



Rotary Club of Billericay

News

January 2017

“Service Above Self”

President’s Message

A Raffle Success To Keep Us All Warm!



As this is the first newsletter for a few weeks I will start by recalling the Billericay Christmas Market, organised so well by the Rotary Club of Billericay Mayflower, with just a little help from their mums and friends. We took the opportunity to hold a charity raffle and promote the Soapbox Derby 2017. In this we were enthusiastically and ably assisted by the Quiltonian RotaKids who succeeded in engendering a festive atmosphere to our proceedings. The glorious sunshine, so low in the sky, caught some of us by surprise. I had dressed in base layer, thermal skiwear, fleecy socks, snow boots, woollen hat, scarf and gloves but rather foolishly forgot to take my sunglasses! Must make

a note for next year. Our raffle raised about £1600 to benefit ShelterBox, Rotary’s End Polio Now Campaign and to our

RotaKids sponsored charity - Great Ormond Street Children’s Hospital.

Between Christmas and the New Year Liz and I hosted our Open House for a few hours and it was so nice to see so many members and partners pop in and have a drink and a nibble and share their Christmas stories with us and each other.

Refreshed after the festivities and holiday period it was good to welcome back Patrick, Peter and Chandra from their exotic travels as we get to grips with a new year.



Michael Hall gave us his take on this as he delivered a New Year message at our first meeting of 2017. The importance of self-motivation is what I gleaned from this and no doubt others would

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have seen different messages. The important thing is that our thoughts should be provoked. We should question and challenge that which has always been routinely accepted, although on a personal note, I would appreciate it if members could wait until July before putting this into action.

Another RotaKids plus

An early piece of good

(continued next Page)



Best Club Newsletter
2016-17



Best Club Website
in District 1240
2014-15 & 2015-16

President's Message (continued)

news in 2017 was the agreement to form a new Rota Kids Club at Buttsbury Junior School – our second RotaKids Club following the successful launch at Quilters Junior School just over two years ago. Thanks and well done to Margaret Fowler and Peter Greene. Margaret's persistence, persuasiveness and patience bore fruit.

January 19 saw our first committee meeting of 2017 for the Soapbox Derby which is rapidly rolling into view. The preparations are intensifying and the loins are being girded. We now have 60 soapboxes entered, which was our target, although experience has shown

that not all of them will make it to the starting line, let alone the finishing line. Banner sales are progressing and our nominated retail outlets are stocked with tickets for sale.

In the near future we will start to heavily promote the event in the High Street, as we did last year, to increase public awareness and boost our pre-sales both online and at our retail outlets. There is much work to do before May 1 and the organising committee is small.

Volunteers for specific projects, or with availability to help, perhaps on a High Street promotion, should contact chairman Peter

Greene, who will be pleased to allocate a task for you in the coming weeks.

A final thought is that it was cheering to visit Ken and Jeannie recently and see Jeannie looking so well as she recuperates following her surgery.

It was also cheering to see Trevor Bond and Michael Ginn shrugging off the after effects of their more minor procedures (although I'm sure they did not feel minor) and soldiering on undeterred.

That takes me back to the New Year message and when you raise your glass going forward please try to make sure it is half full rather than half empty.

It's A Dog's Life Bedding Down

*Mike Ginn tells
a tale of a*

Christmas Just Past

Over the past few years, at Christmas time we have stayed with our son and his family in Surbiton. This year, we moved our family festivities 230 miles north to Headingley where our daughter, Claire, lives. And, yes, it is an easy walk to the county cricket ground. Our son John had an addition to his family last year, a cockapoo called Lucky. Claire's lodger had gone to Gloucester for Christmas. Claire had been asked to house sit for a friend. This just made things possible.

We had Claire's bed while Claire slept where she was house sitting. John and wife had lodger's bed. Granddaughter had bed in Claire's study. Grandson had bed in lodger's study. Lucky would sleep in the kitchen/diner. (This dog is

extremely well trained. He left all the Christmas food alone!). We drove up there on Dec 23)

Each morning, for the three mornings we overlapped, I was up first and I had to take Lucky out on a tank emptying mission. I had to find the key to the front door



and Lucky's lead. He was far more interested in licking my face than having a lead attached. There was a grey rock beside the road that Lucky's mission was to baptise.

Cold baptisms

On Christmas Day morning, a dog on the other side of the road howled defiance from behind a

gate. I wasn't strong enough to prevent Lucky from crossing the road so that he could exchange polite greetings - in true Rotary fashion. Suddenly, the other hound's tail dropped and he retreated from the gate. It now became possible for Lucky to complete that day's baptism.

These baptisms were cold work when all I had on were pyjamas, dressing gown and slippers. My sympathies were with Icelandic dog owners as I awaited the end of the mission. Better that though than a launched carpet.

We are blessed in our offspring - not only academically

talented, but also very good cooks. Between them, John and Claire produced us some fine meals and I had the most unbelievable Christmas present from them - two tickets on a Pullman train that the Flying Scotsman will pull on the Bluebell Railway. Not as if I am a railway buff! As for Lucky - see for yourselves.....

Soapbox 2017 Diary

Countdown - Three Months to go!



Our regular monthly status follows below.

Entries

The on-line application system is fully open and

We now have our full complement of 60 soapbox entrants.

Management of the process

Our small management committee continues to meet to plan for the 2017 event.

We hope for all members' active support as we work towards this year's event.

Video System booked!

After examining the alternatives, the committee has now booked a video system with a large 12 square metre screen on the Queen Elizabeth Field at Sun Corner so that those on the field will contin-

ue to be able to watch the drama of the Derby from the relative spaciousness of the field. This is a significant investment - we hope it will pull in extra crowds.

Banners

- **Banners** - A major push has been started, led by Roger Kettle, to sell Track Side Banners for the event. Members have been asked to approach, talk up and sell to assigned contacts and help identify potential new advertisers.

What has been done?

- **Event Plan** - the existing 2016 plan has been updated and submitted to the Council. A final version will be needed in March.
- **Les Sheppard** has agreed to be Track Manager

- **Publicity** - Trevor has created a comprehensive press release which has been sent to the media to publicize our plans. He will try to arrange a meeting with Alan Woods of the Gazette/Essex Chronicle
 - **Programme** - A simplified 4-page Programme will double as the ticket to the event. The design has been finalised, and an initial print has been completed and distributed. Two sponsors for the Programme (Toomeys and Waterhouse) have been agreed.
 - Pricing has been confirmed as £5 per person on the day, advance sales £3 per person, £10 Family of four.
 - Radios for the event have been ordered
- We will report progress in the Newsletter each month.



Heading For Glory Or Bust

When asked the simple question: "In it to win it?" Mike Wade did not hesitate. "Of course!"

And the grin on his face said it all as he dashed off to an important lunch. Call it confidence, love of competition or determination, the "boy racer" - aka head teacher of Quilters Junior School - has every intention of finishing first when he karts down London Road next May 1 in our second Soapbox Derby.

"I can't wait to get into our kart again," he told me as we chatted in his study (where a photograph of West Ham United skipper, Mark Noble and a plaque of the now defunct Boleyn ground adorning his desk got us off to a mutually good start, since we share the same affiliation.!)



In the school lobby sits last year's third-placed RotaKids Quiltonians kart - multi-coloured and highly-"powered". Mike insists I see it before we chat. The reason: "This year it will be the same kart but modified. P.G.Wilkins who did a wonderful job building it for us last year, are taking it back and making some changes. " The stunner: "The roof's coming

Quiltonians 'Boy Racer' Mike Wade says: "I'll not settle for second best"

off," said Mike. "It has to after last year when I blew it over the first hump on the first drive and we rolled and shattered the roof.



OK, so on the second run, we missed out the first hump and did a quick time - enough to end third overall. I won't settle for anything less than first this time. But the ramp rule has to change."

Mike argued that the ramp rule last year favoured some more than others. He was reassured that the race committee had changed the rules to ensure that soapboxes which by-passed the jumps would be penalised by more time than they gained - 8 seconds for missing one jump and 15 seconds for both jumps.

Silly question I know but I asked it: "Does the run frighten you?"

Reply as expected: "Not at all. It's all about adrenalin." And adds: "I keep being told the kart is equipped for a fat driver. I need to bulge out before May. Great news. Eat anything I want to."

Love Match

There is a wonderful story behind

Quilters, entry - the love Mike has for the school and the love and respect that pupils, staff and parents have for a head teacher

who is slow to chide and quick to bless.

He admits: "Love is the word I like to use about everything here. Not in romantic terms but in the way we all approach what we do in and out of the school.

I still insist on doing some teaching - I can't ask my staff to do something that I can't do or ask them to take on something without us all agreeing. We are a team - which is why the Soapbox Derby excites us - it is a project which unites so many of us in teamwork."

The Quiltonians kart may be painted like Joseph's technicolour coat - thanks to the efforts of the RotaKids who each paint a section under the admiring eye of teacher Mrs Busby - but the colours that shine through are purple and yellow - the school colours.

Mike makes no apologies: "I see everything here in purple and yellow. I am proud of that. I think the staff and pupils are proud too."

Challenges

Growing up in east London, educated at St Bonaventure's in Forest Gate and having taught there and in Leyton and Ilford, Mike confesses: "They were challenging years in a challenging area. The challenges here are different ones.

"I love teaching in junior school because I believe you can mould children of seven to eleven into forming a future for themselves. In addition to academic progress, they are far more flexible in wanting to involve themselves with everything going on in the school.

(continued on next Page)

Glory or Bust (continued)

"They are very conscious of what we are all trying to achieve here. It is gratifying and I am not sure I would find that satisfaction in secondary school."

For this year's kart entry, there will be a new team of RotaKids making sure Mike gets to the starting line – and finishes first.

"The difference a year on, "he says, " is that, at the start of last year, the emphasis was on school first, RotaKids second. It was an unknown. That has reversed. RotaKids is now established here.

We are delighted to be involved with Rotary and with your club. We share the same ideals with regard to working in the community, raising money and helping others. Our radio station is proof. It would not exist without Rotary funding and support."

So to May 1 and the downhill run – the Quiltonians kart going for glory. No expense nor effort spared. Prize money won to be put to another exciting school

Editor's Note

Support Your Committee

The SoapBox Derby committee have worked through the winter to make sure that our 2017 Charity Soapbox Derby when it kicks-off on Monday May 1 is even more spectacular. During that period when we were all enjoying our festive spirit , playing Scribble or Monopoly, putting on silly hats and , watching our best comedies on TV and catching up on those all black and white films we adored when we young,. Peter Greene and the Soapbox Derby committee were taking on board all that was needed to be do to make the 2017 event not only as good, but much, much better.

So seriously - Hands Up? In the next three months , your turn, as members, to promote our Very Special Event. Through friends,

project. As Mike says: "Bring it on. I cannot wait."

contacts. The SoapBox Derby was a a first time winner in 2016 - off the cuff but it worked! Not about entrants - we are full. Now about SELLLING..... the event, the product, the advertisers, the sponsors. I am sure that President Mike will be sounding on of all this in his monthly report, rightly so. To make it work again and better than ever, no member can walk away from the event, saying:: I took no part. Small Club - but as always, punching above our weight. Simple request: Please do everything you can to support your hard-working committee and help hem to make it another Spectacular Soapbox Derby. Last year we raised £26,000 for designated charities supported by Rotary, Let's beat that in 2017.

Adding: "Yes, I believe in LOVE but I HATE Tottenham.!"

By Trevor Bond

A Second Rotakids Club!

Yes - its happened. We've added another one!

Thanks to the efforts of Margaret Fowler and her close contacts with Buttsbury Junior School, the school has decided to set up a RotaKids club, based around its pupil school council.

Margaret kicked off the project last year, and following early dis-

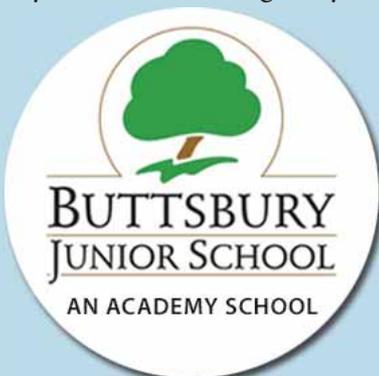
cussions with Head Teacher Ann Robinson, she and Peter Greene met with Ann at the end of the year to explain what a RotaKids club was, why it was beneficial to the children and supplemented the work of the school.

They had a positive response and in early January this year a follow-up meeting with Deputy Headteacher Sally Lavelle yielded confirmation that the school will go ahead with the project. The Induction meeting takes place on February 28, after the children return from Half term break.

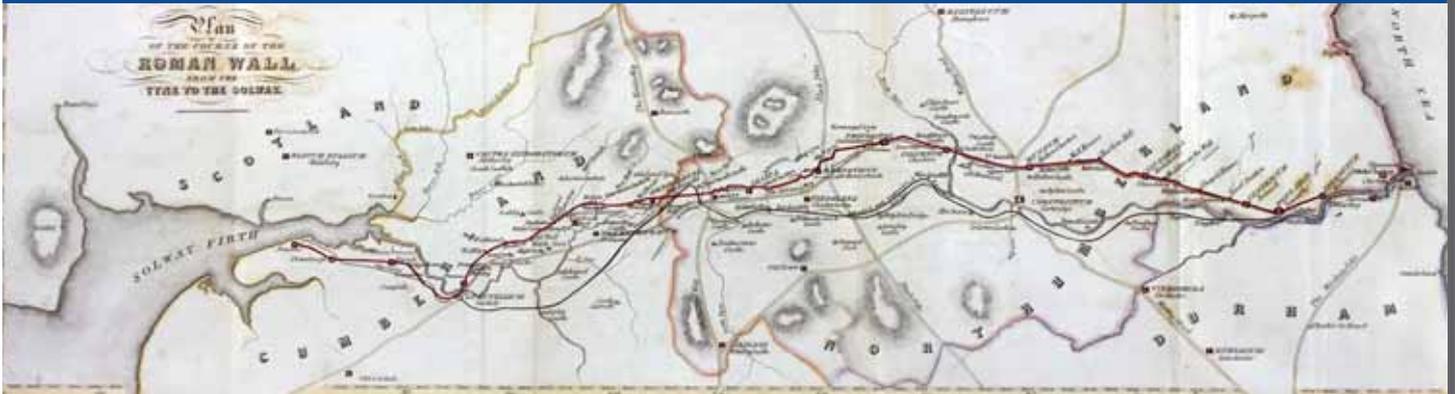
And that's not all, folks.

Thanks to the efforts of the RotaKids from our first club at Quilters Junior School, we raised

more than expected with our raffle at the Christmas Market. We wanted to recognise this effort and in late December Peter Greene visited the school to hand over a cheque for £300 made out to the RotaKids chosen charity - Great Ormond Street Hospital.



Challenging the Romans – Thanks To Hadrian



Past president Malcolm Acors, talking to us on December 5 as he described the task he took on with family and friends to meet the Duke of Edinburgh Diamond Challenge – the east to west walk from Wallsend, above Newcastle to the Solway Firth, 97 miles in total, along the English Heritage site of Hadrians Wall.



Arduous going and tough on the feet – but then there was always the lovely Sue back at the rented five-star farmhouse to transport them to their starting points and welcoming them back with a hot meal (something more than a camp-site sleep-over) and a good bed for the night.



“Our base was at Harlow Hill. I knew it from school days – famous as an area for shooting and gliding. The aim of the route

“I walked the wall and I’m wearing the T-shirt to prove it.”

marathon was back-packing for 35 miles a day. We did not achieve that every day but we finished the challenge. That included our two grandsons, Oscar and Henry. I am so proud of them.”



Hadrian’s Wall is the walking stretch of the Roman Way, built to keep the English in and the Scots – the Picts and Celts - out.



Built originally three metres wide at the base and six metres high with a walkway on the top level for the Romans to see the Scots coming, it is now reduced by wear and tear and stone robbers to no more than two metres in places and barely no height.

A General Mile!

He added: “Over the Roman occupation there were 84 Roman generals commanded to build the wall. Each had to build a mile,” and stressed: “The wall is still there. Thousands walk it every year. The scenery is spectacular. Starting at Wallsend and passing through Newcastle you see what a lovely city of culture it has become. It’s been many years since I last went to Newcastle. Then, it was an industrial place of wagon-ways to send coal to the docks and ship-building. It has changed dramatically.

“Then out on to the hills, past remains of Roman castles – Chester Roman Fort was a wonderful example – and other



historic sites, like the famous tree where the 1991 film shows Robin Hood rescuing a boy accused of stealing an apple!

(Ed’s note: What was Robin Hood doing up there so far from Nottingham? Or was it William Tell?)

A great off-the-cuff talk from Malcolm.

Speaker's Corner

Who are you? Who do you want to be?

The New Year message from Rev Michael Hall, Minister in Charge at Great Burstead delivered to the Club on January 9 spelt it out clearly.

Recounting his youth and citing some fascinating episodes in his walk through life, he said: "I grew up in an area not knowing what I wanted to choose to do with my



life. I came into the ministry, not through persuasion but through choice. My choice.

"Through school, through university, and eventually, through theological college. Decision made; choice made. I became a minister.

"First serious ministry in Chelmsford – not ideal since it was almost a ghetto. Tough kids, small attendances – hard work. But a challenge and I loved it. I had made my choice. And I like to think that I moved on having achieved something better for my church and my congregation."

"Now at Great Burstead, I see a different scene but the same sense

of direction. Families in a close-knit community and committed.



Over 20 weddings a year compared to only one in all the time I was in Chelmsford. But nothing different – everyone aiming to take on board God's message and to choose how they live their lives. "We all have a choice how to live, which way we want our lives to go. God gave us that choice."

Never A Bridge Too Far For The Master Builder

Isambard Kingdom.....come on, would you name your newborn with such a legacy? But you might now if you thought your son would grow up to be one of Britain's greatest bridge builders, innovator of the steam industry with the Stephenson railway dynasty, forge the odd canal, design one of London's great rail stations and, above all, lift Britain into the modern shipping world.

The surname is, of course, Brunel. The time was Britain's powerful industrial revolution and who better to remind us of I. K. B's great achievements than Margaret Mills, historian par excellence.

She filled in the gaps for us at lunch on January 23. Isambard – after his French father; Kingdom – his mother's maiden name. A short man (which is why he always wore a tall hat); had to

look up even to his mother; father spent time in debtor's prison. And much more...



Born 1806. An engineer, came to Essex to do drainage work at Tollesbury and stayed many times in the Brentwood and Chelmsford areas. His faults: Said Margaret, "Egotistic, was always impatient and did not suffer fools gladly."

None of this stopped him designing and building a 1,000 mile track for GWR plus railways in Australia, Italy and India, the mighty Clifton suspension bridge at Bristol, Paddington Station, the famous two-mile long Box Tunnel and the great ships.

Firstly, the Great Western in 1837. Then the first iron-cladder, the Great Britain, still sitting proud in Bristol dockyard and the Great Eastern – the first tourist trade ship. But one which gave him little pleasure and he died of a stroke in 1859 – his work unfinished.

Brunel was something more than a brilliant engineer. Little known – and thank you Margaret for these tit-bits:

- Abridged and modernised guns which were later to be used in the Crimea War.
- Designed the first "flat-pack" hospital, also for the Crimea
- Worked on an iceberg breaking system. Sadly not finished in time to save the Titanic.

PS: Isambard Kingdom Bond NO, sorry, does not quite sound the same !

Christmas Market

Our Stands



RotaKids Help Out



And the Raffle Winner is...

What a crowd!!



Billericay Christmas Market

We Raise Our Game And Reap The Reward



What a double success we had in supporting the Billericay Christmas Market! Firstly, we raised over £1600 on our raffle; secondly, we gained some exciting new entrants for our own SoapBox Derby.

Club members were out in force to support the Market, so superbly organised by Rotary Club of Billericay Mayflower. It was another great success – the sun shone, the skies were blue (and so were we as we shivered in the cold!), but tens of thousands of people thronged Billericay High street to take part, to buy Christmas items and enjoy the entertainment.

Our special themes were the 2017 Soapbox Derby which takes place on Bank Holiday Monday, May 1, 2017 and our grand Christmas raffle which was drawn at the end of the day.

We had two soapboxes on display which delighted the passing children given the chance to sit in and try out – budding racing drivers or just future competitors in the years to come? Reaction to the 2016 event was unanimous – “great event”, “thoroughly enjoyed it”, “looking forward to next year.”



We were able to answer enquiries about whether entries were closed yet and hundreds of people took our information flyers and asked where they could find more



information. We explained that it was all on the website at www.billericaysoapbox.co.uk . And we gained five new entries with another four possibles. (See SoapBox Derby special update on Page 3).

And the figure of over £1,600 raised by our second major initiative, the annual Christmas raffle which was drawn later that day, was a major bonus – almost £400 more than the previous year.



Heroic RotaKids

The prizes of a mountain bike, a case of luxury wine and a wonderful basket of fruit supplied by Ben Curtis as usual tempted the customers but, while members and wives played a valuable part

in selling tickets, the real heroes were the 7-10 year old members of our RotaKids club from Quilters Junior School.

Enthusiastic, thrilled and excited, led by head teacher Mike Wade and their organising teacher, Helen Kilby, they were vociferous in attracting the crowd. They looked great in their RotaKids club tabards and just loved having a microphone in their hand to shout out the prizes. BBC and

Sky – please note, there were some budding commentators out there! And many said: Can we come next year? Of course, they can.



Our thanks to the generosity of the towns folk and all those who came from outside Billericay. A great result and all the funds will be donated to the Caribbean Disaster Appeal, Rotary’s End Polio Now campaign and other charities supported by Rotary. Our thanks also to District Governor Terry Dean and his wife Pauline (District Governor for 2019-20) for supporting us and buying Raffle Tickets from our RotaKids, and to our AG, Peter McCafferty for picking the winning raffle tickets.

District Council

Much lively discussion at the District Council meeting at Writtle College on January 18 when the club was represented by Vice President Peter Greene, Michael Ginn, Patrick Rothon and myself.

District Governor Terry Dean reported that he has visited all but nine clubs in the district and attended a number of events, adding that the joint concert with Inner Wheel at Chelmsford Cathedral on November 29 was a sellout.

He presented various certificates and we were one of few clubs to receive a certificate of appreciation (see image below) for our financial support of the **End Polio Now: Make History Today** Campaign.



A short film was shown about the RI Convention in Atlanta.

President Malcolm Tugwood of the Rotary Club of Canvey Island and his daughter Olivia Bass of the Rotary Satellite Club of Canvey Island gave a presentation about the establishment of the latter.

(VP Peter and I had heard most of this when we attended a Membership Growth Workshop last November but it was encouraging to learn that good progress is being made).

Keynote Speaker

RI Co-ordinator (Zone 18a) and last year's RIBI President Peter Davey fielded various questions from the floor. There are no longer any rules; what matters is what Rotary does, not how it does it. Meeting frequency and format

Not Quite Jam and Jerusalem but the Colour's Purple And Praise For Our Support



should be what suits individual clubs best.

The budget for the RIBI Presidency is being reduced by £10,000 in the next Rotary year.

Value of visits?

Do visits add value? The kind of visit will change. The RIBI Conference will be discontinued in its present format from July 1. An alternative national event will be held with a focus on external public relations (PR)/marketing within an agreed budget. He was impressed by the number of satellite clubs in our district and we should get the news out to encourage other districts. He commended Club Visioning. As regards Rotary Image, how do people see their local club? Clubs should be working together; there is one website for all the clubs in Brighton & Hove. In response to a question as to whether RIBI is relevant and has a future, Peter felt that it does but it needs to be reformed (simplified and streamlined). PDG Ian McMeekan proposed a vote of thanks for what had been an inspirational performance.

Reports of the District Service Committees are on the District and Club websites; there were a

few updates. In the absence of District Foundation Chairman Len Nieuwenhuis, PDG Ken Buck announced that Wilkin & Sons are donating 52,000 jars of Purple for Polio jam and these will be delivered to all the districts in RIBI.

Support Foundation

We were urged to arrange an event to mark the 100th Anniversary of Foundation. A bequest of £170,000 has been received from a past president of Brentwood Club. District International Chairman Andy Hunter encouraged us to attend a district international lunch at Chelmsford City racecourse on Sunday May 21. DG Terry will chair it, and there will be speakers from Sand Dams, Médecins Sans Frontières and Build Aid.

Other bullet points.

- PDG Bob Barclay, Vocational Services Chairman, reported that his club's "Rotary Remembers" initiative had raised £1,500 for the Royal British Legion.
- PDG Ian McMeekan reported that the District Quiz will be held on April 21 at Marconi Athletic and Social Club, and a Teddy Bears' Picnic will be held on Sunday June 4 in Colchester.
- Voting delegates approved the financial statements and the Charitable Trust Fund statements for the year ended June 30 2016, and the District budget for 2017/18
- A reduction in the district levy from £17 to £14 will help to mitigate an increase in RIBI subscriptions. DG Terry thanked Mayflower Club members led by PP Ifor Roberts (District Registration Officer) for hosting the meeting, and Web Manager, David Cope for all his technical work.

Next District Council Meeting at Writtle College on Wednesday, March 15.

By Ed Harrison

Billericay Club News



One For All and All For One

There has been the odd club Christmas Partners' Lunch that has not gone always to plan. Even this year organiser Keith Wood admitted: "It might have gone better."

Hard to see where, Keith. Our function room at Reids on December 12 was tastefully decked out, the food (by general consent) was excellent as was the service – something that had lapsed in the past – and the party was complete with the attendance

of nearly all their members and partners – and some special guests.

Among them was Marcus Bennett, Chairman of Billericay Round Table who was there at the special invitation of secretary Ed. In thanking the Club for inviting him, he echoed the recent message of our own President Mike in reflecting on the "one for all and all for one" relationship between the Billericay service clubs in supporting each other's major events. "We Tablers thank you for your great help on our Fireworks Night. Rest assured, we will be

there again to help you with your SoapBox Derby."

Roger Kettle held the Christmas £100 draw.

The winners were as follows:

£100: Steve Dodge

£75: Roger Kettle

£50: Tom Acors

£50: Keith Wood

£50: Win Allchorne

Despite his misgivings, our thanks to Keith for an organisation well done.

By Trevor Bond



Billericay Club News (continued)



Friendship Echoed In An Aria

We mentioned briefly in last month's Newsletter, the Rotary Club of Basildon's 56th Charter Night held on November 18 at Langdon Hills Golf and Country Club.

usual warm reception from our good friends.

President Kevin Howard welcomed us and gave a short address after an enjoyable three-course meal. President Mike, in humorous vein, proposed the toast to the host club and President Kevin proposed the Guests with

cally trained – and demonstrated her prowess with a superb aria performance, the highlight of the evening for me.

By Ed Harrison

Our Support For Polly Parrot Appeal

Treasurer Michael Ginn attended the meeting of the Rotary Club of Basildon Concord in support of the Polly Parrot Appeal for the Children of our area.

Concord president Alison Messham said: "We are delighted to welcome back Helen Mattock from Basildon Hospital who, with some of her colleagues, voluntarily give their time to raise funds, and to Michael Ginn of the Billericay Club who are similar supporters." Michael presented a cheque for £100 from our Club towards the



We were represented by President Mike, Michael and Sue Ginn, Roger and Sarah Kettle and Margaret and myself and were given the

a response by Sue Lovey from the Inner Wheel Club of Basildon. A collection in aid of Children in Need raised over £200.



appeal. President Alison presented a cheque for £266, raised from a club function, on behalf of Concord.

The Polly Parrot Appeal raises funds for the children's wards at Basildon Hospital including the neonatal intensive care unit and children's oncology. Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals Charitable Trust raised £164, 830 last year towards a fund-raising target of £250,000 which they hope to reach in 2017.

More than 28,500 children go into
(continued on next Page)



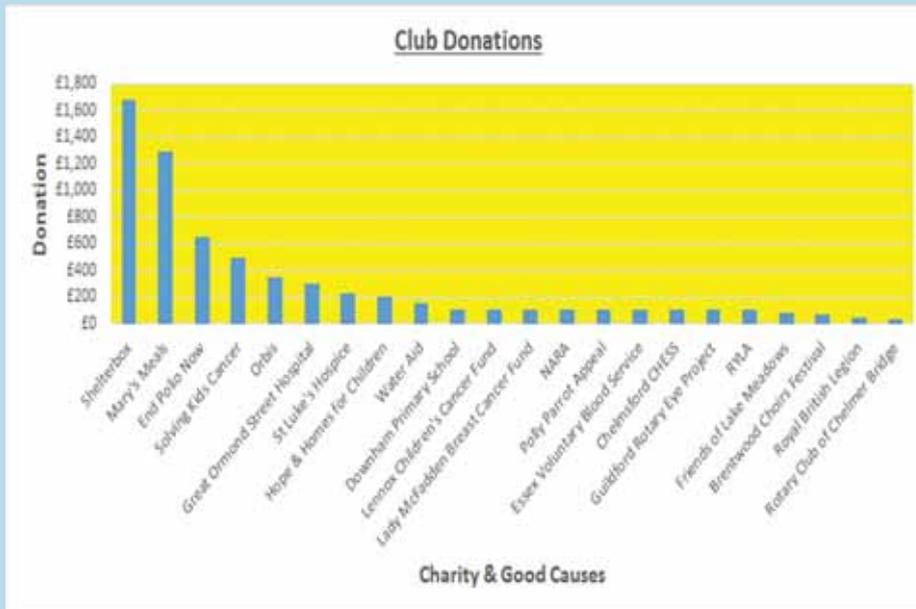
Entertainment during and after the meal was provided by Sarah (not Roger's Sarah!). She performed songs by Abba and Vera Lynn amongst others and told us she had been classi-

Billericay Club News (continued)

Basildon Hospital each year from Basildon, Thurrock, Brentwood and beyond with over 6,500 admissions into the children's wards annually and a further 2,000 emergency admissions and more than 20,000 outpatients. It serves as a receiving hospital from Great Ormond Street.

By Michael Ginn

Helping Charities and Good Causes



One of the principle aims of the club is to raise money for charity and good causes, and to distribute the money we raise as directly as we can.

The present Rotary Year 2016-2017 is no exception and the first six months from July 1 to December 31, 2016, saw us donate a total of £6,500 to charities from the Club's Benevolent Fund. Largest was a donation of £1,690 to ShelterBox, principally in response to the Hurricane Disaster Appeal for the Caribbean. This was followed by £1,300 to Mary's Meals, £650 to End Polio Now and £500 to Solving Kid's Cancer.

Others:

£350: Orbis as a result of our "Orbithon" blind walk along Billericay High Street;

£300: Great Ormond Street Hospital via Quilters RotaKids Club; £225: St Luke's Hospice; £200: Hope & Homes for Children; £150: Water Aid; £100: Downham Primary School; Lennox Children's Cancer Fund; Lady McFadden Breast Cancer Fund; NARA; Polly Parrot Appeal; Essex Voluntary Blood Service; Chelmsford CHES; Guildford

Rotary Eye Project; RYLA.

£80: Friends of Lake Meadows; £75: Brentwood Choirs Festival; £50: Royal British Legion; £30: Rotary Chelmer Bridge.

Special Fundraiser for 2016

Are these donations well received? Yes, they are - this letter was from Havens Hospices thanking us for our donations during last year.

As they say, "Please be proud of the money you have raised and donated over the last year, we are truly thankful and we know the families of Havens Hospice are too."

It is thanks like this which make the hard work of raising money all worthwhile!



Santa's on his way!

Club members recently helped the Billericay Lions collect money with its "Santa's Sleigh".



Members went out on three nights and the club received a certificate of thanks from the Lions whose total collection from the effort was £8164.89p.



End Polio Now

The Rotary Foundation recently awarded certificates to clubs around the world for major contributions to its "End Polio Now - Make History today" campaign. Our Rotary club received its certificate at the January District Council from DG Terry Dean.

Shanghaied - China Christmas & New Year

Zhuhai Midtown



Zhuhai Hotel Christmas



Macau Christmas



Macau New Year

Shanghai



Shanghaied - or How did we get here?

Christmas and New Year in China? No way, I said when one of the kids suggested it.

"But you'll be able to see Helen in her new home in Zhuhai in South China" was their reply.

"But the town where she lives isn't a tourist venue at all, and we've been to China for the tourist sights before, so it's not worth the cost of long haul flights" I replied.

"Just use your air miles instead", was the response.

"But we'll be there for Christmas and New Year and the Chinese don't celebrate either, especially only a few weeks before the Chinese New Year. So, it will mean missing out on the celebrations. And, it will be too difficult to take presents all that way!!" I said. Would this clinch the argument?

"Well, buy our air tickets and they can be our presents" they replied.

"Then we'll miss out on celebrating Christmas and New Year? You won't like that!" I tried.

"But Zhuhai is just across the border from Macau, and a ferry-ride from Hong Kong. So, we can go there for the celebrations", was the response. "Macau was recently Portuguese, so they do celebrate Christmas and New Year"

"Just make sure you get 'multi-entry' visas" said Helen.

"But it won't be the same as home" And so it went on until I thought the idea was dead.

So how did we end up going to China? I wish I knew!

But we did go - and so did all the family including the grand-kids. They would stay with Helen and we would get a hotel nearby.

The plans were made. Go to China before Christmas, day trip to Macau for Christmas Lunch in an Italian restaurant, back to Zhuhai

with side trips to Hong Kong for a week of sightseeing and resting. Then back to Macau for a couple of days for New Year.

The Best Laid Plans ...

We all booked our flights and applied for our visas. (You can't get a visa until you can prove you have confirmed flights there and back, and confirmed accommodation.)

But as they say "The best laid plans of mice and ...". The first problem, Jonathan's wife is Bolivian and China restricts Bolivians to only two visa entries per trip. They had confirmed flights to China in mid-December, first Hong Kong then to Beijing and Xian, then to Hong Kong, and then with us in Macau for Christmas etc. Etc. Too many entries! They had to change all their plans and flights to minimise the entries to China. They did it - we breathed a sigh of relief. But Matthew's wife is American and the Chinese restricted her to only one entry (*Why had Donald Trump phoned the President of Taiwan a week before!!*)



So again, lots of head scratching and changes of plans. In the end, flights first to Macau, stay there for Christmas dinner before entering China proper that evening. Then stay there - no possibility for a trip to Macau for New Year! And we couldn't change our arrangements because we had prepaid the hotel and restaurant in Macau. So on New Year's Eve, they stayed in Zhuhai, and Helen & Richard joined us in Macau, and the restaurant (a Steakhouse in The Wynn Palace) laid on a great meal

and celebration of the New Year. Helen and Richard went home in the early hours after some gambling in the Casino - well worth it, Wendy won HK\$1!

We had a day in Macau and then flew up to, you guessed it, Shanghai, for three days before heading home to the UK.

A Changed Country

So... what did we think? Despite the difficulties and forced change of plans, we all had a great time. Christmas and New Year are such opportunities for commerce that despite their western origins, they are beginning to be celebrated there. Finally, the contrast with the China from our previous visit 16 years ago, was enormous - gone were the hordes of bicycles,



the drab and uniform clothes. In their place, roads awash with cars and taxis (very cheap), stylish colourful clothes, and very modern cities. Very few people speak English although that's changing (every child is taught English from the age of five), but there's no trouble getting around as many signs are also in English.

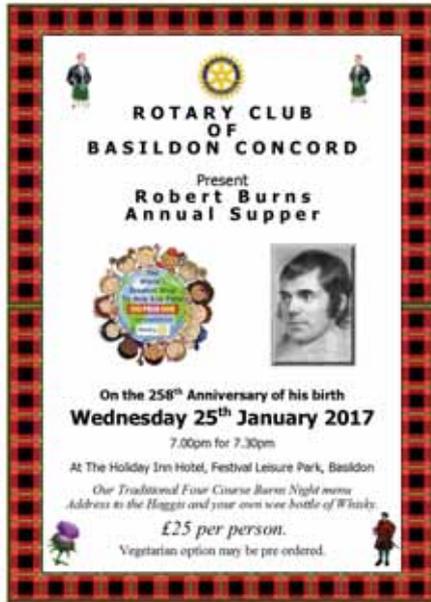
The people were universally very friendly and helpful and we always felt completely safe.

Last time we really needed a Chinese-speaking guide for the whole trip. This time we booked it all ourselves, using taxis to get around. I'd have no hesitation in doing the same again - guided tour just aren't necessary - you can do it all yourself.

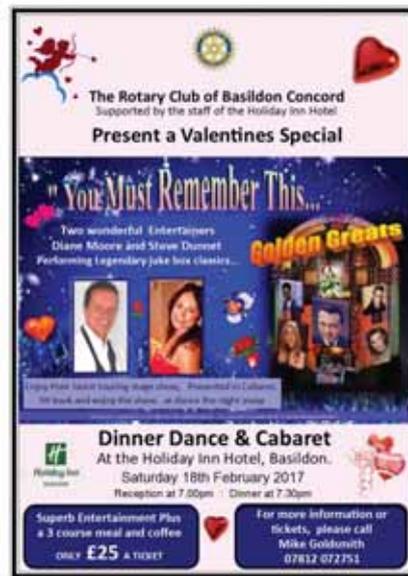
By Peter Greene

Other Club's News

Rotary Club of Basildon Concord - our friends there have kicked off the New Year with two fundraising events- a Burns Night Supper on the Jan 25, converting their usual Wednesday club night. They have converted their normal club evening into a special Burns Supper in support of "End Polo Now".

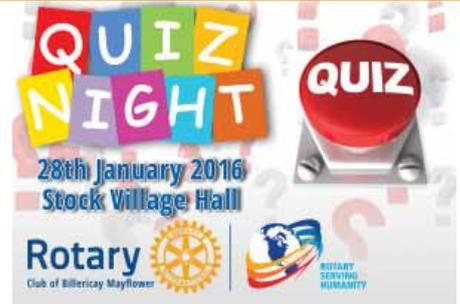


The second event is a Charity Valentines Celebration on Saturday February 18 with two of their favourite entertainers.



Rotary Club of Billericay Mayflower

Our friends at our daughter club held another successful quiz night at the regular venue of Stock Village Hall. The event was on January 28.



Rotary Club of Brentwood

The club holds regular monthly quizzes, and the next three are scheduled for 17 Feb, 24 March,



21 April 2017. The Quiz takes place at Courage Hall, Brentwood School, Middleton Hall Lane - 7.30 pm for an 8pm start. Contact via its website if you are interested.

Birthday Congratulations

We wish a Happy Birthday to Margaret Fowler whose birthday fell this month (24th. January), and to Founder Member Ben Clarke (February 1), Bert French (February 16), and Peter Greene (February 21).

Rotary Club of Billericay - Future Club Meetings and Events

Location - Reids Billericay



We meet on Mondays at 12.45 for 13.00

If there is a fifth Monday in the month, please

check the website for information.

Reids, 66-68 Laindon Road, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9LD Tel: +44 1277 632378

February 6

Danny Lawrence from Gateway978 our local community Radio Station

February 13

John Banks - Membership

February 13 (18.30-20.30) at Reids Gallery

Joint Services Meeting & Club Council

February 20

Business Meeting

February 27

Brendan Murnane Interact Club

- To be confirmed

March 6

Nick Sillitoe DGE - The Future of Rotary

March 13 (18.30-20.30) at Reids Gallery

Joint Services Meeting & Club Council

Other dates for your diary:

April 7-9

RIBI Conference at Manchester

May 1

Soapbox Derby!!

May 21

Billericay Fun Walk