

Across Borders: Members find community and connection worldwide

There are many Rotary members across Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire that have found deeper connections with communities around the world. The reasons are all different. For some it's Rotary events and initiatives that form these connections. For others, it's finding a sense of home and belonging through holiday travelling, moving to a new location, visiting family and friends, or even working remotely from other locations to see more of the world (something that is much more common these days than just a few years ago).

Here are some stories from people who have found community and connection away from home. Their stories of fellowship and service demonstrate how Rotary's global network opens doors to friendships and shared service far from home—allowing a privileged access to the host community that is simply not available to the 'civilian' traveller. And sometimes these connections extend to much needed support in times of crisis.

Tony Scaife

Home club: Rotary Adventurers

International club: Takapuna Rotary Club, New Zealand

For several years, I've had the privilege of spending extended periods in Auckland, New Zealand, visiting my family for about six months at a time. During my early visits, I explored several Rotary clubs in the city and even had the privilege of attending a meeting at the Auckland Rotary Club where then Prime Minister Bill English launched his election campaign. Despite his eventual loss, this experience affirmed my experience of the unique insights gained as a travelling Rotarian. Insights that ordinary visitors cannot match.

Eventually, I found a second home at the Takapuna Rotary Club and became an associate member. The club's welcoming atmosphere and stunning meeting venue at the Takapuna Boating Club made it an obvious choice. My wife and I actively participate in their meetings, social events, and community service projects, which has deepened our understanding of New Zealand's culture and people.

I was particularly drawn to Takapuna's progressive leadership, which has actively addressed challenges such as ageing membership and declining engagement. They've taken a leading role in encouraging clubs in Auckland's North Shore to merge. I attended the first of their joint North Shore Rotary meetings. What a contrast it was to their single club meetings. The attendance was very much larger and there was an energetic buzz in the room. Larger audiences attracted a greater range of speakers. Prospective members also would see a lively and active Rotary.

The formal merger of the clubs has been agreed from July 1 2024 and I can't wait to get back and see how they are all developing.

Learn more about Takapuna Rotary on their [website takapunarotary.org.nz](http://www.takapunarotary.org.nz) and their [Facebook page /TakapunaRotary](https://www.facebook.com/TakapunaRotary).



Takapuna Boating Club veranda view towards Rangitoto

Photo credit: Takapuna Boating Club

Carole Ford

Home club: Rotary Club of Northallerton Mowbray

International club: Rotary Club of Karrinyup (Perth, Australia)

I have been visiting my 'adoptive club', Rotary Club Karrinyup, for over 10 years, starting when my son and family moved to Perth. I visit Australia at least once a year and try to join the club's meetings and events when I'm there.

It's always interesting to compare their club with my own—Northallerton Mowbray. Our clubs are similar in size and have a 50/50 gender split in membership. We have overlapping Rotary interests and our differing approaches to problems, such as supporting humanitarian effort in Ukraine, are only partly related to geography. Surprisingly, they are in some ways more formal than us.

When I'm in the UK, I keep up to date with Karrinyup through their fortnightly online newsletter, which is always a good read. Of course, some of Rotary's challenges such as membership are shared by both clubs.

I now meet up with some of the members outside Rotary. It's a real positive to have a group of friends similar in age to me, who are always ready to advise on aspects of Australian life—such as the best place to source items and services, and places to go.

My son sometimes accompanies me to special events such as handover dinners, but we have not been able to interest him in joining just yet. He's far too busy with three young children and lots of sporty outdoor activities.

During the Covid pandemic lockdowns, Northallerton Mowbray Rotary held a virtual Christmas Dinner and linked up with Karrinyup's in-person dinner. It was great fun, making us realise the global nature of a pandemic.

Learn more about Rotary Club Karrinyup on their [website karrinyuprotary.org.au](http://www.karrinyuprotary.org.au), their [Facebook page /KarrinyupRotary](https://www.facebook.com/KarrinyupRotary), and on [Instagram @karrinyup_rotary](https://www.instagram.com/karrinyup_rotary).

Roger and Carol Ward

Home club: Aireborough Rotary Club

International club: Royal Hua Hin Rotary Club (Hua Hin, Thailand)

Carol and I spend several months of the winter in the seaside resort of Hua Hin in Thailand. There we are visiting guests at the Royal Hua Hin Rotary Club. It's a very international club with members from many countries and uses English as a common language.

We first went to Thailand as part of an organised tour of Southeast Asia in 1981. This was supposed to be a one-off holiday of a lifetime, but we enjoyed the sightseeing, the culture, the weather, and the food so much that we returned many times over the years. Since our retirement in 2002 we've spent every winter in Thailand apart from 2021.

In early 2018, we were invited by a Canadian Rotarian neighbour in Hua Hin to attend a Rotary social event. This included a presentation by Rotaract students from a nearby university. We were so impressed that we started attending lunchtime meetings of Royal Hua Hin Rotary Club until our return to the UK a few weeks later. When we got back home, we found our nearest club, Aireborough Rotary, and were subsequently inducted in July of that year.

Royal Hua Hin Rotary Club works with local schools, schools for children with disabilities, the local hospital, charities, and with other Rotary clubs in Thailand. We've been able to get more involved with causes. Such the Jungle Aid Foundation which supports people living in remote locations by the Thai/Burmese border. Or the Mae Tao clinic on the border with Myanmar that supports migrants from Myanmar who do not have full access to Thai facilities.

Becoming involved in Rotary has given us the opportunity to meet Rotarians from many countries and members of the local community who we would never have encountered as average visitors.

Learn more about Royal Hua Hin Rotary Club on their [website rotaryroyalhuahin.org](http://www.rotaryroyalhuahin.org), their [Facebook page /RotaryRoyalHuaHin](https://www.facebook.com/RotaryRoyalHuaHin), and their [YouTube channel @RotaryClubRoyalHuaHin](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRotaryClubRoyalHuaHin).



Roger in Baan Saphaan village keeping medical records as a nurse provides basic first aid, prescribes medicines such as antibiotics and contraceptive pills. There is a Thai to English translator as well as a village headman translating from Karen to Thai.

Photo credit: Roger and Carol Ward

Ken Robertshaw
Home club: Halifax Rotary
International club: Many

I have made a point of visiting Rotary clubs around the world since joining Rotary in 1993. The first such visit was to Kitzbühel, Austria, where the club met on the terrace of the hotel that hosts the finish line of the Hahnenkamm Races, one of the world's most prestigious alpine ski races held annually since 1931. They took great delight in pointing out that the racers are going sideways at about 40mph straight towards the terrace!

I have a long standing association with the Rotary Clubs of Staffanstorp and Lund in Sweden because of my involvement with the International RYLA gatherings in the early 2000s and still visit them at least once a year. My good friend over there taught me how to give the greeting in Swedish but omitted to tell me that he had included the phrase 'fellow ale lovers' as well as Rotarians!

I've been on several trips and adventures in the United States, gaining strong links to Rotary clubs and individuals there. When I kayaked the Mississippi River, Rotarians helped by meeting us at several points and helping with obtaining supplies, being safe from a tornado, hosting us and arranging transport back from the Gulf of Mexico. I had also arranged to cycle the length of the USA, and I received offers of help from over 40 Rotary Clubs and their members along the route. It's just a shame that the postal service lost my gear, and I never did manage that trip.

I was a GSE team leader in 2000 to Louisiana and as a result have some great friends over there that I still visit, I have an American 'daughter' in Louisiana, who was an exchange student with me and my late wife and who I still visit (I am also an honorary grandfather to her child born a few months ago). The stories from over there would fill a book! I also know several instances where travelling Rotarians who were in need of medical help, received invaluable practical support from their local Rotary contacts.

Rebecca Mendoza

Home club: York Rotary

International Club: Salinas Steinbeck Rotary (Salinas, California, United States)

For me, my international club is my home club and vice versa. I was born and raised in Salinas, California in the beautiful Monterey County. I discovered Rotary in high school through a Brazilian exchange student, Cristina. I knew I wanted to do an exchange, so Cristina introduced me to the idea of Rotary Youth Exchange and introduced me to her host club, Salinas Steinbeck Rotary. A few months later (and after numerous conversations, meetings, and events between me, my family, Salinas Steinbeck members, and the District Youth Exchange team) I was on my way to Petrolina, Brazil.

Twenty years on, and I'm still close to Salinas Steinbeck members. I usually make it to at least one meeting or event when I'm in my hometown, dutifully waking up well before what is natural for the 7:15am start time.

I consider many of the members close friends, mentors, confidants, and advisors. They have opened their homes to me, have invited me to countless catchup lunches and coffee dates to hear what I've been up to, helped me secure a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship (now part of the Global Grant programme) to do a master's at the University of York, and have seen me through the many facets and

challenges of my life so far. They welcome me openly every visit and are a great way for me to stay connected to my home community.

I've been in York since 2012 and a member of York Rotary since 2015. Although York is my home for now, Salinas will always be my 'home home'. The people of Salinas Steinbeck started not only my Rotary journey, but my journey as an international citizen. And for that, I'm forever grateful.

Learn more about Salinas Steinbeck Rotary on their [website steinbeckrotary.org](http://website.steinbeckrotary.org), their [Facebook page /SteinbeckRotaryClub](https://www.facebook.com/SteinbeckRotaryClub), and on [Instagram @SalinasSteinbeckRotary](https://www.instagram.com/SalinasSteinbeckRotary).

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