



### From the Presidents. Ponderings!!!

At our first Friday meeting in February our speakers were Sue and Tony Melia who gave an illustrated talk of their work in Malawi at the Bwengu Project this was an educational project which they funded and ran themselves a most impressive talk hosted by Rotarian Bernard Goodchild.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup>. February Our speaker was Chris Beales who spoke on Afghan Action an organisation that promoted the making of traditional Afghan rugs to help the local economy, he was hosted by Rotarian Rev. Janet Chapman.

On Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February many Rotarians and associates gathered at the funeral of Past President John Smith a fine Rotarian who will be greatly missed for his knowledge and experience in Rotary.

The National Herb Centre was the subject at our meeting on Friday 16<sup>th</sup>. February the speaker was Christine Vic , she was hosted by Rotarian Fred Riches.

It was a pleasure to welcome Past President Reg Charles at our meeting on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>. February our speaker was Sue Moss who gave an interesting talk about the benefits gained by the pupils at Blessed George Napier School because of our involvement in their Mock Interviews. She was hosted by Rotarian John Meeres. This was the day of our frugal lunch with the proceeds going to Foundation. This was also the Presidents Night celebration at the Oxford and Cherwell College it was well attended with over 100 at the event. There were the Presidents of Brackley, Chipping Norton and Banbury Cherwell together with District Governor Jean Charmak attending.

1000 years of Oxfordshire was the subject of our speaker on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. March. Catherine Nitingale spoke of her roll as co-ordinator of the various events happening around the county. Her Host was Rotarian Michael Banks.

During this meeting it was agreed to give £500 to the Beacon Centre, £300 to Dashwood School for musical instruments and £500 to the Bwengu Project in Malawi.

It was also my great pleasure to present a Paul Harris award to Rotarian Gareth Jeremy, he has organised our Young Musician competition for **16 Years** and was instrumental in starting it, he has also helped many charities in the Banbury area particularly with the Banbury Operatic Society.



The Young Musician of the Year competition is one of the highlights of our Rotary year and this was no exception, it was held on Saturday at Sibford School. It was attended by many parents and friends who enjoyed a great standard of performance from those taking part.



President Elect Martin Phillips had the pleasure of hosting our speaker on the 9<sup>th</sup>. March. He was Ex England and Northants's cricketer Paul Taylor he is currently playing for Banbury. His subject was "A Chance to Shine" a project to promote young people to play cricket, it's aim to improve our cricket prospects in the future and to give young people a focus in life.

We continue to have some excellent speakers and the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>. March was no exception. The speaker was Miriam Mason who spoke of her roll with Educ-Aid in Sierra Leone, an educational charity trying to improve the teaching and facilities in Sierra Leone, she had met Alan Wolstencroft when he was working there for Mercy Ships and he was very impressed with the work being carried out by the charity.

At our council meeting we approved a new style letter head for our club there are two versions, one for club use and one for the Trust Fund with the necessary Charity registration number. Please contact our secretary Roger for the new format as required.

At council it was also proposed that we donate the following items. To the Cheshire Home, £2,985 for fitting out a bedroom in the new complex. On "Kids Out" day we would donate £900 to take up to 80 Young Carers to Drayton Manor Park, £400 of this is recoverable from R.I.B.I. Our donation of £3,000 raised for Foundation would also be forwarded. These items are to be put to the Club for approval. A sum of £100 was also to be given to Polly Preedy to assist in her work of feeding the homeless in Banbury.

The club meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup>. March was a business meeting at which the four main committee chairmen gave short reports, Bob Thompson for International, Alan Wolstencroft for Community and Vocational, Philip Cavill for Youth Opportunities and Jonathan Meredith for Foundation. We also had as guests two people from the Home Farm Trust, Sandra Grant and David Lewis who received a cheque for £500 toward's their work in Banbury.

By the time you read this, I will have attended the District Conference in Eastbourne together with several of our members and wives. Second Vice President Richard Watts was left in charge as the First Vice President Martin Phillips was sunning himself in the Caribbean.

**David Hitchcox**

## **ROTARY ESTABLISH A POLICY ON GLOBAL WARMING**

The challenge facing the world through global warming has recently been summarized in a UN report. This report was discussed by Rotary International leaders in Great Britain and Ireland this week and it was agreed that Rotarians should take a lead on this important issue.

President Peter Offer said "We can no longer afford to view global warming as a political issue - rather, it is the biggest moral challenge facing our global civilization. As the leading international humanitarian organisation it is essential that we implement a policy to address the challenge."

In Great Britain and Ireland members are being encouraged to:

Examine all ways of saving energy at home and in the office, including:

- using energy saving light bulbs; upgrading building insulation; installing solar panels; switching off lights and appliances when not needed
- buying cars and other vehicles with increased miles per gallon and reduced CO2 emissions.
- Reducing meetings and increasing the use of technology to reduce travelling and stationery consumption

Showing leadership in the local community by:

- Raising awareness in the community through meetings and leaflets
- Initiating relevant community projects
- Providing educational programmes to schools, local community groups and the elderly
- Purchasing energy saving light bulbs for the elderly
- Planting trees to absorb CO2

- Encouraging local self sufficiency and recycling

Showing leadership internationally by:

- Initiating relevant international projects
- Ensuring environmental issues are considered in all projects
- Assisting with funds for solar panels, mini wind farms, mini hydro plants
- Encouraging and assisting with reforestation in critical areas

Rotary Clubs will be encouraged to submit entries for the RIBI Environment Award which encourages clubs to promote and recognise environmental awareness projects within their communities.

The objective of this award is to promote the improvement and protection of the environment locally and to develop awareness of environmental issues throughout the world.

It is hoped that every Club will appoint an Environment Officer and develop local competitions involving schools, local community groups, business and agriculture. The Environmental Awards are presented annually in 2 categories, Club Projects and School Projects.

The winner in each category will receive a small bursary award to be spent on an environmental project. This year's winners will be announced at the Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland annual conference being held in Bournemouth on April 13-15<sup>th</sup>

**Joyce and Fred Timms** wish to give their sincere thanks for all the prayers, telephone calls, cards and letters they have received during the last three months enquiring about Fred's health.

Thankfully, Fred says "I am now on the road to recovery, slowly but surely."

Fred, as I am sure you know, we are all looking forward to seeing you back on Friday lunchtimes as soon as you are well enough!

Speaker Report for Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2007

## Bwengu Projects, Malawi - Sue & Tony Melia



Sue and Tony Melia are an active, retired couple from Rugby who decided some 18 months ago that they would like to contribute to some form of community service project overseas.

They were invited to Thailand to enable Sue, a former schoolteacher, to assist in teaching English Language in local schools but for a variety of reasons this arrangement did not progress and they soon returned to their home in the UK.

As a result of further research they discovered that major educational/social problems were being experienced in Malawi an extremely poor country in Africa. Schools and community centres have not been maintained for many years and are falling into ruin and resources such as chairs; desks and books are in extremely short supply.

The couple decided to travel to Malawi at their own expense to see if they could 'make a difference' for the local population there.

Throughout the period April to August 2006 they stayed in a local house in the village of Bwengu and actively completed a variety of community projects by their own hard labours and by enlisting the support of locals. Personal, modest savings and contributions from friends and family financed their work

Sue and Tony provided a very detailed but powerful PowerPoint presentation to show the local schools and social conditions before, during and on completion of their work. Projects successfully completed during their short stay were as follows:

- Rebuilding /renovation of St Dominic's School and the provision of all services, windows, offices, desks and books.

- Renovation of Bwengu Full Primary School (659 pupils) as above.
- Establishment of a Bwengu Orphan Care Centre that in its first weeks of existence in June/July 2006 provided 2587 hot meals for young starving orphans.
- Creation of Takandra (Happiness) Women's Group for young mothers
- Building of the Bwengu Community Centre
- Establishment of Bwengu Community Sports Teams – fully kitted out.

There is wide spread corruption throughout the country and Sue and Tony's experience was that much of the international aid provided was being used for the personal benefit of a small number of influential leaders.

Despite this background they were personally able through their own efforts and strong and valued support from unpaid local people to complete the impressive list of projects with only modest financial investment.

They explained that surprisingly a few hundred pounds goes a long way in purchasing building materials and much needed resources in such a poor country It is just that money is in short supply!

Tony and Sue despite some personal health problems are committed to returning for the same period in 2007 and outlined an impressive and lengthy list of projects that they intend to complete provided sufficient monies may be raised from charitable sources in the UK to finance them.

A touching and compelling story of a couple committed to help others and who will succeed in 'making a difference' in a far off land as a result of their personal values, determination and communication skills. They fully deserve to be admired by all.

Post presentation note: The Rotary Club has approved a donation of £500 to support their work programme in 2007.

Bernard Goodchild

## Banbury Sea Cadets are back in action!!

A new management team have taken on the task of reviving Banbury's Sea Cadets with some help from the Rotary Club of Banbury.

The new commanding officer Tony Reece said that 15 years ago Banbury had 45 to 50 cadets, a full marching band and a very active unit. Over the years they almost went under but the new team are determined to build the club back up to its former strength.

They now have 7 new recruits and are looking to build up to 30 -35 in the next 18 months. The Sea Cadets now meet on Mondays & Thursdays at the new building in the TA centre from 7.00 to 9.00 pm.

During the spring & summer the Thursday meeting will be held at Banbury Sailing club where they have their own dinghies to teach the cadets how to sail. The sea cadets are open to boys & girls, aged 10 to 18 years old.

They must have reasonable fitness levels and an interest in having some fun. If you know anyone interested in joining please contact Roger Worrall on tel. no. 01295 711802 or email r.worrall@wg-plc.com).

It costs around £1,500 to pay for their accommodation plus other overheads. Therefore this cheque for £500 from the Rotary Club of Banbury will enable them to focus on their recruitment drive instead of worrying about fund raising.



Pictured here are Rotary President, David Hitchcox and Rotarian Phil Cavill presenting the cheque to the cadets.



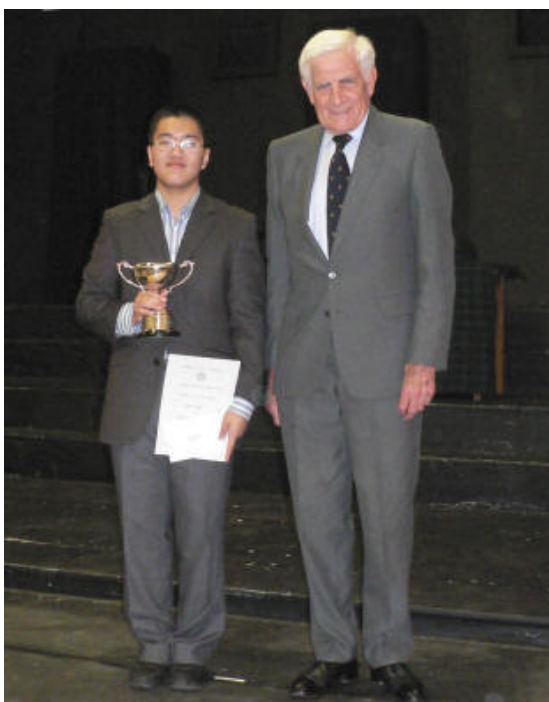
## Umito is Banbury Young Musician of the Year 2007

Saturday 3 March 2006 saw a capacity audience gather at Sibford School for a spectacular evening of musical entertainment at the Banbury Young Musician of the Year Finals 2007.

The performances given by more than 50 young people, aged from 8 to 18 who took part in the finals, ranged from good to absolutely fabulous. Each and every one of them should be extremely proud of their performance.

The standard was such that the three adjudicators, Mark Paine, Peter Adams and David Oliver found it hard to select the winners for each of the 26 section trophies, and extremely difficult to select the overall winner .

Their final unanimous decision was that the Banbury Young Musician of the Year 2006 is Umito Choji, pictured below receiving The Alcan Trophy from Rotarian John Phillips.



Rotarian Gareth Jeremy said "I am delighted that Umito has become the 16<sup>th</sup> Banbury Young Musician of the Year. Every year the standard achieved by the young people seems to get ever higher and this year has proven to be no exception. Umito has been a competitor in the competition for several years and is an excellent example of what can be achieved by hard work and perseverance".



Millie Greedy won Junior Musician of the Year against some strong competition and was presented with the Humphris Family Trophy by Chris Humphris.

The main sponsor of the event for the past 16 years has been Banbury Charities and the Rotary Club of Banbury is extremely indebted to them for their support without which the event would not be possible.

Grateful thanks must also go to our other sponsors Bluecoat Foundation, Banbury Town Council and Cherwell District Council, Sibford School, The Inner Wheel Club of Banbury, One Man Band and a considerable number of Rotarians, partners and friends too numerous to mention individually.

