

June Newsletter

Back from Atlanta now and down to work on trying to encourage as much International work as possible in the new Rotary year. It always strikes me as very fitting that the RI Convention happens at the end of the Rotary Year or very close to it. The Convention gives one a different perspective on Rotary from what can be a rather narrow and parochial local perspective.

Polio was high on the agenda at the conference and the announcements included a further pledge from Bill Gates that his Foundation would for every \$50m Rotary donated per year for the next 3 years give \$100m. All donations were gratefully received at the Convention – The Fellowship of Quilters asking donations for their goods collected just a shade under \$9000 and I was particularly pleased that my wife's goods on display collected \$2000. All of this went to End Polio Now.

Whilst the focus on polio at the Convention was uplifting, I had how important it is that we finish the fight really brought home to me when staying at the coast after the convention. We met an elderly American lady (Edna R Hindson) who when she found out we were Rotarians, said "God bless you for the work you are doing to eradicate Polio and please see the job through". She had contracted Polio in the very early 50s at the age of 7 and had spent 2 years in hospital. She is now fairly mobile with the help of the latest leg

brace technology but still has painful memories and Post-Polio traumas.



Yours truly with Edna.

Disaster Update

There is little change internationally on this front from last month. However it was brought home to us that disasters are not just confined to overseas, by the dreadful fire in West London that claimed so many lives.

Many Rotarians have been asking what they can do. Our best advice is to donate to the special fund that London District (1130) have established.

Sightbox

As we head towards the Rotary International Convention in Toronto, Ontario Canada in 2018 it would appear that significance, along with the stars, aligns for the Rotary Club of Liverpool St.Vincent's and District 1180 (covering the NW of England and Wales) in their efforts to leave a lasting legacy for those who lost their sight in the Great War 1914-18

Best known for his powerful poem 'In Flanders Fields' a most famous son of Canada born in [Guelph](#), Ontario was Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae. It is

his poem reflecting on the meaning of the poppy, and his call to take the 'torch...be yours to hold it high' which frames our work in lighting better pathways and opportunities for visually impaired (VI) children around the world in collaboration with St.Vincent's school for VI in Liverpool, England (www.stvin.com). In 2015 pupils from St.Vincent's returned to the battle grounds of Ypres in commemorating the first ever gas attack which was released upon, and blinded, many Canadian troops. The experience cemented the children's wish to leave a lasting legacy for those who have and will lose sight. With high unemployment rates amongst VI communities and some 6 Million VI children around the world; 90% of whom are in developing countries with less than 10% having access to education, we have a lot to do. In answer to this, we are linking our pupil opportunities here in the UK with educational ideas to serve those overseas by the development of the 'Sightbox' and 'Sightbag'. Containing access to sports and education equipment our pupil ideas become part of the box as we share remotely (using internet and pod casting) how to use the content with the children in receipt of it...a 'win, win scenario' as we share access to opportunity. Perhaps you would join us in connecting the 'sightbox' and 'sightbag' with the associated opportunities to VI children around the world? Please visit www.sightbox.org.uk follow us on Twitter @SightboxUK or contact us directly Info@sightbox.org.uk Dr JA Patterson Rotary Club of Liverpool St.Vincent's

Sightbox Ambassadors Jake Patterson, Angela Williams. A Sightbox brochure is attached.

Rotary Jaipur Limb

A reminder to Clubs in RIBI that we are still very active running limb camps in India and opening permanent limb centres in India and Africa. The newest African centre is the Joyce Proctor Memorial Centre in Tanguieta, Benin. PRIBI President Norman raised the necessary funds in memory of his late wife and, already, the centre is busy fitting prostheses and callipers to local amputees and polio victims for as little as £30-£40. Incoming RI Director Brian Stoyel accompanied Norman to Benin for the opening ceremony.

You may have heard of the LN-4 Hand – developed in the US and provided free to amputees anywhere in the world. A recent development is the production of prosthetic hands by 3-D printer and, eventually, prosthetic legs, printed in the same way, greatly reducing costs, speeding up the process and obviating the need for technicians at each site. Instead the limbs can be printed elsewhere, to specifications sent by email, and posted back direct to the amputee's location. Wherever will science take us next?

We are also delighted to announce that Jenny Seagrove, the well-known actress, has agreed to be a patron of our charity. She was impressed with our work and was happy to give us her support.

New members may not have heard of Rotary Jaipur Limb. Older members may have forgotten about us. We have a good story to tell. If you would like a speaker, contact Rtn Margaret Webb on margaretwebb01@gmail.com who will make sure your request is met!



Gift of Sight

Attached is some information from Gift of Sight for distribution.

An article in Rotary Magazine by Martin Bell – Unicef Ambassador

Since I became a Unicef ambassador in June 2001, the countries I've visited

have invariably been the ones where the cruise ships don't go, either because they are war-torn or landlocked – or both. My Unicef visits have taken me to Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, South Sudan and the DRC – all still torn by conflict. The conflict in Syria has now entered its seventh year. Out of a population of 22 million in Syria, around 11 million – a half – have been forced from their homes by the fighting. It is one of the great humanitarian calamities of our time and it is a crisis that hits children hardest. After six years of war, nearly 6 million children are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria – 12 times more than in 2012. Over 2.3 million children are now living as refugees. Last month, I travelled with Unicef to Lebanon, a country I last visited in 1973 during its own civil war. One in four of the population of Lebanon is now a Syrian refugee. These people, many of them children, are not living in refugee camps but informal settlements that have sprung up across the country. Too many children there are working to survive and so cannot attend school. I met 8 and 9 year olds who were totally illiterate. The children I met dreamt of a return to the homeland many have not seen or cannot remember. The role of Unicef is to work with its partners to ensure all children have access to education and healthcare, as well as campaign to protect children from things like underage marriage, the risk of which has increased since the conflict began.

Lebanon is one country where Unicef's intervention, day by day, is making a real impact on the lives of

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

NEWSLETTER

Rotary
Great Britain & Ireland



children. I spoke to the headmaster of a school which teaches mainly Lebanese children in the morning and Syrian refugee children in the afternoon. I asked him what difference the funding from Unicef had made. "Without Unicef", he said, "We would not be able to do what we are doing." It is donations from the public and organisations like Rotary that fund this work and mean Unicef can respond immediately and help them to rebuild their lives in the long term.

The realities of life for these children are there to see – but our perception of them is not as clear as it used to be. This struck me throughout all my travels for Unicef – I didn't meet any journalists in any of them – with the exception of Peter Greste of the BBC and later Al-Jazeera. Foreign news – especially from zones of conflict – is expensive and dangerous to cover. The result has been a withdrawal. So we depend on such organisations as Unicef to not just help the afflicted but to inform us all and to be prime witnesses of what is going on in the unquiet corners of the world. They do it either through the work of their ambassadors or by helping journalists to access to such places as Somalia, Yemen and South Sudan – emergencies which otherwise would be completely unreported. Being a Unicef ambassador is not so different from being a TV reporter. It is a matter of bearing witness – or, if you like, journalism with a purpose. Certainly it is the best job I ever had.

In Lebanon, I met an old Unicef friend, Luciano, an Italian whom I had previously encountered in Goma in the eastern Congo. I asked him what should we be doing? He said, 'Help

us by raising money, obviously'. But beyond that, we should counter what seems to be a rising xenophobia, and a growing feeling in Europe that the plight of refugees is none of our business. In an interconnected world, it is all of our business – both in terms of our national interests and our security, and in terms of our common humanity.

And this is the reason the UK's aid programme is such a fantastic promise from our country to the world's children. UK aid prevents people dying, gives children an education, keeps the vulnerable from the hands of those to plan to exploit and abuse them', and helps millions fleeing the brutality of war. With this help, the next generation can go from being the most vulnerable to having a chance to flourish. UK aid helps ensure Britain is great and good to the world and we should take great pride in it.

Unicef and Rotary always have been and will be international. Since 1988, the relationship between these two organisations has raised over £27 million for children worldwide. Rotary Clubs in Great Britain have regularly responded to emergencies, allowing Unicef to provide aid to children immediately. Just last year, Rotary GBI members raised vital funds that supplied Syrian children with clothing and blankets to survive sub-zero temperatures.

Through agencies like Unicef, Rotary supports life-saving causes. Its interventions have an enduring impact and Rotary can and should be proud of them. It has chosen to make a difference, because that is what Rotary does.

To find out how your Rotary club can support Unicef's work for children, visit [unicef.org/rotary](https://www.unicef.org/rotary) -

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/fundraise/fundraise-in-your-community/clubs/>

If you need any help or advice, please contact Ron Daniels
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