino Night**
Great National Hotel, Clayton
(contact Rtn Rene Carlisle – RC Newcastle-under-Lyme)
- Friday 21st to
Sunday 23rd Oct** **District Conference**
Southport
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