

**March 2025**



**Bramhall & Woodford Rotary Club**

**1<sup>st</sup> January to  
31<sup>st</sup> March**

## Lyrical Lesley

Hello Rotarians.

The Last three months have flown by.. We started the year off at the Pointing Dog - so far so good. We hosted the Float quiz which was brilliant as usual, hosted by our lovely Sue and Bob. Then the wonderful Penelope Silver gave us a great insight into AI Technology and how it can help expand our daily lives. We were mesmerized. Our Annual visit to CHADS was arranged as our monthly social event - thank you John and Sue.

In February Gaynor Cavanagh gave us a great talk about the work of the Hearing Dogs. It was truly inspirational, and a couple of real cute dogs helped make it a bit special. Darshana Kotecha and Mike, both MS sufferers, gave an amazing talk regarding the MS Society and what they do in its North West arm. Another wonderful Voluntary Association manned by dedicated and caring individuals. Our social evening was at The Out of the Box Cafe in Bramhall Village. What a great event for us all to get together, relax, and just have fun. March rolled in and Presidents Night was at Bramhall Park Golf Club. I put on a Sparkly Dress! We had a wonderful night accompanied by a pianist playing soothing sounds in the background - really special thanks Sue.

The Indian Adventure landed at Notcutts. Simply brilliant - a real Rotarian Team Effort. Thank you Maggie and team. Heather Bennett gave a heartwarming insight to St Annes Hospice how it runs, how they are funding the new Hospice, being built as we speak and to which we have donated £1000 pounds to the Brick in the Wall Campaign. Our name will be on the wall of Contributors to the New Hospice.

How lucky are we to have so much happening in our club.

Signing Off Lesley

## 8 January 2025 - Committees

First meeting at the Pointing Dog with a good turnout despite appalling weather conditions . The room was big, warm and private. Mixed feedback regarding the meals. Some wanted only 1 course, some 2 courses. Discussion followed that it may be possible to accommodate both.

President Lesley opened the meeting by welcoming Sadhna to BW Rotary club. Archana announced she had never had a formal induction /received her pin, so Lesley formally welcomed Archana to the club and gave her the missing Rotary pin.

### Secretary/ Communications report

Michael has more ideas for publicity- which will be discussed in due course

### Club Services

Bob informed us that we are currently trialling The Pointing Dog as the 4<sup>th</sup> Rotary meeting venue over the next few weeks.

The current events programme is organised for next few weeks with a visit to Chads, Quiz night, Hearing dogs Speaker, MS Speaker, St Anne's Hospice and Blood Bikes.

### Community Service

Satish informed us that 'Youth Speaks' has 2 Hazel Grove teams . There will be a mock presentation on Thursday 23 Jan 2025 12.45-13.30 and they would like 3 Volunteers from BW Rotary to attend. The actual competition will be held at Knutsford Tues 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2025@ 17.00. More details to follow

The question of nominating charities for all future events in 2025 was discussed. Members were asked to submit suggestions to Council for worthy causes.

### Treasurer

Steve ( acting as interim Treasurer – thank you Steve) gave us the following figures

**Christmas Collections** ( Grotto,Notcutts, Santa's float etc). total profit = £7967( rounded up to £8000)

16 charities ( inc Rotary) will receive **£500**

**Charity account** . We have donated to

Ukraine incubator initiative.       £250

Global sight Solutions.           £500

St Ann's Hospice.                   £1000

**Provisions** Santa float repairs.   £2500

Collectibles proceeds on hold waiting compliance requirements £5160

Net available balance               **£ 4264**

### **General Account**

**Provisions.**    RGI.                               £1483

                  President Honorarium.   £200

                  Speakers.                               £300

Net available balance.               **£ 874**

### International

Harry informed us that William's School in Uganda now has glass in the windows and the next classroom is being built ( with Rotary funds)

We are also funding UK Med- Ghaza as able

Kasese ( Uganda ) has the President of Winchester Rotary giving a talk there

### **Social**

Sue reminded us of the Chad's theatre event 26<sup>th</sup> Jan

Currently looking at a Comedy evening, games room , pottery making. Any ideas for social events please forward to Sue for February

March social event will be President's night

### **Ways and Means**

Maggie informed us due to the missing Santa Float round we still had 200 bags of sweets remaining . Following discussion it was suggested that these be donated to a local food bank

**Indian evening at Notcutts Fri 14 March** . Still in planning stage but hoping to include Indian dancing and Indian food ( with non Indian option also) possibly display of Saris . Sadhna, Archana and Dev/ Matalia's input would be welcomed. This date coincides with the Indian festivals of Holi and Swin

### **Santa's Float**

Pete gave us the following update

The float is 15 years old and every night of the recent rounds, something went wrong, which Tom from the farm or Pete needed to fix . It appears that it is no longer road worthy ( rusted chassis, unsafe rear gate, unstable frame) It was suggested that buying a new float for 2025 is put to council ASAP

Various options were discussed as to what would be best / value for money etc. Pete suggested forming a float committee involving van/float suppliers/mechanics so Rotary members have access to the experts in this field to guide our final choices

Pete kindly agreed to lead on this . The urgency of getting some actions/decisions on this was stressed. 11 months is not a very long time to organise a replacement- to get funds/ modifications/ legal requirements etc in place

Any ideas on this subject please forward to Pete and Maggie

Denise Geary

## **15 January 2025 - Penny Silver - Artificial Intelligence**

Our second meeting at the Pointing Dog saw Prez Lesley introduce Penny Silver who came to talk about Artificial Intelligence and her work within it.

Uncharacteristically Lesley then became mostly silent as a consequence of earlier dental treatment and Phillip stepped in to do his first duty (as far as I can remember) as Vice-president or President elect. He certainly rang a pretty good bell! We had around 27 members attending which is a bit up on most meetings.

I have known Penny for many years, either in my past life as a quack or when she has modelled at Fashion Shows. When she saw me scribbling she told me that she had an AI note-taker on her laptop which would list important points as well as transcribing what was said in general, and she would send me the transcript later. Being fundamentally idle I put down my pen and enjoyed listening to Penny, knowing that everything was being written for me.

Now I am broadly pro AI, but as you can see from the attachment, it may not yet be fully fledged. From what remains of my memory therefore, I can say that Penny practises Reiki, a form of healing which is different from the stuff I used to do, and in the chaos of Covid she learned about AI and its potential uses. Then, in a series of coincidences, she was able to use her new skills in business and eventually became an AI trainer, which is where she is now.

Penny was keen to emphasize that AI is not the answer to the problems of the world, but there are situations where it can be remarkably effective. For instance, the Law profession is reliant on case law which is constantly changing and evolving. Keeping up to date involves hours of reading every day yet now AI can scan all this data and pick out the salient details while the professional is working with clients. Similarly in Medicine, X-rays and scans need to be interpreted by a skilled and experienced doctor or other professional and mistakes can be made for all sorts of reasons. AI can see things that the human eye cannot, and flag up a potential abnormality.

The basis of AI to my mind is the same as practice for a human. The more we do something the better we get. The more information that is fed into a computer with a machine learning programme the better it becomes at that particular task. Penny was at pains to point out that the quality of the information going in is extremely important. Anybody remember GIGO from early computing? Garbage in, garbage out. The difference now is that the computers can make a shrewd guess at what is garbage and ignore it, though the human touch is still vital.

I invite you to look at the result of Penny's transcription software which contains a great deal of detail but is not yet easy to read. You will note that it is easily fooled by unfamiliar words such as Alderly Edge and Walkden (oddly edge and walkton) which is not surprising.

After lots of questions Penny was roundly applauded, and I know from an email she sent me later that she really enjoyed meeting and talking with us.

Harry Hill

**Ed's note. The AI transcript runs to 12 pages so it is not included here.**

**24 January 2025 - CHADS**

Agathie Christie's "The unexpected guest" went down well with our audience of 50+ people.

## **29 January 2025 - Santa's Float Quiz Night.**

Our final meeting in January saw a full house in our new meeting room at The Pointing Dog.

No fewer than nine of our Santa's float collecting groups fielded teams of various sizes, to join our members at Santa's Float Quiz Night. Four different scout groups, two local schools, Walthew House, Beacon Counselling and Woodford Cricket Club all managed to squeeze in thanks to Bob's careful counting and rearranging of chairs.

President Lesley made a great job of welcoming all our guests despite the rather noisy gathering and we set about the quiz without more ado. Sue had very kindly prepared challenging sets of questions for before and after the interval, including two picture rounds showing celebrities and famous places, to dip in and out of throughout the evening. After various teams forged ahead with the scores in different rounds, only to drop back again in the next, the winning team was a collaboration between Beacon Counselling and three Rotarians, Michael, Chris and Philip. Congratulations to all.

All the collecting groups were winners, each of them receiving £500 from the rounds. Slices of delicious, hot pizza and chips were served during the interval which added to the general feeling of enjoyment.

Ian took the opportunity to inform the gathered throng of our intentions to replace our ailing float, preferably by Christmas 2025, through a crowd funding campaign.

The evening came to an end with a promise that we would all see each other again next year.

Maggie.

## 5 February 2025 - Committees

President Lesley chaired the meeting with her usual liveliness, charm, patience and dexterity and members were succinct in their reports due to the attendance of a Turkish Rotarian Prof. Dr. Arzu Çahantimur, Y.Mimar Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi İmarlık Fakültesi Mimarlık Bölümü

**Attendance** 22 including a visitor from Holland - Mehul

**Dr. Arzu Çahantimur** gave a talk seeking support of a partner for a Global Grant, which will be considered by Council. Copies of her slides are to be circulated to Rotarians.

**David Rose** reported that our Youth Speaks team did not move into the semis.

**Sue Preece** reported a newly arranged social games evening at "Outside the Box" located opposite Angela Beer. The cost would be £5 per head and would need 20 people.

For President's night at Bramhall Park Golf Club on March 7<sup>th</sup> a band was being sought as Richard was away, which could push the price up to £40 per head.

April 16<sup>th</sup> Wine tasting.

**Bob Preece** confirmed the February events:

February 12 Gaynor Cavanagh – Hearing Dogs

February 19 Darshana Kotecha – Multiple Sclerosis

February 26 Social Night

**Treasurer Steve Littlewood** advised Funds available £876 and Charity Funds available not including the Chads night receipts. The bulb receipts achieved were £135. Hooray!

**Maggie Hill** - Ways & Means - advised that the Notcutt booking has to be confirmed/clarified and the arrangements finalised for the Bollywood dancers/musicians on Wednesday 19 March.

**Pete Daniel** clarified that significant research had been undertaken into a replacement Father Christmas vehicle which he estimated would cost about £20K pounds. The issue is to be discussed at Council next week.

**Harry Hill** – International advised that Lend with Care had £16 to give out and William's school had 182 pupils and he was building two new class rooms.

**Michael Lacey** – It was agreed that Michael and Lesley would be the two voting members for the Rotary Clubs of the UK & Ireland.

## **12 February 2025 - Hearing Dogs**

24 members and two visitors, George Mumford and Sus attended the meeting.

Gaynor Cavanagh, Christine Wright, Max Thorton, Ann Tomlin and Walt Tomlin from Hearing Dogs brought along three dogs Jessie, Abney and Wren to visit us. Gaynor has been with Hearing Dogs for three years and thanked us for the money that we donated from the Fashion Show. Hearing dogs breed their own dogs which are mainly Cocker Spaniels, Poodles and Cockerpoos. At eight weeks old the puppies go to a trainer where they are first socialised, and house trained. The dogs are then taught to respond to a squeaker and the trainer has a patch on their leg which the dogs are trained to touch when they hear a particular sound. Gaynor explained how beneficial the dogs were to a deaf person. The dogs are trained to respond to various sounds such as a doorbell, alarm clock, cooker timer, mobile phone ring, fire alarm and a baby monitor. The dogs will then take their owner to the item. These amazing dogs also provide emotional support to deaf people. A deaf person living on their own can easily become withdrawn but taking a dog for a walk every day means that they meet other people and will talk to them as most deaf people can lip read. The dogs were a great success with all present!

Bob

## **18 February 2025 - Multiple Sclerosis**

We had 20 Rotarians, Denise was a visitor and Liz and Denise arrived after the meal to attend the talk on MS. Our speakers were Darshana and Mike both have MS and are volunteers for the Charity in the North West. They were introduced by Ashok.

MS is a Neurological Condition that affects Myelin, the protein that protects Neurons in the Brain. There is no definitive answer to what causes this condition and children as young as 12 have been diagnosed with it. The symptoms are completely individual but include sight disturbances, limb and body pain which can lead to disabilities. It also can present in flare ups and chronic fatigue. The MS society was set up by Mr Richard Mary Cave in 1953 to support MS Sufferers with all its life challenges and have branches all over the UK.

The Stockport group has been going for 50 years helping with practical support information and fund raising for research, which has led to the development of many new drugs to alleviate the symptoms giving the person a better quality of life. Needless to say, the club were mesmerized and asked many questions I for one felt I understood this condition so much more. Having these speakers really does give us all so much knowledge Thank you club services for reaching out and finding such great speakers.

Dates for your Diary. The games night on the 28th 4 places left reach out to sue for a place. 4th of March WaToTo Children's Choir at St Michael & All Angels church Bramhall 6.30 Free Event please support if you can. Presidents Night. 7th of march please let Sue know if you can attend or not. An Indian Adventure at Notcutts 19th of March reach out to Maggie.

Signing off lesley

25 February 2025 - Out of the box

15 members ventured out on a wet cold night to a new social event to engage in Board Games at The Board Games Cafe on Woodford Road, Bramhall. This was unique for most of those who participated even though a few were reminded of having played such games during XMAS & EASTER holidays with family.

Our grateful thanks to Sue for arranging this.

Satish

## 7 March 2025 - President's Night

Fourteen members and fifteen guests met at Bramhall Park Golf Club for Presidents Night, one of our two principal Club events in the Rotary Year.

In a very pleasant room at the Gold Club we enjoyed an excellent meal - everyone on our table was full of praise. Whilst we dined and talked, we were treated to some very pleasant background piano music.

After the meal, Lesley spoke to us, thanking us for coming to this, her special evening. Lesley welcomed all the guests, of which there were many and told us that she valued the opportunity of getting to know everyone on a more personal level. Lesley thanked everyone for the outstanding support she had received and talked of being in the presence of 'forces of nature', for the good of the community and worldwide. Also, she highlighted the lovely new members who have joined in the last year, and the full agenda for the coming year. Challenges do come along, but we are not just a club, we are a team that is prepared to work together, and compromise for the betterment of the Club. Lesley then proposed a toast to our families and guests, and hoped everyone would have a wonderful evening.

Lesley then asked Michael to say a few words, and he spoke about the changes in 'formality' that have happened over the years within Rotary. Michael told us of his earliest memory in Rotary in 1988, as a member of the Poynton Club, was at Millington Hall (the original one, not the John Millington). The event was absolutely packed, all men, all in DJ's, lots of guests. Now, we treat Charter Night as a birthday party, always including women – members and guests.

Regalia was everywhere in those days – U.S. and British flags, pennants from clubs around the world, all of which had to be set out beforehand, and removed the end of the evening. Grace said before the meal, and a Sargeant at Arms was present to fine members, in fun, for any transgression such as not wearing a tie. Life in Rotary now, is almost unrecognisable compared to forty years ago, but better! There would be numerous speeches and toasts, but tonight Michael said, we will finish on a toast - "To the ladies". The pianist was also thanked.

A thoroughly enjoyable evening of good food, music and Rotary fellowship.

Chris Monkhouse



## 12 March 2025 - Committees

About 15 members enjoyed a meal at the Pointing Dog, with another 2 members joining the meeting later. The food menu will soon change and we will enjoy this at our next meeting.

Michael will shortly attend District Assembly, and all are welcome to join him.

Treasurer Steve advised that available balances are £1108 on the General Account and £1954 on the Charity Account. An interest-bearing Savings Account has been set up with the Club's bank Barclays, which is being used to isolate the funds for the new Santa Float. The Savings Account currently has a balance of £13364 which is made up of proceeds of the Collectibles Donation (£5160), GoFund Me (£1074 with a further c£1000 to come) and £2128 direct Float donations. This means that the total raised from the Float Appeal is £4200 approx.

Bob Preece outlined the forthcoming programme. There was an animated discussion about whether to allow the meal charge to include coffee/tea after the meal as not all diners wanted an after-meal drink. It was finally agreed to keep it simple and all would pay the same amount, with non-drinkers choosing to drink or not!

Sue was thanked for an excellent President's Night. Attendance from members was disappointing, however. This raised the question of the viability of this and other social events. Future social events included a wine tasting and a summer bbq.

The poor attendance led to a quite fundamental discussion about members taking on roles in the Club. It was critical that nominations for Club Secretary and Club treasurer were received as the present incumbents had held these posts for many years, and both wished to stand down from these posts. **Both roles are mandatory for a club to continue. The Club could close if replacements were not available.**

The Community Services report was presented by Steve in the absence of David Rose. David had visited the Tree House at Stepping Hill Hospital to see how our donation of £3000 was being used. The improvements were nearly complete.

Harry circulated pictures from William at Kasese, Uganda which showed the brilliant developments at the school. Pupils were growing vegetables to help with their meals. Sponsorship of an individual child for \$10 per child per month was an important source of badly needed funds to continue with the education of the pupils.

Our PR man Ian was continuing his publicity work for the Club on Facebook and local publications. Maggie summarised the forthcoming Indian evening at Norcutts, with plenty of raffle prizes available from a very kind donation via Clare, a friend of the Club. Planning for the Duck race was well in hand. More sponsorship of the races was still needed from local businesses.

We went home at 9.40pm

Dennis

## 19 March 2025 - An Indian Adventure

About 100 people turned up at Notcutts Garden Centre in Woodford to enjoy this special evening. The place was suitably decorated and we enjoyed our prosecco on entry.

Ian announced himself as our compere and first up was the Ami Shah school of dancing (Aimz Bolly Dance Co). Various aged groups of girls, beautifully dressed, performed very animated dances for us.

Next came Harini who played an Indian violin. The music sometimes sounded like Scottish dances and at other times extremely Indian.

Annabel and Michael sold raffle tickets, raising £560.

We then had a delicious meal which seemed to be enjoyed by everyone

Jim from Blood Bikes Greater Manchester gave a short talk. They are a charity who work exclusively for the NHS and move more than just blood, for example donated breast milk. Jim will be addressing the club at The Pointing Dog on 9th April.

Dev then introduced Praanjol Nanda (trained by Metali) to dance an Odissi dance showing "Intricate rhythmic patterns of exceptional beauty"

We then had a "not a fashion show" of Indian clothing. It seemed like a fashion show to me, but there was nothing one could buy! The models apart from two women and one chap were all members of our club, namely:

Kate, Liz, Maggie, Sadhna and Archana and Satish, Dev, Ashok and John. Each modelled 3 outfits and some incorporated dancing!

Then Raj played a big loud drum and encouraged lots of people to get up and dance.

At this point Pam and I had to leave as Pam was unwell. (Fine now)

No doubt there was a very successful raffle with many delighted with their prizes.

Also I am sure thanks were given to Maggie and the organising team, to Notcutts staff and to all the performers as well as to everybody for coming.

Thus bringing an exceptionally good evening to an end

Michael

## 26 March 2025 - St Anne's Hospice

The meeting was chaired by Vice President Philip Morris in the absence of President Lesley Buckley, who was on holiday. He warmly welcomed the speaker Heather Bennett from St. Ann's Hospice, who was accompanied by her father Graham Jackson from Manchester Rotary Club, both of whom were solicitors.

There were 20 present with 15 having meals. There was another long delay to pay for the meals and a delay in serving all the different meals ordered with one main course forgotten about finally arriving at 8.26pm.

Hearty congratulations were expressed for all those involved in the Indian Evening and Maggie mentioned that the initial profit figure was £1,100.

Harry appealed for helpers for the "stuffing" at Walthew House and asked those coming to share lifts to assist with the parking.

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Heather Bennett gave an outstanding talk of her dedication and commitment to St. Ann's Hospice, which is a registered charity. Heather had a wide range of involvement in many duties, which included marketing and fundraising and she sounded as though she did much waving of her wand. They gave much love and support to the patients and the relatives.

She explained that the purpose of the hospice was to provide supportive and specialist palliative care services, both within the hospices and in community settings, enabling individuals with life limiting illnesses and their families and carers to maximise the quality of their lives. Patients were also supported on short term stays.



Dr Moya Cole OBE was one of the founders of our Heald Green hospice in Stockport back in 1971 and was also instrumental in the decision for St Ann's to open a second hospice in Little Hulton in Salford in 1979.

Moya was a massive trailblazer for women as well as a huge intellect – graduating with a BSc degree in physics from Queen's University in Belfast way back in 1939

and earning an even more impressive MSc a year later. This would be a huge achievement for someone these days, let alone for a young woman so many decades ago.

Without Moya Cole's vision and determination, there would be no St Ann's Hospice. Yet almost unbelievably not many people know her name and her founding role in our history.

It was in 1967 that Moya and the then Bishop of Manchester, the Rt Rev Dr William Greer, had the idea for a hospice for the people of Greater Manchester. Together, they worked for 18 months to win over businesses and the public to their cause.

Their efforts were successful. St Ann's was founded in 1969 and our hospice in Heald Green was officially opened by the Queen Mother in 1971. Within a few years, it was so successful that a second site was set up in Little Hulton in 1979.

The new Hospital, which is being built, is to be renamed after Moya thus removing the suggestion a religious link. The hospital had been named after the St. Ann's Road.

Income was obtained from government coffers, donations and fundraising as follows:

### **Income and expenditure**

Data for financial year ending 31 March 2024

#### **Total income:**

**£13,146,521**

Donations and legacies	£4.84m
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Charitable activities	£5.36m
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Other trading activities	£2.54m
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Investments	£396.54k
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Other	£11.40k
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#### **Total expenditure:**

**£12,553,289**

Raising funds	£2.61m
Charitable activities	£9.95m
Other	£0

**Total income includes £5,288,427 from 5 government contract(s)**

There were 10 unpaid trustees, 243 employees and 276 volunteers.

Heather explained that St. Ann's Hospice in Heald Green is being rebuilt at a cost of £26.5m on spare land and housing will be built on the demolished site.



Above is a picture of what the new hospice will look like.

Heather emphasised the importance of securing funding for both the building of the new hospice as well as the ongoing running costs.

Her talk was followed by an extensive range of questions.