

---

# SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

## OF MANCHESTER

---

### PRESIDENT

Val Moss

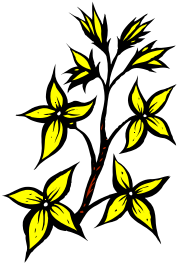
### TREASURER

Joan Davis-Rice

Issue No 43

Spring 2012

Dear Club Members



You will notice that this is our Spring issue. To prove it, outside I can see the vibrant yellow of two Witch Hazel bushes covered in spidery flowers. However, lest our expectations should get out of hand, I would add that the bush is swaying back and forth in gale force winds whilst being drenched by torrential rain. It is the vagaries of our climate which keep us on our toes and ever hopeful.



We have many blessings to count compared with our sisters in India and Africa.

~~~~~

### HAPPY BIRTHDAYS IN ORISSA

Last January I had my birthday whilst at Muniguda, Orissa, and I was treated to a surprise party. All the children assembled in the hall and I have never heard "Happy Birthday to you" sung so many times to the accompaniment of piano accordion and steel drum. Two cakes were brought in, with a discreet number of candles, and these were cut into pieces and following tradition I was fed the first mouthful and I then distributed the cake to all the children.

Eliazar sent me the following pictures earlier this year.



Every child receives a "Vegan" made Cake (no egg or milk) on their Birthday. Children who do not know their Birthday celebrate together on Community day - 21<sup>st</sup> of each month.

This year the children decided that Ruth (Eliazar's wife) would be the Chief Guest. Ruth is seen as "Mother" to all the small orphan children. She is aunt for countless children. As is Indian tradition referred to officially as "Madam" – a polite form of address.

Children's Day is a big festival – The young man (standing white shirt right side) here is "Koteswara Rao", who used to be a lorry driver. He lost the sight in both eyes due to a corneal infection. He has been staying with us for the past 6 years in our community centre at Kothavalasa. We have no age discriminations for Children's Day – all are children. Children's Day stands for the Birth Anniversary of our first Prime Minister NEHRU, Commonly called Cha Cha (Uncle). It is thought of as the Birthday of all Indian children, especially orphans and simply children who do not know their Birthdays. This year the children of Nameste House, Muniguda, are here at Kothavalasa for Holidays. So this is good for us to celebrate Children's Day all together in one home.



## Kathleen Beavis

### THE DECEMBER MEETING

As in previous years, club business at the December meeting was kept to a minimum. Our two Honorary Members kindly offered hospitality and refreshments to us "ordinary" members, and as in previous years their generosity was very much appreciated.



We met at Yvonne's home, greeted with mulled wine and superb selection of food, served by Kathleen, who had taken over in the kitchen. While we munched and supped we were encouraged to buy raffle tickets – President Val had acquired a camcorder, courtesy of insurance for her new feline friend, and the proceeds of the raffle would help swell the dinner fund. (I was more than a little surprised to hear that I'd won it, but that's another story.)

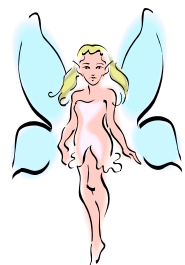
The evening continued with much chat and laughter. After all those business meetings which, let's face it, can become quite solemn and stodgy, this was a refreshing change. The main event of the evening - a balloon debate – confirmed this. Four members were selected, each to represent one of four pantomime characters, and each with the remit of justifying their place in the balloon at the



expense of the other three. Kathleen became the pantomime cat, Ruth made a kindly Fairy Godmother, Sandra was Jack who sold his mother's cow for the beans which, in turn, grew into the beanstalk, at the top of which sat Christine, the angry giant. The rest of us joined in to question each of the candidates' assertions that they should win the prize, and to vote which should be jettisoned. These debates provide a splendid

opportunity to see how inventive, even devious, some of our members can become when faced with the chance to fly off in their own personal hot air balloon. We should do this more often!

I don't wish to disparage the efforts of the others but Ruth's Fairy Godmother was a clear winner, and though Sandra and Kathleen were very persuasive, Christine's slender frame clearly demonstrated how hopelessly mis-cast she was as the giant. It was a most enjoyable evening, great fun, and I found myself wishing we could meet in informal settings such as this more often. Many thanks to Yvonne and Kathleen for their generous hospitality.



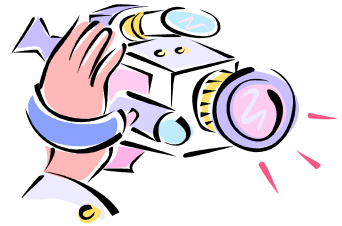
## NOW ABOUT THAT CAMCORDER

I said that I was surprised to win the raffle and I was not joking. In my whole life, despite buying raffle tickets every time I have had the chance, I have won only three prizes, and not one of them has ever been of any use to me.

In my teens I won a half tea service. I was delighted, thinking that when I had a home of my own I would be able to entertain properly. I carried the package home, started to unwrap it, glimpsed the delicate china with its pretty pattern and thought I was the luckiest girl in the world – until I unwrapped it properly. That's when I found that several pieces were cracked. Many years later I won again. This time a most peculiar-shaped bowl, coloured silver on one side and a strange puce on the other. That went to the next jumble sale.



Now this, a camcorder! At first I thought my luck had changed, I'd finally won something useful, but after a few days of euphoria I realised that I would never use it. I had no young relatives to film, no pets, and I really couldn't think of anything else I could possibly do with it. It was just before Christmas and I doubted whether any of my friends might like it. But then I found a really good use for it.

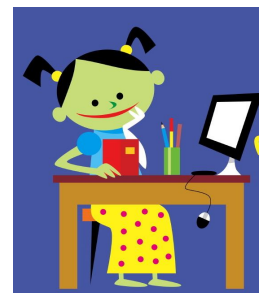


I'm on the board of a fairly new charity in Macclesfield that helps the "learning disabled". It's a community project where disabled young people are given the chance to develop gardening and other skills. The staff has inspired a wonderful spirit among the trainees, and they are constantly on the lookout for new projects to stimulate interest. A camcorder could help demonstrate their achievements I thought, and if you could have heard the shouts of "awesome" and "wicked" that greeted it's delivery you would all have been delighted that something that was simply intended to help swell our dinner fund could bring so much pleasure to so many young people. So I'm passing on to all our members a big "thank you" from the Macclesfield Community Project staff and trainees.



By the way, being new they aren't exactly dripping with cash, and they don't have plush premises or furnishings. In winter, when the weather hasn't permitted gardening, they have been trying to develop other skills such as sewing and making cards and jewellery. However they have only a few tables to work at and have found progress is slow as they have to take turns. If any members have any old tables or chairs that they no longer need please let me know. They don't have to be in good condition. The trainees will have the chance to learn another skill as they do any repairs needed. And if you need plants or seedlings this spring I can tell you where you can get good-quality plants at a very good price.

**Barbara Valcaccia**



## INTERNATIONAL NIGHT

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, President Val welcomed members and friends to our International Night at St Matthew's Church Hall in Stretford. The evening had a Welsh theme and Ann had been given the challenge of preparing Welsh Lamb Shanks for 24. The hush that fell once we had all been served was testament to how successful she had been!

After the 'melt in your mouth' lamb we were all in the mood to accept anything that Wales could throw at us.....but would that stretch to Kathleen's Welsh Quiz?!? We drew lots for quiz partners and tried to remain hopeful that our allotted partner would be a Welsh expert! I became more confident when we came to the Welsh road signs with multiple choice answers.....but alas, I



have apparently been driving in Wales with my eyes shut until it came to Motorway Services! Yvonne partnered by Soroptimister Peter (Halliwell) won, managing an almost respectable 18/35 score, with two or three other teams in close pursuit!

The 'Practical' was to produce a Welsh hat from black card, newspaper and sticky tape. We had joined forces into teams of four but had very little time to complete the project.....stress levels increased and a couple of 'domestics' were narrowly avoided! Fiona employed some of her day-job skills to take the trophy!

(At least we made the Queen smile, but the corgi is 'not amused'!)

Whilst enjoying ourselves we managed to raise £200 so, as ever, diolch yn fawr i bawb a fu'n



gweithio mor galed i wneud yn siwr bod popeth yn mynd mor dda ar y noson!.....see, I did pick up the odd word!?!)

**Sue Underwood**

~~~~~

### **SI JOHANNESBURG: SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF 2011**

The following report of their Programme Action activities was received in January along with a greetings card from Professor Mary Scholes, their Friendship Link correspondent. It is interesting to note that in the Johannesburg Club each of their projects is managed by a different pair of members. Spreading the load seems to work successfully for them.

**Kathleen Beavis**

***Diepsloot informal settlement*** - we energetically support the pre-school and the food garden projects. Jean Schutz and Mary Scholes have been doing ongoing work this year at the School. The Principal of the School, Mary Pule, continues to further her education and has been recognised in the community and appointed as the coordinator for a number of civil society and non-profit organizations working in the community. A drainage system has been installed to alleviate the flooding of the playground and the water which is collected will be used to water the food garden.



**Aurora Project** - Margaret Edwards and Gillian Wilkinson run this very successful programme. The last workshop "Leadership through Management and Technology" was extremely well attended by all of the participating Schools.

**Lochview Primary School** - This project is made possible through the very kind donations from our Friendship link in Dunfermline. Stationery is purchased by our Club and then packaged and transported to the School close to Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. This is a very worthwhile project as the cost of materials in Zimbabwe is much more expensive than in South Africa and often unavailable.

**Teddy Bear Project** - this project involves the knitting of woollen "bear skins" which are then stuffed and the resultant most beautiful teddy bears are donated to needy children. Margaret Edwards is dubbed the "Teddy Bear Queen".



**Carbon Foot Print** - One of our members, Hilary Semple, introduced the idea of "calculating our carbon footprints and handy tips". Each month at the club we exchange ideas and the winner gets a small prize.

**Sparrow's Nest** - for AIDS sufferers - this project is run by Corinne McClintok

**Heather Martiensen Trust** - supports several retired teachers every year. Trustees Jean Schutz and Margaret Edwards.

**Sithabile Child and Youth Centre** -Thabasile Msezane is now looking after 90 children in the home. "Sithabile" is a Zulu word meaning "we are happy". This is a home for abandoned, orphaned or abused children and others who are survivors of human trafficking for the child sex trade and forced child labour. The aim of the Centre is to provide these special children with a safe, caring environment in which to recover from trauma, to reclaim lost childhoods and the ability to play and to acquire the education, skill and confidence to break cycles of poverty,



neglect, exploitation and abuse. The Mears Group worked at Sithabile this year making major upgrades to dormitories, bathrooms and the IT Centre. They are also getting involved with the gate and fixing the outside lights. This picture is of Leyden Field, our President, sitting on a bench, in the Peace Garden, which has been installed in memory of Christine Tobias (SI Birmingham), where you can see the plaque on the back. In the background are two large containers: One is used as the craft centre and the other is the library/computer centre.

On a more personal note, I have just returned from contributing to the COP17 Climate Change Meeting in Durban. I am very pleased to say that I believe the outcomes were significant and it does mean that humankind has a future on this Planet.

**Mary Scholes – S I Johannesburg**

~~~~~

#### **AN UPDATE FROM MARY'S MEALS**

The following is an extract from a letter received from Mary's Meals.

"We celebrate our 10th anniversary this year and a decade of providing millions and millions of life-changing meals! Thank you for your amazing support which is allowing us to provide over 600,000 of the world's poorest children with a meal every school day.

"For the likes of Pooja, who left home at the age of nine to work as a housemaid, her dreams of becoming a teacher move closer to becoming a reality thanks to the Mary's Meals she receives in India. Alec, 14, from Malawi was weak, skinny and suffered from headaches before he started receiving Mary's Meals - he tells us, he no longer suffers.

"When I wrote to you a year ago, we were celebrating reaching our half a million milestone. To know, 12 months on, we are now feeding over 600,000 children every day is a great

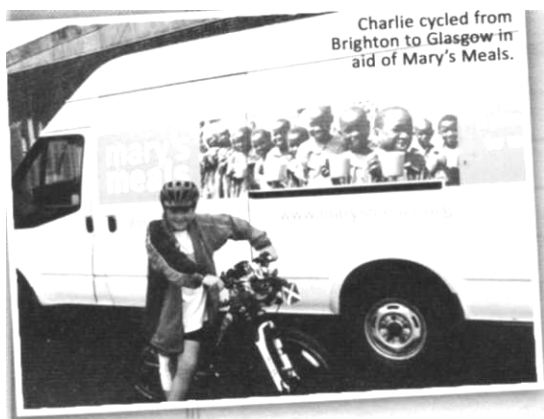
encouragement to me and I hope to you too. When you consider it costs us a global average of just 6 pence to provide a nourishing meal to a hungry child, no support we receive can ever be too little.

"I want to thank each one of you whose contribution, whether through donations, volunteering or prayers, has made Mary's Meals possible. It makes me more determined than ever to continue with this work so that in 2012, our vision for every child in the world to receive a good meal in a place of education continues to burn brightly.

{signed} Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow - Mary's Meals CEO

[www.marysmeals.org](http://www.marysmeals.org) "

Enclosed with the above letter was a new annual magazine and the following are a couple of the stories from this, which I felt sure would interest you and give us all food for thought.



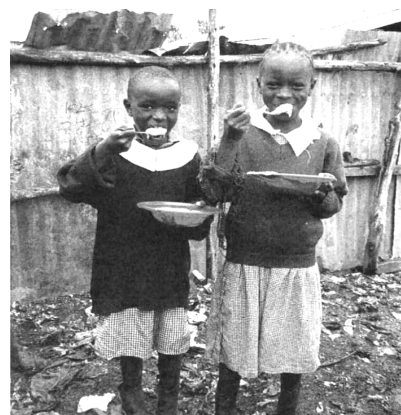
"My name is Charlie Doherty. I am 12 years old and from England. I have been doing fundraising for Mary's Meals since I was six and have raised £16,000 so far. I have also raised over £9,000 for other charitable causes.

"The reason I do my charity work is because of the tsunami in 2004. I couldn't believe how easily homes were being knocked down. I just want you to stop what you are doing and just think what it would be like, just think how you would have felt if that was your home, your life, even possibly your family, all being swept away by what would have started out as small raindrops.

"There are millions of suffering and hungry children all over the world. But with your help and the help of Mary's Meals we can stop people suffering from a lack of food and basic school equipment and we can make that change. Such a small cost can feed a child for a day, and for a whole year. By doing my 603-mile cycle from Brighton to Glasgow, I hope I've inspired you to be more willing to help. Go on, make that change..."

#### **12-year-old pupil from Malawi writes...**

"I have tea with milk for breakfast, but nothing to eat. I have porridge at school. At home in the evening I have sima (boiled maize powder), sometimes I have something with it.



"Social studies is my favourite school subject. In that subject we learn about our culture. At weekends I study and I read. I want to be a lawyer.

"Likuni phala makes a child learn and listen and not be hungry. I learn better now than before Mary's Meals."

#### **World Porridge Day (10<sup>th</sup> October)**

*This global event is a chance to celebrate the work of Mary's Meals and the difference a mug of porridge makes to the lives of thousands of children. Please keep an eye on our website for ideas and events taking place.*

## SPEAKER'S LUNCH

On a wonderfully sunny Sunday afternoon, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 28 Soroptimists and friends (including five members from S I Ashton) gathered at the Northenden Golf Club for a splendid lunch followed by an excellent speaker, Hazel Errey, from the Manchester branch of Amnesty International.

Hazel was well prepared and concentrated mainly on human rights for women, in acknowledgement of Soroptimist values. She spoke movingly of WOZA - *Women of Zimbabwe Arise*, which was formed in 2003 to provide women with a united voice against the social, economic and human rights conditions in Zimbabwe. Since then, numerous incidents have been documented in which WOZA members have been arrested, harassed and severely beaten by police after exercising their right to peaceful protest.

For Valentine's Day and in support of WOZA, Amnesty members had been asked to send a red rose to the Zimbabwean Embassy in London. This I did on behalf of members of S I Manchester and S I Ashton – after all, as Peter Berenson (founder of Amnesty International) said "*It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness*".



Thank you, Shena, for arranging such a highly successful afternoon.

**Maureen Heywood**

~~~~~

## Diary Dates

Thurs	12 <sup>th</sup>	April	AGM and Dinner, Northenden Golf Club. Dinner 6pm for 6.30pm. Meeting 8pm.
Sat	12 <sup>th</sup>	May	Joint Regional Conference, Liverpool
Tues	15 <sup>th</sup>	May	Speaker Dinner, Chancellors, Fallowfield. Speaker is Peter Hyde from the Oldham Mountain Rescue Team
Thu/Sat	25/27th	Oct	SIGBI Conference, Belfast

Last date for copy for the next newsletter is **25<sup>th</sup> May**.

Kathleen Beavis and Maureen Heywood