

## Christmas and December DG Musings 2020

Linda and I would like to wish you all a very relaxing Christmas and New Year.

I hope we can look forward to a more positive New Year.

This has been a most unusual Governor's journey since July. Only five face to face visits to socially distanced events with every other activity through Zoom and similar meeting tools. It's not the same as meeting you all face to face and getting to know you better. Zoom has been the glue that has kept us all together.

It's been very gratifying to hear of all the work that clubs have engaged in, working with voluntary and community groups both old and new, devising new ways of raising money and supporting both local and national causes

My most memorable occasion was quite simple but one that showed how we in Rotary work together to help others. It was when Linda and I gave the Acorns Children's Hospice a Pudsey Bear as a gift from the District. Neil Albinson our Children in Need Ambassador gave me two bears to donate. I put an appeal round the district and had over 20 replies. The first two clinched it and I was guided by Worcester RC to Acorns in Worcester. The hospice nurse in charge we met was overwhelmed by this simple gift. Pudsey was going to a good home bringing some positivity and showing how we as an organisation are able to support local causes even in adversity.

Since then, while on my club visits, I've heard of many clubs supporting places like Acorns through local fundraisers whether it's through making masks, foregoing meal money, walks and runs (virtual and real), virtual meals and many more.

This shows what we are doing to promote Rotary and widen our reach. Certainly, this year's theme Rotary Opens Opportunity could not be more apt. We have had to be revolutionaries and disrupters and we have six months more to show how Rotarians are adapting to the new order post COVID.

I look forward to the rest of the journey this year and wish you all a successful and peaceful 2021 ahead.

Chris Firth

Governor D1100 2020-21  
Rotary Club of Royal Wootton Bassett and District  
23 December 2020

PS I had an email this morning asking me if I wished to be a Steward Volunteer to assist in Vaccination. There will be a desperate need for volunteers in the New Year. This is the weblink: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer/volunteering-coronavirus>

## December 2020

Before writing this Musings, I asked clubs to send me updates of what they have achieved since July.

This is what I received. A lot of creativity and ingenuity, clubs looking outwards and working in collaboration are the key messages I'm picking up. Clubs doing good in adversity. It's worth a read.

### *1 Cheltenham North: President Richard Purdon*

Good things about 20/21 to date.

Used Zoom well. Good quality of speakers and visited other clubs to support by boosting numbers.

Had a series of great Auctions. Asked members and their contacts to raid the attics and send off the goods to Auction houses.

So far raised £5000 for our School in the Bag Project.

Major push on collecting money for a much-needed vehicle for taking wheelchair bound people to hospital appointments mainly. £15000 required - £10k so far- without any face-to-face fund-raising events. Big Community Service benefit for the Cheltenham/ Gloucester Community.

Raised a third of the 100 trees towards the 100-year celebration of Rotary in Cheltenham.  
Other initiatives in the pipeline for the above. Second running of the mile of coins in consideration.

Supplying PPE for drivers, working in the charity we are supporting the vehicle.

Major club effort for Xmas hampers within the foodbank regime.

And of course, major investment in firing up Rotary@Cheltenham in the future.

## *2 Evesham: President Trevor Battersby*

You will be aware that the Tree of Light in Evesham is a major fundraiser for our club and the charities we support. This year has been a challenge; normally the admin work is undertaken by a team working together in an office, which a local charity kindly allow us to use, this year the work has been more widely distributed amongst our members working from their homes.

This year we arranged for a video to be produced - this can be viewed on our website or on Facebook - over 7,000 people have viewed this event. Also, adhering strictly to the lockdown guidelines, we were able to erect the lights on the tree. This is now shining brightly in the town to acknowledge the loved ones remembered and the donations received. We are particularly pleased that the generous people of the area have enabled us to exceed our previous years' total. Over £16,000 has been received plus gift aid still to come and over 1,800 loved ones remembered.

During the lockdown members of the club helped the charities associated with the club in applying for grant funding. We are pleased to have helped charities raise in excess of £35,000.

Our final Zoom meeting of 2020 was our own version of the '12 days of Christmas' celebration.

We are very close to our target of £1000 to send to President Hagop to buy extra tablets to support the education of their underprivileged children

## *3 Worcester: President Pat Stone*

Richard walking 97 miles to raise £7000+ which we have distributed to approximately 10 local charities to help them weather the pandemic.

Having a virtual quiz raising funds for our children's charities and having a great evening into the bargain!

Enjoying Zoom speaker meetings, it works and it's fun!

Raising £3500 for Beirut by having 'socially distanced' lunches for six at a time.

Enjoying a drink together at our virtual pub The Lockdown Lounge.

Keeping all our members updated and connected with our weekly newsletter The Lockdown Times.

Raising funds and clearing out cupboards by buying/selling through our virtual shop The Lockdown Emporium.

#### **4 Stonehouse: President Jan Lawry**

The Club adapted well to Zoom meetings with good attendance and a wide range of engaging speakers

Richard Apperley (President Elect) requested to be deferred for one year due to COVID. Jan Lawry continued into second year.

Community Awards to local schools very well received.

Associate Membership explored by Club with one new member in the pipeline.

Carol Float more popular than ever! Using QR code for the first time for donations.

#### **5 Swindon Phoenix: President Darren Crannis**

##### *Santa versus Rudolph Fun Run*

The Rotary Club of Swindon Phoenix have again joined forces with Brighter Futures to bring you their Santa versus Rudolph Fun Run this December, raising funds for Brighter Futures and the Wiltshire Air Ambulance. So far we have had over 500 people sign up to run/jog/walk 3k,5k,10 and after all costs so far we have raised £6,500.

##### *Christmas Hampers*

This year the members and honorary members of the Rotary Club of Swindon Phoenix have made luxury Christmas Hampers for The Christ Church in Swindon, 50 Shades of Grey and local worthy elderly citizens of Swindon.

##### *Swindon Women's Aid - Family Christmas Funday*

The Rotary Club of Swindon Phoenix came to the Swindon Women's Aid rescue supplying their Sleigh for a family function SWA hosted for their residents.

Members have also been able to assist SWA with their contacts for Security and Catering to help make the event a successful one.

#### **6 Fishponds and Downend; President Jan Palmer**

Whilst our fund-raising activities have been curtailed, we meet up via Zoom almost every week and all our Members have attended at least a few Zoom meetings, which is excellent considering we have a Member in his 90s.

We planted our 4000 crocus bulbs despite social distancing and look forward to seeing them bloom in early spring.

By embracing the virtual world, we have also shared and joined many Area 2 Club's Speaker Meetings.

F&DRC have held 2 virtual fund-raising wine tasting events this year, supported by fellow Rotarians from Area 2 Clubs. Monies raised went to Foundation and End Polio Now.

We have also held Club quizzes and an auction on Zoom and from our fund-raising events have also supported local charities.

My aim for this Rotary year (because of COVID-19) is to keep all my members and when we can, organise a jolly good face to face party to celebrate our united aims, fellowship & liberty!

## **7 *Cotswold Tyndale: President Linda Heath***

The highlights of our year have been weekly meetings on Zoom to keep the club spirits high.

We sold our household junk at three car boot sales in September and October raising a good sum.

We have also done tremendously well as club by making and selling Christmas face masks.  
So good that we have sent double our initial promise donation to Stroud Women's Refuge.

We have also collected and sent over 800 shoeboxes for Eastern Europe.

We ran Rotary Youth Debates at Katherine Lady Berkeley's School -albeit with a skeleton crew and received and judged entries for Young Writer and Young Photographer.

The morale within the club is good and we have gained two new members.

All is well at Cotswold Tyndale. We are just waiting to function as normal after vaccination!!

## **8 *Chipping Sodbury: President Stuart Fraser***

To mark World Polio Day, Chipping Sodbury Town Hall was lit up in purple for a week accompanied by a series of informative posters related to the efforts of Rotary worldwide to support the eradication of wild polio.

Despite not being able to manage any fundraising this year the club has made financial donations and grants to 15 local community organisations as well as a direct financial donation to the Beirut Cedars Rotary Club.

Via Zoom we have managed to sustain respectable communications amongst club members with nearly all of our 40 members routinely now joining the club monthly business and speaker meetings.

Our longest serving club member (54 years), Tony Baldwin-Charles, celebrated his 90th birthday on 17 December.

We have just agreed to establish a club led Community Group with tree planting as the first project, the primary aim of which is to try to attract new members whilst raising our profile in the local community.

## **9 *Nailsea and Backwell: President Ken Rock***

2020 has seen a dramatic change in the routine of Rotary Nailsea & Backwell. Gone are weekly dinner meetings, the bucket collections and many other events and activities replaced with a range of quizzes, entertainment and talks, including some excellent external speakers.

The annual Charity Walks and Runs was held as a virtual event in October with participants being encouraged to do the 5, 10 or 20 k routes anytime in the month. It is anticipated that over £20,000 will be raised for a wide range of charities with many charities using this as their main fund raiser.

Virtual Young Photographer of the Year attracted nearly 200 entries from Nailsea & Backwell Schools. portfolios from 2 students from each school will now be entered in the Rotary District Competition.

Members did manage a few Covid compliant games of bowls, boules and golf.

Food donations from Nailsea Waitrose to the Foodbank warehouse has continued.

Funds supported a local Christmas lunch, to provide toys for disadvantaged youngsters, to support a Rotary Cedars Beirut running a meals service in Beirut, to provide loans for entrepreneurs in the developing world and many other worthy causes.

Members are currently working on projects with local schools, scouts and the Community Group.

### *10 West of England e-club: President David Morse*

The e Club set up during the first lockdown a Zoom tearoom so people could meet and chat, and help feel connected, and had the added benefit of helping Rotarians with Zoom.

We also held our 3rd balloon race and despite the problems and delays still raised over £500 for Roll out the Barrel.

## ***9 Bristol Breakfast: President John Whittaker***

Bristol Breakfast has continued its weekly meetings on Zoom with attendances averaging 35 or more including a regular appearance from our friends at Prague International RC.

Members are continuing to donate moneys that would otherwise be spent on attending our meetings into our charity account.

We have held two successful fundraising events: our annual Golf Day and a sponsored bike ride, the 57-mile Great Weston Ride. We've been keen to spend that money and have donated to local organisations including food banks, Youth Moves and the Bridge Learning Campus.

We've also donated to the Beirut disaster through the Disaster Aid project run by Prague International.

We have a Virtual Black Tie Charity Fundraising Dinner coming up in January., with over 100 guests currently signed up to attend.

There's been a few walks and virtual quizzes and other fun events. We've learnt a lot through going virtual and hope to build on the positives when we get back to 'normal'. But we're in good spirits and raring to attack 2021 with vigour.

## ***10 Leominster: President Angel Lloyd***

Apple picking was a huge event this year: picking fruit in gardens and local apple orchards, and the bottling and pressing. There are two barns full of bottles. It has been an exceptional harvest and our focus now is to sell, sell, sell.

Despite the challenges, we have adapted well to a new way of communicating. Zoom meetings have seen our problem-solving skills in full flow. We have focused our support for local charities and organisations, with the Leominster Food Bank being somewhat of an epicentre.

## ***11 Portishead: President Paul Darling***

We have supported the production of activity packs for Trinity Primary School and were able to donate £345 to the school's special needs charity account.

Several members of the Club donated books and games to Crockerne Pill Primary School to help children who have few resources at home.

£515 was donated to Jessie May Children's Charity as a result of face mask production.

Trinity School received a Presidential Citation for the work of their Rotakids group in July.

We contributed £542 to the Beirut appeal.

£955 donated to St. Peter's Hospice and £1000 donated to TEMWA charity

In 2020 we celebrated 5 years of our Foodbank continuing partnership with Sainsbury's.

We undertook planting Crocus bulbs in Portishead Lake Grounds (with Gordano Breakfast Club). The bulbs are arranged to read "End Polio Now".

We have, for many years now run a Memory Café. The face-to-face meeting has been put on hold, but we set up a telephone conferencing keeping people in touch twice a month.

## ***12 Newent: President Bruce Fowler***

Children in Need was celebrated in a distanced manner and raised over £4500 for the Appeal.

Normality of a sort has resumed with our Santa collection, we have five nights within our district in total, The first two have raised over £800.

We attached four buckets to the corner of Santa's sleigh, everyone wanted to give in appreciation of seeing Santa.

As a little treat Santa gave the children a sweetie which was dispatched through a piece of pipe into the child's hand, the novelty of this was gratefully received.

## ***13 Kingswood: President Tina Potter***

### **Amar Jyoti Basic School, Nepal**

The major enterprise for our club this year and last has been to work with the Rotary Club of Pokhara Mid town and the Pahar Trust Nepal to rebuild Amar Jyoti Basic School in a hill village outside Pokhara. Nine club members and partners were able to attend the opening of the school in February just before the pandemic was announced and the world came to a standstill.

### **Tiffin Fund - midday meals**

The finalisation of the work continued into this Rotary year. The club wants to carry on supporting the school through the Tiffin Fund by providing midday meals for the school children. This not only nourishes and also gives an incentive for parents to send their children to school.

### **Early Childhood Development Nepal**

Kingswood Rotary Club will continue its interest in Nepal, working with the Pahar Trust Nepal (PTN), by funding Early Childhood Development provision - rooms and equipment - in six or maybe more schools. We are able to do this through the legacy of Roy Stone MBE whose wish it was to support education and children in developing countries.

### **With Danetre Rotary Club, Daventry**

We are also supporting Danetre Rotary Club, Daventry, in its project to provide a solar-powered water supply to a hill community in Nepal.

### **Tools For Self Reliance**

Recently we donated to Tools for Self-Reliance to enable a person to develop their skills in running a small business.

This is similar to our ongoing financial commitment to Lend-With-Care, the charity which supports folk in developing countries in starting and growing their business and thus becoming more able to support their family and the community.

## ***14 Cirencester: President Mark Wilton***

We are maintaining our Zoom meetings with a variety of speakers, the latest a local interest item including the transportation of convicts to Australia! We have had several clubs join us for our meetings including Derby and Darlington and have "visited" them as well, taking part in a Zoom Murder Mystery in one case.

We have managed two fundraising events, the first the actual walking of the Thames Path to the Thames barrier when just out of lockdown by a Rotarian and his wife, and the second a walk from Lands End to John 'O Groats by all members of the club logging their daily walks and accumulating them together. We actually managed the distance 3 times over! The amount raised by sponsorship was around £5,000.

We are now working on an exciting virtual charity auction, to take place by Zoom on 12th March 2021 using Moore Allen and Innocent Auctioneers, and have lots to the value of £5.5k so far. We have linked to the District website: all are invited to join in. The monies raised go to our two chosen local charities for the year, one for the homeless, The Big Yellow Bus, and the other, Cotswold Counselling.

We have added 4 members to our club since lockdown plus one Corporate Honorary member to be inducted in the New Year. Overall club morale is good though We are looking to put together a plan for the future for discussion by early February.

We are currently holding fellowship outdoor walks with a maximum of 6 people to keep in touch with members. Attendance at the club meetings has averaged about 28, with a total membership of 38, Our R2 club now with 5 members meets once a month.

We are planning Zoom meetings through to June next year with several speakers booked and would be happy to share speaker details with other clubs. One idea for next year is to take up twinning again particularly with a European Club after Brexit.

### ***15 Royal Wootton Bassett and Town: President Colin Sweet***

Since July the club has been busy adapting to this virtual world.

This year we have held regular speaker meetings (and gave donations) on a variety of themes including: Youth Adventure Trust, British Polio Foundation, British Wheelchair Trust, Mercy Ships, Kids Out New Toys.

The club gave a Beirut disaster donation of £900.

The annual RWBT Calendar was launched in October with all profits going to NHS Charities.

£2500 was raised for Prostate Cancer UK from the Annual Golf Day.

End Polio Now and The Rotary Foundation was given £3164.

We handed out gifts donated by Local Businesses to 200 care home Staff locally.

Santa Sleigh and Santa at Home are the final activities this year.

### ***16 Yate and District: President Richard Gilpin***

All our usual events were cancelled because of Covid-19.

As a way of compensating we set up a Yate Tree of Light in conjunction with the local shopping centre.

Our latest promotional video. [https://youtu.be/\\_lf8WsNxhmw](https://youtu.be/_lf8WsNxhmw)

Many thought this would not get off the ground, but Vice President Marian Gilpin pushed the whole concept forward, found the supporters who provided sufficient funds to cover the start-up cost. So far, we now have over 100 people/events being celebrated.

## ***17 Nailsworth and District: President Colleen Rothwell***

Nailsworth has been busy adapting our activities to COVID since July.

A major project is our continuing commitment to Stroud Foodbank delivering food parcels including a children's book, supplied by the Yellow-Lighted Bookshop. Many members had diverted their meal account money to Marah and the Stroud Food Bank, and volunteered to make deliveries.

The partnership between the Older Drivers' Forum with Nailsworth Rotary Club goes from strength to strength with a grant from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner [OPCC] of £10,000 and a series of workshops as well as an interview on BBC Points West. This is now gaining momentum throughout the District.

Troughs in Nailsworth were planted with 1 spring and summer flowers and the club assisted in the planting of crocuses for the World Polio Day and celebrating a Polio Free Africa

The club continues to distribute the boxes of greengrocery and eggs and farm produce locally.

The club has made a link with the Beirut Cedars Rotary Club and organised an automated donation channel to help in supporting meals and food parcels.

Youth Competitions continue locally.

The Witchy Walk on 31<sup>st</sup> October for local children raised the club's profile and more importantly gave children a lot of fun: other local clubs supported as part of local fellowshi

The club has had good reports in Nailsworth News throughout this period.

## ***18 Swindon: President Debbie Vincent***

We have had highs and lows, losing much loved members, members having chemo and other pressures added on us all by Covid.

We have given our lunch monies, we have started a Hundred Club, raised money for End Polio Now, given crocuses to Swindon Old Association, Town Gardens and Christ Church so hopefully we will see these bloom.

Michelle Leighton ran Race for Life for the A& E department at Great Western Hospital raising over £1,100.00.

We have collected Toys, for the Swindon Refuge with Royal Wootton Bassett and District RC. The club has filled Backpacks for Social Services to give out to children between 5 -16 years of age.

The Online Auction, it was very hard work as we did it in a short time raised an amazing £11,400.00 for seven local charities and Rotary Charities This brought the club and outside people together and promoted the club widely.

We have had fabulous speakers throughout the six months, with many more booked in the New Year.

In December the club enjoyed a social event and rounded off the year by making a donation to Dressability, supporting Swindon Women's Aid and delivering hampers to people in need in conjunction with Christchurch Parish.

### ***19 Pershore: President Peter Gardner***

Our 2020 Tree of Remembrance Appeal on behalf of Acorns Children's Hospice and PRoGS is different, in that we have broadening our coverage and introducing new ideas to appeal to a wider and younger audience.

Pershore was one of the clubs (Evesham, Chipping Campden and Evesham Inner Wheel) that held a moving Remembrance Day commemoration on 11 November)

The target of £7000 for the Lelep School project in Nepal has been reached and is being sent to the Himalayan Trust UK with construction beginning as soon as COVID is controlled with a target end date by end of April 2021.

Locally the Youth Section of Pershore Town Football Club has been supported to enable the club to survive COVID, and a donation to Read Easy a local reading project made in December.

The club will continue to support the Pershore in Bloom project in 2021

The Pershore Business Club continues to build its presence in Pershore. Its current main project is a virtual 'Walk of a Lifetime' from Land's End to John O'Groats to support and renovate facilities at the Wick Care Farm. Rotary clubs along the way have been visited in order to promote the walk, including Penrith and Edinburgh/