

Visit to Fleetwood Health Mela (Fair) on Saturday 4 October 2014

Visitors : Bill Laurie, Andrew Niven

Purpose : To fulfil the Club's obligation as International Partners for the Global Grant Award GG1415721 *'Provision of defibrillators, associated training activities and community awareness events in District 1190'*.

The specific responsibility being met by the visit to the Fleetwood Health Mela was:

'attending events where appropriate to help the potential spread of the Health Mela concept outside of the D1190 region'.

Personnel : In the course of the visit, we met:

- Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Chair of Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition
- Professor Romesh Gupta OBE, Chair of National Forum for Health and Wellbeing
- Ron Shewan, Mayor of Wyre Council
- Robert Wright, President Fleetwood Rotary Club and many of his colleagues and Rotarians from nearby Clubs
- Roger Mason, District Governor 1190
- Kevin Walsh, PDG 1190 and driving force of the Global Grant

The Visit : After the opening ceremony Andrew and I had a discussion with Professor Bailey about contacts in Scotland. She was most encouraging and suggested we contact Professor Sir Harry Burns, the former Chief Medical Officer for Scotland and Dr Denise Coia, Chair of Health Improvement Scotland. Professor Bailey was very supportive of the concept of Health Fairs and encouraged everyone attending to keep up the good work.

We then toured the many stands at the event, over 60 of them covering similar illnesses and conditions as at the Leyland Fair and in addition a number of organizations promoting healthy lifestyles eg an allotment group and the Scouts as well as groups offering assistance to assist in keeping older people living in their own homes. A full list of exhibitors is available. There was also an inflatable bowel being used to promote bowel screening. Andrew visited this and noted the age range for screening in England is 60 to 69 whereas in Scotland it is 50 to 74.

We also visited the Health MoT section where, by 2.45pm, 79 members of the public had obtained a free check on their height, weight, blood pressure, and by a 'blood drop test' their blood sugar and cholesterol. The testing was supported by a counseling service for anyone who wished to discuss a result. This impressive facility involved health professionals from the local hospitals together with medical students from Manchester University based at Preston. The students were in their fourth year of their course and were very enthusiastic in their support for the MoT check as it gave them direct contact with the public and the chance to do diagnostic testing in the field.

In the course of the visit we had conversations with the local Mayor who advised us to contact our local Council as he thought they would be supportive.

The lady from the Citizens Advice Bureau was most enthusiastic about the event as it gave her an opportunity to meet with many of the organisations and groups in the one place that are important to the work of the CAB.

The secretary of the Fleetwood RC, Gordon Oates, introduced us to Helen Kay of Groundwork UK

whom he credited with bringing in many of the exhibitors. This explains the variations from Leyland as Groundwork promotes healthy living in a green environment for all ages.

Conclusions : It was clear that a huge effort had been expended in planning and organizing this multi-agency event, the first Mela to be held at Fleetwood. The numbers were encouraging and the venue of Fleetwood High School was splendid, although car parking will need to be better managed at future events on this site.

We have observed and heard enough to propose that discussions are held at Club and at District level to review whether there are opportunities in Scotland for the promotion of Health Fairs.

There is no doubt that there are opportunities in the conurbations of England to organize such events and plans are already in hand to do so.

Kevin Walsh is also planning to organise a Fair in Carlisle next April. This would be an opportunity for a District delegation to visit the event in order to assess in depth the possibilities of holding Health Fairs in Scotland.

We were made very welcome by everyone at the event and there was considerable interest expressed in the result of the Referendum. Everyone we spoke to on this subject was pleased that Scotland was still in the UK and a number are hoping for some spin-off devolution of powers for the North West.

We would like to thank the members of the Rotary Club of Fleetwood, Professor Romesh Gupta and Kevin Walsh for their kind hospitality.

Bill Laurie & Andrew Niven
The Rotary Club of Falkirk
6 October 2014