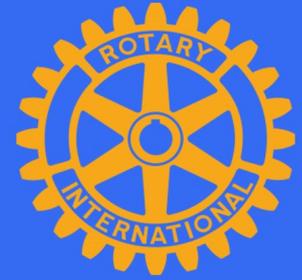




The ARCH

The Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Hexham

June 2022



20X20, 20X21, 2022

At Last, after being put off for two years Hexham Rotary's weekend away actually happened on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the 18th to 20th May.

Michael Saxon had patiently kept the Windermere Manor Hotel updated and carried over our bookings until, free of Covid, we were at last able to get away. Most of those who booked originally managed to make it and any spaces were filled by new arrivals.

Michael—through family connections—had arranged for us to meet at Hutton in the Forest for coffee and a tour of the house. Hutton in the Forest is just north of Penrith and is a grade 1 listed building. It was originally a medieval stronghold and the Pele tower survives. Succeeding generations have altered and added to the house and both the outside and inside show a



Hutton-in-the-Forest May 2022



Our Party at Hutton-in-the-Forest

wide range of decorative styles from the seventeenth century to the present day. The gallery, a rare feature in the North of England, dates from the 1630s and contains early furniture and portraits. The hall, built in 1680, is dominated by the Cupid Staircase, which leads to a suite of mid-18th century rooms, including the Cupid Room. The drawing room dates from about 1830, the library from 1870, and Lady Darlington's Room is decorated in the Arts and Crafts style. We were given a conducted tour of the house by the manager who explained everything in a most lucid manner. After the tour we were free to walk in the magnificent grounds.

The Walled Garden, built in the 1730s, houses a large collection of herbaceous plants. The terraces were originally laid out in the 17th century and is surrounded by parkland. Both the gardens and the house are well worth a visit.

Lunch was booked in the Café and we were served an excellent soup with a selection of sandwiches after which we made our independent ways to Windermere.

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John points out the sights

The Windermere Manor Hotel provided us with comfortable rooms with an excellent view of the lake. The hotel used to be run for blind and partially sighted people but is now in new hands and is an excellent place from which to explore the surrounding area. Like many hotels, a shortage of staff was apparent, but made up for in a willing and friendly service.



Enjoying the view above Windermere

The following morning we gathered shortly after



Holehird Gardens - Winermere May2022

breakfast to be led by John Robinson in

Wainwright's footsteps—not to the top of any of the peaks but to a local viewpoint. Needless to say this was uphill but turned out to be a gentle stroll and the views were well worth it. Afterwards everyone did their own thing until supper time. Jean and I chose to visit the nearby Holehird Gardens. These are in a stunning setting overlooking Windermere, Holehird Gardens is run entirely by volunteers of the Lakeland Horticultural Society.

Friday morning arrived all too soon and it was time to depart. An excellent “weekend” and many

thanks to Michael for the superb organization.

JLD

MORE MATERIAL NEEDED

The Arch has had to revert to an issue every two months as there are so few contributions coming from readers. Of course Lockdown means that many activities were curtailed but equally other opportunities have arisen. Please let us have some of your stories—have you read any interesting books, taken up a new hobby, researched your family tree or found a new walk? Do you have any suggestions for future activities? Have you taken any interesting pictures or helped your neighbours recently? Unless we get more material ARCH will revert to every 3 months.

There must be scores of interesting tidbits out there, so why not contribute to our newsletter.. If you are shy, we don't need to publish your name. Our next issue will be out on August 1st 2022, so send any contributions in by the 20th July to dumbrelljl@btinternet.com and lets make the August issue a bumper one

John Dumbrell, Editor

District Conference



After two years of waiting, the District Conference finally got under way in Edinburgh. It only just made it without any restrictions, as Scottish rules only came off the month beforehand. It took place from the 1st to 3rd April at the Dalmahoy Country Club which is set in magnificent surroundings, a few miles outside Edinburgh.

A good selection of speakers had been assembled ranging from the Lord Lieutenant of Durham, the climber Simon Yates and Danny Brown who represented Rotaract. However my personal favourites were Team Emotive.

Team Emotive's mission is to complete one of the world's most difficult ocean rowing challenges – the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge – all in the name of raising money for mental health charity, Veterans at Ease. Made up of four Armed Forces veterans, Team Emotive is preparing to travel 3,000 miles from La Gomera in the Canary Islands to Antigua in the race in

December 2022. Rowing two hours on, two hours off for forty days, this challenge will push the

team to its limits both physically and mentally. Their speakers described the challenges and their preparation and showed us round their boat.



My second most memorable speaker was Leah Pattison, her charity-Women In Need (WIN) is a charity based in Nagpur, India. Leah grew up in Weardale, County Durham and after graduating with a Fine Arts degree she undertook

some voluntary work in India in 1995. This involved working at a Leprosy colony in Dattapur, Wardha, where her task was to teach English to young girls at the hostel there. Leah was so moved by the plight of the women and children she encountered suffering from leprosy that she found herself returning to India and to Dattapur to continue working there. In 1997 Leah was to experience first-hand the ordeal of her new friends when she herself contracted leprosy. It required a year of treatment before

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Leah was pronounced clear of the disease. At Dattapur she had met and become close friends with a young Indian woman called Usha Patil, who had suffered severely from leprosy from the age of ten and who had undergone nine years of treatment and reconstructive surgery before being freed from the disease. Usha was also at the conference.

The Social side was not neglected and at the Friday night dinner we were entertained by International Vocalist & Comedian, Clark Stewart while at the Gala Ball on Saturday the entertainment was provided by the Jersey Tones.

Clubs were also given a chance to promote themselves and I managed to highlight some of Hexham's achievements over the last couple of years.

Although nominally over three days, the Friday consisted of a golf competition and the opening dinner. Saturday and Sunday mornings were the conference proper which finished at lunch time on the Sunday. Saturday afternoon was free to allow time to see the local sights or to go shopping in Edinburgh—a short bus ride away. I chose to visit the Roslyn Chapel, made famous by Dan Brown in the Da Vinci Code.. It was well worth the visit as the chapel dates from the fourteenth century and not only has an interesting history, but is covered in an amazing amount of carved masonry.

Reflections on the conference—I enjoyed it and found it value for money.



JLD

Small but Full of Information



Slaley Village decided to do something for the environment and staged an information day in their village hall. A multitude of stalls provided information on a huge variety of topics. On one stall you could learn about electric vehicles and on another the Tyne Rivers Trust had a working model that demonstrated how improvements could be made to a river system. Other stalls had details of the various types of plastic and how many things could be recycled. There was even a stall extolling the environmental qualities of home made wines. An interesting exhibition that showed just what can be done to spread the word.

THOUGHTS FROM AN (ALMOST) EX-PRESIDENT

I had planned to write article and send it to John before I went on holiday. I did indeed write it and it only needed a bit of editing but in rush of getting ready I forgot to send it. Worse still I had done it on my phone and I forgot that as well !! So here I am with America almost in sight having to do it all over again.

As you all know the circumstances surrounding my becoming your President were confusing and unusual to say the least. I was at best a reluctant candidate for the presidency but I did agree after a great deal of persuasion to become Vice President which would have been in the year 2020/2021. In the event the person who persuaded me to become Vice President and would have been the President before me, left the club for reasons that remain unclear, leaving me in a sort of no man's land. This would have been a bad enough under any circumstances but it coincided with the start of Covid which only added to the complications.

Now I only joined the Rotary movement round about four years ago and I am still unclear about its workings at international, national and regional level. Indeed I still find it strange that over 90% of our annual subscription disappears before we in Hexham can even touch it and whilst I am sure that benefits must accrue to us I remain somewhat unclear as to what they actually are. It was, therefore, with some trepidation that I found myself in the position of becoming your President and not just for one year budget for two years! I was of course extremely lucky both in my Council but in particular the support I got off from the two Johns, Dumbrell and Robinson, who between them managed to prevent me from getting into too much trouble.

So as I come to the end of my period in office what are my overall thoughts about Rotary? Clearly as an international organisation it is extremely impressive and the work that it has achieved over the years, of which removal of polio is but one, is impressive by any standard. However I remain unclear as to the achievements of Rotary at the UK level and at the regional level I am even more unclear. Covid of course has not helped and I have only been able to attend regional meetings via Zoom. Whilst such meetings were of interest I did not find them particularly helpful. Occasionally the activities of other clubs in the region proved to be of interest but for the most part meetings seem to consist of the presidents bemoaning of their lack of membership and falling numbers. They also seem to take a perverse pride in the fact that "this was the second or third time that they had been President". This is clearly not confined to the north-east as I had attended a meeting of Rotarians on the Queen Elizabeth and exactly the same sentiments were expressed by all present. Indeed I was the only person stating that our membership had increased over the past 12 months.

One issue raised by the Rotarians on the Queen Elizabeth was the number of Rotary clubs operating in their area which they regarded as an inhibitor for growth. This is a factor which affects us in Hexham as well and is an issue of that can only be resolved by Rotary International who have to make a decision whether they are prepared to allow individual rotary clubs to wither on the vine or whether they are prepared to take some steps to rationalise the numbers in any given area.

However it was noticeable that many of the Rotary club's still have significant fund raising capacities which is often due to some traditional activity such as the firework display or a steam tractor rally being an event with which they have had a long standing relationship. However reading between the lines these activities would seem to be the only justification for the continuation of that particular Club.

So is fund raising the primary justification for the establishment of a Rotary In my opinion the answer is no. If anyone is interested in raising funds for worthy causes there are plenty of opportunities to do so without joining a Rotary Club. Is it about community service? Again my answer would be no as that ambition can be realised in other ways. I would suggest that the primary role of a Rotary Club is to be the vehicle for companionship and friendship.

If COVID taught us anything it was that we need Contact with our fellow human beings and when we were deprived of it during lockdown we all suffered to a degree. I believe that the great strength of Hexham Rotary Club is that it does just that namely offer friendship and companionship. This has been greatly enhanced by the number of women who have joined us in recent months and who have made a considerable contribution to the sense of fellowship and enjoyment at club meetings. I do not decry the fundraising and service to the community activities of our club but I firmly believe that at its core we must concentrate on being an organisation which it is fun to join and from which its members get real pleasure.

Miles

The Volunteer Expo



Three years ago, RGB&I decided that instead of the Annual Conference they would try something different and came up with the idea of holding an event at the NEC in Birmingham to link Rotary with the many opportunities to volunteer in the UK and the various charities that needed help.

All was set but then Covid struck but persistence paid off and the event got underway on the 6th and 7th May this year. Visitor participation was free as there was no entrance fee but you were required to register and, in exchange, received a small wrist-

band that acted as an entry ticket. Amazingly parking was also free and the same wristband acted as an exit permit for the car park.

The Expo was held in Hall 2 of the NEC which was filled with stands from a huge variety of voluntary organisations laid out with a central space that was devoted to Rotary itself and directly supported charities. On one side of the Hall was a space where volunteers were busy packing boxes on behalf of a food bank. Guide Dogs for the Blind had a sensory tunnel where sighted persons could experience life as a blind person. Other stalls covered charities from Mother and Child to Age Concern, while organisations like Mercy Ships gave demonstrations and lectures in the three workshop areas.



On the Friday Evening, there was a Foundation Dinner at which Holger Knaack, the immediate past President of RI exhorted delegates to keep contributing to our charity. Also present were our Director, Nicki Scott, and the next President of RI—the first woman to be elected to that post—Jennifer Jones.

The main events on the Saturday were the presentation of various prizes and awards by RGB&I.

My overall impression was that there could have been many more exhibits as the Hall was certainly not crowded and I understand that this was because many companies were still recovering from Covid and did not have enough time to exhibit. It was busy but not crowded.

JLD



AquaBox Update

2022 IS A SIGNIFICANT DATE for Aquabox: it marks the 30th anniversary of the charity's foundation by Peter Hare and Michael Hoole, members of the Rotary Club of Wirksworth. In the three decades since then, Aquabox has manufactured thousands and thousands of water filters and distributed them to disaster zones all over the world. It's impossible to estimate how many lives may have been saved thanks to Aquabox.

To commemorate the anniversary, Aquabox is hosting a day of celebration on Saturday June 18 for volunteers past and present, supporters, ambassadors and key people in north Derbyshire. Elizabeth Fothergill CBE, HM Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire, will formally open the event.

Aquabox works with Ukraine relief agencies as the war has created a massive humanitarian crisis, and Aquabox is working with several partners to help deal with the suffering. An initial consignment of Aquabox family filters has already been sent to Ukraine, as part of a broader emergency supplies consignment organised by the Billericay Mayflower Rotary Club in Essex. Each filter will ensure that as long as there is water of some sort available, a family – or possibly more than one family – will be able to process it into safe, clean water for drinking, cooking and washing.



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We have also been working with the Ukraine Society, which has dispatched a large consignment of medical equipment including hospital beds, wheelchairs, surgical supports and dressings to Lviv. We contributed to this shipment with four community filters, ideal for field hospitals, community centres and the like; each community filter can provide safe water for as many as 500 people. And Aquabox has also teamed up with the Chernobyl Children's Lifeline, a charity which has supported families in the Ukraine since 1991. Lifeline sent a shipment of medical and rescue equipment, including generators, cutting equipment and medical supplies to Ukraine in mid-April, and Aquabox supplied a parcel of family filters for this shipment as well. This aid is destined for northern Ukraine, where towns north of Kyiv have been badly damaged, with buildings and infrastructure destroyed during the conflict. In many cases the water supply systems have been disrupted and many families do not have access to safe water. Our filters will make a real difference in these communities.

Young Employee of the Year



1st Prize - Rebecca Dent of Scott Mitchell Veterinary Care



3rd Prize - Erin Edwards of Humshaugh & Wark Medical Group

On the evening of May 16th, Hexham Rotary held a dinner for the winners of their Young Employee of the Year competition. Held in the Beaumont Hotel, the evening was master-minded by Vivien who did an excellent job as the MC. The three winners came from a diverse set of businesses, with the eventual

winner, Rebecca Dent from Scott Mitchell Veterinary Care taking the first prize of £500 together with the Jack Charlton Trophy. Second place and £250 went to Antonia Azocar-Nevin, a project worker at Hexham Youth Initiative while Erin Edwards from Humshaugh and Wark Medical Group took the third prize of £100. All three well deserved their prizes and the judges had difficulty in making their final choices as the three finalists were very close.



2nd Prize - Antonia Azocar-Nevin of Hexham Youth Initiative

An Historic Ruin

Driving up the A9 in Scotland opposite the small town of Kingussie, you can see, on the righthand side, a ruin sitting atop of a large mound. The ruins are the remains of the Ruthven Barracks, the best preserved of the four barracks built in 1719 after the 1715 Jacobite rising. Set on an old castle mound, the complex comprises two large three-storey blocks occupying two sides of the enclosure, each with two rooms per floor. The barracks and enclosing walls were built with loopholes for musket firing, and bastion towers were built at opposite corners. During the 1745 rising, 12 soldiers under the command of a Sergeant fought off a party of 200 Jacobites. However, they had to surrender to the remains of the Jacobite Army following their retreat after the Battle of Culloden in 1746 as they could not defend the barracks from cannon fire. The Barracks Ruins are maintained as a scheduled monument by Historic Environment Scotland but are open everyday and are free, they are well worth a visit.



Ruthven Barracks

JLD