

Rotary

APRIL | MAY 2022

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Jennifer Jones 6
Rotary in Ukraine 16
Queen's Jubilee 26

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Welcome

WE have had to move very quickly with this month's issue of *Rotary* magazine, having initially intended to run a series of features on homelessness in Great Britain and Ireland.

But the sudden invasion of Ukraine by Russian troops in late February prompted a swift change of direction in both the shape and look of the magazine.

Now writing this editorial mid-March, one can only wonder what state the world, and particularly Ukraine, will be in by the time you are reading this in April.

With the outbreak of Covid-19 exactly two years ago, Rotarians responded in their communities to help the vulnerable and isolated. Once again with the crisis in Ukraine, this is our opportunity to demonstrate how we are humanitarians and People of Action.

The One Voice page, jointly written by General Secretary, Amanda Watkin, Rotary International Director & Leader of the Association, Nicki Scott, plus Chairman of the Executive, David Ellis, outlines what clubs and Districts can do for the Ukraine on a short-term and long-term basis.

The magazine presents two views from the Ukraine and Russia, to offer a sense of perspective about the health of Rotary in these two countries.

It should be pointed out that the features from Ukraine were written before the invasion. Time has moved on significantly. For example, the Rotary Club of Kharkiv no longer exists and its secretary has fled to western Ukraine.

The interview with Russian Rotary editor, Aslan Guluev was conducted

at the height of the invasion and, understandably, for Aslan's own safety, there is only the lightest reflection from him on what is happening in Ukraine.

Originally, the front cover image was going to feature Jennifer Jones, to mark the historic moment this July when Rotary International will have its first female President. The Canadian will have by her side Rotary GB&I's Nicki Scott, who will serve as Vice-President.

Rotary in these isles has had female leadership at the highest level previously, and in this month's issue we canvas the views of former Rotary GB&I Presidents Nan McCreadie, Eve Conway, Debbie Hodge and Donna Wallbank.

While they welcomed the breaking of this glass ceiling, they insist that Jennifer Jones is there on merit.

This is not tokenism but, as Nan McCreadie points out: "Jennifer is becoming our President not because she's a woman, it's because she is the right person for the position."

Jennifer is a charismatic and thoughtful woman who will serve as a terrific ambassador for Rotary globally.

She will be attending Volunteer Expo in May which will be held at the NEC Birmingham for the first time. You can read what to expect with a terrific line-up of speakers and events in these pages. Hopefully it will entice you to sign up.

Volunteer Expo features two showpieces of the Rotary calendar with the Champions of Change and Young Citizens awards. The winners of both awards will be profiled in June's magazine.

Dave King
Editor, *Rotary Magazine*



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Rotary 

FEATURES

- JENNIFER JONES: HISTORY-MAKER** 06
An interview with the first woman Rotary International President in 117 years
- BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING** 12
Four ex-Rotary GB&I Presidents compare notes on Jennifer Jones' appointment
- ROTARY TRANSCENDS BORDERS** 16
An insight into Rotary in Ukraine through the eyes of several Rotarians
- TACKLING BULLYING** 32
Rugby star Ben Cohen talks about his anti-bullying charity ahead of Volunteer Expo
- A CARING PARTNERSHIP** 46
Highlighting the work of Carers UK and how Rotarians can help partner
- INSPIRED BY CAPTAIN TOM** 48
Sidcup Rotarian Martin Low reflects on the legacy of caring left by Tom Moore
- SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB** 49
A new feature for book worms including a choice of five books of the month
- PAINTING YOUR OWN PATH** 52
Featuring mouth and foot painter, Tom Yendell, a Rotarian from Hampshire
- ROTARY IN PROFILE** 54
Bedford Castle's Virendra Soni discusses volunteering at a vaccination centre



NEWS & COMMENT

- QUEEN'S JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS** 26
News of how Rotarians can get involved and also mark 'Thank You' Day
- VOLUNTEER EXPO PREVIEW** 34
Spotlighting the speakers and attractions for the two-day event at the NEC
- ONE VOICE: ROTARY GB&I** 36
Following the war in Ukraine, how can clubs and Districts help with humanitarian aid?
- ONE VOICE: SHEKHAR MEHTA** 38
The Rotary International President writes about Maternal and Child Health month
- LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** 40
Another weighty electronic postbag featuring a variety of Rotary topics
- PEOPLE OF ACTION** 58
Four pages of news and views from Rotary clubs across Great Britain and Ireland
- AND FINALLY** 66
Editor Dave King reflects on how Rotarians should respond over the crisis in Ukraine



JENNIFER JONES

Rotary history-maker

This July, Canadian Jennifer Jones will break 117 years of tradition by becoming the first woman to be elected President of Rotary International.

| STORY BY **DIANA SCHOBERG AND GEOFFREY JOHNSON** |

PRESIDENT-ELECT Jennifer Jones' office at Rotary International world headquarters in Evanston, Illinois, feels different from those of her predecessors, but that's in no way a result of the fact that on July 1st she will become Rotary's first female president.

On the wall hangs a recent gift from a friend — a black scratch-off map on which Jennifer can record every Rotary destination she visits during the next two years.

It's September, two months since she took office as president-elect, and on the map, only Chicago has been revealed — many planned events were cancelled or postponed due to a rise in COVID-19 cases.

Today, Jennifer is the only person on the 18th floor of One Rotary Center. There are no phones ringing, no fingers tap-tap-tapping on keyboards in the cubicles outside her door. One could do cartwheels through the Rotary boardroom and nobody would notice.

"If you start to think about how exponentially Rotary can touch the world, we're more than a club," Jennifer says. "We're a movement."

Jennifer is President and CEO of Media Street Productions Inc. in Windsor, Ontario, where she is a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland. Husband, Nick Krayacich, is past president of the Rotary Club of LaSalle Centennial and was recently selected as governor-nominee-designate of District

6400. Her company's specialties include radio and television production, corporate and nonprofit videos, and live show productions.

Using her media background to elevate Rotary's global profile is one of the primary goals of her presidency, and Jennifer is planning what she calls the "Imagine Impact Tour" to showcase to the world several large-scale, sustainable projects in each of Rotary's areas of focus.

"I see this as a way of increasing our membership," she says. "When we tell our stories, like-minded people will want to join with us."

A Rotary member since 1996, Jennifer played a lead role in the organisation's rebranding effort by serving as chair of the Strengthening Rotary Advisory Group. She is co-chair of the End Polio Now Countdown to History Campaign Committee, which aims to raise \$150 million for polio eradication efforts. She also led the successful #RotaryResponds virtual telethon in 2020, which raised critical funds for pandemic relief and attracted more than 65,000 views.

Between more serious topics such as elevating Rotary's image and its efforts toward diversity, equity, and inclusion, the conversation jumps around to the retro appeal of the 1980s television show *The Golden Girls*, whose social commentary is relevant even today, Jennifer surmises, and dance parties — "Whenever a good song comes on, it's hard to not get a little groove on," she says.

Towards the end of the conversation, Jennifer's dad chimes in with a ding on

her phone and the one-word message, "passed" — he's still working at almost 80-years-old and wanted to let her know he'd succeeded at an annual exam for his job.

"He is the sweetest thing," she says with a smile. A few days earlier, his text to her had included a heart emoji and the query "How's fixing the world coming along?" With the family of Rotary behind her, Jennifer is well on her way.

| YOU'RE GOING TO BE ROTARY'S FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR ROTARY?

When I was selected, although the process was virtual, everybody went around the "room" to reflect on something that was said during the interview.

One of the points that was repeatedly emphasized was that I was selected for my qualifications, not because of my gender. I didn't enter the interview with gender being at the forefront of my thinking.

However, I do think that for our organisation, it was an incredibly significant moment. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is so important not only for Rotary but for our world.

Maybe my nomination is happening at the right time.

When I gave my acceptance speech at the 2021 virtual convention, I mentioned my 10-year-old niece during the opening.

She had given me a drawing of herself that included the words, "Different is always better. Different is me". I loved it and was so proud of her for proclaiming this statement, so much so, that I ended the speech using her exact words.





Being different is nothing to apologise for.

One of our core values is diversity, and this is another way that diversity is represented. It's just that it took 117 years for that to happen.

WHAT DOES DIVERSITY MEAN FOR OUR ORGANISATION?

There is diversity in our Rotary world, but is there diversity in our own most immediate sphere, our own clubs?

When we have diversity of thought, diversity of age, diversity of culture, diversity of gender, diversity of vocation, we bring that to the table. That is our secret sauce. That's what allows us to solve things in ways that others can't. We're looking at it through that kaleidoscope of experience that we bring to the table.

There are going to be clubs that say, "No, we're good. We've got diversity figured out." And maybe they do and maybe they don't.

But I think we are uniquely poised as an organisation at this time in history to be the honest brokers of these kinds of conversations.

Because we're nonpolitical and nonreligious, we have the ability to host this type of dialogue and do it in a safe space where we respect each other.

HOW WILL YOU REDEFINE THE ROLE OF ROTARY PRESIDENT?

I don't know that I'm approaching the presidency from a perspective of change. I'm looking at it from the perspective of how we exist as a relevant organisation in today's culture and climate.

How do we do things that are proactive and positive for our future?

Maybe it's a bit of a shift in what we've been striving for over the past several years, in terms of reaching specific demographics.

Perhaps we need to walk it more authentically. If we're going to ask more women to join our organisation and we've seen negligible results, perhaps this is an opportunity to inspire others to look forward and say, "If she can do it, so can I."

If we're looking for younger members and younger thinkers to be in our organisation, then we need to exhibit that behaviour. We need to showcase why it's important to them — to make sure we're giving people meaningful, intentional things to engage with in our organisation.

The biggest thing that I'm hoping I bring to the table is not gender but communication — how we communicate these things to our frontline members and others who are part of our family, to

understand that being different right now is a good thing and that it doesn't change who we are.

Our DNA remains true. Our core values stay true. Those are things that don't go out of style. But can we look at things through a little bit of a different lens right now?

YOU'RE SAYING YOUNG THINKERS AS WELL AS YOUNG MEMBERS. WHAT'S THE DISTINCTION?

Have you met a 25-year-old who is old? We all have. Have you met an 86-year-old who is young? Of course. So I talk about young thinkers. It's something that resonates regardless of where I am in the world. Embracing the fact that we are people of action speaks to our *joie de vivre*. We step out. We do things. That is what I think of in terms of young thinkers. We're the people who make things happen in our world and our community.

We have such a brilliant opportunity to capture what I like to call cross-mentorship.

Sometimes a great idea comes through the lens of experience, and sometimes it comes from someone who hasn't already been told that they can't do something or that it needs to be done this certain way. When we look toward younger participants in our organisation, they give me hope that we can look at things through fresh eyes, that we can constantly be in a state of evolution.

This is going to be a very wide generalisation: If you have a great new idea, and you give it to a Rotaract club, within days they figure out what it is that they're going to do. They've launched some sort of social media presence.

They've called out and connected with partners. They've done all kinds of things. They take action really fast. Similarly, you can give it to a Rotary club, and what do we do? We form a committee and then we have meetings, lots of meetings.

That's not to be dismissive of that more deliberate path; I say that very much in jest. But the bureaucracy sometimes can bring us to a slow stop and be frustrating for people.

There is an opportunity for us when we look toward the younger demographic.

They just do things differently. And I think that's something we truly can learn from them. 🔄

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| YOU'RE A NATURAL STORYTELLER. WHAT'S THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THE OPENING CHAPTER OF YOUR PRESIDENCY?

It's one word: imagine.

| THAT'S YOUR THEME, RIGHT?

Imagine Rotary.

| HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THAT?

Imagine to me is about dreams and the obligation to run after those dreams.

I want people to think about the things that they want to achieve, and then use Rotary as the vehicle to get there.

We have such a huge array of opportunities in front of us, but we need to channel our energies so that we make sustainable, impactful decisions about what we do.

The most powerful thing for a member is to be able to say, "I have an idea." And then to share that with others and to amplify it and figure out where to go with it. Imagine is an empowering word, giving people permission to say that they want to do something to make their world better, and they can do it because they're part of this family.

| WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY LEADERSHIP, AND HOW DOES YOUR STYLE OF LEADERSHIP FIT IN?

The past two years have given us this deep opportunity to take a look at what's

important to us and what things we want to get rid of, that carry too much baggage in our head and on our shoulders.

Now we can look forward to how to do things a little bit differently and, probably most important, more authentically.

How do we be true and honest to ourselves about what we want to spend our time doing, whom we want to spend our time with, and how we can work toward supporting each other better, not just as friends and neighbours but as humanity?

From a contemporary leadership perspective, we need to take the best from the worst. We've watched world leaders broadcasting from their kitchens and from their basements.

We have learned how to be different and more appreciative of other people's experiences. As Rotary, that's what we've been good at all along. This is our time to shine.

| WHAT STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES DO YOU BRING TO THE PRESIDENCY?

I'm proud of being a connector. I like to connect people, and I like to connect people to stories. I'd like to see how that can be harnessed. I think my strength is also in communication and looking at how we can do things just a little bit differently. The most important thing that we can do is make sure that every member

of our organisation understands what it is to be part of it. There are many different ways to communicate that, and it's not just about sending an email. It's about creating a reason for people to want to hear from the organisation.

One of the things I want to do is go live directly following a board meeting.

I want to tell people what their organisation is doing — what just literally happened. Breaking news from the 18th floor in Evanston, and here is what it means to your club experience. Can we tell that story? I want to use some of the newer tools; when I'm travelling in the field, I will have my little GoPro camera.

I want to field-produce my own presidency. I want to showcase what I just saw and what this person just said to me.

A weakness? Balance. Trying to take care of myself — trying to eat right, exercise, make time for friends and family. I'm not always good at it.

I think this harks back to the conversation we're having about the pandemic. We've all had this opportunity to push the pause button. Sometimes we go a thousand percent toward something that we're working on, when that's maybe not the right approach. We can be stronger when we're better to ourselves.

I think we've really learned this; at least I have.

One of the things that I have taken pride in my entire life is not dropping balls. I've arrived at a place where there is a lot going on, and at the same time I've given myself permission to drop some balls. There are so many different ways that people now communicate, whether through email, text, WhatsApp, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter. I've got two phones going. It's crazy. So I have given myself permission to walk away and to not be tethered to my phone.

I'm aware of it, I am respectful of it, but I need to be a little bit more present. I could literally be communicating 24 hours a day. And that doesn't serve anyone.

| YOU ARE WELL KNOWN FOR BEING A HUGGER. SO WHAT'S THE NEW HUG?

That's a tough one. Elbow bumps are definitely going to be a pattern going forward, maybe a fist bump here or there. Hugs are probably on hold for a little while. ●



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BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

Rotary will have its first female President in 117 years when Jennifer Jones will be joined by Rotary International Director, Nicki Scott (Leader of Rotary GB&I) as Vice-President

| STORY BY DAVE KING |



| Donna Wallbank



| Eve Conway



| Debbie Hodge



| Nan McCreadie

It was in 1989 when decades of resistance to women joining the organisation was broken with a landmark decision by Rotary's Council of Legislation. Reaction was overwhelming. By June 1990, the number of female Rotarians had skyrocketed to over 20,000 and by 2010, those figures had reached 195,000 – or 16% of Rotarians.

By July 2020, the figure had surpassed 277,000, or about 23%. Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland has had four female Presidents – Nan McCreadie in 2013-14, followed by Eve Conway (2016-17), Debbie Hodge (2018-19) and Donna Wallbank (2019-20). *Rotary* magazine gathered all four ladies together to gauge their reaction to this watershed moment in Rotary.

| WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON JENNIFER JONES BECOMING ROTARY'S FIRST FEMALE PRESIDENT?

DONNA: I believe Jennifer's selection as President is one where we acknowledge her ability to lead Rotary as a Rotarian, and we should not be taking her gender into account, as a post selection should always be based on ability and not on the need to tick boxes that say well, we covered that one! That, in my opinion, undermines the efforts and commitment that any Rotarian has made to achieve and, in many ways, disrespects the achievements Jennifer has made for Rotary as a Rotarian. I am pleased to see

the glass ceiling has been shattered and I hope that this appointment will be the first of many others as, with Jennifer's enthusiasm to reach this level on the Board others, may be encouraged to continue even when it seems impossible.

NAN: I think it is extremely important that Jennifer Jones is becoming Rotary's first female President. I don't mean that, just because she is Jennifer; I mean it because we need to show that Rotary is no longer just a lunch club for men in suits, which seems to be a common belief in those who have even heard of Rotary. What is essential to remember is that she is becoming our President not because she's a woman, it's because she is the right person for the position.

DEBBIE: This has the feeling of breaking a glass ceiling, and will be a reminder to all in Rotary that we are an organisation that is open at all. From a personal perspective, with more women holding senior leadership post in the organisation it is great to see that a woman has the top job. After all, 51% of the population are women!

EVE: You could say, after 117 years, that it's about time! I am delighted that a fellow media professional Jennifer Jones is the first female President of Rotary International. I have known Jennifer as a Rotary colleague and friend for a number of years and it was great when, as RI Vice-President, she joined us for



Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland's Conference in Manchester in 2017 when I was President of Rotary GB&I. She wow-ed us all with her warmth and great engaging personality. She is breaking a glass ceiling but has reached this top role through her impressive abilities and achievements within Rotary and in her professional life outside of Rotary, not as a token woman. Having said that, this shows other women that they can get to the top of our organisation. She is a wonderful role-model. I am looking forward to working with her on the Rotary International Board.

| HOW IMPORTANT IS JENNIFER'S APPOINTMENT?

DONNA: The importance is to reiterate that we each have much to bring to Rotary and it highlights that Rotary is for everyone with a passion and that Rotary is inclusive.

NAN: Jennifer will bring a vibrant, passionate, youthful image to Rotary. She has the communication skills to ensure the right message is being sent. She should not be regarded, or reported as a pretty doll. She is highly intelligent, highly articulate and supported by a very good team.

DEBBIE: If the organisation wants to live by its values, then you could say this is overdue. But it does mark a turning point and should enable more women to aspire to leadership.

EVE: Women in Rotary are still under-represented compared to the general population making up just 23% of our membership globally. A key focus now for Rotary is diversity, equity and inclusion, so Jennifer's appointment shows that Rotary is embracing this and practices what it preaches. Jennifer will also be focusing

on diversity, equity and inclusion as RI President. In terms of public relations, this shows that Rotary is diverse which will encourage more women and others to join us. For those outside of Rotary, it dispels the myth that many people still believe that women are not allowed into Rotary.

| WHAT DO YOU HOPE JENNIFER WILL ACHIEVE DURING HER YEAR AS PRESIDENT?

DONNA: I hope Jennifer continues to enthuse others with her passion and professional attitudes. I hope she will enable further opportunities to promote Rotary work across all areas of the globe, focussing on how the family of Rotary is included in all we do. Whoever we are, we each have a part to play in developing more opportunities for our community to know about what we do and for us each to open doors for membership for all. This ensures those with a passion and heart to do good, whoever they are, know they can be part of the great Rotary story.

NAN: I hope Jennifer will put Rotary into a much more central position in terms of who we attract and what we do. Perhaps a kinder face than previously displayed, no offence to previous Presidents. I hope she will be able to position Rotary as the number one humanitarian organisation which can get things done.

DEBBIE: I hope that Jennifer will be able to challenge the status quo that is still evident in some parts of the Rotary world but, more importantly, inspire the next generation to take the brave step to 'step up to lead'!

EVE: Jennifer is already setting out her vision of what she hopes to achieve with her 'Imagine Rotary' theme. Using her media background, I not only hope but know Jennifer will raise the profile of Rotary as she is already demonstrating with her plans to take the Rotary story on the road on an 'Imagine Impact Tour' for her Presidential travels, visiting visible, high impact Rotary projects globally across all of our seven Areas of Focus as well as our End Polio Now campaign to shine a bright light on the incredible work that Rotarians are doing. This will increase our impact and expand our reach and attract people to want to join our incredible organisation. With each of the stops on her tour, Jennifer says there will be a different media approach to raise awareness to "ignite some Aha moments" as the world sees the good work that Rotary is doing with top tier media journalists to help tell our story and influencers who will use their social media presence to reach people who have wanted to serve but have not yet realised they can do it through Rotary.

| HAS ROTARY PROGRESSED IN TERMS OF THE RECRUITMENT OF FEMALE ROTARIANS SINCE YOU WERE ROTARY GB&I PRESIDENT?

DONNA: I believe we are seeing a better inclusion of Rotarians from all genders and areas of life, however I remain firm in the view that once we see someone with an interest in doing for Rotary gender, that their skin colour, sexuality, income etc. should not be focused on. This only makes those who believe Rotary is for their gender and their type of person, more adamant not to invite someone 🚫

unlike them to join Rotary – or even vote against them being admitted. We should show people that whoever we are and wherever we are from, Rotarians come to Rotary service with a passion and heart to do good. We want to contribute to society and, in showcasing that we will continue to change the perceptions of those who do not agree with that thinking. I still think there are many areas of society underrepresented in our membership and we still have much to do to ensure people of action come from all walks of life.

NAN: I have always believed that we are all Rotarians. No-one talks about male Rotarians. In my attempts to recruit new members, I have tried to be inclusive although I confess to leanings towards my own gender. I believe the organisation benefits from its dual gender policy. There are areas of the world where this may not be possible, but Rotary should be encouraging membership from all sectors of the community and all ages. I believe Jennifer is perfectly positioned to carry that encouragement further than previously.

DEBBIE: There is much more conversation about increasing the number of women in Rotary, but this sits alongside the premise that our clubs should be representative of our communities. In that respect, there is a long way to go in some areas. In others, there is a much better grasp of the issues and that is reflected in the diversity and inclusivity in some clubs and districts.

EVE: The numbers have gone up slightly from when I was President but at 23% globally, we still aren't truly reflecting our population. In 2020, 50.59% of the population in the UK were women. But take a look at Rotaract which has already achieved parity with 51% of its members being female. What should hopefully encourage the recruitment of more female Rotarians is the progress we are making in seeing more women in top roles at Rotary International like Jennifer Jones. This Rotary year, there are nine women out of the 20 leaders serving on the Rotary International Board. And I was delighted to be elected as RI Director for 2023-25 which shows more women are taking on these roles.

"WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO REMEMBER IS THAT SHE IS BECOMING OUR PRESIDENT NOT BECAUSE SHE'S A WOMAN, IT'S BECAUSE SHE IS THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE POSITION."



| WHAT MORE COULD BE DONE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FEMALE ROTARIANS?

DONNA: I think every Rotarian should ask their membership group to review their membership statistics, not just based on gender. If there are gaps, we should ask why they exist and then take time to create a people-focussed community development action plan. Perhaps what is missing is the public are unaware of the demographic changes in Rotary today because those Rotarians on duty or who are out and about, are possibly the same type of Rotarians they have always seen. Perhaps that is because these new Rotarians are in work, at home or unavailable, so the 'new' image isn't being promoted at local levels. We need to grow awareness, utilising Rotary membership models, our modernisation, equality and diversity, whenever and wherever we can.

NAN: Given that clubs now have more flexibility than ever before in recruitment and format, it should be possible to reach other parts of the community and age

groups that may not have been possible when I was President of Rotary GB&I. Look, for instance, at Maidenhead Bridge Rotary, which is very vibrant and uses the flexibility in meeting times and attendance to encourage younger people and families to commit.

DEBBIE: We need to not just speak of our values, but live by them, and we must remember that everyone has a contribution to make to make the world a better place locally, nationally and internationally. Our behaviours must reflect those values and our clubs should be places where anyone, including women, feel comfortable in making that contribution.

EVE: Rotary needs to be seen as relevant and representing the communities we serve with not just more women but more younger members and more ethnic diversity. We need to get the message out that Rotary is a welcoming environment for all and our clubs should reflect that. So, to increase female members, we need to see women visible at every level of Rotary: club, district, nationally and internationally. I was encouraged to see, when producing 30 videos for Rotary's membership and marketing campaign, that more women are being attracted to join Rotary when they find out that we are 'People of Action'. The flexibility of new style clubs as well as cause-based and passport clubs is also attracting a new demographic. The pandemic has shown us that people want to volunteer to help their communities and this is an open invitation for us to bring more like-minded people into Rotary – including women – and build our membership. We can grasp this opportunity! ●

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Rotary transcends borders

As the world watches the destruction of Ukraine following Russia's invasion in February, we reflect on Rotary in Ukraine with a series of articles which were written just before the recent conflict

THE first Rotary clubs within the current borders of Ukraine were chartered in the 1930s in the cities of Uzhgorod, Chernivtsi, and Lviv.

During World War Two, Rotary clubs disbanded in territories under conflict, and clubs were forcibly dissolved during the Cold War in countries under Communist rule.

After the collapse of the USSR, several clubs in Europe and North America sought to re-establish Rotary's presence in the former Soviet countries.

Lubomyr 'Lu' Hewko, the father of John Hewko, Rotary International's CEO and General Secretary, played an important role.

Lu's family fled Ukraine during World War II, and years later, as president of the Rotary Club of Clarkston, Michigan, he organised several Rotary projects: delivering medical equipment to Ukrainian hospitals, assisting the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and recruiting doctors to perform eye surgeries for the needy.

After Ukraine declared its independence in 1991, Lu helped to charter the first Rotary club in the capital, Kyiv. John Hewko is a charter member.

In the early 1990s, Ukraine was part of District 1420, along with all the clubs in the former USSR, as well as some in Finland.

Other district affiliations followed, until finally, in November 1999, Rotary International decided to integrate Ukraine and Belarus with Poland in District 2230. This came to fruition on July 1st, 2000.

With the steady growth of Rotary in these three countries, the district was split into Districts 2231 (Poland) and 2232 (Ukraine, Belarus) in July 2016.

Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the armed conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (collectively known as the Donbas) have hindered Rotary's development in Ukraine.

In 2013, there were seven Rotary clubs in Crimea and the now-occupied areas of the Donbas, with a combined total of about 110 members.

Only two clubs remain, and both are in Crimea: the Rotary Club of Simferopol and the Rotary Club of Alushta who have 14 members.

In the rest of Ukraine, however, Rotary is undergoing robust growth on the strength of an influx of members who have joined since the beginning of that conflict. The national impulse to engage in humanitarian work and disaster assistance remains strong in Ukraine.

Since 2014, Rotary has grown from 49 to 62 clubs, with an additional six satellite clubs.

Membership has increased from 800 to 1,100 – and, prior to this latest conflict, members of Rotary in Ukraine were very optimistic about the organisation's continued growth. ▶





Projects for peace

Many clubs in Ukraine have initiated their own projects to bring peace to the country.

Prior to the latest conflict, in the combat zone along the Russian border in eastern Ukraine, about 14,000 people, including more than 3,000 civilians, were killed, and at least 30,000 injured, between 2014 and 2021.

During that same time, more than 1.6 million people from Crimea and the Donbas fled their homes and became displaced within Ukraine, while three million remained in the territories controlled by armed militia forces.

Over the past eight years, Rotary clubs in Ukraine have provided medical and psychological assistance to victims of the conflict and have supported the largely displaced population, while also delivering relief supplies to those who lived in frontline territories.

Rotary International had called for peaceful dialogue within divided communities and between the governments of Russia and Ukraine.

Members had been sponsoring efforts to locate and remove land mines in combat areas, while also educating the public about minefield demarcation and identification.

For the victims of land-mine injuries, Rotary clubs had set up rehabilitation centres in frontline areas.

As part of their efforts to help restore the Donbas region, Rotary members were planning and creating business opportunities that can promote restoration of communities for reintegration into the national economy.

However, the Russian invasion of the country in February has put paid to those plans – for now... ●

Rotaract began our passion for service

Mykola and Olga Stebljanko, the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine

Our Rotary life began in 1996, when we joined what would become the first Rotaract club in Crimea: the Rotaract Club of Simferopol. Since then, Rotary has been an integral part of our lives.

Our 10-year Rotaract past has become a classic example of young leadership development that creates the conditions for a natural transition into the ranks of Rotarians.

In 2006, I, Mykola, joined the Rotary Club of Simferopol, which later sponsored the Rotary Club of Simferopol-Taurica, of which my wife, Olga, was the charter president. In 2007, I became the editor of the official Rotary publication, *Rotariets*, in Ukraine and Belarus. Since 2011, Olga has supported the production of the digital version.

I was president of my club in 2013-14, but when the Crimean Peninsula was annexed during my term, we had to move to Odesa.

To continue our Rotary activities, we established the Rotary E-Club of Ukraine. This type of club, which was fairly new then, helped us and other Rotarians from Crimea and the Donbas keep our Rotary ties and sustain our community.

Our club brings together people scattered across thousands of miles. I was elected District 2232 governor for 2019-20 and now serve as a Rotary public image coordinator at the zone level.

Olga chaired the District Scholarship Subcommittee for two years, and the District Rotary Youth Exchange Committee since 2018. Together, we continue publishing *Rotariets* and providing virtual Rotary events in District 2232 and Zone 21. ● ▶

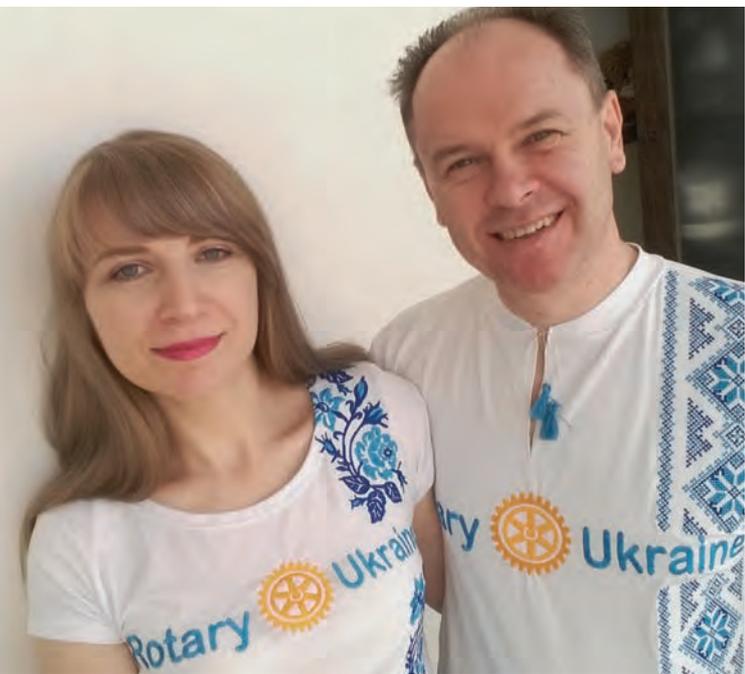
"OUR 10-YEAR ROTARACT PAST HAS BECOME A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF YOUNG LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THAT CREATES THE CONDITIONS FOR A NATURAL TRANSITION INTO THE RANKS OF ROTARIANS."

The Ukraine crisis: A brief history

1922 After several turbulent years in which Ukraine struggles to secure independence, it becomes one of the founding members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

1954 Moscow transfers Crimea to Ukraine; among other reasons, Nikita Khrushchev, recently recognized as the leader of the Soviet Union, hopes that the ostensibly generous gesture will win him support among the Ukrainian elite.

1991 After a failed coup in Moscow, Ukraine's leaders declare their independence; in a national referendum, more than 90 percent of voters, including a majority in Crimea, endorse the change in Ukraine's status.



1992 Meeting with representatives from Crimea, Ukraine's new leaders negotiate a framework that places the territory effectively under local control.

1996 The country's new constitution defines Ukraine as a unitary state with 27 administrative units, including 24 oblasts (regions), two cities with special status — Kyiv and Sevastopol — and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

1994 After signing the Budapest Memorandum, an agreement that guarantees its security and sovereignty, Ukraine, until then the world's third-largest nuclear power, begins to surrender its nuclear arsenal to Russia.

2004-05 The Orange Revolution — characterised by mass demonstrations that threaten to bring on civil war — erupts after the election of the pro-Russian Viktor Yanukovych as Ukraine's president. After the Supreme Court declares the election invalid, Yanukovych is defeated in a new round of voting.

| In the spirit of peace

Yulia Zharikova, Secretary of the Rotary Club of Kyiv Advance

The history of the Rotary Club of Kyiv Advance began at the end of 2013, when several like-minded people formed the Rotary Club of Donetsk Advance.

We were united by the idea of community service and our passion for art and music. The club supported young talents and devoted its energies to the development of educational programmes in the city.

In 2014, after the outbreak of military conflict in eastern Ukraine, many members of our club fled to different parts of the country and even abroad.

Subsequently, four club members who had moved to Kyiv decided to resume our club activities under the name Rotary Club of Donetsk Advance. Four other members who had ended up abroad or remained in Donetsk subsequently decided to keep their membership as well. So, we retained eight members.

In 2020, our club officially changed its name to Rotary Club of Kyiv Advance in accordance with the policies of Rotary International. Since relocating to Kyiv, our club has attracted many new members and even received an award from the District 2232 governor for adding the most new members in the 2019-20 Rotary year.

Given our experience from the conflict in eastern Ukraine, we have made peacebuilding and conflict prevention a main focus of our community projects.

One such project, running since 2017, offers training to various groups to promote dialogue toward reconciliation at multiple levels of Ukrainian society.

In addition, for the past five years, club members have been involved in a large international project for the psychological rehabilitation of children affected by war and military conflict in the east. ●

| Nobody is left alone

Oleksiy Kuleshov, Rotary Club of Sloviansk

The year 2014 became a time of testing for us, a test of endurance and humanity. On the positive side, Rotary brought us new strength, uniting a large number of people of different nationalities, faiths, and levels of prosperity with a common idea: to serve society.

In Ukraine, Rotarians from Lviv, Kharkiv, Dnipro, Poltava, Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chernivtsi, and the conflict areas of Donetsk — they were still holding on at that time — helped people who had fled the war, as did Rotarians from Moscow and Krasnodar in Russia.

We reached out to those Ukrainians who had lost their livelihood and were left alone in misery. Some helpful Rotarians had sent groceries, baby food, and clothing; others sent personal care products and medicine.

We organised logistics to help refugee resettlement. We served meals, distributed gifts, books, and clothes to people in the disputed territories, and, in the evening, delivered grocery packages to large families.

Together with the Rotary Club of Lviv, we also organised a mobile dental practice.

In 2015, with the help of other Rotary clubs in Ukraine, we established a multi-media class at an art school in the city of Sloviansk, and, in 2016, the Rotary Club of Sloviansk endowed a choreography class for children.

The project 'Helpers of Saint Nicholas' gained momentum and became a separate major Rotary project in eastern Ukraine.

Other club projects include replenishing libraries with modern literature, sponsoring sports teams, and supporting the 'Believe in Yourself' project headed by world-champion Paralympic swimmer, Viktor Smyrnov.

We also provided funding for kindergarten classes for children living with visual, mental, and musculoskeletal disorders. ●

2013-14 Yanukovych, who was elected president in 2010, rejects an agreement for greater integration with the European Union. Protests topple the government, and Yanukovych flees to Russia.

February-March 2014 Russian troops enter Crimea, seizing the regional parliament and other government buildings. Russia ultimately annexes the peninsula.

April 2014 Pro-Russia separatist rebels begin seizing territory in eastern Ukraine. (In July, the rebels shoot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, killing 298 people.) As fighting between the rebels and the Ukrainian military intensifies, the Russian army supports the rebels. As of late 2021, the Ukrainian government estimates that about 14,000 have been killed during the conflict.



24 February 2022 As the April issue of Rotary goes to press, Russia wages a full-out war on Ukraine.

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Rotary's Platinum Jubilee celebrations

In 2022, The Queen will become the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service on the throne. Here are some wonderful opportunities for Rotary clubs and districts to celebrate the occasion.

| STORY BY **GEORGE BICKNELL** |

IN honour of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, there will be commemorative events throughout the year and a special four-day Bank Holiday Weekend from Thursday, June 2nd to Sunday, June 5th.

This will be the first time a monarch has reached 70 years of service to the throne. Individuals, communities and organisations across the country now have the perfect opportunity to come together and celebrate while improving the environment.

This Jubilee year, Rotary is delighted to be supporting Thank You Day, the Jubilee Beacons campaign and The Queen's Green Canopy – all campaigns which anyone can take part in.

On Thursday, June 2nd, the first day of this special Bank Holiday Weekend, a plan is in place for Rotary clubs around the world to join together in a chain of beacons!

It has long been a tradition in this country to celebrate Royal Jubilees by lighting beacons - whether that be on mountains and cliff tops, church and cathedral towers, parks and farms or town and village greens.

Beacons were lit all the way back in 1897 for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and the tradition has since continued in stunning fashion during The Queen's Silver, Golden and Diamond Jubilees.

On the evening of June 2nd, there will be thousands of beacons being lit throughout the UK in celebration of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and we want to encourage your Rotary club or district to take part.

More than 1,500 beacons will be lit throughout the British Isles, enabling local communities, individuals and organisations to pay tribute to The Queen's 70 years of service.

It won't just be in the UK that beacons will be being lit though, as Rotary

has arranged for a beacon to be lit in each of the capital cities of Commonwealth countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, the Caribbean, the Pacific and more.

A guide of how to organise taking part in the Jubilee Beacons, what kind of beacons you can buy and health and safety rules can be found for anyone's use at queensjubileebeacons.com.

The Platinum Jubilee doesn't just give Rotarians the chance to come together and celebrate but also to improve the environment for future generations, as is the case with The Queen's Green Canopy.

This tree-planting campaign takes place across 2022 so individuals, groups, organisations and communities alike can take part when it is most convenient to arrange.

The Queen's Green Canopy looks to create a positive legacy from The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, with the initiative aligned to Rotary's new Area of Focus of Protecting The Environment.

The Queen's Green Canopy is also dedicating a network of 70 Ancient Woodlands across the United Kingdom and identifying 70 Ancient Trees to mark Her Majesty's 70 years of service.

The Woodland Trust (a partner of The Queen's Green Canopy) is putting on its Free Trees for Schools and Communities Scheme – a fantastic way for communities to get involved with the tree-planting in 2022.



On the final day of the special Bank Holiday Weekend, Sunday June 5th, Rotary will be one of the hundreds of organisations supporting Thank You Day – the UK's biggest thank you party.

Last year, millions got together across the country on Thank You Day to say socially distanced thank yous for the incredible spirit with which we helped each other through the dark days of the pandemic.

On Thank You Day this year, Rotary hopes that all of us will get together with family, friends, neighbours, and in our communities to share a Big Jubilee Lunch together.

Whether it's sharing a cup of tea with a neighbour on the doorstep or a bigger bash in the street, join millions of people across the UK to share friendship, food and fun.

As well as it being a way of thanking the Queen for her selfless dedication to the throne, it will also be a poignant and deserved tribute to the people in our own lives whose support we couldn't do without.

Amanda Watkin, General Secretary for Rotary Great Britain & Ireland, commented: "We're so excited to once again be involved in celebrating Thank You Day. At Rotary we love making connections and making a difference, and Thank You Day is an amazing campaign which helps people do exactly that."

Rotarian Lisa Hunter, who is a member of Maidenhead Bridge Rotary, appeared alongside documentary maker and previous Rotary collaborator Ross Kemp on BBC Breakfast for the launch of Thank You Day to hammer home the importance of the project.

She said: "That's what the 5th of June will all be about – coming together, celebrating, having fun, saying thank you to the people around us and just taking that time to remember this momentous occasion."

Rotary encourages clubs and districts to get planning for Thank You Day as early as they can – with tips and a free planning pack available at thankyouday.org.uk.

Also make sure to visit the web pages for all these events rotarygbi.org/jubilee and fill in the form that lets us know which activities you plan on taking part in! ●



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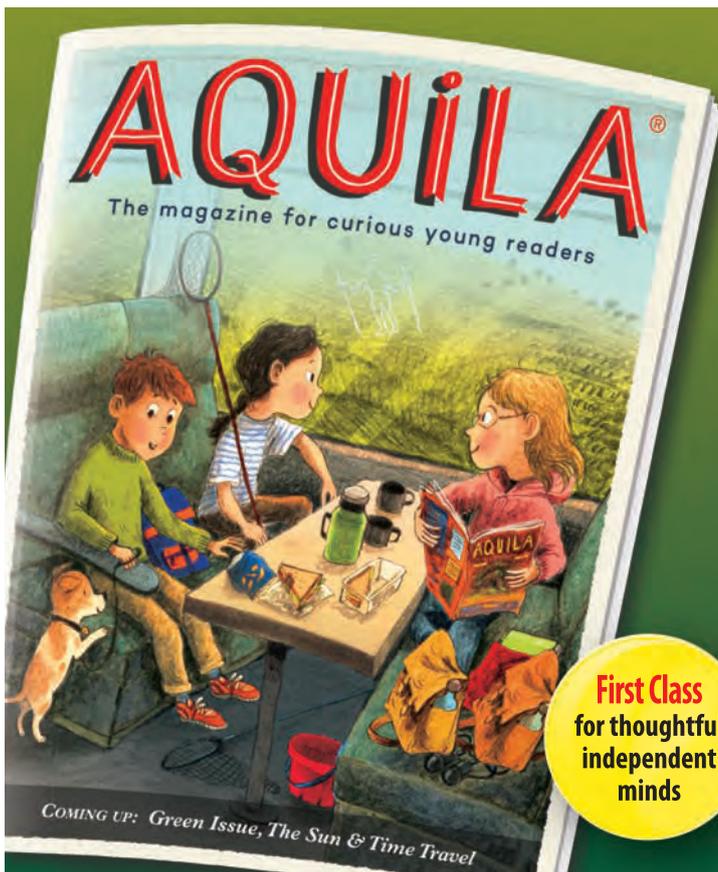


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‘My dad’s killing made me overachieve in rugby’

Ben Cohen will be one of the keynote speakers at May’s Volunteer Expo. Here he discusses his StandUp Foundation which seeks to eradicate bullying.

BEN Cohen’s dad Peter was trying to break-up a fight outside a nightclub in Northampton in October 2000 when he was fatally injured. The 58-year-old suffered serious head injuries and died in hospital a month later.

Three men were subsequently jailed for the attack.

Fast forward to Sydney, Australia, in November 2003, when England rugby international Ben won the World Cup

thanks to Jonny Wilkinson’s memorable drop goal.

Were you thinking of your dad in the final as the match against Australia edged into extra time?

“Not with 30 seconds to go,” explained Ben. “I was thinking we have to win this game. It was a nail-biter for sure.”

And yet Ben admitted that the sudden death of his father drove him to succeed.

“My dad got beaten to death while he was protecting someone,” he said. “I felt lost and angry about the whole injustice of it all. I got rid of a lot of my hurt and

aggression playing rugby.

“But, looking at the plus side, it made me overachieve. It helped me achieve greatness in rugby which I don’t think I would have ever got without the anger and pain of what happened to my dad.

“Don’t get me wrong, I would give it all up in a heartbeat to get him back and for it not to have happened.

“It has to inspire you. My brother went on to join the police, my sister became a paramedic – both because of what happened to our dad. I went on in my rugby to be a world champion.

“So you look at these obstacles or

"IT HAS TO INSPIRE YOU. MY BROTHER WENT ON TO JOIN THE POLICE, MY SISTER BECAME A PARAMEDIC – BOTH BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR DAD."

situations which can ultimately set you on a different path. It is amazing how such a situation can spark something and that is what it did to us all."

However Ben, who was capped 57 times by England and whose uncle George was a member of England's 1966 World Cup-winning football team, admitted he was never able to mourn his father's death until he set up The Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation.

It was started in 2012 as the world's first foundation dedicated to raising awareness of the long-term and damaging effects of bullying.

Their work is around education, helping to increase equality and diversity, as well as raising funds to financially support organisations which are standing up to bullying.

According to the StandUp Foundation, up to 50% of children and young people, as well as many adults in the UK say they have experienced bullying.

Those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender are more likely to be bullied which can lead to isolation and loneliness.

Victims can suffer from low self-esteem, poor achievement, an increased risk of depression and anxiety and, in extreme cases, a higher risk of suicide.

Over the last decade, The Ben Cohen StandUp Foundation has supported 43 charities and organisations.

Ben admitted that progress has not always been easy with the combinations of Brexit, Covid and in 2022 the war in Ukraine.

"It is incredibly tough," he said. "Charities are putting their hands out for help, doing amazing work, but unfortunately it is hard to raise the money." Bullying comes in many shapes and forms. Ben suggested that when he was at school, bullying was a note sent round the classroom.

Today, social media adds a whole new dimension.

"Bullying is something that is precise and concise. Something that is recurring and happening daily," he said.

"You are singled out. It is you they are specifically after. It is as simple and as devastating as that.

"The Foundation is about anti-bullying and, as we know, bullying comes in all forms. Our message is broad, it's not pinned to one specific area: racism, homophobia, transphobia sexism. It is about equality and diversity."

Ben conceded that the waters around gender equality definitions sometimes get muddled. Specifically around bullying, he pointed out that in the work place some people can miss the point about the difference between bullying and accountability.

"If you go into work, you are not working and someone says, 'can you get on with your work', now that is not bullying, that's accountability. Just do your job," he explained.

"As a boss, you want to get a work force which is pulling in the right direction.

"How do you create an environment which is inclusive for everyone, what does leadership look like, how do you lead, are you approachable, do you call it out, can employees put their heads above the parapet?

"It's where you channel the education to get people to understand what diversity and inclusion is.

"Education is really important and the generation which is coming through is really going to drive the cultural change and more understanding.

"I just think sometimes it can get a little lost in translation." ●

| Information |

For more information visit:
standupfoundation-uk.org

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YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO VOLUNTEER EXPO LIVE

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So what is Volunteer Expo Live? It is the UK's first ever national volunteering show and it's hosted by Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland. After hosting the event virtually in 2021, we're so excited to be bringing the event to life in person at the NEC Birmingham on 6th and 7th May 2022.

Rotary is blazing a trail in the volunteering landscape by hosting this event, and this is your chance to proudly fly the Rotary flag and enjoy everything the show has to offer. Take a look at what you can expect.

THE SPEAKERS

At Volunteer Expo Live, we've got a packed programme of incredible speakers to inspire and entertain. We'll be joined by celebrity campaigners, volunteer sector leaders, and real-life volunteering heroes.

We've got rugby star Ben Cohen on tackling bullying, actor Chizzy Akudolu on mental health, and broadcaster Ayo Akinwolere on how Crisis are supporting people experiencing homelessness through their Skylight project.

There is also an incredible opportunity to hear from Jennifer Jones, one of Rotary's great storytellers, who will take the reins as President of Rotary International this July.

Sport is an integral part of our communities. We'll be looking at the power of sport to create social change and bring people together with Team GB double-gold medal winning sailor Hannah Mills, former Team GB Paralympian Steve Brown and BBC Sports Personality Unsung Hero, Sam Barlow.

THE EXHIBITORS

One of the most exciting parts of Volunteer Expo Live is meeting with a huge range of charities and not-for-profits in our exhibition. We have some amazing organisations joining us in the areas of health and wellbeing, the environment, supporting young people and international development. Plus, in the Rotary Village, you can discover and meet your favourite Rotary charities and projects.

THE WORKSHOPS

Interactive workshops in the three dedicated Learning Zones are your chance to network with peers and discover more about the causes you care about. These practical sessions will spark your imagination, giving you ideas to take back to your community. With over 20 sessions to choose from, here are some of the highlights:

- Becoming a Dementia Friend – with **Alzheimer's Society**
- Helping nature in crisis – with **RSPB**
- Connecting Communities – with **Eden Project**
- Undertaking defibrillator projects – with **Community Heartbeat Trust**
- Plus many more

Don't miss out on this amazing event, coming to the NEC Birmingham on 6th and 7th May. ●

Information

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General Secretary
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David Ellis
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ROTARY'S SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

"WE SAW AN OUTPOURING OF PEOPLE HELPING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONFLICT BEGAN IN MARCH. WE KNOW AS ROTARIANS WE ARE IN THIS FOR THE LONG TERM BECAUSE THE IMPACT WILL BE HERE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME."

A DARK cloud hangs over Europe with the war in Ukraine; death, destruction, and displacement, with more than a million refugees fleeing the terrifying bombs and bullets which have been raining down on this proud nation.

The world has responded with an outpouring of support and humanitarian aid to Ukraine, and Rotary, as the world's largest humanitarian organisation, has been at the forefront of these efforts.

The United Nations estimates that five million people could be displaced by the conflict. Innocent people have lost their lives and families are being torn apart by war and violence.

As an organisation who has peace as a cornerstone of our global mission, we stand with the people of Ukraine.

Rotary clubs across Great Britain & Ireland have been overwhelmed by the level of public support to their bucket collections, so how is Rotary in these isles co-ordinating this work?

The Rotary Foundation (TRF) has confirmed that all funds received in its Disaster Response Fund by April 30th, 2022 will qualify for use in support of the Ukrainian relief efforts.

For Rotary GB&I this means that donations can be made to The Rotary Foundation of the United Kingdom's Disaster Response Fund (RFUK). This allows for the addition of 25% Gift Aid on eligible donations, meaning every £1 donated becomes £1.25.

This is in response to Rotary members requests around the world to contribute funds to support relief efforts. It is strongly recommended that funds are not transferred directly into banks

in Ukraine.

Districts are being encouraged to use their District Designated Fund. That is money which Districts don't have to raise for, but which has already come back from The Rotary Foundation immediately translating to cash into bank for The Rotary Foundation to give disaster fund grants.

A Rotary GB&I Ukraine Crisis Taskforce has been created to provide a Rotary co-ordinated approach to the Ukraine crisis.

Their focus will be on displaced people leaving Ukraine, as well as those remaining in the war-torn country which will be communicated to Rotarians throughout the UK and Ireland.

Jersey Rotarian, Allan Smith, is leading the team as Rotarians across the world unite to make a difference.

The Taskforce will work alongside the Inter-Country Committees (ICC) featuring nations with close connections with Ukraine. James Onions (Kew Gardens Rotary) is working with an ICC team led by Rotary International Director, Katerina Kotsali-Papadimitriou.

Inside Ukraine, Rotarians are supporting refugees. They are assisting local services for sick and injured people.

These people need personal assistance, housing, food, medical supplies and even shoes. Rotary is running a train daily into Ukraine with humanitarian supplies and returning with up to 700 refugees.

Rotary's ICC lead on relations with Ukraine, Tata Gick (District 1130), is identifying the needs of refugees in the country – medicines (especially dressings and pain killers for adults and children),



warm socks, thermals, food, bullet proof vests, blankets, sleeping bags, first aid kits, dressings, hygiene products, toiletries, woman pads, nappies, wet wipes, torches, batteries, candles, laptops, phones, and tablets with good batteries.

The ICC lead on relations with Romania and Moldova, Peter King (Kew Gardens Rotary) is identifying needs of refugees once they have left Ukraine.

The Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals, led by Dr John Philip (Newbury Rotary), is activating their network of volunteers to assist and access medical items. There is a critical shortage of medical supplies.

The financial need is huge and getting bigger. Displaced Ukrainians need our help and every Rotary club has its own way to fund-raise.

Financial donations to support these two Rotary organisations are needed through club donations, and even crowdfunding by clubs, districts or even a cluster of districts.

It is recommended that districts hold and distribute any funds raised, using an existing bank account for club's donations including crowdfunding.

The Taskforce will work with districts to release funds for the work of ICC and The Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals until funds can be transferred.

While there is urgent need right now, we must not lose sight that the real work

of Rotary is in the longer term – just as Rotary has done in Afghanistan and with Sudanese refugees.

Rotary is going to have so much work to do supporting refugees for some time to come.

Rotary has an important part to play in this conflict. There is the power of the Rotary network which is able to connect others and find solutions.

Such as the 180 children who were ferried across the Ukrainian border, on a train to Budapest and then an 11-hour flight to Delhi thanks to the interventions of Katarina Kotsali-Papadimitriou and Rotary International President, Shekhar Mehta.

This is the power of the Rotary network. It's not just about raising money, but it is who knows who.

We are people who take care of others. Rotary is very good at it and has been doing this for 117 years.

We are there for the long run.

As an organisation we are trusted and valued. For 14 successive years, The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating by Charity Navigator, an independent evaluator of charities.

Channeling money through The Rotary Foundation receives gift aid as well, leveraging the money we receive for greater use.

And in a world of opportunism, Rotary is a brand, and The Rotary Foundation is a charity which people can

trust to help ensuring well-intentioned giving reaches its destination.

There will be immediate funding needs which the ICC and Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals can help with.

But there will also be a longer-term need, so by sending money through The Rotary Foundation for Disaster Relief Grants, this means the cash goes further and lasts longer.

As Rotarians we are focused on making a sustainable difference for the longer term.

We are going to focus on what we do best by partnering with other organisations in the war zone, and supporting refugee families in the best way.

We will do this through our existing infrastructures and networks, as well as seeking to amplify that money with matching funds to make it go further.

We saw an outpouring of people helping immediately after the conflict began in March. We know as Rotarians we are in this for the long term because the impact will be here for many years to come. ●

| Donations |

Donations to Ukraine can be made by visiting rotarygbi.org/ukraine



SHEKHAR MEHTA

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

FRIENDS, one of my mantras in Rotary has been do more, grow more. I am sure you are adopting this mantra. Do more, as in bigger and impactful service projects, and grow more, as in increasing our membership.

There is so much excitement across the Rotary world about our Each One, Bring One effort.

Everywhere I travel, club presidents, district governors, and Rotary members — both veteran and new — express appreciation that their membership efforts are inspiring the Rotary world.

We are growing more, and I cannot wait to celebrate all of this success with you at the Rotary International Convention in Houston in June. There is still time to register and make your plans to join us.

We are looking forward to a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will unite our members after far too much time apart.

As we grow more, we will have so much more opportunity to do more. April is Maternal and Child Health Month, a great opportunity for your clubs to consider what you are doing to support the health of mothers and young children. Improving access to care and the quality of care for women and children worldwide is an important focus for us and it also ties in very well with our Empowering Girls initiative.

I appreciate the work being done by various clubs in this area of focus, and I would encourage you to think of ways to do more.

It has been so exciting to see Rotary members come together at the presidential conferences to share ideas about using our areas of focus to bring about big, lasting change in the world.

The past and upcoming presidential conferences are looking at our new area of focus — the environment — and how our work to protect our planet must support our efforts to grow local economies, especially in places with the greatest poverty.

I also had the honour to speak at the 26th United Nations climate change conference in Glasgow, Scotland, known as COP26.

This important meeting brought together nearly 100 heads of state and government over a two-week period to set new targets for fossil fuel emission. My call to action was to restore mangroves, a crucial ecosystem that can mitigate the effects of climate change in coastal areas. Already, countries across the world are showing great enthusiasm for this plan.

Our survival is at stake — the damage of environmental catastrophe is already upon us — and so, too, is our ability to lift the world's most needy out of poverty and offer them hope. We must find ways to protect our planet while sustaining the economic growth necessary to achieve our highest humanitarian goals.

This is a very exciting time in Rotary, a time when the world needs us most. As we Serve to Change Lives, remember that we are also changing ourselves. We are becoming the world's great change-makers and peacebuilders.

The world is ready for us. It's time to rise to that call. ●

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"You could have fried an egg on the table in there in the summer, I now look upon the conservatory as a new room. It is quiet, restful and cosy."

Carol Doyle, Surrey

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"I've already turned the underfloor heating down. Lovely job guys, thank you!"

Anne Bird, Bristol

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Mr & Mrs Bailey-Webb, Warsash

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Letters to the editor

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



Wood stoves serve our remote communities

GEOFF Snare may be correct in his statement regarding wood stoves: "Fires are used by 8% of the population but cause triple the particle pollution of traffic". (*Rotary*, February).

Living in balmy Nottinghamshire differs greatly to living up in Bonny

Scotland, especially during stormy times when the electricity can be cut off for many days, as we have endured more than once this winter already.

Traffic is much lighter up in Scotland, is one point. There are only six million of us up here. During a power cut, those homes with a wood burning stove were extremely grateful having a warm house and also a stove to cook on, along with giving a little light.

Let us not get carried away dreaming that electricity is 'green energy'. Consider the huge amount of concrete and steel which has to be hauled long distances,

over miles of new roads to build these wind farms, often in remote places far away from where the power is consumed.

I do not know how much grant money is poured into these wind farms which have a life span of approximately 25 years, not long. I am not here to discuss the merits or otherwise of wind energy, or how we should generate our power.

I just wish to point out that wood burning stoves are a lifeline to many people living in more remote parts of the country, where the supply of fuel to support these stoves is on their doorstep and can be transported in a wheelbarrow.

This, to my mind, is also a very renewable, sustainable situation, during harsh winters. Horses for courses please.

James Robertson

Castle Douglas Rotary,
Dumfries & Sutherland

Is this cancel culture?

YOUR correspondent Nigel Willis (*Rotary* December) suggests that those whom he calls 'climate change deniers' should not be permitted to have their 'dubious' assertions published in *Rotary* magazine.

I am far from convinced that Mr Willis's own assertions are indubitable, but he is entitled to make them in this magazine.

What I find of greater concern is his use of the term 'climate change denier' which is an attempt to equate those who do not share his views on climate change with neo-Nazis.

Secondly I am alarmed by the suggestion that *Rotary* magazine should only publish views shared by Mr Willis.

Cancel culture has indeed come to Rotary.

Gary Adams

Andover Anton Rotary, Hampshire

Why was Rotary at COP26?

I READ in total disbelief that Rotary International was represented at COP26 in Glasgow.

At what cost I wonder to Rotary and the membership? As for the five priorities listed, I shall make no comment.

Do the five attendees seriously believe that they have made or will make one bit of difference by their attendance? I think not.

Derek M Andrews

Hunterston Rotary, North Ayrshire

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 or post to: *Rotary* magazine, Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland, Kinwarton Road, Alcester, Warwickshire B49 6PB. The comments made on this page do not necessarily represent the views of Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland, and Rotarians.

To burn or not to burn?

I WAS pleased to see the letter from Geoff Snare (*Rotary*, February). For a long time, it has been apparent that bonfires, open fires and old wood burning stoves have contributed to particulate and other pollution. This is very harmful to the younger generation.

While it might seem that wood burning stoves are a solution to the problem of burning fossil fuels the answer is more complex.

I live in a 200-year-old farmhouse. It has always been heated by open fires using readily available logs from local woods. No fossil fuel used in transportation.

We have been trying to be as 'green' as possible and we use our own water supply and have installed solar panels. However, we did not want to substantially increase our costs by having electric heating.

Our research showed that in the Scandinavian countries, and notably Denmark, wood burning is far more common. However, these countries have far stricter regulations on particulates.

The engineers at Hwam in Denmark, for example, make stoves which are three times more efficient than the type shown with Geoff's letter and reduce pollutants by 80%.

Perhaps we need tighter regulation in the UK rather than demonising all stoves.

As with much of climate change and environmental issues, the solutions are not black and white.

Neil Hockaday

Paignton Rotary, Devon



Climate change tolerance

I WAS disappointed in the tone of the letters published (*Rotary* December) in response to Gordon Daly's August letter and aghast at the suggestion by Nigel Willis that he should not be entitled to make his assertions in *Rotary* magazine.

The December edition was devoted to climate change which suggests that claims by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the cause of climate change have been swallowed whole by the editorial panel.

Anyone with even half a brain must acknowledge that climate change is happening, as it has for millennium.

To smear someone who considers homo sapiens are not wholly responsible for the changes, by labelling them as a 'climate change denier', is infantile green speak.

The suggestion that a contrarian should be denied a platform to express doubt is something one expects in totalitarian states, not from a Rotarian.

The so-called 'findings' of the IPCC are biased manipulation and the actions being taken in many countries will create great hardship.

I recommend Rotarians read 'Climate - all is well, all will be well' before they demand we treat sceptics as pariahs that must be silenced.

A little humility, less contempt, an open mind and a great deal more tolerance would be welcome in this debate.

Grahame Wiggin

Wednesbury Rotary, Staffordshire



Abandon the Luddite dream world

OF course, we can affect our environment – we know for instance that London smogs were caused by unrestrained coal burning.

Only someone with their head completely in the sand would claim that our present energy-wasteful lifestyle has nothing to do with melting glaciers, warming oceans and all the rest of it.

Our first duty as Rotarians is to cause no harm. One of your other correspondents rightly questions the value of air-mile-heavy Rotary conventions.

We have to go further and question our eating habits, housing choices and travel priorities. Above all, we have to educate ourselves about the science of what we are doing to the climate, and not bury ourselves in some Luddite dream world.

John Armstrong

Chiswick & Brentford Rotary, West London

Let's do something!

THE latest report from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that there is now irrefutable evidence that increasing global warming leading to climate change is man-made.

The way to mitigate this is by reducing emissions in greenhouse gases especially carbon dioxide and methane. The contention that many thousands of scientists disagree with that evidence is now untenable.

A 2019 review of scientific papers found the consensus on the cause of climate change to be at 100% and a 2021 study concluded that over 99% of scientific papers agree on the human cause of climate change.

Papers that disagreed with the consensus either cannot be replicated or contain errors.

Rotary projects that work towards the goal of reducing CO2, methane and other greenhouse gases are needed in addition to those aimed at adaptation measures because both of these fit squarely into Rotary's seventh Area of Focus on supporting the environment.

Neither approach should be discouraged, so let's get on and work together to do something about it.

Mark Scudamore

Twickenham upon Thames Rotary



Rotary needs to step up in pandemic

SINCE the onset of the pandemic, Rotary International has remained somewhat silent on Rotary's role in assisting the respective Governments in controlling the spread of Covid-19.

Rotary has vast experience in dealing with disasters and this pandemic could do with some help from Rotary. With Rotary's experience in vaccination against polio, perhaps this is an area where Rotary can help.

Many individual Rotarians have helped out as vaccinators but it has not been a Rotary-organised activity.

Total global deaths due to Covid 19 is in excess of 5.6 million and counting.

Now that we have a vaccine that can prevent the infection, should Rotary not take a lead in supplying the countries who are unable to vaccinate their population?

Whilst rich countries hoard a billion unused doses only 1-2 % of poorer nations population are vaccinated. Ironically India has no shortage of capacity, but production has been restricted to two manufacturers with patent rights. Half of the doses India produces are exported or given away as aid.

Now is the time for Rotary to step in and help the prevention of death across Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Dr Rajgopalan Menon
Roundhay Rotary, West Yorkshire

Rotary and the Home Guard

WHAT a strange coincidence. The February edition of the magazine has just dropped through my letterbox and I discover Trevor Morgan's letter regarding Rotary and Dad's Army.

At our club meeting recently, I gave a talk on the "Real Dad's Army", the Home Guard. It is based upon a book by Charles Graves, published in 1943, entitled "The Home Guard of Britain", which relates its formation gleaned from reports sent to him by almost all of the 1,200 battalions then established.

Whilst the situations into which Captain Mainwaring and his platoon get themselves are very funny, in the early days of the Home Guard some real-life occurrences were even funnier but, at the same time, frighteningly worrying had Hitler invaded.

What the comedy lacks is the acknowledgement of the heroism of the Home Guard, particularly during bombing raids, and the role of women. Although initially women were banned from joining, many did unofficially, learning unarmed combat and musketry, operating radios and running first aid posts.

As Trevor states, Mainwaring is seen at a Rotary dinner. Indeed, many Rotarians must have volunteered but, despite my best efforts, I have been unable to find out how many Rotarians served in the Home Guard and how many were killed in action whilst on Home Guard duty.

If anyone can furnish me with these figures, I would be most grateful.

Patrick Farrelly
Braunton Caen Rotary, Devon

The Memory Jar

I WOULD like to thank Trevor Battersby for his letter in the January issue of *Rotary* magazine.

This is a strong representation for dementia in Cowbridge. The town council has declared it a dementia-friendly town. Rotary has played a part and had mats made to place on the floor of entrances to shops and businesses in the town.

We have a club running once a fortnight called "The Memory Jar". It is run by Colin Philips and his wife Madeleine. We have quizzes, magic painting and jigsaws to start proceedings and people can chat. There is usually music playing in the background.

We have a drink and cake – kindly donated by the local Costa and "Topstak". Two ladies are in charge of the drinks, one being the Minister of the chapel where we meet.

We then have an old film or a film quiz, and end the afternoon with a sing song. We have our names printed out and stuck on our jumper or jackets so that everyone knows each other's names. The person working the electrics is Mike Carter, and his wife Rachel helps with the drinks.

A Rotarian led by Peter Davies, David Pierce and Gerwyn Watkins, will usually turn up to help put out the tables and chairs, and



then, at the end, help to put them away.

At the moment, because of Covid, we have to spray everything before it is put away, and when we are walking around we must wear masks.

We all have a lot of fun and we get a lot out of the meetings which run from 2pm to 4pm. Everybody loves singing the old songs, and it does one good to see the smiles on people's faces as they leave.

Eleanor Watkins
Wife of a Cowbridge Rotarian,
Vale of Glamorgan



Recycling your spectacles

YORK Ainsty Rotary provides a spectacle recycling service in support of their honorary member, Ruth Perrott. Ruth had travelled to the Cameroon in 1991 and at a presentation to our club, Ruth was asked how the members could help. Thirty years on, they are still helping!

Rotarians from York Ainsty Rotary sort, wash, measure and individually bag each pair of spectacles before they are placed into libraries of 1,000 pairs, ready for shipment.

Prior to Covid, Ruth travelled to the African continent 16 times. Post Covid, the spectacles are freighted to charitable

organisations in Sri Lanka, Kenya and Ghana who have the necessary expertise to ensure the spectacles end up on the right noses and are fitted correctly.

Please send your spectacle donations to: Ruth Perrott, 16 Manor Farm Close, Copmanthorpe, York YO23 3GE.

We suggest using an internet parcel broker such as Parcel2Go or ParcelHero to negotiate the cheapest rate for your shipment. Please omit cases.

| Colin Perrott
Rotary York Ainsty

The pillars of Rotary life

DOES David Telford understand the real meaning of mantra? (Rotary, February). I think not. When the principles of Rotary were originally co-ordinated, they are the pillars of Rotary life. The basic premise is that they are essential to keep maintaining the solid principles of Rotary.

A mantra is a word or phrase that is repeated often to express a basic belief in the ideal of service above self. It is a tag line or catchphrase and comes from the Sanskrit word meaning a special message or text and channels your energies into positivity.

Surely it is good that prospective new members are aware of the four-way test and its observance of our service in this valued movement. Don't try and eradicate or change that which is not broken.

| Tony Osmend
Chichester Harbour Rotary, West Sussex

Read it and leave it!

I HAVE just read the February edition of *Rotary* magazine and wanted to congratulate you on the job you are doing. The idea of leaving Rotary in various locations is a great idea and something I will make sure I talk to club about on Thursday.

| Bill Fishlock
Swindon Rotary, Wiltshire



Shocked by Savile article

I WAS shocked that you allowed the Jimmy Savile article to be printed (*Rotary*, December).

Whilst reading with sympathy the author's plight and believing he acted throughout with professionalism, this is not a subject of which I wish to be reminded.

The despicable acts discovered posthumously to have been carried out without the possibility of any justice for the victims, I believe deserves that his name be expunged from history.

Thank you for the work you do to help produce the magazine.

| Terry Maultsaid
Hedge End Rotary, Hampshire

Dignity compromised

WHAT on earth possessed the editorial team to print the article and photograph about Jimmy Savile (*Rotary*, December)?

Should any of all the many victims of Jimmy Savile be Rotarians, or have family members or friends who were, and they saw the two pages occupied by the copy and photograph of Savile's grave it, without a doubt, will have brought back unwanted and dreadful memories.

Perhaps the photograph of the grave was the worst part. In October 2012, after the exposure of his crimes, the grave was quickly raised to the ground at the request of his family to ensure the "dignity and sanctity" of Woodlands Cemetery, Scarborough.

I would contend that the dignity and sanctity of *Rotary* magazine has been compromised by resurrecting this photograph and accompanying article.

Writer Rotarian Robert Morphet surely could not have considered the effect on victims when submitting his article?

| Paul Whiteley
Sowerby Bridge Rotary,
West Yorkshire



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A caring partnership

An ageing population with improved life expectancy, means that the demand for unpaid carers is growing rapidly. Dr Cheryle Berry, co-team leader for Rotary GB&I Humanitarian Service explains what Rotary can do.

WE were delighted when our partnership with Carers UK was extended for a further two years during the summer, meaning that Rotary GB&I members are continuing to reach out and connect carers in local communities throughout the UK in partnership with Carers UK, Family Carers Ireland and other local carers organisations. We reflect below on what has been achieved through the partnership so far.

About caring

There are an estimated 6.5 million carers in the UK supporting friends, family members or neighbours who are older, disabled or seriously ill. That is 1 in 8 adults.

Caring is such an important part of life. It's simply part of being human.

Carers are holding families together, making an enormous contribution to society and saving the economy billions of pounds.

Yet many are stretched to the limit –

juggling care with work and family life, struggling to make ends meet and often battling with poor health themselves.

With 65% of people likely to care in their lifetime, this is something that will affect almost all of us. Now more than ever it is vital to raise awareness of caring and the work of Carers UK.

How Carers UK helps carers

As the UK's only national membership charity for unpaid carers, Carers UK is both a supportive community and a



"OUR ONGOING PARTNERSHIP WITH CARERS UK WILL ALLOW US TO REACH MORE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES AND SUPPORT UNPAID CARERS WHO ARE DOING INCREDIBLE THINGS IN HUGELY TOUGH CIRCUMSTANCES."

movement for change. Carers UK makes life better for carers by:

- providing expert information, guidance and support through our website, Helpline, and publications
- connecting people through our online meetups (Care for a Cuppa and Share & Learn), online forum and community volunteers, making sure no one has to care alone
- supporting employers so carers are better able to balance work and caring
- campaigning for lasting societal change in areas that make a difference for carers
- innovating to find new ways to reach and support carers

Aims of our partnership

Our partnership is enabling us to reach many more carers through Rotary GB&I's active membership and networks, increasing individuals' understanding of what support is available to them from Carers UK and local organisations, and connecting carers with each other.

Together, Rotary GB&I and Carers UK have created a nationwide network of over 150 volunteer Rotary Carers UK Ambassadors, all of whom are Rotary members across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – and we are always looking for more Rotary members to volunteer to help us increase our reach.

Helen Walker, Chief Executive of Carers UK said "By working with

Rotary's active membership and network of 1,700 clubs across the country, we're able to reach many more unpaid carers at this crucial time. We're so grateful to Rotary GB&I for helping us support more unpaid carers than we ever could alone."

Amanda Watkin, General Secretary of Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland said, "At Rotary we are focused on two principles: making a difference and making connections. Our ongoing partnership with Carers UK will allow us to reach more people in our communities and support unpaid carers who are doing incredible things in hugely tough circumstances."

Why are Rotarians involved in the partnership?

Cheryle Berry, National Lead for England, said, "I am proud to be a Rotarian and a carer for my husband. The support and friendship of my fellow Rotarians has helped me so much and the advice from Carers UK has been invaluable. Therefore, it was truly wonderful to hear that Rotary Great Britain and Ireland and Carers UK were forming a partnership. It had the

potential for us to work together and help many carers while increasing our Rotary membership network.

"This partnership has opened up a whole new world of friendship and support to many carers in these difficult times of the pandemic."

Achievements of the partnership

- Recruiting 150 Club Ambassadors and District Leads.
- Creating resources and training materials to support the future establishment of 'Memory Cafes', 'Friendship Groups' and 'Telephone Befriending Networks'.
- Raising the profile of caring locally, with Rotarians getting involved in many articles in the local press and features on local radio to raise awareness of unpaid caring and the work of Carers UK. ●

Information

Interested in raising awareness of caring in your community? Find out more about how to get involved in the partnership by emailing cheryle.berry@btinternet.com

BE INSPIRED BY CAPTAIN TOM

Martin Low from Sidcup Rotary in Kent is a District 1120 Lead and Deputy National Lead in England for Rotary's partnership with Carers UK.



I AM pleased to have got involved with the Rotary Great Britain and Ireland's partnership with Carers UK, and I am keen that Rotary recruits more club ambassadors.

What inspired me to get involved was listening to some of the excellent first series of Rotary togetherTalks organised by Rotary magazine editor, Dave King and Rotary International Director Nicki Scott.

There, the theme was clearly stated: "Together we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change: across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves."

I hope that the late Captain Sir Tom Moore's daughter Hannah Ingram-Moore who gave one of the Rotary

togetherTalks might get involved. Hannah recognises the importance of carers from when they helped look after her mother.

Perhaps we might see the annual Captain Sir Tom Moore's Award for inspirational unpaid carers.

I attended a very informative webinar on the partnership and volunteered to be the District Lead for District 1120, which covers 72 Rotary clubs stretching from south-east London, along the Kent and Sussex coasts, and which also includes Gibraltar.

Attending that webinar was the then District Governor, Brian Dunne, and Rotarian Ian Wright from Dover Rotary Club with his expertise on mental health.

Together we are working with some very talented people in District 1120 and across the UK. Recently, I have joined the National Team as Cheryle Berry's

deputy in one of her many roles as UK Partnership Nations Lead.

The late Captain Sir Tom Moore inspired a nation in the darkest depths of COVID-19 by walking 100 laps of his garden and raising £32 million for NHS Charities Together.

You can be inspired by him and help unpaid carers by making them aware of Carers UK and linking Carers UK with local charities and support groups.

I would encourage fellow Rotarians to get involved as a Club Ambassador for the Rotary Great Britain and Ireland, and Carers UK Partnership.

It can take as little as an hour a month and you can share role with others.

Go on, give it a try! ●



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. People are at the heart of everything ShelterBox does, and it's the same for our book club. From character-led book titles to the welcoming community which votes for and discusses our book selections – ShelterBox Book Club helps its members to see the world through another's eyes.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY

The Space Between Us ★★★★★
by Thrity Umrigar

Book review from one of our members Laura Sargeant:

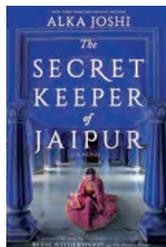
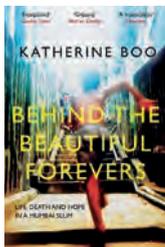
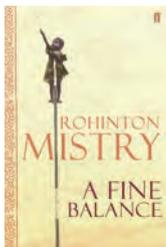
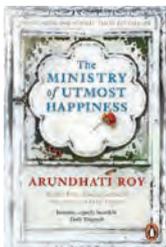
The Space Between Us was November's ShelterBox Book Club read and I am so glad I picked it up!

The Space Between Us tells the story of two women who lead very different lives in India, the server and the servee, but who have formed what seems like an unshakeable bond through years of shared experiences.

This book was so heartbreakingly beautiful, I wanted so badly for Bhima to get the happy life she really deserves, she was so beautifully written. Throughout the course of events in Bhima's life, we were able to explore the parallels and differences between how she and Sera live their lives, experience the world, and learn just exactly where the line in the sand existed when it comes to their complicated friendship.

A captivating read and the perfect choice yet again from ShelterBox's book club, I can't wait to find out which world we will be exploring next!

To read Laura's review in full along with many others, follow her Instagram [@travelling_pageturner](https://www.instagram.com/travelling_pageturner)



We loved travelling to Mumbai in *The Space Between Us* by Thrity Umrigar. Here's my recommendations as Head Bookworm for other books to help you immerse yourself in India:

To buy your copy and support ShelterBox in the process go to www.uk.bookshop.org/shop/ShelterBoxBooks



ShelterBox

Sign up today using the reference code **ROTARY-APRIL** and get a free copy of *The Space Between Us* when you join. www.shelterbox.org/book-club

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Painting your own path

North Hampshire Rotarian Tom Yendell has been consistently defying expectations for decades now to establish himself as a professional mouth and foot painter.

| STORY BY **GEORGE BICKNELL & ALEKSANDRA TROJAK** |

HANDS are a waste of time and why you have them I have no idea. The cost of having arms! I mean long sleeves?

Wristwatches? Under-arm deodorant?

Those are the wise words of Tom Yendell, a Hampshire Rotarian and famed member of the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists' Group. Rarely will you meet someone with such a strikingly honest and humorous outlook on life.

Tom was born in 1962 without arms or hands when his mother was prescribed Thalidomide during her pregnancy.

Since then, he has forged a career as an artist by painting and drawing with his mouth and feet.

While some people may view Tom 'disadvantaged', he sees himself as anything but.

"I've grown up using my feet like you've grown up using your hands so I've known no different.

"As soon as you started scribbling with a pencil or crayon with your hands I did it with my feet.

"I won a handwriting competition writing with my feet when I was 10."

From day one, Tom never viewed himself as 'disabled'. "I've never

considered myself 'disabled' and I've always hated the word 'disability'.

"The word 'disability' is such a negative word when you think about it – dismember, dissatisfy – they're all negative words and the fact that I was born with no arms has never been negative to me, it's always been the most positive thing."

Instead, an unexpected yet poignant experience seven years ago in Bristol provided Tom with the perfect outlook of his and everyone else's lives.

He recalled: "They have a massive hot air balloon festival in Bristol every year and we had a little exhibition there.

"Normally when we do an exhibition like that with children there I have a big pile of blank postcards, I write their name in bubble writing, do a little cartoon and give it to them.

"There was this young lad called Adam who came with his parents. I did this card, 'footed' it to Adam and he turned around took three paces and stopped.

"Adam came back – he was around 10-years-old, I think – and he just said 'thank you so much for my picture, I love your uniqueness' and that was it.

"Uniqueness is such a fantastic word to describe everybody – whether it's someone with blue eyes and blonde





hair or it's someone with no arms and no legs."

This was the spark which gave Tom the idea for the Unique Art Awards, a national art competition for children aged 7-21 with 'uniqueness' that culminates in a September final in London where big money prizes are presented to the winners of each category, with their families in attendance.

"We have tables of families come in 'to the Unique Art Awards' because sometimes this is the first time that their autistic kid has been recognised for doing anything good. It's a really inspiring event."

Tom is keen to use Rotary as a force for good by providing clubs with the opportunity to support the activities involving disability, art and children.

"In that event in September we hand our cheques out to other organisations as well, so if you can think of something that we can give you £6,000 for that's to do with disability, art and children then we can fund it."

Not content with sustaining a busy art career and running a national art

competition, Tom is also a Trustee for a charity called The Education and Book Appeal for Ghana (TEABAG).

Tom explains: "Our charity puts kids through school – it's £20 and that puts a kid into school from the three villages we work with in Ghana.

"I saw it was great we were giving them education but they didn't have a thing to go onto so I got the village to give me a bit of land and I built a vocational college.

"It's the proudest thing I've ever done in my life really, the fact that I have over 160 kids out there learning a vocational skill."

Despite all his incredible achievements, Tom has never seen himself as an inspiration, but is happy to take on that role if it means it sets up the next generation of change makers.

He added: "We are not here to drive Mercedes or Bentley's or to own massive mansions, we're here to generate our next generation because that's how the world will survive.

"My biography is called 'Here for a Purpose'. I really do believe we're all here for a purpose in life and that's one

of the reasons I joined Rotary.

"My purpose to say to people that just because I don't have arms doesn't mean I can't ride a horse or ski or scuba dive or drive a car or travel on my own – all things I have done.

"If I inspire someone to get up from in front of the TV and become part of Rotary or even just hold a charity box for a small charity local to them. And if the fact I don't have any arms does that, then that's what I'm here for." ●

| Information |

For more about the Unique Arts Award: www.rotarygbi.org/celebrating-uniqueness-through-art/



Rotary in Profile

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

Profile:

Name: Dr Virendra Soni

Rotary Club: Member of Bedford Castle Rotary for the last 30 years

Occupation: Retired Ophthalmic Surgeon

Q | Why did you join Rotary?

I joined Rotary to serve the community locally, nationally and internationally through fellowship of Rotary International, and I have served in many countries as an eye surgeon.

Q | Why did you get involved as a volunteer at the vaccination centre in Bedford?

Through our Rotary club, I became aware that our local NHS Trust needed volunteers to help with the vaccination centres. The last 12 months have been rewarding working as a volunteer. I am sure that Rotary International feels proud of such contributions.

Q | What have you learnt since joining Rotary?

Rotary has taught me a true fellowship of like-minded people who believe in 'Service Above Self' and other motto's of Rotary

Q | Why did you get involved as a volunteer at the vaccination centre in Bedford?

Through our Rotary club, I became aware that our local NHS Trust needed volunteers to help with the vaccination centres. The last 12 months have been rewarding working as a volunteer. I am sure that Rotary International feels proud of such contributions.

Q | What have the past 12 months been like working at the centre?

I have been doing this voluntary work every week regularly for the last 12 months and will carry on doing it as long as needed. It been a pleasure and privilege to serve the community. I have been talking to people to allay their fears about the Covid disease, discussing the preventions we must take and understanding the side-effects of vaccine. I have been helping at the centre with car parking, hand sanitisation, reassuring the patients, as well as dealing with the side-effects from the fear of injections and the vaccine itself. The experience has enriched my knowledge about my own community.

Q | What would you say to someone thinking of joining Rotary?

I have always and will recommend anyone to join Rotary for its trusted fellowship and 'Service Above Self' to become a part of this international family.

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

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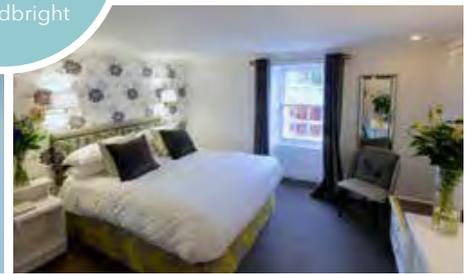
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LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

FROM IRELAND WITH LOVE

THE power Rotary has to connect people through shared values has been perfectly illustrated by an unlikely partnership facilitated by the Rotary Action Group for Family Health & AIDS Prevention (RFHA).

It all started with a football club in Ireland wanting to donate some unwanted kit and ended with big smiles being put on the faces of several football loving children in Africa.

First, Dessie Mullen from the Bray Wanderers Football Club in Ireland got in touch with Gina Miltiadou and John Mullins from the Zahra Media Group to inquire about donating the used kit.

Gina recalls: "Dessie informed us about this box of new, unused sportswear he had and since he knows that we are actively involved in a lot of charity work through our foundation, Zahra Helps, he thought it would be a good idea if we could take it to South Africa.

"We were delighted with the idea. We collected around 30kg of sportswear from Dessie, sorted it all into individual kits, and packed them in our suitcases."

This where the RFHA come in as Gina got in touch with Rotarians Wilma Lig and Sue Paget (CEO, RFHA), who immediately connected with Rotarian Annemarie Mosterat from the Rotary E Club of Southern Africa 9400.

"Luckily, we have two new members in our club who run the East Rand Excellent Soccer Academy (Eresa), which is a football academy in Johannesburg where children from the local community areas are given football training," remembers Annemarie.

"When I received a call from Sue informing me about Gina and John bringing all that sports kit, I immediately decided to sign up for this opportunity. I decided to meet up with them and what



"WHEN THEY RECEIVED THE SPORTSWEAR WITH FRESH TAGS, ONE COULDN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THE SMILE ON THEIR TINY FACES AND APPRECIATION IN THEIR HEARTS."

a privilege it was."

Eresa is a small football academy in the Daveyton township that focuses on social development of children through sports and the donated kits were an instant hit for the children at the club.

Annemarie illustrates the moment that the children received the kits perfectly, saying: "The handover of the sports equipment was such a beautiful sight to see. Some of these kids did not even have proper footwear and most of them had never touched a brand new item.

"When they received the sportswear with fresh tags, one couldn't help but notice the smile on their tiny faces and appreciation in their hearts."

Not just boys, the girls' team was also seen sporting their new jerseys and practising on the field. Zukile, the

football director of Eresa, who is also a Rotarian, said that when he first heard about it, he couldn't believe the news: "We were struggling with sports equipment and we had knocked on so many doors for help but we had never imagined that the help would come from Ireland.

"We have 120 kids in our academy. Our goal is to give them hope through sports, especially through soccer. We also have a girls team in our organisation and the idea behind this was to shift focus on women in sports and make them self-sufficient.

"We are so grateful to Bray Wanderers, John, Gina and everyone else who made it possible for our kids to play and practice football in a better way." ●



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CENTENARY CELEBRATION



GUERNSEY Rotary has led a project to replace the Japanese Fishing Pavilion at Saumarez Park as an early launch of its centenary celebrations.

The structure was officially opened by the Bailiff of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, Richard McMahon.

For the first time in its history, the pavilion will now be accessible to all in the community following the levelling of the associated groundworks and by building replacement handrails to create easy access for all abilities.

Rotarian Nigel Dorey was the appointed project manager who made sure that the construction was as closely aligned as possible to the original structure built in 1935 and built to honour and preserve its Japanese heritage and the local history of the park.

An interpretation board has been placed on site to provide detailed information on the history of the pavilion and its links to Lord de Saumarez as well as to acknowledge the sponsors, supporting contractors, The Rotary Foundation and the Rotary Club of Guernsey. ●

TRIG-TASTIC CHALLENGE



TWO Whitchurch Rotarians have hung up their walking boots after a 12-month fundraising project that can now continue to save countless more lives.

On New Year's Day 2021 Steve Chisholm and his wife Christine Collen set out to visit Shropshire's 96 trig points.

And on December 30th they finished the year having climbed 71 of them and raising more than £8,300 for the Rotary club's 'Lifeline' service.

This is a home call system that enables elderly and vulnerable people to summon emergency help when they need it.

"It has been an interesting year, and one we will never forget," said Steve.

"We've been to remote parts of the county that we otherwise might never have seen and the scenery, for the most part, has been fabulous.

"Although some of the walks were hard, it's been an amazing experience for so many different reasons and the satisfaction has far outweighed the sore feet and aching legs."

Trig points are a nationwide network of stone pillars that have made it possible to measure and map the UK landscape since they were first set up in 1936. ●

GREEN SCHOOL'S PARTNERSHIP

STONEHAVEN Rotary in eastern Scotland has set up an environmental group to help in the drive for a cleaner and greener climate.

The club, which is 16 miles south of Aberdeen, decided that apart from the club's usual litter picks and beach cleans, they should reach out to younger people in the community to get involved with environmental initiatives.

The Rotary club approached local schools with the offer of a financial incentive for them to devise a project which could benefit the environment. Mill of Forest Primary School

managed to raise the funds for a polytunnel, and the Stonehaven Men's Shed helped pave the inside, fit staging and install a remote watering system.

Three Rotarians, who are also trustees of Stonehaven Men's Shed, were part of the team involved in the project at the school, in both the design of the layout, and the implementation.

A rainwater harvesting system was also installed as the polytunnel is situated 50 metres from the nearest water source.

A solar-powered pump was used, with Stonehaven Rotary providing the finance. ●

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ONLINE ARTISTIC LICENCE



AN online art competition organised by a Rotary club in Devon has raised several hundreds of pounds for a hospice in the county.

The Rotary Club of Barnstaple Link's President's charity for this year is the North Devon Hospice which provides specialist care and support to people who are affected by a life-limiting illness.

Fund-raising for the hospice has been going well, but the Rotary club needed a project to take them through November and December which would be fun, innovative and a potentially successful money raiser.

And so the online art competition was hatched.

Thanks to social media, entries were received from across the world and the paintings were judged by two North Devon artists, Mark Woolacott and Clare Willcocks. ●

ROTARY AIRPORT SIGNS



VISITORS to Belfast International Airport will be greeted by two new Rotary signs.

They are part of a project organised by Antrim Rotary in Northern Ireland who applied for a Covid-19 grant last year to fund two community projects.

The club asked for money for signs at Belfast International Airport, and also to provide computer tablets for the Round Tower Integrated Primary School in Antrim.

The club has now managed to secure two Rotary signs on the meeting point pillar in the airport - one visible from the domestic arrivals area, and the other from the international arrivals area.

"The sign welcomes everyone to

Northern Ireland, and is a great way to promote Rotary in general," explained Rotarian, Heather Montgomery.

For the second Covid project, the Antrim Rotarians used the money to fund the purchase of computer tablets to help children with their homework, especially during lockdown.

Antrim Rotary chose the Round Tower Integrated Primary School in Antrim as part of their cross-community work in the area.

The club also planted purple crocus corms at Maine Integrated Primary School in Randalstown, as well as Round Tower Integrated School to raise awareness of polio with younger people. ●

ROTARY WORLD SAVERS

RUGBY Dunsmore Rotary Club has started a free initiative where those who want to make a difference to climate change can come together.

The initiative, facilitated by the Warwickshire-based Rotary club, shares one positive action per week, providing a clear direction on how we can all have a positive impact on the environment.

The idea came about when Club President Mike Folly discovered David Head's website www.365actions.org which published an action per day to help individuals to alleviate the effects

of mankind on climate change during 2021.

The club saw how David's amazing idea could be taken to a wider audience to increase its impact which led to David joining the club and rolling 365actions.org into 2022 as Rotary World Savers.

There are actions for children, families, schools, house owners and landlords and businesses, with articles covering everything from recycling tips to larger projects but concentration is mainly on simple things everyone can do at little or no cost. ●

www.rotaryworldsavers.org



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SWINDON ALE



ROTARIANS in Swindon have worked together with a Wiltshire brewery to produce a beer which will help charities.

Swindon Phoenix Rotary, in collaboration with the Hop Kettle Brewing Company (Tap Brew), have launched a Rotary ale, aptly named 'Phoenix Rising'.

For every sale, a percentage will go back to the Rotary club's charity account, benefitting local charities and good causes.

The ale has been brewed with the help and assistance of the Rotarians, and will be sold in cask, bottles and mini kegs.

Club President, Adam Wainwright, praised the relationship between Swindon Phoenix Rotary and the Hop Kettle, with particular mention to the brewery's founder, Tom Gee.

He said: "To have our very own Rotary beer was an idea I had during the pandemic lockdown and thinking ahead to my year as President.

"After speaking to my fellow Rotarians, it was agreed that it was a great idea and we should pursue it."

Adam pointed out that the pandemic has been a tough time for the hospitality industry.

However, Tom Gee and the Hop Kettle team were incredibly supportive throughout the process.

He added: "On what has been a very difficult time for the hospitality sector, Tom invested lots of his time to make this ale happen.

"We very much hope to see the local community benefit greatly from the partnership and the ale." ●

CONQUERING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE



TWO Rotary clubs in Devon have joined forces to help provide laptops to school children who have struggled to access online learning from home during the Covid pandemic.

Ivybridge and Saltram Rotary Clubs have been working together on the project which was kickstarted by former Ivybridge President, Dr Paul Fletcher.

They have provided 346 new and refurbished laptops and tablets to 35 schools in the Plymouth area.

The clubs had picked up on Rotary schemes elsewhere in Great Britain and Ireland which have partnered with businesses to donate laptops and tablets to schools.

They received devices and financial support from local businesses, individuals,

local authorities and city and parish councillors, all seeking to reduce the digital divide. They received technical support from Dan Tucker of Dan's Computer Services, plus an injection of funds from the Beresford-Jones Trust.

Paul said: "This is a significant achievement and has only been possible thanks to the generosity of the people of Ivybridge and Plymouth, as well as the financial support we have received from various sources."

Karen Sims-Stirling of the Beacon Schools Federation said that the results of the Rotary project had allowed schoolchildren to engage effectively with classes from their own home during the pandemic. ●

LITERACY PROJECT SUCCESS

HAVANT, on the outskirts of Portsmouth, is an area that has a variety of affluence and deprivation. And Havant Rotary Club has been working on a variety of projects with schools in the area over the years.

One of these is the Havant Rotary Literacy Reading Project, focussed on pupils with little or no access to books.

The project was targeted at four to 11 year-olds and began with two schools on a trial basis, sourcing books from a number of publishers including Collins and Usborne.

Rotarians also collected and donated good quality books found in charity shops, or donated from other community

organisations including a local Muslim group and the Scouts.

The club collated and listed the books in age groups and boxed them with specially designed Rotary bookmarks and a leaflet explaining what the club was doing. The feedback from schools has been positive.

"Schools had selected their pupil premium pupils who would most benefit from the extra access to books - that is children with challenging backgrounds, but nevertheless quite able," explained Rotarian, Shelagh Moore, who said that while it is too soon to assess the impact of the project on the children's interest in reading, the early signs were promising. ●



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and finally...

From Managing Editor Dave King
editor@rotarygbi.org

BE PREPARED FOR THE LONG HAUL

ON a fresh, but sunny March afternoon, the Gosport Ferry plying its way across the calm waters of Portsmouth Harbour, was doing brisk business.

Football fans were in a happy mood returning home from Fratton Park mingling with shoppers loaded with bargains from their day out at Gunwharf Quays. Making the reverse crossing to Pompey were youngsters dressed up for 'happy hour' and a night's clubbing.

"WE SHOULD NEVER LOSE SIGHT AT HOW WAR IMPACTS ON PEOPLE AND INFLECTS HUMAN SUFFERING."

Stood in Gosport Ferry Gardens where the council was flying Union Jack and Ukrainian flags side by side, Rotarians were collecting for Ukraine - and a few of those travelling on the ferry missed the opportunity to give and to open up on their feelings over what they were witnessing in Ukraine.

Over two weekends, my Rotary club raised £3,000. The support was overwhelming. I know this response was mirrored by Rotary clubs who have been holding similar collections across Great Britain and Ireland.

The war in Ukraine has touched a nerve among the public in a way which no other humanitarian appeal previously has.

The amount of money raised and the level of humanitarian aid being organised is unprecedented.

Why this is so is hard to fathom.

Is it because, for the very first time, we are watching a war unravel in real time through television and social media, unsanitised in its misery and the scale of destruction on innocent victims?

What has been impressive is how quickly Rotary has mobilised itself with its response to what is happening in Eastern Europe. What is being organised in Great Britain and Ireland is carefully co-ordinated. Rotarians are wanted, sometimes, to go off and do their own thing - but not this time.

Jersey Rotarian Allan Smith, and Dr John Philip from Newbury Rotary are two key figures in Rotary GB&I's response. Both spoke at the Thames Valley Rotary District Conference in Oxford in March with a clear vision of what needs to be done by Rotarians in the coming months and years.

Allan is heading up the Rotary GB&I Ukraine Task Force. The Task Force has been created to provide a unified approach to the Ukraine crisis, especially to displaced people both leaving and within Ukraine.

And John Philip, who is Chairman of the Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals, is leading the Fellowships' network of volunteers to assist with medical items in Ukraine where the situation is dire with medical shortages.

Just as Rotarians stepped up to the mark during Covid-19, so this is an opportunity to engage with our communities in a mission which is clearly resonating with young and old.

However, what was clear from the messaging of Allan and John is that, as Rotarians, we need to be prepared to be into this for the long haul.

As much as our human instinct is to do something right now - and there is that precious need for swift and immediate humanitarian help to Ukraine - there will be a long-term need.

As Rotarians, we are going to have so much work helping refugees when they come to Great Britain and Ireland. We need to focus on what we do best which is the longer term support of refugees.

What is happening in the Ukraine goes beyond the politics and war-mongering.

We should never lose sight at how war impacts people and inflicts human suffering - not just the people of Ukraine, but to their families and loved ones around the world who are also suffering and can't do anything to help.

Now it our time to step up to the plate; not just today, but for tomorrow and beyond. ●



It is only right to pay tribute to my predecessor as editor of Rotary magazine, Allan Berry, who died in February. Allan had been bravely battling with cancer for the past few years. A free-thinking cavalier, Allan was a great communicator, a champion of causes, and a passionate Rotarian. He will be sadly missed.



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