

ROTARY CLUB OF ROMSEY TEST- MEETING

15 JANUARY 2020

WELCOME AND GRACE

Bill welcomed all members and welcomed and introduced guests. Unfortunately, none of the people designated to do room prep and grace had arrived, but a substitute volunteer gave a brief grace. 39 people were present for dinner.

The meeting then took a sober note as Bill commented on the death of Graham Hollier's wife on Tuesday and all members stood for a toast to Veronica.

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TOASTS

After the dinner and break guests honoured the Loyal Toast. Bill then commented on the glasses of port which had arrived and invited the supplier to comment. Peter Hurst revealed himself as the culprit. He said that a few days ago they had cremated his mother-in-law, she had not been too pleased about it (!), but he wanted to pay tribute to all parents-in-law who often suffered a bad press. He proposed a toast to all parents-in-law.

TALK

The President then reintroduced our three speakers for the evening, Matthew Jones, Toby Burns and Ewan Pett. These are three Explorer Scouts who had attended the World Scout Jamboree in America last summer, and to which the Club had made a financial contribution towards their costs. They had returned to tell us about their experiences.

Toby and Ewan started with a double act. They told us that 400 scouts had applied to go to the Jamboree, and they had been fortunate enough to be among the 200 chosen. These were divided into four sub-camps to provide manageable numbers, each sub-camp named after a country that had hosted a previous jamboree.

They attended five training weekends in the year running up to the jamboree to enable the group who came from many different areas and scout groups to meet up and get to know one another and to get used to working together as a team. Their first weekend was at Lyons Copse, the Solent Scouts campsite at Shedfield, near Southampton, which was very much a get to know everyone trip. The second weekend was at Fernycrofts, the Hampshire Scouts camping and headquarters site in the New Forest, which where they had lots of activities laid on in which to take part. Their third meet was at Harry's Island, another camp site in the New Forest, which had a Mexican theme, and yet it was very cold! They met again at the local Dr Peter Centre in Romsey to celebrate a Christmas dinner together, and their fifth get together was back at Fernycrofts for a final weekend. They visited the New Forest Water Park and returned to camp to a great hog roast.

They spoke about the cost of attending the Jamboree which was £3,700 for each UK scout, and advised some of the activities they had engaged in to raise funds. These included dog walking, car washing, running a tombola at events, and making Christmas cards. Ewan also walked the Test Way, got a job, and did busking in Winchester. They also gratefully acknowledged the organisations that had provided sponsorship to help which, apart from ourselves, included Romsey Round Table.

They flew out of Heathrow to attend the jamboree, arriving in a very hot JFK airport. Being America it took 1½ hours to get through customs, and they then had a two hour coach journey to their first

accommodation. Most accommodation before and after the main Jamboree, was in various universities. The next day was site seeing in New York which was another coach journey of two hours to arrive in a temperature of 45°C! Toby said he was glad to dive into an air-conditioned McDonalds. Forgetting that he was in America he ordered extra-large. He discovered that normal would have been the equivalent of extra large back home! They had a second day in New York which was fantastic and included a ferry ride on the Hudson river. This was followed by a six hour coach journey to the University of West Virginia for another night's stop. Finally, they were coached to the Jamboree site. Situated in the wilds of West Virginia, The Summit Bechtel Reserve is a training, Scouting, and adventure centre for the millions of youth and adults involved in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and anyone who loves the outdoors. Ewan was surprised to find that there were anti-aircraft batteries set up at the four corners of the site to guard against terrorist attacks. They pitched their tents in a monsoon and woke next day to dense fog. The site was vast, and their UK sub-camp was at the highest point and furthest from the main arena. It was a 2 hour walk from the site to the arena. There was a fantastic Opening ceremony in which the 128 countries attending took part. The UK contingent was one of the largest at the camp.

The Jamboree, although it took place in America, was jointly hosted by the Scouts of USA, Canada and Mexico. The opening ceremony finished with what was in effect a massive pop concert. During the Jamboree there were masses of activities in which they could take part including shooting (well it is America), Climbing, kayaking, paddle boarding, high ropes, mountain biking, scuba diving, and the use of a technology area where they were all kinds of simulators. Ewan was particularly taken by the mountain biking and there were 47 miles of tracks in the woods on which to ride. He spent about four days of his jamboree doing that.

They felt that the biggest thing they had gained from the experience was the sense of belonging to such a large world-wide organisation and they all came back with special international friends with whom they will keep in touch, and hopefully visit.

Most nights at the camp they were treated to a lightning storm at night which was often spectacular. After the Jamboree was over, they visited Washington D C, where they were able to see the White House, Capitol Hill, and the Lincoln Memorial. They also attended a baseball game along with 4000 UK scouts. After Washington they had a 13 hour coach journey to stay at the University of Maryland, it has beautiful subways, from where they visited Niagara Falls and rode on the Maid of the Mist ferries under the falls. When the time came to return to the UK they were all becoming over-tired and grouchy.

The talk was then taken over by Matthew Jones.

He told us that his favourite moments of the Jamboree were travelling on a zip wire, scuba diving, and trading badges with scouts from other countries. He had taken 50 UK scout contingent badges with him and swapped them all with any interesting badges he could find from other countries. His best swap was with a Japanese scout for a kimono, which he proudly put on to show us. He had also laid out a blanket onto which he (with a little help from his mum) had sewed all these new badges.

He said that he has learnt three things from the experience. Firstly, that he is capable of much more than he thought he was. He never dreamed that he could raise £3,700, but he too did busking and he designed and sold Christmas cards. He was very proud that one of his designs is being used by Romsey Abbey in publicity about the 900th anniversary this year. He had also learnt to sew on a badge. Secondly he had learnt how to be organised, and how vital a skill that is. Thirdly he had discovered that scouting was a much bigger world than he had thought or properly realised. He now knew that he could go almost anywhere in the world and meet up with other scouts who would accept him as a friend. "You need never be alone as a scout".

Finally Matthew wanted to tell us what he had gained from the Jamboree. Firstly, a Jamboree tent which he won in a raffle, secondly a group of international friends that he will keep in contact with, and thirdly the

desire to go again! Jamborees are only held every four years and only scouts between 13 and 17 can apply to go, so a scout only ever gets one chance. However Matthew intends to apply to be a part of the adult organising team for the next one which will be in South Korea in 2023.

Vote of Thanks

Gren Lamb-Hughes gave the vote of thanks and remarked how the three young boys who spoke to us three years ago seeking support, had matured into fine young men, in part from that experience.

AOB

Steve George gave a plug for Youth Speaks taking place on 16 January in the Town Hall and members were invited to attend.

The President reported that John Burgess had been poorly and had been in hospital.

Bill also asked for volunteers to put away all the Rotary equipment as there was no room prep people available. He reminded members that if they were listed for a duty and could not attend it was their responsibility to arrange a swop.

Wine Raffle

Shaun conducted the raffle with his usual efficiency and lucky winners were Jon Livingstone, Steve George, Nick Bellamy, and Dave (no, not Silience) Healy.

DMES

17-1-20