



Rotary club of Farnham

Newsheet January 2024

Events through December and January

Goodwill Lunch Thursday 14th December

Over 30 Rotary members and friends enjoyed another Goodwill Lunch at the Bush, with good food and company, Xmas crackers and decorations, and some, like George Alford pictured below, coming in their own. In addition, Helen Schofield, pictured here between President Ann Foster and Rotary member, John Holton, did a fantastic job in entertaining us with two fun musical quiz's. All rose to the challenge with a prize for the winning team.



Xmas Street Collections



George and Hugh Alford

The Xmas collection, with collection points outside Waitrose, as in the photo, and Boots was a success, raising a little over £1,000 which will be increased by 25% through Gift Aid.

Thank you to all those who took part.

Rotary Club of Weyside Carol Concert, Spire Church Tuesday 12th December

A number of our members joined this event, at which President Ann foster and Farnham Rotary Member Ian Sargeant gave readings. It was, as always, an uplifting occasion with many local community organisations represented and Brian Cotterill, Weyside member, playing the organ and piano beautifully.

Rotary Ghost Walk, Thursday 21st December

About 15 Rotary members and friends were taken round Farnham listening to stories, told by Rotary members, Roy Waight and Roger Jude on the ghosts that inhabit our town. We started at St Andrews Church, on to the Bishop's Table, Zizzi's and finally The Bush Hotel. Most remained not too scared to end up at the Lost Boy (apparently ghost-free) for a meal and a very pleasant end to the evening. All continue to look out for those ghosts we heard about as we walk around the town and take lunch at The Bush.

YOUTH SPEAKS – A DEBATE

Thursday January 17th University for the Creative Arts (UCA)

Another uplifting evening with 20 young people from Eggars, Health End, Weydon and Ash Manor Schools taking part, representing both Intermediate and Senior age groups. Subjects covered were varied and in all cases interesting and well argued. Examples included 'do children of wealthy people have an unfair advantage in education?' 'Are comic books literature or art?', 'Can school students really make a positive contribution to the impact of climate change?', 'Dogs should not be kept as pets' and 'Getting good results in exams determines your success in life'.

Once again, we were fortunate to be able to hold it in the impressive lecture theatre at UCA, which in itself could be intimidating for the students, particular when you are only 11 years of age, which some were. But once nerves were overcome and presentations made all were on a high, with many eager to have another go.

In the Intermediates the best speaker was from Heath End School and the winning team from Eggars. In the Senior group, a team from Ash Manor were both winner and had the best speaker. Both teams will go forward to the District round, expected to be held in February.

The Rotary team, led by Judith Stephens, and involving members from both Farnham Rotary Clubs did a tremendous job in organising it and treating all to delicious savoury and sweet treats.



Judith Stephens, Norma Corkish, both Rotary members, Jo MacGowan, UCA representative and John Lewis, President, Rotary Club of Weyside



Winning School Teams



Adjudicator, Ann Newson providing useful feedback



Iain Lynch, FTC Clerk, Questioner

Talks Through January

Thursday 4th January

Swiss Rambles – talk by Rotary Member
Ian Sargeant



Ian Sargeant spent a good part of his career as an accountant working and living in Switzerland, ending up with Swiss citizenship. His talk identified some of the differences that came to his attention during this time.

By 1968 he had qualified as an accountant and had the opportunity to work in France in an area very close to Geneva. He lived there with two other accountant colleagues and spent quite a bit of time getting to know Geneva and some of its idiosyncratic rules – like it being illegal to ‘jay walk’, for which he got caught but soon learnt how not to pay in order to avoid giving his address in France. Two years later he was offered a job in Geneva working for an American company. His wife, Margaret, then joined him having qualified as a nurse and there they remained raising their family and not leaving until 1992.

During this time a number of differences compared to the UK were noted.

There is no NHS and so health care is paid through insurance.

Most people rent though there has been some increase in home ownership over the years. They have a strong economy and a high quality of life, with much social interaction at the neighbourhood levels.

The way income tax is paid is very different. The infrastructure is highly fragmented as a result of the geography – many mountains – and there are a number of languages used – French, Italian, German and a local dialect.

Their history is interesting – they began as an entity in 1291 when 3 cantons merged, followed by the slow accumulation of more cantons over time, ending in a federation of 26 in total. They have three levels of jurisdiction: Commune, State/Canton and Federal legislation.

A result of all this, the Swiss have learnt to compromise and acquire a unique constitution. Democracy works in a very different way to the way it works here, but with similarities to the US system. They have two houses of government: the National Council with 200 members and the Council of State with 26 members. There are 22 parties which are grouped according to what they represent and this leads to a complicated process of voting with a voting document running to more than 20 pages. An advantage of the large number of parties is that there is no polarisation of views and policies, and the fact that there is prosperity helps to reach compromises.

In addition, the general public can stop legislation via a referendum with a stated number of signatures and with a majority of citizens and cantons represented. The public can also insist on particular legislation being enacted.

Thursday 11th January
Brightwells Gostrey Centre – Talk by
Jess Wells, Manager



She told us that Brightwells had been running for 40 years and are so called because they started in Brightwells before the new development resulted in the need for a move. They now operate from the Memorial Hall in West Street and exist to meet the needs of the elderly in Farnham. The average age of those with whom they work is 82, whereas years ago it was about 65.

They help up to 60 clients/month with up to 30 at the centre at any one time. Many are suffering from dementia with an increase since Covid. They try to help and support, beginning as early on in their journey as possible. All from Farnham and the surrounding villages are welcome. They have their own mini bus service as transport links are challenging.

Social interaction is offered 5 days/week through lunch, hobbies and other activities eg they have a skittle alley and other games.

They provide a community meal service (meals on wheels) for up 50/month with 20 volunteers. This service covers Tilford, Churt and Elstead.

The morning starts with exercise groups - some covering cognitive skills eg eye-hand co-ordination and others physical exercise, building confidence, muscle tone and independence.

They ensure clients have use of a mobile phone and know how to use it as it helps many to keep in contact with each other.

They have links with Frensham Heights School with 10-16 year olds coming into the centre via mini-bus. This started post Covid and provides huge benefits.

Case studies illustrate just how much their support is valued through:

- Reducing isolation
- Increasing confidence
- Providing respite care
- Improving health & well being
- Breaking up the week

They have been imaginative in introducing additional projects:

They now involve grandparents and parents in soft play with preschool and toddlers once/week in the mornings. 111 families have been supported since June. They have also introduced physical and sensory play, which has proved very popular, so they will be doing another day shortly.

They have just started a community cupboard and fridge after speaking with Hale Community Centre and others providing a similar service.

Through a school holiday food programme – Xmas and Easter – they have fed 112 children on free school meals.

They have created community Partnerships with:

- local businesses – 2LK an international events company, with whom they interact weekly in supporting activities
- Frensham Heights which is widening children's horizons and confidence.
- Social prescribers via Farnham Hospital who now refer to them – they have 75 on their waiting list, so are under pressure.

They have 4 full-time and 8 part-time staff and 34 volunteers and receive funding from Farnham Town Council, Waverley Borough Council, though the latter have reduced their supported by up to 50%.

She told us they have a funding gap of £40,000 for this financial year. For more information see their website: <https://www.brightwellsgostrey.org>

Thursday 18th January 24
Breaking the Myths of Global Grants by
Charles Crane, District Foundation Chair
1145 and member of Rotary Club of
Farnham Weyside

Charles gave us a very information talk about Global Grants and how we can successfully apply for them.

Following this he has sent us a very informative Rotary Foundation Newsletter, which has been circulated to all members.

Below are some of the key points from his presentation:

- To apply for a grant someone in the Club has to have qualified via a course on the RI Learning Centre;
- An MoU re the project is needed;
- We need a separate account, though in some circumstances this requirement can be waived;
- Need 4 signatories to the account;
- Need to complete an application form and adhere to the reporting requirements;
- The project must fall within one of the 7 areas of focus.

If there is any re-allocation of the funds compared to the budget presented, Foundation must be told.

Funds cannot be used for:

- Buildings;
- Operational day-to-day expenses;
- Playgrounds, or
- Vehicles.

Minimum size of grant is \$30,000.

He stressed the importance of thinking local as well as international, in particular as this could enhance our local standing and reputation.

To apply, the support of the 'host club', the district and an international club is needed. The latter could be one from Scotland, NI or Wales as well as from overseas. 15% of

funding is required from the international partners. The main beneficiary cannot be involved in funding the project. A committee with representatives from the host and international clubs needs to be set up and one or other or the Rotary Actions Groups, as appropriate, could be involved in the planning process.

Addressing sustainability and needs assessment of the project are the most challenging aspects. He suggested starting with the community, working with one at least of them and using them to discuss strengths and weaknesses.

A report is required on the project as soon as completed or no later than 12 months from the start. Including photos is a good idea.

He also made the point that we are in a position to appoint a number of Paul Harris Fellowships because of the funds we have accumulated. Again, doing this within the local community could enhance our local standing and reputation.

Thursday 25th January
Frensham Heights by Roy Waight, Rotary
Member



In 1975 Frensham Heights was well known as a place you went to for nude bathing even as far afield as North Wales.



It is a magnificent building. Roy said he had been there for last 7 month on and off and is completely sold on it. It has had a fairly patchy history but quite an interesting one. It started with 80 boys and girls in 1925 as a progressive co-educational school, the latter being very unusual for a non-primary school in those days. It now has 450 pupils. He told his story in the chapters below:

- The dream
- How it was made
- Its decline
- Its fall
- School for scandal
- No more experiments
- Renaissance
- Reaching the heights

Prior to it becoming a school it was an Edwardian masterpiece owned by Charles Charrington who was superbly rich – cost him £250,000 to build – a staggering sum of money in those days. It was an extraordinary building with a wonderful interior. Roy has seen photos of life there - Edwardian parties with wonderful women in incredible clothes, WG Grace, Bosenquet (inventor of the googly) and Ranjitsinji playing cricket and visits by members of royal family. Charrington ended up divorcing, got into some trouble and so decided to sell. It was then bought by Charles Hay Walker who was probably the greatest engineering contractor of the 20th century He built, amongst other things, part of the London underground, the Manchester ship canal and docks in Buenos Aires. He was vastly rich and very religious, with a wife who was a strict Baptist. She didn't like Frensham Heights at all, so he lent it to the military in 1914 and it became a hospital for 5 years, but when it was handed back to Walker it had basically been wrecked.

He then went bankrupt – he had agreed to build the Buenos Aires docks and be paid in Argentinian government bonds which became worthless. The last ship he built in Montevideo he called 'The Frensham'. So, the property went on the market and it ended up in the hands of Edith Douglas-Hamilton – probably richest person ever to live or be associated with the village of Rowledge – worth half billion pounds – an heiress of the Will's Tobacco fortune. She was a theosophist and reputedly very beautiful and charming. She was friendly with two women who were forces of nature - Beatrice Ensore, a progressive educationalist and major figure in the theosophist movement, and Isabel King – never forgotten once known. Their prospectus said:

“The prime object of education is to make the presentation of knowledge in all its aspects a means of concisely relating the child to its cosmic environment, that environment being in the final analysis interpreted by the light of the great Science of Life”

The first stage of developing the school was to put theosophy into practice and it proved very difficult as no-one really understood what it meant. Strangely it was a militaristic school – eg exercises at 7.00 am, with no morning assembly and no religious services – just a moment of silence followed by discussion between staff and students. In 1927 Edith Douglas-Hamilton died of appendicitis. She had refused to have an operation for, as a theosophist, 'it was mind over matter'. However, she was defeated by peritonitis. Before she could write a Will she died, so the school became the property of her husband, who had no interest in education and even less in theosophy. He immediately decided he would only allow the school to continue if women headmistresses were replaced by a headmaster. As a result, Gavin MacCauley Hamilton was recruited – no relation. Percy Seymour Douglas Hamilton himself remarried and went to Cape Town, South Africa where he stayed and built a property which he called Frensham Heights, leaving the school in the hands of MacCauley Hamilton, who was highly militaristic and reactionary. Someone called Paul Roberts was then appointed Head, for whom no-one had anything but positive things to say – he was kindly, remarkable and a charismatic headmaster. With him in charge

the dream faded with the theosophist mumbo-jumbo translated into practice. Roberts wrote a book about education, but it was never published. He said:

‘The business of the school is to provide an environment favourable to growth, physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. The most potent influence in the growth of the child is the attitude of the grown-ups who surround him towards the environment of which the child is a part. If the child is to have a chance to grow to full maturity he must be surrounded by adults who themselves are mature, free, courageous and happy. In addition, if they are to perform satisfactorily their function as part of the child’s environment they must cultivate habits of observation, understanding, sympathy and patience.’

The school became quite well known for the quality of its music. Teddy Rice was appointed. He had been a pupil of Fanny Davies who was a pupil of Clara Schumann. He therefore knew numerous German musicians and so attracted a galaxy of them to the school eg Federic Lamond, last pupil of Liszt. Alongside this, the infrastructure was not too sound, but they had a swimming pool – the pool in which pupils swam naked. They took in 30 German pupils escaping the Nazis, of whom up to 15 became very famous - Claus Moser was one.

Rowledge never liked Frensham Heights – they had a conservative MP elected unopposed. The thought was it was risqué and a number of times Gavin Hamilton threatened to close the place. On one occasion a member of staff was criticised for writing a poem in which ‘king’ did not have a capital letter, on another pupils were criticised for refusing to stand up to the national anthem and girls for doing the high jump with skirts tucked into their knickers, which Hamilton thought outrageous behaviour.

But around this time, Paul Roberts joined the Home Guard with the result the school became its home which improved relationships immensely with the local residents. After Roberts left there was a sad decline beginning under Kenneth Keast. He was headmaster for seven years from 1947, during which time the progressive element declined somewhat. He

had an extraordinary unknown back history – when he was a junior teacher of a school in Barnes he took a group of 25 boys to Germany and against all advice took them out in April in summer clothing and sandals into the Black Forest over several miles of tracks. A storm and blizzard ensued and they got completely lost. It was only because an older boy, on hearing a church bell, headed in its direction and locals in the village went out on their skis and were able to save all but five, who sadly froze to death. The story never became known because Hitler heard about it and sent members of the Hitler Youth to lay wreaths on their coffins, with the result the story became one of a courageous headmaster saving the boys who survived after freak weather event.

In 1958 Keast disappeared with no record of him in the school archives, but we know he was having sexual relations with pupils, some below the age of consent. Following this there was a desire to return to stability. A Mr Hogg was brought in who was a bit dull. He had two difficulties:

- Financial – they didn’t own the building and now had to purchase it
- Permissiveness in the 60s

After Hogg dropped dead in 1970 in a tennis match, the governors decided to try to rekindle the school’s progressive reputation. However, they ended up bringing in someone who turned out to be a complete catastrophe – progressiveness was overtaken by permissiveness and the school was threatened with closure. It had to pass an inspection in 1973, which if it failed, would lead to closure. The headmaster was Maurice Bridgeman, who brought in children with serious problems – he became an adviser to Hampshire County Council on this as he was a magnificent teacher of such children. But bringing them into the school brought catastrophe – the cricket pavilion was burnt down, lessons were no longer compulsory and the children were wild - and arsonists . The result was the school became chaotic and anarchic. So Bridgeman had to go – ‘progressiveness’ out, ‘liberalism’ in, with no longer a doctrinaire but humane philosophy embracing the spirit of progressivism.

Alan Patterson became Head. He was a charismatic and a brilliant talker, who had been

a Benedictine monk but lost his faith and remained a tortured soul. He spent his first five years rehabilitating the school getting rid of 17 teachers and dozens of uneducable boys. He was fortunate to have the help of Mr Bayston, who died only a few months ago.

Alan Patterson was inspirational – many people remember him, loved him and admired him vastly, though he was not an easy man. Sadly, he became very ill and in his last 18 months or so he could hardly function and as a result school owed a great deal to Trevor Aldrich who was the chair of governors. He was a great man – the only solicitor to be made an honorary QC and a writer of many books – and one who never lost his temper and helped take the school through a difficult period to the next chapter when Peter de Voil became head. We are now in its Renaissance period of history, when for the first time the school became financially secure. This was because about 150 pupils from Pierrepont school, St Georges joined them - and as a result their income went up. De Voil is now in his 80's – a great headmaster. Not charismatic but a superb administrator and tight on finance – an

insurance claim for a burnt-out music building brought in £1m which enabled them to build a better music centre and general financial security enabled them to build a performing arts centre – the Aldrich theatre. Aldrich reenergised the old frenshamians, in which there were a number of famous people - Claus Moser and David Berglas – great magician of 20th century who died only 2 months ago.

We have now reached 'The Heights' under the headship of Andrew Fisher when it became a 'normal' school. He left in 2018 after building the VI Form Centre – the Roberts Building opened by Duke of Wessex. He brought in art works and sculptures which are now scattered about the school and music and theatre remain strong. It is also a popular wedding venue. After Andrew left, Rick Clarke was appointed, but Andrew is now back running the school temporarily, as they now have a successor in Ben McCarey.

Roy is writing a book about the school – worth looking out for.

THE ENVIRONMENT



For the third time Rotary attended COP. At COP28 representatives included President Gordon McInally, General Secretary, John Hewko, Rotary Foundation Trustee, Barry Rassin, Rotary Foundation Chair and Judith Diment, Dean of the Rotary Representative Network. There were also representatives from GB&I.

Gordon McInally said "the record global temperatures this year have underscored the immediate need to take action on climate change". Rotary Foundation have committed more than \$23.7 million towards environmental projects led by Rotary members around the world.

In New South Wales Australia, 80% of the District's Rotary clubs have put Rotary's newest Area of Focus into action. Together, they had launched 122 environmental projects, completed or underway by June of 2023.

Lunchtime Talks in February

Thursday 1st February – Paul Whitlock with invited guest talking about AI

Thursday 8th February – Business Meeting

Thursday 15th February – Look at the Website

Thursday 22nd February – Dr Roger Jude introducing Paul Rees, President of Rotary Club of Godalming Woolsack on The Royal Surrey Cancer Project - tbc

Thursday 29th February – Brian Thomas – please look at the website

If, as a Friend, you are interested in coming along to any of the talks and for lunch (£20) please email lunches@rotaryfarnham.co.uk on the Monday before, saying whether you'd like, fish, meat or vegetarian, pudding or fresh fruit. We start gathering at The Bush, Farnham from 12.30 for lunch at 1.00 and the talk at 2.00, finishing at 2.30 pm.