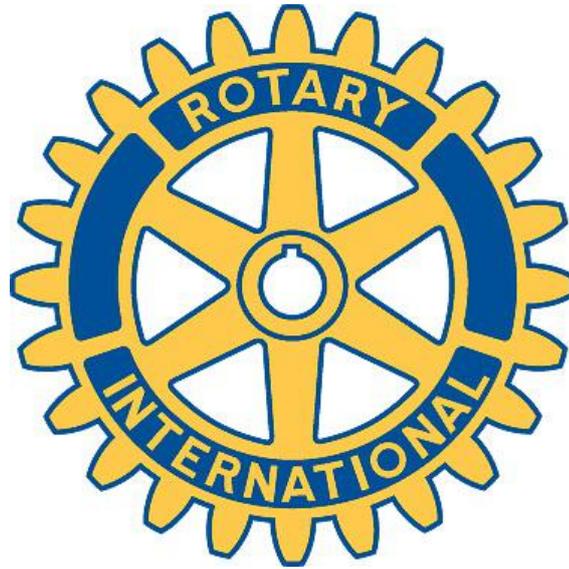


June 2020



Bramhall & Woodford Rotary Club

1st April to 30th June

PRESIDENT'S RAMBLINGS – June 2020

Well, where to begin? The first half of the year was pretty normal including the Scarecrow Festival and Charter Night, Fashion Show, the Float rounds, Woodford collection, the Xmas party and President's drinks. Christmas was tempered by Steve and Lindsey's family tragedy. Then in the New Year we had 9 members of the closed Hazel Grove club join us and for a few weeks normal service continued, including a Pie Lunch, the Float Quiz, a meal at Shaam and the CHADS theatre evening.

Then everything changed and after Rob's talk on March 11th we slipped into Zoom meetings on March 18th as we cancelled all of our normal activities including the Duck Race. We have had a good variety of Zoom meetings including traditional speakers, quizzes and a socially distanced real wine tasting!

Three months ago I wrote :

“there are nearly 700,000 confirmed cases around the world with 32,000 deaths and in the UK nearly 20,000 cases and 1,250 deaths. And we all know it is going to get much worse”

Well it certainly has with over 10 million cases worldwide and 500,000 deaths including over 40,00 in the UK - and it is still a very long way from over.

Our lockdown is easing and there may or may not be a second wave - but whatever happens I am confident we can carry on and eventually resume “proper” Rotary service. In that I wish Harry and the new committees every success.

I cannot end without thanking this year's officers, John Sykes and Sue Preece and all the committee chairmen who have worked together to make this absolutely extraordinary year a great Rotary success!

Michael 30.6.2020

A more detailed look at the year

Ignoring committee meetings, council meetings, cluster meetings, social walks and more, the year panned out as:

Q1 Jly-Sep

The handover meeting, a games evening, a speaker/guitarist, a visit to Swanbourne Gardens, crown green bowling, an Emeritus Professor speculating on life in the universe, Sarah's "this is me", Ed's incredible party, the DG's visit, small scale bee farming, Scarecrow Festival and Tour of Britain cycle race, Charter Night in Romulus and a visit to Hazel Grove club at The Deanwater

Q2 Oct - Dec

For most of us Christmas was a time of joy and celebration. But in all our hearts we felt deeply for Steve and Lindsey whose daughter-in-law Natalie died leaving their son Ian with a baby and a three year old to look after.

In the club we had our International evening, talk on Public Health and Environmental Degradation, Pyramid Bowling, a talk on our water supply, a Peace Seminar, Hazel Grove's 60th and final Charter Night, stuffed envelopes for Walthew House, won their final quiz night, heard how the Dragons' Den winners were doing, had a Fashion Show at Silk restaurant, had a wine tasting, heard from some Beacon Counselling youngsters, inducted Pete, the Xmas party, ran the Santa Float and Woodford collection, had President's drinks

Q3 Jan-Mar

We started the calendar year with 9 members from the closing Hazel Grove Rotary club choosing to continue in Rotary but with us. We heard from BHS about their Borneo trip, about Ashok's voluntary work in India and Uganda, attended Youth Speaks, the Float Quiz, presented a cheque to Bloodbikes, heard about the charity MODE, had a "pie lunch", had a middle eastern meal at Shaam, learnt how to play the markets, enjoyed a CHADS theatre night, and had Rob's "this is me" talk.

Q4 Apr-Jun

Then along came covid-19 and we cancelled just about everything and started Zoom meetings - including "Happy memory" photos, The Samaritans, "Members Secrets" quiz, the restoration of Elizabeth Gaskell's house, Dev on the front line, Ashok "this is me", mystery objects, Farouk from Uganda, Our Wireless World, a socially distanced wine tasting, the RNLI, Robert Lewis's job talk and a final quiz "Ron's Rounds".

Michael
30.6.2020

Apr 1st – Committees

What an excellent meeting, I encourage those members who have not yet joined one of our zoom meetings to give it a try, it is an excellent way of staying in touch with others in the club and it is easy to take part – computer, iPad or phone. During the first half-hour, which Michael defines as “the getting together in the bar before the meeting” we were joined by Steve Littlewood with his young grandson Jack on his knee and the other two grandchildren playing nearby. Steve said he would stay for a short while depended on Jack. Unfortunately, after only a very short time Jack decided that Rotary zoom meeting was not for him and became grizzly, off to bed Jack and goodbye Steve.

For the meeting at 6pm there were 22 members signed in. Chis from virtual Bahamas, Pat from virtual Dubai, and Dev joining us from Hospital where he was still in scrubs during a break from coronavirus ward duty. Great to see him, more later. Our Special Guest was Past President Gill Critchley, who left the club last year because she would be on holiday so much: that was before the virus stopped everything. Gill has managed two golfing holidays, before shutdown, and has had to cancel many future holidays. Gill was not looking her best as she has recently had to have an operation to remove a tumour from the right side of her face and has a wad taped on to stop fluid leak. Lovely to see her and we wish her well for a fast recovery. I think at this time Gill had to leave us and Dev also said that he must get back to duty. Before he left the meeting, we all raised our glasses to toast the superb work that Dev and his colleagues are doing in hospital and throughout the NHS. Next was Committee Reports and as you might expect there were many “Nothing to report” those with something to say were -

Club Services - Bob Preece – next week’s speaker will be making a presentation about the Samaritans and Bob and Michael will be doing a trial run before then as the lady has never used zoom before. Once we see how this goes Bob will contact other speakers about using zoom for their presentations.

International Harry – Cash has been received into the Lend with Care account and will be going out soon. Harry has spoken with our friends in Uganda who report they have a food shortage. Sue also had the same message from her contact.

Treasurer -Sue reported that she sent out a Treasurers Report shortly before the meeting started.

Community Service -Bruce – NTR but said the Beacon had managed to switch all their consultations with clients onto online meetings within a very short timescale. Michael reported that he had a phone call with the ADG who was expecting to hear that like other clubs in District we were shut down; very surprised to hear about our zoom meetings and the activities we were involved in particularly the involvement with Helping Hands Bramhall. Through HH three conversations have taken place, including one with Maggie who spoke with a lady recently moved to Bramhall, currently housebound but who could be a potential new member.

Finally Photographs

We had been asked to have available “a photograph of something on a day which made us feel really good and Michael can choose people to explain their photos.”

Michael presented an image of his whole family taken during a cruise to celebrate Pam's birthday and recovery from major surgery.



New Zealand featured in photographs from Sarah and Chris and were recognised by several well-travelled members.

Dennis showed a favourite spot near his second home in Padstowe. Bob S showed he and his daughter walking near Mont Blanc



Sue showed her and Bob on a quad bike somewhere in Greece – 15mph was the maximum speed that Sue would allow as she was uncertain of Bobs driving skill.

Bruce showed the beautiful array of potted flowers outside his house. I think these were Aileen's work

Ian celebrated with a photograph of him leading the Scout troop at the mayor's parade. Old style scout hats were noted.

Neil celebrated with a photo of his grandson playing rugby; Neil said "I taught him all I know".

Your writer showed a photo from way back when he competed in Autotests.

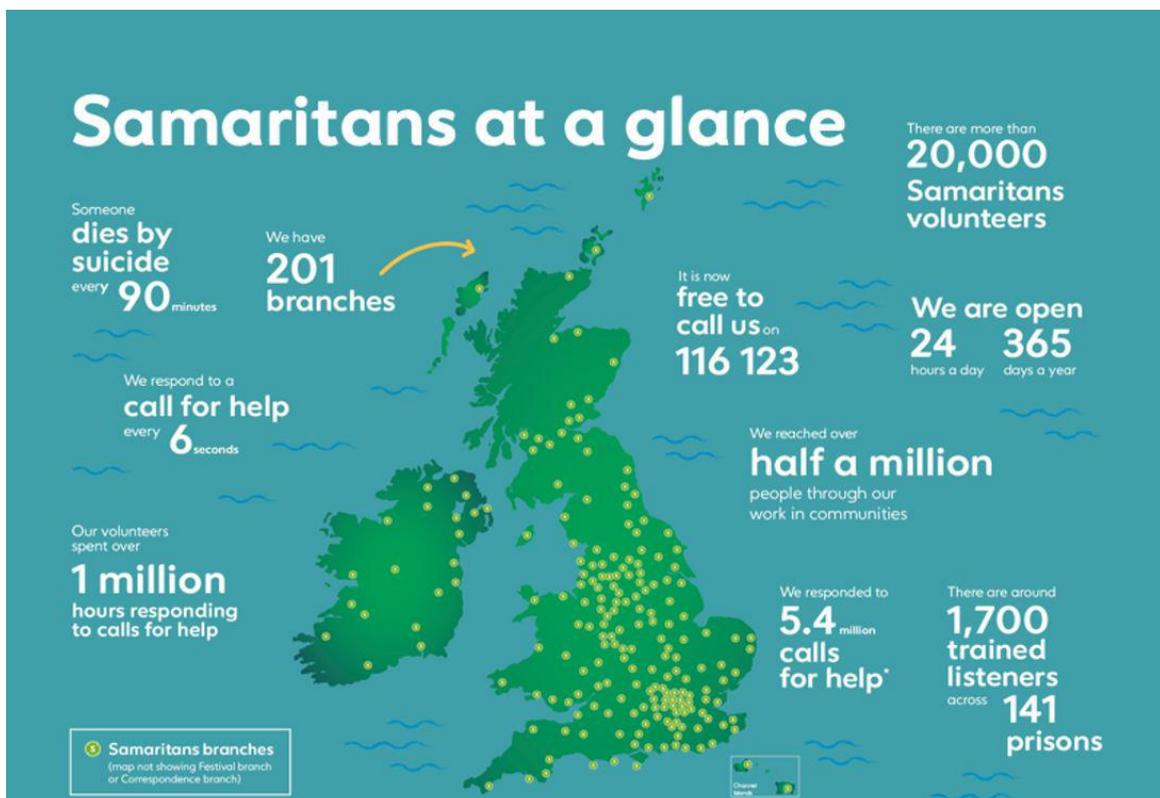
After just a few meetings Michael has got the meeting process well in hand with being able to mute us all, then allow unmute when anyone needs to speak, and also on this occasion being able to stop photo presentation when needed. Well done
The meeting closed just before 7pm with the usual Rotary toast.

John Sykes

Apr 8th – Samaritans

Another Wednesday, another Rotary Zoom meeting! We are all now getting used to our new meeting format, with a half hour “bar chat” from 5.30, when anyone can butt in and have their say. Sarah buzzed in and buzzed out again as she was extremely busy editing a video. Others fiddled about with their virtual backgrounds or tried to decide if sound only or full video access was the best for them. The Preeces looked very comfortable eating crisps and having some libation. In fact, several members could be caught flaunting a glass of wine...and why not?

Then at 6pm prompt our PM (President Michael) called the meeting to order, and speakers had to wave their arm to catch PM’s attention before speaking! Bob Preece introduced our guest for the evening, Chrissie Gibson, the Deputy Director of Samaritans in Stockport. Chrissie thanked the club for its £1000 donation to the work of the Samaritans, and stressed that it would be put to excellent use in the prevention of suicides in Stockport. Chrissie gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation of the work of the Samaritans. During this talk Chrissie had a virtual spotlight on her, which meant that only she could speak. The Samaritans is not a religious organisation, though its founder was a vicar in London, who was appalled at the lack of help that very depressed people could access. The Samaritans are not a counselling organisation, but do refer clients to others who can help when this is necessary. Anyone can call Samaritans free of charge 24/7 every day of the year. Callers will talk in strict confidentiality to a sympathetic volunteer listener for as long as they want. Frivolous callers are screened out.



Every 60 seconds someone in the UK and Ireland calls The Samaritans at one of its 201 branches. One fifth of callers are suicidal, and suicide is apparently the biggest killer of men under 50. A terrible statistic indeed. Our local branch is based in the Heatons Centre, a building that I know well as it was my very first school a very long time ago! This branch has over 90 volunteers who work different shifts. If a call cannot be handled there it is automatically rerouted to another centre. No call is left unanswered.

The Samaritans in Stockport work closely with other organisations, including the NHS, British Rail, GPs and schools. Publicity is important and fire engines and buses carry their message.

Our £1000 has gone to a super cause!

Questions followed, once Chrissies "spotlight" had been turned off. The range of questions showed the great interest the club members have in this excellent work.

Our other business was short understandably. Harry was exploring how to get refunds from the money already paid for the aborted trip to Sophia. The welfare of a few members was checked, and at least one, nameless in this report, was enjoying being antisocial!

Next week there will be a quiz, and all participants will get at least one answer correct as all questions will be from members about something in their own lives! (I erroneously typed "loves" here, and I guess that would be acceptable!). PM will send out details.

The final toast concluded another successful Zoom encounter.

Dennis

Apr 15th – Members' Quiz

This afternoon's pre-meeting chat included updates on how our current national lockdown measures were impacting on such matters as local food shopping trends, Hillbrook Grange and wine.

With an original, BWRC-themed 3 round quiz and 2 guest speakers all prepared, President Michael started promptly at our new online time of 6pm.

18 members welcomed Abi Jenkins, a former member, as mystery guest number one. Abi has been busy coordinating the much-needed gathering of scrubs from the general public due to the national shortage reported by NHS and Care staff across much of the UK.

Abi is running the Scrubs Page in Stockport, desperately seeking fabric, sewers and money for the NHS. The Primary Care Trust PPE team have asked Abi to help them supply scrubs and bags and headbands to their staff. There are literally hundreds needed. Abi has asked for fabric: collections of good quality bedsheets, linen and haberdashery (elastic, cord for drawstring and buttons for headbands) ☺

For more info and to help:

www.abisden.com

<https://www.facebook.com/AbisSewingDen/>

Abi was pleased to see us all again and grateful for help. Well done to members who have already stepped forwards.

Our second mystery guest made a similar plea. Dr Rukshana Salim is a local Clinical Director and has formed the PPE Working Group for the Stockport area, gratefully acknowledging Abi's practical help.

37 local GP Practices, Care Homes and Palliative Care Staff urgently require more Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The Committee have set up a FaceBook page and produced a video to build contacts to source or purchase PPE. Much of the PPE has with been missing (eg: eye protection) or expired (eg: masks).

Interestingly, the UK Govt has been using PPE guidelines that differ from those of the World Health Organisation (WHO).

£250 has already been donated to Abi from the Club. The temporary committee of Michael, Bob, Sue, Maggie and Harry will consider further donations.

There then followed a lively quiz which proved very popular and was eventually won by Ron. All answers were surnames of current BWRC members.

Michael had assembled a Picture Round with members' faces obscured, a 'Guess Who Did This?' round and a final round in which members' surnames were represented by visual clues.



We now know how romantic Bob Preece is: he travelled 4000 miles to propose to Sue!

We discovered that Bruce was a Queen's Scout Troop Leader and that Chris has been a certified county coach in pistol shooting.

In 1968, John Thewliss swapped sides to play Rugby for Belgium against Army colleagues when the national side were a player short.

Sue Preece grew up in the Bronx area of New York and Maggie once had a surfing lesson in freezing cold rain... from her vicar!

Grateful thanks to Michael for organising such a well-received quiz.

Rob Sweeting joined us towards the end, one of a number of members who were busy in other Zoom meetings.

Next Wednesday's guest is Frank Galvin, whose work for Stockport Council included responsibility for buildings such as Bramhall Hall and Staircase House.

Having previously heard Frank speak on the matter, Harry approved of his intended topic: Bringing Elizabeth Gaskell House back to life.

AOB:

Harry has no further updates on the postponed Bulgaria trip.

There were requests to have more former members as guests at our virtual meetings, particularly those whose involvement would lift their spirits as well as ours.

Apr 22nd – Frank Galvin - Bringing Elizabeth Gaskell’s house back to life

Another excellent zoom meeting, we are getting quite good at them though they will never be a substitute for a personal meeting. During the half hour “gathering period” we were joined by former members Gordon Jackson (invited by Ian) and Caroline Egan (invited by Michael). Good to see them both in good health. Caroline works three days a week from her office in Bramhall Hall, no one else around so still observing the social distancing; and two days working from home.

Brian announced the arrival of a new granddaughter, so congratulations.

Lack of green bin collection was a subject of comment from several members.

Our Speaker

Then shortly after 6pm, Tony introduced our speaker Frank Galvin who was speaking on the subject of “Bringing Elizabeth Gaskell’s house back to life”. There were 18 Rotarians, plus 2 guests and our speaker on-line.

Frank worked 30 years for Stockport Council and retired about 8 years ago. He has been involved with many of the historic properties around Stockport – Hat museum, Air-raid shelters, Bramhall Hall, etc. He is also involved with the East Lancashire Heritage Railway.

Gaskell House Story



84 (formerly 42) Plymouth Grove, c 1890

Elizabeth married William Gaskell in 1832 in Knutsford, he was a Unitarian Minister. In 1850 they moved into a house on Plymouth Grove, Manchester. In those days Plymouth Grove was a tree lined boulevard with expensive houses both sides. The house was to stay in Gaskell hands until 1913, the last occupant being Meta Gaskell (Elizabeth’s unmarried daughter).

The house is described as a late Regency suburban villa, built around 1838, designed by Manchester Architect Richard Lane. William and Elizabeth entertained many famous visitors including Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, Ruskin, and Charles Halle.

The house managed to survive the demolition of other properties which changed Plymouth Grove, in 1956 it gained Grade II listing; in 1960 it was purchased by Manchester University for student use as ‘International House’.



Forward to 2004 when the house was purchased by Manchester Historic Building Trust for £1 but in need of much renovation. This was the start of Franks involvement. The plan was to restore the house and open it to the public. By 2009 after much fundraising and a grant from English Heritage they had £750,00 for structural repairs to the body of the house.

The exterior was restored and then came what Frank says was a period of calm as they submitted a bid to Heritage Lottery Fund and waited for the result. They were successful in getting a £1.85million grant and could start work on the interior.

Work inside involved taking down lathe-and-plaster ceilings, removing the chip board panels installed by the University. Fortunately, the Library shelves in Williams study had survived but required stripping and repainting.

Frank and the team were then involved with an incredible amount of detective work. The house originally employed servants and had a bell system worked by long cables (not electric cable, but plain, mechanical stranded wire) where did these run? Answer found under the plaster when parts of the tube and pulley system were uncovered. What wallpaper and what colours were used? The team wanted to return to house to a period when Elizabeth occupied the house, so up to 1865 when she died.

The team used contemporary period images to help get the details right. Small pieces of wallpaper were found as they took the wall plaster away. They approached a Manchester company who have been in the business for 200years and they donated the exact wallpaper to the project. Frank noted that the dining room was not originally wallpapered due to a fear of arsenic poisoning from the wall covering.

Paint Scrape Analysis was undertaken by Crick Smith who identified 7 different paint schemes used throughout the life of the house, scheme 3 Early E. Gaskell period was pale green lead oil paint; scheme 4 late E. Gaskell period, was mid cream lead oil paint.



Frank then went on a buying spree. Those who watch any antique shows will know the "brown furniture" does not sell well today. This worked to Franks favour; guided by a copy of the sales catalogue for 1914 when the house contents were sold off, he knew what he wanted. A beautiful Regency side table was bought for £150; chairs were £25 to £40. I mentioned earlier about the bell pull system, well bells are in sets of 5,

each with a different tone so the servants recognise the sound for each room. Frank managed to buy a full set, eBay I think he said.

Period gas lanterns were bought and converted to electric lighting.

Regency carpets are quite bright, and one might almost say modern looking. A company in West Yorkshire recreated all the required carpet for the house.

A fascinating presentation and to end with a commercial - the House is open Wednesdays, Thursdays & Sundays from 11am till 4:30pm once the current emergency ends.

A great round of applause for our speaker.

AOB

Brian had prepared a quiz for his Round Table friends and tried it out on us. I unfortunately had to slip out of the room so only came back as they were going through the answers, but it looked good.

At something past 7pm we had the Rotary Toast, most people with plenty in their glass.

Apr 29th – Dev – Covid 19 – The Front Line

Over thirty members, spouses, partners and guests, including George from Sofia, joined the Zoom meeting to hear Dev describe his experiences dealing with Covid 19 patients and to answer questions.

Dev is currently working at Telford Hospital and is dealing with Covid 19 patients. The hospital has 350 beds, with one ward of 28 beds being used exclusively for patients infected with Covid 19. The ward currently has 26 patients.

Dev gave us some facts about Covid 19. It is similar to Sars and Mers but they had high mortality rates with the result that the diseases died out. Covid 19 has a mortality rate of about 1%. A low mortality rate means that a vaccine is needed for the world to be rid of it. Approximately 80% of people who contract Covid have mild symptoms but they are infectious in the first three days even though they are showing no symptoms. Patients who become seriously ill and have to go on a ventilator suffer a mortality rate of around 50%. Dev believes that the wearing of face masks would reduce the spread of the disease but there are not enough masks available.

Dev then answered questions that had been submitted. His worse experience was when he first started at Telford and did not have adequate PPE. This was only corrected when he refused to work without the appropriate safety equipment. His best experience was the way all the staff are working so well together in very challenging conditions. One of the risk factors for Covid 19 is obesity with about 50% of patients having a high BMI. It is unclear if smoking is a risk factor and some believe smokers are less prone to contracting the disease and trials are being conducted of giving patients nicotine patches. Dev thought that swab tests were unreliable. A&E departments are quite empty at present but patients should not be put off coming to hospital as the hospitals have red and green areas with patients being segregated when they arrive and the suspected Covid cases are sent straight to the red area. Immunity to diseases varies for example with Chicken Pox giving life-long immunity but flu only has a short immunity period. It is not yet known if Covid 19 will give lifelong immunity. Dev thought it would be the end of the year before a vaccine was available.

This has been our best attended Zoom meeting with everyone being impressed with Dev's talk and the work he is doing.

Bob Preece



May 6th – Ashok this is me

Yes, it was another eagerly awaited Wednesday Rotary meeting. We are now all getting used to the new Zoom format, the half hour chat in “the bar”, followed by an hour’s meeting, all ably managed by PM (President Michael). Members seem to be experimenting with virtual backgrounds, some of far flung places, others much closer to home.

It was a lovely, warm, sunny evening and it reminded me of the Ladybridge Club on such an evening when we would be chatting over drinks out on the terrace. It all seems a long time ago now!

We have been thinking of Satish, who is having a tough time at the moment, and several members have been in contact with him. There were a few apologies, and at least one member, Kate, welcomed the opportunity to view the last meeting as a recording at a time more convenient to her. It was decided to record this meeting as well, and PM has already circulated it.

Ashok gave us his “This is me’ talk, all very interestingly presented off-the-cuff with no preparation, for as he said, he can remember his own life perfectly! Ashok is now sporting a Lockdown Beard, which he vows will stay on until the end of lockdown!

Ashok had Indian parents, who moved to Uganda. He was born in Kampala in 1951 and attended an excellent school, where he obtained his GCSE passes. Further education was in the UK, where Ashok was by himself for several years. This tough upbringing honed his resilience and confirmed his vegetarian diet, though this was very difficult in the early days, and seemed to consist of chips, beans and salad monotonously for a long time! His UK further education college allowed him to get his 3 A level passes in chemistry, physics and maths. His head teacher asked him about his future plans which Ashok had thought might be chemical engineering. His head teacher scotched that idea and told Ashok that he should study medicine! And so it was that he studied dentistry, qualifying in 1976. He met his wife Denise when at college, Denise being a nurse at the time. They married in 1978 and have 2 sons. Ashok was a dentist from 1978 to 2018, a career that he enjoyed immensely. One of the outstanding characteristics that Ashok has displayed throughout his life is his great enthusiasm for his many varied activities and his great enjoyment of them! He loves skiing, squash (not played now), bridge, yoga, travelling and golf! An all-rounder!

Several questions followed this excellent talk, and allowed Ashok to expand on some facets of his career as a dentist. We learned about the development of dental drills, anaesthesia, preferred dental fillings (amalgam and gold still tops in longevity for Ashok), and much more besides. For those, like me, who had no idea that you could fill your own teeth, we learned that Boots the chemist, sell DIY tooth filling materials. If a filling falls out, squeeze some of the filler in, tamp it down by chewing and it will harden in a few hours! A must for frequent travellers!

A virtual round of applause brought Ashok's talk to a close.

Bob Preece asked for ideas for future Zoom meetings, and some proposals were put forward. Our next meeting will be led by Maggie, putting aside her phone camera for a while, and we will look at members' mystery objects, and the stories that go with them.

PM brought another great Zoom meeting to a close with the Rotary toast.

Dennis

May 13th – Mystery Objects

21 Members zoomed into an interesting evening organised by Maggie and Harry. Harry thanked members who had donated to charity.



The evening event consisted of 30 photos of objects old unique and unrecognisable . Found by members amongst their prized possessions.

Here are a few to mention.

Maggie's Polar Bear Brumus named after a Polar bear in London Zoo her first cuddly toy.

Dennis had a photo of a silver spoon and egg ring a bit of o talking point.

Sue had a couple of objects a darning mushroom never used by Sue as Bob has never had his socks darned and a jar of sun light given to Sue by a friend.

John Sykes had a photo of a wool cutter and was a bit of a talking point.

Chris had a piece of equipment for his pistol shooting.

Robert Lewis's ornamental Tobacco case from 1947 made of silver and gold was by far the best object.

Bruce's Sygenta medal from ringing the bell at the New York Stock Exchange was a very interesting story.

Along with a lot of other interesting objects the meeting came to an end just in time for Michael's tuna meal to be served by Pam.

Pat

May 20th – Faruku from Kasese and Charity Auction

By my count, a maximum of 19 screens and 21 people joined the meeting, although we had glimpses of Oriane and Mary. Two guests attended, Nick Bell of the Winchester club and our speaker Faruku Kibabe both of whom received a warm welcome.

Harry introduce Faruku who was attending a masters course in the UK when lockdown occurred so has been stranded here ever since in the Winchester area, supported by the club. Faruku is president elect of the fledgling Kasese Snow Peaks Rotary Club and the prime mover of the Great Lakes Peace Centre which is an organisation for young people.

Faruku started his very interesting and lucid presentation by introducing himself as a very proud member of Rotaract and now a rotarian combining both in a dual role. He is an international trainer and peace advocate and is studying for a masters with only the dissertation left to complete.

Having completed the 2014 Books for Schools project jointly with the Winchester club and some other small projects, Faruku looked round for what next to do. He was interested by the Peacejam project but after delay set up the Great Lakes Peace Centre. Faruku left a well paid job to work full time for GLPC and takes only a minimal salary.

The Centre has five main projects:

Hepatitis: utilising a local hospital for hepatitis awareness education and an immunisation programme.

Environment and renewable energy: Encouraging the planting of trees and replacing kerosene lamps with solar lights.

Education: working with 25 youngsters to provide education which is not free in Uganda.

Annual Peace Conference: this had to be cancelled because of the virus

Peacejam: after a delayed start it is hoped to hold a conference in September. The organisation connects young people with Nobel Prize laureates.

Other activities in which Faruku is involved are, arranging a charter night for his new rotary club before the end of this year, providing self-sustaining skills to young people, covid 19 response and helping with the devastation caused by the recent floods. The response to that has been made even more difficult by lockdown restrictions which are extreme. Eight motor cyclists have been recruited to deliver food and medical supplies. This has been part funded by our £1500 donation and \$1300 raised so far. Further funding will be sought and an effort will be made to involve other clubs. We will receive a monthly report of progress.

In answer to a question, Faruku described the enormous devastation caused by the floods. Some 12,000 families or 60,000 people have been displaced and are being accommodated in

a number of camps. The disaster was caused by a local steel? company failing to dredge and maintain the river banks. The hospital is destroyed and will have to be rebuilt in another location.

Nick Bell made three observations. The GLPC is a very efficient organisation with excellent use of cash as there are no overheads. The speed of action to the flood crisis which happened only 10 days ago was admirable, the measures being put in place in only one week. He is very impressed with the way the education project is being run. There is a Friends of GLPC fundraiser. For a monthly contribution of £10 with gift aid, a child can be educated for a year: please consider!

Faruku was warmly applauded for his excellent and informative talk.

Charity Auction winning bid results (an inspired idea of our president....job for life?)

Wine - £50 by Robert Lewis

Bob and Sue's house in Wales - £80 by John Meuss

Tony's Norfolk house - £250 by Michael

Maggie's biscuits with tin - £35 by John Meuss

Covid mask - £20 by Ari who thinks he offered £30 or £35. We'll accept the higher figure!

The final toast was taken at 19.10 Bruce



May 27th – Professor Nigel Linge “Our wireless world”

Was it a record? Tonight we had 23 screens and 25 socially distancing Rotarians attending our weekly Zoom meeting. { Editor note: No} The high attendance may have been related to the subject matter ‘Our Wireless World’ or more than likely due to the later start time of 7:30 pm. The usual start of half hour ‘drinks in the bar’ before the main speaker was good and consisted of the usual banter. Sue & Bob had been to see Satish and were happy to report that he seemed improved and was cheerful.

Michael introduced the guest speaker, Professor Nigel Linge of Salford University. He is an electronic engineer by profession and has been working in the computer networking and telecommunication fields since 1983. His research interests today include the operation and practical application of computer networks, communication protocols and telecommunications systems in general.

At no point in history have we been so socially reliant on telecommunications as we are today. Wireless communication is part of electromagnetic waves. The most famous pioneer of radio, Guglielmo Marconi, was an Italian electrical engineer, known for his work on long-distance radio transmission, development of Marconi's law, and a radio telegraph system. He is credited as the inventor of radio. Marconi was also an entrepreneur, businessman, and founder of The Wireless Telegraph & Signal Company in the UK in 1897. The first transatlantic phone call was made in January 1927, it cost £15 for a three minute pre-booked call. Enabling technology for mobile phones was first developed in the 1940s but it was not until the mid 1980s that they became available.

In January 1985 the UK launched its first mobile networks. Now, thirty years on, we celebrate the enormous achievements and advances that have been made since then and which have seen the mobile evolve from a humble telephone into the multimedia pocket computer which has become such an essential part of modern life. It was simply not possible in 1985 to envisage a country that would be so reliant on mobile phones and be so involved in the deployment of 4G and shaping the future 5G technologies. (the G stands for Generation!)

However, are these systems safe? Professor Linge says yes but also warned us to be careful of cyber criminals. Here are a few tips and I’m sure there are many others:

- Turn off WiFi & Bluetooth in public places.
- Employ common sense before handing over sensitive information.
- Never trust alarming messages.
- Do not open attachments in suspicious or strange emails
- Keep your software and operating system up to date

- Never publish your private email address on publicly accessible online resources.

As with the use of all technology, it needs to be accompanied by education.

There were many questions and overall it was a most enjoyable talk.

Sue

Look carefully at the masts . . .

Microwave backhaul links

Cellular (mobile) communications

The slide features a central photograph of a telecommunications tower against a clear blue sky. Two red arrows originate from the left side of the slide: one points to a white parabolic dish antenna at the top of the tower, and the other points to a cluster of vertical antenna arrays on a lower section. To the right of the main image is a vertical column of six small video thumbnails, each showing a different person in a video call window.

June 3rd – Socially distant, but real, wine and cheese!

There has been a sense of great anticipation for this event. The build-up somewhat teasing with Zoom 'asides' about the acquisition of the wines et al. There is a buzz in the air about tonight's event.....Sorry, the buzz was a stray bumble bee wanting to be let out!

Our Club adventures and voyage of discovery continue this week with our Socially Distant Cheese and Wine Quiz Evening organised by **Mrs and Mr Preece, Ms Ball** and **Mr President Michael**. Any proceeds from this evening will go towards the Kasese Floods fund.

The Plan

Cheese and wine tasters will be delivered between 3pm and 4:30 pm on Wednesday afternoon.

Ms Ball, our resident wine expert, advised that as soon as they are delivered the wines and cheeses should be put directly into the fridge - yes, even the red wines! You can then remove the red wine from the fridge after 7pm.

Ms Ball will talk us through the first four very 'special' wines - two white and two rose. After that we will try the first four very 'special' cheeses. It is suggested to have a few crackers or pieces of crusty bread to eat with your cheeses. **Ms Ball** will then talk us through the last two red wines and when complete we will sample the last two cheeses.

(The cheeses are from a specialist shop in Chorlton 'Cheesemongers' and they kindly recommended the six different cheeses and gave us a discount of 20%)

Did it happen?.....



5.15 Les vins et fromages viennent d'être livrés.

7.30 Let banter commence.

8.00 **Mr President Michael** called the meeting to order

33 booked in of which there were 11 guests. Unfortunately **Mr Dev** could not get the wine and cheeses early enough to take to Telford but they will be kept in the fridge and be delivered later.

We had three questions to answer for each of the six wines. (Two white, two rose and a couple of reds). The questions were Old/New World, Country of origin and grape variety.

Number 1 White Old World, English, Lyme Bay Baccus Grape (Aldi £8.99)

Number 2 White New World, Chile, Marlboro Sauvignon Blanc (Aldi £5.49)

Number 3 Rose New World, S.E. Australia, blend of blends (M&S £6.00 offer)

Number 4 Rose Old World, Spain, Tempranillo (M&S £7.00 offer)

Break for cheese tasters:-

1. Caerphilly £2.78 per 100 gm.
2. Ragstone (Goats cheese) £5.50 per half roule.
3. Oglesfield Cheddar £1.60 per 100 gm.
4. Red Leicester £3.00 per 100 gm

Back to the final wines

Number 5 Red Old World, S.W France, Malbec (Waitrose £9.99)

Number 6 Red New World, South Africa Western Cape, blend (cab sauv 60%+merlot) (Waitrose £8.99)

Final two cheeses

5. Mature Cheddar £2.94 per 100 gm
6. Stilton £2.68 per 100 gm

There was a communal quiz on cheeses to round off the proceedings.

9.15 Admin announcements

9.20 Final toast.

Once again the ingenuity of Rotary shines through. Well done to everyone tonight. Those who could not join us missed out on a fantastic well organised night 'out'.

Please contact **Mrs Sue Preece** for more detailed information about the cheeses and **Ms Sarah Ball** about the wines.

Stay safe and well

Ian



June 10th – Michael Vlasto- RNLI

So this was the second “new” later Zoom meeting (or the 2nd meeting back at our traditional time ?).

Your scribe for the meeting missed the first part of the half hour virtual bar chat; but it was in full swing and as usual with friends clearly pleased for the opportunity to chat.

At 8 pm President Michael then, in his usual effortless precise manner, moved the meeting on. At this point it is fair to record that “Bulletin Writer” has become somewhat more onerous now that the popular “fact checking” is available to anyone who wants to watch the whole thing via ML’s recording ! In light of this availability I will add some background but with the verbatim account brief.

Speaker - Kenneth Michael Vlasto, educated The Thomas Hardy School, Dorchester. He worked for the RNLI for 39 years, from 1975 to his retirement in July 2013. For his final 16 years running the organisation as “Operations Director”,. Brought up on the south coast of England he always ‘mucked about in boats’. After school he joined P&O as a cadet Deck Officer and spent 9 yrs at sea. His first RNLI role was in Scotland, then Wales then returning to southern England in senior positions. Now retired, he lives in a substantial “cottage” in Audlem, Shropshire.

[BD note: Audlem is principally known as the location of a flight of 15 magnificent Telford locks on the Shropshire Canal, transitioning from the Cheshire plain to the 93 ft higher Shropshire plain].

Michael was Chairman and trustee of the International Maritime Rescue Federation from 2005 – ‘15. He was awarded an OBE for his RNLI work.

He is the brother-in-law of Rotary member Ari Tsalikis. This relationship coming via some sort of liaison between the English and Greek upper classes (mentioning no others ...). He spoke with the obvious polish and confidence of a corporate executive and I could only wish the best of luck to anyone who ever braved to criticise the RNLI in any way in his presence !

Michael Vlasto started his talk by saying how well the RNLI is currently performing and that basically nothing much had changed since he left. He contrasted most other countries which have Government funded comparable services. His talk was very much about the RNLI as an organisation, rather than about lifeboats themselves and he noted its beginnings in 1824 founded by Sir William Hillary. The RNLI commendably still runs the service in Southern Ireland.

In 2019 38k people were rescued and 374 lives were saved (over and above any which other services would have rescued). 95% are volunteers and they took part in 8.941 lifeboat launches. Currently anyone can put to sea in anything which floats, any size, any engine – something Michael would like to see regulated and bureaucratised.

Michael’s greatest achievement and claim to fame was the transition from the RNLI being just a Lifeboat organisation to one which aims to save lives in the water – wherever. Thus lifeguarding was introduced, hugely improving the safety record from previous Local Authority lifeguards. River and lake based rescue services were introduced under his leadership. Another significant introduction was helmet-cams. This led to the hugely successful BBC television series. Covid has made only a

slight difference to operations and no RNLI member would dream of losing a life just because of the 2m rule.

Currently only 150 people die by accident in UK waters each year, this trivial number a testament to the RNLI, presumably amongst others.

Q&A session.

Tony J asked about the Fisherman's Mission, another organisation in which Michael has played a leading role. Denise asked about the volunteers, apparently aged 17 to 55 yrs. A reading list of books about the RNLI was requested and the IMRF mentioned. A discussion about the 43 non-RNLI lifeboats was had with Michael extremely loyal to the professionalism of the RNLI, contrasting some of the (single tragedy inspired) others.

Finally your scribe asked about William Wouldhave, fellow of his birth town, South Shields, where in the mid 1780's the very first lifeboat was invented.

Brian.



June 17th – Robert Lewis Old Crocks, Delinquents and Old People

Robert Lewis took his turn to give his “Job Talk” for want of a better term. Now most of us have had a job, and some have had two or three. Despite copious notes and access to Bob’s slides I still can’t count how many jobs he’s had! His CV must run to several volumes, but there is a familiar theme running through them, that of helping others.

Growing up in Burslem in the Potteries it was almost inevitable that he started work in pottery, as a management trainee with Royal Doulton. After a few years he was chosen to head a new company outpost in Australia, which didn’t appeal at all, and he left. Meanwhile in the Scouts he had met boys from the local Approved School and he took a job as an unqualified housemaster near Peterborough.

This lowly job led to a training course in Social Work followed by a teacher training course in Leicester. During this period he was still working evenings and weekends in his “day job” where he tried to shift the emphasis from confinement to education, and making the education fun. Unsurprisingly he spent a fair amount of time in Criminal Courts and worked with many Children’s Departments.

Following his promotion to Deputy Head at an Approved School for girls who were pregnant or recently delivered, in 1970 the Children Act abolished Approved Schools and introduced “Community Care”. At this point Bob “slid sideways” into Social Services as an Assistant Director in the eastern part of Cheshire. Residential Homes were rather behind the times, being converted large houses for the most part, requiring the elderly to share bedrooms or in some cases dormitories. Bob commissioned Shepley House and Meadway Court which were specifically designed to provide single bedrooms for all.

He became involved in National Policy issues and worked closely with the NHS. Later he became Hon. Sec and President of the national body, negotiating with several governments from Mrs. Thatcher to Tony Blair. He was awarded a CBE in 1992, and left SMBC in 1999.

Never at a loose end, Bob became a Director of several providers of residential, nursing and private hospital care, including responsibility for Specialist Schools with the Priory Group. Following “retirement” he helped to save half the homes in the Southern Cross group following its collapse 9 years ago, forming HC-One, now the biggest provider of residential care in the private sector.

He continues to monitor safeguarding, duty of candour and aspects of quality of care, reporting monthly to the Board. And somehow he manages to be a member of Bramhall and Woodford Rotary Club!

Harry Hill

June 24th – Ron Malabon's Quiz (Ron's Rounds)

With the temperature on our garden thermometer nudging 30 and the humidity levels too high for comfort, 16 of us joined Michael on Zoom for his last meeting as Bramhall and Woodford Rotary President - for the time being anyway. His final task will be to hand over to Harry next week to take us forward into another rather different and challenging year. I think it's safe to say that there has never been a year quite like it and Michael has done a simply amazing job of keeping the club together and the mood upbeat. Well done Michael and thank you.

There were quite a few regular Zoom visitors absent this week, Dev, Pat, Bob S., John S., Satish and Ari but those present provided the usual lively half hour discussion before the meeting was called to order with subjects ranging from being tempted by Greggs' pastries, to hairdressing, to holiday refunds and even Sue and Bob's addition to the family, a tiny cavachon puppy made an appearance between his frequent toilet trips.

Once the general chat was over Ron took over to present the main part of the evening, Ron's Rounds, a really thought provoking quiz. As it turns out it consisted of about two and a half rounds though Ron had prepared many more.

Ron told us that each round would consist of a mixture of difficult and easy questions covering a wide range of subjects. There was indeed a wide range of subjects including Geography, TV and Film, Travel, Sport, and Literature. There were many of those incredibly annoying questions where the answer is on the tip of your tongue and you really should know it but it just will not come to you. All I can say is that I wish I'd payed more attention in Geography and that I'd watched all the TV programmes that Ron had watched. Judging from the occasional whoops of joy and comments such as , ' I've got one!', everyone else was in a similar situation. I suppose we could blame the heat and that we were all desperate to get back to our swimming pools to sip pina colodas but I don't think any of us should rush to put ourselves forward for Mastermind just yet.

Of the 30 or so marks to be had Michael scored 14 and so became the very fitting winner of the evening.

Well done Ron for all your hard work and for helping to get our creaky brains back into gear.

Harry gave us a piece of news about Faruku, one of our friends from Kasese, Uganda. Despite the fact that he is still here in England, having been trapped by lockdown, he is going to be made the first President of the newly founded Kasese Snow Peaks Rotary Club on Friday on Zoom and you can all join in. However this does come with a warning. They really like speeches in Uganda so it could be a long session.

Towards the end of a very pleasant hour and a half Sarah brought up the question of when, if ever, we would be meeting again face to face. I think we all agreed that this would be very desirable and probably very possible now, taking all the appropriate measures to stay socially distanced and adequately dettol sprayed. There are definitely plans afoot to hold the handover next week as a face to face meeting in Harry's garden providing that the weather is good to us. Watch this space.

Stay well and out of harm's way.

Maggie.