WINCHESTER ROTARY
Annual Report 2012-13

A YEAR OF WORKING WITH WINCHESTER AND THE WIDER WORLD

Winchester is one of the largest and most diverse Rotary clubs in the South, with a turnover of some £50,000. With ninety members drawn from a wide variety of professional backgrounds, both men and women, working and retired, it provides support for many organisations in and around Winchester as well as international good causes.

This year’s most significant event was the revival of the Clarendon Marathon in October which had some 1,000 runners taking part, many of whom were raising money for their own causes. A number of local charities benefited from organising way stations along the route. With this and the Swimathon in February over £20,000 was raised by those taking part.
Many of the club’s activities involve the Mayor so it is unsurprising that three previous Mayors have joined. The serving Mayor is invited to become an honorary member.

Support for Winchester City Council includes helping to marshal the Olympic Torch relay, working together on their Olympic legacy CycleFest and helping with a lunch for senior citizens in the City’s care organised by the Worthy Down Garrison – one of whose staff has recently joined the club and is building links between the two organisations.

The University of Winchester now has membership through the Pro Vice-Chancellor which provides a link with the club. A Rotary presentation to a Common Purpose Group of undergraduates on leadership resulted in four students being recruited for the visit to Paulton’s Park for Kids Out. The hope of establishing a Rotaract club at the University has been strengthened.

A new initiative has been the introduction of an award for the best nurse or nursing team at the Royal Hampshire County Hospital as voted by patients and their relatives. The winners were the Freshfield Ward. This strengthens the link with the League of Friends which is chaired by a member of the club and another member who runs the Hospital Radio.
WORKING WITH WINCHESTER

The Club sings carols at Christmas in the High Street as one of its fundraising activities and was helped to keep in tune by Jubilee Brass from Southampton.

Money is also raised by helping Winchester Round Table to steward their annual Firework Spectacular which draws over 20,000 spectators.

A number of members are Cathedral guides and have arranged special tours in aid of the recently launched Capital Fundraising Appeal. The club attends the Remembrance Day Service and lays a wreath.

A flourishing Environment Group in the Club has organised bulb planting in the Cathedral outer close, clear ups in St. Cross and at Stanmore School and is investigating a carbon capture scheme.

Needs of an ageing society

The Stroke Club, which will mark its 25th anniversary later this year, has been supported with a weekly rota of drivers so that its members can attend.

Reminiscence groups have been established in association with the Alzheimer’s Society at the Sunrise Home in Weeke and the newly opened St. Catherine’s view at Stanmore. They benefit residents as well as those in the community.

A Senior Citizens’ party is run with the help of Inner Wheel annually at Itchen Abbas Village Hall which this year was organised by the new Mayor elect, Winchester Rotarian Eileen Berry.
CHANCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Peter Symonds College is the catalyst for a number of activities. The Paralympics offered an opportunity to support a visually impaired student who – with his brother – were key members of the national Goalball team.

Working with Sainsbury’s at Badger Farm, who had coincidentally chosen to back the same sport, forecourt collections raised over £4,000 which will help the national team practice at Peter Symonds, take part in the Paralympics and now to prepare themselves for Rio 2016.

A concert is held annually at the Milner Hall which gives a platform to students from the Specialist Music Group at the College and raises funds. Three Summer recitals are sponsored.

Working with the geography department, the club supports student visits to Africa. Candidates from the College were also recruited to attend the Rotary Youth Leadership Course.

Links with The Henry Beaufort School – which had hosted two Rotary events, culminated in a day of mock interviews for students when twenty seven Rotarians conducted 145 interviews to help students plan their next steps as they considered their careers.

Twenty Young Carers were taken to the Paralympics as well as a sailing day in the Solent and an afternoon’s surfing at Boscombe beach.
CHANCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

District Events
Winchester is one of eighty nine clubs in Rotary Wessex District which covers the central south. They organise larger scale events which includes **Kids Out** every June when some 1,300 children with special educational needs are taken to Paulton’s Park. A team from Winchester looks after a party from Osborne School for the day. Four students from the **University of Winchester** came to help as well.

The district also organises a Christmas **Shoebox campaign** where schools provide the equivalent of a Christmas stocking for children from Montenegro and Tanzania. Last year 737 boxes were collected. They were part of the District consignment of 25,183 that were shipped out of Southampton by container. Local Rotary clubs organise the distribution on arrival.

Competitions are organised nationally for young people. This year we organised the local heat the **Young Musicians’ Festival** which has a District heat and concludes with a national final. Twelve musicians took part.

There are also opportunities for public speaking organised on similar lines. This year **Youth Speaks** returned to Winchester with six teams involved. The District heat was also organised by Winchester with ten teams competing.
Rotary is a global organisation which is active in 200 countries around the world. Its biggest international project is the elimination of Polio. Starting in 1979 and working with the World Health Organisation and the Bill Gates Foundation the disease has now been isolated to only three countries.

Rotarians travel abroad at their own expense to take part in Mass Immunisation Days and Winchester Rotarian Colin Cook took part in 2010. The previous year, Gill Russell, current club secretary and a polio survivor herself, met an Indian Government immunisation team while on a trip organised by the Winchester-based charity Wells for India to visit a water project in Rajasthan.

The major project this year has been working with local charity Education Uganda on their Books for Schools project. Money raised locally and matched by donations from other clubs and global grants through Rotary International should raise some £20,000.

Two members of Kasese Rotary, Western Uganda, who were sponsored by a Cheshire club, visited Winchester and were reunited with the charity who had met them in Uganda earlier in the year.

During their stay violent storms saw considerable destruction back home and both Winchester and the host club were able to provide immediate help.

This included a team from ShelterBox who were quick to visit the scene and assess the need. This charity grew out of Rotary and specialises in the rapid delivery of a tent and all the equipment needed to sustain ten people – which even includes children’s toys.

Winchester has an interest in 27 shelter boxes that are deployed around the world. This year’s collection was aided by the Explorer Scouts.
A party of eight from the Calcutta Rotary Club paid a reciprocal visit to Winchester on their way to the Rotary International Conference in Lisbon.

In addition to Polio, other projects have been jointly undertaken in India with current interest in an Eye Hospital which is being built at Hooghly, near Calcutta and formally the Jaipur Limb project.

A team from the Philippines visited under a Group Study Exchange Scheme which was followed by a team of young professionals from Hampshire making a return visit to look at their own fields of interest.

Winchester is linked to Le Havre de Grâce Rotary in France and to Oberhausen Anthony-Hütte Rotary in the Ruhr, Germany. The three clubs meet on a rotating basis for a weekend in May each year.

It was the turn of the French to be hosts this year and to talk about their peace initiative which is being led by their current president who is a native of Syria.

Two of our most interesting visitors this year have been a Peter Symonds student who won a Rotary scholarship to the United States at a University in Georgia and a journalist from Nepal who was awarded a peace scholarship to study in Britain with other international scholars.

Sponsored by Patan Rotary, she gave us a vivid view of the aftermath of the civil war and the challenge that she and other courageous journalists are taking up.

Artist David Shepherd spoke to the joint meeting of Winchester Rotary and sister club Inner Wheel about his Wildlife Foundation and their work to protect threatened species.
LOOKING AHEAD

Major events in the coming year will be the Clarendon Marathon on 6th October and Swimathon at St. Swithun’s School in February. Both events will provide opportunities to fundraise for charities chosen by those taking part.

Work continues to improve the website to make it more accessible and of greater value to the public and to improve the club’s working with new media. During the year new partners and members will be sought – particularly in the business community. It is hoped to establish a Rotaract Club on the University campus.

SWIMATHON

Through Rotary Wessex there will be opportunities for musicians and singers in the Young Musicians Festival and for public speakers in Youth Speaks which each have local heats leading to a national final. The deadline for this year’s Shoebox appeal is 23rd October. Details of all our forthcoming opportunities can be found on our website. Next year Rotary Wessex will be chaired by a Winchester Rotarian, John Eade – the first for 50 years.

‘The glue that holds the club together are its social events, shared activities and satisfactory projects,’ says Simon Theobalds, the President for this year. ‘It has been an honour to have the responsibility for the club for a year and a privilege to work together with so many talented and enthusiastic people. There may be no such thing as a free lunch, but – we can offer you one!’

Interested?

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