



First Meeting of 2025

President Jeff presiding over his first breakfast meeting of 2025, opened it by wishing the 19 members in attendance, a very Happy and healthy New Year.

He then went on to mention the sad news, of the passing of our friend and staunch Rotarian, Alasdair MacConachie, which occurred on Christmas Day.

He went on to mention that he and Liz had called to see Val and the family on Wednesday and discovered, that although Alasdair was in hospital for treatment, his death still came as a shock as it was so unexpected.

It is thought that the funeral will take place at All Saint's and will be conducted by the Dean of Ripon and friend John Dobson.

Following, he again thanked Ged and Lucy Wiper and their team, for all their efforts with the Christmas Magic concert. Although a profit was made, he only wished that more people and fellow Rotarians had turned up on the night.

He then mentioned the Christmas message and Roger's delivery of it. It had been a long time since anyone had received a standing ovation for the message,

As there wasn't any news from Walid regarding member's health, he opened the floor to any members who wished to speak.

First up was Nigel Little, who mentioned the Italian Night, which will take place at Tre Amichi on Thursday 4th February. Cost will be around £25 per person and a board will be circulating soon.

Nigel was followed by that cheeky chatterbox, David Hayward, who once again, re-iterated the instructions and schedule for those Rotarians, who are taking part in the Christmas tree collections over the weekend. We are at a new venue and there is a high probability of very wintery weather.

He finished by complimenting Rotarian Alex Nicholson who had managed to rustle up another 40 trees for us to collect.

Jeff then announced that the Bonus Ball Winner from the 21st December was Prem Sinha. The winners from the 28th of December were Barbara Johnson and Peter Tindale.

The secretary then gave his announcements that the International Committee would be meeting on Tuesday 7th at 6pm in the Dolphin Centre and that the PR Group would be at St Teresa's at 4.30pm on January 8th.

The business concluded, President Jeff asked Rotarian Jane Bradshaw to share some of her memories of 'Mr Darlington', Alasdair MacConachie.

See Over

Coming Soon...

Friday 10th

12.15 Club Lunchtime Meeting
Speaker: Faye Marsh from the DBC Looked After through Care Scheme.

Friday 17th

7.15 Club Breakfast Meeting
Speaker: Martin Stand from the Listening Post.

Friday 24th

12.00 Austin Brooks Youth Day
Please be punctual and engage with our many guests. Peter Campbell organising.

Friday 31st

12.15 Club Lunchtime Meeting
Speaker: Colin Jay, Chaplain, West Park Hospital 'Mindfulness.'

February

Tuesday 4th

19.00 Italian Night
Tre Amici, Skinnergate, Board going round now.

Friday 7th

7.15 Club Breakfast Meeting

Friday 14th

12.15 Club Lunchtime Meeting

Friday 21st

7.15 Club Breakfast Meeting

Friday 28th

12.15 Club Lunchtime Meeting

To keep this succinct I tried to think of three words to describe Alasdair... But before I say what they are, I just want to share a few personal recollections and thoughts - he was one of the people after my dad and my husband who has made a big impact on me.

The soul of politeness, always keen to meet and welcome new people, a good judge of character, very good at finding the right people for roles to help others, Alasdair was horrifically incompetent at diary management, he had the twinkliest eyes and the cheekiest giggle ...

We didn't see so much of the Alasdair we knew in his prime in recent years...for in his prime he was quite for midable!

Not long after I started at the Hospice, his finance director at the time, Catherine Elgey, said to me "it's okay you can disagree with Alasdair, you just have to get past that moment when you're in fear of your life!"

He actually didn't have any airs and graces – he was always the same, even though achieving exalted positions ... We worked together for more than 25 years for the Hospice, but I knew him before that as a family friend, and through the NSPCC who made him an honorary life member (and they just did not do that for anyone believe me)... So we go back probably over 40 years.

We know he loved little sayings that didn't waste words that he picked up on Boards, in management courses and in high powered meetings with General Motors like "my dear, You should have leadership vision and grip!" and he loved passing them on.

He was a very, very caring person but many of his acts of kindness were not known to the general public and to the officials who gave him recognition for more high profile work... I know about his visits to comfort people who he didn't even know personally. He arranged for essential nursing staff to be picked up and brought into the Hospice then driven home afterwards when everywhere was deep in snow, often doing some of the driving himself. He often lent people vehicles when they needed them and it wasn't to get a sale... I bought an Astra from Alasdair and it was "alright" but I changed it and for ages afterwards his greeting was "How are you and how is your Toyota?"

Actually You didn't pick up his South African accent all that much but it was there .. in expressions like: my dear Jane or Dear Peter and ... how are you and how are your dishy daughters.

He applauded and encouraged both of my girls in their careers and particularly Harriet who he followed up inviting her to piano Society concerts so that she could

meet some of the top international players and of course he sponsored all of those at the Art Centre and it was a brilliant time! He supported the arts "big time" as he would say... and so, so many good causes.

There are not that many people who you can say will leave a big hole in the world, but Alasdair is one of those.

He was a presence!

Known for his suits, and as the "stripey man" by many at the Hospice, I bought him a pair of pinstripe slippers one Christmas which he loved. I hope he's wearing them now. You always knew when Val was away, because if you met him in Sainsbury's, he had various items of clothing that just didn't go together - but I think he celebrated that a little bit !

He never minded making fun of himself - I had one hilarious conversation advising him on wearing tights for his vice lieutenant investiture! On another occasion, he spent a big part of one of our early trustee meeting, when we only had deckchairs to sit on, sporting a knotted hanky on his head.

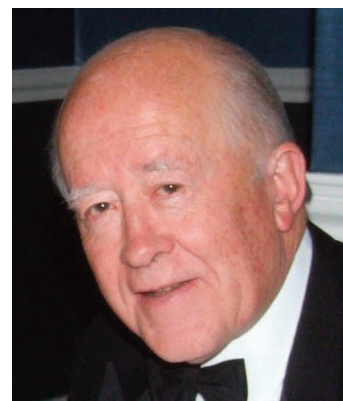
The list of causes and projects he has supported to benefit this community and the wider region and to promote the North in such a positive way is too big to read through now, as evinced by all the online tributes.

To name two very close to home:

He was involved with the hospice from its very beginning in 1986 and never ceased his interest and support. He was a massive ambassador and keen recruiter for Rotary of course and he pushed me to join some 20 yrs ago and as a result I gained, as we all do, the privilege of working on some amazing projects and making good friends.

I for one am very thankful for his mentorship and friendship over the years. I will miss him and I am sure that these sentiments are echoed by so many of us in Rotary.

**Mr Alasdair MacConachie OBE In 3 words...
Mercurial, driven, and caring.**



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DARLINGTON**
PRESENTS...

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“DEMONTIA'S GOT TALENT”
A TALENT SHOW LIKE NO OTHER!

**IN AID OF ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY
AND DEMENTIA GROUPS ACROSS DARLINGTON**

TUESDAY 21ST JANUARY 2025

DARLINGTON HIPPODROME
SHOWTIME 7.00 - 9.00PM

£15 per person. £50 family ticket (2 adults & 2 children).
Tickets available from Hippodrome Box Office.

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TO THE ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY
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As a footnote to Jane's tribute to Alasdair.

On my early arrival at the Dolphin Centre Breakfast meeting, The members of the staff who provide us with breakfast passed on their sincere condolences to the club on the passing of Alasdair.