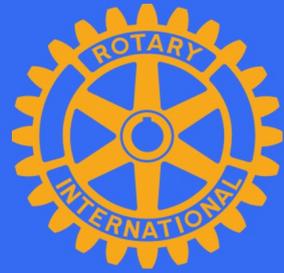




The ARCH

The Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Hexham



April 2020

COVID 19

Inevitable, the publication of this issue is shaped by the Corona Virus and the Government's instructions regarding social contact. So this month we are limiting the distribution to online recipients only and there will be no paper copies for distribution. With all events cancelled for the near future, the next issue which is due out on 1st June is likely to be thin, so we would welcome accounts from our readers of how they are coping and stories of help and good neighbourliness. Meanwhile, in case you have missed it, here is the letter from our President.

Fellow Rotarians, I hope that everyone is keeping well.

A week is a long time in politics, but currently an eternity with the 'Covid - 19' virus affecting us all so much. It is only a couple of weeks since President's Night and the world has changed dramatically. I hope that you are all managing to secure food, medical supplies and other important everyday necessities. I was frustrated the other day to find the only supermarket available for new delivery orders was Asda on April 12th! If anyone has an urgent need for such and requires assistance then please let John Dumbrell or myself know.

Council have met three times - once in person on Friday 20th March and since then via 'Zoom' virtual conferencing software. I couldn't make the Friday meeting as I have a partially compromised immune system and so I am staying at home. The format is ideal for discussion and I would recommend it to you all for family and friend's communication. John Dumbrell will be circulating the minutes in due course and so you will see what we have been considering. Several very good ideas have emerged including a Newsletter, buddying systems, community help and how we best move forward. The whole Rotary programme is obviously on hold and we just do not know how long for. Next year's structure plan and Project planning is of course continuing as you would expect. If you have ideas as to how we can all make the most out of the situation, both personally and with helping the community, then please let me know.

Various Council members will be writing to everyone very shortly with some suggestions and ideas. In the mean time please be assured we are working hard to do what we can to maintain contact, move forward and assist in as many ways as we can.

Best wishes to you all and to your families.

Kind regards,

Andrew. (President - Hexham Rotary) March 2020

Our Charity Fund Helps a Local Charity

Following our successful Christmas Collections in Fore Street for which we thank all the people from Hexham who contributed, we were able to give £852 to Hexham Tans.

Our picture shows Roy Dallison, our Community Services leader, and Andy Rigg, Our President handing over a cheque for £852 to Bruce Howarth, CEO of the Hextol Foundation at the Hextol Tans Cafe in Hexham. The money which was collected by Hexham Rotary over Christmas will help, among other things to purchase a much needed new coffee machine for the coffee thus providing an income stream into the future. However due to the advent of Covid 19 we have agreed later that Hextol can spend it in any way to help them through the crisis.



JLD

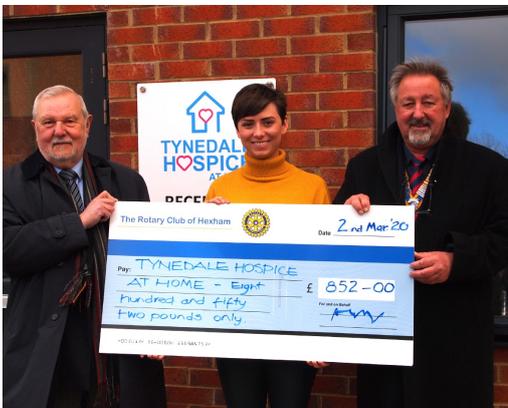
Roy Dallison Bruce Howarth Andy Rigg

Another Local Charity Also Benefited

Tynedale Hospice at Home also benefited with a gift of £852 from our Christmas Collection and Roy and Andrew were again involved in the presentation as shown in our picture.

We were invited to tour their premises and were struck by their "Rainbow Room" which provides a space for people to relax. We asked for a little more information about this and Tynedal Hospice replied;

"With its fairy lit memory tree, patchwork sofa, rainbow rug and cuddle-soft teddies, the Rainbow Room is a safe place for families to talk openly about death and dying.



Roy Dallison Megan West Andrew Rigg

We know, from our experience of working with pre and post bereaved children, that giving families a safe environment in which they can explore painful feelings, together, can play a vital part in helping build resilience and learning to manage grief. From making memory boxes to decorating hearts for our memory tree, children love to delve into our well-stocked crafts cupboard under the guidance of our experienced practitioners. From families facing the death of a loved one by cancer to children bereaved by the sudden death or suicide of a parent, we work with children of all ages in family groups, one-to-one sessions and after school clubs in our Rainbow Room.



Andrew Rigg Megan West

Children tell us that they want to be told the truth, in bitesize chunks that they can understand, and they want to be included. Working alongside our practitioners in Rainbow Room gives families the chance to start to unpick what has happened and talk honestly and openly so that, together, they can face the future with hope."

Hexham Rotary have supported Tynedale Hospice in the past and we will continue to do so as the work they do fills a vital role in our local community. In addition to the Rainbow Room, here is a little more information about their services.

Tynedale Hospice at Home was founded in 1993 and today provides three vital front line services; nursing care, hospital transport and pre and post bereavement support to children, adults and families in the communities of Tynedale, Ponteland and West Northumberland.

A New Way of Working

A 12 hour working day and a seven day working week has become the new normality. As an employer, I have found the extra administrative burden resulting from the crisis, and the speed of change, to be staggering. For example, on the morning of Saturday 20 March, I spent two hours working out a strategy which would allow clients to continue to visit my office whilst presenting the minimum of risk to staff, and then writing a protocol for my staff to follow in respect of this. This was launched at 9 am on the Monday morning. By 9 pm that day, it was irrelevant.

The first real signs of change were in the week commencing 16th March, when we suffered a 20% reduction in staffing due to self isolation and the like. Following lockdown on 23 March, the proportions reversed and we now have a hard-core of 20% of staff working within the office, acting as a hub for the other 80% who are doing their very best to work from home. 25 people in the office reduced to 5 at a stroke!

Three years ago, what we are doing now would be beyond comprehension. Without the technology we have introduced in those three years, continued business would be impossible. As it is, there are a myriad technological challenges to face, with new glitches appearing every day, but on the whole the system is workable. My solicitors can interview clients, face-to-face, thanks to Slype. They can dictate work in the safety of their own home, which they park on "The Cloud", where it sits until a secretary in her (some things are unchanging!) own home can access it, type it and email it to our clients. What were once entire files of paper are now on the Cloud, as are financial records. All of course, compliant with GDPR! It's not anything like as efficient as normal – hence the long hours – but it works, at least with current volumes of business.

"Office Life" is now a lonely existence. There are so few of us that, save for my partner and me, we all have our own personal toilet facilities. No one works in the same room as anyone else, and we are all separated by nearer to 20 metres than 2. Our cashier- (indispensable!) - has an entire wing of the building to herself. A rare trip to her room is long enough to constitute the single piece of daily exercise that Boris allows me.

We now seem to have worked out a new way of business life, but I feel that will only be until the government bring in a new round of restrictions. Then we will start again. Coronavirus will no doubt be beaten. But it will be a new way of business life which rises from the ashes.

Richard Nelson

Rotary Eye Hospital, Palampur



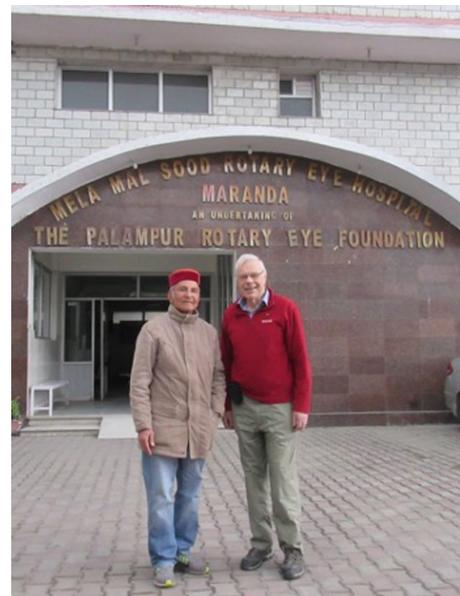
Margaret and I have recently visited the states of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh in India and I had the privilege of meeting with the Rotary Club of Palampur which has 51 very active members.

We had been staying in a homestay on a tea plantation. A Rotarian, known to our hosts, a Mr Butail who was also a tea planter, kindly agreed to show me around the Rotary Eye Hospital. Mr Butail had inherited his small tea plantation of 35 acres which had been originally purchased by his family from the British in 1886. Mr Butail and his fellow Rotarians had been determined to build an eye hospital in Palampur, persuaded an Indian to donate the necessary land, and the building was completed in 1985, all with funds raised by their Rotary Club.

Since Rotary International is not able to own land or property, the building was transferred into a Foundation but with full responsibility for its running and upkeep remaining with Palampur Rotary Club. It is now managed by a Board of 16 members comprising 11 Club Rotarians and 5 outside experts. The board members receive no recompense other than legitimate expenses and free cups of tea!

It is a 'day' hospital and open 7 days a week from 8.30 - 6.30 p.m. There is a staff of 135 including 11 eye specialists and on most days between 200 and 400 eye operations are carried out. There is no charge to the patients other than a registration fee of 20 rupees (say 22 pence!) although the patients are invited to make a donation. The Rotary Club receives no financial support from the government. The funding comes from many sources including the sale of spectacles, a large regular community raffle and individual benefactors are invited to donate between 400 and 1000 rupees (£4.50 - £12) annually.

This is what I call a fantastic Rotary project! - Brian Massey



We Got There and Back



In late January Ann and I set off for New Zealand on what is likely to be our last holiday for many months.

We stopped off for two days in Singapore arriving in time for Chinese New Year celebrations. It was crowded, exciting and VERY loud. Lots and lots of fireworks. We called into Raffles for the obligatory and eye wateringly expensive Singapore Sling. On balance I prefer a G&T.

We joined a tour group in Auckland with some trepidation as we're accustomed to travelling independently.

However it worked brilliantly. Our fellow travellers were a mixed bunch of Brits, Canadians, Americans and Australians, and all super people. Although what became known as the 6,7,8 system came as a bit of a shock to begin with. Alarm call at 6am, breakfast at 7am and on our way at 8am. But we got used to it.

The coach was designed to seat 40 but was fitted out with 20 luxurious seats. We travelled in comfort which was fortunate because we covered 4000km in our 3 week tour. We were so pleased not to be self-driving.

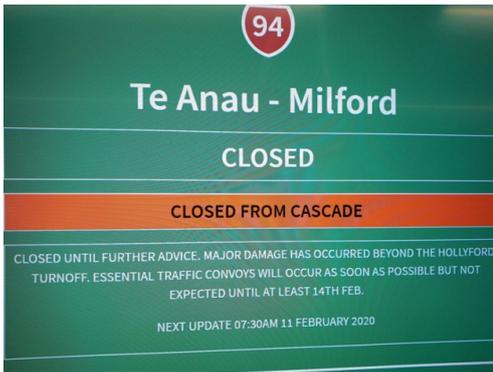
We packed a lot into our trip, and there were



many highlights – The Bay of Islands and a sea trip to the Hole in the Rock. We were lucky to get spectacular views of Mount Cook. Apparently it is usually hidden in cloud. Hobbiton exceeded our expectations, plus we got a beer in the Green Dragon. Sadly



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our time in the Marlborough vineyards was far too brief, but we managed to empty a goodly number of bottles of Sauvignon blanc along the way. Unfortunately we never got to Milford Sound, which we really wanted to visit. It got hit with a metre of rain in one day if you can imagine that, washing out the single road in and out. Apparently they're still trying to clear the road.

Kiwis are friendly, welcoming and hospitable. They speak a version of English which manages to turn "a" into "i". It can lead to strange conversations. In their defence they make proper tea.

We preferred South Island. It's more thinly populated and the scenery is more spectacular than North Island. (think Scotland but with better food and drink.)

On the way back through Singapore the virus was dominating the news and Singapore was very quiet with very few people about. As a precaution we stayed in the hotel, and a couple of days after we left they went into lock down.

We were two of 600+ passengers on our flight to Heathrow, breathing recycled air, which weighed on our minds a bit. Fortunately we suffered no ill effects other than falling asleep at odd moments for the next week or so. If you haven't been, New Zealand is definitely worth a visit, especially South Island. But maybe not just yet.

Andy Moore



Didn't They Do Well

Last year Hexham Rotary made a donation to SEDCU to enable special needs Scouts from Kisoro Demonstration School in Uganda to take part in a Competition and Jamboree. Below are extracts from a letter by the local Scout Commissioner.



"Having won the Joint The Kisoro Municipal and the District Scouts Interpatrol Camping competitions, the scouts from Kisoro Demonstration School proceeded to Kampala for the National Scouts competitions. This event took place between the 23th to 30st August, 2019 and Kisoro Municipal Council was represented by scouts from Kisoro Demonstration Primary School representing Scouts with Special Needs.

Both the Elephant and Crested Crane Scout Patrols (Special Needs Scouts) from Kisoro Demonstration emerged winners with First Place out of the ten (Position ONE out of TEN Districts that had brought Scouts with Special Needs.

The competition was run under the theme, "Living by the Scout Promise and Law". The Competitions attracted over 4,000 scouts (Competitors and Non-competitors) from 59 Districts, Municipalities inclusive. However, some Scouts were non-competitions.

While at Kaazi, Scouts participated in a number of activities that were aimed at enhancing the children's, Intellectual, Spiritual, Social, Economic & Physical potentials.

Kisoro Municipal Council was represented by 18 Scouts from Kisoro Demonstration School sponsored by Jan and Ben of SEDCU.

We can't fail to applaud the head teacher Kisoro Demonstration Primary School for the conducive environment which has enabled us to recruit and train Scouts in the School year in year out.

President's Night 2020



Saturday 14th March was our President's Night organised by our PE Neill at the Beaumont Hotel. Over 60 of us gathered to celebrate our President's year of office together with our partners and the invited guests - Chirs Bayliss, our Assistant Governor and his wife Janice together with Christine Marshall, Inner Wheel Chair and her husband Richard.

After welcoming drinks, we sat down promptly at 7.30 to an excellent 3 course meal during which a magician entertained



us at the tables with a selection of tricks which won great applause. The raffle was organised by Jane and raised an amazing £260 during the course of the evening, with the prizes being distributed amongst all the tables. The President's Lady managed to pull out her own ticket to the amusement of all.



After a short comfort break our President Andrew gave a quick resume of his year so far, commenting that the rest of the year might be somewhat limited due to the Covid 19 outbreak. He finished with pre-

senting a cheque for £1500 to the Rotary Foundation. The Rotary Foundation is Rotary's own charity that spends many millions each year doing good in the World. He ended by



proposing a toast to the guests.

Chris Bayliss replied on behalf of the guests, remarking that it had been a splendid evening and the magician had been most entertaining. Everyone agreed with these sentiments.

Neill thanked the staff of the Hotel for their help in the organisation of the evening and ended by thanking us all for coming to support our President, who closed the meeting with the usual Rotary toast.



JLD

Supporting Education in Uganda

We have already seen praise for SEDCU's help with the disadvantaged Scouts at Kisoro in Uganda from the Scout Commissioner, here is a fuller account of what SEDCU does.

SEDCU is a small charity whose mission is to broaden and strengthen support to disadvantaged children in South West Uganda so that they can benefit from good quality education and realise their full potential.

BACKGROUND

We are Rotarians who recently moved to Hexham. We founded SEDCU after a first visit we made to rural Uganda in 2011. Impressed by the dignity of the people despite their poverty and, seeing at first hand the struggles they had in order to feed and educate their children, we determined to do something very small to help. For us, the best place to start was to support the education of some of the children we had met. Through conversations with friends, work colleagues and family we found that others wanted to support too, so in 2012 SEDCU was born, registered appropriately, and has been thriving on a small but growing scale ever since. We have made return visits to Uganda every two years since then (at our own expense) and have been delighted to witness the difference we are making to some young lives, and this has reinforced our commitment.



SEDCU funded the roof of this MCJS classroom block, solar panels and water tank.

SEDCU is governed by 5 Trustees, and aims to support modest numbers of children and small-scale projects. We operate on a very personal basis. We know all our sponsors, we meet all the sponsored children and their teachers as well as – in many cases – their parents or grandparents, and, where possible, visit their homes. We believe that our support for individual children has the potential to change lives and to give each of them the skills and the hopes to realise their potential and, hopefully, support the next generation. Practically all the money donated to SEDCU is sent directly to the

schools we support in Uganda to fund the education of the sponsored children and projects, with under 2% retained to fund bank transfers and print costs. We believe it is the birth right of every child to be wanted, loved, nurtured and educated.

THE SCHOOLS SUPPORTED BY SEDCU.

SEDCU is mainly supporting children and projects at two schools: Kisoso Demonstration School (KDS) - a Government school with a privately funded disabled children's unit - and Mgahinga Community Junior School (MCJS) – a privately funded rural school. The children we help are all disadvantaged in different ways and would be unable to gain appropriate education without our input. Both schools are in the extreme South West of the country near the borders with Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They are both taking steps to raise educational standards for the benefit of an increasing number of local children. As time has passed, 8 of the children SEDCU has been supporting have been able to move up to secondary school, vocational college or university. We aim to continue to support them and their education until it is complete.

SPONSORED CHILDREN. We are focused on supporting children who are severely disadvantaged in a variety of senses. Some have disabilities and are either deaf or visually impaired. Others have been orphaned, abandoned, or their parent(s) are living in extreme poverty. Some are homeless. In total, 30 children are now being sponsored through SEDCU, with ages ranging from 5 to 22 years old.

At time of writing we have been informed that all schools, colleges and universities in Uganda

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have been closed for a period of time, as one of many measures designed to prevent a corona virus epidemic. With almost all SEDCU sponsored children being boarders, the closures have meant that, with no notice, transport has had to be organised for all children to return to their homes or to homes of family members as appropriate, in some cases involving long journeys. We can only hope that they will all be safe, and that this will be helped by the remote location of their homes. With lack of sanitation and clean water in so many areas the prospects for the country could be dire.

PROJECTS. While SEDCU's original focus was on the sponsorship of children, we have come to recognise that there is much we can do to enhance the quality of their education by funding projects which will benefit all the children attending the schools where SEDCU is active. Projects



The Scouts from Kisoro School.

which we have already supported have included assisting with the construction of new buildings, provision of equipment to enhance school facilities, development and training of staff, and giving children new experiences outside school to broaden their horizons.

Projects for which SEDCU provided funding in 2019 include the construction of a kitchen and dining hall building and a sanitation block at MCJS as well as additional solar power generation. At KDS we continued to fund their arts and crafts project as well as sending disabled children to the National Paralympics Sports Event and National Scouting

Jamboree.

The Rotary Club of Welshpool and District has supported SEDCU for several years and in 2019 it funded a substantial element of the new Sanitation Block. The Rotary Club of Hexham funded the participation of KDS deaf and blind pupils in the Scouting Jamboree where they were victorious! Not only did the children meet others with similar handicaps but they demonstrated the reality of the school motto: "Disability is NOT Inability"

OUR SUPPORTER NETWORK. None of SEDCU's achievements would have been possible without the help, encouragement and generosity of our supporters. Some have chosen to sponsor individual children, others have donated funds to support projects. It means a lot to us and – more importantly – it has made a big difference to some young lives and their community in a remote part of Africa. During our visit to Uganda last October we refreshed priorities for future funding. There is still much to do but it is all made worthwhile by our knowing that 1) children can do homework by solar power and not kerosene lamps 2) they can drink water from the tanks we supplied and not water holes shared with cattle 3) they go to sleep on a mattress without hunger pangs and 4) they can realistically dream of a future.

Jan and Ben Herdan: info@sedcu.org.uk: www.sedcu.org.uk

A Plea for Help

With the current crisis, your magazine is dependent more than ever on your help. Please keep the articles coming in together with photographs if possible. Andy Moore has set a great example highlighting his trip to New Zealand. Jan and Ben have followed with their account of SEDCU but there are many more stories out there waiting to be told. It is your turn next!!

Deadline for the June issue is Wednesday, May 20th, but don't wait till then, put pen to paper now-or finger to keyboard.

John D, Editor dumbrelljl@btinternet.com