

# STORT VALLEY ROTARY

NEWSLETTER

May 2023



**Tuesday 27 June on Zoom**  
**Piera Freccero,**  
**Director of Programmes,**  
**World Child Cancer**

## PRESIDENT'S PREAMBLE



Fellow Rotarians and Friends,  
 We continue to drive change within Stort Valley Rotary. You may ask when will all this stop? I am in no doubt that if we stop changing and improving, we will be left behind. Not

necessarily by Rotary but by the many other organisations that are competing for an audience. Organisations who are determined to succeed must embrace change.

In the news just now, there is considerable discussion about Artificial Intelligence and the software program called CHAT GPT which has a view on everything. I therefore asked it about Rotary. The answer was as follows;-

**“Rotary Clubs need to change and adapt to remain relevant and effective in their mission. By embracing diversity, technology and impactful service projects, Rotary can continue to make a positive difference in their communities and the world.”**

This is just the output from intelligence stored on computers but amazingly, it reflects the path that Stort Valley Rotary is on.

What we have achieved has been impressive, although not necessarily totally approved of by more traditional Rotarians.

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- Rowing the Atlantic - Peter Beatty
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- Coronation Walk – Helping Herts
- Easter Egg Raffle

There is a lot more that can be achieved. The more we look the more people in real need of support we find, and Rotary is the perfect vehicle through which this support can be delivered. However, we require more members that can embrace the technology necessary in our modern society. We are building good relationships with “not for profit” organisations that are able to deliver direct support to those in need.

The funds and publicity that we are generating through Stort Valley’s Helping Herts initiative is creating interest from younger generations who carry with them a real passion to help others.

The other piece of excellent news is that the Volmatch App, which matches those looking to volunteer with those looking for volunteers, is now launched with a trial running in the Bishop’s Stortford Area. A very encouraging level of interest is being generated. Another triumph for Stort Valley Rotary

Kind regards,  
 Gordon Morrison, President

Find us at:  
[stortvalleyrotary.com](http://stortvalleyrotary.com)

Rotary  Stort Valley

## CHANGE IS CRUCIAL TO THE FUTURE OF ROTARY



We were joined at our Club meeting in March by District Governor Jed Brooks and members of his team DG Elect Dave Willis, DG Nominee Anne Moriarty, DG Nominee Mark Williamson and Assistant Governor Alan Swash.

The meeting had been arranged to explore new ways to advance Rotary in a fast-changing world. Change has been in the air for several years but the impact of Covid-19 has been an accelerator and wake-up call.

Opening the business part of the meeting, Peter Latham delivered the Stort Valley Rotary report for the year. As well as continuing with traditional activities, the report informed of the impressive multiplying gains achieved using modern electronic communication techniques to facilitate collaborative ventures. The full content of the report was the same as that covered in the March edition of this Newsletter. The report concluded that within its area of influence, Stort Valley Rotary, is delivering on its ambitions.

- Helping Herts is delivering financial support and educating charities to promote themselves and take on board the latest digital tools: £400,000 raised over the last two years with 29 Hertfordshire charities benefiting.
- The reach of our Speaker Evenings is growing with around 3,000 viewing our talks live or through our YouTube channel. Interestingly twice as many people view through YouTube than watch live on the evening.
- Our partnership with BuildAid is delivering support to disadvantaged families in parts of the world where help is desperately needed.

- Our regular club meetings and outings (social events) deliver excellent companionship and interest to members and friends.

- We face the future with confidence.

Jed Brooks opened by communicating the messages from Rotary International and Rotary GB&I. The message was neatly encapsulated by stating that both RI President Jennifer Jones and Vice President Nicky Scott are encouraging us “to embrace new ways of doing Rotary, take risks, explore new ideas, review club meeting formats, question what we do and why we do it.”

Jed then complimented our club on the achievements of our 40-year existence and the changes we had embraced. He also mentioned our website and Facebook page as being “very active and full of good information.” He stressed that continuity is imperative for success.

Jed commended the Treekly Project which is committed to planting trees. District has joined the project as part of Jed’s main aim to promote environmental projects. He also stressed the importance of supporting Foundation and to promote its vital international work. He stressed the availability of the District Team to support clubs, and how together we can make a difference to those less fortunate than ourselves.

The discussion that followed led by Gordon Morrison centred around the changes needed throughout Rotary if it is to stay relevant in a fast-changing world. The imperative to engage and enthuse upcoming generations via a wholehearted embrace of all modern media was addressed.



**STORT VALLEY ROTARY IS PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES**

## SARAIID RESCUES VICTIMS FROM TURKISH EARTHQUAKE DISASTER



Search and Rescue Assistance in Disaster (SARAIID) was formed in 2004 in response to the tsunami in Southeast Asia with the aim to provide aid to stricken communities

following natural disasters regardless of country or creed. All members are volunteers and give up their day jobs on a short-term short notice basis to provide the vital early assistance needed.

SARAIID is a charity, but unlike the bigger organisations get no Government aid and rely on donations. They operate under a United Nations umbrella which co-ordinates the many similar organisations from all over the world that become involved in times of calamity.

Their team of 60 come from all walks of life, teachers, farmers, carers, woodworkers, builders, firefighters and engineers who comprise 40% of the task force. Alex is an Engineer. They meet every week and have regular training sessions, primarily in the Bristol area at fire station facilities. Once a year they meet for a week-long intensive course.

SARAIID typically deploys half its number to any particular disaster. Their small, self sufficient teams can get to disasters quickly and this ability has been specifically recognised by the UN.

Nepal was their previous major assignment in 2015. Afterwards they stayed on and trained the local monks and the scouts to make them better able to respond to future disasters to which the area is prone.

Out of this, and their earlier involvement in Haiti, they now form groups in conjunction with local officials, engineers and volunteers. The group, tagged 'Beyond the Rubble Pile,'

records the situation, what is involved, and identifies likely future issues. All this is in order to sustain the work after they have left and to bolster future preparedness. This process is now recognised by the UN and set as a requirement when they and other organisations become involved overseas.

The specific contribution of Alex Rogers from Saffron Walden who addressed us, comes from his role as an engineer. In Turkey he was responsible for ensuring safe access into the many collapsed buildings, with countless victims entombed but potentially alive within. Choosing which temporary supports are needed and which wall can be safely breached to gain entry are key to a successful recovery. Speed is of the essence, as trapped victims rarely live longer than five days. Scientific advances have helped the process with ultra-sensitive noise detectors and cameras on probes now able to get into the heart of the ruins and detect the smallest sound or movement.



Their latest assignment in Turkey had many such situations and the teams were instrumental in saving numerous trapped victims often children. They were just one of some 80 teams despatched from across the world to the affected area which approximates to half the size of England. They were deployed to Kahramanmaraş.

As the main earthquake shocks took place at 3am residential blocks (some as much as 13 storeys high) became the main focus of their efforts because most of the people were asleep at the time. Despite some bureaucratic mix-ups and a tortuous overland

journey by bus they were on site two days after news of disaster struck. They arrived a totally self-sufficient team with their own water, food, tents, recovery equipment and a medic.



Success in these situations is a relative term but on their initial deployment, with the help of locals and an excavator, safe access to a largely intact basement was achieved, with access guided by the 'snakecam.' You should however visit the Stort Valley website YouTube channel to fully understand the protracted, difficult but carefully considered route to success on this occasion. They found and brought out a mother and her seven-year-old daughter, alive and well, from the wreck of a collapsed block of flats. Sadly, the father and son did not survive.

The base for all the teams was a safe area outside the city centre but, with night temperatures typically as low as minus 12C, not a good experience. Fault lines riddle the country and the Turkish Government were prepared. They had set up an operations centre with a dedicated emergency telephone contact number. At the centre, they received and collated calls made from disaster sites reporting signs of life and seeking assistance. They decided the subsequent assignments.

On the team's next assignment, they deployed their innovative seismic detectors which can detect scratching across the full width of a concrete structure. Unfortunately, on this occasion they detected nothing. Success, however, came the next day with Alex making the initial discovery. A long and arduous process followed and a girl was found and extracted alive, but most worried about her mum. Sadly she was not be found.

A report of 25 buried in a basement was the next assignment where a French team had so far drawn a blank. This was a collaboration with French and German teams. Sniffer dogs had already been deployed watched by 400 anxious friends and relatives, who stood silent on command when the seismic sensor were deployed. Again, regrettably, to no avail but hopefully the bereaved were more reconciled to their loss given the massive effort put in to trying to find their kin.

With the crucial first 5 days having elapsed the team returned to England.

In the context of 55,000 dead in the disaster their achievements and that of fellow rescuers from across the free world, may seem small but they were appreciated and very helpful to the bereaved. It must be reassuring to all nations that in times of crisis there are such friends and organisations out there willing to disrupt their lives, give their time and put themselves at risk in order to help others. SARAID is one of them.



**STORT VALLEY ROTARY SUPPORT HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVES  
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD**



## ROWING ACROSS THE ATLANTIC SINGLE HANDED WITHOUT SUPPORT



After dinner at a Club Evening in April we were treated to a talk by Peter Beatty. Peter is 61 years old, lives in Bishops Stortford, has a career in Roofing and talks about his achievements over

the years in a cheery matter-of-fact and endearing way.

He came to talk to us because he plans to row the Atlantic on his own from Portugal to French Guyana in three and a half months. He will be the first to cross from mainland to mainland, the oldest to attempt this and will be unsupported for most of the 3,540 miles. His purpose is to raise awareness of men's mental and physical health by raising £100,000 for the "Prostate Cancer" and "Tough Enough to Care" Charities.

The details of what he has to prepare himself for left us open mouthed. This includes navigation skills to ensure that he can manage the many currents that can help him, so that when he reaches French Guyana he hits the coast at a port and not one of the many mangrove swamps! The physical fitness required for 14-to 15 hours of rowing a day, stretched the imagination of most of our members present! Peter has had a 23-foot rowing boat modified for his needs, costing him £45000, and has planned the food and

water supplies that he will need, having taken advice from previous long distance rowers.

This is not the first major challenge that Peter has taken on and achieved, we were relieved to hear. At the age of 45 he swam the English Channel, and also starting in the Neothwest, walked through France and Spain to Gibraltar.



Questions and discussion reflected our concern at the magnitude and potential hazards of the undertaking. How would you deal with sharks and Orcas? How will you manage the heat of the sun with no shade? How will you manage getting out of the boat to clean the barnacles off the bottom? Peter appeared unfazed by any of these issues and we could only be overawed at his courage, resolution and desire to inspire individuals to challenge themselves.

Donations can be made via

[www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/indian-summer--2022](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/indian-summer--2022)

Further information and videos on [www.indiansummer2022.co.uk](http://www.indiansummer2022.co.uk)

**STORT VALLEY ROTARY SUPPORTS ADVENTUROUS &  
IMAGINATIVE PROJECTS TO PROMOTE GOOD CAUSES**

## GORDON & JIM OFF ON THEIR HELPING HERTS CORONATION WALK



Helping Herts, the official charity of Stort Valley Rotary, will showcase the amazing countryside on our doorstep as they take on an epic 180 mile walk of the Hertfordshire Way.

All the money raised will go directly to 12 children's and young people's charities across Hertfordshire including: Coram Life Education, Herts Young Homeless, For Baby's Sake, Herts Mind Network, Grove Cottage, Home-Start Herts, Phoenix Group for Deaf Children & Adults, PlaySkill, the Ollie Foundation, NSPCC, CHEXS and Keech Hospice Care.

This isn't the first-time co-founders Gordon Morrison and Jim Tatchell have taken on such a challenge. Back in 2022 they walked the Hertfordshire Way along with Gordon's black Labradors Rosie and Pepper, the Friends of Hertfordshire Way, Rotary and teams from the charities THAT Helping Herts support.

This year Gordon and Jim are doing the same route, but in reverse. They will take on the walk in 14 sections over the course of two weeks straddling the coronation, beginning on the 29 April and finishing on 13 May. Commencing in Bishop's Stortford, the walk passes through a variety of Hertfordshire scenery, mostly in open countryside, but also includes some really attractive and interesting villages, as well as the larger towns of Hertford and the historic city of St Albans.

Gordon Morrison, co-founder of Helping Herts said: "We've pulled together a wonderful team for the Coronation walk. It will be a great opportunity to walk across a really attractive part of the county, and to raise vital

funds to support the children's charities involved. 180 miles is a really long way, but it should be a good occasion! Please do support us if you can."

Jim Tatchell, co-founder of Helping Herts said: "Gordon and I will be blogging and vlogging every day to highlight the links that our beautiful county has with royalty, such as Hatfield House (where Elizabeth 1st found out she had become Queen!), the former palace of Queen Eleanor of Castille, and St Paul's Walden Bury (the ancestral family home of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother).

"We hope to be joined for some of the route by the royal family's representative in Hertfordshire, the Lord Lieutenant, as well as a number of Deputy Lord Lieutenants, High Sheriffs past and present, and possibly even some local royalty themselves!"



The charity walk is just one of our many fundraisers planned for this year. Keep an eye out on the Helping Herts social media channels for details of more events throughout the year, as well as how you can organise your own fundraiser.

Find out more about the walk and register your interest here:

[www.helpingherts.com/events](http://www.helpingherts.com/events)

To sponsor Gordon and Jim visit:

<https://helpinghertscoronationwalk.heroes.help/campaigns/Gordon-Jim-Friends-Coronation-Walk>

To keep up to date with events and activities Helping Herts is organising, visit:

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

**STORT VALLEY ROTARY ENGAGES THE COMMUNITY & PROMOTES THE HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE WHILST RAISING FUNDS FOR WORTHY CHARITIES**

## ANOTHER EGGCELLENT EASTER EGG EGGTRAVAGANZA



Now a well-established Stort Valley initiative, giant Easter Eggs were given to 14 local hostelrys to raffle, very ably led this year by Robert Muir assisted by Jacqui Baron, Irene Hinshelwood and Martin Budzinski.

At a £1 a ticket the pubs' generous clientele filled the hundred slots on their board – with some pubs seeking

further eggs and increasing their proceeds. A grand total of £1800 was collected which this year will be given to Isabel Hospice.

Members had a dedicated raffle of their own which covered the cost of the eggs, boosted by winner Jim Tatchell who sold his egg on and donated the proceeds.

NB Jim was in training with President Gordon for their 180-mile Hertfordshire Walk reported above in this newsletter. He didn't feel the 5000 plus calories in the egg would necessarily help his cause!

## FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday 9 May        | Talk by Jono Forgham                                                                                                                                             |
| Tuesday 23 May       | Speaker Evening – Rebecca O'Connell, Professor of Food, Families & Society (UH) - Children's experience of Food & Food poverty in low-income families in Britain |
| Tuesday 13 June      | AGM & Club Evening (Assistant Governor District 1240 Alan Swash to attend)                                                                                       |
| Tuesday 27 June      | Speaker Evening - Piera Freccero, Director of Programmes, World Child Cancer                                                                                     |
| Tuesday 11 July      | Club Evening – Talk by James Garrett                                                                                                                             |
| Tuesday 25 July      | Speaker Evening – Ken Follett TBC                                                                                                                                |
| Saturday 5 August    | Garden Party at Gordon & Mary Morrison's                                                                                                                         |
|                      | <b>No Formal Meetings August</b>                                                                                                                                 |
| Tuesday 12 September | Club Evening                                                                                                                                                     |
| Tuesday 26 September | Speaker Evening TBC                                                                                                                                              |
| Tuesday 10 October   | Club Evening                                                                                                                                                     |
| Tuesday 24 October   | Speaker Evening – Daksha Trivedi, community engagement and health inequalities - Providing cancer support in the community at a challenging time                 |
| Tuesday 14 November  | Club Evening                                                                                                                                                     |
| Tuesday 28 November  | Speaker Evening – TBC                                                                                                                                            |

[www.stortvalleyrotary.com](http://www.stortvalleyrotary.com)



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