



SERVICE Above Self

## *The Banbury Bulletin*

The Rotary Club of Banbury  
District 1090 R.I.B.I. Club No. 415

**President Ron Barnett**

**November 2010**



### **Thanks for Life**

Welcome to 'Rotary Day - Thanks for Life', a project involving the clubs and members of Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland (RIBI), to highlight the humanitarian work of Rotarians with a number one aim of helping to eradicate polio throughout the world.

As well as raising awareness, the first phase of the project, in the 12 months to April 2010, raised over £1 million, involved thousands of schools around the country and most of the 1,850 Rotary clubs across RIBI. An amazing start!

The second phase of the project aims to build on that success - it starts now and will culminate in thousands of events and activities on and around Rotary Day - February 23rd 2011.

**FROM THE PRESIDENTS PAD**  
**October 2010**



Four months gone by already, Christmas round the corner and then into the second half of the year. This has to be one of the most enjoyable and fast moving experiences I've had.

**1<sup>st</sup> October** Rotary Meeting - a really enjoyable meeting with an excellent talk by Rebecca Ward on Future for Nepal. Having sponsored Rebecca raise money for Future for Nepal it was good to get such positive feedback on the work being done by the charity, and we were all amazed to learn that this was the first time Rebecca had spoken in public. Well done Rebecca. Many thanks to Owen for hosting Rebecca.

**5<sup>th</sup> October** Party for the blind and partially sighted - an excellent afternoon thoroughly enjoyed by all our guests. Some delicious food provided by the ladies of the Inner Wheel Club, and some great entertainment by "Impromptu". Thanks to all and especially Helen and David for such a well organised event.

**8<sup>th</sup> October** Rotary Meeting - another warm hearted friendly meeting with an interesting talk by Rob Kinchin-Smith about the Banbury Civic Society. Maurice Humphris gave the vote of thanks.

**16<sup>th</sup> October** Rotary Meeting - yet another great presentation by Alan Wolstencroft about all the fantastic work he's doing in Sierra Leone and South Africa. I don't know where he gets his energy from, I felt exhausted just listening to everything he's doing. Well done Alan for all that you're doing. Roger Worrall hosted Alan.

**21<sup>st</sup> October** The Rotary Club of Brackley 37th Charter Dinner - Ian, Roger and I had an extremely pleasant evening at the Cartwright Hotel in Aynho enjoying the company of the members of the Rotary Club of Brackley as they celebrated their 37th Charter Night. It was fascinating to hear all about their fund raising cycle ride from London to Paris undertaken by President David and colleagues. **No**, your President isn't considering a similar exercise, perhaps John or Ian might like to think about it for their presidential year!

**22<sup>nd</sup> October** Rotary Meeting - a good humoured friendly meeting, and a pleasure to have Lord Saye and Sele join us. Pat Thomas kept us all enthralled with her 'my life' talk, which was excellent. Many thanks to Helen Morris for hosting Pat.

**28<sup>th</sup> October** Our fourth Council meeting - I can now feel that we are working as a real team together and will achieve some extremely successful events this year. Again very many thanks to every Council member for their invaluable contribution towards the success of the Club.

**29<sup>th</sup> October** Fifth Friday evening meeting - a most enjoyable evening at the Banbury House Hotel. Many thanks for such good organisation by Stephen Jakeman. Our guest speaker Neil Mackereth gave us a very entertaining talk recalling many extremely amusing incidents from his army career. He was hosted by Helen Morris.

I'm really looking forward to November and of course our Children Singing for Children Concerts.  
President Ron

## CANAL DAY.

Was held on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup>. October with a Rotary presence with Shelterbox and Aqua Box. A small amount of money was donated but the main aim of promoting Rotary and showing the various disaster items we support was achieved. Andrew Fairbairn is see doing his part in the rather inclement weather.



### Party for the blind

Approximately 30 guests were welcomed to the annual party for the blind. An excellent tea, as always, provided by the ladies of Inner Wheel accompanied by lively laughter and chat. They were joined and welcomed by our President Ron,

Inner Wheel President Linda Clarke, Blind Society organiser Enid Smith and John Critchlow Chair of the Macular Disease Society.

Gareth Jeremy and his ensemble entertained us with a variety of melodies, jokes (and sweeties!) which our guests thoroughly enjoyed - singing along to and laughing at (as well as the sweets).

A handmade posy of flowers and plate of cakes was given to everyone as they left - which from feedback obtained was very much appreciated - a "lovely gesture".

Our grateful thanks for all the help we were given by Rotary and Inner Wheel members, without whose help this event would not take place. From the positive comments and feedback received this event was enjoyed and appreciated by all the guests and helpers.

David Blakey and Helen Braisby

## **SPEAKER REPORTS.**

### **WENDY GRIFFITHS SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup> 2010**

Although Wendy's talk was originally intended to be on the subject of Public Benefit as it related to private schools, it was widened to include matters which were currently "hot" in education in addition to the public benefit issue.

One matter which seems to occupy so many minds is that of league tables. The school where Wendy is head is Tudor Hall which has shown the greatest riser nationally in the Daily Telegraph league table over the 4 year period since 2006. Wendy stressed that league tables should not be the only criterion on which to judge a school's performance. Much depends on the standard of each year's intake and league tables vary with that. Academic abilities vary considerably from year to year and emphasis should be made more on value added on to each child's ability.

Another hot topic is "A" level results in that grades always seem to be rising. This is true and the introduction of "A" star grades is an attempt to recognise excellence where an old grade A would previously have been awarded. In spite of the possible reduction in A level values Wendy makes the point that in her experience the best students are still winning places to the best universities.

University applications are up this year but there is the likelihood of many students being turned down. This may lead to an explosion of entries next year or a realisation that a university degree is not essential for everyone and there could be a drift into non-academic jobs such as trades and apprenticeships which are lacking in this country at the moment.

Student debt seems set to increase and the debate over taxing graduates rumbles on. University fees seem set to increase as well to enable standards to be maintained thereby increasing the debt problem.

Legislation involving schools has increased immensely over the last few years. Wendy broadly welcomes this even though it increases red tape and administration work. She cited the Soham tragedy and the Lyme Regis drowning as incidents where the law and its strict implementation could have helped avoid such happenings. The anti bullying campaign is seen essential for all schools.

The public benefit issue is of immense importance to private schools as it is seen as the government's attempt through the charity commission to force private schools to take children from backgrounds where private education cannot be afforded. This is having the effect of increasing fees for those who can afford it. Tudor already provides free places and allows many of its facilities to be provided free of charge to state schools. Contrast our government's approach with that of Australia where private schools receive a subsidy from their government for each student educated privately. (These are my words not Wendy's but come from my knowledge of the Australian system).

During her talk Wendy did not mention very much about her own school but I feel it should be noted that the Independent School's Inspectorate (the private school equivalent of Ofsted) recorded in their recent inspection that "The academic drive has been led by the outstanding leadership of the head and the governing body". I am sure that those who were fortunate to hear Wendy's address can only agree with their conclusion. Wendy is full of ideas and has boundless energy. She sets an example to her staff and pupils and with outdoor events often takes part herself.

In my vote of thanks to her I felt it appropriate to sum up her contribution to the school as 2 obtaining the best out of her staff and girls whilst remaining supportive and compassionate in time of need.

Richard George

### **8<sup>th</sup> October, Banbury Civic Society – Rob Kinchen-Smith**

Rob opened by apologising for not arriving in time on his previous scheduled visit, traffic around Oxford was dire on that day, so to prevent a repetition he had taken the day off work today.

It seems that the formation of the Banbury Civic Society came as result of dismay at the extension of the Castle Centre to form Castle Quay. In the consultation process Banburians were led to expect that many buildings in Bridge Street would be preserved when in fact they were to be demolished to facilitate the new shopping development. Lone voices were of little avail and several people, Rob and his mother included felt that Banbury's heritage needed to be championed.

He pointed out several buildings that the town had lost which were of considerable historic or architectural value, including the north side of Bridge Street. Since the formation of the Civic Society whilst there have still been significant losses, Stones and Spencers buildings in Britannia Road, and the former Northern Aluminium/Alcan/Sapa factory to name a few. There have though been some important successes which may well have not come about without the work of the Society. The office buildings at Alcan, Stanbridge Hall, the Marlborough Arms (thanks to the extension of the conversation area) and land

being reserved on the south east side of the Bankside development for the future provision of a relief road. A notable success is the Blue Plaque commemorating Sir Bernhard Samuelson's contribution to Banbury this has been placed on the library building which was the Mechanics Institute founded and built by him. They also had a partial success with Neithrop House, though at present it looks rather sad as no attempt has yet been made to disguise the signs of the portion that has been demolished.

Pressure from the Society also resulted in the projecting sign at the Reindeer Inn in Parsons Street being renewed when the old one became unsafe, the lovely old doors of the Unicorn in the Market Place have also been very sympathetically and skillfully restored.

The Society are now represented on several District and Town Council committees, including the Building Heritage Working Party and the Strategic Partnership. They are able to respond to emergencies, they keep a watchful eye on planning applications, looking out for unsuitable changes to old buildings such as plastic framed windows replacing wooden sash windows and the removal of features such as chimney stacks. They have also published a report with their views and plans for the possible renewal of the canalside area of the town in considerable detail, and with expert advice..

To publicize their work committee members, led by Rob, man displays at town events such as the Hobby Horse Festival and Canal Day. They publish a regular newsletter keeping all members up to date with developments in the town.

They are always ready to welcome as new members those who are concerned about retaining the best of the old in Banbury and endeavouring to ensure that new development is worthy of our town's heritage. Rob showed himself to be a worthy leader of this very worthwhile organization.

Maurice  
Humphris.

### **Pats Thomas My Life My Work**

I was born in London (a little while ago!!) and at two and a half was evacuated to Yeovil, Somerset along with my elder brother. We lived with a couple and their two daughters with whom I got on well and we became firm friends. My mother then moved down to join us with my four brothers, so we were a family again. My childhood was busy to say the least.

I left school (which I hated) at fifteen and started work the next day in a hairdressers as an apprentice which gave me great joy. I finally had some independence and a little money in my pocket. It was the fifties and I loved dancing and would jive with anybody (even my girlfriends on occasions!)

I met Malcolm, my husband to be, in 1955. He too was an apprentice with Westland in Yeovil who made and tested helicopters. We married in 1960 and were joined in 1962 by our son Jason. Shortly after Malcolm was made redundant, but soon got a job with the town council as a Civil Engineer. I was still working as a hairdresser and would take Jason with me, my employer's nanny taking care of him.

We then moved to Stratford-upon-Avon as Malcolm had secured a better job. Pheona, our daughter, was born in 1966, I found it quite difficult being away from home my home and family but soon made many good friends. I started work as an Auxiliary Nurse at the local hospital and then at the Children's Recovery, which proved beneficial to my later career.

In 1969 we moved to Banbury and I secured a job at a local children's home, which I enjoyed enormously. As my own children were growing up and needing me less I could apply myself to these children who needed love and attention. I was promoted and eventually became Deputy head of Home picking up a degree at Oxford University on my way. It was a bust time for me but i was fulfilled and happy. Malcolm was wonderful looking after our children and supporting me, alongside his great passion - Rugby. Things began to change within residential care and I became an Educational social Worker in Warwick.

Both of my children were now married and in 1995 Pheona gave us our wonderful granddaughter, Rhiannon. Malcolm and I were overjoyed. Malcolm had started to have heart problems and after a massive heart attack (which he, typically. decided to have in Wales - he said he wanted to be amongst his own!) he took early retirement, but then got bored and got another job. Then in 2001 all of our lives changed when he had a massive stroke. He was unable to talk and found walking very difficult. I gave up work and became his full time carer. His strength through this most horrific time was inspiring and he never lost his sense of humour. I never gave up on him and we would go away together and even travelled to New Zealand to visit

family. He loved it. He was still a Rugby fanatic and would watch any game with joy shouting goodness knows what at the TV. He struggled on until 2008 when after a short illness we lost him. We think he waited until Wales had won the six nations before he popped off to the big pub in the sky!

We had joined The Stroke Association whilst Malcolm was alive and I had become good friends with Helen B.

I have joined various groups WI, Parish Council, you name it! - to keep myself busy and have even looked after my daughter's mad blind Labrador! I am a very busy girl.

As you know I have recently joined you at Rotary and I must say I enjoy it immensely. You have made me so very welcome and I am very grateful. As we go through life we don't realise how precious our time here is. We get older and start to lose family and friends. With this in mind I am taking my opportunity to take life by the neck and wring it dry!

Helen Braisby

## **FIFTH FRIDAY EVENING MEETING**

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October Brigadier (Retired) Neil Mackereth, a fellow Rotarian Hon Treasurer from Bishops Waltham came along and gave a very entertaining talk on The Pace Stick – Lesson One. The talk was mainly about his time in the army and particularly at Mons Officer Cadet School that he had joined in 1964. The Pace Stick is a jointed stick that opens up to measure the length of step that soldiers need to know when they are marching. However, it was the side stories about the Stick that were really amusingly entertaining during Neil's talk.

Soldiers on parade have to have their ties in a certain loop and the Drill Sergeant holding the Pace Stick would put the tip of the stick under the loop of the tie to see if it was pinned down properly. One officer cadet tied several ties together end to end. When the Drill Sergeant did the 'pin down' check with the Pace Stick he kept pulling and pulling till the tie(s) were hanging down to coils at the officer cadet's feet. He obviously realised that he was dealing with a joker so ordered the officer cadet 'to about turn' several times resulting in the lengthy tie ending out around the officer cadet's ankles and then he ordered the corps to move forward – which was quite difficult for the joker with his ankles hindered by the ties.

Neil had another tale about when he arrived at his barracks and found on his bed a Bed Block – a very neatly, severely ironed, blankets and sheet pack. He noticed that his fellow soldiers were using sleeping bags and wondered why they didn't use the Bed Block. He understood later on when he put his foot through one of the severe creases in the sheet and a very amusing story followed about how he had to go and sort out renewing the damaged sheet.

There was also the story about the bee that stung a General and later on a bored soldier was working at his desk and saw a bee and captured it under a glass. He decided to 'arrest' it and put it in a prison cell. Later on he decided to feed the bee and gave it some jam but the bee didn't eat it so 'hunger strike' considered and noted. When his Regimental Sergeant Major came in and read the daily report that had been completed he asked why a bee had been 'arrested'. "He was the bee that stung the General" was the reply. When the Guard Commander was starting to receive the 'backlash' the RSM stuck the Pace Stick in the Guard Commander's stomach and said "I've got a twit on the end of this stick" "Not at this end" came the prompt response.

These were just a few of the stories that were much better to hear than to read as Neil had such an amusing way of telling the stories and the laughter was constant. Whilst 'Lesson One' is just part of the Talk title, Neil finished off his talk by saying how he enjoyed the shared fellowship of Rotarians and would be very willing to come and give us Lesson Two – that is, to come and give us another talk. Judging by the applause and laughter throughout the talk I'm sure the members would welcome him back.

Helen Morris 1 November 2010

### **International Committee.**

Future events to include Race Night and Aunt Sally evening.  
Birmingham Chamber Orchestra 20<sup>th</sup> February at Bloxham School.

### **Foundation Committee.**

The collection in lieu of Christmas cards will be organised as usual.  
Christmas Festival of Music Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December at St Mary's Church.  
Focus on the Crocus 2,500 to be planted at the Cheshire Home also at Banbury Cricket Club and local Schools.  
Frugal Lunch is to be on 14<sup>th</sup> January an opportunity to get over the Christmas and New Year festivities.

### **Sports and Entertainment.**

Club outing to Bristol on 12<sup>th</sup> April.  
Other events being organised are a Quiz Night, Indoor Bowls or Skittles and Club Darts.

### **Community and Vocational.**

Christmas Street Organ collections:- Sainsbury's Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December.  
Tesco's Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December.  
Morrison's Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> December.  
Tesco's Friday 24<sup>th</sup> December.

IT's a Knockout 2011. It has been agreed that we will organise and promote this event. The Banbury Show Committee have promised £1000.00 towards costs. It is hoped to attract 24 teams to take part.

### **Youth Opportunities.**

Children Singing for Children November 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> at St Mary's Church. Twenty schools are now enrolled another successful project in prospect.  
Young Musician Gareth Jeremy is again organising and contacting schools for entrants.  
Young Chef is again being organised together with the Cherwell Rotary Club.

**HON SECRETARY** – Dr. Ian Rodrick      **CLUB WEBSITE** ;- [www.banburyrotaryclub.org.uk](http://www.banburyrotaryclub.org.uk)  
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