

# Houlton calling! Transatlantic broadcasts turn to transatlantic visits!

Our connection to Houlton in Maine began in 1926 from the first transatlantic voice transmission from Rugby Radio Station which is now Houlton. This pioneering advancement in communication paved the way for Rugby becoming the world's largest and most powerful radio station through the decades and nearly 100 years on, the new community of Houlton is paving the way quite literally to visit their counterparts in Houlton, USA, in the North America state of Maine.

Our local residents Phil and Judith Clucas embarked on the 2,800 mile journey to Houlton in Maine to visit the place that inspired their new home and forge new connections with residents there and honour the historical ties between both communities. Whilst there, they were also able to witness the once-in-a-lifetime total solar eclipse and joined more than 6,000 spectators in the Market Square, to see the celestial event that lasted for a total of three minutes and 18 seconds.

This is the second visit made to Maine with Urban&Civic's Group Planning Director James Scott having met dignitaries there in 2019 (?) as part of a wider US visit. Houlton School is also planning a visit for some of their inaugural Year 7 pupils who started their secondary education when the school opened in 2021, to visit the town as part of their final GCSE years at the school.

Phil Clucas said: "We decided to travel to Houlton in Maine to experience the last solar eclipse that will take place there until 2079 and to strengthen ties between our two communities as well as the church of St Gabriel's, Houlton, Rugby and the Church of the Good Shepherd, Houlton, Maine. Houlton, Maine is an incredible friendly, hospitable and downright nice town that we're extremely proud to be named after."

Leigh Cummings, curator of the Houlton Museum & Town Library, shared their sentiments, stating, "It is truly heartening to see individuals like Judith and Phil embrace our community and share their enthusiasm for the history we share with Houlton. Their visit not only strengthens the bond between our towns but also the significance of cultural exchange and mutual respect. The fact that they got to experience the total eclipse makes the visit even more worthwhile!"

