



## CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Dear Supporter,

Once again may I welcome you to our Newsletter, which this time is focused on our evolving relationship with schools and how the partnership between them, the Literacy Box Trust and Rotary is developing.

It is a sad fact that the general public's and schools' awareness of Rotary and what it does is limited. Until I joined Rotary in my mid-thirties, my only knowledge of this wonderful service organisation was the existence of a Rotary Literature prize, given annually at my school speech day. Typical of many individuals then and now, I did not seek to find out what Rotary was, let alone understand what it does. However, this is changing as Rotary engages increasingly with schools. The result is that schools and parents of pupils want to know what Rotary is and courtesy of Google, they are finding out what wonderful projects Rotary can offer and how Rotarians have a great deal of fun and fellowship in delivering them.

The partnership of Rotary with schools is growing apace and many Rotary Clubs are now using the Literacy Box as a catalyst to work with schools to mutual benefit. Schools need to deliver their curriculum in the areas of Citizenship and Understanding Overseas Cultures and within Rotary there are many programmes that can help add value to this process. Key to the delivery of Citizenship in

schools are Rotakids (for Primary Schools) and Interact (for Secondary Schools) They are essentially junior Rotary Clubs and by being involved in them, pupils learn about the giving of their time and energy to help others, a key element of Citizenship.

I hope you enjoy the stories told by the schools featured in this edition

## EDITORS' CHATTER

Do keep up to date with our activities by following us on Facebook. Everyone can view all our postings; you don't need to sign up to Facebook to follow us. However Facebook users can of course interact with us and post their own messages. Recent Facebook postings are summarized on page 5 of this Newsletter.

We've now moved to quarterly newsletters so look out for our October edition featuring some of the activities we've got involved in outside of our core programme in Zambia.

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## WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Over the last couple of years, the Literacy Box Trust has worked to create an awareness in schools of its work, and during 2011 Literacy Box Trustees attended several conferences for Primary School Heads and showcased the Literacy Box. We are still following up the interest shown at these Conferences, but more and more, as schools are concluding existing projects they are looking favourably upon The Literacy in a Box Trust as their next charity to adopt.

In its own right, The Literacy in a Box Trust is seen by schools as a charity worth supporting, as its aim is to help educate pupils in other parts of the world. The cost of doing so is a very “affordable” £275 for a Literacy Box, which contains enough school materials for 25 children. Many schools are supporting us in this way and from the feedback we receive, their pupils are having a great deal of fun and gaining much satisfaction in raising funds to help us.

Some schools are going further and in addition to supporting Literacy Boxes financially, they are used as a focus for learning. Schools are engaging with their local Rotary Club as they start Rotakids or Interact Clubs and in addition to the obvious link of these programmes to Citizenship, schools are using Literacy Boxes as a catalyst to help pupils work on another part of their curriculum mentioned earlier, Understanding Overseas Cultures.

The ultimate in this synergistic process between the Literacy Box Trust, Schools and Rotary is the example of Wye Valley College, which has formed its own Interact Club and then sent its pupil members to Zambia to work with pupils in schools in the capital, Lusaka. They have formalised the link by twinning and subsequently helped set up both Rotakid and Interact Clubs in the Zambian schools with which they work. On their last trip to Lusaka in March 2012 they

took Literacy Boxes for the pupils in the Basic/Primary Schools.

Below are reports of just some of the schools, including Wye Valley, that have already given their support.

## WHITSTONE CP SCHOOL

Situated south of Holsworthy, deep in the countryside of North Cornwall, Whitstone CP School was very keen to help pupils in another country who lived in a similarly remote area. Understanding that their colleagues in Zambia had no real resources to help their education, they set about fundraising to help. Their Harvest Festival and other activities were so successful that the pupils raised £550, enough for two Literacy Boxes.



The photo shows the pupils of Whitstone surrounding a Literacy Box and displaying the certificates acknowledging their efforts. Mr. Paul Woolner, Headmaster and Ian Parker, Chairman of the Trust, are behind the Literacy Box.

It is the hope of Whitstone CP School, that the Trust is able to link their school with another in Zambia, so that they can develop a better understanding of each others culture and share learning experiences. By definition, the schools supported by the Trust struggle with resources, not least the electronic equipment and access to electronic connections so freely available in this country. This means that many contacts

will have to be by traditional hard copy mailing, or through third parties. However, we are confident that through the worldwide network of Rotary, requests to link with another school or twin, can be accommodated by seeking out the 'best fit' overseas school through our international Rotary contacts.

## BEACON SCHOOL BANSTEAD

Totally out of the blue, Beacon School in Banstead, Surrey, contacted the Trust to enquire if it could support us as Literacy Boxes were a good fit with National Literacy Week, which, each year, is held in schools across the country to raise Literacy awareness.

Week commencing Monday 31st October 2011 was the Beacon School Literacy Week, which staged several literacy activities for students, including skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking, while staff took on the role of either a "grammar guru" or a member of the Punctuation Police!

To celebrate reading, the whole school took part in a charitable event, a Fancy Dress Day, held on Friday 4th November, when students were charged £1 to come to school dressed as famous characters from their favourite book.

There was a real buzz in the school and a fantastic atmosphere, with characters ranging from Harry Potter to Where's Wally! This finale of the enjoyable week was great fun and raised £406 for Literacy Boxes.

## PLYMOUTH SCHOOLS

In November 2011 Plympton St Maurice held two fundraising events to raise money for a Literacy Box. More information is on the News Events page of our website [www.literacyboxtrust.org.uk](http://www.literacyboxtrust.org.uk)

In December 2011 a band from Coombe Dean School entertained shoppers at Morrisons in Plymstock and youngsters from seven primary schools, Dunstone, Hooe, Wembury, Oreston, Goosewell, Newton Ferrers and Pophlett sang carols raising a total of £500. Many thanks to Saltram Rotary Club for organising this.



In January 2012 Chris Bryan, a Rotary Colleague and teacher, gave an assembly about Literacy in a Box to Lipson Vale Primary School in Plymouth. Chris was invited back to talk to the School council in February and we were delighted when Chris was invited back again to receive a cheque for £275 in June. As with Whitstone School, Lipson Vale are keen to establish links with one of the schools directly benefitting from their donation.



## INTERACT CLUBS

Two newly formed Interact Clubs have committed themselves to fundraising for Literacy in a Box, Penryn College in Cornwall and Skegness Academy in Lincolnshire. They are both featured on our Facebook page.

## WYE VALLEY COLLEGE

In this section we tell the story of Wye Valley College in Bourne End and its support Rotary Club, Bourne End and Cookham. Not only have these two organisations achieved wonders in this country, they have replicated the success overseas in Zambia, to everybody's benefit. The full story of the College's activities in Zambia can be read on their website [www.wyevalley.bucks.sch.uk](http://www.wyevalley.bucks.sch.uk) but here is an abridged version as it applies to Literacy Boxes, Wye Valley College and its Rotary connections.

The Rotary Club of Bourne End and Cookham have for the last 5 years supported Wye Valley School with Project Zambia.

Up until 2010, a party of students from Wye Valley College visited Libala High School in Lusaka, worked with the students over there and more recently worked in and with the junior schools that feed into Libala (they call them Basic Schools).

In 2011, for the first time, funds were raised to bring over a party of Libala students and staff to spend 2 weeks in the UK, hosted by Wye Valley students and parents. During this visit they made many educational trips, visited junior schools and also attended a Rotary Conference in Birmingham.



*Photo courtesy of Bucks Free Press*

In the time the project has been running many things have been achieved, including the training of over 400 Libala students to be Sports Leaders and Coaches, the delivery of

a mentoring programme led by the older Libala Students, a computer suite where there was none and a vast quantity of educational material including GCSE Science resources, microscopes etc.

In 2012 it was Wye Valley's turn to return to Zambia, and Mike Ware, a Rotarian from the Bourne End and Cookham Club, was privileged to be able to accompany the school and assist the staff and pupils as they worked with the Zambian young people. Work started seriously in the Basic schools feeding in to Libala High School, as each Basic School is now twinned to a Wye Valley feeder school.

The party of students from Wye Valley College, many of whom are members of the schools Interact Club, took 6 Literacy Boxes that were very well received by the Basic Schools. The funding for these came from individual benefactors, the Interact Club at Wye Valley and Bourne End and Cookham Rotary Club



Also on the trip were Rachel Gerrish and Josie Bealeare, ex students of Wye Valley College, who are now members of Bourne End and Cookham Rotaract Club (Rotaract being the link between interact and Rotary for 18 to 30 years olds). Thanks to their hard work not only does Libala High School have an Interact club, but four of the Basic Schools now have Rotakids Clubs. With Rachel's efforts and the support of Lusaka Central and Maluba Rotary Clubs, there is now a strong presence of young people

connected to Rotary in the area. Rachel said “Everyone was just so friendly and helpful and we were able to achieve so much.....I cried nearly all the way home after saying goodbye”



Despite the fact that in many government schools the things UK students take for granted are either just not there or in very short supply, Zambia school students are very proud of their education. They see it as a privilege not to be wasted and the only way to make progress in their country. The Libala school and its feeder schools have benefitted greatly from the links formed with Wye Valley and it would be wonderful if Literacy Boxes could be the catalyst for creating similar partnerships, particularly with schools in the more remote areas of Zambia where the shortages are most acute.

Given the situation in Zambia and encouraged by the feedback we receive from Literacy Box recipients, we are truly blessed that Wye Valley school and Bourne End and Cookham Rotary Club decided to support our efforts. We are grateful for all the donations that are starting to make a real difference in Zambia but we have a long, long way to go as just to give continuity to the schools with which we currently work. Please help us by spreading the word about Literacy Boxes and encouraging that vital stream of donations without which we cannot do our work.

## FACEBOOK ROUNDUP

April - Wye Valley School  
Trowbridge Rotary Club  
Rotary Club of Plymouth  
RIBI Bournemouth Conference  
Zimbabwe September 2011 shipment  
arrival photos

May - 10 more boxes for Zimbabwe  
including our 300<sup>th</sup> box to date

June - Whitstone School  
Lipson Vale School  
Penryn Interact Club  
Goodwill and Growth for Africa

July - Skegness Academy Interact Club

## NEW BOX DESTINATIONS

We occasionally get asked if we can send Literacy Boxes to destinations outside of our Core programmes. Our answer is always yes, provided we can work with the donor to arrange transport.

In the case of Wye Valley School (above) the boxes were flown over by the donor. In the case of the 4 boxes to Burma Road School (see April newsletter), we used our usual Operation Sunshine carrier and the boxes were collected in Lusaka. The Burma Road boxes have arrived safely at the School but we are waiting for some more feedback and photos before telling the full story.

In response to recent requests we have also just packed one box for Ghana and 4 for Namibia and later in the year we will be packing some boxes for Nepal. We will tell the story of these boxes along with that of the Burma Road boxes in our October newsletter.