

Audley Rotary Club 50 years of “Service Above Self”

Neil Ginnis. Audley Community News Dec 2013

The club began in 1963 under the sponsorship of the Newcastle Rotary Club with twenty-four founder members coming together to volunteer their services for the benefit of the local community. In doing so they joined an international network that now comprises 33,000 Rotary clubs with 1.2 million members worldwide, all united by the motto “Service above Self”.

Since that first year the club has gone from strength to strength. Over the subsequent years 135 local people have served as Rotarians, each of them with the desire to make a difference in their own way, harnessing the collective power of Rotary to make a positive impact in the local community and internationally as well as in their own lives. Through the years we have supported efforts to improve our community by developing successful relationships with many of our local voluntary organisations including the Audley Brass Band, the Children of Audley Residents’ Association, the Scouts and the Community First Responders. There have been many accomplishments in Rotary’s fifty years in Audley, from promoting a charity boxing match in Sir Thomas Boughy High School to bringing a Life Education Centre to the local schools to help our children make positive health and lifestyle choices.

Celebrating and supporting the achievements of our young people have been central to the activities of Audley Rotary Club for all of its fifty years. We work closely with our primary and secondary schools to sponsor Young Achiever awards and to encourage innovation and creativity through Young Chef and Young Innovator competitions. Over recent years we have developed a very successful mentoring programme with one of the local secondary schools. Several young people from the parish have benefited from the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, Rotary’s leadership development programme.

The history of Audley Rotary Club has seen many friendships forged and developed through service and a full programme of social activities. It is these friendships that enrich the life of Rotarians and that have enabled us to work together to make a tremendous difference to our community over the past fifty years. As we celebrate our fiftieth anniversary our members, past and present, can take pride in what has been achieved and look forward to the next fifty years of Rotary in Audley.

The Rotary club has also supported international projects, including building schools in The Gambia and disaster relief activities such as coordinating the overwhelming response of people in the parish to the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004. We are proud to support Rotary’s global project to eradicate polio. Today there are just 3 countries in the world where polio is endemic, down from 125 in 1988. The fight against this crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease continues.

Perhaps the most visible sign of Rotary in Audley is the bearded face of Santa who has been making his annual tour around the parish for longer than most of us care to remember. It is your generosity during these collections that lets Rotary continue to work for the benefit of our local community. The Rotary Tree of Light provides some festive cheer for the village as well as an opportunity to remember loved ones at Christmas. The proceeds from the Tree of Light go to the Donna Louise Trust.