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Roger Frank and the iron lung he has built to promote Rotary's End Polio Now campaign

# Roger makes his own iron lung

## • Rotarian wants polio to be eradicated

By Jack Brooke-Battersby  
01539-790255

AN EDEN Valley Rotary Club member has built an old-fashioned piece of life-saving equipment in a bid to promote the eradication of an often fatal disease.

Rotary International has invested £600 million over the last 31 years trying to wipe out polio across the world – and has seen case numbers vastly reduced.

Polio is a highly infectious viral disease which mainly affects young children. In the most severe cases it attacks the body's nervous system.

When Rotary launched its campaign in 1985, more than 350,000 children in 125 countries were paralysed by the deadly disease every year. In 2015 there were just 74 cases, all in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Now Roger Frank, a member of Upper Eden Rotary, has spent 650 hours building an iron lung – the machines which were used to help sufferers breathe – from scratch as part of one last push to rid the world of polio once and for all.

“Polio was rife in the UK in the 40s and 50s – swimming pools were shut because of it and all sorts of things were going on,” said Mr Frank, 65, of Raisbeck, near Orton.

“It’s a virus and they didn’t have a serum developed then and there were lots of cases.

“People became paralysed as the virus affected the arms and legs. In a severe case it affected the lungs in which case a patient was put in a mechanical respirator (the iron lung) which did their breathing for them.”

After many unsuccessful attempts to borrow an iron lung from museum displays and hospitals, Mr Frank decided to build one himself,

scouring the country high and wide for components to put the monster machine together.

He now takes it to various events to highlight the importance of continuing the fight against the illness.

“It’s horrific to think this is what went on,” he said. “People often spent years – and sometimes the rest of their life – in these things not being able to even scratch their own nose – and people have forgotten about it. It shouldn’t be forgotten.

“I want to try and educate people and make them aware polio is still about in the world and to try and eradicate it.”

## Man upset at plate theft

A CANAL buff was saddened to discover that the replica number plate he recently fixed to a bridge on the Lancaster Canal has disappeared.

Heating engineer Colin Ogden noticed the wooden plaque was missing when he visited Grade II-listed Larkrigg Hall bridge at Natland with fellow waterways enthusiast Keith Tassart and a botanist on Tuesday morning.

Mr Ogden, of Burnley, suspects that the 180 plate was dislodged by thieves or souvenir hunters who mistakenly believed it was metal, or by somebody with a grudge against him. The 62-year-old has attracted a degree of criticism on social media for his forthright views on restoring the Lancaster Canal's Northern Reaches.

■ Right, Colin with the replica number plate



## Youngsters are leaders

NINETY 10-year-old pupils from primary schools across Furness have completed a pioneering programme aimed at developing their leadership and team skills and inspiring them to believe in themselves.

Now in its second year, the Future Leaders' Academy three-week summer school at Furness College came to end last week at a packed event for all who took part.

Barrow and Furness MP John Woodcock said: “Furness is standing on the threshold of exciting developments and local businesses are anticipating decades of prosperity which will revolve around the successor submarine programme, the expansion at GSK and the contribution made to Cumbria's energy coast by Centrica and other organisations.”