

International Committee Report

January 8th 2008

By John Versey, Chairman, Dist 1260 International Committee

This last period has seen a flurry of activity. On the 26th November I launched a District Appeal for to deal with the Bangladesh Flood. So far it has exceeded expectations and raised over 5000 pounds allowing the purchase of 10 shelter boxes to accommodate at least 100 people.

Besides this crisis there have been several others, and clearly we are beginning to see some of the effects of climate change. There have been two cyclones in Bangladesh, which have created major problems for aid agencies because of severe infrastructure damage. There have been floods in India, Nepal, Mauritius, Uganda and across the whole central belt of Africa and also in Mexico. Tropical storm Noel caused much damage in Haiti. I provided a full report for the DG's letter which makes grim reading. Many of these appeals and UN newsletters have been sent via Secretaries to the clubs in the District. We know that most of our clubs are doing all they can to alleviate some of these problems. Gill Blatchford, Hitchin Tilehouse and on the district international committee, will be writing to you to see how your efforts are going and to publish a newsletter on all our progress.

One really interesting development has been the challenge put to Rotary by the bill and Melissa Gates' Foundation to complete the work on eradicating polio – we have to raise \$100 million dollars over three years which they will match.

The team met on the 28th November for the Half Year meeting. It was praised by the participants as a good meeting but it was poorly attended with only 16 clubs represented. We will have to review why the attendance was so poor at our next meeting on February 14th. I have been discussing with Gary whether we should consider a joint Foundation / International Fair which might be much better attended.

Members have also been active in visiting other clubs, if not in person by telephone. We are trying to have a more active presence in the District this year. I have been able to visit personally several clubs and will continue to do so.

National campaign information has been sent out regularly to club secretaries to pass on to international chairmen. It seems likely to be more successful to send to secretaries to pass on, so that the club as a whole also get to know about things. In particular requests have been made by RIBI to support the Unicef appeal for Africa to support flooding victims. Various national letters about disasters have been placed on the website.

The projects that have been endorsed by the District have been steadily receiving support and were promoted at the half year meeting.

The Siyabonga 'Bus for Hospice' project has now received sufficient pledges to pass to the next stage and Hertford Shires have now completed an application for a matching grant together with the Saldanha Rotary Club.

The Play Pump appeal has progressed well and has the support of eleven clubs..

John Moss 'loop the loop' project to support the boarding accommodation for a school in KwaZulu Natal has also been successful and received significant publicity.

Optyse: This has received significant attention nationally and won several awards. It is a great success.

New twinning links have been established. Hertford Shires have established a link to Alkmaar in Holland and very soon a small District team will take part in a Friendship Exchange to Adelaide.

Finally, Guru has been very active in keeping the international website up to date – it is an important part of our communication.

My thanks go all of the team for their efforts during the first half year.

John Versey, 8th January 2008

Bangladesh Appeal

Great Missenden	£230
Buckingham	£100
Ampthill	£150
Amwell	£100
Welwyn Garden City	£490
Luton Chiltern	£100
Harpenden Village	£250
Ware	£100
Newport Pagnall	£450
Hoddesdon	£1000
Hemel Hempstead	£600
Potters Bar	£1000
Bushey and Oxey	£100
St Albans Verulamium	£500
Hertford Shires	£100
<u>Total</u>	<u>£5270</u>