

Captivity

Like many 15-year-olds, Delir loves playing video games. It's difficult to imagine this lanky boy leading the escape of 50 women and children out of ISIS captivity. Yet that's exactly what he did, just days before I met him.

His ordeal began in August, when the village was attacked while he and two siblings were visiting their grandfather. Terrified, they tried to escape to the mountains, but were captured on the way. All of the older boys and men were tied up and driven away. Many women and girls were taken away by force including their own sister Hozan, aged just 14. Delir was the oldest boy left. He and his younger brother were taken to a village and held captive.



Despite being a prisoner, Delir finally convinced someone to lend him a mobile phone to call his father, who had escaped with his mother to safety. "When I talked to them on the phone the first time, we spent the first 20 minutes just crying," his father remembers. "Then I advised my son how to plan an escape." Delir soon learned the layout of the village, and planned an escape route.

The first time he tried it, he took a group of 20 women and children, but they were recaptured when they stopped at a house to get water for the children.

"They hit me with their hands," says his 13-year-old brother, Delawar. "I screamed, 'Mom and Dad, please help me!'" Delir received the worst beating of all.

He brushes dark hair from his forehead and shows me the scars where guards held his face to a stove. "I knew the next time we tried to escape, we would be killed if we were captured," says Delawar. Despite

the risks, the boys bravely tried again, and this time led a group of 50 prisoners to safety.

When they made it to Zakho, they were reunited with their heartsick parents. "When I saw my father and mother again, the happiness I felt was impossible to explain," Delir says, at last bursting into a smile. "I am flying with happiness." Still, the family worries about Hozan, their daughter and sister, who has been given as a slave to a family in Mosul.

Life now feels very distant from their peaceful village in the hills, full of trees and birds, where families would go for picnics. This family now lives in a five-square-metre section of a dark warehouse. Thirteen of them sleep on the mattresses and blankets Medair gave them. All I can do is listen, and imagine how I would feel if it were my family fleeing into mountains. If my brothers were captured, or my parents were without a home. Any one of those events would stop the universe for me.

In the darkness, the family celebrates the little light they have. Relatives come and go—uncles and cousins visiting to see the boys for themselves and give thanks for their return. "Please don't make the story and then leave us behind, not thinking of us anymore," implores their father. "Please remember us."

As I leave, Delir jumps into the driver's seat of a little truck. His three-year-old brother crawls into the seat next to him, obviously happy to play. Delir puts his arm around the little boy and laughs.

I don't know what the future will look like for Delir and his family. I want peace for them, but I know that won't be possible with relatives still missing, without decent shelter, and with winter upon them.

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FACEBOOK

Thanks to Chris and Karen we are now at

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Shepperton-Aurora-Rotary/193222230826275>

on Facebook. If anyone with Facebook accounts can LIKE the page, they can post to the Wall or if they'd like to add any posts or events, the members can send them to Karen or Chris. Our thanks to Chris Arnot who set the page up for us last year. Karen and Chris have agreed to share the job of keeping it up to date.

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March 2015

PAULINE'S PIECE

Another busy month and already there are signs of spring with snowdrops and some daffodils cheering us all up and on a fine day, it's still light at 6 pm!

There were a lot of Aurorans at Alan Stewart-Darling's funeral and later at the Golf Club where we enjoyed Jean's hospitality and the company of other Rotarians, to celebrate his life and his companionship.

Due to the speaker's ill health, we have cancelled the Prestige Lecture this year, but have several possible speakers for next year.

That's the sad part over so let's look at the happier occasions in February – 8 of us enjoyed Staines Race Night, which proved lucky for Brian and Ken who had the knack of picking winners both in the races and the raffle - thanks for the delicious biscuits Brian!

Sylvia and I handed the last Youth Speaks Award to the regular team at Halliford School, but this will be Ben's last year so we look forward to the school maintaining their superb record with some new team members. We watched them win the District Finals in Weybridge February and they now go on to the Regional Final.

Vivian, Michael, John and I attended the last District 1140 Council meeting – which thanks to Vivian's chairmanship, was a happy, not a sad evening. Changes to come but new opportunities to work with even more Rotary Clubs.

February 23rd was Rotary's Birthday and Michael Gicquel scaled the O2 Dome to celebrate this along with other intrepid (mad??) Rotarians to raise money for End Polio Now – well done Mike, we always knew you were destined for higher things! Also on the 23rd, 22 Rotarians and partners from Aurora enjoyed an excellent 4 Clubs Dinner, organised by Shepperton & Sunbury Club, which was once again held at Ashford Manor Golf Club.

As I write this I am looking forward to the District Quiz on the 7th March. As the current holders of the 1140 District Quiz trophy we may have to give it up. There is also an evening playing 10 Pin Bowling and, in May, a day trip to see Nigel and Mary in their new home. Not forgetting the Charities Open Day, organised by our mother Club in the Village Hall, and, in June, the Shepperton Fair!

Pauline

Talks at Our March Breakfast Meetings

Wednesday 4th - Business Meeting

Wednesday 11th - Footsteps in the Summer - Russell George

Wednesday 18th—TBA

Wednesday 25th—Risk Assessment & Protection –Kevin Mack.

These all take place at the Bridge Hotel, Chertsey, at 7.15 for 7.30 am and finish by 08.30. All are welcome except where it is marked "Members Only". Just call Jenny on 01932 243054 or send an email to jenny.steptoelive@live.co.uk to let us know.

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The Magistracy

For the first meeting in February, the Club was very pleased to welcome Owen Durrett (Secretary of District 1140) who gave us a very informative talk on his work as a magistrate. He began with giving us a little history of the system. The Magistracy was formed 650 years ago and was made up of men from the landed gentry who were invited to join. It was not until 1919 that the first woman became a magistrate and now 52% of all magistrates are women! From 1979 anyone between the ages of 18 to 70 could apply to be a magistrate, but as they need to sit at least 26 times a year (a half day per sitting), quite often at short notice, this makes it harder for younger people to join the Magistracy. To be a magistrate a person does not need to know anything about the law but they do need to be of good character, have understanding and be able to communicate, they must also be mature, of sound temperament and be capable of sound judgement. Needless to say they must be committed and reliable. Membership is drawn from all walks of life apart from police officers, traffic wardens and members of the armed forces but those convicted of certain criminal offences will not be appointed. All magistrates receive three days training before sitting and take part in a mentoring programme. They continue to receive training throughout their judicial career. Additional training is also given to those who choose to sit in the Youth Court or those dealing with family matters. New magistrates sit with mentors on at least six occasions during their first eighteen months. All criminal cases start at the Magistrates Court and 95% of them are dealt with by the magistrates with only 5% going on to the Crown Court. At a court hearing, three magistrates sit on the bench but decisions do not have to be unanimous and the Chairman announces the result without giving details. The crimes which the magistrates deal with include careless driving, shoplifting, assault, environmental and wildlife crime and the enforcement of fines, 95% of which are collected. If a defendant pleads guilty, the case is dealt with on the day but if the plea is not guilty, the case is delayed so that witnesses can be called, this can take six to eight weeks to happen. When the defendant is guilty, the magistrates need to decide on the punishment and for this they look at several factors. Sentences can be up to twelve months but are usually less; if a fine is imposed this can be up to £5 000. In the case of a community order, this requires one of the following - unpaid work, a curfew or exclusion.

A Two Party System?

The last Wednesday in February, our local MP, Kwasi Kwarteng, spoke to a packed audience at the club, where we almost ran out of seats. Essentially his talk was devoid of party politics but he gave us an insight into how coalition politics works now and how it might work in the future. He drew on examples of minority or governments with a slender majority and wondered if we were moving towards a multiparty system where the shape of the government would not be decided by the election overnight but would be the result of, perhaps, weeks of negotiation, with the previous incumbent remaining in Downing Street until a new Government had been formed. He also answered questions on the future of the fixed term of 5 years that we now have and what might happen if a Government lost a confidence motion. He made the talk interesting with many examples from history.

JLD

Prince Charles & Bombs

On 18th February, Barry Buttenshaw entertained us with an account of his career as an Ammunition Technical Officer, a title that includes inspecting the Army's ammunition but disguises the fact that it includes making safe all manner of explosives including devices left by organisations determined to inflict harm on the public. In Barry's case most of these were the work of Welsh Nationalists and his work included keeping Prince Charles safe from postal packages. Besides inspecting venues to make sure they were safe, Barry was also called out to dispose of larger items. In one case this was a large projectile found on Pendine Sands, it had been fired, all its marking had been washed off by the sea and so it had to be blown up in situ. It turned out to be a white phosphorous shell and the explosion left much of the phosphorous embedded in the sand causing the beach to be closed for a number of years!! Barry gave an excellent talk with many humorous anecdotes and answered many questions showing his expert knowledge of the subject.

JLD

Notes for Contributors.

Articles should be between 150 and 350 words long and emailed to john@dumbrell.org.uk or sent in typewritten format. Pictures can be any size and will be returned.

This is a monthly magazine and the deadline for contributions is **the 25th of the month.**

It is your newsletter, please keep sending contributions in preferably with some photos.

John Dumbrell, Editor



John Dumbrell

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Life on the Front Line

As many in the club know, Ken's grandson, Andrew Howe, is working in Lebanon with the Swiss Charity—Medair. Every so often they send out a newsletter and I thought that some of the items in the latest one are worth a greater audience. This short article describes some of the work of a relief worker and overleaf is the story of a brave Kurdish boy who single handedly rescued over 50 people from ISIS. We are indebted to Medair for permission to use their article and photos.

JLD

Winter Distributions 2014/15

In preparation for the Winter Medair teams assessed and distributed approx. 7500 winter shelter kits, providing safe, dignified and weatherproof shelter to over 42,000 refugees. They also distributed water tanks, blankets, mattresses and food parcels to the most vulnerable. The photos below reveal the poor condition of many of the shelters they encountered and the need to provide quality materials to improve their shelters to survive the harsh winter.

Snow Storms In Lebanon



In early January 2015 Storm Zena hit Lebanon, causing wide spread damage to the thousands of tented shelters in the Bekaa Valley and severely restricting access for NGO's to respond to people in need.

Despite the severe cold and numerous access challenges, it was an incredible blessing and encouragement to see our national staff doing everything they

could, including walking by foot to find the refugees most badly affected by the storm, to get necessary supplies to them to repair their tented structures or provide extra blankets to keep them warm. A few photos of the storm and team in action



Some of the Medair volunteers having dinner



Rescuing a family's tent

HALLIFORD SCHOOL TALK THEIR WAY THROUGH TO THE NEXT ROUND!!



Halliford School winners of the Youth Speaks District Final 2015

At the 1140 District Youth Speaks Final on Friday February 27th, nine very anxious Aurora members waited for the announcement of the winners; the reason being that the chief adjudicator had commended two speakers from the senior section, neither of which were from Halliford! However, both were commended for their roles as Chairman and Vote of thanks respectively. Huge cheers were heard when Halliford School was announced as the Senior Section winners, beating teams from Gunnersbury Catholic School and Woking Grammar School. We all felt that the team had given a very good performance and had heeded the advice given at the end of the previous round.

Halliford School will now take part in the Regional Finals on Saturday April 18th at Cornwallis Academy, Maidstone, Kent. We wish the team every success.

Sylvia Courtney

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