

Issue No: 7

1st March 2017

John's Jottings



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

Congratulations to two very Special Rotarians

Since my last Newsletter PDG (and Dr) Fraser Dukes and Rtn David Dixon have received two very different Awards

Fraser has been awarded the Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award for his work in Polio Eradication – more details on page 5

David has received a 'Point of Light' Award from the Prime Minister for his work in Africa, particularly for Village Water – more details in the Spring edition of ROTO

Well done and congratulations to both of them

The District Governor's Month

A double issue this month as I report on my programme in both January and February.

As District Governor I am also a member of the Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) General Council, the governing body which directs the management of our organisation in these islands. Much of my time in these two months has been taken up with General Council matters as we deal with the need to have a balanced budget for the future, whilst ensuring that Rotary continues to serve our communities effectively and efficiently, and maintaining our subscription at about or below the level of Rotary subscriptions in the rest of the world.

A detailed summary of our deliberations was sent to all Clubs at the end of February – and I do urge every member to read the document and every Club to discuss the contents and ultimately vote at the RIBI Annual Business Meeting to be held on Saturday 8th April.

If any Club would like me to visit and explain the difficult choices which we have had to make then I will do my best to do so.

Within the District my time in January was spent in a round of District Service Committee meetings and completing my visits to Clubs – the final two, which had to be delayed from the original planned dates due to circumstances, the visits being to Newport Lite and Willenhall. I thank both Clubs for the courtesy and hospitality – I enjoyed both meetings.

Additionally in January I attended the RC Stoke-on-Trent Youth Speaks competition, the Telford Centre Burns Night and the District International Rally. All superb events.



Addressing the Haggis at Telford Centre's Burns Night

In early February I was invited to join the RC Wednesbury as they thanked the organisations who had helped them with their Christmas events, a really good evening which showed just how valuable our local community partnerships can be. RC Shrewsbury Darwin's Charter Night was followed by another Burns Night Supper with RC Walsall.

The District Final of Young Chef was followed by a fellowship visit to RC Walsall, the RC Blythe Bridge & District Charter Night, the RC Stafford Charter lunch, and towards the end of the month the RC Sedgley and Wombourne Ladies Night and the RC Wrekin's Big Breakfast were all events which I attended.

RIBI President Eve Conway, along with her husband, Robert, were our guests in the District between 19th and 22nd February – and I have devoted a separate section of this Newsletter to that visit.

Purple  Polio

The RIBI President's visit to the District

Eve Conway and her husband, Robert, were our guests for three days in mid-February, and I was able to show them just what a superb Rotary District this is.

My thanks are due to PDG Lynne Deavin and Bruce Boucher for home hosting the couple for the first two nights as we explored the eastern side of the District.

On Monday morning we visited the Green Rivers Community Association, a group in a deprived area of Walsall, to which the RC Walsall Saddlers provide practical support, as well as some specific financial support.



Photo by Ian Johnstone: One of the youngsters who regularly attend helped Eve to improve her pool technique!

Monday lunchtime saw us at Oak Tree Farm Rural Project, near Stafford, an organisation which provides training and supported occupation for adults with learning difficulties. Several local Clubs support the Project financially and Stafford Knot provides some mentoring to the management. We also heard about the Stafford Knot Club's programme to help disengaged children to become reconnected with the community.



Eve Conway and I, along with our Polio Teddy Bears, visited the Cattle shed at Oak Tree Farm Rural Project. One of the animals took a strong liking to Eve's coat

Monday evening saw us at the RC Stoke-on-Trent's 90th Charter Night. It was a superb celebration of 90 years of service to their community, with their former MP Tristram Hunt as the keynote speaker. Both Eve and I were able to congratulate the Club on their achievements.



Stoke President Mike Herbert on the left, Tristram Hunt on the right, with RIBI President Eve Conway and DG John Sayer at the Stoke Club's 90th Charter Dinner.

On Tuesday morning we went to Wolverhampton to see two community projects that the Wolverhampton Club established many years ago, and which continue with support from the Wolverhampton Club and several other Rotary and Inner Wheel Clubs in the area. The Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre celebrated its 30th anniversary last September and in addition to helping sufferers from Multiple Sclerosis it now helps others who suffer from various complaints which will benefit from the treatments available. The Oxygen tank (below) was a highlight of the visit.



The visit to Compton Hospice will remain in my mind for many years to come. It was established through a steering group set up by the Wolverhampton Club and is supported by all of the Clubs in the area. The amount of financial support from Rotary is staggering – and my thanks to all of the Clubs who contribute. Eve and I were privileged to meet a patient in his room, who was clearly very ill, but he wanted to meet us and thank Rotary for all that we have done. We were both very touched, and Eve mentioned that meeting on her live facebook Q&A a few days ago

The Foundation Lunch at Linden House, the home of RC Wolverhampton was attended by so many Rotarians, who had gathered to not only celebrate the centenary of OUR Rotary Foundation, but also to witness the presentation of the Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award to PDG Fraser Dukes in recognition of his efforts over 30 plus years to raise the profile (and funds) within this District for the End Polio Now campaign. It is a very rare Award, and I can think of no better recipient. Well done Fraser.



PDG Fraser Dukes, with his Rotary Foundation Distinguished Service Award, with RIBI President Eve Conway and the Mayor of Wolverhampton, Cllr Barry Findlay

The lunch was also notable for the presentation of a cheque for almost £4,500 to the RIBI President of the proceeds of their campaign to encourage those who receive the Winter Fuel Allowance to donate that sum to the End Polio Now programme.

Tuesday evening saw us at the RC Shrewsbury Severn meeting – a lively affair, good company and some interesting questions for Eve to deal with.

Eve, Robert and I were having a coffee in the reception area of the Hotel late the following morning when members of the Shrewsbury Club started to arrive, so we had an impromptu short meeting and photocall with those members, including President Pat, who had arrived early:



Eve Conway, Robert & I with President Pat, and some members of the Shrewsbury Club outside the Lord Hill Hotel

All in all it was a very successful visit – I was able to show the RIBI President a number of community projects where Rotarians use their skills to improve the lot of others who are not so fortunate as us, as well as join in the more formal events. It truly demonstrated what a wonderful District we have here in 1210

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RIBI Conference

The Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland Conference will be taking place in Manchester from 7th – 9th April and there is still room if you haven't yet booked your seats.

With a wide range of speakers – Ade Adepitan, Russell Grant, Virginia McKenna and her son Will Travers, plus a wide range of Rotary speakers mean that it will be a Conference to remember.

Registration is £40 for a day ticket and £80 for the full three day package – please go to the RIBI website, www.rotarygbi.org for more details and the opportunity to Register.

Hopefully I will see many of you there.

Vocational Study Exchange in 2017/18

The District Vocational Study Exchange Chairman, Trevor Davies, sends the following message:

We are looking for applications from young professionals to be part of our Vocational Study Exchange Team 2017-8

The Team will leave for two weeks vocational and cultural experience late summer this year to a European destination to be finalised.

We have had two very successful outward teams in the last two years; the personal development of the team members has been outstanding, so please give this some serious consideration.

Trevor's contact details are in the District Directory.

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Collecting Used Stamps

Ted Davies, the President of the Wem Club has asked if I can draw attention to the Appeal from the Shropshire British Legion for used postage stamps:

Recycle your stamps to help the Shropshire Poppy Appeal make a difference to the lives of the Armed Forces community. Follow the link below, order your pre-stamped and addressed envelopes, get filling with used stamps. Easy! We will receive £11 per kilo and if separated out the price paid for foreign stamps is £20.00 per kilo provided that they are free of British stamps.

For tips on how to collect the stamps to get the most value read this page - <http://www.fundraisingstamps.com/tips>

There are other charities which also collect used stamps – something to think about when throwing away those envelopes!

And whilst on the subject of collecting used items, don't forget the Yorkshire Tea Bar Code Appeal in aid of the Wheelchair Foundation.



Dates for your Diaries

Date	Event	Contact for information
Thur 16 March	Antiques Evening in aid of Penn Hall School & The Rotary Foundation at Penn Hall School	Peter Hall (P/E of Wolverhampton St Georges)
Sun 26 March	Regional Young Musician Final, Wrekin College	Robyn Davies (District Young Musician Lead)
Fri 7 – Sun 9 April	RIBI Conference	RIBI website
Sat 29 April	Foundation Centenary Dinner Calderfields Golf Club	Keith Anderson (President of Walsall)
Sat 6 May	District Assembly Hadley Learning Centre, Telford	Bill Hitchen (District Training Officer)
Sun 7 May	RIBI Youth Speaks Final Thomas Telford School, Telford	Malcolm Hallewell (District Youth Speaks Lead)
Fri 19 May	End of Year Celebration Dinner Tern Hill Hall Hotel	DG John
Fri 30 June	District Handover Dinner The Chase Golf Club	Malcolm Hallewell or Robyn Davies

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA)

A reminder that there are still a few places left on this year's course, to be held at Kibblestone between Sunday 13th and Friday 18th August.

The RYLA programme is an excellent means by which young people can learn leadership skills, gain confidence and generally become better citizens.

For more information please contact Rtn David Shelmerdine (details in the Directory)