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ROTARIAN GERIATRIC GERONIMOS JUMP FOR CHARITY

Six self-styled 'geriatric Geronimos' – with an aggregate age of over 360 years – will take a leap of faith on 22nd May over Perthshire's Strathallan Airfield in a team tandem skydive for three good causes.

The JumpNuts of the Rotary Club of Dunfermline, whose average age is 61, are planning to go overboard to raise funds for Rachel House, Kinross, run by the Children's Hospice Association (Scotland), and two of Rotary's global campaigns - to supply ShelterBoxes of aid to disaster victims and to achieve a polio-free world.

Those magnificent men and their flying machine plan to take off, weather permitting, on 22nd May and free fall from a Cessna at 10,000 feet, reaching a maximum speed of 120 mph before pulling the ripcord at 5000 feet.

The JumpNuts are Dunfermline GP Gerry Gillespie; IT specialist Brian Mitchell; Bill Runciman, retired secretary of the Carnegie Dunfermline and Hero Fund Trusts; David Steele, Naval Liaison Officer (Scotland); Tom Sunter, the last Royal Naval base commander at Rosyth and former executive director of the Institute of Directors (Scotland); and local entrepreneur and veteran athlete, Mike Williams.

Because of their respective ages, all six JumpNuts require prior medical clearance – to certify they are free of such conditions as current neuroses requiring active treatment, a history of psychosis or pathological euphoria!

The skydive operators insist, "Normal mental development and a stable mental state are important. Candidates must be able to understand what he or she is about to do and be capable of giving fully informed consent,"

As Dr Gerry Gillespie puts it, "Mental impairment is not a bar to jumping from an aircraft. In fact, in these circumstances, it is positively encouraged!"

It will be a maiden parachute jump for all but Rotarian Bill Runciman who shared the experiences of his first jump at the launch of the fund-raising campaign on 18th February.

The campaign is being led by Rotarian Alan Mutter, the Dunfermline entrepreneur who founded the family Acorn Pets chain.

"We will not only be mobilising our fellow Rotarians behind the campaign but also appealing for wider public and corporate support through our dedicated website," he said.

Tom Sunter confessed his wife's first reaction was, "Are you ever going to grow up? Is your insurance in date?!"

Self-confessed adrenaline junkie Bill Runciman recalled, "On returning home from the surgery with my Declaration of Fitness form, signed by my GP, my wife Eileen called: 'How did you get on?' On hearing 'OK,' she called happily, 'Good.' I have been pondering the implications ever since!"

Dr Gillespie, who is following in his skydiver daughter's slipstream, reported this family encouragement: "You have always wanted to be a high flier. Now's your chance!"

Club president Noel McKenna saluted the JumpNuts for their "madcap but fantastic project" to raise funds for charity.

"I'm sure they would be delighted if their dare-devil project encourages you to make a donation to three worthy causes," he said.

To sponsor the skydivers, log on to their dedicated website: www.jumpnuts.org

Membership Campaign

Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland is currently undertaking a national membership recruitment campaign and is looking for women and men of all ages to join their local clubs and make a world of difference to their local community and those across the world. For more information, visit www.ribi.org

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Caption for the JumpNuts:

The JumpNuts, with club president Noel McKenna (front right). From left: Back row, Tom Sunter, Bill Runciman and Gerry Gillespie; front row, Brian Mitchell and David Steele; seated, Mike Williams.

About Rotary:

1. Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland, part of Rotary International, has 1,845 clubs and more than 55,000 members.
2. Rotary International was founded in 1905 in Chicago and is now the world's largest international service organisation with 1.2 million professional men and women as members. There are 33,000 clubs in 200 countries and geographical areas.
3. Rotary clubs are open to men and women of all ages who are business, professional or community leaders and who want to use their experience for the benefit of others.
4. Rotary initiates local and global projects to promote world understanding and peace and improve life conditions for people of all ages and cultures. To find out more, visit www.ribi.org.