

May 2024

Rotary
Congleton



NEWS *Letter*

SWIMATHON 2024 SMASHES ALL-TIME RECORD - £22,080 RAISED FOR CHARITIES

The generous people of Congleton, together with all the friends and families of the hundreds of swimmers that took part, raised a record amount for charity this year. Every penny of the £22,088 raised (including Gift Aid) will be distributed. Rotary-Congleton runs the event, but thanks to generous sponsorship from the Town Council it doesn't cost a penny from the money the swimmers earn. Each one of the 69 teams nominates it's own charity and they keep 50% of the money raised. Rotary Congleton divides it's share between its own two nominated charities. This year, Listen Out Loud will receive approximately half of the money and so too will The Old Saw Mill.

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Sandra Conway and Rachel Brown

Organisers, Sandra Conway and Rachel Brown were absolutely thrilled with the result and are busy arranging all the presentations now all the sponsorship moneys have been collected and as Gift Aid is calculated for each

President's Patter

There are still opportunities for Rotarians to join one of the project teams, particularly Foundation, International and the Tree of Light. Perhaps you might have an idea about starting up a new initiative, if so we would love to hear about it.

Cheques are going out to the various teams that took part in this year's highly successful Swimathon. Rachel and I presented a cheque to Smallwood School on Friday 19th April. The school head confirmed that they would be adding a third team next year made up of teachers and others to add to the 2 pupil teams they normally provide.

Fourteen of us including Rotarians and partners attended the Rotary District Conference during the weekend of 27th and 28th April at Llandudno.

It started with a number of clubs explaining the projects they have been involved in recently, including 3 clubs from the Isle of Man who combined to initiate a £100K environmental project involving planting 10,000 trees. Whilst a club in St Helens managed to unite all local charities/organisations under a simple bar code system, not only informing every one of their activities, but making them available to everyone by one creating a simple point of access. The project and their other work was also recognised by an award from the King

Not surprisingly, we heard about the importance of engaging members at every point in our individual clubs to ensure we give them every opportunity to contribute their views and get involved in our various clubs and community activities. This is to try and ensure members are not lost, as apparently 52% of new members leave within the first 2 years of joining Rotary. We also learned about new ways to attract more members and will be hearing more about Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland's massive NORTH STAR initiative where different forms of membership will be explored.

On Sunday we had a review of the support given to Ukrainians and were entertained by some Ukrainian children, followed by a Rotaract group of children explaining the various projects they created in their school in Bolton.

The conference ended though with an outstanding finale provided by Geoff Machey, a fellow Rotarian and a past Rotaractor, an inspirational and very funny speaker, and someone who you could not ignore – as a member of Biddulph Rotary Club found out to his cost when he decided to take a trip to the toilet during his presentation!

It is almost coming to the end of my presidential year, which seems to have passed by very quickly with only a few weeks left to go.

There have been lots of highlights during the year, in particular the progress being made with many of our project teams which go from strength to strength. In my view, speaker evenings are becoming a lot more interesting when they are provided by our own club members, with some great presentations recently from both Bob and Stew.

Brian



District Governor Praises Club

Rotary's District Governor Dr Sashwati (Swati) Mukherjee visited Rotary-Congleton on Monday April 8th and stressed Rotary's ambitious objectives to increase membership nationally over the next 5 years.

She listened to reports from the club's project leaders and went on to praise the work of Rotary-Congleton as one of the strongest clubs in the local area.

Swati spoke of Rotary's aims to conduct a digital media campaign in the district to attract new members, following on from lessons learnt from a pilot scheme run last year in the Stockport area. Rotary is expanding its thinking to recruit more people with busy working lives to join and spend what time they can as Rotarians, rather than following a strict commitment to attend regular meetings. The thinking is to create a modern model of the traditional Rotary club by forming 'satellite clubs' to involve more people and run alongside the existing club structure.



The Key to the Choir

Eaton Bank Academy's Encore Choir was rewarded for their superb performance at the Rotary Christmas Concert. They wanted three new Yamaha keyboards – and Rotary was pleased to oblige! Rotarian Rod Goodier, Eaton Bank head Mr Ed O'Neil, president of Rotary-Congleton Brian Hogan and music teacher Sophie Walker are pictured with the delivery of the new keyboards.



Ian's Conference Report

Just back from District Conference; Wow! what a fabulous weekend. To the members and partners, I must thank you all for a wonderful weekend of fun and-fellowship . In particular special thanks to Brian for his generous hospitality.

The conference speakers were inspiring. Stand out presentations for me included a pick of individual club projects - in particular the St Helens club which united all local charities/ organisations under a simple bar code system not only informing everyone of their activities but making them all available to everyone by one simple point of access .

We also heard about the importance of engaging ALL members (particularly new) at every point to ensure we give them every opportunity to contribute their views and attend to their personal needs. This ensures members are not lost.

Also we learned about new ways to attract more members; we shall be hearing more about Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland's massive NORTH STAR initiative where different forms of membership will be explored.

Finally no congress is complete with out a stand out humorous finale; and in Geof Machey we were not disappointed; a fellow Rotarian a past rotaractor and an inspirational and very funny speaker.

We were all invited to attend district assembly on the 11 th May; an excellent and informative day where we learn of district's aspirations for the coming year. Unfortunately I was unable to attend.

It really is a great informative day both for team leaders as well as new members wanting to know more about Rotary "outside congleton"

Thanks for reading - see you soon

Ian

Wildlife-Friendly Garden gets off to a busy start



Rotarians Gill Pickford and David Brew launched the Wildlife Friendly Garden Competition at the Wellbeing Exhibition in Congleton Town Hall .

The two bees (or not two bees!) attracted a great deal of interest. The competition runs throughout the summer and aims to get all Congleton residents to do their bit, to make their gardens more wildlife friendly and help endangered birds, bees, butterflies and bugs, not forgetting hedgehogs and toads.

For townfolk with only a window box, balcony, or courtyard, there's still an opportunity to win a prize. There's a separate category for larger gardens and borders.

Entrants must register online before 1st June to receive full details, and helpful hints in a comprehensive information pack.

Simon Fallis is the main contact: simonfallis@hotmail.co.uk or pick up a leaflet from Congleton Information Office or Timothy Brown, estate agents who, together with Smith Farm Garden Centre are sponsoring the competition.

Please Note: As with all competitions, the organisers and their families are not allowed to win! There's a separate category for Rotarians with a cash prize of £50. So please enter!!!



Gill Pickford and David Brew



Rotary Treasurer uncovered Fraud!

Throughout his working life, Rotary-Congleton's treasurer, Bob Mallet, specialised in investigating fraud, first in the insurance industry and later in financial services.

In a fascinating talk to members of the club, he described some of the forensic details necessary to uncover some of the sophisticated tricks used by modern-day fraudsters who are mostly just one step ahead of the law!

Bob's career took him from Ipswich to London and then on to a global role in a fraudsters' business calculated to be worth \$3.7 trillion per annum. Only £200bn of that comes from the UK, whilst £8bn is fraud against individuals. Bob gave the meeting some helpful tips on how to avoid becoming the victim of the fraudsters.

It's Coming Back! Now you see it, now you don't!

The Community Garden Stall aka 'swop stall' hibernated for the winter, but is now making a weekly appearance in time for gardeners and the coming gardening season. Streetscape will be putting the stall out, near the Pavilion cafe from 10am until 2.30pm as and when they have sufficient stocks. So, any unneeded garden pots, produce, bird feeders, seeds or plants can be left for others to use. The stall proved popular last year, so bring your unwanted or surplus gardening bits and pieces and see if they can be used by someone else...

ATC raises £1441 for Swimathon!

Stewart Price together with Rotary Swimathon organiser, Rachel Brown presented a cheque to Ian Spender, chairman of Congleton's ATC 230 Squadron. The ATC cadets and staff swam in teams in a relay for 55 minutes, getting sponsorship for their efforts. They raised £1441, split equally between 230 Sqn and Rotary's two charities.

The ATC has supported the event every year since it came to Congleton. This year the Rotary Swimathon was the first gala to be held at the new Congleton Leisure Centre in March.

Stewart Price flew Phantoms with 74 Sqn RAF, (The original RAF Tiger Squadron). He commented on the fact that an ex-Tiger was making a presentation to the Tiger cadets in the ATC. He praised the all cadets and staff for their splendid Swimathon effort.



£738 gets a rickshaw ride around The Mere

Sandra Conway was able to hand over the first cheque from swimathon 2024 to the WAGS swimmers. The WAGS team chose to swim with the Beartown Rickshaw as their chosen charity and on Saturday, April 13th the team handed over the £738 raised in their sponsored swim to Peter Hall, who then dutifully offered the swimmers a tour around Astbury Mere!

Photo shows WAGS organiser Barbara Burnley and Swimathon organiser Sandra Conway (also a member of WAGS) handing the cheque to Beartown Rickshaw's Peter Hall. Jude Rouse and Di Lyne (seated) were the first WAGS swimmers to benefit from a ride around the Mere.

We're putting the Heart back into Congleton!



A patch of un-loved ground in the centre of town behind the Town Hall called 'Market Square' is being transformed into a heart-shaped wildflower garden for the birds and bees and enjoyment of people! The joint project between Rotary and the Town Council is being implemented by Streetscape with wildflower seeds provided by Rotary's environmental team.

Flying High – How Rotary-Congleton reaches for the stars!

Stew Price was a proper Top Gun pilot reports Penny Mercer.

Stew was able to fly his Lightning jet fighter to 30,000 feet in 2 minutes!

He's since come back down to earth and kept the club entertained with his stories. Stew's talk about his experiences in the RAF during the cold war were illustrated with a film and slides.

District Young Chef Finals held in Congleton

Congleton High School played host to the Northwest District Finals of the Rotary Young Chef competition on Monday, 13th May. A slightly depleted field of 6 contestants nevertheless impressed judges Rtn. Trevor Hoyle and Executive Chef of Congleton's Pear Hospitality Group, Les Wassall.

Rotary Assistant District Governor, Eric Cowcill thanked all the schools for taking part, and Rtn. Marian Basu for organising the competition. Head judge Trevor Hoyle said that the afternoon had proved stressful for the judges as the quality of the food was so good and the marks were so very close between the contestants.

Les Wassall, food director and executive chef of the Pear Hospitality Group, said he would be happy to take one of the dishes – a lemon posset and shortbread and put it on the menu in any of his units! He congratulated all of the contestants.

Rotary District Governor Dr. Swati Mukherjee, herself a cook, said that nevertheless, she could not have achieved the quality of the dishes at the age of the contestants!

In third place was Mahjabeen from Sharples School, Bolton with her hot glazed chicken with egg fried rice.

In second place Alfie from Eaton Bank Academy in Congleton delighted with pan-seared duck breast with a confit duck potato rosti with butternut squash puree and wilted spinach and red wine jus. His tarte au citron with blackberry garnish impressed the judges.

Overall winner was Nathaniel from Fallibroome Academy in Macclesfield. His seasonal lunch with Stanedge rack of lamb, dauphinoise potatoes, spring harvest carrots, asparagus and fresh mint sauce, followed by deconstructed strawberry and rhubarb crumble topped with frozen yoghurt, impressed the judges.

Congleton High School's Samuel and Elkie and Sharples School's Saffiya were all highly commended.

The First Prize is one to be worked for! Nathaniel received an apron, a book and a day with Marriott Hotel Group's executive chef, preparing dinner for his parents. The prize is not to be underestimated. A previous winner of the Rotary Young Chef competition, recently went on to become a finalist in the BBC Masterchef competition on national television.



The contestants receive their awards from the District Governor



The Winner, Nathaniel from Fallibroome



Alfie from Eaton Bank came



Mahjabeen from Sharples in Bolton



Alfie's second placed entry



Judge Trevor checks Nathaniel's progress



Judges Trevor and Les compare scores

Mon 3 Jun '24	16:00 PM to 22:00 PM	AGM & Club Assembly
Mon 17 Jun '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Social/Speaker Night
Sat 29 Jun '24	17:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Jazz Night
Mon 1 Jul '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	President's Handover
Sat 6 Jul '24	15:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Welcome our new President BBQ
Fri 12 Jul '24	15:00 PM to 23:00 PM	Astonbury
Sat 13 Jul '24	16:00 PM to 23:00 PM	Astonbury
Mon 15 Jul '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Speaker Night
Footnote:		Cyber Crime
Mon 5 Aug '24	19:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Business meeting
Sat 17 Aug '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Garden Games Party
Mon 2 Sep '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Business Meeting
Sat 14 Sep '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Last Night of the Proms
Mon 16 Sep '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Social/Speaker Night

Diary Page

It's Big Band Jazz Night at the New Life Church. Don't miss it. A great night of music from the movies and some classic big band Jazz - all played by 'Kaleidoscope' our regular favourite performers.

All Change!!!
Time to see what the new broom has to say. Watch out for the fun!

And so it begins! A hog-roast at Ian's. Ticket only, with plenty of fun and sideshows. Live music in the mid-summer evening.

Astonbury: but with a difference this year. Help needed.

"WE MUSTER PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS, WHO CREATE SOMETHING TOGETHER THAT'S MUCH GREATER THAN WHAT THEY COULD CREATE INDIVIDUALLY."

Rotary 