

# ROTARY CLUB OF MANCHESTER

NEWSLETTER

May 2019



## People Of Action

With more than 35 000 clubs and 1.2 million members, Rotary enables people to have the vision to unite citizens to take action to provide lasting change, globally and locally. For more than 110 years, Rotarians have bridged cultures and connected continents, problem solving some of the major concerns in the world.

Rotary is dedicated to six areas of focus. These causes are:

- Promoting peace
- Fighting disease
- Promoting clean water, sanitation, and hygiene
- Saving mothers and children
- Supporting education
- Growing local economies

And also, of course, ENDING POLIO FOREVER.

Since 1979, 2.5 billion children have been immunized, and today Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan are the only countries where polio remains endemic.

Since the formation of the Rotary Club of Manchester in 1911, we have taken action on our world's most persistent issues and will continue to do so.

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## **Open Day**

**Monday May 13<sup>th</sup> 2019**  
**10 am to 4 pm**  
at Francis House Children's Hospice  
390 Parrswood Road, Didsbury,  
Manchester M20 5NA  
0161 442 2200

### **Everyone Welcome**

Our Open Day is a great opportunity to view our fantastic facilities, learn more about the care we provide, and find out how our donations are being used. No children will be in residence on that day. Refreshments available.



## April Fellowship Evening – A Taste of Hong Kong



**Tang's** in Cheadle Hulme was the venue for our April 4th Fellowship Evening. Members Indra & Hemu Gupta, suggested this Cantonese restaurant which serves Hong Kong style food.



The set menu provided a brilliant variety of wonderful tastes and colours.



### The Set Menu

Har Kau, Seaweed, Prawn Toast  
Salt & Pepper Chicken wings, Peking  
style Spare Ribs

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Aromatic Crispy Duck

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Sizzling Fillet Steak in Cantonese  
Sauce Sweet & Sour Chicken  
Char Siu Pork in peanut satay sauce

King Prawn with cashew nuts  
Steamed Sea Bass with Ginger &  
Spring onion

Fried Rice, Soft Noodle with  
Beansprouts





*Visitors George Lekov and his son Julian from the Rotary Club of Sofia Bulgaria.*

In attendance were 28 members and friends:

Alia Arif, Julie and Roy Chapman, Susan Craig, John Kennedy, Derek Evans, Indra and Hemu Gupta, Peter Hartley, Ernest and Joan Johnstone, Lilian Liu, Dale McAulay, Ian Kane, Ernie and Marian Metcalfe, Barbara Rosenthal, Jitendra Ruia, Roger and Christine Walker, Sarah Withington, Alan and Shelia Small, Mavis Pittway, Gillian Webb, George and Julian Lekov, and Lilian Johnstone.

Thanks to Roger Walker for organizing this event.

Please make time to join the next Fellowship Evening on May 2 at Aspire Restaurant, Trafford College, Altrincham.



## My Visit to Auschwitz - PP Robin Graham

At the meeting on Thursday April 10, PP Robin Graham gave a powerfully moving talk about his recent March visit to Auschwitz, starting with, “We create the conditions which enable things to happen” – whether good or bad. A Single Death is a Tragedy; a Million Deaths is a Statistic (Stalin)



*Birkenau –  
Concentration Memorial Site in Poland*

Speaking about the occupation of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union during WW11 (1939–1945), he pointed out that both occupying powers were equally hostile to the existence of sovereign Poland, Polish people, and the Polish culture. Poland was divided with the intention of subjugating its people by the German and Soviet powers.

Shockingly Robin said “Death camps were a Franchise”, people were a commodity with 20% of those who arrived kept for work - taken to forced labour camps and hired out to companies, including IG Farben, later becoming Bayer. It was where IG Farben tested its products. Prisoners who were considered appropriate candidates were sent to the IG Auschwitz factory, where they were used for human experiments of new vaccines being developed.



*The rubble of the gas chamber*

The other 80% were killed straight away. They were sent to the gas chambers and were privy to another kind of IG Farben invention - the synthetic gas Zyklon-B.

The Germans killed an estimated two million ethnic Poles. Pre 1939, some towns had a 50% Jewish population.





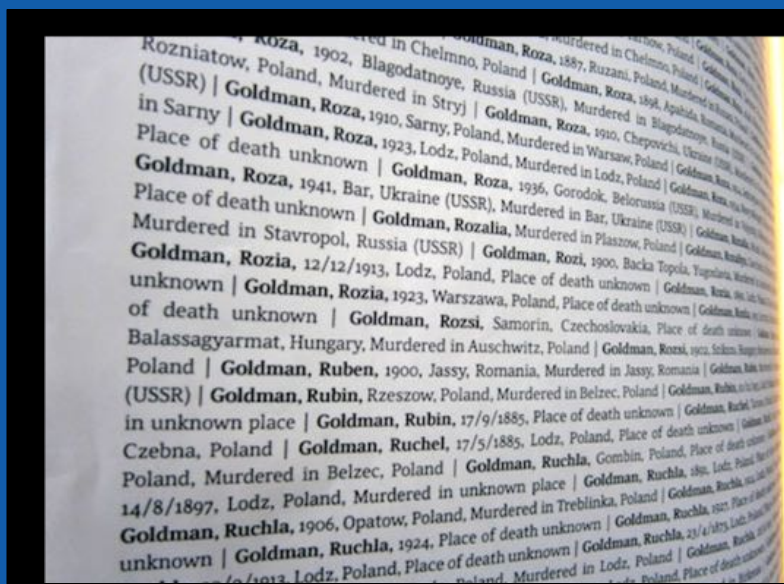
***Jewish cemetery in Prague –  
has been there hundreds of years***

This information was a stark contrast between Robin telling us that “Auschwitz is a pretty place, reminded me of Port Sunlight – buildings were nice” and the terrible atrocities that took place there.

During this global period of increasing division and prejudice, we were reminded of how our wonderful Manchester strives for unity.

The Manchester Peace and Unity – our Communities event was hosted last year by Rabbi Bobby Silverman. Almost 300 people of different faiths, or none, joined together to celebrate diversity. This event was first held three years ago as a response to Islamophobia following a terrorist attack in Germany.

*-Barbara Rosenthal-*



***This vast book ( maybe 10 metres long) listing names of people murdered in the camp, is part of the exhibit. The names in the photo most closely resemble Robin’s family’s names. His grandparents were from Krakow. Robin feels that his name would have been on this page.***

In this newsletter, a different member of our club will be featured each issue so that we can get to know each other a little better and see shared interests and skill sets that will help develop the future of our club.

## Our Feature Member

### An Interview with Robin Graham

Robin Graham has been a member of our club since 2008. In this interview, he shares some of his personal pursuits, as well as ideas and causes that he finds of interest.

#### Tell me a little about yourself:



***New to Manchester, 1995***

#### *Upbringing:*

I was born in north east London. Jewish upbringing. Watched Leyton Orient when 6 for the first and only time in my life. I love Essex County Cricket Club and have been watching them since the 1970s. As a nine year old I attended the indoor cricket school where England player John Lever was tutor. Nonetheless I was hopeless at playing.

#### *Education:*

Educated at Buckhurst Hill Grammar School (Essex). One of my school nicknames was “Tank” - you should have seen me run the 100 metres. Unstoppable. There I created a pupil led school magazine and was on the 6<sup>th</sup> form council. Participated in public speaking competitions, including the **Rotary “Youth Speaks” competition**. Our team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the London final and I gave the Vote Of Thanks.



***News Article  
about  
Rotary  
Speaks  
Competition  
– Robin on  
the left***

GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 4, 1977

★ The winning boys' team Robin Graham, Michael Martin and John Hart from Buckhurst Hill County High School, for Boys.

**Pupils get chance to have their say**

FIVE local schools got the chance to have their say at Longhams Rotary Club's Youth Speaks competition on Friday. And the best teams at making their voices heard were West Hatch High School, Chigwell, in the junior section and Buckhurst Hill County High School for Boys in the senior section. Each group spoke for a maximum of six minutes and were awarded marks for style and presentation by judges Rotary Chairman Peter Caswell, Denis Andrews and Fred Bird. Speaker Robert Edwards, was in charge of events for the evening at Longhams Library and club president Arlene Francis presented the shields in the winning teams. West Hatch School, Chigwell, placed 1st, and West Hatch School, Chigwell, placed 2nd.

At university I obtained a 1<sup>st</sup> class honours degree in Physics (Imperial College, London) and stayed on to do research. I was on the student council, chair of the Social Clubs committee, set up the QT society, and ran many other societies including a physics postgraduate cricket team; nonetheless still hopeless at playing.

### *Jobs:*

My first and only employment was in technical marketing for financial services clients at IBM in London. During those 8 years, I was responsible for millions of pounds worth of contracts, specialised in Knowledge Based Systems, and was part of a consultancy team. I purchased a house but then left IBM to travel. I was aiming for South America, but made it to Manchester.



***Robin with hair -1981***

After completing Shiatsu training in 1996, I set up self-employment as a shiatsu practitioner, photographer, playwright, and poet and added therapeutic laughter in 1998. I completed a BTEC (1 year intensive in performing arts) and started teaching at the Abraham Moss centre, where I was commissioned to write two plays: one was for the youth theatre and was based on the story of Eyam and the plague, and had 22 characters. The second was for Manchester Sangeet Academy, with North West Arts Board funding, and looked at the story of a Jewish woman returning to and revisiting her past and the Moslem family who now live in the once family house, and embracing her future.

By 2000-4, I was associate writer at **GreenRoom** theatre, Manchester, where I hosted poetry and theatre writing events, winning some playwriting competitions (with a play performed at the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford which then toured the UK; and another in Lancashire), as well as poetry commissions (such as North West Arts Board, Arts and Business, and The Co-op).

The Co-op commissioned me to write and present poems for the celebration of Salford and Manchester becoming the 99<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> Fairtrade towns in the UK. I also had 3 poetry books published including one for The Year Of The Artist when I was artist in residence in Clitheroe Castle museum.



***Robin in Ghana 2008***

In 2001 I went to Ghana for the first time on a blind date. It inspired my writing, including a play on Child Trafficking which toured the North West and Wales. I became the visiting link between Garstang in Lancashire and the community of New Koforidua in Ashanti Region of Ghana, and I am the Chief Linguist for Nana Kwadjo Osafo 1<sup>st</sup> of New Koforidua who is also known as Bruce.



In 2004, I founded the UK Laughter network which ran for 10 years, and now, I run the UK Laughter Festival and Championships (since 2012) as well as being one of a dozen Laughter Yoga Ambassadors in the UK.

On the same day I joined **Rotary**, I flew out to Ethiopia, which I have now visited 8 times. A highlight of my trips is leading a short laughter session before their FA Cup final with 30,000 in the stadium, and being on stage in front of 6,000 students and religious leaders in northern Ethiopia speaking and laughing. I was appointed the first International Ambassador for the World Laughter Master in Ethiopia.



*Waiting to perform at Ethiopia World Cup Final for 30 000 fans.*

I sponsor a street child and two students in Ethiopia along with a street child and other unsupported children and young adults in Ghana.

I established a limited company in 2006 to do wellbeing and creative work. In 2011 this became a CIC (social enterprise, community interest company) serving communities in UK and overseas with laughter, healing breath, creative writing and support for people living in poverty, in addition, to being the laughter consultant on a European project involving Germany, France and UK.

My voluntary work includes being a member of the steering group of **We Stand Together** (a Manchester based UK charity set up by the Sir Peter Fahy), and the **Challenging Hate Forum** (set up by the Dean of the Cathedral), along with teaching Yoga breathing techniques at **The Art of Living Foundation**. My work has taken me to about 50 countries, with frequent trips to India, Ethiopia, Ghana and Germany.

### **What lead you to join the Rotary Club?**

I knew about Rotary from school days when we entered the Rotary public speaking competition, and then in 2007 I was invited to our club to speak and lead workshops on laughter during a humour and comedy themed month, as well as giving a talk on Ghana. After this, Philip Webb invited me to join. It had been a lot of fun so I said yes. I knew it was a good organisation, and I felt welcome.



***Robin joyfully with his Guru in India 2010***

### **What kinds of things do you like to do, when you are not working?**

My work is not really like work. My hobbies are my job, but also I like to follow the cricket. Cooking is nice; eating is nice. Also I like watching theatre and live performance. My work brings me into contact with many different communities and many people. I also do meditation which helps lots. If I were to retire, I would build a large model railway.

### **What are the things that you like to read or watch? What kind of food do you like?**

I like TV detectives, and well written comedies. Food – steamed and full of flavour; I am mostly vegetarian. Good chocolate is very good; I have a bag of cocoa beans in my cupboard that I brought back from Ghana.

### **What inspires you or motivates you in life?**

A sense of justice and what is right. Community involvement, supporting others. Appropriate fun and playfulness. Opportunities which just turn up and are too good to turn down. Nature's beauty. The human spirit. Creating something new, being a trailblazer, doing things that have not been done before in my circle of awareness.

### **What are some causes you care about?**

Equality and diversity. Alleviation of poverty. Sharing opportunities.

### **What are some of the things that you would like to do before you die?**

Visit South America, plus Norway and Japan. And some things that you can't print.

### **Who is someone you admire?**

People who have overcome discrimination and adversity and have stood up for causes which I also believe in.

## Who are your greatest influences or role models?

Many ordinary people who do ordinary and extraordinary things. A Dutch university student who told me that it's not MY money, it is God's money and I am just looking after it. People who make the most of their moments.

## What are some things about you that most people do not know about you?

I am a Certified Gibberish Professor, and spoke live on BBC Radio Manchester in Gibberish. I have an MA in Health and Happiness Awareness. Take the initial letters, and officially I have an evil laugh after my name. MAHAHA.



*Robin with his teddy and his grandfather at Kings Cross Station.*

### ***Up and Coming Birthdays***

#### **May**

7<sup>th</sup> Susan Craig  
9<sup>th</sup> Peter Hartley  
10<sup>th</sup> Indra Gupta  
30<sup>th</sup> Barbara Rosenthal

#### **June**

1<sup>st</sup> Richard Dyson  
10<sup>th</sup> Sinclair McLeod  
6<sup>th</sup> Eddie Hanson

#### **July**

13<sup>th</sup> Ernie Metcalfe

#### **August**

11<sup>th</sup> Julie Chapman  
12<sup>th</sup> Jitu Ruia  
19<sup>th</sup> George Osundiya  
21<sup>st</sup> Bill Laidlaw  
28<sup>th</sup> Philip Adeniran

### ***Winners of the 200 Club Draw***

#### **January**

David Andrews - £150  
Joan Johnstone - £50

#### **April**

Lilian Liu - £150  
Sinclair McLeod - £50



## Lakeland Fellowship Break – April 15-17



A cheerful group of six of us, met up at Lowther Castle ( north of Shap) for lunch on a pleasant Monday. From there it was a drive to nearby Cliburn Nature Reserve for an hours walk. It was an interesting Reserve and deserved more time then we could spare. Another 40 minute drive took us to our old haunt, The Borrowdale Gates Hotel, in Borrowdale where we had the chance to toast “Absent Friends” with a drop of gin (kindly supplied by Keith Malyon), before a very good dinner. The catering has always been good here, but I think it was even better this year.



The next morning we drove to Ambleside, parked for free (remarkable for the Lake District) at Under Loughrigg where we had a very good three hour walk to Grasmere along the Rydal Terrace enjoying the beautiful sunny day and magnificent views. Being just before Easter it was very busy, especially with families.

Feeling a bit foot-sore, we trudged into the Garden Centre café for a well-earned drink and lunch and then back to Ambleside by bus (free for those of us with passes, but an expensive £5 each for the younger members). At the cars we said goodbye to Sarah and her friend Helen who had to get home.

The rest of us returned to the hotel and, in my case a well-earned bath. I had just climbed in when a knock at the door was Hugh Barrett an hour early for his gin and tonic. Yes, you can guess it, the second word was "off". In due course another excellent dinner capped a very enjoyable day.



After paying our bills on Wednesday morning – there's always a downside - we drove through the Lakes to Sizergh Castle, a very old National Trust property on the Southern edge of the Lake District and well worth a visit for the gardens.

The three of us had another good 2.5 mile walk, part of which took us through a field of long horned cattle. One of those after you would make anybody run! But we skirted round the field with a very large bull. After a snack lunch in the café, it was down the motorway for home.

We were all in agreement that this was another very pleasant Lakeland visit; good food, good walks and good company. What we lacked in numbers we had in quality.

Enjoying the fellowship were:- Sarah Withington and her friend Helen, Hugh Barrett, Derek Evans, Peter Hartley and myself.

**-Ernie Metcalfe-**

*P.S. I am going to investigate the possibility of a similar couple of nights in North Wales in the autumn, either for just Rotarians or with partners. If anybody has any views on this could you please let me know. Ernie*





# Climate Change – Fact or Fiction?



*Bill Laidlaw and Sarah Withington with Stan Bowes*

An interesting perspective on Climate Change was presented on Thursday April 25<sup>th</sup>, by PDG Stan Bowes.

He demonstrated that Climate Change advocates may not be investigating everything as thoroughly as possible and that the presentation of statistics possibly will not always show the whole truth.

He went through a long history of publications reporting British weather, pointing out that in the 1700's, gardening information was given to plant peaches in February, there were ice carnivals on the Thames River over 200 years ago during what was referred to as the "Little Ice Age", some publications predicating an Ice Age by 2030, endangered species that are not really endangered, conflicting reports about the amount of forest on the earth with NASA reporting in 2019 that the earth is 5% greener, and ignorance about the effect of things such as earthquakes, insect damage, and forest fires on climate.



Bowes felt that too many decisions were being made on fear. He believes that we need to do things to help the environment through such things as promoting challenges for schools, recycling, and developing ECO Rotary Clubs and not safeguarding the environment based on the Climate Change panic, but on the desire to protect and respect the environment.

*If the facts do not change the theory, change the facts.*

- Albert Einstein -



# What is the Mike Craig Award?



**Mike on right with Ken Dodd**

Skilled raconteur Mike Craig made comedy his life choice. When he passed away in 2010, he left behind a legacy of entertainment history. He was a BBC comedy producer and writer and a leading authority of British comedy. Mike wrote for stars such as Ken Dodd, Harry Worth, Jimmy Tarbuck, Tommy Trinder and Arthur Askey.

He created more than 1000 radio and television shows, wrote a 4 volume series of books (*Look Back with Laughter*) chronicling 20<sup>th</sup> century British comedy, became a popular after-dinner and cruise line speaker, was the author for the play *The Day the War Broke Out*, was a Lord's Taverner, member and scribe for the Grand Order of Water Rats, and honoured by the Variety Club of Great Britain for his contribution to comedy over 25 years. The Mike Craig Archive at Salford University contains Mike's huge collection of over 600 BBC classic shows.



Feeling that laughter is a necessary and powerful feature in every field of activity, a panel of judges from Salford University's comedy degree program, selects a winner for the Mike Craig Award, by using the following criteria: Comedy Flair, Creativity, Production, Performance, and Critical Engagement with Comical History.

These characteristics were not only fully exhibited by Mike but brought pleasure to millions of people. The art of Comedy was enhanced by his lifetime contribution.

The Rotary Club of Manchester along with the Grand Order of Water Rats sponsor The Mike Craig Annual Comedy Award.

A comedy showcase incorporating the Mike Craig Award will be held at the Frog and Bucket Comedy Club on Tuesday May 21.



**The Rotary Club of Manchester  
District 1285  
Invites you to our Summer Reception  
At  
Arley Hall and Gardens, Cheshire  
11<sup>th</sup> July 2019 1230 - 1600**



**Come and Celebrate our New Rotary Year!**

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The Rotary Club of Manchester District 1285 invites Rotarians, Inner Wheel, Rotaract and Friends to join us at the magnificent surroundings of Arley Hall and Gardens. We will receive a warm welcome from Lord and Lady Ashbrook, followed by a light lunch and the opportunity to explore the beautiful grounds including the Hall, woodlands, family chapel and the world famous herbaceous border. Lord Ashbrook has also agreed to be on hand to answer any burning gardening questions!

Supporting The Rotary Foundation, Tickets are amazing value at just £20 please register your interest via Eventbrite or contact Sarah Withington via email

[Presidetelect@manchester1285.org](mailto:Presidetelect@manchester1285.org)

Dress Code; Smart Casual

## Up and Coming Events

- Fellowship Evening  
Thurs May 2  
Aspire Restaurant  
Trafford College 18:30
- Lunch Meeting  
Thurs May 9  
Club AGM 12:30
- Club Council  
Tues May 14  
Hough End Centre 17:15
- Lunch Meeting  
Thurs May 16  
Manchester Inner Wheel  
PP Joan Johnstone
- Comedy Showcase  
Mike Craig Award  
Tues May 21  
Frog & Bucket Comedy Club  
19:30 – 21:30

## Club Meeting Info

**Weekly: Every Thursday at 12:30**

**Place: Manchester Hall**

**36 Bridge Street, Manchester,**

**M3 2BT**

- Lunch Meeting  
Club Assembly  
Thurs May 30  
President Elect Sarah Withington
- Fellowship Evening  
Thurs June 6  
TBA
- Club Council  
Tues June 11  
Hough End Centre 17:15
- Lunch Meeting  
Thurs June 13  
Rotary International Report  
PE Sarah Withington & PP Robin Graham
- Lunch Meeting  
Thurs June 20  
TBA
- Lunch Meeting  
Thurs June 27  
President Siddika Ahmed  
Valedictory Address
- RC of Manchester Garden Party  
Thurs July 11  
Arley Hall, Cheshire  
12:00 – 16:00

## Rotary Club of Manchester Team 2018-2019

### President

Siddika Ahmed

### President Elect

Sarah Withington

### Membership

Robin Graham PHF

### Vocational

Julie Chapman

### Executive Secretary

Robin Graham PHF

### Secretary

Peter Hartley PHF

### Community

Julie Chapman

### Rotaract

Roy Chapman PHF

### IT

Peter Hartley PHF

### Treasurer

Peter Hartley PHF

### International

Siddika Ahmed

### Youth Service

Roy Chapman PHF

### Fellowship

Barbara Rosenthal MPH

### Immediate Past President

Julie Chapman

### Rotary Foundation

Bill Laidlaw PHF

### Attendance

Roger Walker PHF

### Primary Webmaster

Peter Hartley PHF