

SI CROYDON AND DISTRICT

VOLUME 2 | DECEMBER 2018 – APRIL 2019



CLUB UPDATE

These last few months have been packed full of events! From Gin Tasting to Carol Singing to walking the first leg of the Via Francigena our members have been extremely busy fundraising, socialising and getting the word out about Soroptimism!

The end of April also draws the conclusion of Heather Bailey being our Club President. Heather has been an extremely diligent and lucrative President, bringing in new fundraising ideas and a work ethic that has driven our Club to have a very successful fundraising year.

AN EXCERPT FROM HEATHER'S FINAL PRESIDENCY REPORT:

“...What do Soroptimists enjoy most – eating, drinking and talking! So the year started with my incoming lunch at Tre Fratelli restaurant on 5th May followed by Hazel’s coffee morning. Then there was the Murder Mystery Dinner Party at Patricia Painting’s house, my Raspberry Tea Extravaganza, the Quiz and Curry Night, Jean Turner’s coffee morning, the Line Dancing Supper, the World Food Day lunch, SIGBI conference in Liverpool, Pat’s amazing Bollywood Evening, the gin tasting party hosted by the entire Patel family, the games evening at Penny’s house in January, the Inter-Club Supper, the Mayor’s Afternoon Tea, and finally the Snooker and Mah Jong evening at my house. Do you see a certain pattern emerging here? All these events involved food, friendship and fellowship, and apart from the world food day lunch, I managed to attend every one of them – so why should I be surprised to discover that as well as gaining social enrichment from all these experiences I have now also gained several extra inches around my waistline!

“Thank you all for your help and support over the last year, in particular, the members of the Executive, loud and proud and inter-club supper committees. Thank you to our Treasurer Jean for keeping our finances straight, and special thanks to our co-secretaries Grace and Emma for the many hours I know they spend, doing the tasks which no-one else has been willing to undertake. I could not have done this without you!”

OUR CHARITY: MULTIPLE SYSTEM ATROPHY TRUST



“DO SOMETHING YOU ENJOY TODAY AND HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR MSA!” – HEATHER BAILEY

Multiple System Atrophy Trust was our Club’s chosen charity for the year of Heather’s Presidency. This charity is very important to our club as our member Penny Veness’s husband Bob sadly passed away last year due to the disease. We, therefore, have put in an extra effort to raise as much as we can for the charity especially as it relies solely on donations.

The research for MSA is still ongoing as a cause for the disease has not yet been found, it is still to be determined as to whether it is a product of the environment or whether a person can have a genetic disposition to the disease or if it a combination of both these factors.

The Club is immensely proud to say that we raised **£7,200** for MSA Trust! This money will fund a nurse’s salary and travel expenses for two months!

We presented Karen Walker, the C.E.O of MSA Trust, and Tanya Mitra, the senior fundraising manager, with a donation check on the 9th of May at a meeting which was attended by club members and their family and friends.



Penny Veness

Cycling across Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand



In February 2019 Penny cycled 300 miles in Southeast Asia to raise money for MSA Trust.

The bike ride started in Thailand and alongside 18 other riders Penny made her way to Cambodia and then to Vietnam!

The group cycled 30-50 miles a day in 38°C heat, they wore water packs and were topped up on electrolytes during their breaks.

Penny got to discover a different side to these countries, exploring their temples and lifestyles and learning about their history.

Penny’s bike ride raised an amazing £1,766!

(This amount is separate to our overall total)

FUNDRAISERS:

CAROL SINGING

Members of the Club took part in spreading some joy during the Christmas period by singing carols at East Croydon station and in the local shopping centre. The money raised went towards purchasing gifts of toiletries and necessities to give to the women currently staying in the Women's Refuge in Croydon and Bromley.

The Club has been raising money through carol singing for a couple of years now and the money raised increases each year and the events have now become a permanent fixture in our programme.



GIN TASTING



(Self-appointed) Gin experts Sheila and Emma Patel hosted a gin tasting event where guests got the opportunity to taste 10 different gins.

Guests discovered new favourites and walked (stumbled) away from the event with new knowledge of gin and the wide variety that is available.

The money raised went towards the Club's main charity: MSA Trust.



FAIRTRADEUK



Grace and Sue hosted a Fairtrade Coffee Morning for 'Fairtrade Fortnight', raising money and awareness and serving up some delicious cake!

The Club finds it very important to support ethical and sustainable brands. In cocoa farms, women do most of the work but because they don't own the land/tools they do not get most of the income generated from the sale of the product. Fairtrade seeks to change this. The event highlighted some of the Fairtrade products that are available and also the need for local supermarkets to be providing more of them.

PROJECTS:

LOUD AND PROUD: YEAR 6 GIRLS PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Our annual Loud and Proud competition is a project that the Club is most proud of! We ask year 6 girls from Croydon Primary Schools to be put forward to write and deliver inspiring speeches on very debatable and topical questions that we have provided. In the grand setting of the Council Chamber of the Town Hall in Croydon, the finalists delivered their speeches.

The final took place on Friday 1st March as part of the global theme of International Women's Day and the call for a more 'gender-balanced' world. The annual competition seeks to engender self-confidence, improve communication skills and ultimately encourage girls to play a more prominent role in public life.



The Croydon President, Heather Bailey opened the event and Councillor Toni Letts welcomed the contestants from 7 Croydon schools in the final of the competition. This year's speeches centred on topical themes ranging from gang culture and life after Brexit to gender equality in uniforms. The judging panel included the competition sponsor, Reginald Larry-Cole, CEO of BUY2LETCARS, Venue Director of Fairfield Halls, Neil Chandler, Freelance writer and journalist Christine Fender and Soroptimist Emma Patel, a Psychology and Sociology graduate. Their task proved challenging when presented with such interesting and intelligent speeches, delivered with great determination, passion and courage by these 10 and 11-year-olds.

As a result of 2 fire drills in 20 minutes, prize giving took place outside in the Queen's Gardens. The Woodside Academy were awarded 1st and 3rd places for speeches on 'What's more important - taking part or winning,' Lily Mae Murphy in 1st place and Sylvie Wallace-Fairley in 3rd. Naa-Dromo Tackier from St Cyprian's Greek Orthodox School came 2nd with 'Is there gender equality in school uniforms?'

The winner was presented with the Connie Filce Shield which will have their name engraved on it and then displayed in their school. Connie Filce was a previous member of our club and the shield was named after her in commemoration. It was paid for out of the generous donation she left the club after she passed away.

This year's finalists were also treated to a tour of the House of Commons by the local MP, Sarah Jones. The girls found the trip extremely enjoyable and eye-opening and we are grateful that MP Sarah Jones took the time out to show them around and also chat with the girls about her job role and answer any of their questions.

This project has become such an important part of what we do, especially as we always get such fantastic feedback from the girls, their parents and everyone who is involved. It has become a permanent part of our programme and will hopefully continue to be for many years!

SOCIALS:

INTERCLUB SUPPER

On the 8th of March, we held our annual Inter-Club Friendship Supper to celebrate International Women's Day at The Chateau. At the event, we had guest speaker Melanie Barton-Gibson, who talked about "The Life and Times of Edith Cavell. Edith Cavell was a British Nurse in the First World War and was known for not discriminating on the lives that she chose to save be they British or German.



VIA FRANCIGENA

Five of members of our Club joined SI Canterbury for the first leg of the Via Francigena and through the wind, rain and mud we walked 10 miles for International Women's Day. At the same time in Italy SI Siena were walking stage 33, Pian De Lago to Siena and we facetedimed each other throughout the day to report our progress. We plan to walk the second stage later on this month!

RAMBLING CLUB

Our Club has also formed a little rambling club where members and their family can join in on a walk to socialise and get some exercise in a couple of times a month.

Our last walk was at Banstead Woods, where we enjoyed the warm weather and had fun trying to find all the wooden carvings from The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe!

GAMES NIGHT AT PENNY'S

Members were invited to Penny's house to enjoy delicious food, great company and some very competitive games of a general knowledge quiz, Bananagrams, Dobble, Moustache Snap and many more! It was a great night filled with a lot of laughter and friendship and we left with very full stomachs!



OTHER NEWS:



< JEAN TURNER

Celebrating 60 years of friendship, Jean became a Soroptimist in 1959! She was presented with a certificate and badge at our Interclub Supper to honour her continued contribution and valued membership to our club.

From left to right: Mayor of Croydon Cllr Bernadette Khan, Jean Turner, President Heather Bailey.

PEACE GARDEN >

The Club has a small plot of land in Park Hill Park where we have the freedom to put in whichever plants we wish. Various members have been diligent in visiting the little garden to weed and plant various flowers. A notable addition is the pictured bespoke wooden tulips that Heather painted and placed in the plot as an eye-catching feature.



< CLUB BASEL

During her travels in Switzerland, member and Co-Secretary Emma Patel visited Club Basel and had the chance to see their fundraising in action. The Swiss Club had set a stall to sell flowers and reusable bags to raise money and awareness of the women who live in war-torn countries who need support.

It was very interesting to hear about how their club is run, especially when they have an impressive 42 members!

GRACE'S HEDGEHOGS >

Co-Secretary Grace Onions is currently keeping an eye on some hedgehogs that are residing in her garden. Grace noticed that one of the hedgehogs had a gammy leg and so she took it to the Vets. When she went to collect Peg, the Vet also gave her another hedgehog Meg! Members and friends of Grace got the opportunity to meet the two hedgehogs before they were put into the garden!



IN LOVING MEMORY OF BOB VENESS

26TH NOVEMBER 1949- 10TH MARCH 2018



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