

# LOOKS EAST

The Newsletter of the Rotary Club of Ipswich East - D1080 | 2025-26, Edition 7: 1st December 2025

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Tuesday 2nd December at 12:55pm  
**Speaker meeting: Tim Ryan - 41 Club**  
*Menu: Cock-a-leekie*  
*D.R.: Peter Shepherd & Ross Lunney*

Tuesday 9th December at 12:55pm  
**Speaker meeting: Phil Martin -  
Community Action Suffolk**  
*Menu: Glazed gammon & pineapple*  
*D.R.: Ed Nicholls & Eric Barnett*

Ipswich Bowls Club

## CLUB OFFICERS 2024-25

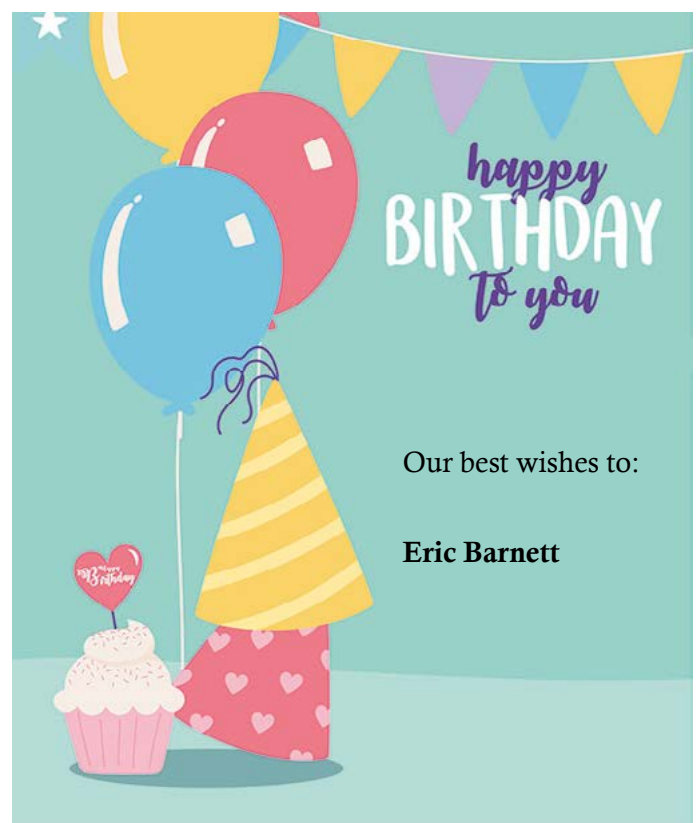
*President* Steve Flory  
*Senior vice-president* Steph Mackentyre  
*Junior vice-president* Eva Alcerreca  
*Immediate past-president* George Woodward  
*Secretary* Robin Needham  
*Treasurer* Neill Keveren

*Club service* Steve Flory  
*Community service* Andy Lewis  
*Foundation* Bob Parker  
*International* Mark Murphy  
*Vocational* Ed Nicholls  
*Almoner* Alan Forsdike  
*Environmental* Lucy Trenchard

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# RECENT MEETINGS AND EVENTS

## Fifth Tuesday - Fellowship night at the Woolpack Inn

By Eva Alcerreca

On 30th September, members got together at the Woolpack Inn for a casual fifth Tuesday of camaraderie and a few drinks. Here are some shots of the evening, for those of us who missed it!



# Robin Needham & Mandy Small - SSAFA, The Armed Forces Charity

By Bob Parker

On 7th October, a talk was given by our Secretary Robin Needham on the work carried out by SSAFA in looking after, in many cases, the special needs of members of our armed forces, who having returned to civilian life have experienced both mental and financial difficulties.

The help administered by SSAFA, whose Patron is King Charles, is delivered by Field Officers who go out and give tailored support. Support is also given by trained telephone advisors, who offer counselling especially to those experiencing addiction, debt or relationship breakdown, to mention a few of the problems many ex-service personnel experience.

A real life experience of SSAFA in action was given by a heartfelt account from Mandy Small, now working for SSAFA because of the help and support she received after the loss of her husband, who was killed in action in Afghanistan. She was left with a young son, and she not only lost her



husband but had to relate the impact of this loss to him. SSAFA provided support to enable her to pick up her life in a meaningful way to where she is now.

SSAFA relies on charitable donations and fundraising events — such as the Charity Dinner held at Venue 16 on November 29th —, as well as on an army of volunteers to carry out this valuable work to this section of our community that are called on to defend our country and way of life but are often forgotten when the mission has been completed.

*For more information about SSAFA and the work they do, visit: <https://www.ssafa.org.uk>*

# Helen Fairweather - Brainy Dogs

By Des Cunningham

I am sure, like myself, many Rotarians expected our speaker to tell us all about how clever our canine friends are, doing tricks or working at airports sniffing out drugs or explosives, but Brainy Dogs are a long way from this. They confirm that dogs are not just man's best friend but true companions, part of our emotional support system, and that they sense our needs.

Brainy Dogs is an Innovation Award winning charity run within Headway for people with brain injury or neurological conditions, many of whom may experience a personality change or depression, which could result in a loss of friends or family, and the dogs fill this gap.

The charity works within our local community

and also within the local prison system, with many inmates suffering from neurological conditions.

Brainy Dogs generally come from the Blue Cross or rescue centres. The charity has won many awards and Helen has met many politicians and celebrities over the years, but the funding this brings is short-lived. They received a lottery grant, which was for only one year before it was withdrawn.

Helen was a very good speaker and this is a charity well worth our support. I believe we supported the Headway charity in my year as president back in 2008.

# Speaker Meeting: Mark Murphy MBE

Here are some photos of the breakfast meeting of 21st October, when our own Mark Murphy was the speaker. It was a very successful change to the usual lunch time meeting, so keep an eye out for the next one.



# Steve Clarke - Assistant District Governor 1080

By Russell Wiles

On 18th November, our guest was Steve Clarke, Assistant District Governor (ADG) with responsibility to look after 10 clubs in his Ipswich patch. Before he spoke, our President had the pleasure of inducting 2 new members: Rob Adams, recommended by Mark Murphy, and Keith Miller, recommended by Bill Izzard. It's brilliant that the club's efforts to increase recruitment are paying dividends.

Andy Lewis, as chair of Community Service, had been asked to summarise the club's efforts in its various projects over the last 6 months. He was able to inform us that Ipswich East had given approximately 240 hours of community volunteering, including Cancer Support Suffolk's car show, garden clearances, FIND, Pop Up Shops and many more projects.

The ADG then spoke positively about our recruitment and community involvement, with special emphasis given to supporting/working in conjunction with other clubs on their projects/big

events. He made a request for us to be aware of the roles available at both District and International level, rather than just at club level. He was very positive about the impact of Foundation, describing it as one of the "most efficient charities on the planet". In this regard, he specifically referenced the End Polio Now Campaign which, although actioned by the World Health Organisation (WHO), had been largely funded by donations and topped up by Bill Gates, as one of the public health successes of the last 50 years in making polio almost eliminated but with commitment still needed, with the final stages being the most challenging. David felt the most effective way to support World End Polio Now Day is for clubs to try and link up for events on a larger scale.

His other Rotary passion is RYLA, and the "life changing impact" it can have for any 18-26 year old who gets the chance to take part, and hence encouraged the club to remain focused on facilitating this to happen where possible.

## Ten-pin Bowling Evening

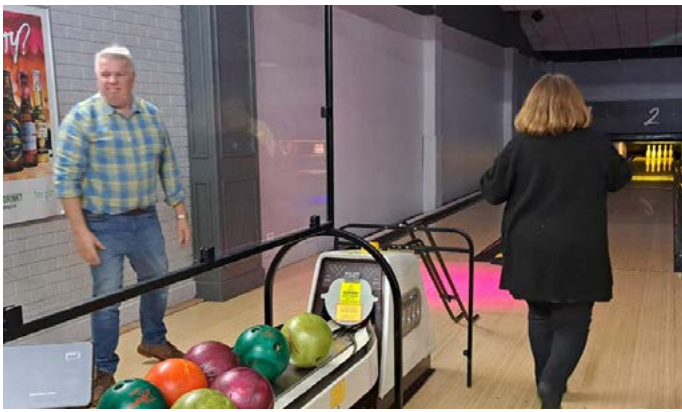
By Lucy Trenchard

Thursday evening on 6th November arrived together with fourteen intrepid bowlers all keen to show their skills on the lanes at Martlesham's 10 Pin Bowling alley. The initial cat-herding was hard, trying to get groups of either 4 or 6 sorted, group names handed in, meals ordered, all whilst waiting for the late-comers to arrive (naming no names!).

For the beginners, there was an initial struggle knowing which was the right ball weight to choose, then understanding how best to grip it, and then getting the right approach and release was a struggle, with many first attempts ending up in the channels. For the experts (of which there were many!), this was a doddle and a few early strikes were achieved.



*The winner of the evening, Martin Westlake*



Needless to say, the competitive spirit was alive and well, with keen competition amongst a few key players on Lane 2 (again naming no names, you know who you are!!).

All in all, a splendid evening was had by all and congratulations went to Martin Westlake as the overall winner who was awarded the Medal of Excellence together with the Wooden Skittle!



*Despair for some!*



# Katherine West - A Life Girlguiding

By Martin Whitworth

On Tuesday 11 November, Katherine West gave us a personal reflection of her time in the Girlguiding movement.

To set the scene and provide the wider context of Girlguiding in modern society, she explained that Girlguiding is legally entitled to be an organisation for girls only. Also it has, for 17 years, asked a selection of its members aged 14-25 about their lives. The impact of the survey is significant. It is used by various agencies to set priorities. The responses included that 1 in 10 girls aged 11-16 missed school to avoid sexual harassment, 36% feel depressed after using social media, and the girls specifically wanted to refer to misogyny in the survey report as a big concern. However, there is also some hope, as according to the survey, girls in Girlguiding are 28% more confident than other girls.

Katherine's own journey through Girlguiding began not because she wanted to become a Brownie but because her best friend joined Brownies and Katherine wanted to be with her. This desire to emulate her friend continued until she was 11.

Having delayed moving up to Guides until her friend could join, Katherine found she had to join a different unit. She also had to go to camp on her own when her friend cancelled. These events made her stand on her own two feet. She joined the unit at St Margaret's Church, Ipswich and the rest, as they say, is history.

Katherine moved through Girlguiding, becoming a leader and ultimately the Commissioner for Suffolk. Katherine explained that Girlguiding is a flat organisation that relies heavily on volunteers. Her role as Commissioner was a volunteer role

combining chairperson and CEO duties. She spent between 20 to 40 hours a week for 5 years running the Girlguiding organisation in Suffolk, with unit leaders deferring to her on such matters as safeguarding risk, funding property and finance.

As an aside, she commented that she was finding it a challenge to get prospective employers to value volunteering. Thankfully, this was not a view shared by several of our members who had recruitment roles in the past. They regarded references to volunteering as a plus.

Having relinquished her role as Commissioner, she continues to be heavily involved in Girlguiding. In addition to running a Guide unit, she was encouraged by her daughter to form a new Ranger unit at St Margaret's (Rangers are for 14 to 18 year olds). 95% of Guides now go on to Rangers. A strong friendship bond is therefore maintained amongst the girls. She organises a wide range of events and activities for Guides and Rangers including trips and provides significant support.

The impact of Girlguiding on Katherine and her impact on the girls was clear. If she captivates the girls in the same way as she captivated us, she is a great leader and fantastic role model.



# Orwell Challenge 2026 Launch

Via John Button

The launch event for the 2026 Orwell Challenge was a success, with many local charities attending and showing much interest.

The Club also took the opportunity to present several charities with donations that will undoubtedly help them carry on with their important work.

John Button provided those present with the details of the Challenge, which are here for your information, so feel free to pass this along to anyone who might be interested!

Orwell Challenge 2026: 28th June

- Registration for next year's event will open on 1st December
- 20% Discount to registration rates applies until end of February
- Our runs all comply with the rules of English Athletics and are validated by the Trail Running Association
- The website has all the relevant info, but so you know:
  - o Adult walkers £19.00
  - o Child walkers (12 and under) £9
  - o Half marathon (Over 17) £31.50
  - o Marathon (over 18) £36.50
  - o Ultra marathon (Orwell 55) £44.00
- T-shirts must be ordered when registering - £10
- If you are able to put a large group together, then talk to us – we may be able to give you a special deal
- Over 100 local charities have benefited over the years, so make sure you are on the list next year!





# Fellowship Night at Bin93

By Eva Alcerreca

On 26th November, a casual get-together for members took place at Bin93, organised by John Hutton. Here are some pics of the evening. Let's keep these events going!



A very warm

# WELCOME

to our new  
Ipswich East Rotary Club Members:  
Rob Adams and Keith Miller

# Shout Out to the Orwell Challenge on the EADT

26 EAST ANGLIAN DAILY TIMES TUESDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2025

# Your EADT

• Your community • Your news



The Orwell Challenge was launched at Venue 16. Below, Mark Murphy

Image: STEPH MACKENTYRE

## Charity money raised by Orwell Challenge is donated to charities

**The 49th Orwell Challenge was launched at Venue 16 in Ipswich.**

Organised by the Ipswich East Rotary Club, the event brought together more than 20 Suffolk charities.

Cheques totalling £5,500 were handed out to charities, including Brave Futures, Cancer Support Suffolk, Leukaemia UK, ABC Childcare (Ipswich) Ltd, Got To Read, the Al Tazid Foundation, and the Ipswich Samaritans.

The funds were raised through participant registrations for this year's Orwell Challenge, an annual event that sees people walk, run or take part in a half, full or ultra marathon.

Ipswich East Rotary Club's challenge co-ordinator, John

**SOPHIE SKYRING**  
sophie.skyring@newsquest.co.uk

Button, said: "We can confidently say that since its inception, the Orwell Challenge has enabled charities and good causes to raise in excess of £3.6million, which is a staggering amount of money.

"This oven-ready fundraiser is unique and it's the biggest one held in Suffolk each year."

The event was hosted by Mark Murphy MBE, who said: "Most large fundraising events are just for the one charity."

"The Orwell Challenge is the only big event in the calendar where different charities can all come together, on one glorious day, and each raise funds for themselves."

Steve Flory, president of Ipswich East Rotary Club, said: "I would now urge everyone, supporters of charities and individuals who just want to take part, to spread the word about this event happening on the 28th June 2026 as registration is due to open on 1st December 2025."

"There will be an early bird discount too - 20% off for those who get their registrations in early."

The event, originally known as the Orwell Walk, was set up to create a fun, yet healthy event which raises funds for multiple charities.

This year's event attracted 1000 participants, and it is hoped that next year's will be even more popular.

For more information, visit the Orwell Challenge website.



**Send your community news and pictures to [suffolkeditors@newsquest.co.uk](mailto:suffolkeditors@newsquest.co.uk)**

# Fun at the KLH Oktoberfest in benefit of Inspire Charity



## A well-deserved recognition for Karen Finch!

< **All About Hearing** 51m · 🌐 ...

We're incredibly proud to share that our very own Karen Finch, Lead Audiologist and Co-Director at All About Hearing, was recognised at the recent event in London, held to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the British Society of Hearing Aid Audiologists ([BSHAA](#)).

Karen was honoured for her outstanding contribution as President of BSHAA from 2004–2006, recognising her leadership, dedication, and lasting impact on the audiology profession.

Her commitment to raising standards in hearing care continues to inspire both colleagues and future generations of Audiologists, and we couldn't be prouder to have her leading the way at All About Hearing. 💙 🍷

Please join us in congratulating Karen on this well-deserved recognition! 🍷 🍷



# A Donation to the Club thanks to Jem Doncaster

Via Neill Keveren

Jem did a presentation recently which resulted in a £50 donation to the Community Support Fund. Here is what he said about it:

"Just to make you aware, I did a talk on Ipswich Speedway's league title win at Sudbury sporting memories on 5th November and they have made a donation to the Club as a way of thanks. It went down well - 60 plus in attendance, and many kind words as well!"

And here is the thank you message Jem received after his talk:

"Thanks again for your talk. There will have been 60 people telling 60 others what a great afternoon they had - that's 120 plus families who will be comforted to know their parents are enjoying themselves. Yesterday brought comfort and happiness to at least 500 people, so thank you.

- Andy Read"

Well done, Jem!



# Rotary Sports Report 2025

By Des Cunningham

We have had a busy year with a number of different sporting events and fellowship, starting with the croquet evening at Ipswich Croquet Club on Bucklesham Road, with 16 players enjoying several competitive games against fellow Rotarians, and then off to the Bucklesham Shannon for burger night and a few drinks. I believe several other Rotary clubs also play croquet, so perhaps a challenge match could take place in 2026.

Martin Whitworth and myself took part in the Annual District Golf Day at Ely Golf Club; unfortunately, we were unable to bring the trophy home.

After several attempts, we were able to hold the individual Golf Trophy at Ipswich Golf Club. We changed the format and started the day early with a full English breakfast, and Neil Hewitt was the worthy Winner with 39 points.

Peter Shepherd and Neill Keveren reached the final of the District Golf Pairs played at Thetford Golf Club, but unfortunately lost on the very last hole. Still a great achievement, they seem to be the top players within the Club and also made the final of the Dick Jeffery's Knockout, with Peter being the eventual winner 3/2.

The final event of the year was the Snooker challenge against the Ipswich and Suffolk Club, with 8 players from each side. After the first 4 frames, Ipswich East were 36 points in the lead, and increased our lead to finish further ahead after the evening meal and the 4 more frames, with a total score of 481 against 438. I believe this is our first victory against the Ipswich and Suffolk Club.

I would like to congratulate all the winners, and thank all those who have taken part this year. I hope in 2026 we can have more players taking part and even more fellowship.



BOOK NOW

# Christmas Afternoon Tea

Join us for a festive fundraising afternoon tea at Venue 16 in Ipswich with Christmas songs from Pop Chorus!  
Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
£30pp - 14:00-16:00pm



Buy tickets at...  
[www.cancersupportsuffolk.co.uk/events](http://www.cancersupportsuffolk.co.uk/events)

## ROLLING CALENDAR

Date	Event
2nd December	<b>Speaker meeting: Tim Ryan - 41 Club.</b> Details and registration via Wild Apricot.
9th December	<b>Speaker meeting: Phil Martin - Community Action Suffolk.</b> Details and registration via Wild Apricot.
9th December	<b>Ipswich East Wine Tasting Fundraiser in aid of Brave Futures.</b> Details and registration via Wild Apricot.
11th December	<b>Rock 'n' Roll Panto - Beauty and the Beast.</b> More details to follow.
16th December	<b>Christmas Lunch.</b> Partners welcome. Details and registration via Wild Apricot.

Date	Event
23rd December	<b>No meeting.</b>
30th December	<b>No meeting.</b>

**At a glance:** If you want to get an idea of what we have going on when, make sure to check out the calendar page on our website: <https://www.ipswicheastro Rotary club.co.uk/calendar/>

You will be able to see what kind of events we have coming up, and you can also check against that when organising activities to avoid any clashes.

## DUTY ROTARIANS AND LUNCH MENU

Date	Duty Rotarians	Menu*
2nd December	Peter Shepherd Ross Lunney	Cock-a-leekie
9th December	Ed Nicholls Eric Barnett	Glazed gammon & pineapple
16th December	Graham Bickers Andy Lewis	Roast turkey with all the trimmings, followed by Christmas pudding

If you're unable to be a duty Rotarian, remember it is your responsibility to look for a replacement, and please notify our Secretary Robin as well as Steph Mackentyre of any changes.

\*Dietary requirements/Vegetarian option available upon request, please contact Steph Mackentyre at [info@inviewpublicity.co.uk](mailto:info@inviewpublicity.co.uk)

## ONGOING COLLECTIONS

Remember we have an ongoing collection of ring pulls, as well as ink cartridges, which you can give to **Andy Lewis**.

The ring pulls are sent to the Philippines so that people there can make crafts to be sold, which helps them support their families.



**John Button** is still collecting postage stamps (they can be used ones), so if you're lucky enough to still receive any post with those, keep them and make sure to give them to him.

**The Ipswich Rotary Club** is collecting spectacles, which get forwarded to SpecSort York. After sorting and grading them, they're taken to Africa. Please contact Peter Rogers at: [peterrogers327515@gmail.com](mailto:peterrogers327515@gmail.com).



## UPCOMING PROJECTS UPDATES

We have a few projects and activities coming up, and volunteers are (usually) welcome. Please contact the relevant club member and join in!

- **FIND Christmas parcel deliveries** - John Button is, as every year, liaising with FIND regarding the parcel deliveries. There are several dates and times available from 8th December onwards for those who can help collect and deliver parcels in our area, so please get in touch with John if you can help.

- **Christmas Tree Festival Café at Ipswich Minster**  
- Help needed with general café duties in two-hour shifts from 28th November to 6th December, so please get in touch with Andy Lewis if you can help or donate baked items.

- **Greener Ipswich** has created a series of planters in Ipswich TC which need watering. The plan is to get rehabilitated prisoners to do this work in the longer term. Help is needed to drive a van with a tank of water in the back around the town to do the watering. Please contact Andy Lewis if you can help.

- **FareShare** - are in need of van drivers and stores people 2 hours per week or per month. Please contact Andy Lewis if you can help.

- **Community Action Suffolk** are looking for volunteers and to come to our Club to talk about the work they do. Please contact Andy Lewis if you can help.

Hello! On this occasion, it was John Button's turn in the hot seat, so enjoy!

- Editor Eva

## John Button: In Profile

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*Name:* John Button.

*Where are you from?* Ipswich – Born, bred, matured and aged!

*Occupation (current or previous if retired):* Almost retired but still dabbling in Project Management and Quantity Surveying.

*Member of Rotary since:* 1994.

*Do you currently hold a position within the Club? If so, what is it?* Co-ordinator of the Orwell Challenge / Past president.

*Tell us a bit about your personal life:*

Married to Sue and with two sons, Matthew and Adam, and two granddaughters, Amber and Livia. We recently lost our “family” dog Ruby and that was heartbreaking for us all – she was 16 and a half years old.

*What was your dream job when you were a kid?*

Not sure I really thought about it – just wanted to play football!

*What was your first job?*

It's my first and last job – Quantity Surveyor. I started in September 1972, became a Partner in 1986, senior Partner in 1995 and I am still there as a Consultant 53 years later.

*A bit about your career or occupation:*

We provide consultancy services within the Construction and Property sectors to people / organisations wanting or needing to build. It covers the full range, and two of my current projects are an extension to a stray cats home (don't really like cats!) to the redevelopment of an entire property estate – so quite varied.

*Favourite tippie?* Depends on the occasion – real ale (Adnams Southwold), red wine (a top Malbec,

Rioja or Chianti) or on a mellow evening a glass of Remi Martin.

*Radio or TV?* TV – but not in the car.

*What kind of music do you like?*

Where do I start? The Progressive Rock of the early seventies is probably my go-to: Pink Floyd, Yes, Emerson Lake and Palmer, but then I like Carole King, Queen, The Eurythmics, REM, The Who, Rolling Stones, (some) Beatles, (Some) Opera – I'll stop there but it's by no means exhaustive.

*What are your hobbies?* Golf, Watching ITFC, gardening, jigsaws in the winter months.

*What is the thing you are most proud of?*

So difficult! Obviously my family is and will always be what I am most proud of but...

I am proud of many projects that we delivered when others had failed. Proud of what the Orwell Challenge has done and has become, proud of my work in the Charity sector – Rotary, Cancer Support Suffolk, FIND and St Elizabeth Hospice.

*If you could travel back in time, what piece of advice would you give to 20-year-old you?*

**I don't look back with regrets, wanting to change things. I believe you make your own luck and it's important that when that “luck” presents itself you grab it with both hands and say thank you.**



# WHERE HAVE ROTARIANS BEEN?



"Liz and I attended a Remembrance Service in County Antrim. Here is a photo with our son and the mayor."



Liz Harsant spent a few days in New York supporting her daughter Samantha, who ran the NYC Marathon!

And that's it for today!

Just the usual reminder: to send photos, news, articles, stories, announcements, or any material (yes, even jokes) for publication in the newsletter, please address them to:

**[iercnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:iercnewsletter@gmail.com)**

*The deadline to receive items for publication will be the Friday prior to the next issue (so for the next issue, that will be 12th of December. Needless to say, I would be very grateful if members kept the deadline in mind for a timely publication of materials.*

— Editor

STAY PAWsiTIVE!



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