

Late December 2023

Rotary
Congleton



NEWS *Letter*

Happy New Year!

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First of all, a Happy New Year to you all. Hopefully this year will bring a more peaceful outlook in the world and relieve some of the tensions that exist within societies and between countries.

It seems incredible that we are already half way through the Rotary year.

Looking back over the last six months, we started with 455 entries for the Young Artist competition based on the theme Kings and Queens. Whilst the Environmental team introduced the notion of signing 'The Pledge' to cut down the use of Petro chemicals and other harmful substances. In addition, the Environmental team also received a letter from no less than David Attenborough acknowledging the introduction of the Pledge.



Whilst Doug's Night at the Proms was a great success and a sell out once again. This was followed in November by the Bonfire and Fireworks Display, which despite the very wet weather being experienced in the lead up to the event, was a great success with just over £k20 being raised.



The first round of the Young Chef competition took place at Eaton Bank Academy and Congleton High School with very high standards of food quality and presentation being on display, making the judges job of selecting the winners so much more difficult.



We had the Tree of Light event held at the Community Garden with the Bear Town Choir singing throughout the event hosted by Doug Parker. Then of course we had a wonderful evening at Sandhole Farm to celebrate the 76th Charter of the Club's founding.

Followed by the judging and display of the photographs in the library in Congleton from the Young Photographer competition.



We then ended the year with the Xmas Concert held at the Daneside Theatre. It was a brilliant evening thanks to the Eaton Bank Encore Choir and the Silk brass Band, with a special appearance of Taisiaa Hovlokovna, a saxophonist from Ukraine, studying music at the Royal Northern College of Music.



Looking forward to this year, 2024, there are of course new challenges to come, not least ensuring that all of our members are able to make a contribution in the various activities and project teams operating within the Club, so that we ensure we are using the skills, experiences and talents of all our members.

To develop this further we will be reviewing the structure of the project teams, and in particular ensuring each team has sufficient support in terms of numbers of team members, as well as having access to a mentor/champion when they confront hurdles or difficulties to progress on key objectives.

To further enhance member development, a key objective for the New Year is to persuade those members who are not really using MyRotary, to enrol and to start to use the facility. In particular to make use of the various training courses on offer to enhance their Rotary experience and develop new skills to use within the project teams.



In March we have the Annual Swimathon event which will take place, once again, back at the new Leisure Centre in Congleton. The lanes are already being booked up, so there is little doubt that we will have all of the slots taken up.

Brian

Young Chefs Compete in First Round

Every Year Congleton's secondary schools compete in the first round of the Rotary Young Chef Competition.

The Rotary Young Chef competition is similar to 'Masterchef', only it has been running much longer, with the first round a local elimination heat to choose three chefs, two of whom will go on to represent Congleton in the next round – the District Heat. If they are lucky possibly at least one could represent their school in the national Rotary Final.

Of the three winners at each school, only the first two will go forward, with third place being held as a substitute in case of illness.

Also up for grabs is the Eric Capper Trophy. The late Eric Capper was the instigator of the entire competition and ran it for us until his death in 2019. The trophy is won alternately by the winning chef in the two schools in Congleton. This year, the winner is Alfie, from Eaton Bank Academy. President, Brian presented the trophy.

Each chef has 2 hours to cook a main course and a desert, with a maximum budget of £18. Rotary funds the entrants as part of our ongoing commitment to Youth Services. Judges are Andrew Bourne, head chef at the Alexandra Court and 'Mosey' Knight. They keep a watchful eye on the proceedings and taste every dish before going through a detailed checklist, giving marks for each aspect of the process from preparation to presentation of the finished plates of food. Representing Rotary District, Rtn. Marion Basu and our youth organiser Eric Westwood present the winners' prizes, with all entrants receiving a certificate.



Alfie from Eaton Bank received the Eric Capper Trophy and came first in his heat



Congleton High School fielded a big team. Eric and Marion presented the winner.



It's Nice to be Appreciated!

Congleton in Bloom, in association with Congleton Town Council presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Rotary-Congleton's environmental team for their assistance.

Wow! What a Night.

Rotary-Congleton's Christmas Concert showcased some stunning young talent and the music of Silk Brass Band, Marton's full-size traditional brass band, playing to a near capacity audience at the Daneside Theatre (December 16th).

Guests, Mr Ed O'Brien, Head of Eaton Bank Academy and Mayor and Mayoress of Congleton, Rob and Helen Moreton were entertained by president, Brian Hogan and Pauline.

Compere, Rod Goodier did the honours, introducing the evening's performances with the band, led by its musical director, Tony Wyatt starting the evening with the band playing a series of Christmas favourites including 'Rockin' around the Christmas Tree.'

Eaton Bank Academy's Encore Choir, comprising of 12 – 18 year-old pupils, delighted the audience with a series of numbers including 'Make you feel my love' and 'Let it be', conducted by music teacher, Sophie Walker.

After the interval, a guest appearance by Taya (Taisiia Holovko) stunned the audience with a saxophone solo rendition of Nat King Cole's 'Christmas Song' – 'Chestnuts roasting on an open fire'. Taya is a Ukrainian refugee and a third year student at the Royal Northern College of Music whilst also continuing her studies online with the Kyiv Academy of Music.

The Encore Choir came back to sing four more arrangements before joining with Silk Brass to perform several Christmas favourites.

A 'regular' expectation of the audience, many of whom return regularly, is the 'Schneewaltzer', where Tony Wyatt directs sections of the audience to sway in their seats and cheer to the music, played by the band, now adorned with Christmas headgear. 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' encouraged further audience participation before the band and choir joined with the audience to round off the evening singing 'White Christmas' and 'Jingle Bells'





Swimathon. Almost sold out for Saturday but space for more teams to swim on Friday!

Please can you get your friends to join us, put a team together (2 to 8 swimmers) and swim for charity on Friday 15th March 2024?

This year, the Rotary Swimathon event is at the brand new Congleton Leisure Centre. Early response has been fantastic, say the organisers, Sandra Conway and Rachel Brown. Many teams return year after year. The event is supported by teams from schools, clubs, families, businesses and youth groups.

There are still spaces for new teams on Friday. Each team raises money for a charity of their own choice and keeps 50% of what they raise - with the remainder going to Rotary's own choice of two local charities.

The event, now running for over 20 years is a major charity fundraiser in the town. Each team swims in a relay for 55 minutes, completing as many lengths of the pool as they can in that time. At the end, every swimmer attends a presentation and gets a medal, recording the lengths that their team has completed. Swimathon is neither a competition nor a race. Each team sets their own targets.

For the last two years the event has been held at Biddulph Leisure Centre as the Congleton Baths were being rebuilt. However, now it's back in Congleton, Rotary says that it expects to sell the event out completely! Interested team leaders can register their teams online at congleton-swimathon.com. An information pack, sponsorship forms are online and can be easily downloaded. Sandra Conway will deal with any questions: Phone 07887 54701509

The pledge - Now with over 500 signatures! There's a regular supply of hints and tips sent by email to everyone who has expressed an interest in Rotary-Congleton's environmental initiative.

If you signed after the programme started, you can catch up with all Simon's helpful hints on the website: www.congletonrotary.co.uk



Rotary support helps put the IT into Astbury

Earlier this year, Rotary contributed £2,000 towards the cost of Astbury C of E Primary School purchasing laptop computers and iPads to enable pupils to become computer literate. Their appeal was also supported by the Town Trust and Inco-

The proof of the pudding is the photos of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils sent by head teacher Miss Pip Blythe.



Rotary **YOUNG** PHOTOGRAPHER COMPETITION

Rotary's Young Photographer competition produced some remarkably good images – making the judges task more difficult!

Now on display in Congleton Library until January 13th, the winners are exhibited on boards inside the entrance, whilst all the remaining photographs are on the walls in the children's section. The theme was "Buildings in Harmony with Nature."

The overall winner, from **The Quinta**, and perfectly capturing the competition theme is 9 year-old Obe. His photo of a derelict farm outbuilding captured the relationship between the building and the encroaching shrubs and trees. The judges were unanimous in selecting the winning photo. Rotary's own professional architectural photographer, John Gauld commented on the composition with strong leading lines and yet keeping perfectly, the vertical lines of the gates and the buildings.

Second place, also from the **Quinta** went to 10-year-old Charlie with a totally different and angular shot of a well-known Congleton townhouse where the creepers had become a feature of the building, displayed in deep autumnal colours.

Third prize overall went to Olivia, a 16 year-old pupil at **Eaton Bank Academy** for her image of a lake and gardens, framed by a building and cleverly back-lit hanging branches.

In the competition, prizes are also awarded to individual schools, to encourage all pupils to take part and to develop and improve their interest in every aspect of photography.

The **Quinta Primary** submitted two sets of class entries from two age groups, resulting in the judges awarding prizes for each class of 9-year old and 10 year-old children!

In the 9-year age group, first went to Obe (also the overall winner) second to Jackson and third to Cole.

In the 10-year old group, first was Charlie (second overall), second to Kionna and third to Amelia

From **Marfields Academy**, Brad was first, Reece second and Isabella third.

Mossley's winner was Noah and second place, Eva

Also in the primary school section, Highly Commended Certificates were awarded to Harry from **Smallwood**, Chery from **Castle**, Callum from **Astbury** and Mason from **Buglawton**.

In the senior age group, the winners from **Eaton Bank Academy** were first, Olivia (also third in the overall competition) Martha and Joseph.

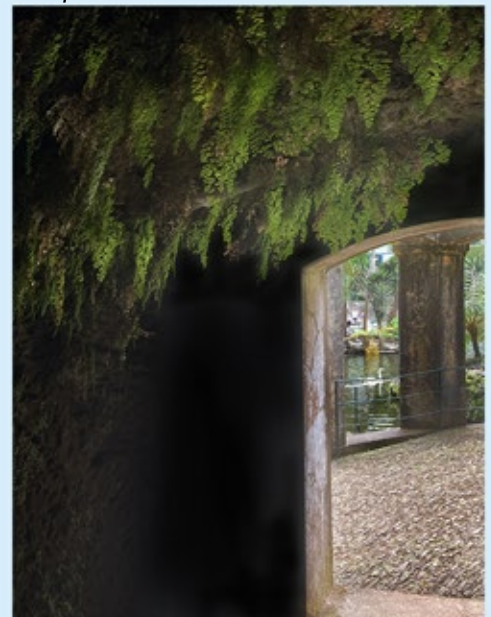
From **Congleton High School**, Noah came first, followed by Ella, second and Henry, third.



The Overall winner, Obe nailed this shot in the judges' opinion



Second, Overall: Charlie had this unusual viewpoint



Olivia earned Third Prize with this well-lit composition

Make a point of paying a visit to the Library to see the exhibition!

Cath organised the competition and the exhibition. It's well worth a visit to see what a talented group of pupils of Congleton's schools we have. Prize presentations to all winners will take place in schools later in January.



HOSPITAL VISITORS...

Santa delivered presents to the patients and staff in the Aston Ward at Congleton Hospital.

Rotary requested the special visit and Santa duly obliged, together with a team of elves.

Charlotte Bevens, healthcare assistant wanted to meet Santa and have her photo taken!

Janet Davies from Congleton had a long chat with Santa. So too, Mrs Georgina Fox from West Heath, briefly interrupted during visiting time with her daughter, Mrs Lindsey Donelly-Cordory. After a 3-weeks in hospital, the last two of which were in Congleton after breaking her hip, Mrs Fox hopes to be back in her Congleton home of the last 12 years in time for Christmas day.

Santa dropped in on Hannah Evans, Therapy Assistant, Linda Dale, Occupational Therapist and Hannah Dowdswell, Physiotherapist while they were taking their lunch break.

Paul Allen, from Poynton took the dog out, tripped over and broke his leg! After 4-weeks in Macclesfield Hospital and 3-weeks in Congleton, he is now nearly ready to have his cast removed before he can return home. He is full of praise for the staff and for the time he has spent in Congleton.

The elves and members of staff were delighted to see Santa and some of them even found the time from their duties to have their photograph taken in the day room.

All too soon, the brief visit was over and Santa disappeared to fill his sack ready for his next visit



APPLECROFT MEETS SANTA



Applecroft Nursing Home on Brunswick Street had a surprise visit from Santa (Tuesday, 19th December) and the elves from Rotary-Congleton who dropped in to hand Christmas presents to all the residents.

Brian Jennings, 77, has been at Applecroft for just 5 months and says how much he likes it there. Previously, Brian worked for Air Bags in Congleton, where he has lived for 50 years. He was pleased to be photographed with Santa.

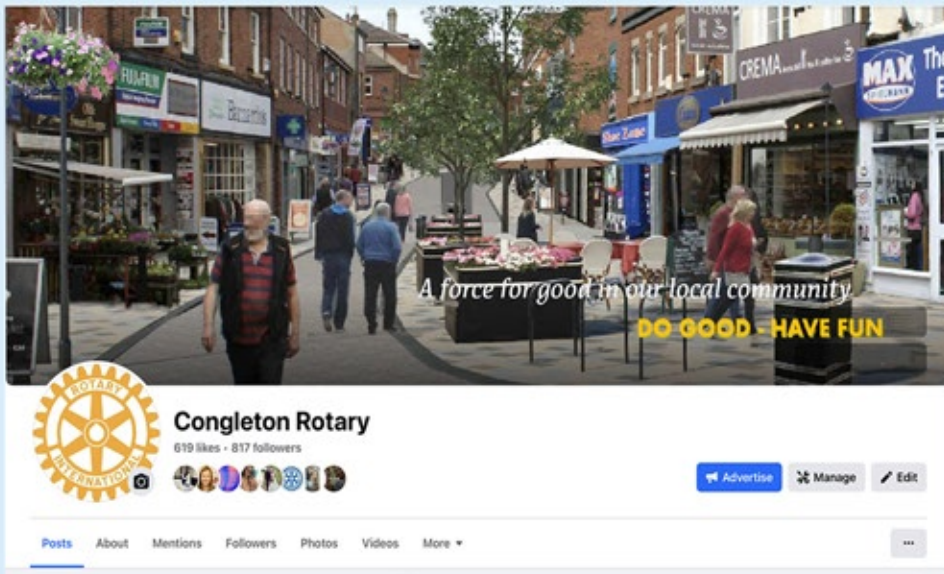
It was visiting time for Mrs Mildred Dean, aged 88. Her husband Frank and her sister were there to see her and share tea and biscuits when Santa called in with a present from his sack. Mildred, met and married Frank almost 40 years ago and they lived in Key Green. Mildred's is a remarkable story. Weighing just 3lbs at birth, she nevertheless progressed and went to Macclesfield Grammar School. Unfortunately, after brain surgery, 8 years ago, Mildred has been compelled to live in care.



Meanwhile, at Bradwell Court, Santa met Danny Dolman, a Congleton resident all his life, mostly spent in the transport business. He's been in Bradwell Court for the last 3 years and was delighted to meet Santa.



Mrs Joyce Lidgett thinks that **The Laurels** is a lovely place. Originally from Failsworth, Manchester, her husband of 40 years, worked on the railways and was moved to Congleton. Recently she went out for a rickshaw ride and loved Astbury Mere and the ducks.



Over 800 Congleton people now regularly follow us on our own Facebook Page

Facebook: How to stay up to date with what we do...

Rotary-Congleton has many ways to stay in the news and keep in touch. Secretary Rod recently asked members how many used social media. Eighty percent of those who replied already follow us on Facebook, which leaves twenty percent that are not up-to-date with our latest news. Inevitably, there are also some who did not respond or do not use the internet for whatever reason.

Some have a reluctance to follow Facebook in the fear that they might expose themselves to being 'hacked' or having their identity stolen.

This actually doesn't happen if you only use Facebook to see what's going on! The only danger of Facebook is for those people who choose to post a lot of personal details about themselves. Some ask for trouble by posting photos of themselves while they are away out of the country - an open invitation to an old-fashioned burglar!

For the rest of us, Facebook is a great way of keeping in touch with news and events as they happen in Congleton.

We post Rotary news regularly on Congleton Rotary's own Facebook page as well as local sites such as Congleton Chat, Congleton Chats Back and Congleton News and Views among others.

Often, our most relevant posts are picked up and shared by our friends at Congleton Radio and the Town Hall. In fact, Congleton Radio helps us by re-posting our news extensively on sites that they author.

Why does this matter? Put simply, our media campaign is our main method of marketing and which relies on as many people as possible seeing our events and supporting what we do. Not only does this add to our success, but it aids by building long-term awareness and support for our Rotary brand and in turn helps our recruitment drive to find new members.

One more thing. What is really important for everyone is, once you have picked up a news story, wherever you can, please 'like', comment or even better, 'share' what you've seen, helping up to spread the word to an ever wider audience. Liking and Sharing posts keeps them more visible as

Please help us to build Rotary-Congleton's success in 2024 in the modern world of social media.

A cheque puts a smile on their Friendly Faces.

Molly Ball receives a cheque for £50 from Rotarian Rod Goodier for the Friendly Faces Nursery's winning Guy Fawkes in the Bonfire competition.

Here's a friendly group from the 36 young people, presently attending the nursery. When our photo was taken, they were all getting quite excited about Christmas.

Nevertheless, they are determined to all work on entering the Guy Fawkes competition again next year!



Friendly Faces everywhere!!!



...And who could forget their winning Guy Fawkes, standing proudly to face the fire!

The David Worth Environmental Challenge

In 2024, we are launching a major new annual award in memory of our much-loved and respected treasurer and local farmer, David Worth, who passed away over Christmas 2022. The David Worth Challenge will be offered to local schools and youth organisations and will be a major environmentally-themed competition intended to be of long-term benefit to both the winners themselves and the community as a whole. The winners will receive a first prize of £500, a trophy and a plaque. All schools and youth organisations will be contacted early in the new year. Full details will be in the next Newsletter and the media. David Worth's family are supporting the idea and will be involved in its development.

Christmas Party - Masterstroke!!!

The Christmas Party was the final social event for 2023, with Rotarians encouraged to wear seasonal jumpers! A fine turn out of elves, reindeer and Santas, together with traditional designs and even a duck(?) might have challenged the judges had not Tish pulled a **masterstroke** with his jumper, complete with battery-power and flashing lights. No contest. He was immediately and obviously declared the winner.

He also 'won' on another count, having delivered an urn-full of the most deliciously inviting and piping hot gluhwein, made to his own recipe. Rumour has it that any alcohol which might have inadvertently evaporated as part of the herbal heating and infusion process was replaced with Vodka to ensure the appropriate levels were maintained! **Masterstroke number two!** Oh, and who said 'Rocket balloons?'

The club enjoyed a splendid 3-course dinner with options for those not wishing to take the traditional option of roast turkey and Christmas pud, orchestrated by long suffering organiser, Ian (**Masterstroke number 3** for Ian) and earning the club chef and his team a round of applause and a token of our appreciation.

Masterstroke number 4 consisted of a fun evening of after-dinner games. Eric and Stew organised the games, including a fiendishly difficult pub quiz, with boxes of chocolates for the winning tables, followed by two elimination rounds of 'Heads and Tails Bingo' questions. Who said it was like 'I'm a Celebrity?' Finally, the dance floor became a giant skittle alley, sliding pound coins to see who could be nearest to win either a bottle of water, a bottle of wine or a bottle of whisky. It didn't matter so much who won (Gill, Eric and Cath) but competition was intense and the game did raise an entertaining £63, duly swooped on and 'bagged' by the treasurer.

The end of a packed year of events, both social and community-based and a perfect evening that ended too soon.



Lorraine Sloane



Lorraine joined Rotary-Congleton in 2012

It is very sad news to hear that Lorraine Sloane has passed away after a period of illness. Lorraine was introduced to our club by Maggi Walker who alas is also no longer with us. These two ladies were Rotary Congleton and Lorraine was involved somehow in most of our activities. She organised and helped with Dictionaries of Life, Swimathon, Easter Eggs, Raffles, Bonfire stall items to name but a few. With everything she did Lorraine threw herself into it with boundless enthusiasm and energy.

A lovely lady who epitomised what Rotary is all about and she will always be in our thoughts.

Stewart Price

I met Lorraine in Marks and Spencer cafe, drinking coffee and helping Maggi join an online dating service. We talked for some time and both ladies told me about Rotary Congleton and the work they carried out in our area. They persuaded me to attend a meeting when they resumed in the new year.

From that point, Lorraine, Maggi and I were firm friends and we often met for coffee and a catch up. Lorraine was obviously devoted to her family and would do anything to make their lives easier and see them as frequently as possible.

To assist with that aim, Lorraine and Ron took the decision to move down south to Taplow to be near her son and his family. She loved seeing the grandchildren after school every day but missed her Rotary friends and activities. She kept in regular touch with us all and supported our activities from afar. Even the week before Christmas she was putting aside unwanted gifts to donate to our future raffles.

Lorraine handled her illness with courage and strength. She talked about it as little as possible and was only interested in what we were doing. I can only imagine how much effort it took her to travel up to Congleton a few weeks ago to say goodbye to family and friends. Photo attached of Lorraine's early Christmas with the family.

Lorraine was a huge asset to the Rotary, a loyal friend and a huge loss to us all. She will be sorely missed.

Sandra Conway

Diary Page

Note that our meeting place has changed - albeit only temporarily - while they spoodle-up the Golf Club. The next meeting - January 8th 2024 is at the Egerton Arms, Astbury

Listening out Loud will 'sing for their supper' as they tell us about their work, before benefitting from their share of the Swimathon proceeds.

Get ready for the Big One! Final preparations for Swimathon and all leave cancelled as all hands will be needed on the pumps.

Let's see how the new Congleton Leisure Centre measures up as they get ready to host their very first Swimathon. It's definitely 'In at the deep-end' for us all!!!

You can now get your swims off as we de-brief and see what worked and what didn't.

Mon 8 Jan '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Business Meeting
Footnote:		VENUE - The Egerton Arms Astbury
Mon 22 Jan '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Speaker Night
Footnote:		At the Sawmill
Mon 5 Feb '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Business Meeting
Footnote:		vENUE - The Egerton Arms Astbury
Mon 19 Feb '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Speaker Night
Footnote:		Listen Out Loud
Mon 4 Mar '24	18:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Business Meeting
Footnote:		Swimathon Briefing
Fri 15 Mar '24	14:00 PM to 20:00 PM	Swimathon
Sat 16 Mar '24	14:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Swimathon
Mon 18 Mar '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Swimathon debrief
Mon 8 Apr '24	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Business meeting
Mon 22 Apr '24	19:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Speaker Night
Sat 27 Apr '24	09:00 AM to 17:00 PM	District Conference
Sun 28 Apr '24	09:00 AM to 17:00 PM	District Conference

