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1921



HUB

Rotary Club of the City of Wolverhampton

Service above self



District 1210
RIBI No. 77
RI No. 19999

Registered Charity No. 220492

www.rotaryclubwolverhampton.co.uk



Club meeting and SSAFA talk

December 2020

A good turnout again for our zoom meeting on 13th October. Fraser's plaque is underway. Richard Green reported on a meeting with clubs from District 1145 about our success in attracting new members. Mike Boyce reported on progress in the Shoebox appeal – and Sylvia Morgan called for more boxes. Paul Lockley 'performed' the rollover raffle and president Brian drew the Jack of Spades! (The raffle has raised £815 so far.) David Hill then gave us a very informative talk about the work of the Armed Forces charity SSAFA, originally founded in 1885 with the RAF joining in 1918. It covers many fields : advice, mentoring, 'prison in-reach', Gurkha vets in the UK, support for families etc. And many issues : addiction, relationship breakdown, mental wellbeing, housing etc. It has 92 branches including overseas in Brunei, Belgium, Nepal, the Falklands etc. Its many thousands of volunteers (more needed at this time) deal with umpteen thousand cases. It houses families while soldiers are receiving treatment for injuries e.g. in Fisher House by the QE hospital. It 'almonises' and distributes several million pounds (more needed!). Great work. (Questions brought out a couple of interesting thoughts : there may be too many armed forces charities and some are 'narrow' in their services, American Vets may have joined the forces to receive the benefits like health care.) President Brian led the applause.

Six Stalwarts

On 19th October a small team planted a lot of crocus corms in Bankstock Park. To promote the continued battle against polio and in memory of Fraser. Thanks from us all to Brian Bailey, Brian Reilly, Richard Horrell, John Bloxham, Charles Cox, David Cheadle. And thanks to Richard Green for his organisation.



27th October

The meeting, again by Zoom, was well attended with visitors including 7 Rotarians from Edinburgh. We began with the sad news that David King died on Saturday having been quite ill for some time. Richard Green reported on Shelterbus which might be taken in hand by Oasis Love Church and his recent talk in Wednesfield about Jaipur Limb. The Christmas Club appeal is underway, the Shoebox effort likewise and warm coats for the homeless are beginning to arrive. We will not be able to attend the Cosford Open Week. Mike Colley reported that we will have a substitute Tree event, 'The Memories Live On', with the cooperation of the Express and Star. Our thanks go to himself, Peter Williams and David Nicholls. The main event was our speaker, another David King, editor of Rotary magazine, which he described as one of our best marketing tools. Rotary is not as esteemed as it might be if we told our stories more- and taking advantage of the new media landscape involving Facebook and our website, without boring statistics and acronyms! Get away from our white middle class image and 'tell them stories'. We generally thought that he was preaching to the converted.

Pandemic latest

Near the end of October Italy is having a lockdown 'to save Christmas'. Spain has a State of Emergency. Wales has a national 'firebreak'. Boris's 'moonshot' is a massive attempt to keep up with the daily thousands of new cases of COVID by tracing and tracking

We now have three 'tiers' and an increasing number of areas in the highest (most restrictive) tier : Liverpool, Lancashire, greater Manchester (with protest about compensation by mayor Andy Burnham), Nottingham and Warrington. Reopened schools seem to be working. Hospitals are taking more 'Covids' and trying to catch up on postponed elective surgeries. The economy is growing again (but not fast enough). Chancellor Rishi Sunak is trying to satisfy as many of the pleas for funding as he can. The latest is free school meals during the half term holiday – a very popular project lead by Marcus Rashford who plays for Manchester United! Will the Oxford/AstroZeneca vaccine be ready before Christmas? In distant China Covid is under control and they are steaming ahead – they say. In the USA many are dying but the main attention is on the presidential election on 3rd November – Joe Biden is ahead in the polls. On Halloween (Saturday 31st October) Boris, Whitty and Vallance show us some graphs to explain how dire the situation is ... and declare a near lockdown nationally from the 4th November until 2nd December.

Zambia



The Kanyama Free Baptist Community School with 165 children in poorest Lusaka has reopened. Mike Boyce was able to send them the generous donation of £100 by one of our members and the Principal, Beston Chilimalema has written to say a very heartfelt thank you and detail the expenditure of 2,353 kwacha. The money has contributed to the reopening and feeding the children. Among the many items bought were 200 facemasks – being fitted in the photo. Every little helps quite a lot!



Shoeboxes à la Morgan

The enthusiasm of their granddaughter Ella for decorating the boxes and the generosity of many friends are prompting Derek and Sylvia to aim for 60 boxes. Well done folks!



Le Rugby a Quinze

On 10th November, when Biden has been elected but Trump doesn't want to know, we held our Zoom meeting with a group of about 26. Carolyn Cundy has sent word that Colin's treatment is progressing satisfactorily. Jeremy Walters has sent his greetings. Richard has attended the district Foundation Seminar, so entitling us to claim for grants. The shoebox number is around 200, with around 50 from the Morgans. RG will hand over a batch of 30 warm coats. And the Tree/Memories Live On will have a P.O. box instead of Millers, to receive requests. Mike Boyce failed to win over £500 in the Roll-over – which has now contributed £833.50 to our charitable funds.



We then moved to a sporting theme under the guidance of speaker Andy Ireland of RC Pulmont in south Scotland. He was for 32 years a prison officer but the talk centred on his great love Rugby Union (see French title). He began as an 'openside flanker' until seriously injured at 21. Thereafter progressed upwards as a referee, granted leave from HMP to referee the under 21 world cup final in New Zealand – the NZ team beat South Africa 71:5. Receiving a professional contract in 2002 he did a lot of travelling, became very fit at 38, knew the Laws (not rules) inside out and considered himself 'very lucky' to be allowed to pursue his hobby so thoroughly. Chords were struck with the audience. Mel Eves coming fresh from the terrible VAR penalty in the Leicester-Wolves match ('more common-sense needed'), Richard Walton unhappy about scrums (hear, hear), Stuart Williams played in France (his French team mates didn't gouge eyes!). A very entertaining talk.



Antiphospholipid Syndrome

At our club meeting by Zoom on 24th November Richard Green reported on the virtual visits he has made (Wellington, Bishops Stortford, Guildford) and others reported on the Christmas Appeal (going well), the Shoeboxes (likewise), the Warm Coats (keep them coming), the Pudseys raffle (Peter Williams's big Pudsey will go to Australia) and the James Beattie grant (we have paid out 3x£750). The CAC minutes have been circulated –the Special General Meeting will take place on 8th December. Governing Council has just met and the draft accounts were examined (more later). It was also decided to defer the completion of our club history. Peter Wright did not win the Rollover Raffle, decided before our very eyes by Paul Lockley. And so we came to our visiting speaker Phil Godfrey who talked to us about APS (see title above). His very active wife Christine was struck down by this blood-clotting condition. (Phil has kindly allowed us to use her picture.) After she died, and retired from the Railways (after 38 years), he became an ambassador putting the disease on the map firstly by walking the length of the UK. A damaged knee cut that short so plan B was to use the railways. He has travelled some 42 000 miles and visited 249 Rotary clubs to date. Part of the money raised has been spent to produce an e-learning module for GPs to raise awareness of APS. It is preventable and treatable but early

diagnosis is vital and this difficulty remains. This very interesting and illustrated talk was an eye-opener for us as President Brian said in his vote of thanks.

Lend with Care

An arm of the charity Care International which receives loans for small scale entrepreneurs all over the Third World. The loans are repaid with minuscule defaulting and then recirculated to others who advertise their needs for a piece of equipment or some stock to sell via the website www.lendwithcare.org. See attached photo of a group of enterprising ladies in Malawi. Our 5 Wolverhampton clubs have been donators for a few years and their total so far is £27 000 lent to 3238 entrepreneurs and 10 550 family members. 43 clubs in District 1210 have lent £264 000, a quarter of the UK Rotary total, and helped 25 900 entrepreneurs. BBC Dragon Deborah Meaden has agreed to become an ambassador for the scheme : 'it is truly amazing what a huge difference such small sums could make to (the entrepreneurs') lives'. Head of Lendwithcare Tracey Horner has expressed their great gratitude for the Rotary participation.



There will be Tiers

At the beginning of December Wolverhampton, together with a lot of England, emerges from lockdown and goes into Tier 3. The whole world is hoping that the vaccines, three of them almost approved by the regulator, will soon be ready. (And Donald Trump is almost ready to hand over to Joe Biden!) However we have 15 000 new cases and over 400 deaths each day with a total (30th November) 58 448 deaths. So as Boris says : Tis the season to be jolly careful. Trying to think positively the number of daily new cases has dipped during lockdown and university students will be mass tested to enable them to go home for Christmas. (We are all free from 23rd to 27th December. Will that be a good thing or a bad thing?) Mass testing will be a logistical problem as will mass vaccination when that day comes. (Also the Brexit terms are still being negotiated.) Is this the beginning of the end or the end of the beginning? We're dreaming of a something Christmas .



Special General Meeting

Some 25 members attended. Richard Green brought greetings from other clubs which had called on him to present Jaipur Limb or his Two Ronnies sketch. Voluntary organisations appear to be well funded at the present so the Christmas Appeal decided on a grant for Every Family Counts. The Haven has thanked us for the Kidsout toy boxes. The great Shoebox effort was recorded.. Mike Colley reported an excellent take of £4015 so far for The Memories Live On, with website and Express and Star printing of messages. The 200 Club fund is still growing and some 90 coats and jackets have gone to the Good Shepherd.

Various venues for our Centenary meal (3rd Friday in May?) have been reviewed – it could well be in the Molyneux Hayward Suite. It has been decided to hold a Rotary raffle for the signed Wolves shirt. The big surprise was that Fraser Dukes has left £5000 to the club – **thank you Fraser!** In the SGM part of the meeting the Accounts and Charitable Trust Account were approved with no questions – just a droll comment by Mel Eves that John Hollingsworth would make an excellent member of the club! As officers, Sylvia Morgan will be President in 2022-23, Gerry was reappointed Secretary and RG Conference Delegate. The posts of Vice-President and Treasurer were deferred until April. Mel Eves with more drollery offered his services to Sylvia to boost her confidence!



Past President David King 1946-2020

The funeral of Past President David King was held on Wednesday 18th November at Bushbury Crematorium. Fifteen friends and family attended and the service which was streamed live to other friends and family members unable to attend. Tribute was paid to David's musical talent and a recording of one of his songs was played evoking a poignant response from those gathered. David was President of The Rotary Club of Wolverhampton in 2004-5 and was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship (later upgraded to Sapphire) in 2006. David joined Rotary in 1995 and served the club with enthusiasm for many years as Hub editor and Chairman of International Committee. David was 74 and will be sadly missed by his many friends in Rotary.

Club Meeting on 22.12.20

Around 25 members on parade, mostly wearing Christmassy hats and including John Pike from Wombourne. Richard Green passed on greetings from Kerala and Sylvia Morgan likewise from St Georges. The lottery for the signed Wolves shirt in favour of Samaritans is in preparation. The Tree/Memories Live On collection is now closed (successfully) and the 200 Club draw will take place on 5th January. No Rollover Raffle today but winner Lisa expressed her pleasure at scooping the money last week! Reverend Ben Whitmore from St Barts delivered a Christmas message – basically that God's son born in a cowshed indicates that He loves us all and that we will emerge stronger from this dark period. A memorial service for Fraser will be held when many more than the 15 people at his funeral service will be able to attend. Some of the group have already received their COVID-19 vaccinations. To finish we joined Sylvia in a 'rendition' of Hark the Herald Angels.



Vaccines versus Variants

Medics were combating COVID using new treatments like retrovirals and convalescent plasma. Then the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Authority approved for use the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine so the first vaccinations in the UK (and the world) began (on Tuesday 8th December). However it soon became clear that the virus was spreading very quickly because it had mutated. So although more than 500 000 people had been vaccinated by Christmas Eve the government determined to increase restrictions and reduce the 'free' Christmas to just the 25th. The latest figures are : nearly 34 000 new cases each day and 500 deaths with 68 307 total deaths (23rd December). Another new variant has appeared. In the USA Trump is still complaining and tying up legislation. Back in China research into the origins of COVID-19 are being blocked by the authorities. The one hopeful sign is good news from the Brexit negotiations and the prospect of a deal!

Happy Christmas everyone! SW