

# ROTAGEN

The Bulletin of the Rotary Club  
of Letchworth Garden City

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September 2009

## MENIER CHOCOLATE FACTORY

In our chat before yesterday's Council meeting Mike O'Leary spoke enthusiastically about this London theatre which he and Marian had visited.

The Menier Chocolate Factory has been a full-time producing house since 2004. Built in 1870 to house a chocolate factory, this unique space now comprises a 150-seat theatre, restaurant, bar and rehearsal space. The restaurant offers delicious modern British cuisine and a specially created pre-theatre set menu. They offer "meal deals" for which you get a 2-course pre-theatre dinner and a seat for the performance for a great price.

Their next production which runs from 17 September to 14th November is "Talent", a comedy show written and directed by Victoria Wood. It is a comedy with original songs written by Victoria Wood (she does not appear!). It was first performed in 1978 at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield.

The theatre is located at 53 Southwark St, London, just south of the Thames. The nearest tube station is London Bridge, or take a No. 17 bus from King's Cross.

Their website [menierchocolatefactory.com](http://menierchocolatefactory.com) has booking details and other information.



## Rotary on the plinth!

Rotary has been in the spotlight recently after winning two different slots on the 22-ft high empty plinth in Trafalgar Square as part of the OneandOther human art exhibition.

Jasmine Morris from the Rotary club of Hertford Shires dressed completely in purple on August 27 to publicise Rotary's polio eradication project. The 68-



year-old retired teacher hoped the initiative would raise awareness of the Turn Hoddesdon Purple Day taking place next February during Thanks for Life week. Jasmine's club are encouraging the whole town to dress in purple; the colour symbolising the dye painted on the fingers of children who have been immunised.

Money raised from the initiative will go towards the Thanks for Life campaign which aims to help Rotary stamp out polio from the world for good.

"I was so shocked that I'd been chosen to appear on the plinth, but I'm so glad that I was. It really gave me a chance to raise consciousness of the cause," she said. "All I can say was that it was a 'High point' of my life – all 10 feet of it!" Jasmine was even able to raise the profile of the polio eradication campaign with a live interview on BBC Radio 5.



Just weeks before, Rotarian Paul Manning, from the Rotary club of Amwell, was delighted when he learned his son Timothy (pictured above) had acquired a prime slot on the plinth at 10am on the second Saturday of the exhibition. Tim chose to raise awareness of Rotary, paying particular emphasise to the club's annual duck race which was taking place at Ware in Hertfordshire the following day.

Dressed as a duck wearing the Amwell Club's tabard with the Rotary Roundel decorating the plinth, Tim certainly caught the eye of passing shoppers and tourists.

Paul said: "The hour passed quickly and after entertaining the crowd and especially the passing open topped buses - those on the top deck were at a level with Tim! - Tim came down to well deserved round of applause."

"We met Rotarians from as far afield as Australia and Canada – and had also sold a small number of tickets to the duck race, including one to Val Kirk from Australia, who won a prize in one of the Races. Race day passed off successfully and the Club was able to raise £3,000 for local charities.

Armed with the photos of the 'Duck on the Plinth' we hope to do even better next year." Jasmine and Tim join more than 2,000 volunteers to win a one-hour slot on the Fourth Plinth as part of the 100 day long OneandOther art exhibition organised by sculptor Antony Gormley - the creator and sculptor of the Angel of the North and other large-scale art works.

## GSE breaks new ground

*By Jennifer Lee Atkin*

Rotary's first all-wheelchair GSE teams, from districts 9680 (New South Wales, Australia) and 5490 (Arizona, USA), meet with New South Wales Governor Marie Bashir and her husband, Sir Nicholas Shehadie (standing, center). At far left (standing) is Tony Castley, at far right, Harold Sharp. *Photo by Mark Wallace*



For 33-year-old Robb Martin, the 2009 Group Study Exchange between Rotary districts 5490 (Arizona, USA) and 9680 (New South Wales, Australia) offered more than the opportunity to compete in a sailboat race, summit a mountain, and meet with other law enforcement officers. It was also a once-in-a-lifetime chance to participate in Rotary's first-ever all-wheelchair GSE. A former patrol officer from Prescott, Arizona, Martin became paralyzed from the chest down following a 2005 vehicle accident, but continues to work for the police department in the dispatch center.

"The whole point [of the GSE] was to dissolve the perception of people in wheelchairs," Martin explains. "Just because we're in wheelchairs doesn't mean

that we can't do things that able-bodied people can do."

The idea for an all-wheelchair GSE started two years ago when Charlie Tegarden, 2008-09 governor of District 5490, struck up a conversation with Darol Kubacz in an airport. The two were returning from Mexico where they had helped distribute wheelchairs to the needy as part of a Rotary project. Kubacz, a wheelchair user, was curious to learn more about Rotary, and Tegarden was happy to oblige.

"Eventually, the conversation turned to Group Study Exchange," Tegarden recalls. "As I was talking about how great GSE was, I was thinking to myself that it was too bad that a person like [Kubacz] could not participate. How could he possibly travel? Then the obvious struck me -- he was sitting right there with me in the Mexico City airport! Why couldn't he participate in a GSE?"

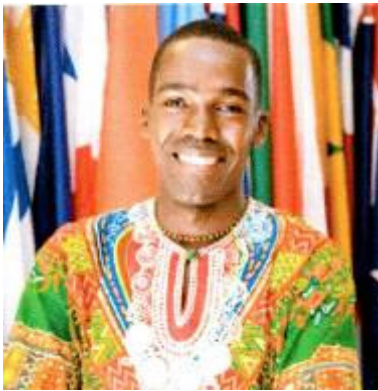
Determined to host an all-wheelchair GSE, Tegarden found a partner in Tony Castley, 2008-09 governor of District 9680, whom he met at the 2007 RI Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. Past district governors Harold Sharp (9680) and Don Schiller (5490) coordinated the exchange, and the idea became reality. Kubacz, now a member of the Rotary Club of Phoenix-West, served as the Arizona team leader.

Some Rotarians were initially a little uneasy about an all-wheelchair GSE because of a perception that disabled people "are either subnormal or unable to live and travel independently and hold down full-time, worthwhile employment," says Sharp, a member of the Rotary Club of Crows Nest, New South Wales, and the GSE's cochair. "As a result of the exchange, the attitude in our district has totally changed." Sharp, who is retired from a career in non-profit management, counts himself in that group. "Though I have for many years been involved with people with disabilities, the wheelchair GSE allowed me to become very involved on a day-to-day basis. It was only then that I realized that I was totally underestimating [disabled people's] abilities and desire to be judged on their results and not their appearances."

In Arizona, "we've opened the door now to people with disabilities," says Schiller, a member of the Rotary Club of Prescott-Sunup and the district's GSE chair. "We might not do another all-wheelchair GSE, but I can see disabled people participating in our next GSE, just like anyone else." As for Martin, he's considering joining the Prescott-Sunup club. "As a police officer, I was able to serve the community, and that was very fulfilling to me," Martin says. "Now, I have found a way to fill that void and still get out there and help the community. "I'd like to be a team leader in a future GSE."

## Maasai warrior hopes to work for diplomacy

*By Ryan Hyland*



Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah, incoming Rotary World Peace Fellow, collaborated on 14 Cows For America describing his Maasai tribe's response to the 9/11 attacks in New York City.

*Rotary Images/Alyce Henson*

When Wilson Kimeli Naiyomah returned home to Kenya months after witnessing the 9/11 attacks in New York City, he found that most of his fellow Maasai, a nomadic warrior tribe, had only a vague understanding of the events of that day.

Naiyomah, an incoming Rotary World Peace Fellow, shared firsthand accounts with the East African tribe, using the oral tradition it has relied upon for years. Deeply moved by his story, Maasai elders felt compelled to do something to help. That something turned out to be a decision to send a herd of cows to the United States as a display of sympathy and regret.

Naiyomah has collaborated with award-winning author Carmen Agra Deedy on 14 Cows for America, an illustrated children's book about his tribe's response, which received international attention. The book explains how cows are sacred to Maasai and valued above all other possessions.

"The cow is a symbol of life for us," says Naiyomah "What happened that day was devastating to me." Although the cows were never shipped to the United States -- State Department officials decided it would cost more than the value of the herd to import them -- the tribe decided to keep them for the Americans, setting the cows apart and vowing never to slaughter them.

"The story focuses on healing and solution," says Naiyomah. "I think children can best understand that, because their hearts are so innocent. The future of a more compassionate world starts with them." In February, Naiyomah will attend the Rotary Center for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution at the University of Queensland in Australia.

"Rotary International answered my prayers to belong to an organization that embodies what I silently believe in my heart: that using compassion can help solve problems," he says. "Rotarians are ordinary people taking

extraordinary actions to foster relations with countries around the world." Naiyomah says he hopes the peace studies program will help him find ways to promote peace. "The 9/11 attacks "showed me there's something very wrong with world relations," he says. "There is something lacking in diplomacy that I want to find out." Naiyomah believes world leaders need to practice "compassionate diplomacy," valuing the lives of people over political expediency. "Compassionate diplomacy must start by understanding and approaching conflicts with a caring aspect," he says. "Yes, one person can make a difference in the world. But only if they see themselves as the world, not as individuals."

Chosen as the state of Georgia's selection for the 2009 National Book Festival , 14 Cows for America goes on sale 1 August. Naiyomah has requested that his share of royalties from the book be used toward the purchase of copies to be given to families of 9/11 victims.

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## **Rotary honors Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari as a champion in the effort to eradicate polio**

Rotary International will recognize His Excellency, Asif Ali Zardari, President of Pakistan, with the Polio Eradication Champion Award on August 5 for his leadership and his country's dedication in the support of a polio-free world. The award, which will be presented on behalf of Rotary International by Rotary's International PolioPlus Committee Chair Robert Scott, was established in 1995 and is the highest award Rotary awards to honour heads of state, health agency leaders and others who have made significant contributions toward polio eradication.

On behalf of 1.2 million members worldwide including more than 5,100 members of Rotary clubs in Pakistan, I am honoured to recognize the commitment of President Asif Ali Zardari, for his outstanding support of a polio-free world," said Scott.

Although Pakistan remains one of four polio-endemic countries, under the leadership of President Zardari, direct political engagement and oversight of polio eradication activities has increased substantially. He has worked closely with Prime Minister Gilani and the Ministry of Health to implement effective measures regarding polio, and ensure that the children of Pakistan are protected through polio vaccination. In his efforts to eliminate polio from Pakistan, President Zardari has worked to gain the support of local elders and Ulema in tribal areas where it is difficult to operate due to conflict. He has also strived to ensure the safety of mothers and children during vaccination days.

# HOWARD GARDEN SOCIAL AND DAY CARE CENTRE

NORTON WAY SOUTH, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

TEL: 01462 68252

have pleasure in inviting you to a

## FUNDRAISING AUCTION

on

SATURDAY 12th SEPTEMBER 2009

at 1 pm

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 219715

The fundraising fair is from 10.30 am to 3.00 p.m. with the auction at 1.00 p.m. The centre is a 50+ social and day care centre providing not only interaction and activities such as table tennis and seated keep fit but a home cooked meal each weekday. There are also facilities during the afternoon and evening for such activities as art and "Scrabble" and outside organisations such as The Royal British Legion and The Royal Naval Association.

The selection of items for auction includes:-

- "Steiff" Queen Elizabeth (purple ribbon)
- "Merrythought" Limited Edition Scottish Bear
- 4 x Salzburg Crystal Glasses
- "Serenity" Luxury Manicure voucher
- Family Ticket for Standalone Farm
- "Raymond Barry" Hair Voucher
- Bottle of Brandy
- Case (6 bottles) "Echo Falls" Rosé Wine
- £10 Gardening Voucher donated by Bickerdikes
- One Month's Gym membership at Nuffield Health Centre (reserve price £50)
- Bottle of "Eugene Cliquot" Champagne Demi Sec (reserve price £10)
- 2 tickets for the Barron Knights 6.11.09 donated by Plinston Hall
- Glass Table, chairs and parasol (as seen)



<b>WEDNESDAY MEETINGS</b>
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<b>Duty Rotarian</b>	<b>Speaker Finder</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
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**September (New Generations Month)**

9 Sep	Alan Goodwin	Dick Darvill	Dick Darvill <i>“What is the WEA?”</i>
16 Sep	John Moys	BUSINESS MEETING	
23 Sep	Roger Thomson	Bob Mills	Terry Dear <i>“Landscapes &amp; Townscapes” (Part 2)</i>
30 Sep (5th Wed)	Mike Birrell	John Stoddard	T.B.A.

**October (Vocational Service Month)**

7 Oct	Terry Brazier	Peter Harkness	T.B.A.
14 Oct	David Brightwell	CHARTER NIGHT	7.00 for 7.30 (Black tie)
21 Oct	Roger Buckley	Roger Thomson	T.B.A.
28 Oct	Dick Darvill	Nigel Downes	T.B.A.

**HUGH OSBORNE**

It is with great sadness that we have to record the death of Hugh on 31st August at the age of 81. Hugh joined Rotary in 1969 and was Club President in 1986.

The funeral will be at Harwood Park Crematorium, Stevenage on Wednesday 16th September at 12.30 pm. No flowers or donations, by request.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Hugh's family.

**TERRY DEAR**

As we were enthralled recently by Terry Dear's talk on the birth of "the town" from neolithic times to the Roman period, we are delighted that he can return on 23rd September to give us Part 2, which will start with mediaeval times.

**DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**The next meeting will be on**  
**Tuesday 13th October**  
**at Mildenhall**  
**6.30 meal for a 7.30pm start.**