



The Rotary Club of Belfast

Club No.67 in RI & No.3 in RIBI

115th Annual Report

For the year ended 31st March 2026

**UNITE
FOR
GOOD**



Organised 24th July 1911

First formal meeting 14th August 1911

Founder member of Rotary International in Great Britain & Ireland

Rotary

The Rotary Club of Belfast



The Club meets normally at the Europa Hotel, Belfast on Mondays (except Bank Holidays) at 12.45pm for 1.00pm.

Contact Details

Club Secretary : David Boyd

**128 Bangor Road,
Holywood,
BT18 0ES**

Email: *info@belfastrotaryclub.com*

Telephone: +44 (0) 28 90424931

Mobile: +44 (0) 7774 857508

Online Presence

www.belfastrotaryclub.com



The Rotary Club of Belfast



@belfastrotary

Website Members' Area Log in

User name:	your christian & surnames - all lowercase <i>no spaces or capitals</i>
Password:	member1911 - all lowercase no spaces

CLUB EXECUTIVE

President
Immediate Past President
Honorary Secretary
Honorary Treasurer
Asst. Hon. Treasurer

Heather Shiell
Ken Nixon
David Boyd
Tim Browne
John Williamson

CLUB COUNCIL

Derek Baxter
Shaun Hannon

Brian Clements
Marnette Lyons

Malcolm Griffiths
Eric Rainey
John Rea

Rosemary Simpson

CLUB SERVICE CHAIRS

Membership
Community & Vocational
International
Foundation
Environment
Youth Service
Communications

Alan Rundle
Mark Davidson
Adrian Kerr (*to June 25*)
Steven Costello
Karen Blair
Heather Shiell
David Boyd

CLUB OFFICERS

Attendance
Archivist
Badges
Children in Hospital / Montgomery Bowl
Directory
Website/Club News Editor
Fellowship
Health & Safety
Information
Pastoral Care
Programme
Protection Officer
Sports
Youth Leadership

David Boyd
Gordon Millington
David Boyd
John Rea
David Boyd
David Boyd
Brian Clements
Denis Wilson
Gordon Millington
Rosemary Simpson
Ken Nixon
Eric Rainey
Tim Browne
Alan Duncan

CLUB LIAISON OFFICERS

Inner Wheel



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One Hundred and Fourteen Years - 1911-2025

Year	President	Honorary Secretary
1911-12	William Wallace*	John P Corry
1912-13	H H Montgomery*	Edwin Dempster
1913-14	W H Alexander*	Hugh Boyd
1914-15	W C Gabbey*	~
1915-16	John M Colton*	~
1916-17	Arthur S Davidson*	William C Gabbey
1917-18	George W Clarke*	~
1918-19	Hugh Boyd*	James Dalzell
1919-20	James F Newell*	~
1920-21	Charles E White*	Walter Malcolm
1921-22	James Dalzell*	John S Garrett
1922-24	Frederick McKibbin*	Wilfred W Weston
1924-25	Robert G Todd*	~
1925-26	Walter Malcolm*	~
1926-27	Arthur S Atkinson*	~
1927-28	William Sweeney*	~
1928-29	George G Little*	~
1929-30	James E McCue*	~
1930-31	Harris Rundle*	~
1931-32	A Thomas Robinson *	~
1932-33	John W T Watters*	~
1933-34	R P C Gotto*	~
1934-35	David J Thompson*	~
1935-36	Gordon J Stephenson*	~
1936-37	W D Geddis*	~
1937-38	John W Lindsay*	~
1938-39	Fred R Unwin*	~
1939-40	Edwin Dempster*	Ernest R Ingram
1940-41	Sir James Norritt*	~
1941-42	Walter K Alexander*	~
1942-43	Ernest Rea*	~
1943-44	Walter H Cooper*	~
1944-45	Fred H Purdy*	~
1945-46	Walter C Tate*	Arthur D Simpson
1946-47	S Robert Bell*	~
1947-48	Arnold White*	~
1948-49	Robert Mulholland*	~
1949-50	Aubrey A Harding*	~
1950-51	John Petrie*	John Little
1951-52	F Malcolm McKibbin*	Robert A Patterson
1952-53	Arthur D Simpson*	~
1953-54	Fred L Gribbon*	~
1954-55	John Morrow*	~
1955-56	W Frank Black*	~



One Hundred and Fourteen Years - 1911-2025

Year	President	Honorary Secretary
1956-57	John Little*	Robert A Patterson
1957-58	David Andrews*	Horace W Gooding
1958-59	J Allison Corkey*	Terence W Duncan
1959-60	Norman Agnew*	~
1960-61	Thomas W McConnell*	~
1961-62	A Stanley Boyd*	Terence W Duncan
1962-63	H Cecil Rundle*	R G McCadden
1963-64	John McC Rea*	~
1964-65	H Chesley Boyd*	P H S Newel
1965-66	Frederick C Rogan*	~
1966-67	Robert J Frizzell*	S O Morton
1967-68	Henry J Porter*	~
1968-69	Reginald G McCadden*	J Campbell Bailie
1969-70	Stanley Rainey *	~
1970-71	Lister Dawson*	~
1971-72	Terence S Duncan*	~
1972-73	Ernest Gleghorn*	Alan Brown
1973-74	Harry S Corscadden*	~
1974-75	William J Doran*	~
1975-76	James T Kernohan*	Gordon S Millington
1976-77	Harold E Smith*	~
1977-78	William H Donaldson*	~
1978-79	John H A Swinson*	K K Fleischer
1979-80	Raymond H A Boyd*	~
1980-81	Gordon S Millington	~
1981-82	Trevor C Dickey*	Gordon S Richardson
1982-83	Jack McGarry	F Michael Donaghy
1983-84	Robert J Ayling*	~
1984-85	Robert W Kimlin*	Brian Mooney
1985-86	K Craig McClelland	~
1986-87	Kenneth J Dunbar*	~
1987-88	B R Johnston	David S Boyd
1988-89	Douglas M Simpson*	~
1989-90	Derek E McIlwaine*	~
1990-91	F Michael Donaghy*	~
1991-92	Roy N MacDougall*	~
1992-93	T Victor M McKirgan*	J Trevor Hinds
1993-94	Albert S Baird*	~
1994-95	J Brian Byers*	~
1995-96	Alan E White *	~
1996-97	Ken E Reid*	~
1997-98	J Campbell Morton	R H Barrie Houston
1998-99	David S Boyd	~
1999-00	John C Lowry*	~



One Hundred and Fourteen Years - 1911-2025

Year	President	Honorary Secretary
2000-01	Brian T Ferguson	R H Barrie Houston
2001-02	J Trevor Hinds	~
2002-03	J Derek Baxter	Stephen Smith
2003-04	Alastair Corscadden	~
2004-05	Marnette Lyons	~
2005-06	Michael F Smyth	Robert Hood/Mark Davidson
2006-07	Maurice Brooks	Mark Davidson
2007-08	Bryan Johnston	~
2008-09	JL Courtenay Thompson*	~
2009-10	Arthur J Boyd*	~
2010-11	Brian Clements	Rosemary Simpson
2011-12	Adrian Kerr	~
2012-13	Alan Rundle	~
2013-14	Ken Morrison	~
2014-15	Ronnie McLean*	Alvin McKinley
2015-16	Ronnie Porter	~
2016-17	Ivan McMinn	Crawford McIlveen
2017-18	Rosemary Simpson	~
2018-19	Mark Davidson	Lorna Magill
2019-20	Karen Blair	~
2020-21	Ken Nixon	~
2021-22	Ken Nixon	~
2022-23	Steven Costello	Lorna Magill/David Boyd
2023-24	Steven Costello	David Boyd
2024-25	Ken Nixon	~
2025-26	Heather Shiell	~



President's Letter

My fellow Rotarians

It has been a pleasure to serve this year as the President of the Rotary Club of Belfast. We have had a varied and exciting range of activities to attend or take part in, as we follow our invocation of Service Above Self in our 115th year.

In 2026 Rotary International started with a strong Rotary Direct Marketing Campaign, but we in the Club are already well served, with our weekly newsheet and our regular public promotions on social media, through the work of Jenny and Hon. Secretary David Boyd. Thank you to both of them and also for running the video links at the weekly meetings, keeping us connected. It has been interesting too to be promoting our work through interviews on the tv channel That's TV Belfast.



Amongst all the help I have received in my role, I must thank AG Roland Bailie and within the Club, IPP Ken Nixon, who continues to organise an interesting range of speakers, but I especially thank him for his welcome advice and for stepping in to run the meetings when needed. I'd also like to thank Council members for volunteering in our wide range of activities throughout the year and in particular PP Brian Clements in his role as organiser for social activities and for ensuring we include those who are unable to attend our regular meetings.

In the contents of this Annual Report you will see the wide range of work done by our committed members.

The Seeds of Hope project has come to fruition, and is enthusiastically looking for funding to continue the good results so far. In our focus on youth, we have again worked alongside YouthAction NI, who have also interviewed Rotarians in a podcast and we have enjoyed connecting with our young Scholars and Queens students as they create a Youth project of their own. We have taken part in Generation Chef and, with thanks to Alan Duncan, we have returned after a few years, to take part in the excellent Youth Leadership programme, sending our young winner as part of the team to Stormont, the Dáil Éireann and Strasbourg.

We have continued to raise funds for humanitarian projects such as Polio Plus, ShelterBox and Lendwithcare, as well as for local needs, such as in the Ulster Hospital and Mitchell House. We have had some hands-on gardening projects too under our Environmental Service.



President's Letter

New activities have included attending the Balmoral Show in May and walking for health at the Mary Peters track. We have attended many events at other Rotary Clubs and Charity events but we would love to extend our activities even more and we look to encouraging new members at the upcoming invitation event at the Boat Club, Stranmillis.

For myself, I am happy to extend my role as President for another year. It has been wonderful to be part of a volunteer organisation that works for the good of others and especially to meet Rotarians everywhere who believe in Service Above Self to make a difference in the world.

Yours in Rotary

Heather Shiell

President



Secretary's Report

The Officers and Council are pleased to present the Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2026.

Some of the main events during the year are listed below. Full details of these and many other activities undertaken can be found in the relevant sections of this report.

2025

April

- * the new Club year commenced with President Ken presenting at the Club meeting YouthAction NI's Senior leader Clare Conlon a cheque for another Club sponsored Intern
- * YouthAction NI celebrated their 80th Anniversary with a celebratory event in the Harbour Commissioners which was attended by President Ken, PE Heather, PP Alan and Hon. Member Lady Mary
- * Council agreed to donate £500 a year to Mitchell House towards their Therapy Dog Raia which they are leasing from Assistant Dogs NI
- * Tuesday 08 April heralded the 50th Anniversary of Harmony Community Trust's establishment by The Rotary Club of Belfast
- * 56 volunteers from 4 clubs - *Belfast, Bangor, Donaghadee and North Down* - collected for ShelterBox in Bloomfield Shopping Centre across 3 days raising £2,330
- * 5 members of Lisburn Rotary Club joined 10 Club members at the coffee morning held in the Templemore Baths Heritage Centre
- * PP Marnette gave an excellent address at the District Meeting on the Club's involvement with the End Polio Now Campaign following the big fundraiser in 2008 and her participation on a vaccination campaign in India in 2009



May

- * at the Generation Chef Inter Club Final held at the Belfast Metropolitan, the Club team were narrowly beaten into 2nd place by the RC Newry team
- * the Club's Global Grant application for Seeds of Hope was approved by RI
- * the latest in the series of coffee mornings was held on a gloriously sunny day at Hillsborough Castle Coffee Shop gathering specifically there to join the members of the RC Lisburn who regularly meet there
- * the Club advised the sudden passing of Rosemary Skelly, wife of long-standing member Robert, noting she was a stalwart of the Inner Wheel Club and extended condolences to the family
- * several members joined President Ken at the joint BBQ with Inner Wheel held at Malone Golf Club
- * PE Heather and PP Mark manned the Rotary Ireland stand at the Balmoral Show



Secretary's Report *cont...*

June

- * President Ken and PE Heather met RI President Stephanie Urchick in Dublin; at the morning meeting she listened to a joint Belfast, Dublin and San Antonio Clubs' presentation on Seeds of Hope
- * The AGM was held 09 June
 - the Annual Report was adopted
 - the election of a Vice President for the year 2025/26 was deferred
 - Ordinary members of Council elected to serve for the year 2025/26 were: *Derek Baxter, Brian Clements, Rosemary Simpson, Eric Rainey and John Rea*
 - Honorary Members for the year 2025/26 were re-elected
 - a £10 increase in the Subscription for the year 2025/26 was agreed
- * the Club welcomed AG Roland Bailie to the Club Assembly who commended the Service Chair presentations particularly congratulating all the past work and plans for the year
- * Council accepted the applications of Christopher Shiell and Shaun Hannon and the resignation of PP Adrian as International Chair
- * an enjoyable time was had at the Club Gathering at the Boyds
- * introduced by guest speaker Miriam Donnan, Principal Mitchell House, the Club welcomed an unusual 'guest' - Raia the School's Therapy dog
- * 33 members and guests attended the President's Day evening meal at The Royal Belfast Golf Club
- * 28 members from the Rotary Clubs of San Antonio, Dublin and Belfast enjoyed much fellowship during the zoom virtual social at 6pm Thursday 19 June
- * 7 members and partners had a most enjoyable day of fellowship and culture in Dublin with 15 members of the Rotary Clubs of Lisburn and Newry
- * the handover to President Heather took place Monday 30 June
- * Past President Gordon led the tribute to PP Ken and presented him with the usual Compendium of Club News



July/August

- * the Club took the usual summer break with no formal Club meetings held in July or August however several events were held:
 - Club rambles were rekindled with a 2hr walk by 4 members along the Lagan towpath
 - President Heather, PP Marnette, Chris Warnock and President JCI Belfast and Friend of Club, Teddy Pop volunteered at the Hillsborough Running Festival
 - President Heather gave an interview on being Club President for That's TV Belfast which she did on zoom being on holiday in London



Secretary's Report *cont...*

- ShelterBox awarded the Club a Gold Partner Certificate; 1 of only 3 ShelterBox RGB&I Gold partners for the Rotary year 2024/25, the others being RC of Dublin-Fingal and RC of Cambridge

September

- * President Heather and Eric Rainey were interviewed by Ceilidh Jeffrey for That's TV Belfast on the Club's ShelterBox Gold Award
- * Rotary Ireland Governor Michael Fleming addressed the Club
- * many members and partners attended the Inner Wheel Club of Belfast Lunch held in John & Hester O'Carroll's home
- * 6 members who attended the District Conference held in Portrush enjoyed great fellowship and very interesting talks
- * the Club was particularly honoured to receive the Cecil Whaley Award for District Outstanding Community Project for Seeds of Hope and the District Governor Citation Certificate for achieving 10 of his 12 targets for 2024-25 in addition Hon. Secretary David came a close 2nd in the Rotary Golf Competition held at Royal Portrush
- * 17 enjoyed a lovely walk around the Mary Peters Track which was the 1st of a series of 4



October

- * the 1st Evening Meeting took place attended by President Heather, 5 members and the 2 Masters students at QUB Global Scholar Corinn Olsen and Carter Dargan
- * President Heather and IPP Ken attended Bangor RC's Charity Breakfast which was attended by nearly 120 people
- * the Club supported the Inner Wheel Club of Belfast's concert "A Night of Magical Music" held in Fisherwick Church which was greatly enjoyed by the 200 strong audience
- * the Club awarded the 2024-25 John Savage Trophy and Bursary to Harmony Community Trust (HCT) for giving great service to the community over the last 50 years; it was presented to HCT Chair Judith Thompson and Board member Seamus Camplisson after their presentation to the Club meeting
- * President Heather was joined by Hon. Treasurer Tim, PP Marnette, PP Alan and Chris Warnock to tidy up a bit of the grounds at Alpha Housing's Lowry Court
- * the 22 October meeting was the 1st time there were more participants on zoom than in the Europa!

November

- * the Club welcomed Global Scholars Lydia Kim (being hosted by the Club) and Hannah Ferguson (being hosted by RC Newtownabbey), both spoke impressively about their backgrounds, studies and hopes and plans for the future



Secretary's Report *cont...*

- * Council agreed to donate £3,300 from the Montgomery Bowl Children in Hospital Fund, for a children's digital weighing machine for the Paediatric Ward at the Ulster Hospital
- * Alexander Christopher Egan from Methody was selected as the Club's candidate for the Youth Leadership Competition; he narrowly missed being selected for the European Parliament visit at the Zone Final hosted by RC Newtownabbey but was subsequently given a place
- * 3 members participated in YouthAction's Big Skills Day
- * 20 sets of waterproof clothing kindly donated by Shaun Hannon were delivered to the Belfast Homeless Charity's new premises
- * Council with regret accepted the resignation of Teddy Elliott as he is unable to get out and about and has no internet access
- * the 1st of the new evening meetings was held



December

- * at the Special General Meeting held 01 December the examined Accounts for the year to June 2025 were approved, President Heather was re-elected to serve as President for the year 2026/27 and Honorary Secretary David and Honorary Treasurer Tim were re-elected for the year 2026/2027
- * 8 Toy Boxes were donated to Kids Out UK for a local Women's Refuge
- * the Club Xmas Appeal was donated to The Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul and the Belfast Homeless Charity
- * Members' podcasts were recorded
- * 13 current and past members attended the Coffee Morning in Belvoir Golf Club
- * 36 Club members and guests enjoyed an excellent Christmas Lunch at the Europa
- * the Club was delighted to again provide the traditional Christmas party for the Junior School children from Mitchell House
- * 7 bags of members' donated winter clothes and sleeping bags were handed over to Liz Rocks, Belfast Homeless Charity
- * seasonal greetings were exchanged with the Rotary Clubs of Belfast/Kaiapoi and Dhulikhel, Pakistan

2025

January

- * the New Year Address was given by guest speaker the Very Reverend Robert Townley who in his highly personal address reflected on the debt we owe to those gone before us leaving inspiring legacies to live better and put "in the famous words of Rotary" Service Above Self
- * Council sadly accepted Doris Houston's resignation as her husband David has gone into a care home



Secretary's Report *cont...*

- * due to the refurbishment of the 1st floor coffee bar into a cocktail bar, Club meetings have now been held in one of the meeting rooms
- * PPs Brian and Steven agreed to represent the Club at the Generation Chef Competition

February

- * the Club received an anonymous £5,000 donation for ShelterBox which, together with last year's balance of member's donations (including Gift Aid) of £2,000, enabled £7,000 to be sent to ShelterBox
- * despite having had an early lead the Club came joint 3rd (with 5 other tables) at the RC Comber Quiz night
- * 14 members and partners, including former member Teddy Elliott, had a most enjoyable Lunch for Seniors in the Montalto Estate Coffee Shop
- * John Rea organised a YouthAction Conflict Resolution Programme meetup for the young people in Queens
- * the Club regrettably advised the passing of former long-standing member John McCleery

March

- * PP Craig McClelland kindly organised for the repair of the President's Chain
- * Council agreed £500 to be paid to Mitchell House from the Children in Hospital Fund to continue the sponsorship for a year for their special therapy dog Raia
- * Council also agreed to sponsor another YouthAction NI Intern at £500
- * PP Alan regrettably reported 2 NI Rotary Clubs have closed down: Derry/Londonderry & Antrim
- * 3 Club teams were highly successful at the Mary Peters Trust Quiz particularly PP Bryan's team who won and IPP Ken's team who came 2nd!
- * PP Karen was joined by President Heather, PP Mark, PP Brian and Hon. Treasurer Tim at Lowry Court for the latest environment/community outreach
- * President Heather, PPs Ken, Steven and Alan attended the District Foundation and Membership Seminar
- * the Tent for Lent Appeal was launched
- * in a most impressive presentation MCB's Alex Egan reported on his Youth Leadership Development visit to the European Parliament in Strasbourg



Membership

Club Membership at 31 March 2026 is 37 - 3 less than in 2025. There are 8 Honorary Members. Council was delighted to accept membership applications at the end of the 2025 Club year from Shaun Hannon and Christopher Shiell. With regret, resignations were accepted from Letitia Fitzpatrick, Michael Graham, Ronnie Porter, Teddy Elliott and Doris Houston.



Secretary's Report *cont...*

A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of

Alan E White, JP



10th January 1933 to 26th January 2025
Whitstable Presbyterian Church,
Shore Road, Newtonabbey
Saturday 10th January 2025 at 11am

Service conducted by
Matthew Banks, Assistant Minister of Whitstable

The Club was greatly saddened to record the death of Hon Member Alan White PHF who passed away peacefully in his Nursing Home Monday 26 January; condolences were expressed to his sons Brian, Richard, Colin and Berkeley and the wider family circle. Alan was awarded a Paul Harris fellowship in 2002 and Honorary Membership in 2009.

At the Club meeting following his funeral PP Brian in his personal reflection noted that he had known him for 65 of his 95 years and that Alan had been a former Sunday School teacher, Scout Leader, colleague and an outstanding Rotarian and entrepreneur though he had suffered with depression. A 3rd generation Rotarian President (1995-96) he joined in 1958 and instigated many Club youth projects, particularly restarting the Boys Camp in 1963. He was renowned for his "Epistles", particularly to incoming Presidents, which always contained classic ideas and 'gems'. He concluded that PP Alan had been one of his greatest mentors; a huge influence on his life not least for introducing him to the rich experience of Rotary and Club members, for which he was greatly thankful, he will be greatly missed and he asked members to stand for a moment to remember him.

Condolences on his personal bereavement was extended to Robert Skelly on the sudden passing of his wife Rosemary who had been a stalwart of the Inner Wheel Club and condolences were extended to the family circle.

The Club was also saddened to hear of the death of former long-standing member John McCleery who died Friday 13 February, John had been a long-standing member for 58 years before he resigned in 2024. Former member Peter Thompson also sadly passed away in February.

Several members and family members experienced ill-health, some have had treatments, medical operations or procedures and the Club wish them all well.

The Club thanks PP Rosemary Simpson for her continual pastoral care reaching out not only to members but also to the widows of former members.

Attendance

From the start of the year meetings have been held in the Europa with a zoom link, in recent weeks the venue has changed from the 1st floor restaurant to one of the new meeting rooms. No meetings were held during July and August.

37 Meetings were held with an average attendance in the Europa and on zoom of 21, 17 members recorded attendance of 70% and over, 3 members recorded 100% attendance.



Secretary's Report *cont...*

Speaker Programme

Thanks are extended to IPP Ken Nixon for organising such excellent weekly speakers on very varied and interesting topics all of which were greatly enjoyed and appreciated and ranged (to name but a few!) from *local charities, youth, local business, the Lyric Theatre and Seeds of Hope*.

Communications

The weekly Club News is the main channel for communication to members. The public face of the Club continues to be the website, Facebook and Instagram pages which draw attention from around the world, prompting visitors and prospective members.

Charity Draw

The winners of each monthly draw were:

	<i>1st</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>
April	<i>Denis Wilson</i>	<i>Jonathan Bogg</i>	<i>John Williamson</i>
May	<i>Brian Clements</i>	<i>Jenny Boyd</i>	<i>Adrian Kerr</i>
June	<i>Jean Horstman</i>	<i>President Ken</i>	<i>Jonathan Boggs</i>
September	<i>Campbell Morton</i>	<i>Janice Brown</i>	<i>Maurice Brooks</i>
October	<i>Judi McMinn</i>	<i>Maurice Brooks</i>	<i>David Boyd</i>
December	<i>Denis Wilson</i>	<i>Gaile Morton</i>	<i>Susan Nixon</i>
January	<i>Eric Rainey</i>	<i>John Rea</i>	<i>David Boyd</i>
February	<i>Maurice Brooks</i>	<i>Betty Wilson</i>	<i>David Boyd</i>
March	<i>Maurice Brooks</i>	<i>Marnette Lyons</i>	<i>John Williamson</i>

Hon Treasurer Tim asks all members to inform him of their bank details so the payments can be made online.

As always the following pages set out in more detail the life and contributions of the Club and its members over the year. The Officers and Council acknowledge the Commitment of members to the ideal of service as recorded by the Chairs of Committees and other members.

David Boyd

Honorary Secretary



Membership Report

The Rotary Club of Belfast Membership at 31 March 2026 is 45 :

37 active Club Members and 8 Honorary Members.

The biggest challenges currently facing Rotary are acquiring new members and membership retention. This was highlighted by District Membership Convenor Michael Foley at a recent event held at Corr's Corner Hotel in March. He introduced the meeting by informing that the average age of Rotarians in Ireland has now reached 75. He also advised that in the past two years Rotary Ireland has lost a number of Clubs across the island. He emphasised that it is imperative that all Clubs have a root and branch review of existing practices and introduce effective modifications to make Rotary more appealing to younger candidates and adapt to modern living in this digital age.

On a brighter note, we were delighted to welcome our Peace Scholar, Lydia Kim, who has formed a connection with a number of fellow students studying Conflict Resolution at Queen's University. One of their number being Corinn Olsen, a Rotary member in her home town in Arizona. They are currently working with our other collaborative organisation, YouthActionNI on a variety of projects. We also welcomed Jeanette Pierobon, a Rotary Direct member who attends our meetings on a regular basis. It is also good to see that our more recently inducted members have immersed themselves in our projects over the past year.

Our meetings continue to be held at the Europa, with the addition of members joining on Zoom, the balance being fairly equal in numbers. As I close we are preparing an event at the Belfast Boat Club entitled "This is Rotary" to inform potential members of the various projects, both within the local community and internationally, with which we are involved. We also will be promoting the social aspect of the Club.

Alan Rundle

Membership Chair

Honorary Members

Lady Mary Peters

Martha Gray

Ilene Shaw

June Trimble

Jenny Boyd

The Lord Mayor of Belfast

US Consul General in Belfast

Inner Wheel Club of Belfast President



Community & Vocational Report

Rotary Christmas Toy Box initiative

As a Club we donated 8 toy boxes to the KidsOut Toy Box Christmas Appeal supplying a Refuge nearest to the Club's location. This supports Mothers fleeing domestic abuse with their children. Cut off, they have no way of accessing gifts, which are packaged and delivered through the KidsOut charity.

Mitchell House School Christmas Party

This year's party was held on Tuesday 16 December. 30 pupils were entertained by Magic George in the nursery. As always, the show was a great success. Snacks and cartons of juice were distributed before Santa's arrival.



PP Brian Clements again donned the costume, distributing presents to the children. Brian and Rosie once again put together the goodie bags, so a special note of thanks to them for all their input.

Raia , Mitchell House's New Therapy Dog.

Leased from Assistance Dogs NI at an initial outlay of £8000.00 Raia, a labradoodle puppy, now resides with School Principal Miriam Donnan and spends her days providing comfort to the children at Mitchell House. The teachers and assistants all enthuse about Raia's ability to reduce anxiety levels, not only for the children but staff also as can be seen in the pictures - a full appreciation of Raia can be found on Instagram [@raia_mitchellhouse](#).



The Club again agreed to donate £500.00 towards the yearly outlay.

Mark Davidson

Community and Vocational Chair



Community & Vocational Report

Belfast Homeless Services

The Club this year has started supporting the charity Belfast Homeless Services not only through the Club Christmas Appeal but also on a practical level.

The work of the Charity and the difficulties they face was outlined by the Charity's Service Co-ordinator Liz Crummy at a Club meeting 17 November. Having recently moved to new premises, she highlighted its refurbishment has enabled them to increase their volunteers and greatly expand their opening times and services.

In the autumn members kindly donated warm clothes such as coats, waterproofs, jumpers, gloves, blankets, sleeping bags which the charity had requested.



7 bags were delivered by PP Alan and 20 sets of waterproof clothing, kindly donated by Shaun Hannon, were handed over when President Heather, PP Alan, Shaun, QUB students Corinn Olsen and Carter Darger had a most inspiring visit to the Homeless Centre's new premises.



Montgomery Bowl - *Children in Hospital Appeal*

The Club continues to support this Fund during the year through online payments or a cheque to Hon. Treasurer Tim Browne. Contributions were all donated to the Club's "Children in Hospital" Appeal Fund no flowers were sent in lieu. 2 disbursements have been made from the Fund.

Council agreed to donate £500 to Mitchell House to continue the sponsorship for a year their special therapy dog Raia.

Council also agreed to donate a children's digital weighing machine at £3,300 to the Paediatric Outpatients Ward at the Ulster Hospital. President Heather was shown it by Jess Band 6 Clinical Nurse and Stuart and notes it is a very clever piece of equipment as it can instantly weigh a child and judge their height from above. In addition children like it better as a panda engages their eye! They gratefully thank the Club especially as it saves a lot of time. When President Heather got there at 3pm in the afternoon 100 children had already been to various clinics!



John Savage Award

The Club were delighted to award the 2024-25 John Savage Award and Bursary to **Harmony Community Trust (HCT)** for giving great service to the community over the last 50 years. The Club was instrumental in its setting up and still supports it.

President Heather was delighted to present the Cup to HCT Chair Judith Thompson and Board member Seamus Camplisson after their presentation to the Club meeting 10 November.



Council unanimously agreed that 2025-26 John Savage Award would be awarded to the **Lady Mary Peters for the Mary Peters Trust**. It will be presented to her at the end of April



The John A Savage Memorial Trophy and Bursary is awarded by the Club annually to the individual or group selected as giving great service to the Community.

Inaugurated in 2009 the Cup has been specially refurbished and created in memory of former member the late John Savage - a Club member who was man of action with great ability, high ethical and moral standards - his Scouting career was unique! - Scout Master; Group Scout Leader and latterly President of his own Group.



Youth Service Report

YouthAction NI (YANI)

The Club continued to focus on support for YouthAction both financially and practically through members sharing their business expertise and personal skills to assist these young people build their futures.

The Club again supported YouthAction's Big Skills Day with PP Brian Clements, Eric Rainey and Shaun Hannon participating from 9.30am - 3.30 pm on Wednesday 12 November. It was another fantastic day lasting with 30 young people focussed this time on learning entrepreneurial skills.



In a new format this year, YouthAction's William Redpath and Chloe did 2 workshops based on entrepreneurial skills aimed at enabling the young people to think about how they might pursue their own goals. It was all about confidence and being able to stand up and talk to them and the other business partners who were there such as Invest NI, BT, EE, and insurance companies. The Club notes how worthwhile the day had been and how appreciative the young people are for their help.

The Club will again be supporting an Intern at YouthAction NI's headquarters. President Heather presented Grace O'Neill, YANI Fundraising and Development Manager with the cheque at the Club Meeting 09 March. Grace expressed the Organisation's huge thanks for the continued support for an Intern which is so valuable and advised that this year it will go towards their Digital Communications Hub to share stories of the issues and experiences of young people they work with and their journey with them. It is interesting to note that year's Club-sponsored Intern Rachael Hasson organised the recordings of members for the podcast.



The Club were delighted to also hear that day guest speaker Mark Clegg highlighting the aims, work and future plans of YouthAction NI and the serious implications of the UK Government's cut in funding Community and Voluntary Sector from £24m to £9m. Mark is the Senior Leader for Leadership, Peace Building and Activism working mainly with Peace Plus work, he is also helping the Masters students in QUB, Liz, Chantell, Carter and Corin with their project, which the Club is supporting.



Youth Service Report *cont...*

Club Members have been delighted to participate in various YANI events:



President Ken, President Elect Heather Shiell and Past President Alan Rundle attended the 80th birthday celebration for YouthAction NI held Wednesday 09 April at the Harbour Commissioners. All enjoyed an evening of fun, laughter and music. The young singers of the Rainbow Factory were outstanding and there were many case studies of

how the young people with various challenges have benefitted from their youth work in NI as well as Diplomas being presented, all of which showcased how well YANI have done over the last 80 years.

President Ken and PE Heather thoroughly enjoyed YouthAction NI's Rainbow Factory performance on 01 May of a specially written play *Gold Medal Mary* written by Marie Campbell. Based on Dame Mary's early life and her dream of winning a gold medal at the 1972 Munich Olympics. PE Heather reports it was a really fun and uplifting play with lots of music and exercise! It was followed by a Q & A session with Dame Mary. The play is scheduled to be performed at the MAC in April 26.



President Heather and Christopher also greatly enjoyed YANI's Fundraising Concert Thursday 23 October which was a very successful evening raising over £3,000.



Youth Leadership Competition

The Club's participation in the Youth Leadership Competition has been dormant since Covid, but with thanks to Alan Duncan it was rekindled this year. He organised interviews with 4 schools in October and the Club's selected candidate was Alexander Egan, Methodist College.

The Club were invited to host the Zone 1 Final but declined and it was hosted by RC Newtownabbey on Tuesday 18 November. Although a most impressive candidate, Alex was not successful on the evening but was subsequently offered a place to travel to attend Euroscola in the European Parliament in early 2026.



The Club was delighted to welcome Alex to the Club Meeting Monday 30 March to give his report on the trip. In a most impressive presentation Alex advised it was a brilliant experience with 20 young people from all over Ireland embarking on a week-long trip at the end of January. Alex noted he had found the experience surreal but incredibly exciting and enjoyable, there was a serious element but he also had a lot of fun, made a lot of friends of all nationalities and he was especially pleased to have been able to practice his German speaking with the other scholars. He particularly stressed that the competition may be based on leadership but he believes it delivers much more by increasing confidence and interview skills, which will greatly help with University and job applications, as well as the general skillset gathered from such a week.

In his detailed daily report of the week he covered:

- * their first get together in Belfast for a visit to Stormont followed in Dublin by visits to the European Parliament Office in Dublin the European Liaison Office and Leinster House
- * having arrived in Strasbourg it began to sink in that they really were there!
- * the European Parliament visit began with a Q&A with one of the EP Vice Presidents followed by a discussion with a Policy Advisor on the European Green Deal
- * they were particularly lucky to have 17 of them being chosen out of the 800 participants to speak for 1 minute during the debate, though he acknowledged they did have excellent advice on how to get noticed!
- * the action-packed week culminated with a visit to the Court of Human Rights

He concluded he had been impressed with the sheer size of the Parliament, the difference between Stormont and Dáil Éireann and his only disappointment had been the wet weather in Strasbourg. He greatly thanked the Club for selecting him and Rotary Ireland for the organisation and stressed he had been telling everyone what a brilliant, not-to-be-missed experience it is and would be highlighting it in the school next September!

The Club thanks Alan and all who were involved in the selection process.



Generation Chef

2025 Competition

The final of the inaugural Generation Chef Competition was held on Thursday 01 May at the Belfast Metropolitan College. The Club's congratulations were extended to the Club team: chefs Rowan Graham and Aaron Agnew and Front of House Jane Bracken who came 2nd only being narrowly beaten by the Southern Regional College team supported by the RC Newry.

Their long day started at 9.15 and while they were cooking and being judged on their incredible culinary skills sponsors and guests chatted over coffee and delicious fresh scones. The competition food was then served for lunch which was followed by the prize giving. All the finalists received small trophies and the 1st and 2nd place teams jackets, aprons and knives were presented by Judge Geoff Baird, Development Chef Henderson Food Service. The evening concluded with members and guests from the 6 participating clubs enjoying a delicious 4 course dinner. The courses were separated by short comments from the lead Rotarians about their experiences of this new competition. The students themselves were very appreciative and the Belfast Met team presented PE Heather with a bouquet thanking for the benefits and encouragement they received.

President Ken presented the 3 Club winners with Certificates at the Club meeting Monday 19 May.



2026 Competition

4 young talented teams, again comprising 2 chefs and one front of house server, have been honing their skills over the last months to vie for a place in the Final to be held between the 6 Regional College winners on 30 April 2026.



President Heather, PP Steven, PP David & Jenny were treated to a delicious lunch with wonderful service at the 1st practice day for the 4 Belfast Met Generation Chef teams of 3 on Wednesday 25 March. It was excellent to meet the students and see their enthusiasm and passion. The next practice and team selection will be held on April 14 with the team of 3 being selected by visiting professional culinary chefs Danny Millar from Stock Kitchen Restaurant and front of house judge Jorge Mineguez from the Galgorm Group. We wish them well.

Thanks are extended to President Heather, PP Brian Clements and John O'Carroll for their time, support and mentoring of the Met candidates and team for the 2025 competition and to PP Brian and PP Steven Costello for the 2026 competition. The Club also thanks Rtn. Trevor Stewart and members of the Lisburn Rotary Club for initiating this competition and extending its reach and profile this year.



Seeds of Hope

The Seeds of Hope Project has been successfully progressing throughout the year. Previously the Club supported the Pilot and the movement of money to Ballycastle from our successful \$158,000.00 Global Grant Application has been crucial.

3 Residential for young people have taken place so far at the Corrymeela Peace Centre in Ballycastle in September, December and March.

- * September was all about *'welcoming and nurturing relationships'*
- * December was *'understanding the dynamics of relationships'* and
- * March was *'explaining the dynamics of conflict affected societies'*

There will be further activity in the spring and summer of '26 in Residential and Contact Seminars and one of a number of social action plans is the creation of resources for the young people to become ambassadors for peace building.

Overall in taking the quantitative measures of success there has been 100% self-reported increase in building new friendships, learning about peace building and gaining useful knowledge to take into careers. Indeed five new jobs from the cohort have been achieved in peace building/youth work and the private sector.

The website is now live at:
seedsofhope.academy
and more information will be added.



My thanks to all members of this Club and to those committed members from San Antonio, Dublin and The Hague.

Thanks are also extended to the SOH team at Corrymeela including leader Sylvia Gordon, facilitators Kobe Griffiths, Adam Linton (who spoke at the RI Portrush Conference) and Fiona Rea and the supporting youth workers, members of the Corrymeela Community and the Understanding Conflict Trust.

Ken Nixon
Co-ordinator SOH



Rotary Foundation Report

The Rotary Foundation is Rotary's own charity and the Club has maintained the \$100 per member donations to the Foundation as well as the £50 per person donation for End Polio Now. The Club urges all members to sign up as a **Sustaining Member** to contribute the \$100 directly (circa. £7 per month) and receive a reduction of £30 in Club Membership Fees. It is however very important to check the contributions continue to reach the threshold with currency fluctuations.

District Grants

The Club in conjunction with the Rotary Clubs of San Antonio and Dublin applied for a Global Grant for the Seeds of Hope Programme and successfully received \$156,000. A separate Bank Account has been set up to manage these monies to be paid out to Corrymeela during the duration of the project; Hon. Treasurer Tim and Hon. Sec. David are the administrators as well as Dublin RC's Eamonn Allen.

All members are urged to consider programmes for which a District Grant can be applied for application deadline is 31 May.

Rotary Global Scholars

The Club was delighted to host Lydia Kim this year while she is studying at Queens University. She is sponsored by Charlottesville Rotary Club, Virginia and introduced herself at the Club meeting 03 November. Lydia revealed she her background is marketing but her academic interests have always been very different. She attended the University of Virginia in Charlottesville studying Global Commerce in Culture and Society (which was a mix of anthropology and politics as it covered how human systems work and different individuals interact with each other in the context of history and culture). She also studied Environmental Thought in Practice which she is most passionate and excited about as it concerns sustainability and how to protect the environment.

She revealed she is particularly concerned with the impact of climate change on the livelihoods of those (particularly women) working/living in coastal communities when so many small island nations are disappearing under water as well as poverty alleviation and understanding the inequalities that come from the environment. Lydia also highlighted that she is passionate about academia and wanted to continue research which led her to choose a Masters Degree at QUB in Global Security and Borders. She revealed she is really enjoying it and will study coastal communities impacted by climate change. The frameworks need to be in place to address inequalities and create sustainable development which is her thesis topic.

She highlighted how impressed she was at the hospitality she has received and how generous people have been of their time to go out of their way to help or be a friend and how the course is unique and perfect for her. Unfortunately she has had a lecture at lunchtime on a Monday and has not been able to attend any Club meeting.



International Report

lendwithcare.org
Microloans from CARE International



Make a loan, change a life



As with previous years, we have continued to invest in the *Lendwithcare* scheme. All new loans are funded by scheduled repayments from existing loans.

The Club invested this year in 26 projects. When selecting projects or individuals to fund, priority has been on selecting cooperative groups, who have come together in an attempt to improve living standards for their wider family or local community. Since October the emphasis has focussed on renewable energy projects, such as solar energy and environmental and organic farming.



Asif Solar Group / Malawi
Solar tube well



Darwin Manuel / Ecuador
Organic Farming



Mtaya Mayi Wala / Malawi
Solar Lighting

Since our initial involvement in December 2017, 147 loans (worth £6,005) were made. Of these 112 have been fully repaid, 35 are current and 2 (in Gaza and Malawi) have sadly not been able to continue their repayments. These investments have enabled us to:

- * help 743 entrepreneurs – 2,522 family members
- * create 242 Jobs and
- * help a total of 3,507 people.

This is a remarkable achievement and excludes the contributions made by Club members who have joined the scheme on an individual basis and continue to invest/reinvest on an ongoing basis.



ShelterBox
Disaster relief



**GIVE A TENT
FOR LENT**

As with previous years, ShelterBox continued to be the priority project for the Club's international support.

The Club supports in various ways:

- * Fundraising event in conjunction with the Rotary Clubs of Bangor, Donaghadee and North Down held in Bloomfield Shopping Centre, Bangor
- * Annual Tent for Lent appeal when members made donations during the Lental period
- * Individual Donations from members

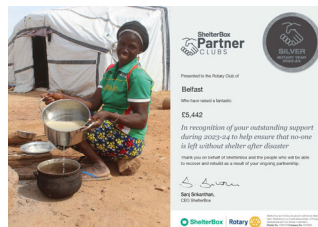


International Report *cont...*

Gold Award

For the Rotary year 2024-25 the Club was delighted and honoured to receive a ShelterBox Gold Award having raised a total of £6,600.

This is particularly significant as the Club is 1 of only 3 Rotary Clubs in GB & Ireland named as a ShelterBox Gold Partners (the others being RC of Dublin-Fingal and RC of Cambridge).



The Club thanks all members who have contributed in any way.

ShelterBox noted: *"Thank you again for your continued support of our vital work to ensure that no-one is left without shelter after disaster. It's only thanks to generous individuals and clubs such as yourselves that we can make the necessary commitment to supporting communities as they recover and rebuild their lives. We hope to enjoy an ongoing and impactful partnership with your club into the future."*

Bloomfield Collection



The joint Rotary Clubs' collection at Bloomfield Shopping Centre was held 10-12 April. 4 Rotary Clubs participated: Belfast, Bangor, Donaghadee and North Down. In all 56 volunteers from the 4 clubs collected across the 3 days £2,330 with Gift Aid added - this was a good increase on the previous year's £1,867.

International Visitors

The Club continues to welcome international Rotarian visitors to the Club meetings and events and during this year we were delighted to be joined by Rotarians from other clubs and individual international guests. (see page 37)

PP Adrian stood down as International Chair in July and the Club greatly thanks him for his tireless work in this area.



Environment Report

The Environment Committee comprised PP Karen Blair, PP Marnette Lyons, Hon. Treasurer Tim Browne and Malcolm Griffiths and the Club thanks them for input, enthusiasm and support.

Gardening Tidy-ups

The Club was delighted to again provide gardening help for Alpha Housing, this time at their Lowry Court accommodation. On 24 October President Heather, Hon. Treasurer Tim Browne, PPs Marnette Lyons and Alan Rundle and Chris Warnock on a beautiful autumn day made a huge difference to a very overgrown bed. They also enjoyed chatting to the residents who were very appreciative of what they were doing and had a few gardening requests of their own!



This was followed up in the spring when on Friday 13 March President Heather, Hon. Treasurer Tim Browne, PP Mark Davidson and PP Brian Clements had a busy but enjoyable morning tidying up, preparing beds and planting native hedging "whips" along a boundary and herbs in raised beds. They learnt new skills and were very lucky with the weather which



managed to stay dry and not too cold!

Treekly

The Club also continues its walking and off shore tree planting via Treekly. The Club has planted approximately 12,000 trees and walked over 87 million steps.



We have also tried to make a small difference by sharing practical environmental 'tips' at Club meetings and in the Bulletin to improve Members' knowledge of what they can do to decrease their environmental impact.



Pastoral Care

The Rotary Club of Belfast Pastoral Care scheme aims to keep members in touch with each other during difficult times of ill health or bereavement or in any situation when a helping hand in the form of a visit or phone call can bring a feeling of fellowship or friendship when needed. We all like to know someone cares or a friend saying 'I missed you at lunch the last couple of weeks, are you alright?' to know that one is missed can give a feeling of comfort and hope.

Rotary International encourages members to help others less fortunate than ourselves at home and worldwide. The humanitarian aid supplied by Rotary and distributed worldwide by voluntary means is incredible but the saying that 'charity begins at home' is often true and necessary.

The President is also informed if anyone is unwell so that she/he can make a call of encouragement.

The coffee mornings organised by Brian Clements are a great way of keeping in touch and if a member can do both lunch and coffee so much the better especially helpful if a member enjoys the craic!! And who doesn't?

I always appreciate when someone keeps me aware if anyone is ill and ask you please to contact me ether by phone, message, apps or email.

Please do keep in touch, as this is in true Rotary fellowship and a really valuable service to us all. Pastoral Care is a vital part of the Rotary organisation - to help others in need.

If you are reading this and would like a friendly chat, call me, I am good at listening as well as chatting!

Rosemary EC Simpson



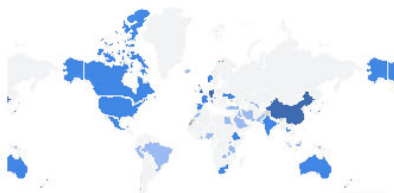
Communications Report

The main channels of the Communications team continues internally with the Club News and outward facing with the Website and Facebook and Instagram pages.

Issued weekly, 2 days after a meeting, the Club News is the main communication channel for members and highlights not only what happened then but also details of future events and information for all members. Currently, on average 86% of members open it (around 80% within 24 hours) but all members are encouraged to open the email asap and have a quick look at it, even if they have been at the meeting, as it often contains additional information not available at the time of the meeting.

Members are also urged to 'like' and 'follow' the Facebook and Instagram pages (details on inside front cover) - it is stressed you do NOT need to be a Facebook or Instagram user.

The website is updated constantly particularly the 'blog' articles which are then posted to the Club's Facebook as well as Instagram pages. It continues to build up its visitor figures and statistics to date are pleasing showing that in year to end March 2026 visitors to the site were up over the previous year and it continues to reach worldwide audiences. Most visitors were again from the UK & the US but the next numerous countries were: Ireland, New Zealand, Australia and Canada.



The Club receives many communications through the '*contact the Club section*' on the website; these range from membership enquiries, requests to visit, greetings from other Clubs and funding requests.

The pocket-sized Club List, with details for members' use only, was produced both as a hard copy and as a pdf and issued in October 2026.

I thank all members who have supplied information and photographs of events and ask that members are even more vigilant in this regard going forward.

Finally grateful thanks are extended to those who send in 'smiles' for the Club News - please keep them coming!

David Boyd

Communications Chair



Glebe House (*Harmony Community Trust*)

Established by the Club in conjunction with the International Volunteer Service in 1975, Harmony Community Trust celebrated its 50th Anniversary last year.



The Club continues to be involved with and support it with Hon. Secretary David on the Board as Honorary Treasurer.

The resilience of staff and volunteers has enabled Glebe House survive the fallout from Covid and the continuing funding cutbacks of the current public expenditure environment. This has resulted, however, in HCT focussing its activities on the local community providing activities of interest to support people of all ages to come together to work, play and develop relationships, thereby enhancing enhance community relations and mental wellbeing.



HCT Council are hugely grateful to the Club for applying for and obtaining a District Grant of \$4,000 which enabled the refurbishment of



and electrical safety in the small kitchen in the Harry Corscadden Building.

However, the big challenge continues to be how to move funding away from grants for specific purposes to unrestricted monies to fund salaries, upkeep, heating and insurance etc. The underlying aim is to keep going with the huge amount of local goodwill.

David Boyd

www.glebehouseni.com



Inner Wheel



The Inner Wheel Club of Belfast has enjoyed another successful year led by our President Hillary Brooks. We continue to meet at Malone Golf Club for lunch which is followed by our Meeting on the second Wednesday of each month; we also meet once a month on a Monday for morning coffee and a chat.

During the year we have had a mixed range of activities. We have had the pleasure of listening to a variety of speakers and collected many items to send abroad to support overseas charities including: clothing, toiletries, baby bundles, blankets and, in particular, ring pulls which are made into the most amazing jewellery!

One of our highlights was the concert A Night of Magical Music held Saturday 18 October in Fisherwick Church. Due to the hard work of the organizing committee every seat was filled and it was a truly magical evening. The delightful evening, capped by a fabulous finale of One More Day from Les Misérables, garnered a standing ovation from the delighted audience who all left smiling. £4,000 was raised split evenly between Women's Aid and Water Aid.



Hester and John hosted a lunch at their home which was very well supported and great fun.



The proceeds from the lunch contributed to the £1,650 presented to Brainwave N.I., President Hilly's chosen charity.

Unfortunately, this year we lost two long standing and much-loved members Rosemary Skelly and Lorna Donaldson. They will be sadly missed.

Belfast Inner Wheel may be less in number but we still enjoy meeting together.

Rosie Clements



Inter Club Events

The Club has been delighted to support and enjoy several Inner Wheel Events.

Joint BBQ

Several members joined President Ken at the joint BBQ held Wednesday 14 May at Malone Golf Club. Held on a lovely sunny evening, the delicious food and delightful lake views were greatly enjoyed by members of both Clubs. We were also delighted that Junior Chamber President Theodor Pop also attended.



A Night of Magical Music

The Club helped to promote and support the Inner Wheel Concert which was a huge success raising funds for the Inner Wheel Charities Women's Aid and Water Aid.. Thanks are extended to Hester O'Carroll for her seamless and meticulous organisation as well as those from both Clubs who helped in any way.

Inner Wheel Lunch

Club members were delighted to be invited by Inner Wheel Club President Hilary Brooks to the Inner Wheel Club of Belfast Lunch Sunday 14 September and many members attended. The lunch was greatly enjoyed and hugely successful. Thanks are extended to John and Hester O'Carroll for opening their home.



Socially

The Club places considerable emphasis on getting together socially and having fun. I am delighted at the attendance at the many events and especially at the Coffee Mornings. It is particularly great to see there members, past and present, who typically do not have the opportunity to attend meetings in the Europa. Thanks are extended to the hosts of the venues.

Club members have enjoyed a large, varied programme of events which are summarised below.

Brian Clements

Coffee Mornings

The series of coffee mornings continued with 3 events organised:

The coffee morning on 08 April was combined with a tour of **Templemore Baths Heritage** Centre. The 10 members there were delighted to welcome 5 members of Lisburn Rotary Club and plenty of animated chat was had before the walk around the beautifully refurbished areas.



It is Ireland's only remaining Victorian Bath House and it was particularly interesting to see where and how the East Belfast workers came to bathe, socialise and swim as well as the stories of members who frequented it more recently!



A gloriously sunny day on 07 May heralded the coffee morning at **Hillsborough Castle Coffee Shop**. It was held specifically to join the members of the RC Lisburn who regularly meet there, who gave everyone a very warm welcome. Highly successful, it was very well attended by members and partners.

On 28 November, kindly organised by PP Derek, a convivial coffee morning was held in **Belvoir Golf Club** with 13 attending and it was great to see Robert Skelly, Trevor Hinds, Malcolm Griffiths and Teddy Elliott there.



Socially *cont...*

Gathering Together

Much fun and laughter was had, delicious food, wine and soft drinks enjoyed, at the Club Gathering, Sunday 09 June held in Hon. Sec. David & Jenny's home. The weather, although not sunny, was kind and it was possible to mingle outside before eating. Some hardy folk even stayed outside! PP Brian notes the event highlighted the fabulous rapport between the people who were there, it was fantastic and great to see, as it is what binds us all together and must be extended. Thanks are extended to all involved and to those who attended who made it such a success.



President's Day

President Ken was delighted to welcome 33 members and guests to his President's Day held at the Royal Belfast Golf Club, Monday 23 June. Always an outstanding event in the Club calendar, this year was no exception, with those in attendance thoroughly enjoying the relaxed and sociable evening. Sadly, the weather was not conducive to sitting on the terrace, so pre-drinks were enjoyed in the bar before enjoying a delicious 3 course meal.



After dinner President Ken specially welcomed JCI President Teddy (known to the Club as Theodor) Pop and he was also delighted to induct new member Christopher Shiell (PE Heather's husband) with the 4-Way Test being delivered by PP Maurice.

PE Heather in her tribute to him noted that this was his 3rd term of Office and he had constantly energised and steered the Club with great competency, equanimity, excellent humour and grace exemplifying the values of Service Above Self in all the work he has done over his years as President. He not only continued to lead the Club in continuing its long-standing service projects with encouraging words of support but also led the Club to follow new initiatives such as Generation Chef, working with Belfast Homeless Services as well as the Club involvement with the Seeds of Hope programme successfully helping it going and receiving a significant Global Grant! In addition, he engaged interesting and



Socially *cont...*

varied speakers. Thanking Susan for all her support she presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

President Ken thanked PE Heather for her kind words and support. Noting that the Club is all about the members he thanked those who come to the Europa for meetings or join in on zoom as well as Hon. Sec. David and Jenny for all they do presenting her with a bouquet of flowers.

The golfers had a very pleasant afternoon of golf in testing conditions but no rain! 5 members played and it had had been very competitive Campbell Morton was 2nd (on the second 9) with 32 points but, having played beautiful golf, the winner of the MacNab Trophy was Hon. Treasurer Tim with a score of 76 (34 points).



Day Out in Dublin

Club Members had a most enjoyable, entertaining and informative day with members of the Rotary Clubs of Lisburn and Newry on a day trip to Dublin 24 June. Having travelled down by train the group visited the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, architecturally beautiful it contains artifacts from prehistoric Ireland and we were treated



to detailed explanations by Lisburn Rotarian Henry McNally of many of them. The Club party consisted of PE Heather and Christopher, PPs Brian Clements and Maurice and Hillary Brooks and Hon. Sec David and Jenny. After lunch in a nearby Italian restaurant some went shopping and some to reminisce in the Lincon Inn before strolling back to the station through the grounds of Trinity College and the 18.50 train home.

Club Walks

PP Alan rekindled the Club Rambles held before and during Covid when he organised a 2hr walk along the Lagan towpath Thursday 14 August. An intrepid foursome set out despite a thunderstorms warning. However the weather was kind and they had an extremely enjoyable walk, the highlight of which was a visit to the Canal Barge which is moored near the Lock Keepers Cottage and had short talk from Eric's brother who is a volunteer.



In September President Heather initiated a series of 4 walks around the Mary Peters track. All members, friends and family who went enjoyed gently walking along the really smooth (and unexpectedly spongy!) track - though not everyone walked, or walked the same route and the chat was so good they lost count how many times they went around it!



Socially *cont...*

The walks were suitably rounded off by a lunch of soup and wheaten bread in the cafe across the road in Dixon Park.

Christmas Lunch

36 Club members and guests enjoyed an excellent Christmas Lunch at the Europa Monday 16 December with a delicious meal and excellent fellowship. President Heather welcomed members and guests especially Inner Wheel Club of Belfast President Hillary Brooks and Olive Byers (widow of former member Brian). The great buzz in the room exemplified the usual relaxed enjoyment and fellowship of the event enhanced this year by the warm and comfortable atmosphere of the full 1st Floor Piano Restaurant.



Seniors Lunch

14 members and partners, including former member Teddy Elliott, had a most enjoyable Lunch for Seniors in the Montalto Estate Coffee Shop Tuesday 10 February.



Sadly the inclement weather meant no one opted for the lunch and walk option, but there was a wealth of genial conversation instead!



Visitors and Guests

We were delighted to welcome many visitors and guests to our meetings in the Europa. Some came to hear a specific speaker, some to outreach to the Club while visiting or studying in Belfast or they attended as a former or prospective member. The Club was also delighted to welcome many guests of members.

Visitors to the Club within these isles included DG Michael Fleming, AG Roland Bailie who attended several times including: the Club Assembly meeting, the visit of DG Michael, to introduce Global Scholar Hannah Ferguson being hosted by RC Newtownabbey and to hear the speaker Cormac McMullan, Regional Community Fundraiser and Engagement Lead for the Cancer Fund for Children Charity. Rotarians also visited from the Lisburn Club.

Rotarian Rosanna Patrì noted she hailed originally from Sicily and had been a member of RC Sicily & Malta but, having moved to Tuscany where she is an English Teacher, she is now a member of RC Florence and is in Belfast this week on a training course. She kindly brought lovely little biscuits which were enjoyed by those there.



PP Bob Competti advised that he was in Belfast with his wife Beth and they were members of the Lancaster Rotary Club in Ohio. He noted when travelling they like to attend a local Rotary Club and were thrilled to find that the Club meets on the same day as they do! He revealed that they met through the Club and his mother, who turned 100 recently, is now the oldest living Polio survivor in the US and probably the world.

Rotarian visitor Adeline Keogh, Senior Vice President of Blythe RC, Northumberland noted being in Belfast this week with her husband they wanted to visit and exchange banners.



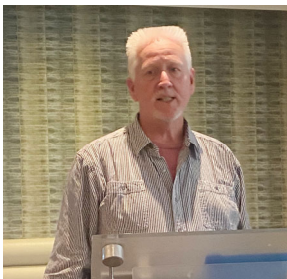
Rotarian visitor from Ancastor AM Rotary Club, Nikki Milligan advised she became a Rotarian in June and is loving being part of her very active Club with 50 members. She was visiting family here as she comes from a large NI family all living here - she and her sister are the only Canadians. She considers NI as her second home and did her undergrad degree at Ulster University!

PDG Gail Savage, Club Secretary and Vice President RC Eastwood Scotland, also noted she had been District Governor for 2022-23. Thanking for the welcome, she advised she had spent the weekend in Belfast with Rotarian friends noting what a beautiful city it was as she had only passed through it from the docks before! She reported they cover the southwest side of Glasgow and are based



Visitors and Guests *cont...*

in Giffnock. She also noted having been a Rotaractor how lovely it was to see the young people at the meeting (who were there to hear YouthAction NI's Mark Clegg).



Rotarian visitor Graham Stewart advised, having had many roles in the RC Campbell River, British Columbia, he is currently Membership Director as well as a District AG responsible for 4 clubs. Located on the eastern shore of Vancouver Island it is a very big fishing area and is known as the Salmon capital of the world.

QUB students Liz, Chantell and (pictured) Corin and Carter who are studying for a Masters in Conflict Resolution have attended several times and especially to hear YANI Mark Clegg. Rtn. Gordon Graham, The Hague Metropolitan Club was also a visitor several times both in person and on zoom.



The Club has also been visited by Rotary Direct members currently in Belfast. Jeanette Pierbon who has visited several times over the year and Maurizio Liberante who advised he has recently joined Rotary having heard about it when attending a Peace Conference organised in Dublin by RC Raheny, living in Belfast he is working as an AI Program Manager at the legal services company Factor Law and is also trying to establish a consultancy network called Sustain which deals with all things concerning sustainability RD member .

Belfast Rotarian Billy Kohner was invited by guest speaker RC Randolph-Avon-Canton President Michael Wish (*see page 40*).

Northern Ireland Amenity Council President Trevor Edwards and Chairman Doreen Muskett came to hear guest speaker Executive Officer Bridgeen McIlroy speak about the Best Kept Awards which were initiated 1957 when the late Professor Arthur Muskett O.B.E. launched a Competition to find Northern Ireland's Best Kept Village. After his death in 1985 his daughter Doreen took it over.



Visitors and Guests *cont...*

Rtn. Seamus Grant (who was a speaker at the District Conference) advised he is working with The Rotary Foundation focusing on encouraging more support from the 1,500 clubs in RIBI's 24 Districts and highlighted the Foundation's amazing projects, programme and impacts of Global Grants.

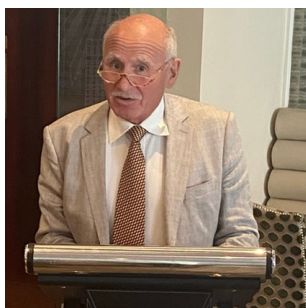
Unfortunately we were unable to welcome Thompson Keating, President of Rotary Club Marbella East, Costa del Sol, as he visited Belfast during our Summer break in August.



Miscellaneous

Speaker Surprise

Guest speaker President Michael Wish had an amazing surprise for all present in his address which began with the conception of the Rotary Million Dollar meal and how its name had come about when 1960-61 District Governor Chester Claff had had the idea to expand the not hugely taken up annual 'austerity' \$2 Paul Harris Memorial Meal, the proceeds of which were donated to the Rotary Foundation., to create an income to set up Scholarships to increase international understanding through grants for study abroad for a year. One of the 1st awarded a Fellowship was Dr Dinah Kohner who was sponsored by the Belfast Club to study at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital and who was tragically killed in a plane crash in 1964 returning from her work in Ecuador. In November 2018 he received memorabilia from Chester Claff's granddaughter which included a tape recording. To the surprise of those at the meeting he played a section of it which was an actual recording of Dr Dinah being interviewed on a popular Boston CBS radio programme and her commendation of the value of the Scholarship and her enjoyment of her time in the USA.



Congratulating the Club for setting up in 1966 the Diana Kohner Fund at Queen's University, Belfast, to award grants for research equipment, the provision of technical assistance or other expenses incurred in the prosecution of research in diseases of children, he handed copies of the tape to President Ken for the Club and Dr Dinah's brother Billy whom he had invited to the meeting. Billy noted he was very surprised to have been contacted by Michael and it was an even bigger shock to hear his sister's voice again after 60 years! He concluded by recording how appreciative he and his family are that the Club chose to remember his late sister in this way.

Volunteering at Hillsborough

The Club was delighted to support the Hillsborough Castle and Gardens Running Festival, held on Sunday 27 July in support of Northern Ireland Hospice and thanks are extended to our volunteers President Heather Shiell, PP Marnette, Chris Warnock, and President JCI Belfast and Friend of The RC Belfast, Teddy Pop.

Luckily, the weather was clement and all enjoyed being kept busy at the gel station handing out sachets to the runners. PP Marnette even went the extra mile running alongside some late runners to give encouragement!



Miscellaneous *cont...*

Mission Accomplished

PP Bryan in May completed his mission to create a montage of all the Royal New Zealand Air Force Airmen who were killed on Active Service during World War II and are buried in Northern Ireland. It all began 2014 when visiting the RC Belfast/Kaiapoi, NZ a 92-year-old D-Day veteran recounted his 7th D-Day anniversary visit to Normandy. He told him that his brother Eric Hunter had been killed in 1942 having crashed into Slieve Donard and he was concerned about the state of his grave as well as those of the other NZ airmen who had died in NI. PP Bryan told him he would check them out and so began an amazing, dedicated crusade to recognise all the Royal New Zealand Air Force Airmen who were killed on Active Service during World War II and are buried in Northern Ireland and ensure they would not be "faceless, forlorn or forgotten". The Club commends his resilience.



San Antonio Links



International Virtual Social

members from the Rotary Clubs of San Antonio, Dublin and Belfast enjoyed much fellowship during a zoom virtual social at 6pm Thursday 19 June.

Nurturing Hope

Among the visitors at the very successful summer Nurturing Hope Residential at Corrymeela were Delma Sweeney and Eamonn Allen from Dublin RC and JC Clapsaddle and Jack Maguire from San Antonio RC, Texas and IPP Ken. As a thank you to the members of the SOH organising committee Jack hosted a dinner in Ballycastle and IPP Ken took the opportunity to present a bottle of Golden Girl Mary Peters Gin to Jack and a bottle of Carl Frampton's Whiskey to JC.



Cycling for NIPAC

PP Mark cycled the 27 miles between Ballywalter and Ardglass on Friday afternoon 06 June, as part of Pedal The Periphery, the annual epic endurance team cycling event for NIPANC, NI's only local pancreatic cancer charity. Teams cycled 480 miles in 48 hours around Northern Ireland.



Miscellaneous *cont...*

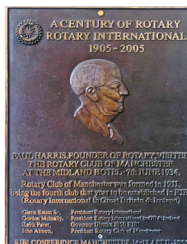
A Pleasant Shock

PP Brian advised that following one of his Tuesday's aquarobics sessions in Templemore Baths he was taken aback when he was suddenly hugged by a lady in a Dry Robe whom he did not recognise! However, he was delighted when he realised it was Pauline Hegney known to many members having looked after Club members in the Europa for nearly 30 years. He had a lovely conversation with her and she wanted to be remembered to all as she felt so highly of everyone.

Spotted on travels!

PP Steven spotted this plaque in the Midland Hotel in Manchester. Titled *A Century of Rotary 1905-2025* it highlights:

- * the Rotary Club of Manchester was the 4th Club to be formed in RIBI
- * Paul Harris visited them June 07 in 1934 and
- * the RIBI Conference was held in Manchester 14-17 April 2005 during the centenary year



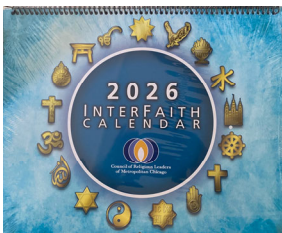
Plaque Returned



President, Best Kept Awards Scheme, Doreen Musket, presented President Heather with a very large and heavy brass plaque which used to be presented by the Club for the Best Kept Building in Belfast Award from 1959-1993! The Best Kept Award was founded by her father Professor Musket in 1955, originally seeking to find the best kept village but the Club got involved in 1959 and many of the landmarks in the city have won and the winners' names are recorded on the back. The plaque will be kept in our Archives. The scheme has evolved to now include towns, villages, street schemes, schools, healthcare facilities and housing areas. The scheme is expected to fold in its 70th year in 2027.

Happy 90th Birthday

Congratulations are extended to PP Gordon Millington, Robert Skelly and John Williamson who have celebrated significant birthdays of 90 or over!



Interfaith Calendar

Courtesy of Highland Park's Ilene Shaw, the Club was again sent copies of the 2026 Interfaith calendar, produced by the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago. Ilene has been sending these calendars for many years, they are available for members to pass on to any schools, churches etc who would be interested in copies.



Miscellaneous *cont...*

Speaker on zoom

In a first for the Club guest speaker Kirsty Mark highlighted the work of the Dogs Trust on zoom.

Busy Time

President Heather had a busy time outside of Club meetings, as well as those already mentioned in this Report she:

- * did 3 TV interviews with That's TV Belfast
- * attended several events at Youth Action NI including several Rainbow Factory presentations and Lady Mary's 80th celebration
- * RC Lisburn new member event
- * District PETS day
- * District Membership and Foundation Seminar
- * RC Bangor Charity Breakfast and
- * 2 Burns Nights (RC Lisburn and Donnaghadee)



Programme of Speakers

All meetings were held on a Monday and were hybrid unless noted

April

- 7 Business Meeting
- 14 Cormac McMullan, Regional Community Fundraiser, Cancer Fund for Children
- 21 No Meeting
- 28 Chris Morrow, NI Chamber of Commerce

May

- 5 No Meeting
- 12 Katie Bell, Senior Conservation Officer, Ulster Wildlife
- 19 Michael Wish, President Randolph-Avon- Canton Rotary - Dinah Kohner
- 26 No Meeting

June

- 2 Jean Horstmann, Seeds of Hope Update
- 9 AGM and Club Assembly
- 16 Miriam Donnan, Principal Mitchell House
- 23 President's Day
- 30 Handover Meeting

September

- 1 Business Meeting
- 8 Adam Linton - Youth Peace Conference in the Hague
- 15 Rotary Ireland District Governor Michael Flemming
- 22 Past President Ivan McMinn - Cancer Focus
- 29 Lord Mayor of Belfast Tracy Kelly

October

- 6 Business Meeting
- 13 Bob Grundy, Director of Innovation and Partnerships, Catalyst
- 20 PP Bryan Johnston - Memories and Memorabilia
- 27 Club John Savage Award presentation to Harmony Community Trust



Programme of Speakers *cont...*

November

- 3 Global Scholars Lydia Kim and Hannah Ferguson
- 10 Business Meeting
- 17 Liz Rocks, Belfast Homeless Services Charity
- 24 Shaun Hannon - My Job Talk

December

- 1 SGM & Business Meeting
- 8 Bridgeen McIlroy, Executive Officer, NI Amenity Council
- 15 Club Christmas Lunch
- 22 No Meeting
- 29 No Meeting

2025

January

- 5 No Meeting
- 12 Very Revd. Robert Townley, New Year's Message
- 19 Pauline Brown, Regional Manager for the Northern Region, SVP
- 26 Immediate Past President Ken Nixon, Seeds of Hope Update

February

- 2 Business Meeting
- 9 Kirsty Mark, Supporter Relations Officer, Dogs Trust
- 16 Joe O'Neill, CEO Belfast Harbour Commissioners
- 23 Richard Buchanan, Chair of the Trustees of Leukaemia and Lymphoma NI

March

- 3 Business Meeting
- 10 Mark Clegg, YouthActon NI
- 17 Grainne Girvan, NSPCC Schools Coordinator and volunteer Hamilton Topping
- 24 Erin Hoey, Head of Creative Learning, Lyric Theatre
- 31 Alex Eagan, Youth Leadership Club Nominee



Paul Harris Fellowships

Date Awarded	Additional	Hon. Member	Date Joined
1980	Tom M ^c Connell	1982	1943
1990	Gordon Millington - <i>Presented by District for Polio Plus</i> Sapphire Award presented 2011 Ruby Award presented 2017		1968
	Harry Corscadden	1998	1959
1992	Tom Crocker		1956
	David Dorman	1993	1935
	Willie MacNab		1959
	Fred Rogan		1952
	Cecil Rundle	2000	1942
1994	Brian Clements		1990
	Hugh Fergusson		1989
1997	Bob Johnson		1945
	Bryan Johnston		1977
	Stanley Rainey	2005	1957
1998	Brian Byers		1979
	Roy MacDougall		1974
2002	Dick Thornton		1991
	Alan White		1958
2003	David Boyd		1981
			<i>Sapphire presented by Highland Park RC 2009</i> Ruby Award presented 2012
	Hilary Gault	2019	1992
2005	Bill Donaldson	2006	1960
	John M ^c Cleery		1966
2006	David Brennan		1969
	Barrie Houston		
	Adrian Kerr		1996
2007	Marnette Lyons		1995
			<i>Sapphire Award presented 2009</i> Ruby Award presented 2012
2008	Albert Baird		1975
	Trevor Hinds		1988
2009	Brian Ferguson		1989
2010	Derek Baxter		1988
	Billy M ^c Coubrey		1993
2011	Maurice Brooks		2002
	Edwin Coppel		1988
	Eileen Kennedy		1997
	John Williamson		



Paul Harris Fellowships *cont...*

Date Awarded		Additional	Hon. Member	Date Joined
2012	Alistair Corscadden			1996
	Trevor Dickey			1966
	John Lowry			1988
	Campbell Morton			1981
	Craig McClelland			1974
	Victor McKirgan			1983
2013	Arthur Boyd			2005
	Courtenay Thompson			1977
2014	Dame Mary Peters DBE	<i>Sapphire Award</i>	2011	2011
	Mark Davidson			1999
	Eric Rainey			2000
2015	Brian Clements	<i>Sapphire Award</i>		1980
	Alan Rundle			1984
	Fred Sweeney			1975
2017	Joe Hyland			2010
	CT Hogg			1973
	Gordon Millington	<i>Ruby Award</i>		1968
	Robert Skelly			1987
	San Wong			2014
2018	Alan White	<i>Ruby Award</i>		1958
	Teddy Elliott			1988
	Ronnie McLean			2008
	Ivan McMinn	<i>2 Sapphire Award presented by 6 Rotary Clubs 2019</i>		2009

Fellowships awarded to Non Members for service to the Club and the Community

1987	Frank Carson	<i>Polio Plus</i>
1990	Helen Honeyman	<i>Harmony Community Trust</i>
	Pat Smyrl	<i>Boys Camp</i>
1997	Denise O'Neill	<i>Boys Camp</i>
2005	HRH The Princess Royal	<i>Sapphire Award (Rotary Centenary)</i>
2014	June Trimble MBE	}
	Councillor Mairtin O'Muilleoir	} <i>Community of Belfast</i>
	Baroness May Blood MBE	}
2015	Maurice Kinhead	<i>East Belfast Partnership</i>
	David Boyd	<i>Beat Carnival</i>
2017	Rev. Dr. Harold Good	<i>Reconciliation</i>



