

# Rotary

JUNE | JULY 2022

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# Rotary



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# Welcome

**C**OLIN and I first met at the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire District Conference in Bradford 20 months ago, when he told his amazing story of living on the streets of Halifax before having this ephany moment standing atop a viaduct.

Rather than throwing himself off, Colin decided to turn his life around, sought help, and along that journey the Rucksacks 4 Homeless project, in tandem with Sowerby Bridge Rotary, was born.

Colin's story and the rucksack project is featured in this issue of the magazine which has a focus on some of the Rotary projects which are looking to help the homeless in these isles.

Just as the magazine was going to press, I was informed by Hazel Brindle, a Past President of Sowerby Bridge Rotary and a close friend of Colin, that he had died.

The club had known since before Easter that Colin had terminal cancer. So, on April 20th, he was made an honorary member of Sowerby Bridge Rotary, when Hazel presented him with a Paul Harris Fellowship in recognition of his work.

"To say there was not a dry eye in the house would be a massive understatement," said Hazel. "Colin could not believe that he was worthy of such a prestigious award. His family and friends were so proud of him."

Colin's family said they would still like the article to be published. They said they were looking forward to seeing in print the work which Colin had done in an attempt to improve the life of others.

There are three key themes to this issue of *Rotary* magazine; homelessness, Volunteer Expo, and the latest conflict in Ukraine.

Volunteer Expo was an absolute triumph. Two days at the NEC in Birmingham which showcased the value and importance of volunteering, and how much it underpins our society.

The National Volunteering Show, which was organised by Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland was inspiring with so much going on over the May weekend.

Amanda Watkin, Rotary's General Secretary, reflects on Volunteer Expo in these pages, telling the story of how it came together, and what happens next.

As your editor, I am loathed to repeat themes in consecutive magazines. I like to keep the pages fresh and topical.

But there can be no hiding from the conflict in Ukraine.

What Rotary is doing in these isles on behalf of Ukraine is phenomenal. The examples showcased in the People of Action section merely scratches the surface of the wonderful work going on.

The level of commitment by clubs, and the response from the public is unprecedented. This is reflected in the work of Rotary's Ukraine Taskforce which is making a phenomenal impact in Ukraine and bordering countries.

Rotarians Allan Smith, Dr John Philip and James Onions from the Taskforce explain in this issue what they are doing with the money being raised.

I have handed over the 'And Finally' column to my friend Mykola Stebljanko, editor of the Ukrainian *Rotariets* magazine, who is living in Odessa.

He is at the heart of Rotary efforts in the country. His heartfelt 'Letter from Ukraine' demonstrates the real impact which your efforts are making.

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



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# The real Bag for Life

A few years ago, Colin was homeless and facing desperate times. He's now left a legacy of working with Rotary, helping those dealing with life on the streets.

| BY DAVE KING |

**F**EELING rock bottom is standing atop a viaduct, your body shaking with fear, looking down at the abyss – and with just one thought.

“I was terrified, I was ashamed, and I was embarrassed of being homeless,” recalled Colin, of that seminal moment in Halifax almost five years ago.

“Basically, I wanted to end it, I’d had enough. I got to the top of the viaduct, looked down, and I said ‘no, no Colin, if it don’t work you’re going to be very, very poorly, and it’s going to hurt.’”

Colin, a man in his 50s, describes the moment as his epiphany.

This was the juncture in his life where he had to turn things round. But he didn’t reach out for religion, instead he turned to Rotary.

Colin moved on to establish an independent life and serve as an ambassador for the project Rucksacks 4 Homeless, run by Sowerby Bridge

Rotary in West Yorkshire.

The project is now in its fifth year with more than 250 rucksacks distributed to the homeless in the Calderdale district around Halifax. These are distributed through a number of homeless support organisations who can identify the legitimate homeless.

Carrying Rotary and Rucksacks 4 Homeless logos, each rucksack contains a warm sleeping bag, bivvy bag, a foil-backed sleeping mat, a lined beanie hat, scarf, thick insulated gloves, two pairs of long, warm socks, and a wind-up torch.

There is also a hygiene clip box containing a face cloth, liquid soap, shampoo, hand sanitiser, comb, deodorant, lip salve, toothbrush and toothpaste, plus face masks to wear during Covid.

Rotary also provides a labelled flask, which can be taken to several coffee shops in Halifax, which offer free refills to the homeless of hot or cold drinks.

For Colin, the road to despair and homelessness, happened so quickly.

The former welder was in a relationship, had a daughter in her twenties, and his partner had just given birth to a baby girl.

He recalled: “When my partner left me, we were both working. We had been together for three years.





"We'd just had the baby, my dad had just died after fighting cancer for six years and things just snowballed. That were eight years ago."

Alcohol was the accelerant. He had lost his job, his family, his home and, by his own admission, Colin was not a nice person to be around, then.

"The worst part of being homeless is you do it yourself. I lost my family myself, my friends, and you can only stay with people for so long before you start getting under their feet.

"I was drinking quite heavily. I wasn't talking to people, I was shouting at people.

"Basically, I became homeless, a rough sleeper through debts, addiction to alcohol, broken relationships, and depression.

"I stopped caring. I didn't know what to do. All I wanted was keep myself to myself. I suppose I was a bit ashamed. I don't blame anybody but myself.

"I just got it wrong. I got it wrong because I didn't have the strength to cope at the time. That was it, I lost everything, so I ended up rough sleeping, even sleeping in a cave."

That moment at the viaduct was the turning point.

Colin started to cut down on the drinking, slowly got back on his feet

when he met Dave Fawcett, the chief executive of Happydays, a charity which works with the homeless in West Yorkshire.

"After what happened, I held my hands up, I went to get help from homeless organisations, and decided to give something back."

Colin had heard of a rucksack project for the homeless in Bristol, and wanted to replicate that in Halifax.

"I didn't have a rucksack when I was homeless," recalled Colin. "I just had a big Parker jacket.

So, Colin toured charity shops in the town to collect items for the rucksacks which he or Happydays distributed.

The idea snowballed when he was introduced to Hazel Brindle, who was then President of Sowerby Bridge Rotary.

Colin added: "Rotary took the time to come out and see me, to listen to someone who had hit rock bottom, and we took it up from there."

For Hazel, the rucksack project hit a nerve. Hazel worked on a trust programme which dealt with vulnerable young people, 95% of whom were homeless, had a drug addiction or been convicted of criminal offences.

"It really touched my heart to see these young people, who came to us with no self-confidence, but who taught me 

**"ROTARY  
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**"EACH OF THE FILLED RUCKSACKS COSTS ABOUT £85 WHICH IS FUNDED BY DONATIONS TO SOWERBY BRIDGE ROTARY. THEY HAVE RECENTLY BEEN LEFT AN £8,000 LEGACY TO HELP WITH THAT WORK".**

more about life than I ever knew," she recalled.

"As club president, I wanted to do something to help the homeless.

"When I met Dave Fawcett from Happydays, he mentioned that Colin had been doing something on his own collecting rucksacks from various charity shops and buying hygiene products out of his own pocket.

"Dave said it would give Colin a purpose if we joined forces."

So the project began. Initially, some of the homeless would take the rucksacks and sell them to buy drugs or alcohol.

Now the process has been refined, with Colin advising and being at the heart of the initiative.

To give Rucksacks 4 Homeless a professional look, Rotarian Rupert Cooke, who is a graphic designer, came up with the project branding.

The logo design is based on the Paul Weller song 'Broken Stones', which has lyrics about trying to find your way home. He has also made a series of short films to promote the project.

Each of the filled rucksacks costs about £85 which is funded by donations to Sowerby Bridge Rotary.

They have recently been left an £8,000 legacy to help with that work.

"We work with Happydays and SmartMove, which are two of the homeless organisations in the area,"

added Hazel.

"Happydays distribute them because they know the support workers in the area. Colin has a supply of them too as he often gets calls from people wanting rucksacks. Colin knows these people and knows they are going to the right place."

Sowerby Bridge would love to expand the project wider across Yorkshire to Bradford, Kirklees and Leeds, but that would require further funding or partners who want to expand this project.

John Needell, who is Colin's long-time mentor and friend, talked about turning the project national.

Prior to Covid, he and Colin had discussions with an agri-chemicals company and a homeless charity in Manchester interested in funding and supporting a project just across the Pennines.

"We would provide the rucksacks, the business would help with the fund-raising, and we would work with the homeless charity in Manchester to distribute the rucksacks to the right people" explained John.

The impact is impressive, but the rucksacks are a sticking plaster. They create a bridge and temporary solution which enables the homeless to get the longer term help they need.

Colin added: "I have had people come up to me and say this rucksack

saved my life, it has helped me so much and helped me to keep going for a few weeks until I can find a property and support."

As for Colin, he found a settled place to live, and was visited regularly by his 28-year-old daughter. He admitted he missed seeing his other daughter, whose mother has moved on.

Colin dreamt one day of starting a business, buying and selling Vespa scooters which he had repaired.

"That morning, five years ago, I turned my life round and did something about it to live independently.

"All my bills are paid. I'm not in debt. I have met so many nice and genuine people, not people who want to take things off me. People that welcome me.

"I know if I had not gone on that journey I would not have met all these lovely people."

Colin died peacefully on May 16th after a short illness. His family asked for the article to be published as a tribute to his life and work. ●

### Information |

If you would like to know more visit: [happydaysuk.org](http://happydaysuk.org)

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# THE HOMELESS SHELTER THAT NEEDS A HOME

The story of an innovative Rotary project that helped the homeless population across the Midlands and its hopes for the future post-pandemic.



**B**ACK in 2017, Angelo Buratti of the Birmingham Breakfast Rotary Club was trying to think of a way to help the homeless off the streets but without the funds it would take to build a brick-built unit.

When it was realised that they could use a shelter that could move around to where it's needed, that's when the idea for a suitably equipped bus came around.

Angelo recalls: "I came up with the idea of getting the bus, then went about with one of the guys at Rotary who was an architect to design the inside of the bus and then I redesigned it myself and got it fitted."

That design included 10 private, secure overnight sleeping pods, a light cooking space, washing and toilet facilities, provision for pets, and a medical/private consultation space.

The bus officially took to the streets of Wolverhampton in 2019, with the

Shelterbus team led by Angelo's son Luca Buratti.

Even the brief time the bus was able to operate before lockdown, Angelo was able to see the impact the bus had for the homeless community.

He explains: "The bus is a really good intermediate point because there's a lot of people who've come off the streets that don't want to sleep in a brick building because they all sleep together for fear of people pinching their stuff, whereas the bus has more security.

"The bus got used by an organisation that was providing shelter for people and just before lockdown people were actually breaking into the bus!"

Alas, like so many other projects in 2020, the Shelterbus had to be taken out of service as they couldn't have large groups of people congregating on the bus.

After a while of being housed by Wolverhampton charity The Good

Shepherd, Birmingham Breakfast Rotary had to make the hard decision of cutting ties with the bus, so Angelo took matters into his own hands.

Angelo remembers: "I wouldn't accept the idea of it the bus just turning to nothing, so I ended up taking over the bus."

Despite the pandemic hampering progress, Angelo still believes there is a demand for the Shelterbus and that it could make an impact in the hands of the right charity or organisation.

He states: "I think there is a future for the bus and I think what it needs is a charity that can think outside the box.

"For individual companies who want to put money into helping charitable organisations, that bus works as an advertising platform to let people understand the plight of homelessness." ●

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# Rotary's got it all wrapped up

Winter coats donated to Rotary clubs across the UK have been going to homeless charities to help those sleeping on the streets.

| BY DAVE KING |

**F**OUR years ago, Accrington Rotarian Ann-Marie Etherington was visiting London on business when she spotted a statue outside Paddington station dressed in coats.

They were promoting a homeless initiative organised by Hands On London. For more than a decade, the organisation has been collecting, sorting and distributing warm winter coats during winter to the capital's homeless via various charities who have direct contact with the homeless.

By adopting this approach, it often provides a gateway for someone to access services and help them get back on their feet.

WrapUp London has become one of the charity's biggest volunteering events, which has seen around 180,000 coats distributed and 87 projects supported.

Ann-Marie discussed what she had seen with her now fellow team members, Malcolm and Jacquie Baldwin and Pam Holgate at a Blackburn Rotaract Charter night. It was agreed that they would take the idea forwards.

The idea was discussed with clubs in East Lancashire and, as a result, WrapUp Lancashire was hatched with the blessing of Hands On London.

In the first year, 2018, the project operated within a two-month window, October and November in preparation for the cold weather setting in for the winter.

Seven Rotary clubs in East Lancashire partnered for WrapUp Lancashire, collecting 2,300 items of winter clothing with 10 local charities benefitting.

Following feedback from the charities, it was decided the following year to extend the project across the whole of the Cumbria and Lancashire Rotary District. Some clubs in the Manchester area also joined in and there was even an outpost in Chelmsford!

By 2019, more than 40 Rotary clubs were involved, resulting in some 35,000 items of winter clothing being collected and distributed to 170 charities.

In early 2020, the team were contacted by the Trustees of Hands On

London, who had followed the WrapUp campaigns over the past two years.

They were so impressed by their success that they wanted to forge a partnership with Rotary.

WrapUp Lancashire changed its name to WrapUp UK to reflect the ambition of the team to drive the project nationwide, and which was launched at Volunteer Expo last May.

Today, there are 15 clusters involving more than 50 Rotary clubs. Within that number there are newcomers to the project including Bury, Cardiff, Middlesbrough, Lanarkshire, Tameside and West of Scotland.

From the most recent campaign, last year, 130 charities benefited from 31,000 items collected by 290 volunteers putting in 3,000 volunteering hours, and featuring 52 Rotary clubs.



Jacquie said: "This is why I joined Rotary, to make a difference by working directly to help those in need without having to shake a bucket."

According to Jacquie, the secret of the project's success and sustainability is forging partnerships with other clubs who want to make a difference in their own communities.

The sole aim of a WrapUp campaign is to get donated coats to those who struggle to keep warm during the winter months.

Once donated coats have been collected at collection points arranged by the Rotary clubs, volunteers get to work sorting the items into categories, men's,

women's, children and babies.

While being sorted, the donations are checked to make sure all buttons are intact, zips are working and that they are clean and in good enough condition.

Jacquie explained that coats are not given directly to the homeless and needy persons. Instead, they work through charities and community organisations which provide frontline services to the homeless, the elderly, refugees, children and families living in poverty or those fleeing domestic violence.

When a needy person reaches out to a charity for a coat this winter, hopefully they will also discover other forms of support available to them.

She added: "It's amazing that a donated coat could kick-start a relationship between those in need and the charities that can help them by providing year-round services and support."

Jacquie is hoping that the campaign can spread even further. The WrapUp team will be attending Volunteer Expo in Birmingham next month, and she said that now was a good time for Rotary clubs interested in getting involved for next winter to make an approach.

She explained that it takes a bit of organisation to set up. The WrapUp team help clubs to work together to structure groups in their local area.

They are able to provide resources including a dedicated page on the WrapUp UK website, branded collection boxes, bags for distribution and much more.

The Accrington President, Jacquie Baldwin, added: "Our aim and hope is that this project will continue to run annually throughout Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland providing support to those in need in our own communities.

"We also hope that this project will raise the profile and awareness of Rotary. Indeed, the efforts of the West of Scotland campaign were praised in the Scottish Parliament." ●

### Information |

If you would like to know more visit: [wrapupuk.org](http://wrapupuk.org)  
[handsonlondon.org.uk/wrap-uplondon](http://handsonlondon.org.uk/wrap-uplondon)

# LIFE-CHANGING SLEEP PODS

Sleep Pod UK has been working with Midlands-based Erdington Rotary to help the homeless who have experienced a tough winter with their life-changing pods.



**T**HE winter months of December and January have been the most demanding on homeless charities as the pressure for shelter for the homeless is at its annual peak due to the freezing temperatures.

However, with the support from dedicated Rotarians many lives have been touched this winter by Birmingham-based charity, Sleep Pod UK.

Sleep Pod UK builds one-person, triangular prism shelters which allow a homeless individual to be protected from the elements, including snow, rain and the freezing temperature which come with winter.

The pods maintain their warmth inside through insulation. Using double skin aluminium foil sheeting with a waterproof outer layer. Each pod is supported with bamboo sticks which are light and durable, making them easy to carry and assemble.

Complete pods can be manufactured for only £30, and this includes all materials that are needed. Building the pods takes less than an hour and is as simple as eight straightforward steps completed by volunteers.

Once completed, the pods are handed over from Sleep Pod UK to homeless charities. They are then distributed to those that need them the most.

Erdington Rotarians have supported the charity through donations as well as hands on help with building the pods during meetings.

The club has also engaged with the local community to encourage people joining the 'build at home' programme.

The project was set up in late January 2022 allowing those who cannot commute an opportunity to help. With each person building five to ten pods and more than 60 people signing up, over 365 pods were built for the first collection.

Sleep Pods' story began when co-founders, Justin Devereux, Ian Ashby, and Pete Kenyon met during their time volunteering at a refugee camp in Calais, France. Very early on, they all realised how dire conditions were for the refugees.

Freezing temperatures became the biggest threat to the estranged families who were forced out of their home countries fleeing wars and political uprisings. Strangers would huddle together around fires seeking the slightest feeling of

warmth and security in the bitter weather.

"During our time volunteering there were 2,000 refugees and the support being received from Britain was scarce," explained Julian. "The ever-occurring threat to the people we were looking after was the cold.

"We were constantly giving out tents which have been collected from festival grounds, however, they would soon become ineffective.

"Blankets and sleeping bags would be wet and dirty, and the waste was extreme."

Following this experience, the trio decided to take action and to create the sleep pod design. Justin handed over built pods to already established charities in Birmingham for distribution.

He explained: "The majority of people that did give their feedback used the words 'life' and 'saving'." ●

## Information |

Visit Sleep Pod UK at [sleeppod.org.uk](https://sleeppod.org.uk)

For Zoom clubs:

[rotarysleeppod@gmail.com](mailto:rotarysleeppod@gmail.com)



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# Rotary at its best

With war still raging in Ukraine, what impact is Rotary having providing humanitarian aid to countries affected by the conflict?

| BY DAVE KING |



**I** NEVER thought I would find myself at the centre of a massive tragedy and trying to do a little bit to help the people of Ukraine.”

Those are the words of retired consultant Dr John Philip, who has been at the forefront of efforts to provide humanitarian relief to the war-torn country as Chairman of the International Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals.

Ever since the Russian invasion in February, this group of Rotarians drawn from across the world, has been working closely with doctors in Ukraine. They are not only providing medical equipment, but training too.

In April, 3,850 Ukrainian doctors joined a training session organised by the Fellowship to tackle the management of blast injuries. That recording has since been viewed 10,000 times.

“I think this is Rotary at its best,” explained John, a member of Newbury Rotary in Berkshire. “We had a choice of closing our eyes and living in our comfort zone. But we got involved.

“For me, personally, it was a big

step, as an individual wanting to help our Rotary colleagues and our doctor colleagues in Ukraine. But suddenly, collectively, the message had power. Because I stepped forward in the name of Rotary and because of that, people took notice of me.”

John is one part of a collaborative effort under the umbrella of the Rotary GB&I Ukraine Taskforce.

Chaired by Jersey Rotarian, Allan Smith, it provides a co-ordinated approach to the crisis – firstly, providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine and bordering countries, and secondly assisting displaced people in Ukraine, as well as refugees seeking sanctuary in these isles.

The Rotary GB&I team responsible for refugees is the resilience team which is co-led by Brenda Parsons and Peter Dowse.

“Sometimes, as Rotarians, we are looking for projects to do,” explained Allan Smith. “The dreadful situation in Ukraine has provided that focus.

“This has enabled us to really prove how important Rotary is worldwide.”

For Dr John Philip, that impact is



**“SOMETIMES, AS ROTARIANS, WE ARE LOOKING FOR PROJECTS TO DO. THE DREADFUL SITUATION IN UKRAINE HAS PROVIDED THAT FOCUS. THIS HAS ENABLED US TO REALLY PROVE HOW IMPORTANT ROTARY IS WORLDWIDE.”**

being firmly felt on the frontline.

“Our focus at the very beginning was to deliver medical aid to the people of Ukraine,” he said. “And we made a decision to deliver that aid through Rotarian doctors working in Ukraine.

“For obvious reasons, emergency medical aid has dominated our thinking for what we call polytrauma.

“Some of the injuries which people are suffering are so horrendous to see. We have been able to assist with doctors to manage some of the very complicated injuries which people have been suffering.”

John and his team of medical practitioners drawn from across Europe meet online with their Ukrainian counterparts once a week.

They gather information about what is needed in the country’s hospitals and the Fellowship gather together the aid.

“In terms of managing polytrauma,

we have been supplying tourniquets and other devices to manage shrapnel injuries.

“And we have been able to supply a large amount of equipment to hospitals at the request of local Rotarians.”

Since February, the Fellowship has raised nearly £200,000, and in the first couple of months provided more than £80,000 in life-saving equipment and supplies.

But it is the connection of Rotarians which has enabled the Fellowship to partner with medical manufacturers who have generously donated equipment.

One example was shipping out an x-ray machine to identify shrapnel injuries.

A Rotarian who is a Chief Executive of Siemens in Austria heard of the need and the company delivered four machines valued at €500,000 free of charge.

John and his team identified a

machine needed in a Ukrainian hospital for premature babies costing €60,000 and Rotarian contacts in Italy provided the equipment without cost.

The Fellowship is currently in discussions with acquiring medical instruments from another international company.

“We have been told there are a lot of pregnant mothers who are giving birth to underweight children born prematurely,” added John.

“That’s not entirely surprising when you think about the conditions they have been living through.

“The Ukrainians wanted a large number of specialised equipment to keep these babies alive in vulnerable conditions.

“So we have been able to provide special resuscitation equipment to 35 neonatal units.

“But alongside this, there are also 



**“THERE ARE QUITE A FEW SPECIALISTS WHO ARE WORKING WITH US TO ADVISE WHAT IS POSSIBLE TO SUPPORT THE MEDICAL TEAMS IN UKRAINE.”**

other medical issues to consider; people with chronic diseases, people with diabetes and other diseases.

“We have been able to highlight the importance of caring for people with non-emergency conditions as well.

“And we have discussed about internally displaced children being unvaccinated or under-vaccinated. We are currently discussing the possibility of working with UNICEF to launch a vaccination programme with Ukraine.”

Medical staff are working under the most extreme conditions, with the World Health Organization pointing out that dozens of Ukrainian medical facilities have been hit in airstrikes.

The International Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals has also been putting together pastoral support for the doctors who are suffering emotionally.

“We never sought and we never thought we would have this position,” said John.

“But because of our proximity and connectivity we have started to gain an international reputation.

“We are now working with American

and Canadian doctors.

“There are quite a few specialists who are working with us to advise what is possible to support the medical teams in Ukraine. We have got our team of doctors and pharmacists from the UK, Austria, Germany, Poland, and almost all of the frontline countries.

“Because we have got safe transit routes sorted out, we have been able to offer logistical advice to several Rotary teams in the United States to transfer safely medical goods into Poland and, from there, into Ukraine.

“People are taking notice that we have the right kind of people in Ukraine, as well as the right kind of strategy to make sure we can target medical aid to the appropriate places in the appropriate manner.

“There are many other medical charities which do not have that connectivity.

“And I think when other organisations collect or buy things, they can dump them in border warehouses without knowing where they will end up.

“Whereas, if we get a request for

tourniquets, we can target them to specific places. Currently we are supplying 2,000 tourniquets each week. We could afford to buy 20,000, but we won’t do that. It’s that kind of specific targeted action which has enabled us to maximise our impact.

“There is no wastage. None of the things we are supplying are sitting in warehouses or in boxes.”

John said he wanted to thank Rotarians in Great Britain and Ireland for their financial support. But they need more. “We need more money because we are in this for the long term,” he pointed out.

“The immediate needs are being met, but we are looking into the future.

“We want to be standing with the doctors in Ukraine, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, to rebuild the health service, offering them support, the training and medical education.

“We want to be thinking big, and we want Rotary to be there. We want Rotary to be a big player in the reconstruction of the health service in the Ukraine.” ●

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# Getting your hands dirty and achieving

A look at the work of the Rotary Inter-Country Committees during the Ukraine conflict.

**O**NE of the unique qualities of Rotary is its connectivity. That ability, through a common bond, to come together and make things happen.

So far in Great Britain & Ireland, Rotary clubs have raised up to £3.5 million in goods and donations sent to Ukraine.

The ICC could be easily misrepresented as a global cricketing body, when it reflects, instead, the work

of Rotary's Inter-Country Committees.

James Onions from Kew Gardens Rotary, in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, heads up the body in Great Britain & Ireland.

"The ICC is an enabler of Rotarians doing things together," he explained. "So when there's a crisis, there are some go-to people who can make it happen."

James is working directly with Rotary clubs and districts to send funds direct to areas of need.

That need is being identified by Rotarians in Ukraine and bordering

countries, such as Moldova, Poland and Romania.

He cites the example of Yeovil Rotarian and doctor, Michael Fernando, who identified an urgent need for clean water just weeks after the war in Ukraine.

Working with the ICC, the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Rotary Action Group and Rotarians on the ground, work began with UNICEF to remedy the situation.

James explained that in Great Britain & Ireland, their focus has been



working with poorer countries in the region such as Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria where refugees are heading to.

“The fact that we had ICCs in place has enabled us to move quickly to make contact with Ukraine, understanding some of their requirements and begin to fulfil them,” he said.

“Moldova is the poorest country in Europe. It has got about 100 Rotarians and eight clubs. We are working with them as they are looking after 5,000 of the 90,000 refugees in Moldova.

“The Rotarians have partnered with a Spanish charity called Jeunes, who are providing goods from Spain to Moldova, and we have been paying for the transport costs.

“The goods include non-perishable food, baby goods, hygiene products and medicines. Each consignment is worth around €100,000 and, so far, we have helped with six shipments – each shipment costs us around €7,000.”

The ICC is also working closely with Rotaract across Europe. At the start of the conflict, Rotaract Europe worked to get visiting students and young people safely out of the war zone to border countries.

Interact is also active in border countries. In Romania and Moldova, they add normality to the lives of young

Ukrainian people by spending time with them.

But for James and the team, he believes their work has only just begun, and there will be a need for more funding to support their work.

“There is still a lot of emergency work to be done,” he added.

“Whether that be water, medicine, shelter or even reconstruction, there will be a need for that emergency work to continue for as long as the war continues, and probably for a while longer.

“One of the big issues is refugees and my gut feeling is that Rotary can help a lot here. In Moldova, we’re talking to 5,000 refugees. Rotarians are supporting them with aid. Rotarians are going there talking to them.”

One of the clear consequences of Rotary’s work in eastern Europe, even at this early moment, is the esteem which the organisation is held in.

“We have now become the mouthpiece for medical issues in Ukraine,” said Dr John Philip, Chairman of the International Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals.

James Onions points out a meeting they held with UNICEF recently to discuss water and sanitation in Ukraine.

“You could see that UNICEF were resource-hungry, but they had not

thought of working with Rotary,” he explained.

“UNICEF realised they would work with a network of a thousand Rotarians across Ukraine to help make their work succeed.”

James added: “As Rotarians, we have enabled a lot of things to happen. We have empowered individuals and Rotary in those countries to do more than they would otherwise have been able to do.”

Allan Smith, head of the Rotary Ukraine Taskforce agreed. “I think we are making a significant contribution, far greater than we had envisaged.

“The clubs and districts have done a very good job raising money and transmitting money to where it is needed.

“They have also sourced a lot of goods, products which they have managed to transport to Ukraine and bordering countries. So I have been very heartened.

“It’s been Rotary getting its hands dirty and achieving. If we hadn’t been here, I think there would have been a gap in the market.

“We have huge credibility because we are Rotary in Great Britain & Ireland and we speak with one voice.

“We’re not finding that across the world, but we are focused and this has earned Rotary a lot of respect.” ●

# A safer future

Thousands of Ukrainian refugees are seeking sanctuary from the war in their homeland. The Korchak family are settling in Somerset with Rotarians Julie and Rory O'Donnell.

| BY DAVE KING |



**W**ITH Russian bombs raining down on the Ukrainian town of Kolomyia, Olga Korchak was told by the driver she had 40 minutes to pack her bags and collect her three children for the 1,500-mile trip to England.

There was no time to waste.

"I packed just two bags and got in the car," said Olga. "We were very scared. Bombs were exploding in the town.

"They turned everything red. They shook our house and broke the windows."

Through social media, Olga had found a driver who would help her get to England, a country she had learned about at school and always wanted to visit. She had to sell all her jewellery to pay the man, plus cash of £800 – a debt which 39-year-old Olga still owes.

Olga is telling the story from Kingston St Mary, a village just outside of Taunton, Somerset, where she is staying with Rotarians Julie and Rory O'Donnell.

They had registered with the Government scheme, Homes for Ukrainians which had approved 4,700 visas by the end of March from 28,300 applications received.

"We had registered with the scheme but matched ourselves through a Facebook page run by volunteers," explained Julie.

So, for two days and two nights, Olga, with her children Evelina, 16, Maksym, 7, and six-year-old Sofia, travelled from western Ukraine, leaving behind husband and father, Igor, 45, a traffic policeman.

Olga's sisters fled to Italy and Poland with their families, as Kolomyia was shelled by Russian planes.

Even then, the process of entering the UK was not simple. Olga and her family were stranded in Calais trying to get visas.

Julie reached out to the Rotary Club of Calais where Rotarians Sylviane and Guillaume housed the family for 10 days. All the while, Olga and Julie were texting each other.

Julie recalled: "The heart-wrenching part of this for us at this end were the messages from Olga saying 'please don't change your mind, please tell us where to go and what to do'.

And this was just one family. It is a microcosm of what is happening to

**"IT HAS BEEN A LONG AND SCARY PROCESS TO GET TO ENGLAND, AND VERY DIFFICULT. WITHOUT JULIE AND RORY, WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT. BUT NOW WE ARE SAFE, AND UNDERSTAND WE ARE HOME."**



so many people, but it really brings it home to you. “It makes me angry that wonderful people who are welcoming people into their homes may not be able to get through the system on behalf of the refugees that they are hosting.”

But now the Ukrainian family is settling in Somerset, having arrived at the beginning of April.

And for the children, every day is like a birthday as the local community have rallied round bringing toys, clothes and gifts to the O’Donnell’s home.

“Their generosity has been amazing,” explained Olga, whose English has been steadily improving, and who is hoping to take classes.

Teenage daughter Evelina has been doing work experience at a Taunton hotel, while Maksym and Sofia have visited a school.

Depending on their length of stay in the UK – and the O’Donnells have committed to hosting the family for at least six months – Olga is hoping to work, while looking to secure some education for her children.

All the while, however, thoughts inevitably turn to home. Easter is a special time when Olga’s 76-year-

old Grandma hosts the whole family. Kolomyia is famous for its museums and its Easter exhibitions.

The family watch the news every night, and they are in touch with Igor and family through the internet and social media.

“At the moment Kolomyia is quiet, but like children when they are quiet, you start to worry,” reflected Olga.

“Refugees from eastern Ukraine are now staying in homes in my town.”

Julie adds: “The other day we were in the garden and an EasyJet plane flew overhead. Maksym looked at his mum asking whether the plane was going to hurt them. There are plenty of scars.”

What the future holds for the Korchaks, no-one knows. They will return home one day, but when: no-one knows. Olga does not speak of what her husband, who used to be in the Army, is doing now, but the concern is clear to see.

So distraction is the key, adjusting to English life in a rural Somerset village.

Olga is learning to ride a bike, the family are enjoying Rory’s roast beef and cauliflower cheese.

As for chocolate English Easter eggs, they are a real novelty.

Olga knew little of Rotary before finding Julie and Rory. She is astonished at how well connected Rotary is, and has vowed to find a Rotary club when she returns to the Ukraine.

She adds: “It has been a long and scary process to get to England, and very difficult. Without Julie and Rory, we could not have done it. But now we are safe, and understand we are home.

“Despite the difficulties, we still managed to get to a place where we feel safe, though it hurts to remember what is happening in Ukraine.” ●

## UKRAINE

### Kolomyia





## LATEST NEWS FROM AROUND GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND

### RALLYING FOR UKRAINE

Rotary has collected thousands of pounds to support the victims of the war in Ukraine. Karen Eveleigh, District Governor for Rotary in the Thames Valley (1090), reflects on the work of clubs in her district.

**C**LUBS and Rotarians across our district have continued to work with local organisations and use their contacts with Rotary clubs in Ukraine and neighbouring countries to support those affected by the war.

Many clubs held successful collections in their town centres and shopping centres.

- Burford & Kingham Rotary served teas and cakes at Chastleton House and all funds were collected for Ukraine support.
- Witney Rotarians were in the town centre, supported by Windrush Radio, and raised £2,600.
- Wallingford & Didcot District Rotarians collected over £2,300.
- Cookham Bridge Rotarians raised £2,000 at their street collection.
- Reading Abbey Rotarians organised a collection with support from the other Reading clubs in The Oracle shopping centre. They raised £3,700 and even had t-shirts provided by a local company.
- Other clubs have also given donations to the Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals: Gerrards Cross & Chalfont St. Peter Rotary donated £1,500 partly collected at a gala dinner; Banbury Cherwell Rotary donated £1,000; Misbourne Matins Rotary donated £3,410 from a street collection and some member donations; Faringdon and District

Rotary donated £1,000; and Langley & Iwer Rotary held a quiz night and donated £560.

Rotarians from across the district gave over £3,000 at our district conference in Oxford, after hearing from Rotarians Allan Smith and John Philip about Rotary's Ukraine Taskforce.

Clubs are doing their bit to tell their Facebook followers how Rotary is operating:

From a Marlow Thames Rotary Facebook post: "The Rotary clubs of Marlow and Marlow Thames joined forces to hold a street collection in aid of the Ukraine.

"During the day, 26 Rotarians and friends filled one-hour slots and collected over £4,000 from generous Marlovians and visitors to the town.

"After adding gift aid, the clubs will be donating over £5,000 to the International Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals."

Reading Matins Rotary were also active on Facebook stating: "Like the rest of the world, members of Reading Matins have been horrified by the war in Ukraine and its devastating effects.

"In order to support in both

financial and practical ways, our members immediately voted to donate £1k to The Red Cross, and joined forces with Woodley Netball Club to organise a collection of shoeboxes full of essentials.

"The huge numbers of shoeboxes pictured, contained essential items such as batteries, underwear, toiletries for Ukrainian refugees and have since been transported to those in need."

Windsor St George Rotary is organising a sunflower growing competition, with all funds going to its Ukraine appeal.

Marlow Thames Rotary has worked with scout groups across Buckinghamshire to collect medical and other items.

These will be delivered to Banbury Rotary since the club is working with a Polish community group who are delivering items to the Polish-Ukraine border.

Bourne End & Cookham Rotary lit up their peace garden with blue and yellow lighting and paper peace doves. They also donated £5,000 to the Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals. ●

**"LIKE THE REST OF THE WORLD, MEMBERS OF READING MATINS HAVE BEEN HORRIFIED BY THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND ITS DEVASTATING EFFECTS."**

## €3,000 RAISED IN A WEEKEND

**D**UBLIN-Fingal Rotary was at the forefront of many of Ireland's 72 Rotary clubs by managing to raise over €3,000 for the Ukraine in two days.

The club had already sent €10,000 directly to a Polish Rotary club situated close to the Ukraine border. They will use the money to support Ukrainian refugees who are fleeing the conflict.

The club received a staggering response from shoppers during a weekend collection in the Irish capital.

Club President David Normoyle said that he was humbled by the generosity of the people of North County Dublin: "We collected almost €3,000 over the two days. That's an incredible amount considering that there are so many charities appealing for money for Ukraine."

David Murray, the District Governor for Ireland, who is also a member of the Dublin-Fingal club, thanked members for their commitment to the project. ●

## MAKING A NEW HOME



**B**EDFORDSHIRE Rotarians came together to support a Ukrainian family who have fled the conflict.

Members of Sandy, Biggleswade and Biggleswade Ivel Rotary clubs came together to clean, decorate and furnish an empty house for a Ukrainian mother and her two daughters, aged 17 and 8, fleeing the conflict in their homeland.

A local fencer repaired the garden fence and the combined Rotary clubs got the house ready using manpower, donations from Rotary fund-raising and generous local donations.

Rotarian Ron Parsons from Sandy Rotary went shopping with Biggleswade resident and Ukrainian national Nataliyya to get the essentials for the new home.

Problems happened at the border when two of the family were held back, with only the 17-year-old allowed passage to the UK.

By the time the paperwork had cleared, flights were £200 more expensive - so the Rotary clubs contributed funds to help make up the difference and allow the family to be reunited safely in their new home in Biggleswade.

Another four families have been settled in the local area with help from the Rotary clubs. The clubs received £1,000 from the District 1260 (Rotary in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire) Ukraine Disaster Relief Grant. ●

## FORGING LINKS WITH POLAND



**T**HERE has been no let-up in the work of Christchurch Rotary who, at an early stage in the Ukrainian conflict, donated £1,000 to the Red Cross appeal and gave a further £1,000 from its own funds to the International Rotary Fellowship of Healthcare Professionals.

The Dorset club also donated £2,000 from its own charitable funds to a sister Rotary club at Chelm in Poland, close to the Ukrainian border. This will help Polish Rotarians to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees. The money is being earmarked to buy shoes and medications for children.

Vincent Banks, President-Elect of Christchurch Rotary said "It was wonderful to meet Agnieszka Grzywaczewska, the President of Chelm Rotary Club by Zoom.

"We were most impressed by the help that her Rotary club has provided to Ukrainian refugees, in cooperation with other Rotary clubs from Poland, Germany, France and Israel.

"We will continue to look for more ways to help!"

Christchurch Rotary Club then went on to organise a street collection in the town in April which raised £678.99. ●

## TOWN RALLIES ROUND FAMILY



**G**LENROTHES Rotary in Scotland has been working on a number of fronts to support the crisis in Ukraine.

The club has been supporting a Ukrainian family which has settled in the Fife town, as well as organising the collection and delivery of humanitarian aid to the country.

Rotary President, Brian Johnson, his wife Kay have been at the forefront of collecting goods destined for Ukraine stored at the Gilvenbank Hub. This included clothing which was cleaned and then sorted into categories, along with toiletries, nappies, medicines and non-perishable food.

So far three loads of goods have been transported, with the community in Glenrothes rallying round the appeal.

The club has also been supporting a Ukrainian family in the town who, after wading through plenty of red tape, managed to settle in Glenrothes with family, having fled the country.

The Rotary club managed to find bikes for the three children. The Ukrainian family returned the favour by taking part in a Rotary litter pick. ●

## AID TO UKRAINE



**A** NUMBER of Rotary clubs in Great Britain & Ireland have worked with charities and transportation companies to ship much-needed humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

Andrius Zubernis, a pastry chef based in Dungannon, Northern Ireland, headed to Lviv with a field kitchen, food, medical and toiletry supplies for the Ukrainian people.

Funded in part by Rotary Ireland, the lorry and its driver, Krzysztof Czerwinski, were supplied by A1 Transport. Enniskillen Rotary members turned out to assist with the packing and loading up.

Andrius is putting his skills to use

from war zone location in Lviv distributing 500 to 1,500 meals a day to civilians in the country.

The East London-based Stratford Rotary and the Isles of Scilly Rotary partnered with Rotary clubs in Ukraine to send a lorry load of humanitarian assistance to help disabled people and wounded soldiers.

The clubs teamed up with Kyiv Synergy Ukraine, Lviv International and Kharkiv Multinational Rotary Clubs, with the aid being sent to Kharkiv.

Meanwhile Derby Rotary teamed up with the charity Teams4u to send two lorry loads of aid to Ukraine. ●

## RUDOLPH GETS A MAKEOVER!

**R**AINHILL Rotary on Merseyside struck on a clever way of fund-raising for the Ukraine. They converted their Santa sleigh into an Easter float emblazoned with Ukrainian colours.

Rotarian Mike Gaffney hatched the idea to change the float beyond recognition, apart from the reindeer, who would have Ukrainian blankets, with Rudolph sporting yellow and blue colours on his antlers and nose.

The club managed to receive permission from St Helens' Tesco and Asda supermarkets, and over the Easter period collected £4,000 for Rotary's Ukraine appeal. The club even got sponsorship from Rocket Embroidery to wear special t-shirts for the occasion. ●



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## A BIG RESPONSE



**D**EVON Rotarians, Roger Byrom and Patrick Farrelly, have recently returned from Hungary after delivering aid to Ukraine close to the border.

“The experience is a fine example of the international family of Rotary working together for the better good,” said Patrick, a member of Braunton Caen Rotary.

The Devon club worked closely with Frici Németh, a Rotary District Governor from László, who connected them with the Rotary Club of Kisvárdá, a small town lying 12 miles from the border with Ukraine.

St Brannock’s Church in Braunton Caen offered use of a minibus, and two other vans were supplied by local people.

This club was already heavily involved in collecting aid and sending it across the border to the Rotary Club of Uzhhorod, but after setting up a ‘Ukraine Braunton Community Response’ Facebook page, and producing posters appealing for goods, the response was overwhelming.

“The local Tesco store was stripped of nappies, baby food and ladies’ hygiene items; members of the community bombarded us with donations, both physical and monetary,” said Patrick.

The pair made a 33-hour 1,500 mile trip to Kisvárdá, where 20 Rotarians and helpers were on hand to unload the six tons of aid. ●

## FIRE ENGINES TO UKRAINE



**R**OTARY clubs have been involved with the delivery of fire engines to Ukraine to support the fire service in the country.

Rotary in Somerset, along with parts of Wiltshire and Dorset (District 1200) joined Rotary districts from across the world to provide funding for the fire trucks, which were delivered on the Polish-Ukrainian border.

The Rotary clubs of Weston and Yeovil, along with Elgin Breakfast

Rotary from Scotland, were prominent in their support.

The Somerset District has been active in its support, donating £10,000 to Rotary in Poland, Moldova and Hungary, as well as £5,000 to Rotary Lviv International in Ukraine via a Polish Rotary club, plus £5,000 to Water Survival Box.

More than £100,000 has been sent from the west country Rotary clubs to support people from Ukraine, including individual clubs sending support directly. ●

## SUPPORTING SHELTERBOX

**W**ILDE Green Rotary Club from Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, has sent £1,200 to the Rotary-originated charity ShelterBox, to help the people being displaced due to war, in Ukraine.

ShelterBox is a UK-based international disaster relief charity which has had a team in eastern Europe since the end of February responding to the war in Ukraine. The charity has spent time in Poland, Moldova and Lviv in western Ukraine.

ShelterBox is providing mattresses to collective centres in Lviv, Ukraine. Working with People in Need, distributions began in March and the delivery of mattresses is continuing throughout April. They started distributing shelter kits and other essential items to help people in Ukraine survive in damaged buildings.

Working with their partner Relief Aid, they are moving aid across Ukraine.

The charity will be supporting



refugees in neighbouring countries with high priority items they can carry with them, like hygiene items and cash.

Their teams are working with government representatives, other humanitarian organisations and Rotary in Moldova to draw up our plans.

They have been visiting collective centres as well as conducting needs assessments at a reception centre in Moldova not far from the border with Ukraine, where many refugees have been arriving. ●



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*Anna Ryder Richardson*



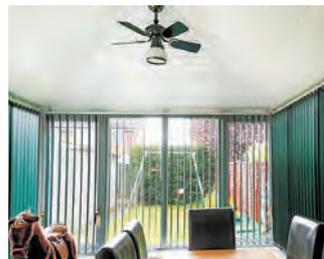
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# ROTARY SOCIAL

## THE BEST OF VOLUNTEER EXPO LIVE

Earlier in May, Volunteer Expo Live finally got its in-person debut at the NEC in Birmingham and the event was a resounding success. Here are some of the best bits from the event that were captured on social media.



[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#)



### 15 YEARS OF YOUNG CITIZEN

To mark 15 years since the start of the Rotary Young Citizen Awards, a remarkable set of young people got to have their inspiring stories told in front of the live audience at Volunteer Expo Live and have their awards presented to them by Ellie Crisell. Head over to the Rotary YouTube channel to hear their stories.



[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#)



### SPEAKER SESSIONS

Over the two days, Volunteer Expo Live was lucky enough to welcome a whole host of different speakers, from Rugby World Cup winner Ben Cohen to Olympic gold medal winning sailor Hannah Mills. All the speaker sessions from the event are available on the Rotary YouTube channel.



[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#)



### FOOD PACKING EVENT FOR UKRAINE

With the help of Feed The Hungry UK, Volunteer Expo Live put on a special food packing event where over 700 boxes of food for Ukrainian refugees were packed by attendees. BBC Midlands Today were there to document the food packing which you can see on Rotary's Twitter.



[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#)



### HEAR FROM THE EXHIBITORS

Some of our amazing exhibitors such as Guide Dogs and Colostomy UK gave their time to speak to Rotary about what their charities are all about as well as the importance of events like Volunteer Expo Live. All these short interviews are available to watch now on Volunteer Expo's Twitter!



[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#)

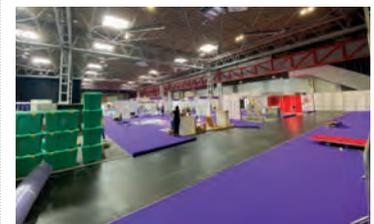


### CHEERS FOR VOLUNTEERS

As a preview for the upcoming Thank You Day celebrations, the Royal Voluntary Service orchestrated a 'Cheers for Volunteers' where staff and attendees could raise a glass for the volunteers that make such an enormous contribution to our country every day. You can see on Royal Voluntary Service's Instagram!



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### HOW IT ALL COMES TOGETHER

Ever wondered what it takes to put on an event the size of Volunteer Expo Live? On Volunteer Expo's Facebook page, you can watch a short montage from the day before the event of every stand, desk and stage being set up to get a grasp of how much work really does go into live events.

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# SHEKHAR MEHTA

**ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT**

**G**REETINGS, dear change-makers of Rotary. Due to your positive response to the Each One, Bring One initiative, I am so happy to see that the membership trends in Rotary are very positive. Let us not lose this momentum — keep working, and also work hard to retain every member we attract.

In June, we hosted my final presidential conference in Houston. We have devoted this year to conferences built around Rotary's areas of focus. The conferences have been a tremendous success, both in terms of attendance and in the ideas that have been brought to the surface.

Last fall, our conference in the Philippines, which focused on protecting the environment and growing local economies, attracted 2,200 people online.

In Brazil, our meeting centred around water, sanitation, and hygiene and how it relates to disease prevention and treatment; more than 600 people attended. That was followed by an event about the environment, economy, and peace in Maputo, Mozambique, which attracted around 400 in-person attendees and another 700 virtually. Our conference about keeping the economy and environment in harmony, held in Venice, Italy, had more than 600 in attendance.

Through these conferences and my travels around the world, numerous leaders have taken the time to meet with me and agreed to collaborate with Rotary. These have included the prime minister of Mauritius, the president of Seychelles, the deputy prime minister of Bahrain, and the presidents of Albania and Kosovo. Clearly, Rotary is making an impact in the world, and the world is eager for our leadership.

In Houston, the final presidential conference focused on an area in which Rotary has long provided leadership: Serve to Bring Peace. Everything we do in Rotary helps create the conditions that foster peace in communities, nations, and ourselves.

In March, I was able to see firsthand the tremendous difference Rotary is making in Ukraine, as refugees continue to pour into Poland. Donors have contributed millions of dollars to this effort; our projects are making a tremendous difference, and there is enormous gratitude for your continued generosity and support.

It is heartbreaking to see up close all the lives that have been uprooted, and the Ukrainian people are not alone.

A devastating civil war in Yemen continues. The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan is deepening. Armed conflicts affect nations across Africa, including Libya, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, northern Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Cameroon. And major refugee crises continue in Syria and Venezuela.

Rotary will always be on the side of peaceful resolution of conflict and providing aid and comfort to people in need, whenever and wherever we can. Rotary was there at the end of World War II, promoting the creation of the United Nations and standing up for the cause of peacebuilding worldwide. It is time for us to renew our mission and perform our role as one of the world's great promoters of peace.

There is no better way to Serve to Change Lives than to serve the cause of peace. ●



Amanda Watkin  
General Secretary  
Rotary in GB&I



Nicki Scott  
RI Director & Leader  
of the Association



David Ellis  
Chair of the  
Executive

# IT'S TIME TO TAKE ACTION

**W**HAT a truly inspirational day we had in Birmingham last month at the Action Summit - such a great way to round off a fantastic weekend all round, with Volunteer Expo on the opening two days.

To have three major leaders of our great organisation in one room was a truly unique event in these islands or anywhere in the Rotary world come to that! Rotary International President-Elect, Jennifer Jones, Immediate Past President, Holger Knaack, and our very own President-Nominee, Gordon McInally, all took a very active part.

The positivity in the room at the Action Summit on Sunday was palpable. Each table was buzzing with fresh ideas and open to new ways of promoting and growing our organisation at club, district and national level.

What took place was far beyond anything any of us imagined and one thing is for certain, Institutes are now confined to history.

Our Director Nicki Scott had wanted to create something completely different to a traditional institute experience.

One which would complement the inaugural, live, outward-facing event of Volunteer Expo, engaging Rotarians from all districts to drive inspiration and fresh thinking towards tangible actions.

All too often we enjoy participating in a conference, meeting up with our friends and fellow Rotarians, listening to great speakers, but we don't really return to our clubs to do anything differently.

With the hard-earned lessons of the pandemic under our belts: learning to adapt, embracing technology, engaging in experiences beyond the walls of our own clubs; we now have extra tools in our toolbox to #BuildForwardBetter. After all: we are People of Action!

Before Volunteer Expo we also held a fantastic Foundation event recognising contributors to OUR Foundation - the engine which fuels and amplifies so much of the work we do. Huge thanks to our great Foundation Team, led by John Dehnel, for hosting an outstanding event and to Immediate Past President Holger Knaack for his wise words as our Trustee representative.

At the end of the day, what matters most is our ability to lift up and support the great work of our grass roots Rotarians and be perceived as relevant enough for others to want to join us, helping grow Rotary to have even greater impact.

In the words of Phil Dyer, who has served in many roles in Rotary, soon to include being an at large member of our Regional Board: "The four strategic priorities of Our Rotary International and GB&I Action Plan are a blueprint for the future of our organisation.

"But the real success of the Action Summit was the ability for Rotarians to turn those into a roadmap for action right here right now in a way that is truly relevant to us.

"Being able to discuss this in real time with senior Rotary leaders was incredibly rewarding and reinforcing because, at the end of the day, we are all Rotarians united in our collective passion to do good in the world, irrespective of our position."

How do we capture the positive vibe that pervaded the room and get our message out to as many Rotarians as possible?

There is no doubt that this is the way forward and the perfect platform to build on, every person there must ensure they bring others along to the next summit to widen our scope for positivity. ●



**"BUT THE REAL SUCCESS OF THE ACTION SUMMIT WAS THE ABILITY FOR ROTARIANS TO TURN THOSE INTO A ROADMAP FOR ACTION RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW IN A WAY THAT IS TRULY RELEVANT TO US."**

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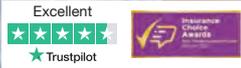
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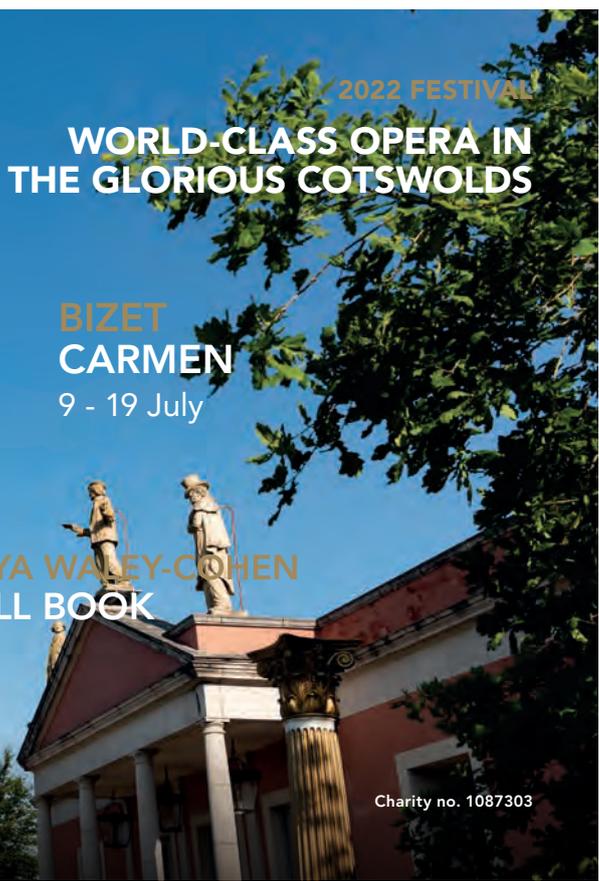
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# Letters to the editor

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



## Rotary: People of action

I WOULD like to flag up the Rotary's response to the humanitarian disaster occasioned by the Russian invasion of and terrorising of the Ukraine, well documented in the free press and media of Great Britain.

I am tremendously proud of the efforts of members who have worked hard to link up with fellow clubs in our district to coordinate the delivery of medical and personal products to the Rotary Club of Lublin in Poland.

From there with the additional products from local clubs our 220 box consignment of 2.42 tons was delivered to Lviv for distribution to hospitals and aid stations.

The most praise must go to the two members - everyone involved are volunteers from all walks of life - who drove 2,584 miles in 75 hours to affect this achievement.

As this would not reach the Kharkiv region where Maksym, a personal friend

of mine is living, my family and I sent a personal donation for him to be able to buy food and fuel for distribution to his fellow citizens.

He messaged me at midnight to thank us and in particular Boris's efforts to help his country with weapons and supplies like ours.

However, the relief of knowing he is still safe was tempered by the harrowing pictures he included - dead civilians, pet dogs, bloated dead cattle in fields and also in stacks, killed by Russian soldiers to rob the local farmers of milk and meat. I am not ashamed to admit I cried.

Well done to all the people of Plymouth who have been tremendous in so many different ways.

Keep it up, and keep praying for the sufferers and for long term peace. #, in Maksym's view only.

**Dr Edmund H Shillabeer**

Mayflower Plymouth Rotary, Devon.

## Supporting Russia and Ukraine

I READ the articles in April's Rotary magazine concerning Russia and Ukraine with considerable interest and thank you for their timely publication.

One thought which came to mind was suggesting to Rotary International that the 2022/23 dues for both Russia and Ukraine members could be funded by Rotary International as a gesture of support for our small community in Russia, but also our much larger community in Ukraine.

It seems a very small gesture but one that would recognise they both face tremendous challenges in the year ahead.

I am not sure what forum is available for you to ask the question but thought I would ask anyway.

**John Cooper**

Ponteland Rotary, Northumberland

## Rotary's swift response

MANY congratulations for moving so swiftly to report on Rotary in Ukraine and Russia (*Rotary*, April).

It is so encouraging to hear of Rotary's immediate support for Ukraine and the role of Foundation both immediately and for the longer term. It is most heartening to read of the swift response of Rotary to support Ukrainian relief efforts.

**Peter Love**

Shrewsbury Severn Rotary,  
Shropshire

Every issue, *Rotary* magazine publishes a series of letters from Rotarians featuring a number of topical issues. We welcome your letters on any subject to do with Rotary. Submissions should be no more than 250 words long. If you would like to contribute please write including your name and address and then emailing: [editor@rotarygb.org](mailto:editor@rotarygb.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.



## Building trade in Ukraine

I WAS pleased to see the well written and interesting material on Ukraine in the April issue of *Rotary*.

The country's involvement in Rotary has a complicated history, but there is much potential for future development once this terrible war can be brought to an end.

I know Kyiv pretty well, but not other places. However, I have academic contacts in both Odessa and Uzhgorod, and would like to reactivate these once conditions

would allow that.

There will then be much need for help with recovery and reconstruction plus advice on improving economic policy to build better links with the European Union - building on and implementing properly the existing Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement that Ukraine has with the EU.

**| Paul Hare**  
Esk Valley Rotary, Midlothian

## Turbulent times

I JUST want to thank you for the content of the April issue. The Ukrainian colours on the cover gave a great sense of solidarity with the Rotarians and population there. I hope, and it probably has, that this issue is emailed to them.

The history of Rotary in Ukraine and the turbulent times the country has experienced was so interesting.

The article about Rotary in Russia was very moving. One's hopes for a safer future for Aslan Guluev and to all the people in Ukraine.

**| Liz Shaw**  
Battersea Park Rotary, London

## Audio magazine joy

I WANTED to register my delight in being able to listen to the *Rotary* magazine, rather than relying on others to read it to me - which never happens in reality!

I am visually impaired, and I have found the magazine truly inspirational; so many clubs doing so much good work which, in turn, gives us some ideas to consider.

Thank you and your other readers for a very enjoyable listen.

**| Laura Haynes**  
Swansea Rotary, South Wales

## Stand together

ROTARY International has had a proud involvement in the creation and on-going support of the United Nations.

Rotary was among a group of international NGO's which participated in the San Francisco Conference, April to June 1945, which drew up the UN Charter.

Just before that historic conference Rotary encouraging participation in the debate on maintaining world peace, urging every Rotarian to get involved. Rotary retains consultant status today, with Rotary Day being celebrated every year.

Since its inception the U.N. has done its best, with varying success, to uphold its charter in a divisive world.

The globe so far has been spared the horror of a Third World War which inevitably would threaten to escalate into nuclear conflict. But recent events in Eastern Europe have highlighted how impotent the U.N. has become.

When it was set up the hope was it would evade the deficiencies that plagued its predecessor the League of Nations which was shown to be powerless to arrest the slide into the Second World War. Admittedly there has not been another major global conflict since it was founded - although that might have more to do with ever more chilling nuclear weapons than any high-minded discussion in New York.

At the heart of the problem is the UN's architecture, in particular the role of the Security Council, which in the case of Ukraine has enabled a brutal, unprovoked aggressor simply to veto moves against it. Never mind that the vast majority of the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly for peace and adherence to international norms.

Rotary is firmly non-political, but it does stand for peace, humanitarian action, and a safe future for the children of the world. Can we not revive club by club, district by district, country by country, the spirit of 1945?

**| Jim Wilson OBE**  
Norwich Marchesi Rotary, Norfolk

## Thank you for your support

AS we enter the final weeks of this Rotary year, I would like to express my deep gratitude to all the districts and clubs that have kindly invited Denise and I to attend, either at a conference or a milestone charter dinner.

We both received excellent hospitality but what impressed us most was the genuine desire to change from all quarters, there is a real groundswell of positivity.

This has been an amazing year and the level of change that has been keenly adopted by all the Service Team Leaders is truly humbling.

When our Rotary Director, Nicki Scott and I started this journey in 2020 we never imagined that the changes we hoped for would be achieved, but they have and gone beyond our dreams.

It is only when you look back at where we were and where we are now, on the verge of a brand new era for Rotary in these islands that you realise how far we have come.

Credit must be given to our predecessors Past Presidents Debbie Hodge, Donna Wallbank and Tom Griffin who, along with their District Governors, had the foresight to agree to the changes.

I decided to take on the role of Chairman of the Executive and together we could share the responsibilities, Nicki working with the DG's and setting the strategy and I working with the Service Teams.

I look forward to attending the new Board as we continue to shape the future of Rotary to make it more appealing to prospective members.

I will continue to spread the word as I act as the ambassador for the Regional Board and look forward to meeting many more of you, thank you, it's been a blast.

**David Ellis**  
Chairman of the  
Rotary GB&I Executive

## Giving grace to foodbanks

FOR many people, life is now hard and will soon get harder.

Our Rotary club, as a group, is like other clubs already providing financial support for our local, bona fide foodbanks. We are looking, however, to increase our support to meet increasing needs.

Meeting four times a month, each attending member pays £15 for a two-course meal. If, at one of these meetings, some 30 members were to pay £7.50 for a lesser, but still adequate meal, then the remaining £7.50 could be donated to foodbank funds, thus raising £225 more per month, or £2,700 per annum.

If a district of perhaps 10 clubs, was to adopt such a plan, then some £27,000 per annum could be raised.

With similar support nationwide, Rotary's assistance to foodbanks could be significant.

It would be very easy to raise objections to the idea – practical or ideological, perhaps. Any charitable aids need to be carefully planned

and implemented with due diligence. As Government has discovered, to our considerable cost, hurriedly distributed aid is open to abuse.

If asked to say grace before a club meal, I would usually express thanks for friendship and food, and a thought for those who go hungry. But would my words, however well meant, help anyone who is hungry?

Fine words, tis said, do butter no parsnips! But when my club puts its idea into action, I will sit down and partake having, as an individual, put more of my money where my grace is.

**Jim Crate**  
Bewdley Rotary, Worcestershire



## Finding a home for spectacles

IN February's *Rotary* magazine there is an article referring to the recycling of spectacles which states that Boots Opticians, Vision Express and Oxfam take used spectacles for recycling.

This not true, since Vision Aid stopped their recycling service because, according to their website: "For many years, the income generated through this recycling scheme has helped support VAO's eye health programmes in our partner countries, delivering eye health services and low-cost new glasses to those in need.

However, the recycling scheme no longer raises enough income to adequately cover its costs and therefore VAO has taken the decision to close its scheme in 2020."

All opticians, including Specsavers, sent their used spectacles collection to Vision Aid. I have tried other organisations to no avail, the latest suggestion was Barnardo's but that was a negative.

It is such a shame, but it looks like the Rotary Club of Blyth's collection of 70+ pairs is destined for landfill!

**Jim Schofield**  
Rotary Club of Blyth, Northumberland

*Editor's note* | York Ainsty Rotary provides a spectacle recycling service. Contact: Ruth Perrott, 16 Manor Farm Close, Copmanthorpe, York YO23 3GE.

## Templated Rotary

I HAD often challenged myself to find a cause or at the very least a group where I could directly notice an impact from mine and my fellow members' contributions.

After some research and discussion I joined Angus Glens Rotary in 2021.

I believed that being a member of my local Rotary club would serve its purpose to help the local community directly and of course be part of a global movement where I was sure that the intentions and actions were delivered.

The global output, is something I feel connected with and the magazine definitely makes me feel like I am part of an organisation which is making a true impact on lives globally.

As with all global organisations it is sometimes easy to transmit an image of impact, participation and success through all types of media however, sometimes when we delve a little deeper into the detail, we might find that the communication model doesn't always filter down to local level.

I consider myself a young Rotarian aged 46. I have sent our President an email with the suggestion that we modernise the format of meetings in such that these meetings become fun, interactive and informative. The current format is not engaging nor is it informative.

I think Rotary GB&I should be doing more to encourage clubs to use a standard format such as PowerPoint presentations or similar for meetings which include a visually delivered agenda. I also think local clubs would benefit from a standard newsletter, minutes of meeting and presentation templates.

By providing templates and meeting formats for clubs to use, we can ensure that we are setting a common corporate format and building the foundations for enhanced participation and clubs are showing an ability to adapt.

**| Barry Stewart**  
Angus Glens Rotary, Angus



## Value our speakers

I READ with interest the two articles in the February magazine in response to an earlier article entitled "Rotary Club of the Irresistible".

From the content of those letters, I am assuming that the Rotary Club of Milton Keynes is embarking on a very different approach to Rotary, which is to be applauded.

Certainly, this pandemic has given many clubs this opportunity to do things differently and my club is no exception.

In my career as a pharmaceutical scientist, I am only too aware of the unreliability and dangers of 'checking my phone' for any accurate and factual information. This is exceptionally naive thinking at best.

How often can we be reliably satisfied that information on internet platforms is in any way at all peer-reviewed and authentically verified?

To denigrate the value of speakers is really not a principle of Rotary where all are valued or should be. What a "phone data dump" can never do is show the feeling of a speaker's subject. For example, a group of school children talking about their experiences surrounding a field trip to Africa, is never and can never ever be captured on any internet or data platform.

Invited speakers still have a role in the variety of our programmes and perhaps, could be a periodic event in the 'new normal' Rotary world.

**| Colin Knight**  
Rushcliffe Rotary, Nottinghamshire

## Measure our volunteering

I AGREE 100% with the sentiments expressed in February's magazine by Mike Parker about visiting speakers and accept the statement by Richard Lowe that "Regrettably, we are still viewed by many outsiders as "The middle classes and middle-aged at lunch."

I would, however, add that we do not do ourselves a service by measuring and publicising our projects by the amount of money raised. This adds to the image above as Rotary being an organisation which rattles buckets etc. to raise money.

What we should be doing is to emphasise the financial support we have given both locally and internationally to good causes, and the amount of unpaid effort that we put in to achieve this.

**| Graham Suggett**  
Warwick Rotary, Warwickshire

## Jam-packed magazine

JUST to say how very much I enjoyed - and was rewarded by - the April edition of the *Rotary* magazine. It was jam-packed with interesting and relevant articles and photographs. My pride as a Rotarian was increased by its contents. Thank you.

**| Gary Shaeffer**  
Rotary Club of Northampton





# Smiles all round

Smile Train is the world's largest cleft-focused charity, with a sustainable approach to a single, solvable issue: cleft lip and palate.

**A** CLEFT is the most common facial difference globally, affecting around in 700 babies. In the UK, cleft surgery is carried out within the first 12 months of a baby's life by the National Health Service (NHS). However, hundreds of thousands of children living in resource-poor communities worldwide are not as fortunate, and do not have access to the lifesaving cleft treatment they desperately need.

An untreated cleft can lead to difficulties with eating, speaking, hearing and even breathing. Babies and their families can also experience isolation from their communities.

Smile Train's sustainable model empowers local medical professionals with training, funding, and resources to provide free cleft surgery and comprehensive cleft care to children globally.

Since 1999, Smile Train has supported safe and quality cleft care for more than 1.5million children and will continue to do so until every person in need with a cleft has access to the care they deserve.

Smile Train is committed to treating the whole patient through programs that provide access to important comprehensive cleft care services.

Comprehensive cleft care includes essential treatments beyond cleft surgery, such as nutrition services, orthodontic and general dental care, speech therapy and emotional support, intended to ensure

long-term, successful rehabilitation for Smile Train's cleft patients.

As People of Action and with a vision of delivering a better world by creating opportunities, supporting those who need it most and transforming lives, Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland has a strong relationship with Smile Train's work.

In as little as 45 minutes, a skilled Smile Train partner surgeon can perform a cleft surgery and change a child's life forever.

Since 2019, Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland has raised awareness of Smile Train's work through numerous engaging talks and raised more than £25,000 through impactful fundraising activities.

These donations have given children living with untreated clefts the opportunity to live a healthy, productive life, filled with smiles.



### A WALK TO FREEDOM

NKUNDA was born with a cleft in a remote village in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His mother, Muswamba, was unable to afford the cost of the cleft surgery he needed, so Nkunda's cleft remained untreated.

Muswamba went out of her way to raise Nkunda to be confident. "I was always there to cheer him up and assured him that there was nothing wrong with the way he looked," she said.

He was a very happy boy until he started attending school. Outside the safety of home and his mother's protection, he was bullied incessantly.

The worst part was the long walk to and from school. Unfortunately, it got to the point that Nkunda would hide in the bushes when he saw or heard another group of children.

Another painful slight was that the other children stopped calling him by his name and started calling him hurtful things instead. The mental anguish was so bad that he started cutting himself, which he said helped ease his pain.

When Nkunda started school, his goal was to become a teacher. But after several years of bullying, Muswamba reluctantly agreed to pull him out of school altogether.

By 2019, Nkunda was now three years behind the other children his age.

Just when he was seemingly past his breaking point, Muswamba learnt that Smile Train was sponsoring free cleft surgeries through Congolese hero

and NBA All-Star Dikembe Mutombo's hospital, in Mbuji-Mayi. Both she and Nkunda didn't mind at all that it was a three-hour walk to get there – the solution they'd been hoping was just a few miles away.

When they arrived at the hospital, they were shocked to see more than a dozen other families were waiting for cleft surgery as well.

They had always felt alone in their struggles and were comforted to know that they had a new network of families who understood what they'd been through.

Nkunda's name was called and he passed his blood tests and physical.

He had been approved for his long-awaited cleft surgery and it wouldn't cost his family a thing.

After the surgery, Nkunda could hardly contain his happiness.

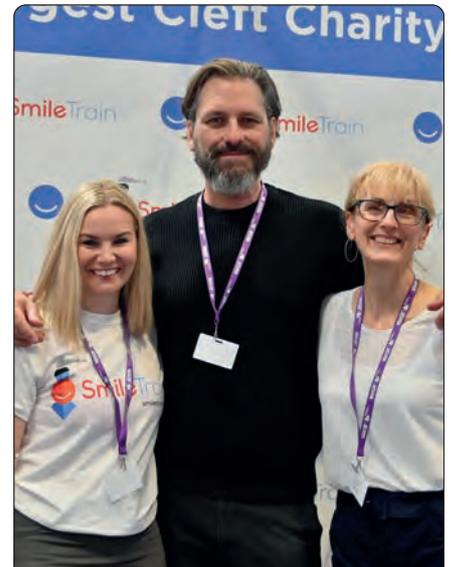
One of the first things he told his mother was that he was ready to go back to school as soon as they got back home.

"You have changed my son's future for the best. You have given him the best gift ever. My son was in mental prison, but you have released him.

"Thank you, Smile Train," Muswamba said as tears rolled down her cheeks. ●

### Information

To read more life changing stories and learn how your support can change the life of a child, visit [smiletrain.org.uk/stories](https://smiletrain.org.uk/stories)



### Our Impact

- 1.5M+ Smile Train-supported cleft surgeries since 1999
- 2,100+ empowered medical professionals
- 1,100+ partner hospitals
- 90+ countries where Smile Train has helped children
- Every 5 Minutes Smile Train-supported cleft treatment helps a child in need
- 1 Goal: To give every child with a cleft the opportunity for a healthy, productive life.

To learn more about our work and how you can support Smile Train through your Rotary Club, please visit [smiletrain.org.uk](https://smiletrain.org.uk), email us at [ukinfo@smiletrain.org](mailto:ukinfo@smiletrain.org), or call us on 0113 841 8101.

# Global grants will deliver for local needs

How easy is it for Rotary clubs to secure a Global Grant for a domestic project? Ashley Gray, Assistant Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator, spotlights one Rotary project in Berkshire.

**I**T is rare to find a project within Great Britain and Ireland which qualifies for Global Grant Funding, but it is not impossible. It is just a matter of looking in depth at your own community and assessing any urgent gaps in service provision.

One such programme which has received funding approval from The Rotary Foundation for a Global Grant is the Thames Hospice Patient Care Improvement Programme.

The Thames Hospice is located in Bray, Berkshire, and serves a community covering 750 square miles in the Thames Valley with a population of over 500,000 people. It is the only hospice in the area providing 24/7 emergency services.

Cookham Bridge Rotary already had links with the hospice but they wanted to do more and so the idea of a high impact large scale project in partnership with the hospice was conceived.

Derek Smith is the lead for the project and I asked him a few questions about the project...

## How did the project come about?

Thames Hospice has been around for some 35 years and over that time has seen the need for its services increase tremendously in our community and as a

result has grown to help meet those needs.

There had always been links between my Rotary club and other local Rotary clubs with Thames Hospice and many have made cash donations over the years which were most welcome.

However, we wanted to make a real difference and spoke with the hospice and asked them what they needed and it was agreed that a Patient Care Improvement Programme was a great way of making a real difference and so it began.

## WHAT WOULD BE INVOLVED IN THE PROGRAMME?

The programme would primarily involve upskilling current nursing staff in the area of general patient care and in the provision of critical pain relief.

This will enable them to undertake more responsible tasks without recourse to support from senior medical staff thereby relieving senior staff to carry out tasks more appropriate to their qualifications.

## WHY DID YOU CONSIDER A FOUNDATION GLOBAL GRANT TO HELP FUND THE PROJECT?

A Global Grant would enable us to develop a much larger project and therefore have a higher impact than we would have otherwise been able to afford.

You have managed to get 25 clubs to provide some of the finance for the project, how did you manage to do that?

We realised that our club could not do this project on its own, either financially or logistically so I did a presentation at our District Conference and that did the trick.

We had seven clubs willing help put the project together and the remainder would donate funds.

## HOW DID YOU FIND AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNER?

A Rotarian from a local club moved to Germany some years ago and joined a club over there.

He still kept in touch with his former club and was more than happy to recommend this project to his club in Germany as the International Partner.

## APART FROM YOUR LOCAL CLUBS WAS ANYONE ELSE INVOLVED?

It was vital that the project was developed with the hospice in the forefront but as important was the involvement of the district in particular the District Foundation Chair and our Assistant Governor and a number of others all of whom were invaluable in getting the project to where it is today.



**| DID YOU FIND ANY ISSUE WITH THE APPLICATION FORM?**

Most was quite simple and straight forward, the only issue was the section on community involvement.

The form assumes that the project will take place in a small community in an underdeveloped part of the world where discussions can take place with community leaders on the ground.

Obviously in our case that was not appropriate. However, by involving the hospice and between us developing a comprehensive needs assessment The Rotary Foundation was happy that we had completed our due diligence in this area.

**| WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE ANY CLUB LOOKING TO DO A GLOBAL GRANT PROJECT LOCALLY?**

Go for it, but do not attempt this on your own, involve other clubs in your strategic team after all many hands make light work.

So, in a nutshell, it is possible to devise and implement a Global Grant project in Great Britain and Ireland, it is just a matter a finding a need in your local community.

Derek is happy to provide advice or answer any questions related to this project. Please contact Assistant Regional Foundation Co-ordinator Ashley Gray at: [ashleygray@btinternet.com](mailto:ashleygray@btinternet.com)

## The value of The Rotary Foundation

**I**N the first half of this Rotary year, clubs and districts in Great Britain & Ireland received approval for some stunning projects at home and overseas - all thanks to grants from The Rotary Foundation.

The total number of projects approved by The Rotary Foundation was 493, including 70 Global Grant projects.

The total value of all of these projects was an eye-watering \$4,563,728, with the largest project coming in at \$146,000.

A total of 298 projects are to take place within Great Britain & Ireland.

District Grants are smaller grants which offer clubs the flexibility to create their own much-needed projects. Great Britain & Ireland Rotary clubs have developed 23 of these projects worth \$605,584.

These figures show how contributing to The Rotary Foundation really makes a difference to people's lives both at home and overseas.

- It's **EFFICIENT** having some of the lowest operating costs for charities in the world
- It's **EFFECTIVE** with every project having its need assessed before being implemented
- It's **ETHICAL** with every project complying with the second Object of Rotary
- It's **SUSTAINABLE** with every project having a sustainable element to it
- It's **FOR EVERYBODY**
- It exists to **SERVE ROTARIANS**

In these difficult times, the world needs The Rotary Foundation more than ever. Donating could not be simpler; give your donation to your club treasurer or donate via [rotarygbi.org/donate](https://rotarygbi.org/donate)

# Rotary Marketplace

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



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# 15th Anniversary of Rotary Young Citizen Awards

The Rotary Young Citizen Awards recognising inspirational young role models have celebrated their 15th anniversary in style.

| BY AWARDS FOUNDER, EVE CONWAY |

BBC TV Presenter Ellie Crisell, who presented the first Awards in 2007 and many since then, hosted this year's Awards Ceremony at the Volunteer Expo at the NEC in Birmingham on May 7th.

To mark the anniversary, there were two new Awards: the first-ever Young Environmentalist Award reflecting Rotary's new area of focus on the Environment and the Child of Courage Award honouring two youngsters who are helping make a difference to others despite having to face extreme health problems and difficulties themselves.

## MEET THIS YEAR'S REMARKABLE INDIVIDUAL WINNERS:

### | MEGAN RODD, NOMINATED BY HORBURY AND OSSETT PHOENIX ROTARY

Fifteen-year-old Megan has been helping her local community since the age of five, both by fund-raising and random acts of kindness. Aged six, Megan climbed Ben Nevis and since then has climbed Snowdon, completed marathons, bike rides and more. Her fund-raising balance is now over £35,000. During lockdown, Megan didn't let COVID stop her fund-raising efforts: she started a Facebook page called Megan's Kindness Mission and organised food parcels for families in need.

### | DR MYA-ROSE CRAIG, NOMINATED BY BRISTOL BREAKFAST ROTARY

Mya-Rose is a 20-year-old British-Bangladeshi birder and environmentalist, committed to stopping biodiversity loss

and saving our planet through halting climate change. She started campaigning when she was eight-years-old after meeting indigenous peoples in the Amazon. Aged 11, she started her Birdgirl blog to share her passion for birds and wildlife. At the age of 13, she set up her charity Black2Nature and became the youngest British person to be awarded an honorary Doctorate of Science aged 17 from Bristol University for fighting for equal access to nature and ethnic diversity in the environmental sector.

### | AMOL NEUPANE, NOMINATED BY BEXLEY ROTARY

Eleven-year-old Amol's charitable fund-raising activities started when he was just 6. During lockdown, he cycled 400km over a three-week period, raising over £3,300 for the Oxford University Coronavirus Vaccine Research Project because he wanted to help in the fight against COVID. Amol has undertaken a fund-raising challenge for school children in rural Nepal. He also has a keen interest in saving the environment.

### | AVYE COULOUTE, NOMINATED BY PUTNEY ROTARY

Fourteen-year-old Avey is passionate about girls getting involved in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and set up Girls Into Coding with her mum and runs workshops in coding and robotics for underprivileged and underserved girls. Avey started coding aged 7.

## GROUP WINNERS:

### | SPARK UK, NOMINATED BY ILFRACOMBE ROTARY

Spark UK is a mental health organisation set up by four teenagers, aged between 14 and 16, for young people. Their aim is to "spark the conversation around mental health" and alleviate the stigma through their website [www.sparkuk.co.uk](http://www.sparkuk.co.uk) and developing resources for schools and the community. They have received support from sports stars and celebrities such as Jonny Wilkinson, Stephen Fry and Emma Thompson who recorded messages for an All-Star Digital Calendar where they talked about their own mental health.

### | CATCH LEEDS, NOMINATED BY ROUNDHAY ROTARY

CATCH (Community Action To Create Hope) is a volunteer youth-led charity. The young volunteers, aged between 11 and 24, many of whom had been in trouble themselves, have turned their lives around. They have transformed a previous crime hotspot into a vibrant community hub. They have also helped reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the local area by leading youth programmes and fostered relations between different communities by promoting community cohesion.



**ROTARY YOUNG CITIZEN ENVIRONMENTALIST AWARD WINNER 2022**

**| AMY AND ELLA MEEK NOMINATED BY CARLTON ROTARY (NOTTINGHAM)**

Teenage sisters Amy, aged 18, and Ella, aged 16, are campaigning for positive change to reduce single-use plastic. They set up their own charity Kids Against Plastic, aged 12 and 10, aimed at helping young people (and not so young people) to learn about environmental issues such as plastic pollution and the Climate Crisis.

**ROTARY YOUNG CITIZEN SPORTING HERO AWARD WINNER 2022**

**| KHOVAN HUSSEIN NOMINATED BY NEWTON-LE-WILLOWS ROTARY**

Seventeen-year-old Khovan from Warrington has overcome a heart condition, autism and Tourette's to put others first including fund-raising for teenagers with cancer. Khovan is a student at the Lakeside Sixth Form College at Wargrave House Autism Specialist School & College. There, he has been helping fellow students with medical and mental health issues who required his sensitive understanding to step up to sport to engage them in the wider community. He has helped his peers and teachers to

maintain their fitness, despite the impact of COVID-19. He has completed two college work placements as an MMA coach and gym instructor/personal trainer.

**ROTARY YOUNG CITIZEN PEACEMAKER AWARD WINNER 2022**

**| FAY PRETTY, NOMINATED BY BOURNEMOUTH EAST CLIFF ROTARY**

Fay, who's 22, has been passionate about peace since secondary school. From the age of 16, she was involved in projects locally and in Ecuador, Uganda and India helping build peace and understanding and community cohesion. Fay was a founder member of PeaceJam UK's Youth Leadership Team and now leads this team.

**ROTARY YOUNG CITIZEN CHILD OF COURAGE AWARD 2022**

**| AREEB KHAN, REDBRIDGE ROTARY (LONDON)**

Areeb Khan, Redbridge Rotary (London) Areeb has revealed her remarkable battle with COVID-19 in a bid to encourage others, particularly young people, to get vaccinated. She had no underlying health conditions before contracting COVID, aged 16, in July 2021. Her oxygen levels fell to below half and she was transferred

to the Royal Papworth Hospital in Cambridge for treatment called Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) - described as a "last hope" for COVID patients. She has had to re-learn skills such as walking.

**ROTARY YOUNG CITIZEN CHILD OF COURAGE AWARD 2022**

**| ESHA NADESWARAN, REDBRIDGE ROTARY (LONDON)**

Five-year-old Esha's battle with acute myeloid leukaemia has inspired around 20,000 people to join the bone marrow donor list, including many from ethnic minorities unrepresented on the register. Esha's personality and her story touched so many and testing centres were set up in an effort to find her a donor. After a donor was found outside the UK, an urgent stem cell transplant combined with a new treatment has been carried out but she still faces an uncertain outcome. ●



Head to the Rotary GB&I YouTube channel to watch the inspiring stories of this year's winners

# VOLUNTEER EXPO LIVE!

CHANGE LIVES. TAKE ACTION.



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## Changing Lives and Taking Action

| BY AMANDA WATKIN, GENERAL SECRETARY OF ROTARY GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND |

**V**OLUNTEER Expo went LIVE at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on May 6th and 7th and I could not be more proud of what

Rotary has given to the voluntary and community sector.

From conversations held back in 2017, encapsulating a vision to bring an event to market showcasing the power of volunteering, this has finally been realised!

For over 100 years, Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland had provided an annual conference to its members.

Without doubt there have been some

fabulous weekends for members to come together, meet friends and hear from amazing speakers. But with attendee numbers falling and a call to connect Rotary with the wider community, it was time to rethink our signature event.

It was a bold move on the part of our elected leadership back in June 2018 when the governing body voted to adapt by supporting this event.

The concept was to place Rotary at the heart of the voluntary and community sector, giving a platform for the 'third sector' to speak to current and new generations of volunteers.

Volunteer Expo was to launch in May 2020 and work began in earnest to

attract sponsors, exhibitors and keynote speakers for this showcase set to celebrate the power of volunteering and its impact on society. But in March 2020, just five weeks ahead of the go live date, we hit lock-down!

Covid forced the world to stop, and this event was no exception.

I must be honest and say that the past two years have been a scary roller-coaster ride of emotion as we worked to maintain the support of Rotary members and our event participants.

The world was in crisis and the need to come together was strongly felt, so a pivot in 2021 saw the first virtual Volunteer Expo deliver inspiration for 





those people giving or wanting to give their time to support others.

By the end of 2021 there was no doubt that people needed to be together.

The virtual world had served many so well, but the human 3D experience is critical to long term well-being. It was time to pick up the pace again, take a leap into the unknown. Just six months out, the team cranked up once more to bring Volunteer Expo LIVE to life in 2022!

Excitement has been high across the staff team and our extended 'volunteer' family, as we've watched registrations rise to over 4,000 with a quarter being teenage/young adults, and approx. 57% being non-Rotary.

But it's not until you open the doors that the true impact is known and when we saw queues forming on Friday morning the atmosphere was electric.

To quote a friend, "you knew it was successful as you couldn't walk in a straight-line through the aisles", and this was true on both days of Expo.

I took time to speak with many exhibitors who expressed thanks to Rotary for hosting an event that enabled them to share their services and opportunities.

The event attracted the active participation of Rotary International's leadership with Jennifer Jones, Gordon McNally and Holger Knaack adding to the buzz on the Expo floor. On the main stage, Jennifer and Nicki Scott ably demonstrated the wider value of being a member of Rotary in a way that

was outward facing and inclusive of our partners and other non-profit volunteers in attendance.

The Rotary Village was in the heart of the exhibition showcasing 16 projects and programmes, and the iron-lung exhibit raised significant interest about our global End Polio Now campaign.

A fantastic addition to the show was our hands-on community service space brought to us by Feed The Hungry.

Hundreds of people joined the team to pack food boxes that have been transported to the Moldova-Ukraine border to help feed over 700 Ukrainian families.

This amazing effort of filling 735 boxes across the two days, attracted significant media attention that led to Volunteer Expo being the lead story on BBC West Midlands news and the BBC website.

There were over 20 deep-dive workshops across the weekend, all drawing a crowd and many exceeding capacity.

What was clear to me was the focus of health and well-being is something that resonates with many people, attracting high levels of interest and participation.

In total, these workshops gave over 14 hours of free onsite learning and volunteering, which is simply amazing.

The line-up of keynote speakers brought forward both hard-hitting and thoughtful conversation.

Alongside the many personal stories

of challenge, tenacity and success, we heard about the power of volunteering and what it brings to us in terms of driving positive mental health and empathy for others. Volunteering can truly power peace as we bridge divide and develop a sense of belonging within our community.

The question to be answered is what now for Volunteer Expo? Statistical evaluation and participant feedback will very much drive the decision on when and where Rotary takes this event next.

Many ask me about the cost of this event to Rotary, citing how it should break-even and not cost our members anything.

My response to this is that we all have a part to play in supporting society. Rotary is the glue that facilitates collaboration, leveraging significant impact through its connections and global network.

We have a duty to invest in what we believe in most which is the power of people taking action in their community.

Is it good value to invest around £3 per member to showcase the power of Rotary in action?

I believe it is to ensure Rotary increases its impact, enhances member participation, and expands its reach. Volunteer Expo 2022 is just the beginning, will you join the event next year? ●



TOGETHER, WE

# PROMOTE PEACE

Building a peaceful world begins in our own backyards. That's why Rotary brings communities together to learn from our differences, gain new perspectives, and form stronger connections. Promoting peace through understanding — that's what people of action do. Learn more at [Rotary.org](https://www.rotary.org).

Rotary



PEOPLE OF ACTION

# GOD BLESS 'THE ROTARIAN' – AND ALL WHO SAIL IN HER

**T**HE Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) has a new addition to its fleet.

D-859 'The Rotarian' came into active service in May after a naming ceremony at Filey Lifeboat Station in North Yorkshire.

Four years previously, Past District Governor Robert Morphet challenged Rotary clubs across Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire to raise money towards the cost of a new lifeboat and help support the tremendous work of the RNLI.

The RNLI announced that the next D-class lifeboat would be based in Filey within Rotary District 1040.

In the end, Rotary in Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire surpassed their target

by £9,000 to raise £35,000. Current District Governor, Stephen Ellis, named the new lifeboat 'The Rotarian' at a special ceremony.

In recognition of the service and commitment provided at Filey Lifeboat Station, the District Governor presented a Paul Harris Fellowship (PHF) to the Filey RNLI team, which was received by John Colling, Lifeboat Operations Manager.

The PHF medal was returned to the Rotary Club of Bradford West when founder member John Brook died in June 2016. John's widow, Gita, said that the family would like it to be used appropriately rather than left in drawer. Gita had a front row seat at the naming

ceremony and watch a plaque unveiled in John's memory.

'The Rotarian' arrived at Filey in January. She was commissioned and put into service almost straight away and is credited already with saving two lives. ●



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*Joyce from Penicuik, January 2022*

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## **FORM YOUR OWN ROTARY CLUB**

Rotary builds from the ground up. So if you've got family, friends, colleagues or acquaintances to join you, why not start your own Rotary Club?

## **JOIN THE ROTARY GLOBAL HUB**

Access all the benefits of a club experience by becoming a member of our direct, online community the Rotary Global Hub.

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-  **Tweet us:** Find us on Twitter, [@RotaryGBI](https://twitter.com/RotaryGBI) Or Facebook **Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland**
-  **Find us:** Contact your local Rotary club. Just type your postcode into [rotarygbi.org/club-finder](https://rotarygbi.org/club-finder)

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Rotary 



Tresor, Ophthalmic patient, Cameroon

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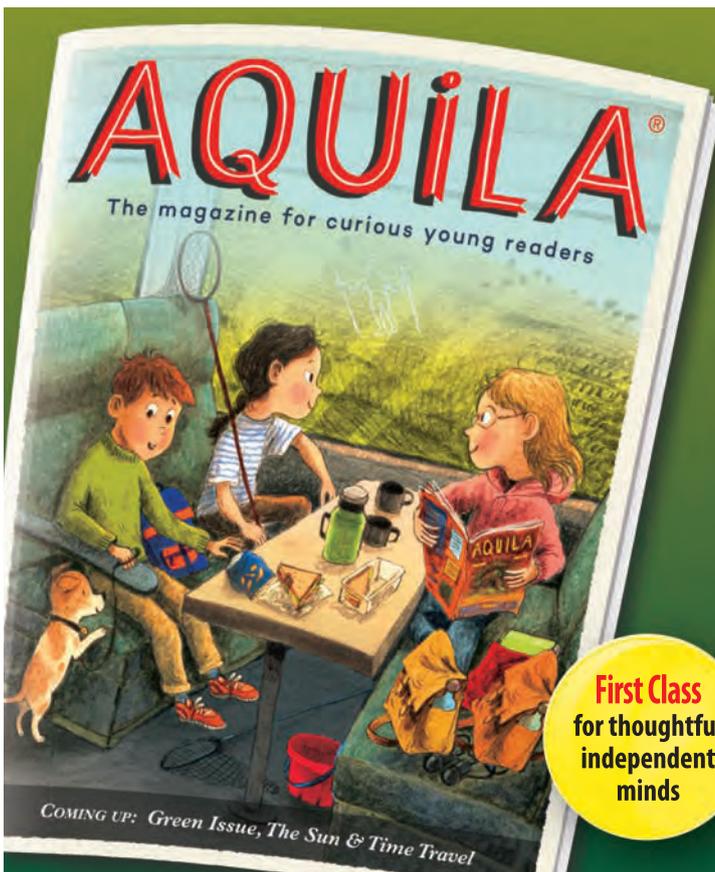
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# Championing the cause of Rotary

The Champions Awards were presented at Volunteer Expo in May honouring the great and the good – both within Rotary, and the communities which we serve. Here, we focus on the three winners, all of whom are Rotarians.

| BY **GEORGE BICKNELL** |



**ALAN BUSH**  
**SHERWOOD**  
**SUNRISERS ROTARY**

Alan is highly regarded Rotarian who runs the Rotary Club of Sherwood Sunrisers Memory Café.

The café was there for carers and their ‘cared for relatives’ to meet on a regular basis in a safe environment. When the pandemic made gathering at

the café impossible, Alan kept the café active through Zoom.

During this time, he kept in contact with each of the café members with personal contact and phone calls and, where necessary, he has done shopping, taken members and their carers for PCR testing and supported carers following the bereavement of a member of their family.

The café was part of a joint initiative with Carers UK to extend their work

throughout the District 1220 area.

The project was such a success that Alan was able to take on the role of District Ambassador and co-ordinator for the Rotary Carers UK joint initiative. He is using this role to provide important information and support to carers in District 1220 which includes Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, parts of South Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. ●



**STEVE GALE**  
**THORPE BAY**  
**ROTARY**

It has always been Steve’s mission to serve the community and help others, as shown by a lifetime of volunteering which involved being President of his current Rotary club – Thorpe Bay Rotary, near Southend-on-Sea in Essex.

Steve has been Assistant Governor in District 1240, which represents Rotary

in Essex and East Herts, for the past few years and has truly set the bar for what an AG can achieve, helping to raise over £100,000 during lockdown.

A prime example of why Steve has earned this nomination is his handling of the Foulness Bike Ride – a community event that brings together cyclists of all ages and abilities.

It was through Steve’s building of respect with the local community, tenant farmers and the Foulness Conservation and Archaeological Society that the

club managed to work out a new route for the bike ride that kept everyone in attendance safe and socially distanced.

Just under 1,000 riders took part in the race, with plenty of money being raised for charity and feedback from local residents reporting that 2021’s ride was the most efficient version of the event so far. ●



## MARTIN SUCCESSFULLY SERVED HIS COMMUNITY AT A CRUCIAL TIME, WITH HIS TEAM OF HADDENHAM VOLUNTEERS GIVING OVER 2,000 HOURS OF TIME TOWARDS VACCINATION EFFORTS.



**MARTIN ANDREW**  
**HADDENHAM &**  
**DISTRICT ROTARY**

Martin was a founding member of Haddenham and District Rotary in West Buckinghamshire in 1987, and he has diligently served Rotary ever since, serving as President of the club twice in 1992 and 2017.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was requested that someone took the

lead with establishing the pharmacy-led vaccination programme for the community around Haddenham and District Rotary, and Martin stepped up to the plate.

Martin recruited and trained over 100 volunteers including other Haddenham and District Rotary Club Rotarians, and managed the volunteer rota.

Under Martin's stewardship, the team of volunteers have helped the facility deliver up to 400 vaccinations

each day, as well as maintaining morale and commitment.

The Haddenham volunteers gave over 2,000 hours of time towards vaccination efforts. ●



**MARTIN HAS HELPED TO DELIVER UP TO 400 VACCINATIONS PER DAY.**



# The magnificent seven

Rotary clubs from across Great Britain & Ireland nominated their community champions for Champions of Change awards. Here are the winners.

| BY **GEORGE BICKNELL** |



**REBEKAH WILSON**  
PROJECT: SET UP THE BED  
POVERTY CHARITY 'ZARACH'  
NOMINATED BY: LEEDS ROTARY

Rebekah (Bex) Wilson was working as Deputy Head Teacher at one of the biggest primary schools in Leeds when a child in her classroom told her “I’m always tired Miss, I don’t have a bed.”

It was this moment that inspired Bex to start Zarach – a charity that aims to address the unrecognised issue of ‘bed poverty’ by delivering beds and basic

supplies to children living in poverty, therefore giving them a better chance of a good education.

Despite having no previous experience in the charity sector, Bex rose to every challenge and galvanised many individuals, Rotary clubs, churches, schools, NGOs, businesses and other organisations into helping her on her mission to tackle bed poverty.

Over 1,500 children received a ‘bed bundle’ as part of the project, with hundreds more receiving emergency food

parcels and new school uniforms.

The project has been widely recognised, appearing on The One Show and BBC Breakfast, and the aim for the future is to expand Zarach out of Leeds to address poverty in other major cities. Bex was nominated by the Rotary Club of Leeds.

Bex has always had a passion for education, and she believes that every child has the right to an equal opportunity to learn and to become the best version of itself. ●



**NANCY WALL**  
PROJECT: EXCEPTIONAL  
TEACHER  
NOMINATED BY:  
DARLINGTON ROTARY

Nancy Wall has been a sports teacher at the Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College in Darlington for over ten years and in that time has gone above and beyond to provide students with exceptional options for their development.

Whilst Nancy is responsible for a number of successful sports teams and

coaching awards as part of her job at the college, it is the extra-curricular activities and her engagement in the wider the community that set her apart.

One of these extra-curricular activities includes coordinating QE Interact, which has run for three years and engages 30 young people each year.

Darlington Rotary Club regularly welcomes students from the Interact Club to give presentations and they can report without hesitation that, due to Nancy’s tutelage, they are some of the best

speakers they hear at the club.

She also organises QE Explore – an annual challenge where students raise money to enable them to travel abroad to deliver aid in countries such as Nepal, Costa Rica and Ethiopia, a truly life changing experience.

Nancy will always credit the students with the success of the club, but without her drive and enthusiasm it would not have been as successful as it is. ●



**SANDRA ELLIS**  
PROJECT: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH  
NOMINATED BY: CLEETHORPES  
ROTARY

With her husband of 52 years, Graham, Sandra regularly makes sure that the children of her community have something to do during the holidays – be it a mini sports day or arts and crafts – all while managing the load of taking care of her own family.

Before Sandra and Graham became such integral parts of their local community in Daubney Street in North Lincolnshire, there were several issues damaging the quality of life where they lived such as anti-social behaviour, littering and the residents not interacting with each other.

Sandra and Graham said ‘enough is enough’ and have spent the past years bringing residents together to create a community they can be proud of.

Through small changes like having planters on each end of the street, having alleyways securely gated, adding seating to alleyways for residents use and providing grocery packages for pensioners, Daubney Street has become a great place to live. ●



**SUSAN WATKINS**  
PROJECT: GUARDIANS GROW  
NOMINATED BY: ARBURY  
ROTARY

Since Susan (Sioux) Watkins was a teenager she has wanted to make a difference, eventually becoming a social worker before retiring and moving to Nuneaton in Warwickshire 12 years ago.

She initially started a small group in a relatively poor part of the town to look after the local area and when the COVID-19 lockdown came into force, Sioux and her two helpers turned their focus to providing food parcels for those in need – the group becoming known as ‘The Guardians Grow’.

Some 6,000 parcels were put together and distributed to over 300 people.

They operated out of a Church Hall but that facility was lost when the restrictions eased and that is when the operation changed into providing hot meals put together in Sioux’s kitchen.

In November 2020, having provided food to some of the most disadvantaged council wards in the country, the group achieved Charity status and became The Guardians Grow Charity. ●



**SEAN SULEMAN**  
PROJECT: THE BLONDE ANGEL  
STREET TEAM  
NOMINATED BY: BRADLEY  
STOKE AND CHIPPING SODBURY  
ROTARY

Sean Suleman is from Yate, South Gloucestershire and works full-time at a PPE manufacturer whilst also drumming for a successful band.

It was on the way out of one of his gigs that he met four homeless people that desperately needed basic supplies such as deodorant, socks and food.

The next night he returned with those supplies and, after seeing how bowled over they were, he set out to get as much help as possible to the homeless population of Bristol and the surrounding areas.

With the help of his brother, a Facebook group with the title Blonde Angels Street Team was formed and since then Sean has amassed a Facebook following of over 4,500 members who want to help the homeless in some way.

Raising awareness of the plight of the homeless has been a fantastic initiative, with many of those helped by Sean and The Blonde Angels are now living in their own homes and have gained employment. ●



**RACHEL DIMOND**  
PROJECT: GRANGE FARM ESTATE  
COMMUNITY CHANGE MAKERS  
NOMINATED BY: EDGWARE AND  
STANMORE ROTARY

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Rachel Dimond has been busy helping her local community both through alleviating food poverty and giving self-respect to some of the most disadvantaged families around South

Harrow in Middlesex.

Grange Farm Estate is a due for demolition estate where problem, transient and refuge families have been rehoused and Rachel took it upon herself to teach both the parents and children self-help skills and how to celebrate each other’s cultures and differences.

In the summer of 2021, Rachel for over 100 children and young people

attended a six-week summer camp which kept them busy, supervised and away from possible criminal activity.

With her charity My Yard, Rachel also helped distribute over 50 tonnes of surplus food to those in need while catering to everyone’s cultural and dietary needs. ●



**JIM PRICE**  
PROJECT: CARDIFF & VALE  
YOUNG CARERS CLUB  
NOMINATED BY: CARDIFF  
EAST ROTARY

Jim Price has worked with young people all his adult life and, since 2006, he has led the Cardiff and Vale Young Carers Club which gives young carers in the Cardiff area the chance to have a break while meeting new friends having fun.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit,

it was clear that the club would have to temporarily close and that the young carers who attended the club would need support. Jim did not let them down, keeping contact with club members over text and social media while encouraging older members of the club to stay in contact with the younger ones.

Jim also enlisted the help of the Rotary Club of Cardiff East in order to obtain supermarket vouchers the young carers could use online and sewing

machines they could use to repair their clothes.

After the first wave of the pandemic had passed, Jim managed to persuade the Cardiff Council to allow the club to meet in small groups, with Jim taking it upon himself to pick them up to take them to outdoor activities. The young carers at the club all appreciate how Jim makes sure to support each of their individual needs. ●



# Rotary in Profile

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

## Profile:

**Name:** Jamie H Jamerson

**Rotary Club:** Member of Sheffield Rotary

**Occupation:** Local Government/Civil Servant

### Q | Why did you join Rotary?

Thirty-five years ago, I became an advocate for improving Equality, diversity and inclusion in my workplace. This advocacy extended to my role as a volunteer basketball coach in Sheffield and Rotherham.

I recognised the need to remove the barriers faced by young people to becoming involved or wanting to be involved in sport and I sought to enable a group of disadvantaged youth to learn basketball.

A colleague introduced me to the Rotary Club of Sheffield and I decided to join because this is a space where I think I could make a significant contribution to build community locally and worldwide.

### Q | What have you learnt since joining Rotary?

I have learned the importance of teamwork and have recognised that coming from a different cultural and ethnic background

leadership isn't a straightforward process. I learned that even at the local level, sharing insights and taking action must include opportunities for diversity, equity and inclusion to be included in all that we do.

### Q | What has been the highlight for you?

Being appointed as the first Black President after 102 years and facilitating conversations around how a more inclusive culture within the leadership of the club can be fostered.

We have begun to think of ways to form more equitable and supportive partnerships within our communities.

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

Rotary is an internationally recognised, multi-functional and multidisciplinary network of people who are service oriented, dynamic and intentional in their efforts to make the lives of people better.

If you can sacrifice a few hours of your life to help make a lasting contribution to supporting community projects and build capacity through networking. If you are spontaneous, happy, enjoy engaging in fundraising activities and want to develop your leadership skills, then the Rotary club needs you. ●

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



# SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB

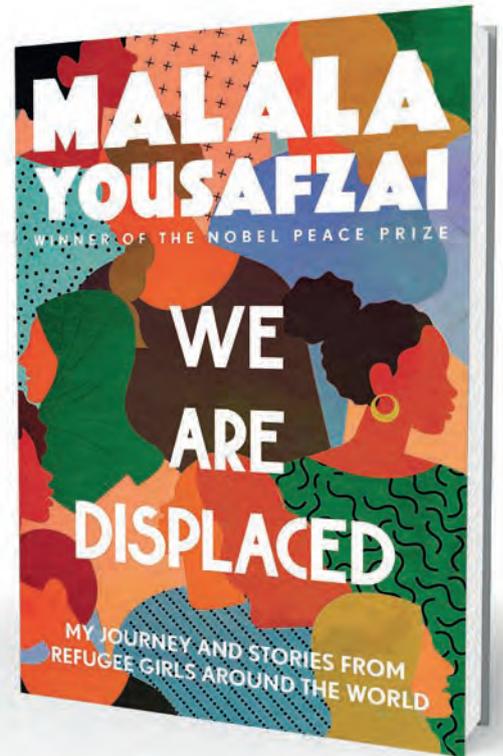
| BY CATHERINE THORNHILL, HEAD BOOKWORM AT THE SHELTERBOX BOOK CLUB |

If you love books and love making a difference around the world, then the ShelterBox Book Club is perfect for you. Every story we read is inspired by the people that ShelterBox supports and none more so than our latest book: *We Are Displaced* by Malala Yousafzai.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

In this timely book, Malala shares her own story and the stories of ten other inspiring women. Introducing Marie Claire she writes, “When she spoke, I felt her trauma as well as her triumph”. These vignettes of life are so beautiful because they hold in them both shadow and light, inextricably linked.

At this time, when so much focus is on families fleeing the crisis in Ukraine, *We Are Displaced* is a powerful reminder of the very human emotions that come with being a refugee. Malala discusses her own experience of fleeing violence, and says, “to be displaced, on top of everything else, is to worry about being a burden to others”. But the book also talks about the other side, the joy in giving, in sharing what we have, and in supporting others.



## SHELTERBOX SUCCESS STORY



At ShelterBox, we are able to help thousands of families every year. One family we've been able to help is Kouka's in Burkina Faso.

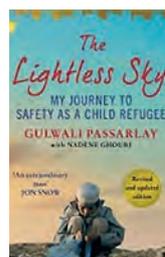
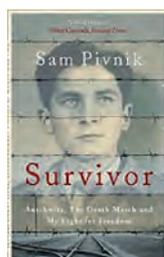
Kouka and her seven children used to live a rural lifestyle, successfully farming and raising livestock. She told us, “We lived peacefully with our neighbours until the day when conflict disrupted everything”.

Two years ago, they were forced to abandon their hometown on foot. It took them three days to reach the displacement camp. As one of the world's “forgotten crises” with an estimated 2.7 million internally displaced people, there is often a long wait for support. Kouka and her daughters were able to stay in rented huts, but her sons had to sleep under the trees until ShelterBox aid arrived in December 2021.

ShelterBox provided the family with tarpaulins, rope, and tools to make a shelter, as well as household items such as mosquito nets, solar lamps, blankets, and wash-kits. Kouka said to us, “Now, we are relieved by this donation of shelter because we arrived empty-handed. We are very grateful to the donors”.

**“TO BE DISPLACED, ON TOP OF EVERYTHING ELSE, IS TO WORRY ABOUT BEING A BURDEN TO OTHERS”**

Malala Yousafzai



We loved being inspired by Malala's book. Here's my recommendations as Head Bookworm for other books to inspire you:

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# and finally...

*Mykola Stebljanko*  
*Editor of Rotariets, Ukraine*

## THANK YOU ROTARY, FROM UKRAINE

**D**EAR fellows Rotarians from Great Britain and Ireland, Today (May 15th), as I write this article for *Rotary* magazine from my home in Odessa, it is the 81st day of military aggression against Ukraine.

Eighty one days of heroic resistance of the Ukrainian people and Rotarians' response to the humanitarian crisis as a result of the military actions.

Since the beginning of the war, the Ukrainian District of 62 Rotary clubs has created a Co-ordination Committee to respond to the challenges in Ukraine.

Each club has a representative and we meet online twice daily to discuss issues facing our clubs and communities.

### Our Rotary activity in Ukraine falls into the following three areas:

- The first involves providing help to our hospitals, where a large number of wounded civilians are being treated.
- Second, we are working to co-ordinate humanitarian aid. Rotary clubs and districts are sending aid via trucks, ships, and air carriers. We built the network of Rotary's humanitarian hubs along Ukraine's borders with Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. They have received all the supply items and sent them across the border to our cities. Then, our hubs distribute this humanitarian help to the cities that are in dire need of it.
- Third, the District is actively involved in help to internally displaced people in western cities in Ukraine and support to eastern cities citizens hidden in shelters from the bombs and missiles.

Our district has set up special accounts for donations from Rotarians, Rotary clubs, and Districts from around the world.

As of mid-May, the Rotary world had donated about \$450,000, including donations from Great Britain. Special thanks to RC Elgin (Moray, Scotland), RC Bideford (Devon), RC Oxford, RC Roborough (Devon) and District 1145 (south London, Surrey, Sussex).

Your donations helped us address issues that Ukrainian clubs are asking the committee to address at the request of communities.

An interesting fact emerges during the war. Thanks to our joint activities, Rotary is becoming more visible in the cities of Ukraine, and there are people who want to join us.

Thus, in the last two months, the Rotary community of Ukraine has increased by almost 50 members.

Moreover, initiative groups are appearing in cities where Rotary doesn't present. Recently we applied for starting a new satellite club.

Recently, we have established a strong partnership with Rotarians from Great Britain and Ireland through the Rotary GB&I Ukraine Crisis Taskforce.

We have exchanged ideas for a better understanding of our current and future needs, what is and isn't working for us, and how the taskforce can ensure appropriate and effective support despite the ever-changing situation in different parts of Ukraine.

One of the examples of this successful partnership is the humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian disabled people and wounded soldiers provided by RC Stratford (east London),

RC Isles of Scilly, RC Lviv International, and RC Kharkiv Multinational.

On behalf of Rotarians in Ukraine, I would like to say a big thank you to all Rotary members of Great Britain and Ireland who donated to Rotary Disaster Response Fund or D2232 direct accounts, who organised humanitarian aid deliveries and who support Ukrainian families forced to move from Ukraine to Great Britain & Ireland.

We feel your support and we have strong feeling that we are not alone during the biggest challenge in the history of our country.

Glory to Ukraine! •

### | Mykola Stebljanko

Editor of Rotariets, Ukraine  
Rotary e-Club of Ukraine

**"ON BEHALF OF ROTARIANS IN UKRAINE, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL ROTARY MEMBERS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND"**

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# BUY A HOUSE, GIVE A HOME

ShelterBox has launched a new campaign: **Buy a House, Give a Home**, and they're asking Rotarians to take action to spread the word within the housing sector about this new initiative.



Together we can provide shelter to families affected by disaster.

## What is 'Buy a House, Give a Home'?

**Buy a House, Give a Home** is a campaign to engage the housing sector, based on a simple message that ShelterBox partners can tell their customers: "Each time you buy or let a house from us, you are helping to provide a home to a vulnerable family halfway across the world that has been left without a roof over their head due to disaster."

Through a partnership with ShelterBox, housing companies will be able to demonstrate their commitment to providing homes to families both in the UK and around the world.

## Can you help ShelterBox with warm introductions to companies in the housing sector?

**Please get in touch with Alex Jones at ShelterBox at:**

[alexjones@shelterbox.org](mailto:alexjones@shelterbox.org)

To find out more visit:

[www.shelterbox.org/  
buy-a-house-give-a-home/](http://www.shelterbox.org/buy-a-house-give-a-home/)



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# Time to catch up

1 in 8 goes free\*

Book a holiday and **10%** of the total value will be paid back to your Rotary Club in commission

Travel. We've all missed it the joy of discovery and exploring somewhere new. But 2022 is the year to catch up. The world is opening up again, and it's waiting for you. We'll look after you every step of the way - so all you have to worry about is your packing. **With limited 2022 availability, make sure you book early to secure your preferred date and itinerary.**

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Bookings for individuals as well as groups are accepted. Some elements are not commissionable - for full details on the affinity offer, visit [rivieratravel.co.uk/affinity](http://rivieratravel.co.uk/affinity). Please remember to mention your Rotary Club when you book. Riviera Travel retain the right to withdraw this offer at any time. \*Applies only to river cruises of 7 nights or more, departing in 2023 and booked before 31 May 2022. Free place offer can be exchanged for cash back after travel of 12.5% if 10 or more travelling.

