

HISTORY AND MEANING ROTARY WHEEL

A wheel has been the symbol of Rotary since our earliest days. The first design was made (1905) by Chicago Rotarian Montague Bear, an engraver who drew a simple wagon wheel, with a few lines to show dust and motion. The wheel was said to illustrate "Civilization, Movement and Service work in action." Most of the early clubs had some form of wagon wheel on their publications and letterheads.

In 1922, it was decided that all Rotary clubs should adopt a single design as the exclusive emblem of Rotarians. So, the present gear wheel, with 24 teeth and six spokes was adopted by the "Rotary International Association." The gear teeth around the outside represent the fact that work is to be done, the six spokes represent the inner direction and path of our Vocational Service, through the representation of our membership via the classification system. Similarly, these same spokes represent an outward distribution path of Rotary's ideals of service and the Four Way Test... going out toward the community, vocations and businesses that our members represent.

A group of engineers advised that the geared wheel was mechanically unsound and would not work without a "keyway" in the center of the gear to attach it to a power shaft. So, in 1923 the keyway was added to signify the wheel was a "worker and not an idler". The keyway in the center of the hub is of great significance, because it represents the individual Rotarian member, who is the key factor in every club. Quality members are the keys, needed for the hub to engage with the shaft and turn, putting the energy into motion and creating the power for the gears to do their work.

At the 1929 Rotary International Convention, it was determined that blue and gold would be the official colors of the organization, so the wheel was designed with these colors. The four blue bands within the outer radius of the gear represent our four avenues of service. And the design which we now know was formally adopted as the official Rotary International emblem.

