
SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

OF MANCHESTER

PRESIDENT
Stella Kay

Issue No 53
Autumn 2014

Dear Club Members



What a glorious summer and after a brief hiccup it seems set to continue a little longer! Outdoor activities and functions have been arranged and enjoyed to the full without weather worries. On the whole rain has fallen between 10pm and 7am on sufficient occasions to obviate the tedious chore of nightly use of the hosepipe. Produce has flourished and my freezer is full. I feel rather like a squirrel. Hope you, too, have had a wonderful summer.



GLOBAL SUMMIT TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

In June I was working in London and so was able to attend this event. Here is a short summary of the guest speakers' topics:

- **Anne MacDonald OBE, SIGBI Project Liaison** and **Lois Kamara, Project Leader Sierra Leone**, spoke about **Project Sierra** and how the project helped several young women who were victims of rape re-build their lives. It was very inspiring that, after being outcast for being raped (which makes absolutely no sense to me), they have been able to learn a skill or go back to school while supporting their children through the opportunities the Soroptimists have helped to fund.
- **Federation President of Europe, Ulla Madsen**, also spoke and talked about the various projects the clubs of Europe have been involved with, focusing on education, empowerment and healthcare. They have helped widows in Bosnia, taught leadership in Tunisia and helped displaced women in Mali. They are lobbying government to change laws and increase punishment of human traffickers (especially in Eastern Europe and Western Africa). Currently they are focusing on Ukraine as well as Poland and Germany relations.
- **Judge Salvina Arbia, ICC**, spoke about the work she has done to try war criminals for sexual violence, especially related to the conflict in Rwanda. She emphasized the need to protect victims and spoke out about child soldiers.
- **Soroptimist International President, Ann Garvie**, spoke about the work she did with Limbs for Life. This was very informative as well as daunting - there is still so much to do (I felt quite embarrassed to learn that the USA (my home country) had still not signed the ban on land mines). She spoke about the need to continue to pursue this cause as despite the progress, there are still far too many landmines in far too many countries. She also spoke about the work they did with pigmentation of



prosthetics which I found very interesting. As always she was engaging and made everyone want to act.

I also visited the Soroptimist stand and met many Soroptimists from other clubs (and purchased a scarf, as did Stella McCartney!). The summit appears to have been a great success and I am really happy I made it, if only for a short while.

Molly Byrne

~~~~~  
**FAIRY GODMOTHERS, DESTINY OR JUST BAD LUCK**



**January 2014:** Great! Fred Olsen has a cruise through the Black Sea, visiting the Crimea. Nan and I, as young nurses, were taught to follow the example of our role model, Florence Nightingale, and now we would be able to see where it all started; so we booked.

**February:** Putin stepped in with the Russian boot – the British Government were against any tours to the Crimea, so the itinerary was changed. Should we cancel, well no, there were plenty of other countries to visit.

**March:** We paid up the balance and received yet another itinerary, north of the Black Sea was out of bounds.

**May:** Yet another change to a quick run into the Black Sea to the Dardanelles. Oh well, we'll stay with it.

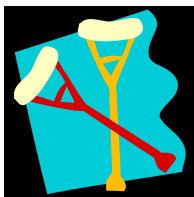
**June 1<sup>st</sup>:** Tickets etc. arrived.

**June 12<sup>th</sup>:** Milk, papers, post etc. cancelled. Cases packed, passports checked, car coming for us on 14<sup>th</sup> June at 8am. Nan to be here on the afternoon of Friday 13<sup>th</sup>.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>:** Telephone call – Nan had had a fall, dislocating her hip and was waiting for



the ambulance. 2pm, A&E doctor was suggesting an easy reduction, a light anaesthetic, home later ready for 14<sup>th</sup>. 5pm Change: full anaesthetic, reconstruction of the hip joint, hospitalisation for four days!! Panic stations, unravelling all the arrangements, contacting the insurance, all to be done before the offices closed for the weekend.



There must have been a bad fairy at either Nan or my christening, but the good fairy prevailed and Nan is now mobile again. It felt as though this holiday was never meant to be!

Now I only have to wait for the insurance to cough up: they are quick to take your cash but slow to pay out. However, it would have been much worse had the accident happened in a foreign port.

The moral of this sad tale is "Never count your chickens before they have hatched."

**Yvonne Mullen**

~~~~~  
PRIZE GIVING AT THE RNCM

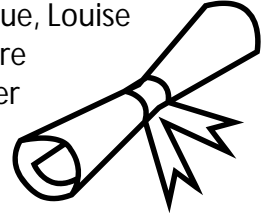


Most of our members will know that, in memory of a late President of the Club, the Helen Latto (Soroptimist) Prize was bequeathed to the Junior School of the Royal Northern College of Music. It is awarded annually to the student who has excelled in vocal studies.

This year's prize giving day at the College was the 21st June and could not have been a more beautiful summer's day, with the right degree of warmth, bright sunshine and a gentle breeze. In addition, on arriving at the car park there was an extra bonus of free parking ALL DAY as it was Open Day at Manchester University!

This was my first attendance at a prize giving but as Yvonne, who was instrumental in setting up the bequest and who had attended most years since, agreed to come along as well as President-Elect Sue, S I Manchester was well represented. Parents of the prize-winners are also invited to the event. Whilst waiting in the foyer, a very jolly, colourful gentleman with a seemingly unending fund of jokey anecdotes attached himself to our party (well to Yvonne, actually) and couldn't be shaken off. He was the founder of a group which helps disadvantaged children in the City to learn music and, like us, was attending to help distribute prizes.

We were welcomed by Karen Humphreys, the Administrator of JRNCM and her colleague, Louise Godfrey, then ushered through ranks of students into the tearoom. The three of us were seated at the same table with two students between each of us. There were three other similar tables in the room. Soon everyone was seated and tea served and the conversation never flagged. The volume of noise and laughter increased and the ambience was relaxed and happy.



I don't have the opportunity to meet many young people these days, but hear so many stories about the fecklessness of the young that I almost believe them. However, in meeting these students, my views have become more balanced. In close conversation with Jess (music theory), Myrna (singing) and Robin (conducting) along with Anna (clarinet), my faith in the future was restored. They were all delightful, amusing, articulate and dedicated to their chosen subject and, without exception, absolutely convinced that they were privileged to be studying at JRNCM – the “top in Europe” I was informed.

Robin, the conductor, told me that he was basing his own career on that of former Manchester University and RNCM student, Jamie Phillips who in 2012 and at 22 years old was appointed the youngest ever Assistant Conductor of the Hallé Orchestra and is now achieving amazing standards in Europe. The other thing that struck me particularly about these young people was the obvious respect and affection that they had for their tutors and for Karen Humphreys, the Administrator.

Once most of the excellent cake was demolished, the prizes were distributed. This was quite informal and we each were asked to present more than one prize. Most of the students present were to receive prizes from various bequests but in many cases the benefactors could not be present, hence the extra help needed from ourselves.



I had been so wrapped up in conversation with my tea table neighbours that I hadn't really looked at the prize envelopes given to me and it was only once the distribution had started that I realised that the Helen Latto prize was destined for one of my table companions, a most attractive, dark girl named Myrna Tennant. Myrna is 19 years old, a soprano, who was born in Holland, her mother being Dutch. Her father is from North East England and the family only moved to the UK in 2003. Myrna now claims Dumfries as home which I think is a happy coincidence as Helen Latto herself was a lady very proud to be Scottish. Myrna has attended JRNCM since 2010 but this is her gap year before she takes up a hard-earned place to continue her studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in September 2014. Though

she has many interests, Myrna says that singing is a passion for her and her hugely impressive exam results confirm this. Singing in JRNCM concerts, as well as regularly performing in local concerts, festivals and charitable events has won her a host of impressive prizes each year from 2009 to 2014.

Now, having scooped yet another prize, members were able to judge her re-action as her letter of thanks was circulated at a recent Business Meeting. To quote a short passage from it, “the support and care of my tutors have been second to none and to have my passion and dedication, both for singing and for the

JRNCM itself acknowledged in this way, means so very much to me". I suggest we all remember her name and watch out for this very talented young woman.

President Stella



OUR VISITOR FROM SI WICHITA

Lunch: Jane McHugh from SI Wichita, one of our international friendship links, paid us a visit in July during her holiday to the UK. In addition to a planned coffee morning on the Saturday she was in Manchester, we arranged an informal lunch for the Friday in the city centre as some members were unable to attend on the Saturday. It was a lovely, sunny day and President Stella, Immediate Past President Susan, new member Rosemarie and I met her at the historic Palace Hotel. We then went on to the Whim Wham Café on Whitworth Street where enjoyed a lovely lunch.

Jane spoke to us about the work her club has done to raise awareness about and prevent domestic violence and kindly brought us all bookmarks her club had produced for this cause. The Wichita club distributes these bookmarks, which list warning signs of an abusive relationship, to local businesses and to schools as a teaching tool.

We all had great time learning about Jane, as well as Wichita, Kansas, and were all extended an invitation to visit her club in the future. It was fantastic finally to meet someone from this long-standing friendship link, and we all had a pleasant afternoon of eating and chatting.

Molly Robinson



Coffee Morning: The following day, President Stella and IPP Susan were joined by four other members in welcoming Jane McHugh from SI Wichita to a coffee morning at Susan's home. It was a lovely sunny day so we were able to enjoy the glorious surroundings of Susan's garden whilst sampling a range of goodies including scones and jam, shortbread and Eccles cakes.

At the same time, we shared experiences of Soroptimism across two continents; not just the serious aspects but the social and fun activities, too. Jane told us about "yarn bombing". Have you heard about it?

Yarn bombing is a type of graffiti or street art that uses colourful displays of knitted or crocheted yarn or fibre rather than paint or chalk. It's believed to have originated in the US with Texas knitters trying to find a creative way to use their leftover and unfinished knitting projects, but it has since spread worldwide. Jane McHugh's group "decorated" a caterpillar statue in the grounds of the Wichita State

University! Here in the UK, Saltburn Pier in North Yorkshire has been a regular target, with mystery knitters covering it with knitted figures and objects including lifeguards, sunbathers and birds.

At the end of the morning, gifts were exchanged. Jane gave us some colourful napkins for the club, fittingly in SI blue and yellow, bearing a pattern of sunflowers which is the state flower of Kansas. President Stella presented Jane with a beautiful Royal Worcester cup commemorating the birth of Prince George. Many thanks to Susan and Soroptimister David for their hospitality.

Barbara Blaber

A RESPONSE FROM THE S I WICHITA NEWSLETTER

Upon deciding to travel to the United Kingdom in July I realized I had three open days between two planned activities. Since I would be near Manchester, I contacted the Manchester Club about attending a meeting. They e-mailed back that they had no meeting planned but they would love to meet me and in fact wanted to hold a coffee morning for me.

I met four of the members in downtown Manchester for lunch on a Friday, and then attended the Saturday morning coffee in the lovely garden of Susan Hollick. Our clubs have much in common. The Manchester Club is 88 years old, the second oldest club in the UK. They have about 25 members. The club is very active. They have numerous fundraisers such as balloon races, duck races, stalls at events, garden parties and joint fundraisers. They support a homeless day shelter, domestic violence victims and programmes to educate young girls, among others.

They presented me with a friendship gift for our club that will be unwrapped at our August meeting.

The whole experience was wonderful for me. I have extended an invitation to any of their members to visit Wichita.

Jane McHugh

SUNNY SUNDAY STRAWBERRY TEA



On Sunday, 3rd August, President Stella, members and friends enjoyed a super afternoon at Yvonne's home. Unexpectedly (after a dreadful rainy Saturday) for once we were all able to bask in glorious sunshine in the garden.

The strawberries, scones, and cakes were delicious and the spirit of friendship very buoyant. There were a large number of items to be raffled and a home produce stall selling cakes,

plants, cards and sewn items, which ensured that a healthy sum was raised for St Ann's Hospice.

All who attended gratefully appreciated the hard work of the organisers with special thanks to Yvonne who opened her home and garden and hosted the event.

Rosemary Steven



THE SPIRIT OF THE SOROPTIMIST ROSE



Once upon a time Kathleen gave me a Soroptimist rose. This thrived for several years but then succumbed to an infestation of ants and was pronounced 'almost dead'. On the principal that I could do no further harm I washed all soil off it, dunked it unceremoniously in soapy water and re-potted it. The next spring it managed a leaf or two so, encouraged, I put it in a sheltered spot in the garden and went off to Hong Kong, then Africa, leaving it to survive as best it could.....OK, I forgot all about it!

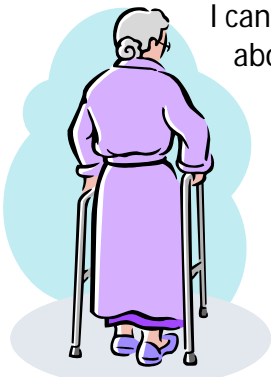
Then, when I was watering the garden in July I saw the rose turning her face to the sun.....true Soroptimist spirit?

Sue Underwood



WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES!

This time last year I was an active OAP, playing bowls several times each week, gardening, doing my own housework, socialising, I was so busy that even for the shortest journey I took the car. Life was good. Then I hurt my back, and within weeks everything changed. I became a dodderly old woman who could barely hold a teacup without spilling the contents. Finally I had surgery, and recently I've been advised that walking is the best physiotherapy for my condition, soeach morning I put on my comfortable old shoes and I walk.



I can't just walk – there has to be a destination. The walk to the local newsagent used to take about twenty minutes, there and back, which seemed about right for a start, so that's where I head each morning. I used to walk everywhere when I was younger and I think I must have forgotten what a great way it is to meet people. Most mornings I find somebody who is happy to chat to a fellow walker and I'm learning more about my neighbours too.

For example, one morning, I set off down the road as usual. Angela was standing outside her garden, while all sorts of puffing and panting, banging and thumping were coming from the jungle round what I had assumed to be a small damson tree. At that moment her husband emerged from the undergrowth, secateurs in hand, insisting, in a strong Irish brogue, that there really was "a rose bush in there somewhere, and I'm going to find it and prune it". Prune it? If he ever finds that poor rose it will need nourishment, not amputation. I'm not sure about their gardening skills but I enjoy the stream of Irish stories they tell.

Nearby live another couple with whom previously I was on nodding terms only. They seemed obsessed with their old yellow sports car, bringing it out into the sun on every fine day and polishing it madly – a hobby I've never understood. Now we chat regularly and I've found out that their two children are, in fact, three. All are either married or otherwise spoken for, and have produced four grandchildren already. How could I have missed all that?



Just round the corner lives a man (Tom) whose first boss when he started work at the bank was Roger, an ex-neighbour of ours. Roger's house is now occupied by Mavis, who joined us one morning when we were chatting and asked Tom whether Roger had been a good boss. A negative reply was greeted with a smile that could only indicate that she, too, had found her contacts with him trying. Tom confessed that he doesn't enjoy cooking, so he trots down the road to the local old folks home (sorry – Retirement



Village) for his breakfast every day. He recommends it both for price and quality, but somehow I can't persuade Mario to join me and try it. He doesn't think he's old enough. Tom has no such prejudices. I've seen him there at lunchtime too whenever I've been late starting my walk.

These, and others I meet on my walks, are all people I might have talked with before but never seemed to have the time. What a difference a year makes.

Barbara Valcaccia



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Birthday Greetings to the following members, each of whom celebrates her birthday in the next couple of months.

Barbara Valcaccia	22 nd	September
Barbara Blaber	30 th	September
Margaret Cropper	14 th	October
Fiona Spencer	25 th	October
Rosemary Steven	2 nd	November
Evelyn Nichols	4 th	November
Val Moss	5 th	November
Shena Cuttle	8 th	November
Yvonne Mullen	17 th	November
Sue Underwood	17 th	November



FORTHCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS

Do please make a note in your diary of the following dates, in advance of the flyers, as they all need your support.

- Friday, 26th Sep - McMillan Big Coffee Day at Susan Hollick's home 11am to 2pm or 7pm-10pm. Contributions of biscuits or cakes would be welcome.
- Saturday, 18th Oct - Friendship Evening, 7-9,30pm at Heald Green Village Hall
- Saturday, 29th Nov - International Evening; American theme; venue to be arranged
- Tuesday, 9th Dec - Christmas Party at Yvonne's home; mince pies and mulled wine, hosted by Kathleen and Yvonne
- January - Coffee Pot Lunch; date to be agreed

OTHER DIARY DATES

- Thursday 6th-8th Nov - SIGBI Conference, Harrogate.
- Saturday, 13th Sep - Regional Meeting at Leigh Sports Centre – **note earlier start PAC 9.45am for 10:15am, followed by Council Meeting
- Saturday, 22nd Nov - Regional Meeting at Leigh Sports Centre
- PAC 10am for 10:30am, followed by Council Meeting

Christmas Greetings

Those who wish to send greetings via the December Newsletter are asked to have their messages ready for the November Meeting.

Copy for the next edition of the Newsletter by 18th November, please. Personal anecdotes would be welcomed.

Kathleen Beavis

Maureen Heywood