

News, Notes & Notions



Rotary: Making a Difference

Despite a ground frost this morning, I do believe our long winter is finally behind us! The daffodils are out and the crocuses have come and gone. Crocuses: what a saga- best described as “signs, designs and re-designs”. With a bit of luck, we will see new signs at Riverside Drive and Stannergate soon. Our local authority has now dug up the crocus bed at Claypotts to undertake “environmental improvements”, so we have now seen the demise of the original badly-worded sign and our corms.

The new tax year started with us welcoming a group of Dundee University overseas students; with Mohammad Alobaidy telling us about his time studying in Dundee. Later that evening, I was in the company of Dai John when I was representing my firm at the official opening of the new Cadet Centre in Arbroath. It was an interesting evening in the company of lots of RAF ties and a variety of Army and Air Force uniforms. The following day was largely spent in the car, travelling to a string of sales meetings in and around Aberdeen. The one advantage of this was that I was able (for once) to get home in time for tea.

On 11 April, we had Club Council. As usual, we covered a lot of matters coming forward from the committees. We agreed to donate £300 towards travel costs for Claypotts Castle Primary pupils to visit Our Dynamic Earth and a further £100 for book token prizes for the next round of the Primary Schools’ Quiz. The day after, we heard from Jan Bell at lunch, who told us about the work of the Royal Voluntary Service, particularly their local project “Home From Hospital”. This is an initiative I am sure any of us might have need of in the future and to which we could lend our support.

I took a couple of days off work to coincide with my birthday in the middle of the month. My long weekend comprised cleaning the patio and garage; sanding our “banana” bench and generally catching up on overdue chores. I went back to work on the Wednesday to 370-odd emails and a staff resignation!

On 19 April, I had the pleasure of inducting three new members to the club. Welcome Doug, Eric and Frank to the Rotary Club of Dundee; I have no doubt you will each be a great asset to the club and I look forward to getting to know you better in due course. The inductions were swiftly followed by the AGM, which passed off reasonably smoothly, with the exception of me omitting one chair and giving another two jobs! I do apologise to JD and DJ for the slip. I hope I don’t have to do an “Amber Rudd” for inadvertently misleading the club. The same evening, President Nominee Mary and I attended the Dundee Presidents’ Meeting. As is usually the case, this was an interesting and convivial meeting, well attended by the other clubs. We discussed the demise of the Discovery Club, the crocus saga, as well as various joint club initiatives and forthcoming events.

On 23 April, I travelled to Inverness for a sales meeting. I drove to Pitlochry and took the train from there. This is the first time I had travelled to Inverness by rail and it allowed me to work for three hours, instead of being behind the wheel on the A9 for all of that time. I anticipated spectacular scenery, but the fact is, the railway line largely follows the same route as the road and it was a fairly dreich day in to the bargain. Evelyn and I celebrated our 31st anniversary the following day. We enjoyed left-over chilli con carne, whilst watching a film on Netflix. I then drove down to Dundee to pick up Fiona after her 4.00-10.00pm shift. Who said romance is dead?

I was delighted to present a cheque from the club to Heather at Brae Riding and to get my photograph taken

with Romany, Heather and the Rotary stable hands on duty that day, Alastair Scott and John Don. It was a brief, heart-warming visit; highlighting the best of what we do in our communities. An hour or so later, I was fascinated to listen to John Halliday's "take" on the Austro-Hungarian Empire of 100 years ago. Immediately after the meeting, a number of members took the opportunity to visit the new bedroom wing of the Invercarse. I am sure we will breathe a collective sigh of relief that the construction works are now substantially complete.

On Sunday past, a group of us attended District Assembly at the Caird Hall. I do appreciate the squad of volunteers who turned up sharp to assist with registration and stewarding. Given the mood of some delegates, keeping a cheery face was indeed, "Service Above Self". I often express reservations at some of our District events, but on this occasion, I did feel I got more than a numb posterior out of the day.

As I write this, I am looking forward to visiting Abertay Rotary Club to hear RIBI President Denis Skinner address the troops.

To be continued...

Brian Smith

President 2017-2018

Gavel Report

The Gavel season is now over and I breathe a sigh of relief! In truth, this had me worried from the outset because I realised I was well out of my comfort zone – only child – no kids – no games. Ah shame! Grab the hankies.

Nevertheless, I grasped the nettle resolutely and adopted as my mantra Brian Cram's comment that "it's only a game". And so it was, initially.

In the early stages we had an away match with Perth and enjoyed good fellowship - and won - and then a home match with Howe of Fife, again good fellowship - and won and a further away game with Elie – more good fellowship and won. Unfortunately, Aberfeldy had to concede courtesy of the Beast from the east, and suddenly we were in the semi-final against Stirling. At that point I had convinced myself that this was really going very well. It was no longer "only a game". We were in it to win it and we could. They say that pride comes before a fall. I think the correct expression for the away match with Stirling would be - "slaughter". We returned home somewhat

dejected and to be honest after the table tennis I think that some of my players were a bit puffed!

I girded my loins to make the report on the following Thursday but life just continued to throw bad luck at me. Visualise the scene. Thursday 19th April 2018, there I was all primed to make an announcement that despite the best efforts of my worthy Gavel team we had been defeated by the Stirling Club at Bridge of Allan in the semi-final. Imagine my disappointment when President Brian himself stole my thunder and made the announcement instead. That announcement, having been delivered in the coldest and most brutal of terms – 'they lost'!

I had intended to ask for use of the microphone to thus better convey the emotion in my voice and to report our sad loss. The Stirling Club had a secret weapon – table tennis (doubles) and even my secret weapon – Michelle Lyall, was not enough to save us.

However, every cloud has a silver lining because the opposing team in the final would be Inverness Loch Ness with the match probably being played at Pitlochry. As we discussed in the car returning home the A9 is the most dangerous road in Scotland, being ever mindful of retention of membership during President Brian's Presidential year, it was perhaps a blessing that we were not being obliged to endanger the lives of nine Rotarians to travel to and from Pitlochry.

Our last chance was in the Challenge match with Inner Wheel on 24th April at Cambustay. Once again, the players did not let me down and we had a delightful evening. Part of the merriment was that I made a complete idiot of myself and managed to get the teams mixed up. No-one seemed to mind, and in fact it added to the conviviality (that's my excuse).

All that remains is for me to give very heartfelt thanks to all those Rotarians who took part, put up with me as Chair (Boss) and to wish Clive, as my successor in office, the very best of luck for next year. PS – I will take great care of the Inner Wheel Trophy until next spring!

Editor's postscript

The catering for the Gavel Challenge in the Cambustay was superb. I don't know how the ladies expected us to eat all the chicken bites, sandwiches and sausage rolls – a superb spread and something to live up to for next year's competition when our club members are the hosts.

Bowling Section

The fixture lists have been sent out and all that needs to be done now is to contact Alex Scott and let him know your availability. For those of you who have received the lists and not yet replied can I ask on Alex's behalf for a speedy, positive response?

Our contact with the members of the Dundee and surrounding neighbourhood bowling clubs is an important part of the social life of our club. It is always encouraging to hear the Presidents of the various clubs thanking Rotary for all the funds we raise to help local, national and international charities and the good humoured atmosphere that pervades every evening match is testament to the fun that everyone enjoys.

The Bowling Section always needs additional bowlers and this is a plea for club members to consider coming along and taking part. It is a very simple game and it is not difficult to play. All you need are a pair of flat soled shoes. Bowls can easily be provided by the regulars. It is really easy to send a bowl across the green towards the jack (small white ball). No one, apart from you, is worried how close you get to the jack because if you are short it can help by providing a guard, and if you are long you can help to provide cover should the jack be knocked back. Heads you win, tails you don't lose.

It is the only game where you will get more help and encouragement from your opponent and there are not many games where you can take timeout to go into the clubhouse and have a bit of a training session with advice and a wee refreshment with your opposite number.

There are 4 in a team and the only person who really makes much of a difference to the result is the skip who is able to turn possible losses into wins, with only the very occasional error where a winning position is converted into a losing one. Those of you who followed the Commonwealth bowling competition will know that Alex "Tattie" Marshall became Scotland's most celebrated Commonwealth Gold Medallist by winning his 5th Gold Medal at the games this year in Australia. The Scottish bowling team had support from Sports Psychologist Simon Petrie, middle son of former President of our club Murray Petrie, not a lotta people know that!

If you would like to take part please contact Alex Scott who will be delighted!

The games this month are Wed 2nd May Hillcrest BC, Tues 8th May Ex Pres at Balgay BC, Tues 22nd May Dudhope BC.

Thought for Today

Oh to have a lodge in some vast wilderness. Where rumours of oppression and deceit, of unsuccessful and successful wars may never reach me anymore.
-William Cowper, poet (1731-1800)

Couple more Thoughts

Abduct Yonder Lure
Overreach Tinsel
Rat Prod He
DD2 1PG

Patience of a Grandpa

A woman in a supermarket is following a grandfather and his badly behaved 3-year-old grandson. It's obvious to her that he has his hands full with the child screaming for sweets in the sweetie aisle, biscuits in the biscuit aisle and for fruit, cereal and lemonade in the other aisles.

Meanwhile, Grandpa is working his way around, saying in a controlled voice, *"Easy William, we won't be long. . . easy, boy."*

Another outburst and she hears the Grandpa calmly say: *"It's okay, William, just a couple more minutes and we'll be out of here. Hang in there, boy."*

At the checkout, the little terror is throwing items out of the trolley and Grandpa says again in a controlled voice, *"William, William, relax, don't get upset. We'll be home in five minutes, stay cool, William."*

Very impressed, the woman goes outside where the grandfather is loading his groceries and the boy into the car. She says to the elderly man, *"It's none of my business, but you were amazing in there. I don't know how you did it. That whole time you kept your composure, and no matter how loud and disruptive he got, you just calmly kept saying 'things would be okay.' William is very lucky to have you as his grandpa."*

"Thanks," said the grandpa, *"but I'm William. This little horror's name is Kevin."*

SPEAKERS

DATE	SPEAKER	TOPIC	HOST
3rd May	PP Scott Henderson	Down Memory Lane – Rotary Club	PP Charlie Scott
10th May	Paul Mooney	Vocational Talk	Brett Davidge
17th May	Kevin Simpson	Malawi Fruits	PP Bill McFarlane Smith
24th May	Endeavour Awards		John Don
31st May	Gary Macalister	Rotary Health check	PDG Gus McDonald
7th June	Family/Youth Day		Tim Baker

NB: It is responsibility of the Host to find a replacement if he/she is unavailable. Any such changes should be reported to the Programme Convenor no later than 8 days prior to the hosting date.

THE NUMBERS GAME

April 2018

MEMBERSHIP	Nos	AVERAGE ATTENDANCES	%
Active	74	5th April	48
Non Computing	12	12th April	49
Honorary Member	2	19th April	56
TOTAL	88	26th April	55
		Average	52%

MAY MEETINGS

Membership	TBA	International	TBA
Club Council	Wed 9th May	Youth	Wed 23rd May
MPRC	Mon 14th May	Ways & Means	Mon 28th May
Vocational	TBA	Community	Thurs 31st May