



BRUIN

Brecon Rotary Update, Information & News



Youth evening

The importance of teaching young people leadership skills was the keynote message at the Club’s annual Youth Evening held in the Castle Hotel on 17 September.

Josh Pearce, 17, from Brecon, was presented with a RYLA award after completing a course at the Storey Arms Outdoor Education Centre. Josh, who studies at Merthyr College, confidently described the variety of outdoor activities, such as hill-walking and kayaking, which they had to complete during the week.



Alastair Smith, Senior Leader at the Storey Arms Centre, who presented the certificate, said: “It is brilliant to see the young people blossoming during the course, gaining confidence and forming strong bonds of friendship.”

President Hayley commented: “Young people are our inspiration and that is what makes it all worthwhile.”

The audience were also given a demonstration of karate by two young members of JKS Brecon Senshi Karate Dojo, Nathan Preece and Rhydian Rogers. The karate club was one of a number of local organisations involving young people that had received grants, either directly or via our Community Chest Scheme. There were the Red Kites, providing summer rugby for girls aged 9 to 15; the First Brecon Scout Group and Isobel Ross, a 15-year-old pupil at Brecon High School, who had used the money to attend summer dance school, which she hoped would serve as a stepping stone to a professional career in dance.



Helen Quarrell, Principal Youth Officer at Powys County Council, thanked the Club for providing opportunities that helped young people develop as well as letting them have fun.

- Glyn



On show



Show Champions! Awarded for the best non-agricultural stand at the Sennybridge Show.



PRESIDENT – HAYLEY RIDGE-EVANS

VICE-PRESIDENT – NEIL SANDFORD

EDITOR – JEFF OPLAND

Nick and Carol engrossed in the y Gaer giant puzzle challenge



Scandinavia and the North

I can't now remember what it was that first triggered my fascination with Scandinavia and the North but the summer after I left school my friend Roger and I went to Denmark and Sweden on bicycles. We cycled from Worcester to Harwich in two days, took the boat and train to the Hook of Holland and on to Hamburg. There we got off and started cycling at three in the morning. We stayed with a German exchange student friend and his parents in the beautiful city of Lubeck and were taken to see the nearby border with East Germany, which in 1960 was manned by heavily

armed guards. Our journey continued by ferry from Grossenbrode to Gedser and then through the beautiful Danish countryside on the islands of Lolland and Zealand to Copenhagen, visiting Roskilde and other sights on the way. The world famous "Little Mermaid" was a huge disappointment as she is so tiny! Sweden next via Hamlet's castle in Elsinore which is called Kronborg and from which the Danes fired on Nelson's fleet in the run-up to the battle of Copenhagen in 1801. A few days exploring Sweden including swimming in the Kattegat, then we cycled back to Hamburg to get the train and boat home.





Two years later when I was at college I met students from many different countries and became particularly friendly with some from Denmark, Finland and Iceland. This led to a visit to Finland to celebrate the New Year 1963 (by boat and train the whole way

– total cost £39 return) when I was introduced to the traditional Finnish sauna by a Russian (!). We sweated in 110C in the sauna then rolled in the snow outside at -10C. Two summers working in Germany and Sweden and visits to stay with friends in Aarhus in Denmark and Hamina in Finland were followed by a year studying German and Swedish. I was lucky to stay and work in a beautiful part of Germany, North Rhine Westphalia, which is close to Cologne, and also in the lovely



coastal city of Gothenburg in Sweden. After finishing my engineering course I spent the best part of a year working in the Llanwern steelworks near Newport before getting the offer of a six-month contract to work in a design office in Helsinki. Without much thought I gave in my notice, threw all my belongings in the car and drove up there. After six months I got a permanent job with a Swedish-speaking engineering consultant where I worked for four years and was involved in some very interesting construction projects. During that time I travelled extensively in Finland, also visiting St Petersburg in Russia (it was Leningrad then), Tallin in Estonia, Mariehamn in the Aaland islands and North Cape, the northernmost point of Norway. The history and politics are such that one soon found that the Finns do not trust the Russians and the Norwegians are not particularly friendly with the Swedes – all the result of occupation and conflict.

It was there I met my wife Wimke who was doing a one-year post-graduate design course in Helsinki. After we were married we decided to leave Finland intending to live in the UK but as luck would have it I got a job with the Danish company of Christiani and Nielsen and we



found ourselves in Ireland for the next two years. I worked with them for eighteen years spending three years in the head office in Copenhagen and three and a half in Ireland again. I made many friends in Denmark including some from the Faroe Islands, which are a Danish Protectorate. We bought a house in Copenhagen and our lovely next door neighbours were an Inuit lady with a Norwegian husband and two lively sons. What parties they gave! They moved to the west coast of Greenland where she found a job as a

head teacher and invited us to visit them there. I always regret that the opportunity never arose.

My interest in the North has continued and in the last few years I have made two trips to Iceland along the south and west coasts, one to the east coast of Greenland trekking where I saw an amazing display of the northern lights (I had been trying to see them since 1965 i.e. for over fifty years!) and an arctic fox tried to steal our food. That was the experience of a lifetime. We were using 1:250,000 maps from Danish surveys in 1992 as no newer ones were available. We observed first hand that several glaciers had retreated by about 3 km or 2 miles, more evidence of global warming. Last year I visited the Faroes for a week



and would love to go back again – wonderful walking country with some very aggressive rams we had to fight off. One of my sons lives in Canada so a few years ago we went on a cruise up the west coast from Vancouver to Alaska. I visit him every year and spend some weeks in the Rockies. Nearer to home I love visiting Scotland including Skye and the Outer Hebrides, the Lake District, Snowdonia and a short visit to the Shetlands. On my list for the future are Norway, particularly the Lofoten islands, Svalbard (or Spitsbergen), the West coast of Greenland and maybe even Baffin island. Reading through this I realise my love is not just for the North but also for islands and wild mountainous areas.

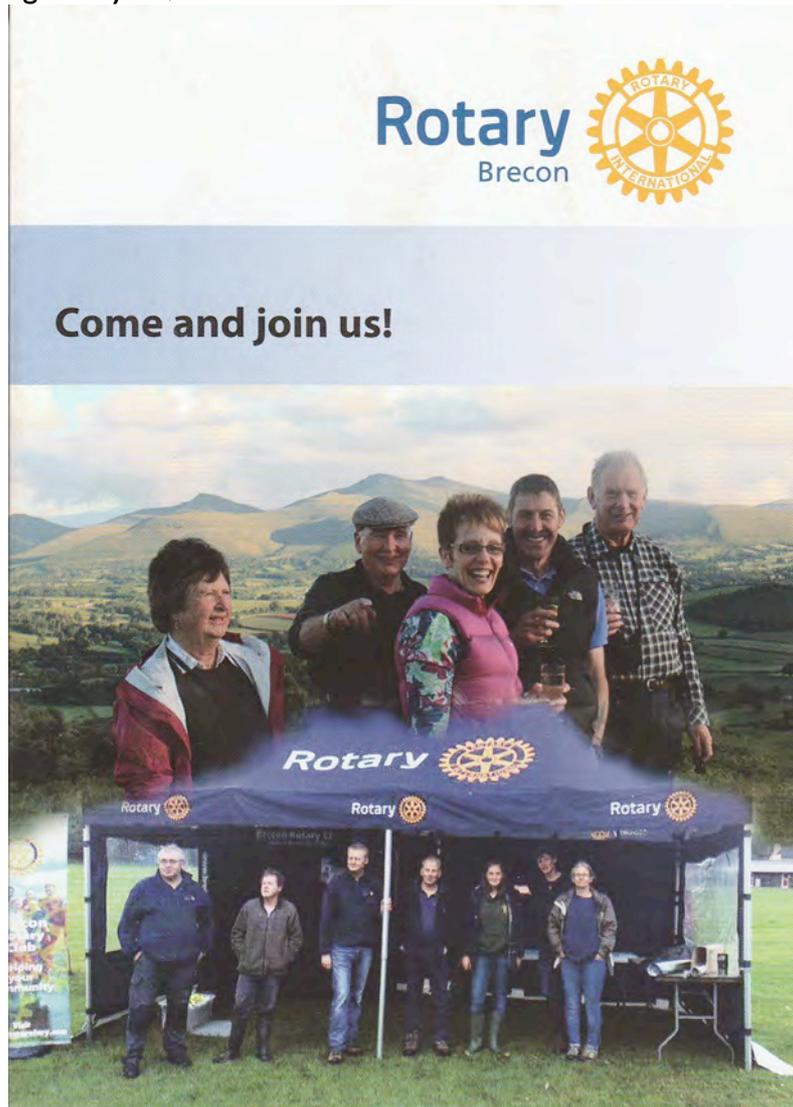
- Andrew



Area Quiz

As the elements clashed furiously about the Monmouthshire Golf Club, Brecon met Abergavenny in a titanic clash of a more sedate nature: the first round of the Area Quiz held on 20 September.

Brecon was represented by **Peter**, **Anne** and **Jeff**, with **Mike** and **Hayley** in the audience and **Brian** Newman scoring. The teams were confronted with ten rounds of three questions each. Brecon leapt into a dazzling lead after the first round of questions, then gradually slipped back until at the break Abergavenny commanded a seemingly insurmountable lead of 29 points to 22. After the break, in Round 6, Brecon yielded another point: down by 8. Then the tide turned. Brecon staunchly cut Abergavenny's lead to 7 in Round 7, and to 2 in Round 8. Round 9 saw the scores unchanged, which left the final round as the clincher. Brecon, somewhat bewildered by the flurry of chocolates the Quizmaster tossed encouragingly and inexplicably to the Abergavenny team, yielded to the pressure. Final score: Abergavenny 49, Brecon 45.



The cover of our splendid new membership brochure



Dates for the diary

24 September	Dinner meeting	15 October	Speaker meeting
1 October	Business meeting	22 October	Fun night: Murder mystery
8 October	Dinner meeting	29 October	Breakfast meeting

Speakers

15 October Mary Adams, Public Image Chair, Rotary Southern Wales
26 November Allie Thomas, Cradoc's Savoury Biscuits

Bottle Rota

20 August	Paul Tambling	1 October	Pat Blake
3 September	Barry Tomlinson	8 October	Terry Dewan
17 September	Andrew Wakley	15 October	Brian Ellam
24 September	Brian Birtles	22 October	Mike Evans



From the Brian Matthews BRUIN file

December 2003 Why Caledonian?

Some of you may, like me, have been puzzling over the origin of the name of our annual fund-raising monster jumble sale. I am indebted to **Peter** Jenkins for this explanation: Apparently there used to be a cattle and general market in Islington which went under this name from its opening in 1855 until it finally closed at the outbreak of WWII. It was particularly noted for its miscellaneous second-hand goods and was much frequented by bargain hunters. It was often referred to as the 'Thieves Market' – so now you know!

April 2004 Peter's quirky questions

Our industrious Sergeant-at-Arms, **Peter** Jenkins, reports that since his introduction of the infamous 'Glass Pig' in 2001 over £700 has been raised. Peter has compiled more than 70 of his weekly quirky questions for our edification and delight (and education) and this represents over £10 per meeting – see, I can do sums too! This money goes into our administration account and helps pay for some of the running costs of the club. Thanks for all that effort spent poring over those obscure reference books, Peter!

June 2004 Usk riverside walk

Our President has at last succeeded in contacting someone at County Hall who admits to knowing something about this project. Older members will recall that in the dim and distant past we set aside some funds as a contribution towards the cost of developing a riverside walk to link Captains Walk with the Usk Bridge where a flight of steps would be provided to give access to the street. At one time we had intended this to be our Millennium Project. However, as members will be aware, the pace of life at Powys County Council is glacial at best and nothing came of the scheme. Now it seems that the project is still alive, albeit only just, and there is a slim chance that we may yet be able to make our mark, possibly by contributing towards a tree planting scheme along the new path or by supplying bench seats. In either case we would arrange for suitable plaques to be erected to denote the contribution of Brecon Rotary to the project. For this reason Club Council has resolved for the time being to retain the sum earmarked for this project in our accounts.

July 2004 Hail to the (new) Chief

The Club celebrated its 45th Charter Night on Monday 28th June with yet another enjoyable dinner for members and guests at the George Hotel. After the meal President **Gareth** gave an account of his very active year in office and thanked all those who had assisted him before handing on the baton to his successor **Terry** Dewan – and so the easy affability of President Gareth gives way to the boyish charm of President Terry! In his turn Terry introduced his 'team' to the Club and outlined some of his plans for the important

year ahead as Rotary International celebrates its centenary. Terry is still our youngest member despite the Club's best efforts to attract younger members but he is determined to shed this accolade before the year is out. The evening ended with a lusty performance by the powerful lungs of the Aberhonddu Male Voice Choir including, of course, those of our new President who is a member of the choir – well done Terry and have a great year!