

The Rotary Club of Lincoln

(Est. 1922)



August 2026 Newsletter

The Rotary Club of Lincoln Meeting – Monday 10th August

Guest Speaker: Steve Howe

Steve was District President 2022/23 and is currently District Membership Lead.

Steve spoke to the club about increasing Rotary Membership. He suggested that District can help to an extent with finance or other resources for some initiatives

He explained to the members that there is a District/National move to increase membership through :

- 1) Associate membership. No connection to Rotary but help in fund raising, community or social efforts and may be counted in our annual numbers.
- 2) Corporate membership, being businesses who see advantage to employees belonging to Rotary and support membership. Counted in our annual numbers.
- 3) Companion groups who operate as groups with ideals of Rotary, but not restricted to regular meals, instead maybe a drink/sandwiches etc at irregular meetings. This type of group to be mentored by a Rotarian and Companion groups to have representation on the Council. Rotaract members could be such a companion group. Again counted in our annual numbers
- 4) District may assist Rotary Clubs in publicity on social media, even printing of support material
- 5) Rotary has a template for production of Rotary web sites. There is an App to assist in production of initiatives called International Club Creation which gives guidance in doing this.

President John Herrick has asked club members to consider these initiatives and bring feedback to our next Council meeting.

The Rotary Club of Lincoln Meeting – Monday 24th August

Guests: Glenys Robertson: Assistant District Governor, Joan Fatchet: President Inner Wheel club of Lincoln, Margaret Miller: Past President of Inner Wheel club of Lincoln, Maureen Coffey: Inner Wheel club of Lincoln & Kathryn McKee: Inner Wheel club of Lincoln

Speaker: John Cawdell, Rotary Club of Lincoln

It was the 58th time that John has been luncheon Speaker at the club. This is still fewer than the late great Tom Baker who addressed the club on 59 occasions.

Frida Kahlo: A Life of Pain

At this week's meeting, members heard a compelling and wide-ranging address on the remarkable life of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, a woman whose story intertwines personal resilience, global politics, and the modern fight against polio.

Born in Mexico City in 1907 and raised in modest circumstances, Kahlo contracted polio as a child, leaving her with a withered leg and lasting breathing difficulties. For Rotarians, the mention of polio carries particular weight. In 1994, Rotary's ambition was to eliminate the disease by the year 2000. At that time, millions feared the paralysis and iron lungs that defined the illness. Today, thanks in no small part to Rotary International's vaccination efforts, annual cases have fallen to only a few dozen worldwide. Conflict zones—particularly in the Middle East—remain the final barrier to complete eradication, and Rotary's work now focuses on containing outbreaks and protecting vulnerable communities.

Despite her early health challenges, Kahlo aspired to study medicine. Her life changed dramatically as a teenager when her school bus collided with a tram. She was impaled by a metal handrail, suffering catastrophic injuries to her spine and internal organs. Months in hospital followed, with pain so severe it might have overwhelmed many. Instead, Kahlo began to paint. She transformed her suffering into vivid, unforgettable works of art, many of them self-portraits that captured her physical and emotional reality.

Her distinctive appearance—most famously her monobrow—and her willingness to challenge convention, including occasionally wearing men's clothing, made her a striking figure. She married fellow Mexican artist Diego Rivera, twenty years her senior, who became both partner and promoter. Together they lived at La Casa Azul, the Blue House, in a bohemian district of Mexico City.

The talk then shifted to an unexpected but fascinating historical connection: the Russian Revolution. After Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin consolidated power, forcing Leon Trotsky—advocate of a more democratic form of communism—into exile. Trotsky eventually found refuge



in Mexico, where Kahlo and Rivera, sympathetic to communist ideals, welcomed him into the Blue House.

Trotsky's assassination in 1940, carried out with an ice axe, shocked the world. Although Kahlo was briefly arrested, it was quickly recognised that she could not have committed the crime. The incident nevertheless propelled her into international prominence.

Her artistic reputation continued to grow. In 2025, her painting *The Dream* sold at Sotheby's for £45 million, a record for any female artist. The Tate Modern has described her as the most influential female artist of the 20th century.



Kahlo's health deteriorated severely in later life. She endured more than 30 operations, lost a leg, and relied heavily on painkillers. Yet she continued to paint, often being carried to exhibitions on a stretcher. Her final work, *Watermelons*, includes the inscription "Viva La Vida"—"Long Live Life"—a defiant celebration despite her suffering. She died in 1954, and thousands attended her funeral.

Her influence did not end there. Seventy years later, Coldplay's Chris Martin visited the Blue House. Inspired by Kahlo's story and her final painting, he wrote "Viva La Vida", which became one of the fastest-selling albums in history.



The speaker concluded by reminding members that Kahlo's life—marked by pain, perseverance, and creativity—continues to inspire artists, musicians, and millions around the world. Her story also serves as a powerful reminder of Rotary's impact. Every contribution to the Rotary Foundation's polio campaign helps ensure that future generations will never endure the suffering Kahlo faced as a child.

A life of extraordinary hardship became a legacy of global influence. Frida Kahlo remains a symbol of resilience—and a reminder of the difference Rotary can make.

Vote of thanks was given by Peter Morrison. Peter acknowledged John's ability to speak without notes of prompts, remembering a wide range of facts. He recalled his very first polio jab when he was at school and reminded us all of the similarities between Putin's and Stalin's political purges.

Second speaker: Glenys Robertson: Assistant District Governor

Glenys spoke of her concerns about the future of the club with the club lacking a President Elect. She said it was important that any incoming President has training for the job. She suggested that it was not a great deal of work and that it was great fun. She urged all of the members, including members who have previously held the post to consider putting their name forward for President next year.

Rotary Notices:

- 1) Council Meeting on 3rd September at 1800 hours at Bob and Julia Bellamy's home. See David's email (31/08/26) for the address.
- 2) John Dehnel DS has this year asked Club Councils to consider:
 - I. Planning for young RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Award)
 - II. Defibrillators
 - III. Community Service Team
 - IV. Use of Artificial Intelligence/Data Protection Policy.
- 3) Rotary Leicester - Charter Celebratory Dinner - 8th October, see David's email 18/08/2026
- 4) District Council on Wednesday 2nd September, which will be at a different venue – Kettering Park Hotel – with a restructured agenda including several more talks about topics for club programmes, and less time spent on district leadership reports
- 5) THE DISTRICT 1070 MEMBERSHIP SUMMIT! Saturday 19 September 2026, Greetham Valley Hotel, 9:00am for a 9:30am start | Finish 4:00pm
- 6) District Conference – 17th October, Whittlebury Park, nr. Towcester