

STORT VALLEY ROTARY

NEWSLETTER

April 2022



**Tuesday 24 May
7-30pm on Zoom**

Robert Cannon
**Covid to Omicron,
Back to Success**



PRESIDENT'S PREAMBLE



Fellow Rotarians and Friends,
My time over the last month has seen me very much focused on our Helping Herts campaign. As many of you will know Jim Tatchell and I have agreed to walk 170 miles

around the Hertfordshire Way from 23rd April until 7th May. This is an average of 12 miles per day, so quite a challenge. Training every day now is very much our priority. A very detailed book on the Hertfordshire Way has been published by the Friends of the Hertfordshire Way (available on Amazon) which subdivides the route into 14 sections with the longest section of 15 miles being from Tring to Kings Langley. Jim and I, as part of our training programme, are walking this on 10th April departing from Tring Railway Station at 10am. We would really welcome some company on the 10th and each day from 23rd April to 7th May. Please contact me at gmorrison@chaldean.co.uk if you feel you would like to join us on one or more of the sections. Jim and I are taking on this challenge to raise money for our Helping Herts 2022 initiative and hope to collect £50,000 before 7th May. To donate go to www.helpingherts.com

IN THIS ISSUE

- Dr Philip Porter - Arctic Field Exploration
- Stort Valley Rotary – Project Updates
- School Children – Challenges of our Environment

The whole 2022 Helping Herts campaign hopes to raise £250,000 during the year and to achieve this there will be four primary initiatives:

- Our Walk 23rd April to 7th May.
- Hertfordshire Fun Week 4th - 8th July when we will have involvement from many of Hertfordshire's Schools.
- The 12 charities we are supporting will each be walking a section of the 170 miles of the Hertfordshire Way on 24th September.
- In November we will be rounding off our campaign with a Hertfordshire-wide Raffle.

An initiative as large as this is very different from traditional Rotary fundraising but Stort Valley Rotary believe this will be the future. The more people we can get involved the bigger this can be so please offer your support at stortvalleyrotary@gmail.com.

Kind regards,
Gordon Morrison, President

Find us at:
stortvalleyrotary.com

Rotary  Stort Valley

T-SHIRTS FOR FIELD EXPLORATION ATOP A WARMING WORLD



Dr Philip Porter is a senior lecturer in Physical Geography at the University of Hertfordshire. He is involved in research into glacial ecosystems, assessing the rate of geomorphological changes in the high

Arctic, the Alps and the Himalayas. He observed that his work over 30 years in the high Arctic had seen rapid changes in the environment. Although this was not the focus of his work or the subject matter for his talk, the Arctic is the part of the planet which is warming fastest. This has implications on global water production, sea borne sediment, nutrient amounts and sea levels.

Philip spends the summer months on Svalbard Islands off the northern shores of Norway and, referring to the title of his talk, said that it came from a newspaper article showing scientists on Svalbard in t-shirts in 2005 when the temperature reached 19.6 degrees. Significantly, this was exceeded in 2020 when temperatures reached 21.7 degrees. £0 year ago when he started at Svalbard the sea around their base was frozen even in the summer but now it is open water.



Most people's impression of the Arctic is of a wasteland of ice and snow but where he is based there is lots of human activity with a port, industrial plant, housing and an airport. The place is called Ny Alesund and it is the world's most northerly continuously occupied settlement. It was developed as a coalmine

although production ceased some time ago. It must have been an unbelievably harsh existence for the miners.

Philip works there from late spring to early Autumn as the conditions are too severe in the winter with no daylight. Conversely in the summer they have continuous daylight. Interestingly there is a memorial to Amundson's first polar flights near the original airship mooring mast. Nowadays the settlement is devoted to research by international teams. Significantly, winters have got drier with less snowfall and summers wetter, which accelerates the shrinking of glaciers.

His work involves the study of glaciers especially a small example near Svalbard. They need to understand what is happening in the heart of the glacier. It is relatively easy to measure the input of water on the surface and at the outfall but knowledge of the inner workings is limited as the core is inaccessible and he described it as a black box. It is full of holes, tunnels and crevasse, like a Swiss cheese.



To illustrate the type of work he undertakes, he had some fascinating pictures of research projects. One involved drilling down into the core of the glacier and inserting measuring equipment for water pressure and movement. It is always a challenge to get projects off the ground. This was particularly difficult involving 6 people taking time off work, and co-ordinating flights for personnel and equipment. At Svalbard success is always weather dependent as for much of the time it

is virtually impossible to distinguish between land surface and sky putting flying out of the question. This project was fortunate however and everything was helicoptered in to plan. They drilled down the 360 metres to the base rock of the glacier using heated recycled water to melt the path to the bottom. Philip then inserted his measuring device which check water pressure and flow and is driven by batteries charged from solar panels. The device is ultra-robust and has survived since 2019.

Such projects are in remote locations and it is essential to keep a look out for polar bears. All the scientists carry a rifle outside the main base and have been trained in their use. Actually, Philip has only ever seen 3 bears in his 30 years in the Arctic, but there is a constant threat especially from females with cubs.

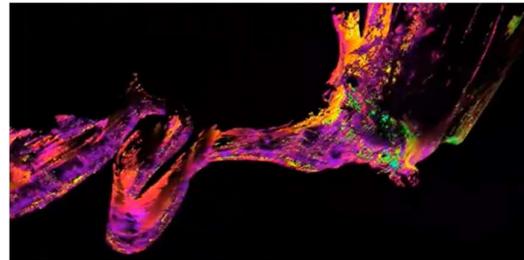


In another experiment to get inside a glacier his team found a hole called a moulin, where melted water flows into the glacier. They abseiled down about 90 metres where they

explored a system of tunnels in the ice almost to the edge of the glacier where they could see daylight. Philip admitted that he had been terrified most of the time but awed by the sights. The photos were



amazing and even more so were the images of the tunnel network produced in colour from laser measurements. The exercise proved the system was much more extensive and complicated than had been expected.



Philip kept his talk non-technical but opened a window into a rarefied scientific world full of interest and beauty.

**STORT VALLEY ROTARY ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN WORK
THAT EXPANDS OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PLANET**

A LOT IS GOING ON AT STORT VALLEY ROTARY!

Our members are again enjoying face to face meetings and a meal at the Coach & Horses. It has been reassuring and inspiring to have several updates on the impressive projects initiated during the pandemic with great ambitions for the future. Our President, Gordon Morrison who is leading the modernisation of our club with determination and energy, reviewed his project Helping Herts.



Helping Herts is itself a charity which helps charities to develop their social media and collaboration skills, while at the same time raising donations.

Designed and set up last year a staggering £200,000 was raised for Citizen's Advice and Hospices.



This year the target is to raise £250,000 for 12 charities that come under the theme "Child and Young Adult Welfare". The charities are:

- NSPCC
- Grove Cottage
- Coram Life
- Home Start Hertfordshire Education
- Carers in Hertfordshire
- Phoenix Group For Deaf Children
- Herts Young Homeless
- PlaySkill
- For Baby's Sake
- Riding for the Disabled

Hertfordshire Mind Network
The Ollie Foundation

As part of the fundraising effort, Gordon along with Jim Tatchell, has agreed to walk 170miles around Hertfordshire over a period of 14 days and is, of course, asking everyone to sponsor him. Gordon's target is to raise at least £50,000 and he is looking for generous support from everyone. By clicking on the Red box below you will access the fundraising page.

Gordon's Fundraiser

Alternatively, you can donate directly to the Helping Herts account:

Account Name: Helping Herts part of
Stort Valley Rotary
Account No: 20049190
Sort Code: 20-36-98
Reference: Gordon

In order to physically achieve his challenge, Gordon is in regular training with support team Rosie & Pepper (pictured) by his side.



<https://www.facebook.com/helpingherts/>
<https://www.instagram.com/helpingherts/?hl=en>

Jim Tatchell gave an update on progress with his VolMatch app. For new members and guests, Jim first gave an overview of VolMatch.



Aims and objectives of VolMatch are to provide a way for people of all ages to find opportunities to volunteer where, when and at whatever they choose. This is for those seeking ad-hoc opportunities – other routes exist for people to find regular commitments.

Meetings are scheduled for Tanya (VolMatch Marketing Director) to establish logo, fonts, colours and image so that the app will really feel like it's taking shape.

Jim also asked members to start drawing up a list of organisations that we could approach once the pilot scheme is live in Bishop's Stortford and surrounding villages. The aim is to launch in quarter 2 2022) – Participants could be the likes of TUBS, Save our Stort, Friends of Castle Park etc.

He thanked members for their support and is looking forward to updating members on progress.

Jim has been working with developers, WebAppz on technical specifications. The three key areas of focus are volunteers, opportunities and firms – all have individual requirements which the app will fulfil.



Colin George was delighted to inform us that Aspects, with whom we had previously worked and funded to promote protective behaviours in schools, was now going further. They are progressing to stage 2 of the process having already secured funding.



We had an update on the historic signage project for Bishop's Stortford. Stort Valley Rotary members Derek Crowther and Steve Mustill have led this collaborative project to a successful conclusion of the first phase.

Signs for the first phase of the historic signage project were erected in March. The signs show the history of Bishops Stortford as far back as Saxon times in words and pictures.



Bishops Stortford Town Council

funded the project with a grant available from the European Union.

We made it just before time for the grant ran out! The project received help and encouragement from the Town Council Chief Executive, James Parker and his team.



The Bishops Stortford History Society led by Rob Francis provided the words and the pictures were provided from their archives by the Museum at Southmill Arts. Volunteer Mike James' encyclopaedic knowledge proved particularly helpful.

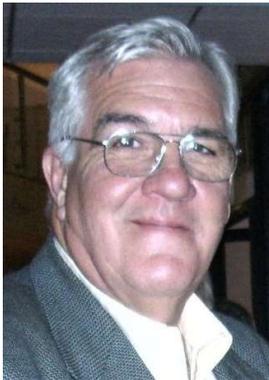
The board at South Mill Arts Centre is featured here. With Steve Mustill, Derek Crowther and Rob Francis proudly standing behind it.

The other signs are situated at Hockerill, Market Square and Windhill and each one highlights the history local to its situation.

When the Castle Park improvements are realised, more signs may feature there.



We have been aware and proud of the achievements of fellow Stort Valley Rotary member Robert Muir and his charity BuildAid. For a number of years, we have participated in fundraising for BuildAid projects around the world. With Rotarians from four other Clubs joining us for the Club Evening, this note on Robert's update includes some additional information that Robert did not include and our guests may not be aware.



Robert founded BuildAid in 2005 in response to the South East Asian Tsunami to provide technical assistance to rebuilding projects. Since then it has evolved from providing emergency aid, to long term community projects assisting over 400,000 people in need across four continents. Projects are predominantly in post-disaster areas focussing on building schools, orphanages and medical facilities. These are the areas where Robert is confident of making the most impact, with aid that is permanent, cost effective and helps those who need it most. Maximum local participation including using local materials and labour as far as possible, enhances commitment and sustainability. Wherever possible he works in partnership with local Rotarians to ensure project integrity. BuildAid has attracted significant Rotary funding support with Global and District Grants and Robert contributes to the work of the District International

Committee. District Governor Keith Brownlie highlights in the March District Bulletin that Robert "is working with UK and Ukrainian charities to assist in providing accommodation for over 200 children from orphanages who are about to leave Ukraine, using Build Aid as a vehicle to provide accommodation."

An update from Robert always reinforces member's admiration for what has been achieved and which he and his team continue to achieve.

Recently completed projects include:



- Mother and Baby Unit in the Rombo Health Centre in Kenya serving 30,000 people where it is also hoped to construct a small operating theatre

for emergency caesareans and other procedures.

- Also in Kenya, two 45-seater classrooms in the Colin Davies Secondary school. The school was oversubscribed because of its scholarship programme for children who could not afford to go elsewhere. This fantastic school has a teacher /pupil ratio of 90/1!



- Child abandonment is a major problem in the Philippines and orphanages are lifelines. An orphanage on the island of Bohol for these children has helped to double its intake by the addition of a new dormitory.
- Two primary schools, also in the Philippines.
- School buildings and a Rural Health Centre in Haiti.



- A Rural Leprosy Hospital in Nepal.
- Several school projects in Sri Lanka conclude a very impressive list of completed Projects.

Current Projects:

- Four Sand Dams are planned for Kenya. These dams built of reinforced

concrete or stone, are built across dry seasonal riverbeds and are designed to trap and hold water from seasonal rains. This provides a safe, naturally filtered water supply for the community, with each dam able to provide water for thousands of people. The dams also raise the water table of the local area meaning they are a very effective way of regenerating and encouraging vegetation to grow. With virtually zero upkeep costs they can have a huge transformative impact on communities in marginalised and dry areas.



- A child oncology unit in Blantyre, Malawi in partnership with President Gordon's World Child Cancer. The unit will double the capacity of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.



- In Pprtnership with Rotary International, "Solar Biolites" are being provided to off grid homes in Kenya. Costing £120, each solar powered unit can provide the electrical needs of an entire home. Radios and mobile phones can be

STORT VALLEY ROTARY VIEW THE FUTURE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

charged, as well as making housework, childcare and hygiene much easier and safer and improving families' quality of life.

- Belgrove primary School in Kenya need accommodation that will double up as dormitories for children living in remote areas with unsustainable travel distances to school. It will also provide extra learning spaces for nursery-age children.



- BuildAid is partnering a Philippines charity, C.U.R.E. to build sheltered accommodation for sexually-abused children and has joint plans for other future projects with this charity.
- Again in partnership with Rotary International, a sanitation campaign has been launched on Panglao Island

- in the Philippines to combat two main diseases, diarrhoea and worms. These diseases cause school absenteeism, chronic under-nutrition and growth retardation, and even death. The plan is to build as many toilet blocks as possible
- with fully -unctioning plumbing and hand washing facilities to raise hygiene standards in primary schools.

Robert has now retired from his day job of running a Building Surveying Consultancy. He left us in no doubt, however, that with this range of projects he will not find himself without demands on his time! His talk left members and guests marvelling at his energy, compassion and commitment to making a difference in the world.



A POSITIVE TAKE ON THE FUTURE FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

The three addresses by young people at a recent Zoom meeting on the challenges we face with the environment were a welcome uplift in our troubled world. It is possible some feared angry hectorings like those of Greta Thunberg. Instead, we received careful explanations of the issues, followed by practical improvements that we could all contribute to. Each talk was well prepared and clearly presented. The confident delivery of the presenters could only be achieved with understanding of the issues.

Sophie Broom from Lambrook School addressed warming oceans. Her presentation involved beautiful computer animations and

which included photos to emphasise her main points. As the ice caps are melting and sea levels rising with sea water warming due to too much carbon dioxide emissions, she had various suggestions as to how simple changes in our life styles could make a difference.

Examples included not using running water when brushing our teeth and cutting down on our dependence on plastics.



Savannah Martin from Tain Royal Academy addressed the impact the North Coast 500 route has on the environment and tourism in the area. The north highland route has been a major boost to tourism but the beautiful countryside has been threatened with the increase in traffic, causing frustration and increased pollution. She said that the lack of infrastructure was also causing problems. There were not enough campsites, with campervans using and damaging passing places overnight. Litter - including face masks - lack of toilets and "wild campers" were all having negative impacts on the Highlands. Her suggestions included improving locally produced food for tourists rather than mass produced and over packed food. Savannah said the North Highlands offer lovely holidays with beautiful scenery but her mission is to make people more aware of the damage that can be caused.



Zoe Hart and Yvette Hupje from Hockerill Anglo European College talked on Food Waste. They did an experiment with the lunchtime meals at their school. Measuring the daily food waste from lunch time food plates they made the staggering discovery that their food waste met the daily needs of 250 people!

Food waste occurs at all points in the chain from farming to transporting to consuming. It is recyclable and we must cut down the amount going into landfill where it decomposes to create methane gas – a more damaging greenhouse gas than carbon

dioxide. They suggested we compost food waste if we can. They also suggested that we avoid food waste by not necessarily following "best before" dates of our food but relying on look, smell and taste.

To improve the school waste, they created a competition between schoolhouses to see who could have the least waste for one day. This improved awareness in the school.

The three presentations showed how aware our younger generation is of the danger to our environment. It is tempting to think that this awareness and willingness to make a difference is worth more than the promises and show-boating of our leaders and opinion formers at highly publicised COP meetings.



Keith Brownlie our District Governor for 1240, who is an enthusiastic environmentalist, was so impressed, that he has invited the three presentations to be entered in the Rotary Young Environmental first competition.

However, no report can demonstrate the quiet enthusiasm and promise projected by the young presenters. Those who missed the talks deny themselves an uplifting treat if they do not visit the YouTube recording. Just click the button below.



STORT VALLEY ROTARY RECOGNISES THE IMPORTANCE FOR THE FUTURE OF SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Tuesday 12 April	Club Evening – Easter Egg Raffle
Tuesday 26 April	Will Gemmill – Partner-Ceres Rural
Tuesday 10 May	Club Evening – Quiz presented by Alan & Rhian Capener
Tuesday 24 May	Robert Cannon – Covid to Omicron, Back to Success
Tuesday 14 June	AGM
Tuesday 28 June	Speaker Evening - TBA
Tuesday 12 July	Club Evening
Tuesday 26 July	Speaker Evening - TBA
Tuesday 13 September	Club Evening
Tuesday 27 September	Richard Roberts, HCC - What life is like as Leader of Hertfordshire County Council
Tuesday 11 October	Club Evening
Tuesday 25 October	Rowan McKellar - Experience at the Olympics
Tuesday 8 November	Club Evening
Tuesday 22 November	Speaker Evening - TBA

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