



BRUIN

Brecon Rotary Update, Information & News



Our loss

It is always sad when we lose a friend and fellow Rotarian. It is even more distressing when that friend is taken from us in such a traumatic fashion. Jim was a relatively new member of our Club but one that had already shown a willingness to roll up his sleeves and make a difference to the new community he had decided to call home. Whilst his time with us was short it was valued by those who got to know Jim and this article gives members a chance to remember him and celebrate his memory. Jim, may you rest in peace.

- Owen

Unfortunately, as Jim had not been a member for long, I had only a few conversations with him. During these, he told me he used to work as an engineer and his main hobby was restoring a vintage car. In early March I had been organising a Murder Mystery evening to raise funds for Macmillan and asked for members to volunteer to take part. One of the characters was a ship's engineer and the costume suggestion was oily overalls. Jim readily volunteered, saying he had just the clothes to wear! The event was due to be held on Monday 19 March, but had to be postponed due to snow so, unfortunately, Jim didn't get his opportunity to tread the boards.

- Carol

In March Melanie and I attended a concert in The Muse organised by The Brecon Jazz Club. A tap on the shoulder at interval revealed Jim and Sharon sitting behind us. Jim was enjoying the show, and waxed enthusiastic about their move to Brecon with all the cultural facilities it offered them. We looked forward to exploring our mutual interest in jazz in the coming months, but those months just didn't come

- Jeff



Speaker's Corner

On 23 April we had Julian Atkins as our speaker, the new CEO of Brecon Beacons National Park. Although having worked for the National Park for nine years, he had mostly been engaged in conservation issues such as upgrading the Black Mountains area.

His was a very professional presentation with plenty of lovely pictures of the National Park area, interspersed with information about the Park Authority. He spoke without notes and smiled a lot.



Initially he explained that National Parks, set up from 1959 onwards, were landscapes chosen for being close to major centres of population. The aim had been to provide outdoor access and recreation for urbanites as well as to help sustain communities in the small towns and villages within their boundaries.

Our National Park is home to 33,000 people and one million sheep, and caters for five million visitors a year, only a quarter of whom stay for more than a day at a time. He said that there were 24 members of the Authority, eight of whom were appointed by the Welsh Government. Powys CC appoints eight, but not all were resident in the Park area. Julian thought that, since there were 100 full-time staff, the ratio of members to staff was too high and might be reduced in the future.

One of the unusual things about BBNP compared with other National Parks is that it owns 14.3% of the land, with National Resources Wales runner up on 12.7%. With a budget

of £5.8m, the Park handles planning, conservation, access and recreation, education and information and has a limited sustainability fund for any private sector schemes of which it approves. He obviously enjoyed saying that the area of the National Park was equivalent to the area of the London Underground. Julian concluded by describing some of the qualities of the Park, namely waterfalls, rare plants, caves and bats and mentioned the problems caused by over-use and what was being done about erosion, wildfires and parking.

In the open session that followed, Rotarians noted how little had been said about Brecon itself, the largest town in any of the three Welsh National Parks. Was the town the unintended victim of neglect by both the National Park and Powys, each authority thinking that the other was in charge? Perhaps Brecon should have not been included in the first place, asked one Rotarian. Julian Atkins ended by reminding us that the Local Development Plan was up for review this summer, which in theory would give us the opportunity to voice any of the concerns that we might have.

- Peter



Community Chest

The current round of the Club's Community Chest Small Grants Scheme closed on 8 April. In total ten applications were received and reviewed at a meeting held at the Castle Hotel on Wednesday 18 April. The panel consisted of Owen, Neil, Cath, Hayley, Nick, Roger and Brian Newman. An initial budget of £2,500 was allocated to the scheme. The review panel agreed to support the following seven applications:

- Brecon and District Swimming Club for the purchase of eight stop watches (£300)
- BCA Independent Advocacy Services for Theatre Wildcats - working with adults with learning difficulties (£480)
- Red Kites Cluster Girls for a large gazebo for the girls-only rugby team to shelter during games (£450)
- The Friends of Llyswen School for the development of the school garden (£250)
- Hay and District Dial-a-Ride for the monthly Bank Bus (£500)
- JKS Wales for the Brecon Senshi Karate Dojo - the project aims to increase participation and improve standards by providing a local centre of excellence for the development and promotion of karate in Brecon (£375) and
- Llangors Youth and Community Centre as a contribution towards the overall funding requirement for the new Llangors Play Park (£500)

The awards amounted to £2,855. The shortfall of £355 was unanimously approved at the breakfast meeting on 30 April.

- Cath



Stroke Awareness Day

The Stroke Awareness day, or Blood Pressure day as it is known, is an annual event and we held ours this year on Saturday 21 April in The Guildhall, Brecon.

We hold it here as it is a central place in Brecon with lots of history, and we can entice people in to have a look round, and take their blood pressure at the same time.

We are very fortunate to have the help of Dr Julia Bignall, a local doctor, and a team of helpers who use the monitors to measure people's blood pressure. Having your blood pressure checked regularly is essential as high blood pressure can cause a stroke.

There are more than 100,000 strokes in the UK each year—that is, around one stroke every five minutes, and over half of all strokes can be caused by high blood pressure! So we are providing a very useful service to the community here in Brecon, as having your blood pressure taken without having to make an appointment with your GP can often put your mind at rest, or give you a warning to do something about it if it is too high.

We had a total of 182 forms filled in and many of the recipients were visitors to Brecon and not locals alone, so it is also a good PR event for Rotary.

One middle-aged lady said to me that she hadn't had her blood pressure taken for years. When told she was fine she said it had "made her day" and she was off for a celebratory lunch with her grandchildren!

A very worthwhile event for Rotary to be involved in and one we should continue to do every year.

- Anne



Tŷ Hafan visit

On Monday 16 April **Brian** Newman, **Hywel**, **Pat** and I visited Tŷ Hafan children's hospice, which is located in Sully, Vale of Glamorgan. We were shown around by Julie Williams, the Fundraising Manager, who had invited us after giving our Club a talk in January.



Tŷ Hafan is one of the UK's leading paediatric palliative care charities and offers the only children's hospice service in south Wales. It provides holistic palliative care for children with life-limiting conditions and their families from throughout Wales, so they can make the

most of the time they have left together. The term “life-limited” is used to describe a child not expected to live beyond 18 years of age.

The facilities allow parents and carers to relax and recharge their batteries. And the staff make sure the needs of brothers and sisters are never forgotten. Tŷ Hafan is also a family’s safe haven when their child is close to the end of life, providing expert comfort and support in their darkest hours and beyond.

Our visit lasted two hours and was very enlightening and worthwhile. The visit was organised in such a way that we didn't feel as though we were intruding on anyone's privacy. An air of calm and happiness permeated the place. There was so much equipment, most of which is specialised for the very individual needs of the patients. Every year Tŷ Hafan has to raise £3.7 million to provide its free services to families in Wales. Tŷ Hafan has supported nearly 600 children since it opened in 1999. Apparently 10 children from Powys are currently on their register of patients.

We met a nurse with a patient—conjoined 18-month-old twin girls. This was rather shocking to see. They had separate heads, but appeared to be joined from shoulder down to hip; one outer arm apiece, a shared middle arm, with separate hands; one leg apiece. A vision that will stay with us all for a long time! However, the nurse was very upbeat and her aim was to help create as many happy memories for the children in her care as possible, in the time they had.

Before leaving we handed Julie a cheque for £500 as a donation towards their running costs.

- Carol

Dates for the diary

14 May	Business meeting	25 June	Club Assembly
21 May	First Aid	25 June	Speaker meeting
4 June	AGM	2 July	Business meeting
11 June	Speaker meeting	7 July	Charter night

14 July Nikki Grist Rally

Speakers

11 June	Gordon Atkinson, Chair, Under the Mango Tree
25 June	Rebecca Chamberlain and Gill Colerick, The Stroke Association
23 July	Misha Pedersen, Wye and Usk Foundation
13 August	John Gibbs, Chairman of the Brecknock Society & Museum Friends, on the new Brecon Cultural Hub

Bottle Rota

14 May	Clive Lillywhite	11 June	Mike Mellors
21 May	Glyn Mathias	18 June	Nick Morrell
4 June	Brian Matthews	25 June	Brian Newman