

The breakfast meeting held at Youth In Romsey was attended by 17 members and one guest, Stuart Marchant the Director of Music at Mountbatten School.

After the usual excellent breakfast provided by YIR Steve George introduced Stuart Marchant. Romsey Rotary had agreed to give Stuart £500 some considerable time ago for his work with music and young people. Unfortunately due to Covid and other reasons this could not take place until now. Stuart said that as this was school holidays this was the earliest he had had to get up recently. The Mountbatten Band's performance at the Mayor's Picnic was their first public performance, as it is each year. With his wife he had run the Romsey Festival of Music. This was a showcase for music in local schools. Romsey has more choirs per head of pupil than anywhere else in the country. Nationally music is growing in importance in schools, as it has been accepted that it can change lives. This is more important than ever due to Covid and the isolation it has brought. The importance of music to youngsters can be seen at Mountbatten by the fact pupils get in early and stay late for their music lessons.

As part of the Romsey Schools Choir Festival renowned composer Alan Bullard has composed a choral piece for the children of Romsey to sing. Due to Covid this has not been performed yet. It is planned to give the inaugural performance of this in the Abbey in October. Stuart will use the £500 to help facilitate this.

Mountbatten school is fortunate in so far as it is overstaffed in the music department. This allows them to outreach to junior schools and teach music early in the youngsters lives. With regard to national school competitions, Hampshire is at a disadvantage. This is due to the fact Hampshire has 6<sup>th</sup> form colleges. Elsewhere schools have a 6<sup>th</sup> form within themselves and consequently have higher calibre students to call upon for competitions. Despite this disadvantage the Youth and Wind Band both got to the finals at the National Music Festival. This was whilst competing against schools with significant financial backing from companies such as Aga!

Nigel then presented Stuart with the long overdue cheque for £500. Numerous photos were taken of this momentous occasion both inside and outside YIR. No doubt these will be published in due course.

Under AOB Tony Abbott reminded members of the Romsey Show. He would like everyone, positive or negative, to reply to his request for helpers. It should be noted that helpers will only be required for a couple of hours during the day and they will receive free entry to the show. It was also pointed out that this would be an occasion to see John Whitham in a bowler hat, as he and Heather are joint presidents of the show this year. I'm not sure if Heather will also be wearing one too!

Next weeks meeting is at The Royal British Legion. The dress code will be something Clive Collier approves of!

The meeting closed at 08:57