

MINUTES OF ROTARY MEETING AT THE BRITISH LEGION CLUB, ROMSEY ON  
WEDNESDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2024

35 members and guests enjoyed a dinner served in a screened off area in the ground floor bar which worked well.

Following the meal Ron Bowater introduced our speaker Olena Kudrinova and her youngest daughter Polena from the City of Mariupol in the Eastern Ukraine attending with their host family Jane and Andrew Lax. Ron explained Olena , Polena and friends entered our Testway Walk and raised £750 for the charity 'Medicians for Mariupol'

Olena ,with Polena's help, showed photographs and videos of their home city which came under almost immediate bombardment when Russia ,without any warning, invaded on the 24th February last year. The pre-war slides showed her and family enjoying a happy life within the historic city with many views of festivities in the Old Town and in the impressive theatre. The photographs were in stark contrast to current ones that show the total devastation that is now Mariupol, with tens of thousands of lives lost.

After surviving the horrendous onslaught Olena and her daughters managed to escape the Russian occupied City leaving in her badly damaged red car with a Red Cross logo on the bonnet driven by a very brave volunteer who used his local knowledge to avoid blocked and damaged roads, crossing fields, driving around tanks and negotiating some 20 check points and after 6 hours of driving reached the safety of Zaporizhzhia. Later travelling on to Lviv in western Ukraine to stay with friends before heading for England via Holland where they stayed 6 weeks to obtain permission to travel with their cat!!

Ed Holmes gave a heartfelt vote of thanks to Olena and Polena for sharing their experiences with us - amazing spirit and resilience.

A difficult act to follow President Nigel asked for any committee business.

Steve Simmon- Jacobs confirmed the Technical Tournament was taking place on 8th March. 25 teams had entered but he was still short of at least one judge please.

Brian Rickett reported the fund raising event at Hilliers had raised £1100.

Next meeting is a business meeting at Royal British Legion on Wednesday 1st March.

Nick Lockyer.