

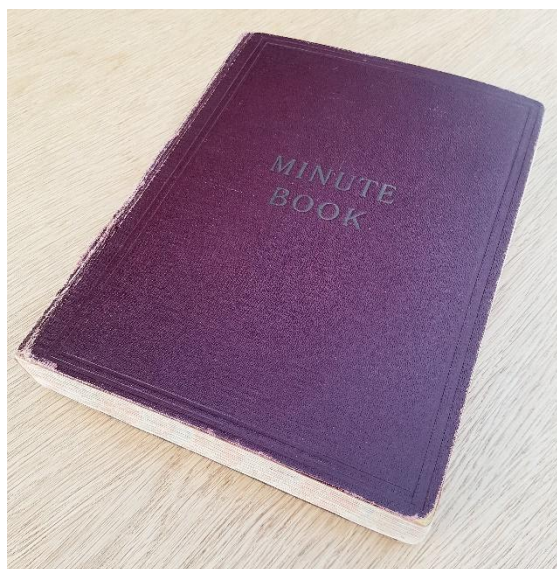
THE ROTARY CLUB OF PETERBOROUGH IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR – David Gray

The Rotary Club is a benevolent society whose stated mission is to "provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through [the] fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders." Their motto during the war was "Service Above Self". The members provided assistance in the form of advice through their own specialist knowledge and a network of contacts. During the war, the club also raised funds for its own selected good causes.

Membership was restricted to various 'Classifications', that is, they tried to recruit professionals who worked in areas of expertise, such as legal, medical, technical, governmental, employers etc. In this way the club had members who could provide practical help to the community in most areas.

Members were vetted before being allowed to join and generally had to be recommended by a current member. References were requested from other clubs if ex-members were moving to the city and wanted to join the Peterborough club. Poor attendance at their previous club would result in a polite letter declining their application. Also, if an applicant represented a profession that was well supported in the club already, they were not likely to be accepted.

The Rotary Club of Peterborough was formed in 1931 and continued to meet as normal throughout the war years. They held monthly Council Meetings (5.45pm), bi-monthly Business Meetings (1.30pm) and Annual General Meetings (8pm), all at the Angel Hotel in Bridge Street. The membership remained consistent throughout this time at around 49 members who paid an annual subscription of twelve shillings. Attendance at meetings was expected unless there were very extenuating circumstances which had to be notified beforehand. A run of non-attendance could result in membership being withdrawn.



Most of the information for this article comes from a 'Minute Book' (*left*), in which the meetings of the Peterborough Club were recorded from 14th July 1942 to 19th May 1948. Unfortunately, we cannot see the work that was being done before the first entry in July 1942, but the information that has been recorded still gives a fascinating insight into the efforts of this prestigious organisation and their marvellous contribution to the war effort at a local level.

The minutes of the meetings are divided up into sections starting with the title, those officers present, apologies, confirmation that the minutes of the previous meeting had been read, followed by the Treasurer's Report. The activities of numerous

committees and sub-committees within the club were recorded in the minutes. Each club member was delegated to working groups on one of these committees. However, there were four main 'Services' which were always covered in the meetings.

These were:

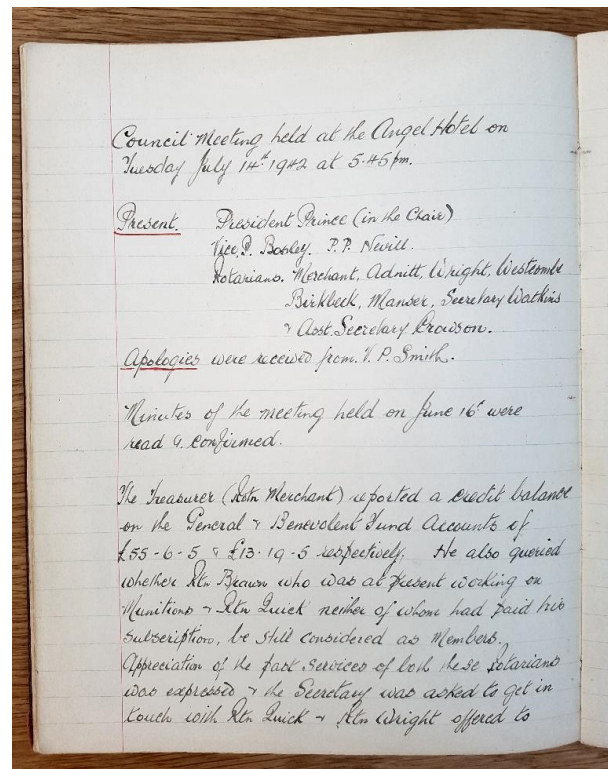
- Club Service.
- Community Service.
- Vocational Service.
- International Service.

Although Rotary Council Meetings were held every month and Rotary Business Meetings every two months, I cannot see how they differed, as they appear to cover the same headings. There may be some items that were only discussed in one type of meeting, but it is not clear what the difference was. There was always a Speaker at meetings, giving a talk on an interesting subject, covering aspects as diverse as post-war reconstruction, youth delinquency, employee relations, profit sharing, the future of the retail trade, local government reform and the future of medical services to mention only a few.

The Rotary Club also had a ladies' section, called the Inner Wheel. Unfortunately, there is little information to be found regarding their role in Peterborough during the war. We do know it was formed in about 1939 and its meetings were held on alternative Tuesdays at the Angel Hotel.

In 1940 its officials were:

- **President:** Mrs B. Fried.
- **Vice President:** Mrs Jack Bancroft.
- **Treasurer:** Mrs Norman Wright.
- **Secretary:** Mrs R. Prince.



Above: First recorded entry in the Minute Book for a meeting held on 14th July 1942.

THE ROTARY CLUB OF PETERBOROUGH									
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT									
In respect of the year ended 31st March 1943.									
RECEIPTS	£	s	d	PAYMENTS	£	s	d		
Balance at Bank 31.3.42.	3	14	5	R.I.B.I. Levy	30				
Subscriptions	106	1	-	R.I.B.I. Fees etc.	2	12	6		
Entrance Fees	10	10	-	Regalia	6	18	8		
				Printing & Stationery	13	3	-		
				Speaker Finder's Postages	1	10	2		
				Typists etc.	4	4	-		
				Secretary - Imprest Account	20				
				Cigarettes	1				
				Honorarium - Baillie	5	5			
				Donation to Prisoner of					
				War Fund	10	10	-		
				Library	9	5	3		
				Balance at Bank 31.3.43.	15	16	10		
	£120	5	5		£120	5	5		
BENEVOLENT FUND									
Balance 31.3.42.	£11	7	7	Sweets & Tobacco	£4	19	8		
Weekly Collections	27	9	6	Thorpe Road House	5	12	8		
				ditto					
				Children's Outing					
				per R. Prince	3	3	3		
				Donation - Sea Cadet Corps	5	5	-		
				G.S. Ploughstiel	4	4	-		
				Balance at Bank 31.3.43.	15	12	6		
	£39	17	1		£39	17	1		
I have examined the above Account of Receipts & Payments for the Year ended 31st March 1943, and find the same correct.									
May 25th 1943. E.L. New Road, Peterborough.									

Above: Accounts for Year ended 31st March

Occasionally the Minute Book mentions the Inner Wheel, and when it does, I will record it here.

We will first jump to the Annual General Meeting of Wednesday 26th May 1943, which provides us with the first full record of who was appointed to the various positions in the club. In addition, there is an Annual Report and a Statement of Accounts, which includes the various monies spent on projects from the Benevolent Fund (which was built up by the members at 4 pence each a month). These accounts then lead us nicely into the various activities being carried out.

Present at the 1943 AGM were:

- **Outgoing President:** R. Prince who was in the Chair.
- **Vice Presidents:** F. J. Smith and Reverend Bosley.
- **Past Presidents:** Davies, Andrews, Hall, McConnell and Nevill.
- **Rotarians:** Adnitt, Creevy, Crowson, D'Arcy, Fox, Fryer, Fowler, Jaidka, Kirman, Lenton, Merchant, Russel, Taylor, Vawser, Watkins and Westcombe.

The election of officers for the coming year took place and the following was agreed:

Vice President Smith was elected as President for the year commencing 1st July 1943. Second Vice President Bosley would become First Vice President.

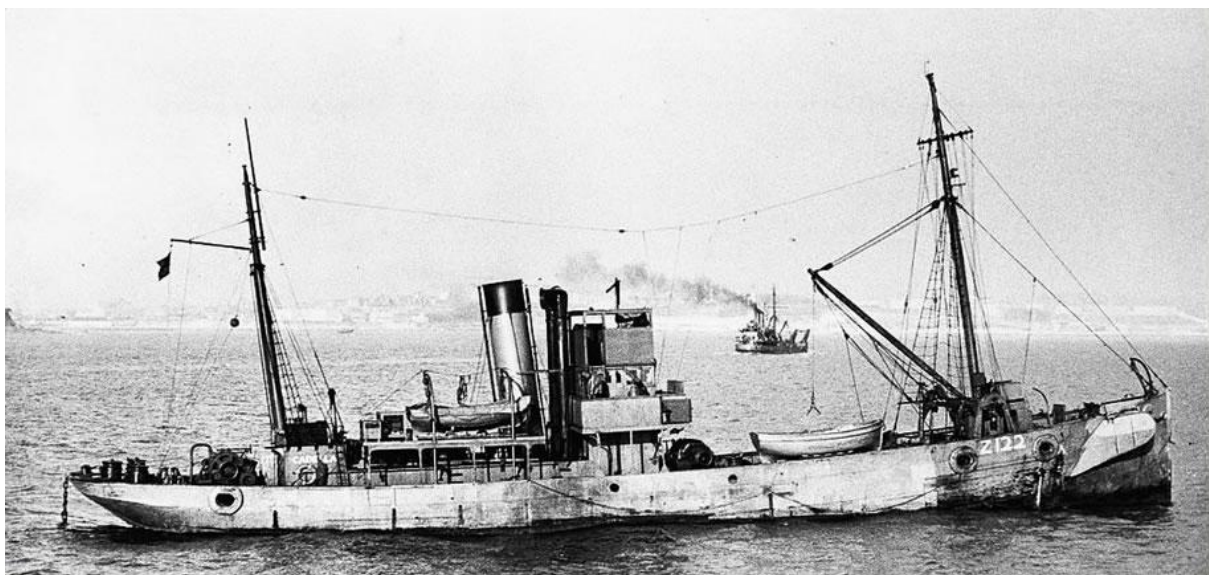
The remaining officers were elected as follows:

- **Immediate Past President:** R. Prince.
- **Second Vice President:** P. Crowson.
- **Treasurer:** H. G. Merchant.
- **Secretary:** C. E. Watkins.
- **Assistant Secretary:** P. Crowson.
- **Council:** All of the above and including, N. Davies, J. Taylor, R. W. Westcombe, W. J. Adnitt, J. W. D'Arcy and H. Kirman.
- **Speaker Finder:** R. W. Westcombe.
- **Auditor:** W. J. Adnitt.
- **District Council Representatives:** The President and Secretary.

A vote of thanks from the club was then accorded to Mr. Baillie, the Manager of the Angel Hotel and his staff, "for their willing service at luncheon meetings", and that he be asked to accept a cheque for five pounds five shillings. Further to that, recognition in the form of a cheque for three pounds three shillings was accorded to Miss Beardsall "For her great assistance in the production of the Weekly Letter." The Treasurer, Rotarian H. G. Merchant, presented the audited accounts for their financial year ended 31st March 1943. The accounts show a number of payments made over the previous financial year but for now we will focus on payments from the Benevolent Fund which came to a total of £38. 17s. 1d.

H.M.T. Plougastel

There is an entry for S.S. Ploughastel with a total of £4. 4s. against it. The S.S. stands for Steamship, however this vessel was not designated as a steamship at this time, it was a trawler, and its name was spelt Plougastel, minus the erroneous 'H' in the accounts. This ship was one of many requisitioned by the Admiralty at the beginning of the war to carry out essential work around the coast of Britain. H.M.T. Plougastel (His Majesty's Trawler), was named after a small town in Brittany situated in the department of Finisterre. At least that is the only reference I can find of the name anywhere else. S.S. Plougastel was requisitioned by the Admiralty in 1940 and carried out mine watching duties as H.M.T. Plougastel until she was decommissioned in 1945 and went back into civilian service.



One of His Majesty's Trawlers, the same type as H.M.T. Plougastel.

The Peterborough Rotary Club decided to 'Adopt' the Plougastel during the war and send comforts to the crew while they were carrying out their war work. The Royal Navy requisitioned 215 trawlers during the Second World War, 72 of which were lost. I have not been able to find out why Peterborough chose this particular ship. H.M.T. Plougastel was engaged in mine watching operations for the whole period of her service. This meant carrying out patrols looking for floating mines and reporting any they found so that minesweepers could be sent to deal with them.

The question of whether to send gifts to the 'Skipper' and crew was discussed in the Council meeting of 25th November 1942. It was finally decided that it was not practical to send parcels in view of the difficulty in obtaining supplies of food etc. Rationing was in place, and it was almost impossible to get hold of more food than was allowed for each person. Instead, it was agreed that they would send the sum of £4. 4s to be distributed among the ship's crew.

It is not until 23rd November 1943 that H.M.T. Plougastel appears in the minutes again. This time, after considerable discussion, the Secretary was authorised to obtain a supply of Penguin Books, and if possible, games, to be included in a parcel of clothing which it was hoped would be ready in time to be sent to the members of the Plougastel crew. Being "ready in time" would suggest that parcels were being sent fairly regularly and the additional items would be added if they could be acquired before the latest parcel was dispatched.

Two months later in January 1944, the Secretary reported that a parcel containing books and games had been despatched to H.M.T. Plougastel and that he was waiting for the completion of woollen garments being knitted by the Inner Wheel ladies, before sending these also.

On the 16th May 1944, two letters of appreciation for the clothing sent to H.M.T. Plougastel were read out, in which Skipper Cooper asked whether it were possible to supply the crew with a wireless receiving set. The Secretary was requested to make enquiries as to the possibility of obtaining a suitable set locally and alternatively whether Skipper Cooper could obtain one himself and at what price, in order to save on transport. The figure of £20 was mentioned as a possible necessary outlay. A week later, during the Annual General Meeting, the Secretary again read out Skipper Cooper's letter requesting a wireless set. The Secretary explained that he had already contacted Messrs Claypole & Sons with a view to obtaining an estimate of the possible cost if a purchase was deemed appropriate. Also, he had sent a letter to the Skipper asking for further details of the type of radio set suitable for the vessel. Past President Prince said that a letter could be inserted into the local press enquiring if a member of the public would care to provide a set they were not using or send a donation for a new one. After further discussion it was decided to wait for responses from Claypole's and the Skipper.

The following month a letter was received from Skipper Cooper explaining that his request was for a battery model wireless set and that he had contacted Mr. Claypole on the subject. Mr Claypole had promised to contact him regarding a second-hand set within a week. At the end of July 1944, the Secretary reported that an order had been placed with Mr. Claypole for a new battery wireless set to be sent to H.M.T. Plougastel and that they should soon expect a bill. Also, that a box of about half a gross of books had already been despatched to the crew.

Letters of grateful thanks were received later from the Skipper and from a member of the crew after the wireless set was delivered. The club had also sent a letter of thanks to Mr. Alec Hunting for his offer of a car radio set which had proved to be unsuitable for a trawler. Past President Andrews had also offered a set which at the time was being overhauled. It was decided that this set should be donated to a charitable cause in the city.

By the time of the Annual General Meeting of 23rd May 1945, H.M.T. Plougastel was being decommissioned from Admiralty service. During this meeting it was decided that a letter be sent to Skipper Cooper expressing the best wishes of the club for a speedy return to normal life of the Skipper and his crew. Two months later, the Secretary reported that he had received the White Ensign from H.M.T. Plougastel. After discussing regarding hanging it in the Rotary Room (presumably at the Angel Hotel), it was finally decided to ask the Parish Church of St. John to accept it. In commemoration of his Presidency, Past President Smith offered to provide a suitable plaque and fitting to hang the flag from in the church. In November 1945, Past President Smith said that he and P.P. Bosley had been over to St. John's Church regarding the hanging of the White Ensign from H.M.T. Plougastel but found that the place set aside for it would not be suitable. He suggested that the flag should be installed in the Club Room at the Angel Hotel. Unfortunately, this is the last time the Flag is mentioned, and we have no idea whether it was hung in the Angel Hotel, or whether it still exists somewhere today.

Form No. 16—Club Half Yearly Report

HALF YEARLY REPORT OF CLUB MEMBERSHIP

to the Board of R.I. and General Council of R.I.B.I.
and

Statement of Subscription due to R.I.B.I. from a Rotary Club in Great Britain and Ireland

You are requested to complete this statement in triplicate, and to send TWO copies WITH CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO R.I.B.I. to the Secretary, R.I.B.I., Tavistock House (South), Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1. THE THIRD COPY SHOULD BE RETAINED FOR YOUR CLUB FILE. The Secretary of R.I.B.I. will forward one copy to the Secretary of Rotary International.

FROM THE ROTARY CLUB OF PETERBOROUGH

We hereby certify that on July 1, 1943, the membership of the club and amount of Subscription due were as follows:—

SUBSCRIPTION DUE* 1943/44 rate per annum, 12s. 0d.						
	Number of Members	Total	Rate for half year July 1 — Dec. 31, 1943	Amount due on Certified Membership		
				£.	s.	d.
1. Active Members.....	46	49	at 6s. 0d.	14	14	0
2. Additional Active Members.....	3					
3. Past Service Members.....						
4. Senior Members.....						
5. Honorary Members.....	5					
Less: Refund in respect of 1942/43. 49..... Members at July 1, 1942 @ 6d.				1	4	6
NET AMOUNT DUE				£	13	9 6

*In R.I.B.I. the annual subscription includes the international *per capita* Tax (which R.I.B.I. remits to R.I. on behalf of each club); also the cost of, and postage on, the official publication.

A cheque for the amount due is enclosed with this statement.

Signed: *J. J. Smith* President Date 17. July 1943

Signed: *P. W. Atkins* Secretary Date July 16. 1943

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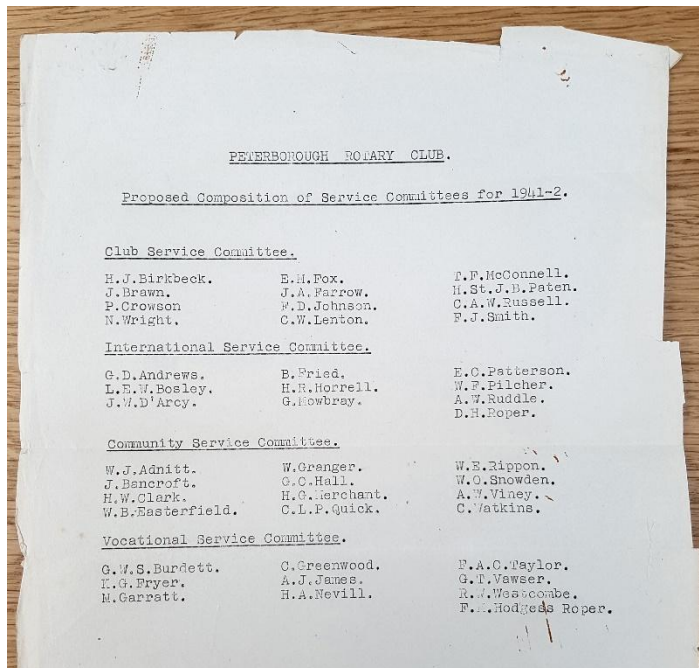
Above: Half Yearly Report for 1st July 1943.

Donations

Another group that benefited from the Benevolent Fund was the Sea Cadet Corps which received a donation of £5. 5s. during the financial year ending 31st March 1943. The Sea Cadets however were not the only beneficiaries of direct donations made by the Rotary Club. This particular donation was in response to a request from the Sea Cadets appealing for funds in support of the training of local lads as Naval Cadets. Already some seventy local boys were receiving training and it was agreed that this was a cause worthy of financial support. After discussion at the Council meeting on Friday 16th

October 1942, Rotarian Westcombe proposed that a cheque for £5. 5s. should be forwarded to the Sea Cadet Corps in Peterborough, and this was approved.

In a meeting of 7th December 1943, the Treasurer stated that in view of the healthy state of Club finances, additional subscriptions should be made to the four 'Pre-Entry Services, £5. 5s. to the Sea Cadets, £10. 10s. each to the Army Cadet Force, the Air Training Corps and the Girls Training Corps. This recommendation was immediately approved and adopted. The regular Army did not lose out on donations, however. On Tuesday 28th September 1943, a request was read out for bicycles for use of a local 'Ack Ack' battery (anti-aircraft). Rotarian Westcombe stated that surplus funds were available, and the matter was agreed.



Above: Proposed list of Service Committees for year 1941-1942.

In a Council meeting on Tuesday 8th December 1942, the President stated the main reason for the meeting was to decide whether the club should donate a sum towards the British Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. Past President Davies proposed that the sum of £10. 10s. should be subscribed from club funds, this was seconded and adopted. The British Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund provided British prisoners of war in enemy camps with food parcels and other essential items.

In a meeting on Wednesday 19th May 1943, two donations were discussed and agreed. After receiving a letter of appeal for financial assistance on behalf of the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA), it was agreed that they should be sent a sum of £3. 3s. Also, a Mrs. Blagden had recently sent a letter asking for a

subscription on behalf of the Peterborough Girl's Club, and it was resolved to donate £2. 2s. to that group.

On 22nd June 1943 the Secretary read out a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Alliance Commemoration Committee, appealing for the support of the Club towards the provision of a bed for the New Stalingrad Hospital. The cost was stated to be £150, and it was proposed that the bed bear the name of the City of Peterborough. This is the only mention of this bed in the Minutes, however the following Statement of Accounts for that financial year contain an entry for five guineas donated to the New Stalingrad Hospital for a bed. I wonder if it's still there!

At a Council meeting on 20th July 1943, the subject of Merchant Navy Week was raised. This was a week when Britain put its efforts into raising as much money as possible for the merchant seamen who were facing enormous dangers bringing the convoys to British shores in the face of enemy U-boat and bomber attacks. It is presumed the money was spent on comforts such as tobacco, warm clothing, special treats that were difficult to obtain on the ration and items such as games, wireless sets and anything else that might make their job more bearable. These Merchant Navy Weeks were separate to the special National Savings Weeks which will be discussed later.

The Secretary brought up the task of raising these funds during the city's efforts in September. It was mentioned that the Inner Wheel might be willing to cooperate in a combined effort, and a further meeting was planned after this had been confirmed. In a meeting the following week (27th July), The Secretary stated that he had received a letter from the Secretary of the Inner Wheel expressing the Club's readiness to cooperate with the Rotary whenever desired and also giving details of their programme of proposed activities. The Secretary of the Rotary was asked to write back pledging the full support of the Rotarians whenever their services were required.

This exchange of letters, and points raised at meetings seems so strange, after all, the ladies of the Inner Wheel were the wives and sisters of the Rotarians! It was decided that a Joint Coordinating Committee should be formed from the two clubs regarding cooperation in matters of mutual interest and Mr. Bailey at the Angel Hotel was asked about the possibility of preparing lunch for a joint meeting of the two Clubs. Unfortunately, it appears that due to rationing, the Angel Hotel was not able to provide the meal for the joint meeting, and instead, the Rotary donated £10 to the Merchant Navy fund in lieu of the money that would have been spent.

PETERBOROUGH ROTARY CLUB.
ATTENDANCES FOR SIX MONTHS ENDING 30th JUNE, 1943.

Name.	Possible Attendance.	Actual Attendance.	Percentage.
Crowson, P.	26	26	100%
Fox, E.M.	26	26	100%
Watkins, C.E.	26	26	100%
Davies, J.H.	26	25	96%
Easterfield, W.R.	26	25	96%
Garratt, M.	26	25	96%
Prince, R.	26	25	96%
Taylor, J.	26	25	96%
Vanner, P.T.	26	25	96%
Westcombe, R.W.	26	25	96%
Goodby, G.H.	26	24	92%
McConnell, P.F.	26	24	92%
Merchant, H.E.	26	24	92%
Smith, P.J.	26	24	92%
Bosley, L.E.W.	26	23	89%
Hall, G.C.	26	23	89%
Harrison, E.J.	26	23	89%
Hewitt, H.A.	26	23	89%
Patterson, E.C.	26	23	89%
Rippon, W.E.	26	23	89%
Russell, C.A.W.	26	23	89%
Andrews, G.D.	26	22	85%
Creedy, W.	26	22	85%
Chaplin, R.	26	22	85%
Pilcher, W.F.	26	22	85%
Farrow, J.A.	26	21	81%
Ruddle, A.W.	26	21	81%
Admitt, W.J.	26	20	77%
D'Arcy, J.W.	26	20	77%
Granger, W.	26	20	77%
Lenton, C.W.	26	20	77%
Mowbray, G.	26	20	77%
Jaidka, K.C.	26	19	73%
Taylor, F.A.C.	26	19	73%
Greenwood, C.	26	18	69%
Burdett, G.W.S.	26	16	62%
Bennett, J.	26	14	54%
Horrell, W.R.	26	14	54%
Viney, A.W.	26	14	54%
Wright, H.	26	14	54%
Fryer, K.G.	26	13	50%
Clark, H.W.	26	12	47%
Coleman, H.	26	10	38%
Manser, S.A.	26	9	35% (Leave of absence)
Fried, B.	26	7	27%
Quick, C.L.P.	26	2	8%
James, A.J.	26	1	4%
Brown, J.	26	-	-
Snodden, W.O.	26	-	-

} Leave of Absence

Above: Attendances for six months ending 30th June 1943.

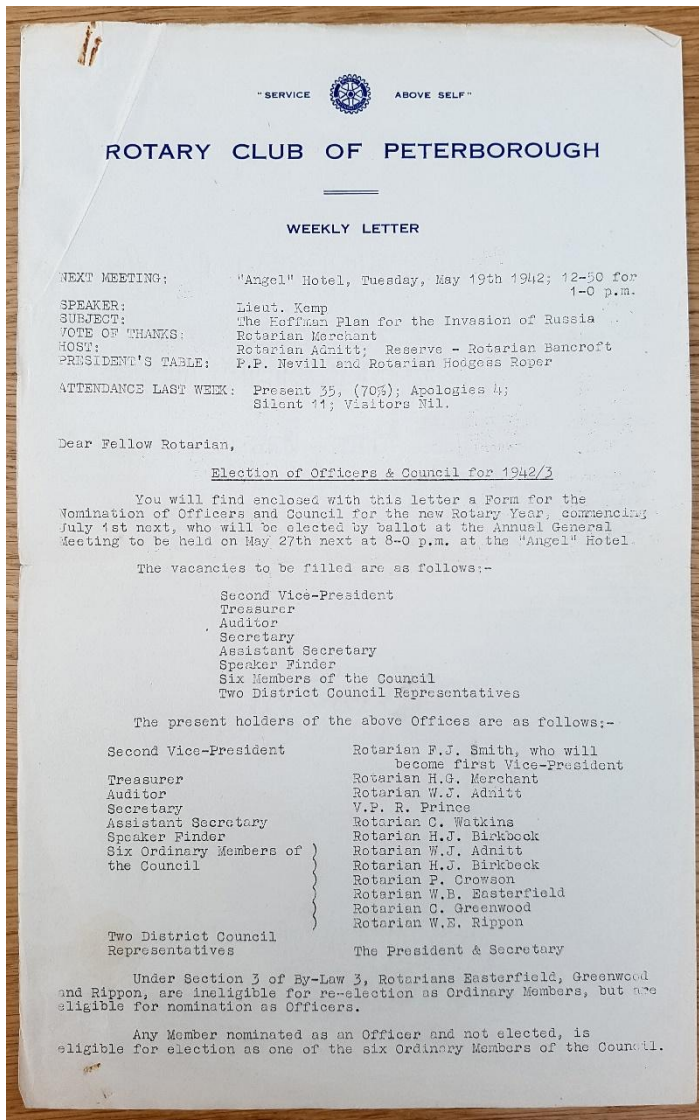
There was more discussion at the 27th July meeting regarding how the club might contribute towards Merchant Navy Week. It was resolved to bring it up in a full Business Meeting the following week. During that meeting on 3rd August, the President asked for suggestions regarding fund raising. Rotarian Fowler said that he was responsible for arranging a fun fair which was proposed to be held during Merchant Navy Week in the Bishop's Gardens if the bishop could give permission. It was proposed that the St. Peter's College grounds might be more suitable, and this was agreed. All Rotarians were asked to support Mr. Fowler in every possible way by staffing the fun fair. In a meeting on 28th September, members agreed to take parties of 'Cottage Homes' children round the fun fair and spend the sum of £10 to £15 which had been donated by an anonymous donor. Cottage Homes were places where a group of disadvantaged or orphaned girls or boys of varying ages lived under the supervision of a House Mother. The number of children varied between 15 and 20.

As we can see, the Rotary Club was hard at work during the war, giving financial support to many different groups. Money that was paid directly

from their own pockets.

Rest Centres

At a meeting on 7th October 1942, Rotarian Birkbeck asked the members if the Club could offer assistance in connection with the arrangements being made to convert St. Peter's College into a Rest Centre for American Troops. It was decided that the President should get in touch with the mayor to discuss specific requirements. The mayor responded shortly afterwards by asking if representatives of the Club could serve on a local committee which was about to be formed, although it is not clear now what this involvement meant for the Club.



Above: Weekly Letter dated 19th May 1942 showing election of officers and vacancies to be filled.

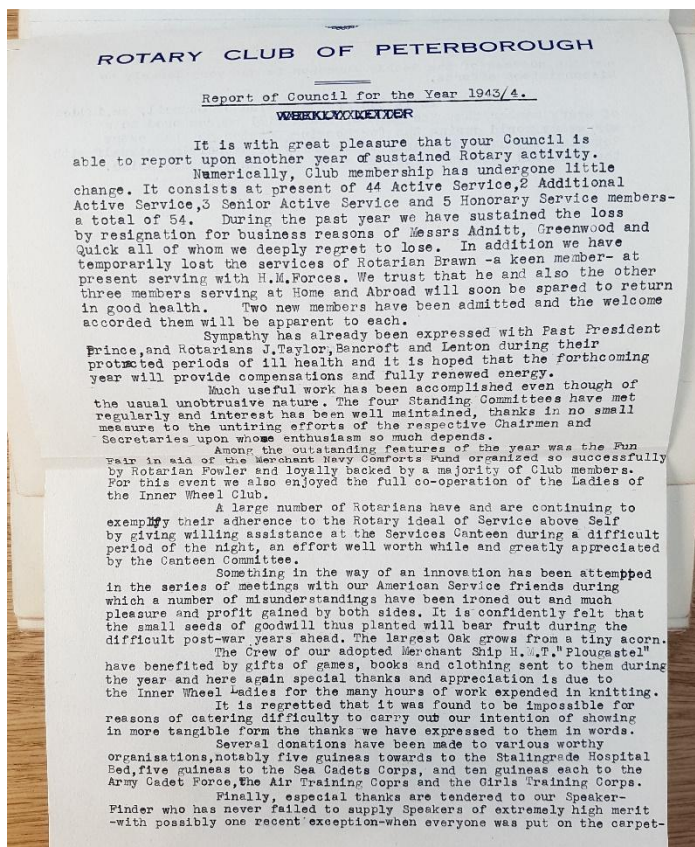
desk instead of at the counter. It was also decided to make tentative enquiries as to the possibility of acquiring the Cowgate British Restaurant premises as a more suitable and "commodious" centre for serving meals. This is fascinating. It would appear that the Club members did not want knives and forks anywhere near them when they were serving the food. It would be interesting to know exactly what the 'disturbances' were, but clearly the members felt threatened. A few weeks later on 25th April, Mr. Davies reported that several improvements had been affected at the Services Canteen as a

On 23rd November 1943 the Committee were actively engaged in maintaining a rota of members of the Club serving at the Services Canteen on the Market Place. The lack of adequate accommodation for visiting servicemen, and the paucity of the menu were subjects that were engaging attention. This seems quite a job that the Club had taken on, operating a rota and taking their turns in serving servicemen and women, turning up at random times from all groups and nationalities. These were well respected professional gentlemen and clearly, they didn't mind getting 'hands on' with this particular task. In his Secretary's Report on 6th March 1944, Past President Davies stated that the duty rota for the Services Canteen had been completed up to 10th June, so this was turning out to be a long-term effort.

On 5th April 1944, Rotarian D'Arcy reported in a Club Council Meeting that a meeting had been held to discuss matters concerning the Services Canteen. It had been decided to recommend to the Canteen Committee that in view of occasional disturbances caused by American servicemen, the U.S. Military Police should be asked to make regular calls at the canteen in the course of their patrol. Also, that knives and forks should be drawn at the cash

result of suggestions formulated at previous meetings. We can only assume that the U.S. Military Police had come down hard on anti-social behaviour at the canteen and the atmosphere had become a lot more peaceful.

The Service Canteen was causing some friction of a different kind in February 1945. At a Business Meeting on 20th February, there was what was described as a "lively discussion" in response to an appeal from the Secretary for additional names of members willing to serve as cashiers at the canteen. Rotarian Fryer, supported by Rotarian Ruddle, remarked that such a worthy club effort supported by less than half of its club members was a poor show. Rather than accept non-Rotarian assistance, he would prefer to discontinue the service but could see no possible excuse for such a step. Several members stated their reasons for their inability to take a turn, whilst it was argued that many Rotarians had "perfectly legitimate obstacles."



Council Report for Year 1943-44 recording a total of 54 members.

It was generally felt that others could, if they wanted to, spare one night a month and it was finally resolved that individual members forming the rota should try to recruit further assistance from among the main body of the Club themselves. We perhaps shouldn't judge those who hesitated too harshly. Clearly the canteen had a history of trouble and the task itself must have been outside the experience of most of the members, many of whom would have been quite advanced in years.

The rota at the Service Canteen continued to be worked well into 1946. In a Business meeting on 29th January the President reported that he had informed Mrs. Mellows of the W.V.S. (Women's Voluntary Service), that when the W.V.S. finished their duties at the canteen for the last time, the Club would automatically finish their rota. It was thought however that some

members would continue to volunteer as individuals as there was an appeal in the canteen asking for help.

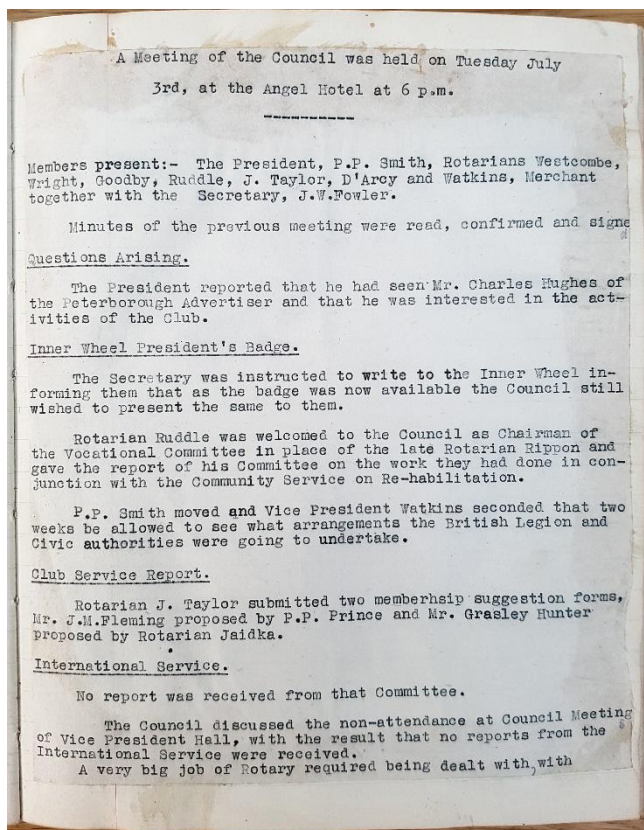
Helping the Americans

Although the Club sat on the committee for the American Rest Centre at St. Peter's College, they did help American troops in more direct ways. This started in July 1942 when Rotarian Manser reported that the International Service Committee was compiling a directory of general hospitality to overseas troops and that each Club member would shortly receive an enquiry form asking him to state the extent of the assistance he could provide. Another document that the Club had prepared a few years earlier was a Social Survey relating to the city. This appears to have been an information booklet along the lines of a city guidebook. On the 25th November 1942, the President stated that he had been approached by Mr. Cuthbertson, Director of the American Red Cross Hotel for information

about the survey and it was decided to provide the hostel with a copy for the use of the American troops.

In December 1942 two American servicemen gave a lecture to the Club's International Service Committee on the subject of post-war reconstruction. This lecture was very well attended and reinforced the determination of the Club to 'get to know' the American visitors with an exchange of ideas and making them feel welcome. In addition to this, in September 1943, Past President Hall reported that the International Service Committee had made arrangements to hold a joint meeting with Welfare Officers from various American camps in the hope that arrangements might be made to commence a series of discussions with "our American Service friends." This approach seems to have been met with approval, as Past President Hall spoke in the Business meeting on 15th February 1944, regarding the successful continuation of the meetings being held fortnightly at the American Red Cross Club, including a much-appreciated lantern lecture given by Mr. Mellows.

Things soon began to go wrong, however. On 25th April 1944, Past President Hall had to report that unfortunately the series of meetings held with American servicemen had had to be suspended owing to lack of support by the Americans. Rotarian Fryer mentioned a conversation he had had with an American lady who offered an introduction to various station commanders, and it was decided to follow this up as soon as possible. It may be that the Americans were not happy to spend their spare time listening to Mr. Mellows' lantern lectures!



Above: From 3rd July 1945, meeting reports were typed out and stuck in the Minute Book.

Despite these small setbacks, contact with the Americans was never completely lost. A final comment on the efforts of the Rotary to assist the American forces in Peterborough and make them feel welcome is recorded in a meeting of 13th September 1944. The Club President raised the question of the cost of supplying 'liquid refreshment' on the occasions when the Committee entertained American Service personnel. It was agreed that Post President Hall, Chairman of the International Service Committee, should not be expected to defray the cost, but a debate ensued as to whether the Committee as a whole should bear the expense. It was eventually decided that the total cost be covered by Club funds, but that members (whether of this Committee or otherwise), should be invited to subscribe towards a separate Hospitality Fund formed for the purpose.

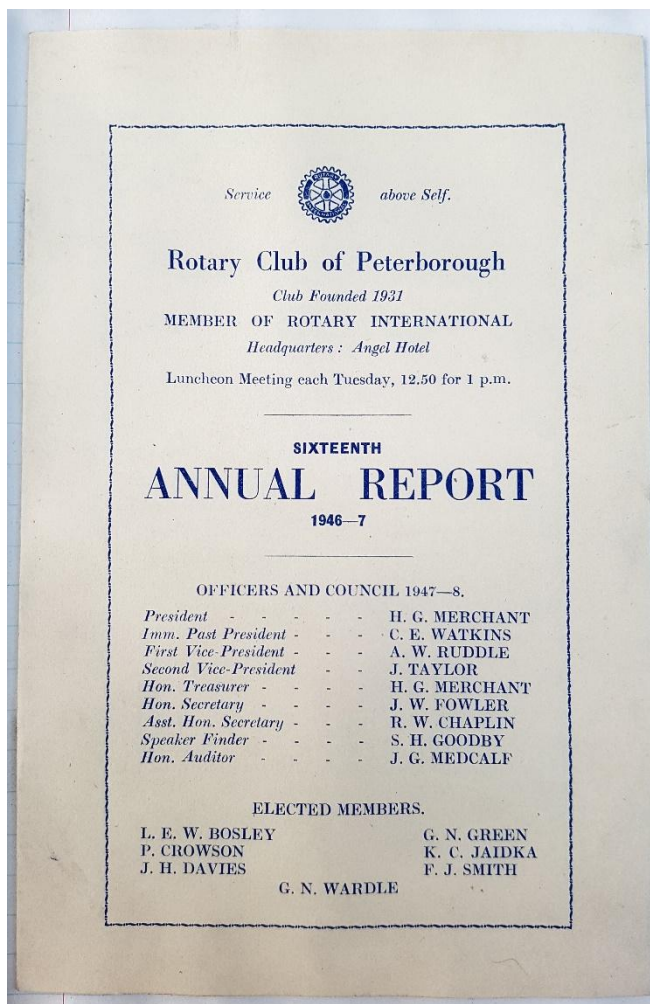
The truth was that every member of the Club was contributing to this hospitality anyway, through their subscriptions. This was the main method of funding any project that the Club started. Members were regularly being asked to step up with additional

donations for good causes and this philanthropy should be remembered. There were so many other projects that the Rotary helped with in the city, such as cinema and theatre visits and Christmas

parcels for the 'Cottage Homes' children's homes, and 'Thorpe Road House', which was a residential home for the elderly and infirm and used to be the main workhouse in Peterborough. They were very involved in assisting local people to find employment, particularly after the war, and were active in dealing with the issue of juvenile delinquency, which we think of as being a modern problem, but was having quite a serious effect during the war. These many other projects do not fall within the scope of this book, which focuses on the specific activities related to the war. However, the Rotary were spending their time and money operating in every aspect of life in the city and a lot of people would have fared less well without their help.

National Savings

Another area in which the Club raised finance was that of National Savings. National Savings was organised at local level by Savings Committees and Savings Groups. These groups sold savings stamps to members who, when they had bought enough stamps, could purchase Savings Certificates or Bonds. These were government securities and people could get their money back by cashing in their stamps, or if they waited for a set number of years (ten in the case of Certificates), they would receive their original cash amount back, plus a guaranteed bonus when their Certificates or Bonds matured. These savings were guaranteed by the Government who spent the money while it was being invested on the national war effort.



Annual Report for 1946-47 which was now produced as a booklet.

There were special Savings Weeks arranged each year during the war when each village, town and city competed with the others to raise as much money in savings as they could for ships, tanks, aircraft or other specified items. The 'Wings for Victory' savings week campaign took place in 1943, and the idea was that Groups saved in order to buy aircraft with which the RAF could carry the war to the enemy. On 23rd February that year the Club Treasurer reported that the Rotary Club had been asked (by the Local Savings Committee), to aim at subscribing £4,000. It was unanimously considered by the members that this was far too high a target and a proposal was made to endeavour to raise £500. This seems very much lower than the original request, but it must be remembered that the Club were raising money for all sorts of other causes and the pot was not bottomless. The Treasurer however made a second proposal for the sum of £1,000, and this was finally agreed. The Club could eventually congratulate itself however, when on 19th May 1943, the President expressed his pleasure at the 'magnificent result' namely £8,135 saved in the Clubs 'Wings for Victory' effort.

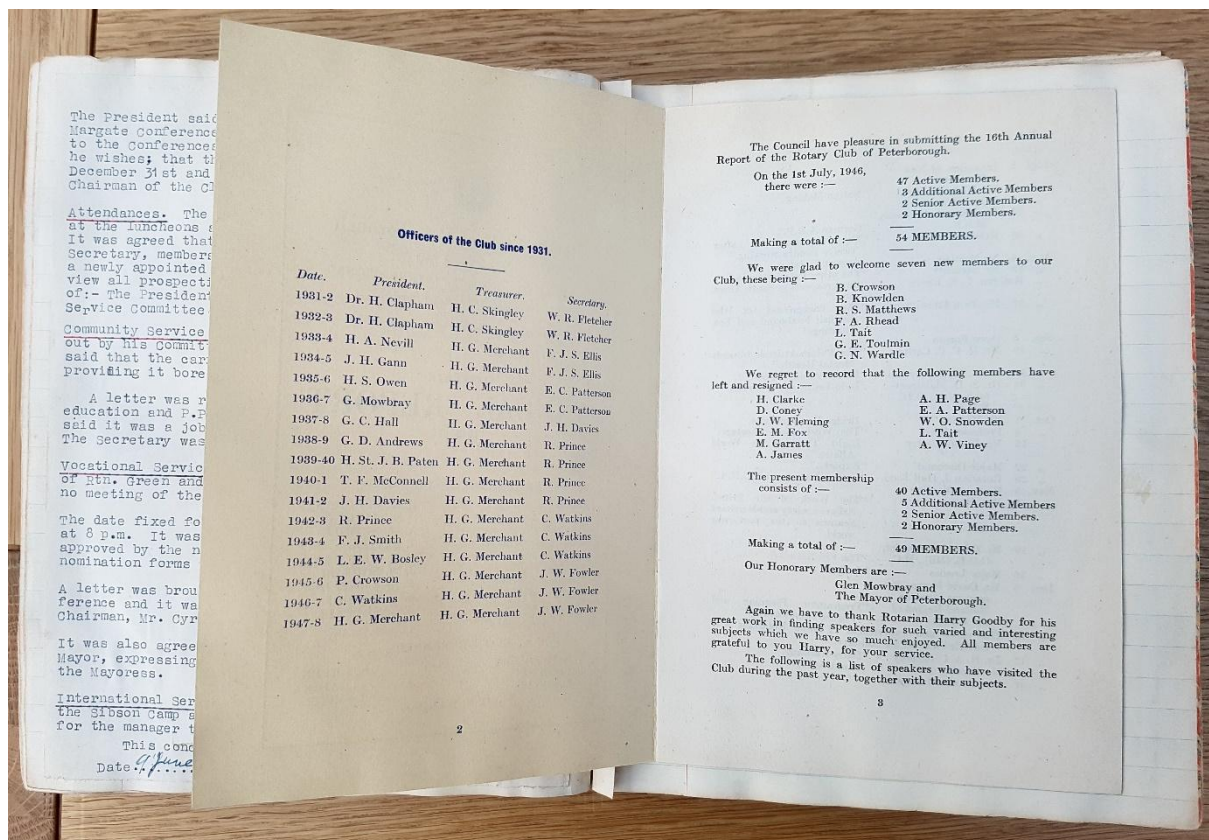
The next special Savings Week in 1944 was 'Salute the Soldier' week. The aim this time

was to save money so the Government could use it to equip the Army with anything they needed which included weapons, personal equipment, tanks and even the cost of keeping battalions of men in the field for a day, a week or longer. Groups were given lists of suggestions ranging from a bullet, to equipping a tank battalion to choose from. On 25th April 1944, the Honorary Treasurer, Rotarian Marchant, appealed for every member's support in the forthcoming effort. The sum of £9,300 had been raised by the Club since the beginning of the war and he hoped this latest target of £3,000 could be exceeded. Unfortunately, the Minute Book does not record the final target reached for 'Salute the Soldier' week, but it is certain, bearing in mind the sum raised the previous year, the target of £3,000 would have been well beaten again.

Assistance for Returning Members of the Armed Forces

On 13th September 1944, Rotarian Westcombe stated that many opportunities for giving service by way of advice to demobilised servicemen would shortly arise and proposed that a study of what could be done should be commenced immediately. He agreed to attend the next meeting of the Vocational Service Committee to expand on his thoughts. It was also agreed that the local manager of the Labour Exchange be invited to attend one of the meetings to give members an idea of what Government schemes may be available.

The following month, Rotarian Rippon said that a letter was being inserted into the local press offering such aid and advice that was available through the cross section of professional and trade channels of Rotary to those persons who chose to take advantage of the opportunity. On 31st October Rotarian Bancroft proposed that a committee be formed to consider the possibility of raising a 'Rehabilitation Fund' to give practical assistance to needful cases among demobilised troops. The possibilities of this suggestion were to be discussed.



On 20th February 1945, Rotarian Rippon reported that three replies from men in the Forces had been received in reply to the letter of invitation in the local press. These were being dealt with by the Rotarians whose classification best qualified them to reply. A number of committee meetings were now also taking place to discuss the rehabilitation of returning servicemen and women. Rotarian Ruddle spoke on 5th June 1945, on behalf of the Vocational Service Committee describing the steps taken up to that point in connection with the resettlement into civil occupations of demobilised men and women. More advertisements in the press were being planned plus a poster campaign. The cost for one year for this would be £25 which the Club Council were asked to sanction from Club funds. It was unanimously agreed to spend half of this for half of a year and then review the position.

By April 1946 the Club had received 33 letters from returning servicemen requiring help in resettlement. 19 had been closed satisfactorily and 6 had been definitely placed by members of the Club. On the 1st April 1947, V. P. Ruddle stated that out of a list of people they had endeavoured to help from the publicity given by the Rotarian's adverts, and the slides that were now being shown at theatres, 35 had been found jobs. The somewhat dull subject of resettlement and employment of ex-servicemen seems like a thankless task now. Especially as in the two and a half years that had passed since Rotarian Westcombe had raised the idea, only 35 people had been found jobs. But this work was crucial to a lot of families and the people that had been helped may well have been 'difficult' cases that required a lot of hard work. The men of the Rotary were concerned citizens, trying to use whatever special talents they had to help people in Peterborough, and their hard work is to be commended.



The Angel Hotel where the Rotary Club held their meetings.

This is still just 'touching' on the work of the Rotary Club during the Second World War, and we only have part of their records to go on. There were meetings held at the Displaced Persons Camp at Sibson, and with the Commandant of the German Prisoners of War Camp at Sawtry. All to try and offer as much help as they could to those living there. They arranged food parcels for the starving people in Holland at the end of the war and helped in resettlement of British ex-prisoners of war on

their return home. None of this work can be 'measured', and it wasn't always easy, but the men of the Rotary were not the type to give up on something just because it was hard. In practice their work was crucial, and the City would have been much worse off without their efforts.

Form No. 16—Club Half Yearly Report

HALF YEARLY REPORT OF CLUB MEMBERSHIP

to the Board of R.I. and General Council of R.I.B.I.
and

Statement of Annual Subscription due to R.I.B.I. from a Rotary Club in Great Britain and Ireland

You are requested to complete this statement in triplicate, and to send TWO copies WITH CHEQUE MADE PAYABLE TO R.I.B.I. to the Secretary, R.I.B.I., Tavistock House (South), Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1. THE THIRD COPY SHOULD BE RETAINED FOR YOUR CLUB FILE. The Secretary of R.I.B.I. will forward one copy to the Secretary of Rotary International.

FROM THE ROTARY CLUB OF PETERBOROUGH

We hereby certify that on July 1st, 1942, the membership of the club and amount of Annual Subscription due were as follows:—

SUBSCRIPTION DUE* 1942/43 rate per annum, 12s. 0d.						
Number of Members	Total	Rate for half year July 1 — Dec. 31, 1942	Amount due on Certified Membership			
			£.	s.	d.	
1. Active Members.....	47					
2. Additional Active Members.....	2					
3. Past Service Members.....	Nil					
4. Senior Members.....	Nil					
5. Honorary Members.....	4					
	49	at 6s. 0d.	14	14	—	

*In R.I.B.I. the annual subscription includes the international *per capita* Tax (which R.I.B.I. remits to R.I. on behalf of each club; also the cost of, and postage on, the official publication.

A cheque for the amount due is enclosed with this statement.

Signed: A. S. Smith President Date July 7th 1942

Signed: P. S. Atkins Secretary Date July 7th 1942

Half Yearly Report of Peterborough Rotary Club Membership dated 7th July 1942.