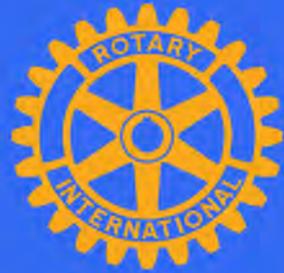




The ARCH

The Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Hexham



June 2020



Sh.....!!

It's quietly taking shape. Well not so quietly as everyday when the wind direction is right we can hear the bulldozers and diggers hard at work behind the old Hydro building in the grounds of the Queen Elizabeth High School.

The lockdown has not held up the work on the new school buildings and the accompanying sports field. My daily exercise takes me up the path beside the site so I get an excellent view of progress. Early on the footpath was closed while Northumbrian Water installed a connection for

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

a new water main—the closure notice was for a week but was extended several times!! Meanwhile the excavators had dug a large hole and moved the material to form the flat area for the playing fields.

As the days went by, the area of the playing fields grew as the hole in the ground got bigger, eventually half the area was covered with a thick layer of stone chippings and a tarmac surface placed on top. This is currently a car park and temporary accommodation for some of the many workers.



The traffic to the site has been well controlled with the lorries bringing material in parking in the layby next to the Golf Club until they are called forward. As many as 12 trucks have been seen there waiting for their turn.

The walled garden has now gone, together with several of the ancillary buildings and,

in the last week, work has started on the area for the new tennis courts. Alongside the excavations, the tree surgeons have been busy felling and removing the trees to make way for the entrance and exit roads. A new water main has been laid and some of



the steel and concrete foundations are already in place.

Work has now started on erecting the steel framework that will be the core of the new buildings and an access road has joined the excavation to the Allendale Road. Access to the temporary car park and buildings is through a new gate by the Leazes South Lodge on Allendale Road.

JLD

From the past – Group Study Exchanges

Many of you will not have been in Rotary when our Club last participated in hosting a Group Study Exchange.

On several occasions since I first became a Rotarian, the Hexham Club has been involved in these Exchanges. They have always followed a similar pattern and have entailed two or three Hexham Club Rotarians each hosting, for up to 4 days, one of a G.S.E. team visiting from another part of the world.



The Australian GSE Team

Each team will have comprised four young professional ladies and men together with their Rotarian leader. The four young members of the Team will have been at least 25 years old having put themselves forward for this opportunity to widen their vocational and cultural experiences. Their visit to Britain will have involved being hosted in different Rotary districts for a total of at least 4 weeks.

During their time in each district, they have both communal organised activities and also spend time alone with their respective hosts. The communal activities will include a formal presentation, visits to local 'tourist' attractions and social events. The hosts have the opportunity on a one to one basis of spending time with their guests and providing them with an 'educational' day and also a day of R&R.

Margaret and I have had some wonderful exchange guests who have come from Sri Lanka, Canada, Australia, the Philippines and the U.S.A. Organizing a day of R&R was usually easy although I was somewhat fraught with the day's shopping in Prince's Street, Edinburgh, requested by the lady guest from America !

Finding suitable educational opportunities required a little more imagination. I took the Canadian 'Mountie' to spend time with the mounted police at their Ponteland H.Q. We also dressed up for dinner at Dene House with the 'Mountie', an evening shared with Rotarians Andy Pryor and



Dressing for Dinner at Dene House a "Mounties" themed evening

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Peter Trevelyan. Choosing an educational day for the Sri Lankan who was a tea plantation manager with more than 1,000 workers proved challenging. I decided to take him to Brocksbushes Fruit Farm and we then visited a 200 cow dairy farm with only one full time worker !

The young lady from Australia accompanied me to the B.B.C. Studios where we sat in on their morning news briefings and she was invited to participate in one of their programmes. It was interesting that having previously commented on the Commonwealth Games for Australian television she was surprised how outdated she thought our T.V. technology was !

I should also mention that our Club has provided leaders for reciprocal G.S.E. visits including one undertaken to Sri Lanka and led by Rotarian Peter Jewitt. The Rotary programme of G.S.E. visits ended in 2012/13 and what a pity it is that these exchanges no longer happen.

Brian Massey

Editor's Note. GSE teams were discontinued in the major changes to the Foundation Grants system of some six years ago. Part of the reason was that a few clubs were abusing the system and treating it as a way of getting a cheap holiday. It has been replaced by Vocational Training Teams as part of the Global Grant re-structuring. A VTT has a set purpose and that is to pass on knowledge and is often used in conjunction with a Global Grant. It can be funded either by a District Grant or as part of a Global Grant. It can operate in both directions, so, for instance, a VTT consisting of members involved in Maternity Care from the UK might visit a third world country to help improve the Maternity Care there by training local staff in the latest methods. Equally a team from that country could visit the UK to learn the latest methods here.

Previously GSE Teams were lead by a Rotarian but the four team members could not be Rotarians or members of their families. A VTT is also led by a Rotarian but, so long as they have the appropriate qualifications, team members can also be Rotarians. I have quoted midwifery as a suitable subject for a team but it could be any other discipline and, if appropriate, even a multi-discipline team.

John Dumbrell

ColdWarBunker

" It's strange what one discovers less than an 500 metres from your house! During a recent lockdown-enforced walk, we spoke to farmer who explained what the "bits of concrete" were on the top of a small hill. The simple story is that they were the visible parts of an underground bunker. Apparently it is probably the best preserved version of 40 such structures built during the 1960s in preparation for nuclear attack. Four people could live 25 feet underground with sleeping, cooking washing and other facilities for up to 6 weeks.

A heavily padlocked trapdoor prevents below ground viewing but we were told all food supplies and probably the much in demand toilet paper had been removed. We found the **No Admittance** sign on the ground amongst the nettles but only as we were leaving."

Anon



A short history of the Rotary Club of Hexham

This is the first instalment, up to 1946, of our History and will be followed by further parts later.

Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland began in 1911 with the formation of the Rotary Clubs of Dublin, Belfast, London and Manchester. In 1915, Newcastle-upon-Tyne became the 10th Club in what was then the British Association of Rotary Clubs. In 1922, presumably partly in recognition of Dublin's changed status after Partition, the name was altered to the Rotary International Association of Great Britain and Ireland. The third and (to date) final change to Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (RIBI) was made in 1938. Rotary's concepts of service and fellowship proved so popular in the post war years that BY 1927, 246 Clubs had been formed. The year before the President and members of the Newcastle (no.10) club and the Extension Officer of District 3, as it then was, had turned their eyes up the Tyne Valley alighting upon Hexham and one man in particular – Herbert Lees J.P. With his assistance, others were approached until on 31st March 1926, twenty one men resident in Hexham and one in Humshaugh, gave their separate undertaking to observe the Objects of Rotary in much the same wording as prevails to-day. So these twenty two became the Charter Members of the Interim Rotary Club of Hexham and RIBI member on 30th March and a fully fledged member (Club 247) on receiving its' Charter on 18th May 1927, the official founding day.

Herbert Lees became the Club's first President, effectively from its' being mooted in 1926 to the end of the first full year in 1928. He moved to Hexham in 1891 as manager of the Gas Company and by 1926 (aged 64) was one of its' most respected citizens, so a wise choice to rally support for the new Rotary Club. He was on the (then) UDC for 12 years, a Magistrate for 22 and a school Governor.

All too little is known about the early years of the Club up to 1946 - though a thorough trawl through the files, if someone is prepared to volunteer (!) could rectify that to some extent – as sadly, and probably in the 1940's, a fire in the premises of Bobby Welch – a Founder Member and President in 1946/7 – destroyed the records to that date, including the Charter.

However some highlights are recorded. Community Service seems to have been overseen by the Club as a whole and either in or by 1947, £1000 had been spent on local causes (when a teacher's salary was say £250 a year - so £1000 was a massive sum). Among projects given help were a Rest Home for Merchant Seamen which had been opened in Allendale – three Seamen were collected each week to join the Club for lunch. Help was given in various ways to King Haakon's Fund for Relief in Norway. In 1944, the Colonel in Chief of the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers asked for help in sending parcels to POW's from the RNF, some thirty being from Hexham, and towards the end of the war, the Club participated in the 'Get Yar(?) Home' Scheme for Servicemen returning home. An officer on permanent duty at Newcastle Central Station contacted the Club upon the arrival of any local man and he was immediately met and ferried home, petrol being supplied by the War Office. Also around that time, the Club helped the Evening Chronicle Sunshine Homes for the Blind.

A notable event in the Presidency of Henry Rose 1929/30 was our hosting a day long visit by eleven boys, sons of Hamburg Rotarians, in 1930. The boys presented the Club with a Banner of the Town of Hamburg which was the first of the many to be displayed at the weekly meetings. It sadly perished in the fire mentioned above.

Sandy

Nature Corner

I think you probably need at least three Goldfinches for a "charm" but there was only room on the feeder for two. This handsome male Bullfinch has been a regular in the garden recently, with what the books describe as its "melancholy whistle call" - very distinctive. I haven't seen a Wood Warbler for years (classed as "rare" in Northumberland these days) but, after a tip off, found this little fella singing his heart out in Muggleswick Woods near Edmundbyers.

John R



Bullfinch



Wood Warbler



This little chap appeared in my garden this morning

Shelagh

Some Reflections from the Past

Terry Robson and Brian Fenney modelling the new line in Rotary over garments in 1995.

At the launch of Hexham Recycling Week in March 1993, Left to Right, Ted Donnelly Wastesavers Recycling Manager; Tom Jobson, Club President: and George Robinson of Fourstones Paper Mill.

Group picture outside the County Hotel the venue of our club meetings for many years.

Sandy



Keeping up the Good Work

Covid 19 has meant great changes for Hexham Rotary, as indeed it has made for everyone. Several of our fund raising ventures have been put on ice but we have still managed to help the local needs. So far, since March we have managed to help these local and international enterprises with donations.

£500 West Northumberland Food Bank

£1250 Hexham Youth Initiative

£500 ShelterBox (Syria)

£250 Blind Veterans UK - VE Day donation.

13 Rotarians have also donated £960—the money they would have spent on their weekly meals to our Charity Fund.

We particularly asked that the donation to ShelterBox be used to help the Syrian Refugees as their already difficult situation has been made much worse by the Covid 19 pandemic which has reached the refugee camps. This followed a talk by Lucy Carr of ShelterBox at one of our Club's Zoom meetings. We received the thank you below and the accompanying pictures.



“That is incredibly kind. Thank you to yourself and everyone at Hexham Rotary for this generous donation. Hopefully, as you heard, this

money will be put to good use helping to shelter and protect vulnerable families at this time.”

Lucy Carr

Rotary Engagement Manager,

ShelterBox



We Need Your Views

To keep our magazine alive and up to date, we need more articles from club members. It is your magazine - articles can be on any subject, local stories, a walk or an interesting visit. Stories, especially with pictures, are most welcome. It is better to email the pictures but actual photos can be accepted and will be returned after being copied.

As you can see in this issue, there are topics ranging from International visits to history but the writers can be counted on one hand. We desperately need more articles on a diversity of subjects. Why not write about your favourite charity or your hobby or even suggestions of how the club might improve. We even accept articles from non—Rotarians. We also need write ups of Rotary events, if you are involved in any aspect of Rotary, then let us know what you are doing. It might be helping children in school, giving time to a local charity or tidying up the town. Send any items to me at dumbrellj@btinternet.com. **Deadline for our August issue is the 24th July.**

John Dumbrell, Editor