



WELCOME TO 2025 AND THE 10TH EDITION OF 'UPDATE'

UPDATE on December

Everyone who worked so hard, through some pretty varied weather, can take heart from the results of the Santa Tour and the Tree of Light. Both raised even more than last year – with £9,901 coming in from the tours and 'personal appearances', in the run-up to Christmas, and the Tree of Light raised £1,045. Donations towards the Christmas Day meals brought in another £195. So, well done all round and, rest assured, the money will be put to good use in the coming year.



The Christmas Meal team prepared, cooked, packed and delivered some 130 meals last month.



SPRINGING A 'THANK YOU' TRAP

A 'Paul Harris Fellowship' is among the highest honours in Rotary. But many people think it's something purely for Rotarians. Not so. Rotary International encourages clubs to award them to non-Rotarians, too, in recognition of work that supports Rotary values and objectives within their communities.

It was a pleasure, therefore, to present this medal and certificate to a friend and supporter of Whitchurch Rotary for the past 30 years. In addition to his overall support - which helps promote our projects throughout the year - John Huxley of Walker's bakery in the High Street, climbs out of bed in the unfriendly, small dark hours of Christmas morning to bake fresh mince pies and deliver them to our 'meal team' where they are packed into around 130 Christmas meals that are taken out at lunchtime to elderly, disabled or vulnerable people in and around the town.

Normally a Paul Harris Fellowship is presented at a formal occasion – but, this case, dealing with someone who dislikes the spotlight as much as John does, required a secret, pre-planned 'ambush' that gave him little chance of escape. He did not seek the honour but he got it anyway because he deserves it so much and we are so grateful.

So, at the risk of embarrassing him even more, **THANK YOU JOHN ...!**

ALPORT SUPPORT

While we're into festive appreciation we owe another 'thank you' to Whitchurch Alport Football Club. The invitation for Santa to tread their hallowed turf, in aid of Rotary funds, had to be cancelled last month when a fixture was dropped because of the weather. But they compensated for that by sharing their Christmas draw – which added a sizeable £650 to our charity account. And some of the players joined the Santa Tour team one night ... reportedly enjoying the evening too.



A SAFE PAIR OF HANDS

At the end of every year the outgoing president makes a special award to a member who has been a "safe pair of hands" in support of the club's work during the previous 12 months. The 'trophy' is a miner's Davy Lamp. Don't ask why! (Probably to help recipients navigate the tricky paths they often have to tread?)

But in 1923/4 the choice was a tight one so the lamp was shared. For the first six months it was held by Dave Simcock in recognition of his prostate screening project and the success of the annual 'pop-up' shop. Now, for the rest of the Rotary year, it has been passed to Andy Danton to mark the exceptional number of hours he put into completing the changeover of the emergency home Lifeline units as well as the many other club responsibilities that he has taken on.

HAMMERING DOWN TO LONDON

It can be a tough life for a football fan ... especially if the team you support is 200 miles away from home. But the January fixture between West Ham and Fulham was 'must' for club president David Ryder.

That's why he fought his way, for seven hours, through traffic, parking problems and train delays to get from Whitchurch to the London Stadium ... then, afterwards, made his way back to get home at 2am. Why? Probably because a Hammer never forgets a grudge match.

David's first visit to a West Ham fixture, nearly 60 years ago, ended with a 3-1 defeat by Fulham. The 11 year-old cockney schoolboy took it hard and embarked on a lifetime of support. Even though he moved to Whitchurch nearly 30 years ago the season ticket holder rarely misses a home game these days. "When you really support a team it gets in your blood. You can't give it up," he says.

So was the journey from hell worth it this time? Well, West Ham won 3-2 ... so, what do you think?



**AND FOR
SOMETHING
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT ...**

WOMBLING AGAIN

Litter-picking has become one of the club's environmental priorities in the last year - not to mention its role in keeping our town in the state that makes it such a great place to live. So – we're planning another litter-picking session.

Possibly sometime around February 28th.

So - if you might, in principle, be available to join in – please drop us a line at enquiries@whitchurchrotary.org.uk and we'll keep you posted when a date is fixed.

Pictured left is a group of supporters from the Inner Wheel Club of Whitchurch who helped our previous litter-picking morning.



OWEN - A DEBT

One of our traditional annual events is taking a different shape this year. Instead of a January 'Burns Dinner' we are moving this purely social evening into March and celebrating the birth of the First World War soldier and poet Wilfred Owen. His home town was, of course, Oswestry - a little closer than Robbie's Ayrshire. So, again, if you're free to join us on 18 March please drop us a line at enquiries@whitchurchrotary.org.uk