

The Orwell Newsletter

The Rotary Club Of Ipswich Orwell, RIBI 1339

August/September 2008

From The President's Desk

My first duty as your President was to attend the end of term leaving service for year six pupils at St Botolph's Church, Whitton, conducted by Rtn. The Rev. Andrew Dotchin. It was one of the most enjoyable ceremonies I've attended in Rotary.

To witness the rapport that Andrew has with the children and the respect they give him in return was a joy to behold. I had the privilege of presenting each of the year six pupils with a photograph of the group and of themselves, which as you know are provided by our club. These were very much appreciated by the children and their parents, and this is a project that I trust the club will continue to support in the future.

Now that September is here we will get into the Rotary business mode again. Having said that the first two months of this year have been excellent, with good attendances and interesting speakers.

We were fortunate on the fifth Wednesday in July to have a warm summer evening for our dinner at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club at Woolverstone, when about 80 people (including guests from other clubs) enjoyed an excellent meal followed by an interesting talk by Det. Chief Supt. Stewart Gull, who led the police investigation into the murders last year of five Ipswich prostitutes. This was the first time that Stewart had given a talk on his personal involvement in these tragic events, and the interest was evident from the large number of questions. A big thank-you to Alan Pawsey and Alan Swan for

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Cliff Smith

Words by Malcolm Reece

Photograph by Gordon Kember

With a memory many younger people would admire, Rtn. Clifford Smith (Ipswich East), our speaker on 16th July, gave us a brilliant overview of the new proposals for local government reorganisation – and, as Derek said in thanking him, “he did it without once looking at his notes”.

Clifford, former CEO of Suffolk County Council, referred to “a bee in my bonnet that won't go away” as he recalled how over the years since he first came to Suffolk in 1964, the county's governance had changed, noting that in the sixties we had a total of 33 authorities.



With President Brian Beason is Rotarian Clifford Smith, past CEO of Suffolk County Council, who spoke on 16th July about the proposed designation of unitary authorities in East Anglia

From 1972-74 he was engaged in the changes in Suffolk from 33 local authorities to eight, one of which was Suffolk County Council. What was not understood, he said, was that the county council has since 1974 provided 80 per cent of the county's local government activity. “Today the budget is a billion a year; employment is 27,000 people.”

He went on: “In the districts, of which Ipswich is one providing 20 per cent of the services, they employ a couple of thousand people. Ipswich feels it is the

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arranging the evening. Alan P. has a full programme arranged for the rest of the Rotary year which includes a wide variety of speakers.

Finally, our Charter Night on Friday 10 October is coming up fast and SVP Carol has masterminded the evening and all seems to be well under control. We have a different venue this year at Claydon Country House Hotel, and I hope to see a good turn-out for what promises to be an enjoyable evening.

Yours in Rotary,

Brian ❖

Picture Gallery 1

Photographs By Gordon Kember



At Neptune Marina on 20th August Rtn John Field discussed the new building developments about Ipswich docks



On 10th September Spencer Greystrom spoke about the history and the future aspirations of the River Gipping Trust

biggest and most important district. It is the most urban and complex area with a population of 120,000 of the county's 700,000 population."

Clifford said the current reorganisation proposals were making people "uneasy and restless" with the thought that the borough council would be demoted from a county borough to a unitary authority. He believed that, because the borough was mostly Labour and the county council Tory, it was not helping the situation. "We have," he said, "a pretty awkward situation".

He explained that when Ipswich borough was given the opportunity to apply for unitary services, the answer was yes. "If they had succeeded, libraries, social services, waste and other things would no longer be with the county council. So you would have a new organisation; Ipswich for Ipswich."

Clifford said he was getting so uptight because he realised how much it would cost, with thousands of companies put at risk. He even offered to come out of retirement and to offer his services to various local authorities because he knew the implications of the proposed changes. Clifford added that Graham Dines, political editor of the East Anglian Daily Times, agreed that his case was 100 per cent right, but its chance of success was nil.

Clifford said, personally, he thought it was a total waste of time and money to be putting these proposals forward - "and putting people at each other's throats." He believes the situation is far from over and that the arguments will continue. ■

ROTARIAN WALKS ON WATER

FROM RIBI NEWS

A Rotarian who last year became the first disabled person to sail 1,500 miles single-handed around Great Britain has released a book recounting his inspirational journey.

Geoff Holt was an 18 year old professional yachtsman when on 5 September 1984 he dived into a tropical sea and hit his head on the sand, breaking his neck. He was left completely paralysed from the chest down and facing the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

Twenty-three years later to the day, on 5 September 2007, Geoff crossed the finishing line of what he had called his Personal Everest, as told in his new autobiography Walking on Water, published by Seafarer Books.

Walking on Water can be ordered from leading bookshops, or online at www.walkingonwater.info, priced £9.95.

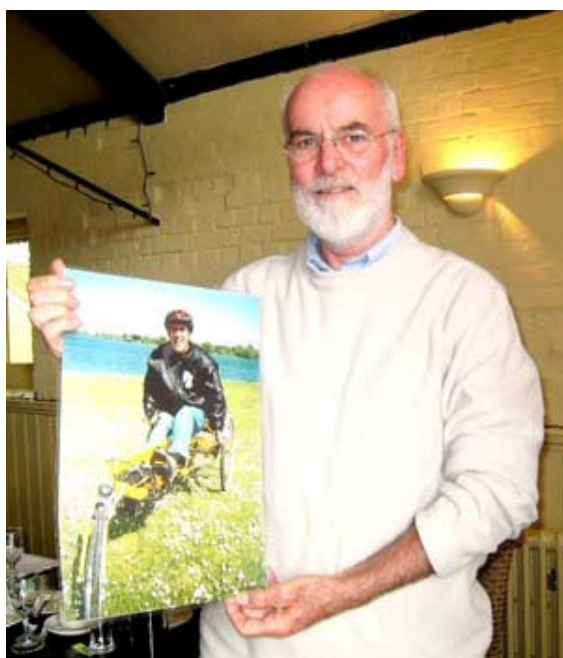
Bike Active

Words By Malcolm Reece

Photograph By Gordon Kember

The well-known saying, "On Yer Bike" has more than the usual meaning for a group of Ipswich volunteers, one of whom, Peter Robinson, took the time to speak to us at our lunch on 3 September.

Peter, who has spent more than 15 years doing voluntary work with the disabled, told us how rewarding it was to see some of these people thriving and enjoying the world of cycling. Many of them are quite severely handicapped, he said, but this has not prevented Peter and his fellow volunteers from leading them on regular cycle outings.



Peter Robinson promoted the BikeActive scheme for the physically handicapped at Rotary on 3rd September 2008

The outings on a weekly basis, take several forms, such as tandems, sidecar attachments and other "aids", and during the whole of Peter's 15 years voluntary work in this field there has never been an accident, he told us.

This cycling for the disabled goes under the heading of "Bike Active" and Peter believes he and his fellow volunteers are the only organisation in Europe doing this particular type of work. Currently Peter is one of 12 voluntary people in Ipswich who regularly carry out cycling activities for 20 disabled people.

The organisation, which boasts of never needing to seek publicity, depends entirely on voluntary contributions. ■

Picture Gallery 2

Photographs By Gordon Kember



President Brian Beason and a visiting Rotarian on the Balcony of the Bistro on the Quay enjoy a brief period of sunshine on 23rd July 2008

ORWELL COUNTRY PARK

President Brian reported receipt at the last council meeting of the following letter of thanks from Councillor Judy Terry, on behalf of Ipswich Borough Council.

Dear Brian

Orwell Country Park

On behalf of Ipswich Borough Council, I would like to formally thank the Rotary Club of Ipswich Orwell for their very generous contribution to repairing the steps in the Country Park. It has been such an important project, and I know that Richard Sharp and the Rangers are absolutely delighted to have been able to reopen this access.

I would also like to thank you very much for a most delightful and entertaining lunch last week. I enjoyed meeting you and your members and I hope to see you again in the future.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Cllr. Judy Terry

Portfolio Holder for Culture & Leisure.

Det. Chief Superintendent Stewart Gull

Words By Peter Hopper and Alan Pawsey

Photographs By Peter Hopper

It is not often that our club can claim a true exclusive, but the first public talk given by Detective Chief Superintendent Stewart Gull, of the Suffolk Constabulary, outlining the investigation which led to the arrest and conviction of Steve Wright for the murder of five Ipswich prostitutes, was indeed just that.



An upturned policeman's helmet serves as a container for raffle tickets drawn by Cathy Gull, wife of Stewart, aided and abetted by Orwell event organizer Alan Swann and SVP Carol Lockett. The raffle raised some £300 for "Supporting Child Victims of Crime through Suffolk Constabulary."

The occasion was our fifth Wednesday July meeting at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club at Woolverstone, and the 80 people present comprised members, Rotarians from other club and guests. Our speaker was accompanied by his wife, Cathy, a former policewoman who is still active in the constabulary on other crime-solving duties.

The following report is a summary of the talk, supplied to us by member Alan Pawsey, on behalf of the Suffolk Constabulary (Our thanks to Alan and organiser Alan Swann for arranging the much appreciated event):

As the then Head of Crime Management, Stewart was involved in the case from day one. Reports of people going missing are not rare. In fact, in Suffolk there are around 3000 such reports each year. The vast majority of these missing people are found alive and well within hours. But Stewart quickly recognised the tell tale signs which told him this report of a missing person needed to be taken more seriously than it might otherwise have been.

Within two days he had appointed a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to lead the hunt for the missing Tania Nicol.

"The fact we identified it as a potentially critical incident from virtually day one acted in our favour. Appointing an SIO for Tania and then Gemma, along with an Officer in Overall Charge (OIOC) was exactly the right thing to do.

"When Anneli then Paula and Annette were found, in terms of the investigative structure, all the elements were already in place. We were well organised and there was some excellent teamwork.



Orwell President Brian Beason welcoming guest speaker DCS Stewart Gull.

"There was a sense of drive and commitment right across the force, even from those who weren't directly involved."

All the key dates for the seven weeks of the inquiry are embedded in Stewart's mind.

But the weekend of the 9 and 10 December stands out – that's when the inquiry really accelerated. Gemma Adams body had been found on 2 December followed by Tania Nicol's on Friday 8 December. Then on Saturday 9 December there was an unconnected fatal shooting at Zest nightclub in Ipswich.

"I had been out all night dealing with that, then back into the office on Sunday morning. I went home, had some lunch and was doing my ironing when I got the call to say another body had been found.

"I was reeling. Anneli Alderton hadn't been reported missing, so wasn't even on our radar. I was left wondering what the hell was going on. Little did I know what was to come."

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Det. Chief Supt Stewart Gull speaking to Rotarians and guests at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club headquarters at Woolverstone Marina.

Just days later, Stewart was faced with the harrowing image, taken from the police helicopter, of the bodies of Paula Clennell and Annette Nicholls, who were found at Levington.

"In Suffolk we normally average six murders a year. We were dealing with six * in just 10 days – any force would have struggled with that. But we had a huge amount of support, with officers from across the country drafted in to help.

"We had multiple crime scenes to manage and inquiries to carry out. The volume of calls we were getting was a particular challenge – we had over 13,000, and each one had to be assessed to make sure we weren't missing any golden nuggets of information.

The intense media interest in the case brought its challenges for Stewart who was fronting the press interviews as well as leading the investigation.

But it also brought benefits, as Stewart explained: "It gave us some fantastic opportunities to do some direct appeals and we got a great response from those.

"It also meant we could provide some re-assurance because the fear of crime was through the roof at that time and as one of the safest counties in the country, that was something we were just not used to."

Just over a week later on 19 December, police investigations led to the arrest of an Ipswich man.

Steve Wright was charged with all five murders on 21 December 2006.

**The murders of: Tania Nicol, Gemma Adams, Anneli Alderton, Paula Clennell and Annette Nicholls, plus the unconnected fatal shooting at Zest nightclub in Ipswich of Jimoh Plunkett.*

Stewart Gull joined Suffolk Constabulary as a Police cadet and has since served as both a uniformed and CID officer at every rank during his 27 year service.

He has worked across the county, including Lowestoft, Haverhill, Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich.

He led the investigations into several high-profile cases including Cara Martin-Brown (prostitute murder), Marc Kelsey (homophobic murder) and Ian Halls (multi-force no body murder). All resulted in successful convictions.

He took on the new role of Head of Protective Services in September 2007. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

www.ispwichorwellrotary.fsnet.co.uk/diary

SEPTEMBER 2008

THURSDAY 11TH

6.00 pm. Neptune Marina, Club Service

WEDNESDAY 17TH

12.55 pm. Lunch, Bistro On The Quay + Business Meeting

WEDNESDAY 24TH

Bistro Lunch – Visit by District Governor....Peter Harris

OCTOBER 2008

WEDNESDAY 1ST

12.55 pm. Lunch, Bistro On The Quay + Speaker: tbc

WEDNESDAY 8TH

12.55 pm. Lunch, Bistro On The Quay + Fellowship

THURSDAY 9TH

6.00 pm. Neptune Marina, Club Service

FRIDAY 10TH

Charter Night at Claydon Country House Hotel

WEDNESDAY 15TH

12.55 pm. Lunch, Bistro On The Quay + Speaker: tbc

WEDNESDAY 22ND

12.55 pm. Lunch, Bistro On The Quay + Business Meeting

WEDNESDAY 29TH

5th Wednesday. Evening function to be confirmed.

Woolverstone Project

Words By Malcolm Reece

Photograph By Gordon Kember

One of the most rewarding aspects of Rotary is when several clubs join forces to raise funds for a single project, and it looks as if this may be the case in Ipswich in the next few months.



In the limelight are Rotarian John Wilkinson and Jonty Dickinson who spoke on 13th August about the Woolverstone Project

Ipswich Wolsey members, John T Dickinson and John Wilkinson, joined us for lunch on 13th August to show us with the aid of a slide presentation just how successful the club's Woolverstone Project, which provides sailing facilities for the disabled, has become since it was launched several years ago.

Most of our club members are familiar with Wolsey's project and just how successful it has been over the years – as John Dickinson pointed out in his slide presentation. But what we didn't know until John Wilkinson pointed it out to us was that the project needs a Rotary boat.

So this is the challenge: if all four Ipswich clubs pool their resources and chip in about £4,000, Wolsey can purchase a boat and "splash" the Rotary message all over its hull and sails!

And, as John Wilkinson rightly pointed out to us, if we (the four clubs) get our fund-raising efforts in gear before the end of the year, a Rotary boat could be a reality for the new season. John's goal is to take the new boat to the Rotary International Convention in Birmingham in June '09 and use it to promote Ipswich Rotary at the convention's Sailability facility.

At the time of writing, Wolsey still have to persuade Ipswich and Ipswich East to support the Rotary boat project, but judging by the level of enthusiasm from Orwell members, it seems pretty certain that the boat will be sailing at Birmingham next June. ■

Inner Wheel Notes

Words By Ann Orvis, Club Correspondent

Photograph By Pam Hill

On 16th July we met as usual at The Ipswich and Suffolk Club, but at the earlier time of 6.30pm. After our meal, President Linda presented Elizabeth with a card from all members thanking her for her good work as President during the past year.



We then went on to the home of President Linda where, ably assisted by her family, she served Pimms and an excellent choice of desserts followed by coffee. The weather was pleasant enough for us to sit out in her beautiful garden, which overlooks picturesque fields. It was a really enjoyable evening, relaxing and sharing great conversation with friends. Our thanks go to Linda and her family for being such splendid hosts.

As we look forward to an interesting new year with Inner Wheel, a visit to the ballet is planned during January. Further details will be given nearer the date and tickets will be available from Moira Podd.

There will be no meeting during August and our next meeting will be a business meeting on 20th September. If you are unable to attend please let Elizabeth know by the Thursday prior to the meeting.

■