

STORT VALLEY ROTARY

NEWSLETTER

April 2021



Tuesday 13 April at 7-30pm

Toby Dutt

**The Role of the Voluntary Police Officer
& Special Constable in East Herts**

PRESIDENT'S PREAMBLE



Fellow Rotarians
and Friends,

Change is something that most of us are very uncomfortable with. I attended a Rotary training session a couple of weeks ago, with over 150 people online, and the

common theme was declining membership and increasing age profile. Despite this common theme there was no conclusion that a completely different approach is necessary. I got the impression that heads were deeply buried in the sand with people thinking things will sort themselves out. We all know this will not happen.

The people, the younger generations, that we would like to join us want to get involved, want to support others, are not resistant to paying a membership fee but are very firmly against rigid commitment. Rotary is still highly regarded but fast running out of momentum. I am very firmly of the view that fundraising can all be achieved through our online fundraising platform working alongside very proactive Social Media activity.

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- Emel Rizwani - Facebook
- Nick von Westenholz - Post Brexit
- Captain Gavin Edward RN – A life of Service
- Peter Blascos - A Poetry Evening

This is the future. Through the last 12 months we have also seen that our community are very willing to volunteer to help others. We have therefore all the ingredients necessary for a vibrant Rotary Club.

Rotary, of course is not just about volunteering and fundraising, there is also a very important networking and social aspect to be considered. Some will prefer regular get-togethers and it is therefore important that that remains also as one of our priorities. We will require to accept that not every club member will wish to participate.

My question to those reading this is how we put it all together?

Kind regards,
Gordon Morrison, President

Find us at:
stortvalleyrotary.com

Rotary
Club of Stort Valley



FACEBOOK FOOD FOR THOUGHT



To advance members appreciation and involvement with social media, Emel Rizwani gave a presentation about Facebook. She began by pointing out that Facebook is used

worldwide by 2.6billion people, 1.73billion using the app daily. 44.8million Britons, 2/3 of the population, use it and 98.2% of smart phones have the app. This makes it a very powerful tool in providing a platform for disseminating information, connecting individuals and groups but also as an advertising medium.

Amongst the sites you can visit, she mentioned:

1. The Prime Minister's site, where you can read about meetings and join in a discussion.
2. A Coronation Street page where new characters are introduced or the previous night's cliff hanger discussed.
3. A pub which was loaning its outdoor heaters to a Vaccination Centre.

As Facebook grew globally, the novelty of sharing your life with everyone waned and people wanted to use a more enclosed environment.

In response to this Facebook allowed groups to create safe places in which they could share information. She illustrated this by mentioning the Lea and Stort Boaters Group with 2,000 members which provides a bulletin

board and chat room. Facebook is the way members of the group are connected.

Fundraising involves posting an invitation on your Facebook page which is then available to all people in your group. If they then like the post and pass it on to members in their groups, the potential number of recipients and potential donors is enormous. The privacy of your page is always reserved to members of your group.

In setting up a fundraising page she stressed the importance of having a heart warming and wholesome story, a supportive network and a clear and easy way to donate.

When asked how local a pitch should be aimed, she said that it must always be relevant for people and where they live.

Asked about 'fear of losing control,' Emel suggested getting a 'buddy' to work with you until you are familiar with the process on Facebook. It is daunting at first but becomes easy with familiarity

Use of Facebook is free for individuals but businesses have to pay to advertise. When fundraising, Facebook steers you towards using the Pay Pal giving fund. Some platforms such as Just Giving require you to pay if you wish to be given a list of the donors.

On the question of how one controls the group it is suggested that one has a questionnaire for applicants and there should be at least 2 administrators for every group.

Emel left members with much to consider.



STORT VALLEY ROTARY KEEPS UP WITH MODERN COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY – EVEN THE WORLD OF SOCIAL MEDIA

BREXIT HAS HAPPENED BUT CHALLENGES LAY AHEAD



This is the third talk to our club by Nick von Westenholz, the Director of Trade and Business Strategy for the National Farmers Union on the developing Brexit story. The first was prior to the agreement with

the EU and the second during the transition phase of detailed negotiating phase. This talk addressed the plusses and minuses post Brexit. In his introduction Gordon Morrison, Stort Valley Rotary President congratulated Nick on the NFU's very effective lobbying of the government.

Nick reflected on his previous talks and painted a picture of what the farming community is facing. Negotiating the deal with the EU, finalised at the last minute on Christmas Eve, was critical and came as a relief to farmers, as it meant that there would be no tariffs on goods between the UK and EU. The importance of this to farming is clear with, for instance, 80% beef, 45% lamb and 50% barley UK exports sent to the EU.

With the 'Hard Brexit,' however, we now face burdensome and expensive border checks on 30% of our EU exports and documentary evidence on all products of animal origin at French ports. Even a ham sandwich requires an export health certificate signed by a vet! This is particularly burdensome for small producers. Transport with companies such as DHL will also be more complicated, particularly where multiple item shipments are involved as is often the case with many small businesses and supermarkets. At present checks only apply when going into the EU but starting in April and then fully in July, they will be in place for goods entering the UK from the EU. At least in theory, the agreement offers the UK and EU, the platform to negotiate better working arrangements in the future.

Compromising on the Brexit deal the UK regained its sovereignty, and we can now make our own rules and laws. For farmers, Nick cited an example of the powers we have now to regulate the use of pesticides. Other freedoms include gene editing, biotechnology, employment rules and labour laws. However, we need to be careful not to make changes that would create problems exporting to the EU. Nick was also cautionary in pointing out that it is difficult to assess the impact of Brexit because of the pandemic. Trade is only just picking up, but encouragingly, farm gate prices, notably for red meat, are all quite good contrary to what had been expected. He praised the supermarkets for doing a good job buying from UK farmers.



In the longer-term, problems arising now will get easier but there will be a cost.

Nick concluded his interesting and informative talk by looking at the prospect of trading overseas in the future. The large barrier to trade we have erected with our largest market means we must trade and form partnerships further afield and this will not be easy.

Nick fielded a wide range of questions. These and the recording of the complete talk can be accessed on our YouTube channel via our website www.stortvalleyrotary.com



**STORT VALLEY ROTARY KEEPS INFORMED ABOUT THE EFFECT ON
OUR LIVES OF THE GREAT CHANGES TAKING PLACE**

A CAREER OF VARIETY & SERVICE WITH THE ROYAL NAVY



Captain Gavin Edward RN, a weapons engineering specialist, has served 30 years in the Royal Navy, shipboard and ashore. He has a

profound knowledge of the electronics surrounding combat systems, covering everything from installation, maintenance and upgrading. His career has involved everything that transforms a ship into a warship, by linking all the electronics on the vessel to make it into an effective fighting unit.

The Navy currently has 40 ships including submarines and its primary duty is to afford security in home waters and overseas. The global deployment of the Navy promotes confidence in the country and aids rapid response to overseas problems. The 30,000 sailors and marines in the service are the lifeblood protecting our nation's maritime interests and security from attack by overseas powers. In the modern navy, officers move jobs every two years, making their careers very varied with wide experience.

Gavin's interest in engineering developed growing up on a farm in Aberdeen. He was fortunate to have a trip on a Leander class frigate which settled his career ambitions.

He went to Britannia Naval College in Portsmouth which included a spell as an ordinary crew member aboard HMS Minerva in the Baltic. This experience was invaluable in understanding the problems of ordinary ranks living on board ship. He then went to the Naval Engineering College in Plymouth. During this time he established his connection with Bishop's Stortford by marrying a local girl at a flamboyant ceremony with pipers and a guard of honour.

Gavin next job was with the Procurement Department of the Navy based in Bristol and involved the upgrade to the Seawolf Missile System. He then went on to further his academic qualifications with a Masters degree

and became a bona fide rocket scientist. He moved on to London where he worked as an intelligence analyst and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander.

He then deployed to HMS Richmond a frigate specialising in anti-submarine warfare. As head of the Engineering Department he completed the refit before taking it to the Arabian Gulf, protecting oil platforms.

Returning to London he worked in the HR Department where he was promoted to Commander, the key step in any naval career.

Gavin was then moved to Washington and served as a Naval Attaché closely linked with the US Navy. As well as a trip on the US aircraft carrier Carl Vincent, he worked with the Canadians, New Zealanders and Australians ensuring along with the US and Royal Navy that they could all work together.

HMS Bulwark beckoned next where he was Commander Weapons Engineering, but this also embraced ceremonial activities including overseeing operational messaging. He was the right-hand man to the Captain in deployments, including D-day memorial visits and the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign. This required special media provision and involvement with the Royal Family. Soon afterwards the ship was diverted to deal with the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean where it became the base for all television and media reporting. Gavin received a commendation for this service and was then promoted to the rank of Captain.

Currently he is overseeing the weapons design and installation for the Type 26 frigates which will be the most complex ships ever built for the Royal Navy.

In conclusion, Gavin emphasised the importance of teamwork and, quoting the Prime Minister, how the Royal Navy today is the embodiment of global Britain.



**STORT VALLEY ROTARY IS INTERESTED IN
THE SECURITY OF OUR NATION**

AN EVENING OF POETRY WITH PETER BLASCOS



Our March Club Evening was ably hosted by Peter Blascos and was devoted to members' favourite poems, which ranged from those by Pam Ayres through Edward Lear and

Lewis Carroll to John Betjeman and David Kossoff and various others.

A light-hearted enjoyable evening which was much appreciated by those who joined the monthly get-together.

All the poems, with their introductions, can be accessed on our YouTube channel.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Tuesday 13 April	Toby Dutt - The Role of the Voluntary Police Officer & Special Constable in East Herts
Tuesday 27 April	Club Evening with Susan Haddock
Tuesday 11 May	Robert Voss - HM Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire
Tuesday 25 May	Club Evening with Alan and Rhian Capener
Tuesday 8 June	Penny Carey – Dean of the School of Law, University of Hertfordshire
Tuesday 22 June	AGM
Tuesday 29 June	Ed Anthony, Director Health and Wellbeing in Schools – Feedback on Social Prescribing validation programme

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