



humanity in motion

rotary international in great britain and ireland

## press release

**Release date:** For immediate release Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008  
**Media contact:** Karen Jones, 01789 768126, karenj@ribi.org.uk

### **NEW PRESIDENT LEADS ROTARY INTO A NEW ERA**



The new president of Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland has vowed to lead it into a new era and drive major changes forward to secure it as the largest humanitarian not-for-profit organisation in the UK and Ireland.

Ian Thomson, who was inaugurated as president of the humanitarian organisation on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June at the Four Pillars Hotel in Cirencester, aims to show that Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland is still as relevant today to business people and community leaders as it was when the first UK club opened in 1911.

The former engineer, originally from Fife in Scotland and now living in Cheltenham Spa, will lead 58,000 Rotarians in 1,845 clubs across Great Britain and Ireland who commit themselves to carrying out humanitarian work in communities at home and abroad. David Fowler from the Rotary Club of Edgbaston Convention joins his team as Vice President Elect.

Changes to the organisation include a new approach to the running of the clubs to ensure they are more flexible and accessible for all those wishing to join, with a particular emphasis on attracting younger members, women and ethnic minorities. A major change has also been made to the organisation's administration with the appointment of the first ever CEO/Secretary, Annemarie Harte, and a new marketing division to help boost publicity and promotion.

Mr Thomson, a member of Rotary Club of Cheltenham, said: "We are in the process of building the Rotary of the future and the key word for us over the year ahead is change. A lot of people unfamiliar with Rotary do not understand the wealth of humanitarian work it does at local, national and international levels. We plan to show how active members are and the amount of fun and enjoyment to be had by joining us."

t: 01789 765411 f: 01789 765570 e: [secretary@ribi.org](mailto:secretary@ribi.org) w: [www.rotary-ribi.org](http://www.rotary-ribi.org)  
a: rotary international in great britain and ireland, kinwarton road, alcester, warwickshire, B49 6PB



humanity in motion

rotary international in great britain and ireland

## press release

The new president continued: "I am greatly honoured to be leading Rotary in Great Britain and Ireland in the next year. The need for Rotary is even greater today than when it was founded in 1905, and the help of Rotarians worldwide really does make a difference."

"I am delighted to announce a new partnership with Leonard Cheshire Disability and a commitment to establishing 20 schools in Uganda able to accept children of all disabilities with our joint Schools for All in Africa campaign.

"There will be a continuing major focus on The Rotary Foundation, Rotary's corporate charity, which is dedicated to furthering international understanding, goodwill, and peace and gives more than £50 million every year to educational and humanitarian programmes."

More than 200 Rotarians attended the inauguration in Cirencester which symbolised the start of the new Rotary year, 2008 to 2009.

The first Rotary Club was founded by Paul Harris in Chicago, USA on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1905. Ever since, Rotary's work has spanned the globe, with clubs in more than 200 countries and geographical areas and a membership of 1.2 million business men and women. The first club in Ireland was established in Dublin in 1911, quickly followed by the first ever club in the UK, based in London.

Ends

**RIBI PR Officer Karen Jones on 01789 768126**

### NOTE FOR EDITORS:

1. Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland, part of Rotary International, has 1,845 clubs and 58,000 members.
2. Rotary International was founded in 1905 in Chicago and is now the world's largest international service organisation with 1.2 million professional men and women as members. There are 32,000 clubs in 200 countries and geographical areas.
3. Rotary initiates local and global projects to promote world understanding and peace and improve life conditions for people of all ages and cultures.

t: 01789 765411 f: 01789 765570 e: [secretary@ribi.org](mailto:secretary@ribi.org) w: [www.rotary-ribi.org](http://www.rotary-ribi.org)  
a: rotary international in great britain and ireland, kinwarton road, alcester, warwickshire, B49 6PB