

Mercian Rememberings

The Journal of The Rotary Club of Eccleshall Mercia

July -
December
2015



It's been a while since our last edition of the "Mutterings" so this is a reminder of what the club has achieved in the first half of the 15-16 Rotary Year. Editor – Steve G

Speakers

We had a flood of speakers in July and August with water based subjects ranging from James Brindley (The father of the British canal industry) to a fund-raising rowing challenge from London to Paris in aid of the Donna Louise Trust, followed by John O's pictorial journey along the Panama Canal in South America.



Robyn Davies from Ironbridge RC brought us some extremely interesting stories and artefacts from her own grandparents' and great-grandparents' travels through China in the early 1900s.

Swynnerton Training Camp

After being suitably vetted and security checked we were privileged to have an historical guided tour around the MOD site at Swynnerton in October that covered the early days in the 1940s when it was a secret bomb factory employing 30,000 to the current day. We got to see the underground bunkers used in the Cold War years for overnight nuclear missile storage, the firing ranges and the assault course. We even had lunch after in the mess.

Remembrance

PDG Barry Picken's talk on the true history of the Red Poppy was very timely and combined with our new found knowledge of the civilian losses at Swynnerton during the war years, the Remembrance Services attend by club representatives in Eccleshall and Swynnerton were definitely a bit special this year.



Hook-A-Duck

The now infamous RCofEM pond made the usual appearances over this wet summer at the Eccleshall Show, Yarnfield Village Fete and the Young Farmers Bonfire providing good entertainment and some excellent prizes to young and old alike.

Come Into My Parlour

Said The Worshipful the Mayor of Stafford Borough - Peter Jones, so we did. We enjoyed a shortened (but still very detailed) history of Stafford in the days of serfs and sheriffs from the Sergeant at Arms. And we were fed as well!

A Jolly Talk on Being Older & Bolder

Our speaker on 16th November was Angela Glendenning, who at the age of just 80 made even the youngest of our membership feel old when she explained the challenges that she had set herself (and completed) since her 70th birthday. These included walking, swimming, bog snorkelling, climbing, abseiling, canoeing, cycling and horse riding to name but a few.

The Festive Season Awaits

Santa's Sleigh was spruced up in time for the Eccleshall Christmas Lights switch on 30th November and later the same evening our social gathering was the first official opportunity for us all to wear the best of this year's Christmas Jumpers and feast on some festive goodies prepared by Dawn that included appropriately named delicacies such as Rudolph Pie (no reindeer were harmed in its preparation).

Sleigh Bells Ring



December was wet, but our annual Santa's Sleigh tour around the local area managed to miss the worst of the weather. (Not every night though!)

In fact Santa did actually complain that he was too hot on at least one occasion. When it did rain, the new canopy was successfully deployed and made sure that Santa didn't get as wet as his Elves.

We had some great non-Rotarian volunteers collecting with us this year and the record breaking total of over £2,900 was very impressive. One member of the public contacted us through facebook and kindly treated us to hot drinks and mince pies half-way round our Eccleshall collection on Christmas Eve

Smile Fund

We have distributed nearly £300 to a local family in need and look forward to helping others.

Rain and More Rain

Whilst the December rain in Staffordshire caused some of us some minor inconvenience, those further north suffered some disastrous flooding. In some cases properties were inundated 3 or 4 times, causing massive damage. In true Rotary spirit members of Eccleshall Mercia Rotary held a bucket collection outside the Eccleshall Co-op on New Years Eve in aid of the flood victims. The generous shoppers of Eccleshall



donated £847 in just 4 hours. With some Gift Aid and a top-up from the club's funds the total was boosted to £1000 and has been sent direct to a Rotary Club in one of the worst affected areas to allow them to provide aid, such as cleaning materials and dehumidifiers to those in the greatest need.

If you are interested in our activities and want to find out more, please have a look at our web-page www.eccleshallrotary.com

The President's Bit

First of all, thank you to the members of RC of Eccleshall Mercia for electing me as their President for the year 2015 to 2016. As you can see from Steve's list of our activities for the first half year we have been busy and successful both in fundraising and social events.

Thanks to John Ogbourne and Brian Eyre for finding some very interesting speakers, thanks also to Brian for arranging the trip to MoD Swynnerton. Thanks to Bob and Steve, our Rudolfs, for skilfully driving the sleigh again (one of them was stunningly talented) and for their work on the new canopy.

Thanks to the volunteers who carried the buckets from house to house and raised amazing amounts of funds. Thanks to Hilary and Jon for managing the buckets and for counting and banking all of the cash – a dirty job but great that they did it so promptly. A special thanks to our Santa (you know who you are) for his willingness, enthusiasm and dedication to the job – you made many children very happy.

There were some memorable Santa moments – John Morton running up Badgers Croft. Pat and Sylvia covering miles and full of smiles alongside others heroically plodding - music failing, lights going out – both fixed amazingly quickly. Perhaps the biggest thanks go to the weather which remained fine for nearly all our trips and, most of all, to the local people who supported

Lastly and more seriously, my proudest moment was to assist Margaret Clewley our AG to make three senior members; Steve Groom, Bob Metcalfe and John Ogbourne Paul Harris Fellows and to add to the jewels for PHFs Hilary and Jon Ball.



P.S. Thanks to Dawn (and Zoe) for making my Christmas event such a social and culinary success.

