

MARCH 2023

NEWSLETTER



President gets a Swimathon job as sweeper-up in chief...

PRESIDENT'S SWEEPINGS

Hello team Rotary Congleton and friends.

What a splashing good time we have had this month. I was thrilled to see such incredible teamwork at this year's Swimathon event at Biddulph Valley Leisure Centre. The event ran like clockwork thanks to superb planning from Sandra, Rachel and their team. It was great to see so many smiling faces from various community groups coming together to do good and have fun, the atmosphere all weekend was fantastic!

As you'll read over the following pages our outreach has been hugely impressive from environmental work in the community to connecting with our brilliant schools – Thank you for everything you are doing.

I am also delighted to see the fellowship in our club and the new walking group is a great example of this hugely important part of Rotary.

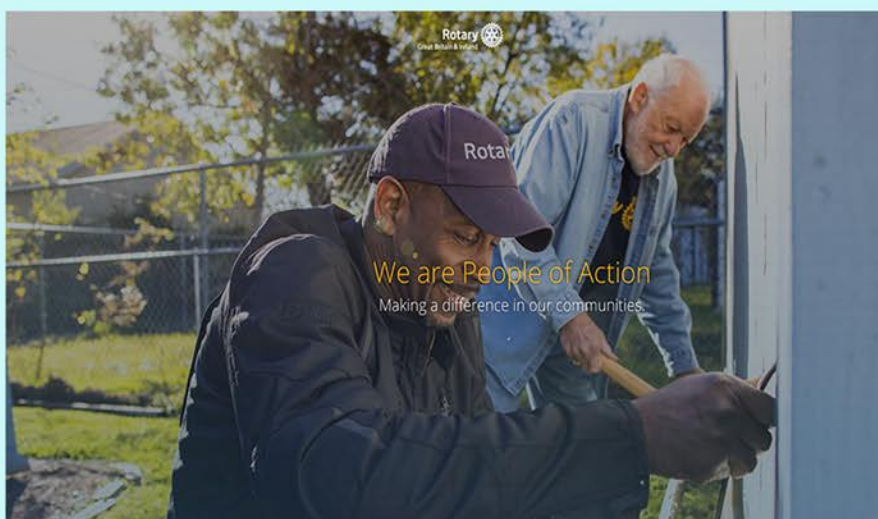
I encourage you all to use the Rotary website, it is an excellent resource and I was interested to see on a recent visit, the image on the landing page is this, and I thought it sums up Rotary Congleton perfectly!

Until next time - **"Do good. have fun"**

Kev

IN THIS ISSUE

**President sweeps up...
Swimathon - All the
teams and all the
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For friends and Rotarians alike - this is the Rotary Great Britain and Ireland web site that Kev referred to, above. The address is <https://www.rotarygbi.org> It gives the regional, national and international perspective. For members, if you register there's an extensive range of resources available in the members' area.

Of course, our local site still gives comprehensive information and news of our events. Look for it at www.congletonrotary.co.uk

Two hundred and ninety one swimmers in 49 lanes of the pool, one cross-channel swimmer, one family that turned up for every Swimathon since 1992, six primary schools, three scouts groups, one orchestra, the Air Cadets, two swimming clubs, and several family groups. Not forgetting the spectacle of the Rustic Rotarians, with Stewart Price in Edwardian costume. Over 4,000 miles swum to date. That's Swimathon!



This year's Swimathon and some of the Rotarian and partners that provided line judges and the medal team: Cath and Julie who distributed 291 medals - one for each swimmer!

...more



Quinta 1



Bennettron - The Bennet Family



"Slash and Dash"



Quinta 2



Mossley C Of E



The WAGs



Dane Valley Scouts



Air Cadets "Tiger" Flight



Mossley C of E



Air Cadets "Puma" Flight



Congleton Amateur Swimmers



L: Jennie Cook, top: Air Cadets NCO's



Cloud Brownies



1st mossley Scouts



CHS Lane 6



marlfields "Marlins"



Astbury St Mary's "Angels"



CYO "Crochets"



New Life Church Lane 1



Buglawtonn Primary



CYO "Quavers"



New Life Church lane 2



CHS Lane 3



Marlfield "Marlins"



New Life Church Lane 4



CHS Lane 5



1st Mossley Scouts



New Life Church Lane 4



Pennyston Family



Friends for Leisure Lane 1



Friends for Leisure Lane 2



Friends for Leisure Group



Izzy's BTC Team



Bidduph Swimming Club was on home ground



Black Firs put in the biggest team and raised over £1,000



Part of the support team and the Rustic Rotarians' caption competition...

A STORY OF LOCAL FOLK TO TUG AT THE HEART-STRINGS

The lengths that an extraordinary team in a local charity went to in order to support an extended family as they fled danger in Ukraine and found a safe haven in Congleton - and how Rotary-Congleton played its part.

Rotary-Congleton has been active in assisting refugees from Ukraine, both with direct help, supporting the building of modular homes, assisting with art classes and securing substantial grants from Rotary District funds to support essential school uniforms, English lessons and house moving costs.

This is how one Ukrainian refugee family came to Congleton and the support network that ensured that their journey was made possible.

When Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24th 2022, Europe discovered a new problem: how to cope with European refugees fleeing a conflict in the continent.

The refugees inspired a small group of people in and around Congleton to take action to build a structured network to match refugees to hosts and to solve all the problems of integrating them into the community.

At the heart of the organisation was Paul Nixon, who with others, set up a charity; The Congleton Area Ukrainian Support Network. CAUSN attracted teams of volunteers to help with the refugees and handle the offers of hosting. The team has successfully supported around 175 refugees with only minor problems.

One Ukrainian family posed a particular challenge. Professional couple Feliks and Natalia Tytarenko had three children and an orphaned nephew. Housing such a large family unit was exceptional and beyond local hosting families to accommodate in their homes.

This is where Catherine Evans stepped in. Cathy, a music teacher who retired early due to health reasons, had become the head of matching for CAUSN. She was responsible for setting up contacts with refugees and matching them to host families

families are prepared. Herself the granddaughter of a refugee, Cathy explained that she would not be here were it not for the welcome afforded her grandfather when he was forced to flee Vienna at the start of WW2.

So it was that she became interested in the Tytarenko case. She spent time on FaceBook communicating with them in Cyprus, and later using FaceTime to talk to them and establish their background.

Fortuitously Doug Saunders, a local

builder and property owner, entered the scene. He had tenants who were vacating one of his houses in Congleton. When the Russian missiles started to fly he asked himself "What can I do?" He heard of CAUSN and met with Paul Nixon at his recently empty but unfurnished property. Paul and Cathy thought that the Tytarenko family would make good tenants for Doug's unfurnished house.

Doug decided to gift the tenancy to the family for as long as they needed to stay. 'But,' he said, 'I didn't know what it would take to bring a family into the UK and give them a life here.'

The Tytarenkos were the first family to be found an empty property in Congleton. The problem was how to furnish the house with everything that the family needed. Again with some support from a Rotary grant to assist with removal costs, a fridge, beds, table and chairs a TV and so on were needed. Another task for CAUSN. In charge of that aspect was Alex Davis and her husband, Simon. They cleaned the property and inspired Doug to roll his sleeves up and sort out a list of building tasks!

Alex and her airline pilot husband, Simon, set about collecting furniture. Alex said that they scrounged, begged and borrowed every single thing. While Simon was away, flying, their neighbours John and Maura Rylands helped with transport and removals. Two weeks of spare time later, the house was ready.

Back to CAUSN, Elaine and Jeff Sharples - members of Refugees Welcome - who CAUSN work with closely - wanted to help. Elaine said "We saw the news and thought, What if it was us?" Their own home was not suitable for them to act as hosts, so the next best thing was for them to help others. When they heard that Doug had offered his house, they decided that they could provide the practical help in moving the family into Congleton. With the path made easy by local doctors, dentists and schools, they registered the family, sorted out a TV licence and solved countless other problems including helping to organise a benefits package. They even went round every phone shop in the area until one gifted them a phone! They said that everyone, from local shops up to Government departments all assisted. The Council helped

reduce the Council Tax and in the end, managed to cancel it completely.

The Red Cross provided boxes of books and a tablet with English educational programmes for the children. They provided phone cards and initial support money too.

The English lessons are deemed essential for all the Ukrainians. They are seen as 'key enablers' assisting children to understand school lessons and the adults to find employment to support themselves. Every Saturday, the lessons are held at All Saints church in Congleton where beginners and intermediates are taught, while otherwise distractible children are treated to creative play! One teacher is Julie Bernardi, who teaches Spanish at Sandbach and also English as a foreign language. For the Tytarenkos, because of their work, they were already capable at written English, but needed a little help with conversation.

The Tytarenko's story

The family has its own story of how they came to Congleton. They literally 'landed on their feet' when they were met at Manchester Airport. Natalia and Feliks Tytarenko settled into Doug's terraced house with their extended family, which includes one of Natalia's two nephews as well as their three children. It took Cathy over 100 days to get a visa for Natalia's nephew, Zakhar and that was only achieved with a lot of hard work and intervention by Paul Giotoiu of Cheshire East Council, who did an amazing job!

A professional couple from Irpin, Natalia and Feliks found themselves in the middle of the Russian invasion from Day One on February 24th last year. They experienced two frightening days of aerial bombardment, huddled together for safety under the stairs. With a

was under attack and all the windows and doors were blown in. They soon found themselves on the wrong side of the last bridge between their home and safety when it was destroyed defensively in order to protect Kyiv.

They managed to escape south with what they could fit in their car, driving through the middle of a battlefield, with both sides engaged around them as they drove, with Russian aircraft and helicopters flying overhead. They stayed with friends for four days, before fleeing west. Natalia and the children

found their way to Warsaw. Feliks went back to Kyiv and volunteered. After two months the family went to Cyprus which was full of Russians who were quite hostile, before connections in England put them in touch with CAUSN's Paul Nixon and Cathe-

ing conducted by video call matched them with a suitable home in Congleton. Paul remembers the first video call with Feliks in his car in an army base asking that defining question, "How are you going to look after my family?"

Natalia is now a determined volunteer undertaking translation in school for Ukrainian children whilst herself taking more advanced one-to-one English lessons, funded in part by grants from Rotary. In the evenings, she helps the children online with their schooling in Ukraine. She says that mathematics and numbers-based learning is fine here, but the written lessons are more difficult and English history is almost impossible for the children to understand.

Natalia's parents were on holiday on February 24th and couldn't get flights back home because of the near total destruction in Kherson. They ended up in Belgium, only getting to the UK in January. Now, living near Congleton Park, they are able to help with the children.

Feliks was spared front line military duty. Happy that his family are all safe, and with his parents now also in Congleton, he works for the government to arrange essential supplies, delivering them to help both the military and civilian population. He is presently

arranging convoys to drive them back to Ukraine where they are repainted and fitted with rocket launchers or machine guns. He has delivered 50 so far. Natalia helps by driving a truck as far as Rotterdam, where they are all met by a car transporter to take the vehicles onwards to Ukraine.

Feliks did manage to get back to his house with his father, where he has been able to re-fit his windows and doors. He spent a whole day removing booby traps and mines from the house. They were everywhere, including in the children's toys and in the beds, he said. The government has promised compensation to complete repairs.

Nobody knows when this extended family will be able to return home. Convinced that Ukraine will win the war, they put their trust in Volodymyr Zeylenskyy and the determination of the younger generation. As well as their home, their professional lives are back in Ukraine, but they fear that the memories of the war will remain in their children's minds and the recon-

struction of their country could be around them for a lifetime. Natalia said that the children flinch if a helicopter flies overhead, or when they hear a police siren.

The whole support team says that they are glad to have done what they did. They have bonded as a group as a result and they have all become close friends with Natalia and Feliks. Alex and Simon even invited them to their home for a four-day traditional local Christmas with all the trimmings!



Feliks with one of the pickup trucks that he took to Rotterdam to be shipped the battlefield recently



Above: The Tytarenko family

Top Left: Jeff and Elaine Sharples, Doug Saunders, and Cathy Evans

Left: Simon and Alex Davis



Focus on Schools

President Kevin wanted young people to be a theme for his year. Here's a round-up of our schoolwork this month

Buglawton Primary



Buglawton Primary received a £2,000 cheque towards their garden in the school grounds so that their pupils could learn about gardening. Fourteen raised beds have been built with the Rotary funds helping towards a pond and planting the area, adding a polytunnel, potting benches and young plants

Photo shows Mrs Rosson, the school's eco-lead who planned the garden, with Rod, Gill, Doug and Dave.

The school said 'The entire exercise is improving physical and mental well-being, which has suffered as a result of the lockdowns and missing months of their development. It will also assist with teaching teamwork and the journey that food makes from seeds to table, and making healthy diet choices.'



A group of young schoolchildren, all budding growers, was on hand to receive a starter pack of plant pots, compost, seeds and bamboo canes presented by Rotary to help them to get the new season started.



Smallwood C of E

Smallwood C of E Primary School PTA has been busy raising funds for a Trim Trail for the school, and needed a bit of help to top up their project. Rod Goodier and Brian Hogan presented a cheque to the school assembly together with Head, Mr I Lewis and Claire Pear

raised most of the money for the project. Classes take turns to use the trail



at lunchtimes, with Fridays saved for two 'VIP' classes that have shown leadership, good manners and politeness during the week.

The trim trail helps children improve spacial awareness and co-ordination.

They encourage physical play outside and encourage an active lifestyle. Apparently, the pupils at Smallwood are enjoying the experience and can't wait to take their turn!



Above: The Smallwood pupils enjoy their Trim Trail



Daven Primary

Our environmental team has been hard at work, pruning fruit trees, clearing the garden area and the poly-tunnel at Daven School, ready for the school to teach classes in horticulture during the planting season.

The final job was to plant a hedge along the boundary at the front. Simon and Anne were hard at work on the hedge early in March. Anne has been a staunch supporter of the Rotary project from the start - and with her own personal reason. She retired as a teacher at the school having spent five years working with the pupils and staff.

Mossley Primary



Pupils say 'No' to parking! The photo is of the head boy and head girl of Mossley Primary School proudly displaying their new "Buddy" signs for which we donated £500. Boundary Lane is beset with parking problems at school times with cars obstructing driveways and the yellow road markings and the school was determined to do something about it, improving safety for the pupils. The signs were designed by the pupils, themselves.

NEWS ROUND UP



The Party in the Park is on May 8th

We've had a cry for help from the Town Council, with volunteers to monitor the gates and assist with helping blue badge holders through the road closures.

Rotary will have its usual gazebo in the park, this year with the emphasis on the environment with a pledge to get everyone thinking about the issues. Simon Fallis wants to make Congleton a more environmentally-aware town and an set an example to the rest of the country.



Purple Patch

In March, purple crocuses were in bloom in beds throughout the town. The biggest beds are in the triangle near the Ambulance Station at Lower Heath. The purple crocus is the symbol of Rotary's fight against polio.

Some people will be old enough to remember polio victims in an iron-lung. These dreadful contraptions were needed as the only way to maintain breathing while patients fought the disease. Total eradication of polio has now been achieved in the developed world. But the ongoing inoculation campaign is vital to maintain that record both here and throughout the world.

Back in 1985, Rotary committed to a global campaign to inoculate every child under 5.

Rotary's 'End Polio' campaign is an ongoing commitment. The purple crocuses will flower again, next year

Will you sign the pledge?



The environmental team tested a new idea at the Wellbeing exhibition in the Town Hall on March 28th. The idea is to raise awareness in environmental issues and make Congleton the most environmental aware town in the country. Simon Fallis wants everyone to 'Sign the Pledge' – in fact 10 pointers to help local folk realise that simple steps can have an impact. Posters and leaflets explained the Pledge, while everyone that signed went away with a lapel badge. The Pledge, in its early stages of thinking could eventually grow to include a web page and a blog with regular ideas of what simple steps everyone can take to help the environment.

Church Defibrillator is Up, Fully Charged and Good to Go

We provided a grant of £1,000 towards a defibrillator at the Trinity Methodist Church on Wagg Street.

The defibrillator is mounted outside of the church and is available to use 24 hours a day. Revd. Yvonne Pearson thanked Rotary for providing the funds to make the installation possible. The church had raised a substantial amount to-

had made it possible.

Doug Parker said that around 7 – 800 people, many of them elderly, used the church and its facilities every week. Tish Bhatt, our retired cardiac surgeon, handed over the defibrillator to Revd. Pearson on Saturday, 4th March.



NEWS ROUND UP

Eric Capper Trophy

Each year, the Eric Capper Trophy is presented to the winner of the local heat in the Young Chef competition. The trophy is in memory of Rotarian Eric Capper who founded the competition. It is retained for a year by the winner. This year the trophy goes to Ella, from Congleton High School. Together with runner-up, Amelia, they were practising for the next stage of the competition with a little help and oversight from Andrew Bourne, well-known chef at the Alexandra Court Hotel and head of the local judging panel.



L to R, Amelia, Andrew Bourne, the winner Ella, Eric Westwood, and teacher, Mrs C Thorpe.

Easter Eggs for residents of Care Home

Last year, Rotary purchased 50 Easter Eggs for the residents at Heliosa Nursing Home. This year, they asked if Rotary could do the same again. The eggs were purchased from Tesco and delivered to the home in good time for Easter



Rod and Heliosa's Kirsty Maskery

KALEIDOSCOPE
BIG BAND AT THE NEW LIFE CHURCH

A VARIED PROGRAMME OF CLASSIC, SWING, BALLAD, SALSA, LATIN AND FUNKY TUNES... FROM COUNT BASIE AND DUKE ELLINGTON THROUGH TO WEATHER REPORT AND THE BIG PHAT BAND.

SATURDAY 17TH JUNE AT 7.30 pm

TICKETS FROM CONGLETON INFORMATION OFFICE PRICE £12.50

Bring your own Food and Drink
Proceeds support Rotary work in the community

Rotary
Congleton

BIG BAND IS BACK!

Put Saturday 17th June in the diary for a night to remember when Kaleidoscope returns to the New Life Church with a night of all-time favourites. There's a new vocalist - Marilyn Royle - to accompany the band this year. Tickets £12.50 from Doug Parker and shortly from the Information Office at the Town Hall.

KINGS & QUEENS

ROTARY-CONGLETON
YOUNG ARTIST COMPETITION - 2023

ENTER NOW - CLOSING DATE: JUNE 17th.
SPONSORED BY SENIOR AEROSPACE BIRD BELLOWS
INDIVIDUAL PRIZES AND CERTIFICATES AND A TROPHY FOR THE WINNING SCHOOL

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Rod reports a big response from schools to the Young Artist competition, this year. There's a limit of 50 entries per school, so judging could be a big task! Sponsors Senior Aerospace Bird Bellows have generously returned to support the competition, with it's particularly relevant and topical theme. The competition closes on June 17th

Rotary-Congleton's Lasting Tribute to Queen Elizabeth II



The club presented a Scots Pine tree to Astbury Golf Club, where it has been planted together with a plaque, in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

President of the golf club, Mr. Steve Whalley said 'It means everything that Rotary supports the club with the tree in memory of the Queen. Now the club has a memorial that will last for many years and which it will treasure as a fitting tribute to a wonderful person.'

The tree is located near the 18th green and is clearly visible from the club house.

The donation of the tree was arranged by Rotary's environmental team, headed by David Brew.



The ceremony to plant the tree at Astbury Golf Club in memory of Queen Elizabeth II was delayed due to a short, sharp shower. Minutes later a rainbow appeared, as if to spotlight the newly planted tree at its end.

Rotary **YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER** COMPETITION

Eric with assistance from John made Young Photographer presentations to all the schools that entered the competition and drummed up support for next year from those schools that only entered a handful of photos! This year, every entrant got a certificate and a print of their photo. The 10 best – three winners and 7 highly commended entrants – each received Amazon vouchers and framed certificates. Quinta entered 44 photos and ran away with half the prizes.

Buglawton



Buglawton: The whole school turned out to see our entrants receive their certificates and award

Quinta



Quinta: Again, in front of the whole class, our highly commended entrants and the two winners received their certificates and gift vouchers. Because of the number of entrants, teachers gave each entrant a certificate and a print of their photo.

Owing to the number of entries received, Eric decided to present a framed photo to the school. Our photo (below) shows Eric presenting the picture frame to the head, Mr Sharpe.



Eaton Bank



EBA Only one entry, but a worthy one! Eric was on hand to present the certificate. Perhaps there'll be more next year...

Congleton High



CHS Unfortunately, our highly commended entrant and winner of a voucher was off sick on the day, so we left her prize with her teacher. We presented a certificate to the one remaining entrant and left confident that there'll be more entries next year!

Mossley



Mossley: Another crop of entrants with two chosen by the judges to receive vouchers. Eric holds the prize-winner's entry - absent on the day.

Marlfields



Marlfields: Out in the playground, we had four entrants this year. John's tinted glasses went dark as the entrants stood in front of the whole school in the playground to receive their certificates. They all gave Rotary three enthusiastic cheers!

We're confident that Marlfields will be back, next year with many more aspiring photographers.

Well Done Everyone!

Diary Page

Mon 3 Apr '23	19:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Huddle Night
Mon 17 Apr '23	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Speaker Night
Footnote:		Paul Nixon on Ukraine update
Mon 15 May '23	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Huddle Night
Mon 22 May '23	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Social Night
Footnote:		Meal at a Pub
Mon 5 Jun '23	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	AGM & Club Assembly
Sat 17 Jun '23	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Jazz Night
Footnote:		New Life Church
Mon 19 Jun '23	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	Speaker Night
Footnote:		John Twigg - Advanced Driving
Mon 3 Jul '23	19:00 PM to 22:00 PM	President's Handover
Fri 7 Jul '23	18:00 PM to 23:00 PM	ASTONBURY
Footnote:		Glebe Farm - Beer festival with live music
Sat 8 Jul '23	18:00 PM to 23:00 PM	ASTONBURY
Footnote:		Glebe Farm - Club BBQ/Picnic with live bands.
Mon 17 Jul '23	18:00 PM to 21:00 PM	Speaker/Social
Sun 23 Jul '23	10:00 AM to 18:00 PM	Classic Car Show
Footnote:		Egerton Arms Astbury

April 17: Bring wives and partners - in fact anyone you can, to hear Paul Nixon's inspirational story of how Congleton played host to 175 Ukrainian refugees - with our visitors - the people that helped make it happen for one Ukrainian family.

Monday 22nd: Watch for details of a social night at a pub venue to be advised

Monday 5th: Another Year recorded and the next one planned.

Saturday 17th June A night out with the Big Band. Usual great night of big band music from the superb Kaleidoscope Band

Monday, 19th June: And now... How to signal at roundabouts, perhaps?

3rd July: "Bye Bye" Kev and "Hello" to Brian! Will it be "all change?"

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

Rotary 