

PRESIDENT
Sue Underwood

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Welcome to our 90th Anniversary Celebration Edition



OH WHAT A NIGHT !!

I think we all hoped that the Club's 90th birthday party (because, though formal, that's what it was) would be a jolly occasion. Everyone had come to celebrate with us at our 90th Annual Dinner and also to rejoice that in this ever-changing world our Club, which had been formed in very different times, was still thriving.

Let's start at the beginning of the evening. The Monastery, the venue for the event, is a superb building. The pale blue lighting along the stone-flagged corridors evoked times past – a monk might have walked out of a door at any moment. A harpist played while guests arrived and made their way to the dining area, again dimly lit, with statues of saints on each of the stone columns. All along one wall were plain wooden doors, monk's cells I thought, but someone else said they were confessionals – an awful lot of confessing must have been done!

As we took our seats President Sue welcomed 174 guests, after which Kathleen offered the Grace and dinner was served. Seated as I was near to the Top Table, it was at this point that I became aware of a distinctly cold draught coming from behind the curtain which hid the altar. I'm very sensitive to temperature and I wondered whether it was "just me" but nevertheless, between courses, I slipped out to the cloakroom for something warmer to put round my shoulders.



When President Sue proposed the traditional toast to the City and Ports of Manchester, she remembered our Founder President Margaret Pilkington and spoke about some events of 1926. Knowing that she had already been through this process several times at previous annual dinners, I was happy to see she had been able to find a new angle from which to approach the topic. In his reply the Lord Mayor thanked her for the warm welcome he'd received and spoke about the ethos of Manchester, which he

described as a forward-looking entrepreneurial city, but his initial comment about the chilly draught brought applause from some guests..(Obviously, I wasn't the only one to feel the cold.)



But what about that beautifully decorated birthday cake? Was it real or just for show? This was the moment to find out. President Sue invited Yemisi Opaneye, the President of our Mother Club, S I Greater London, to join her and the cake was cut to the sound of Soroptimist cheering. And, yes, it tasted as good as it looked.

During the interval which followed, other guests retrieved their coats from the cloakroom. The venue could not be held responsible for the fact that the temperature outside was fast approaching zero, but the heat inside the building rose into the very high ceiling, leaving those below quite chilled. Nevertheless spirits were high and as we resumed our seats we were delighted to hear Martin Smedley, CEO of Act4Africa, describe the work of his charity and propose the toast to S I Manchester.

Margaret Emsley responded to the toast, welcoming our involvement with the charity, and teasing Martyn gently about his allegiance to a particular football team – obviously one which didn't enjoy Margaret's support. During her speech Margaret paid tribute to our two Honorary Members and their long and continuing dedication to the club. Members of S I Manchester know Margaret well. She has been a member of S I Ashton for many years and it's splendid that we can now welcome her in her role as President of Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland.

Finally President Sue introduced our Guest Speaker, Immediate Past International President Ann Garvie, who spoke about her experiences in that role. Ann is an impressive speaker with a great wealth of knowledge of Soroptimism, however her speech, though most interesting, seemed to dwell on world problems and those of women in particular. Perhaps a little too much for such a happy occasion?



After President-Elect Molly's vote of thanks, President Sue presented a cheque for £5,000 to Martyn Smedley, our initial contribution to the HEAL project. The Club had put forward our collaboration with Act4Africa (HEAL Malawi) for selection to be the SIGBI Federation Project 2016 -2019. Unfortunately we were not successful but our Club's involvement will continue.

Finally, we came to the presentation of table flowers to the visiting President's and here I must confess a sin of my own. I referred earlier to the ethereal blue lighting which contributed so much to the atmosphere in the Monastery. Unfortunately it contributed little to my ability to read my instructions. As a result it was not until next day when I looked at the card that I realised my mistake. I have no idea what happened to the flowers on table M. I only know that I did manage to present some flowers to the two Presidents I had been told earlier were to receive them! Phew!! At least on this occasion my memory didn't let me down.

With seventeen tables to serve in the body of the hall it was inevitable that service was slow and so it was nearly midnight when we rose to sing Auld Lang Syne. I hope our President enjoyed the evening over which she presided with such assurance. It had been a very happy evening and we look forward to many, many more years of S I Manchester.

Postscript

The Dinner Committee is chaired by the President Elect and, this year being a special year, Molly had extra support from President Sue. However much work is done by the Dinner Committee during the year the success of the Annual Dinner is judged, ultimately, by the guests' enjoyment of the whole evening. No matter how good the meal or the speakers, if your table companions are not congenial the evening can become less than the pleasure you may have anticipated.

Much of the work involved in table planning is done in the last month before the dinner. When names, cheques, and menu choices have been received and recorded, the work of planning seating and all the other "final touches" can begin. This vital job has been done by Yvonne for many years, using her immense knowledge of local Sorops, their likes, prejudices and allegiances, and it's thanks to her that we have a reputation for hosting such a happy event each year. It's to her credit also that she lets us think it all happens by itself. As someone who has been called in to help recently, I can tell you all that it doesn't! Thanks Yvonne!

Barbara Valcaccia

We thought you would be interested to see the following excerpt from a 1976 edition of Lancashire Life. Happily both Yvonne and her friend Nan were there to celebrate our 90th.



OUR HOME FROM HOME IN LONDON

In January, as usual, I attended the AGM of No 63. This is always a most pleasurable occasion, because of the opportunity to meet up with many Soroptimist friends and acquaintances from all over the UK made during the years when I was closely involved with "63". It saddens me that for the last two, if not three years, there have only been for election to the Management Board the same number of candidates as there were vacancies. I remember times when there were as many as seven candidates for three vacancies and those were the "bad old days" when "63" was in a sorry state and we didn't have two halfpennies to rub together.

"63" is now extremely well furbished and maintained and an exceptionally friendly place to stay when visiting London. Why not visit it and see for yourself and if you feel so inclined allow your name to go forward when the next request for candidates comes out in October. It's time we had another representative from the North West.

And remember that in Soroptimism as in most things in life the more you contribute the more pleasure you derive. Here endeth the first lesson! Have a look at the website at <http://www.number63.co.uk/>

Kathleen Beavis

ANNUAL COFFEE POT LUNCH

14 members and friends gathered on January 20th to lift their post-Christmas spirits and enjoy a friendly and relaxing lunch at the Wycliffe Villa Hotel. It was, as ever, a very enjoyable occasion and thanks go to Yvonne Mullen for organising it.



ST MARY'S SARC 30TH ANNIVERSARY LAUNCH EVENT

2016 marks 30 years since the opening of St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre and 10 years since their specialised paediatric services began.

President Elect Molly and six members were pleased to attend their event at HOME Manchester on Thursday 28th January to launch this 30:10 Anniversary year. Speakers at the event were Councillor Paul Murphy OBE, Lord Mayor of Manchester, Dr Rainie Roberts, the founding Clinical Director, and Dr Catherine White OBE, the present Clinical Director.



Roger Graef, the Documentary Producer, spoke about the impact of and showed excerpts from his documentary 'A Complaint of Rape' made in 1982, which marked a watershed in changing the way rape cases are handled by the police and other agencies.

Sarah Hardy and Blue Ryan spoke about and showed excerpts from their documentary 'The Unspeakable Crime Rape' made at St Mary's and broadcast in 2013.

The event was attended by staff and many friends of the unit.

Val Moss



GREETINGS FROM INDIA!

The following letter has been received from Eliazar Rose who, you will remember, came to speak to us at our June Business Meeting. If anyone is interested in the Hope Eternal Gift Catalogue to which he refers, Maureen has a copy.

"I am taking this opportunity to write to you as winter starts and the children in Muniguda Namaste House get their woollen 'beanie' caps out. It has been a turbulent year in so many ways but here at New Hope we stay focused on the important and urgent work of reaching out on a daily basis to those who need us.



"Many of you know that I was in the UK during May/June 2015 to attend the MBE investiture of our long-time Secretary Jill Ghanouni. It was a great way to honour Jill's years of tireless work on behalf of New Hope. In India we are at the other end of all this work as the funds raised by you all are carefully utilised to give maximum benefit. This is no simple task and it has been made harder with the Cyclone in October 2014, followed by the tornado in May 2015, both of which ripped through the New Hope Community Centre, causing immense damage. We all read and hear about climate change but the summer of 2015 in India was so unusual, with a freak hail stones storm which smashed rows of crops, then shortly after, a long heat wave of 48-50 degrees causing the death of so many in India. Sporadic rains meant weeds grew rapidly, and now patchy monsoon, leaves us unsure of what the crop yields will be. Our market garden survived thanks to the extra work by everyone to ensure watering in the evening and careful mulching to retain moisture. The banana plants thrived through it all and gave both fruit for human consumption and fodder for the cows and goats.



"In Muniguda where we have our Challenged Children's Home we are so relieved that Polio, with its crippling side effects, is now under control in this region, thanks to your all your help over the years to fund vaccinations for thousands of babies. We also continue to care for the many older children who were left severely disabled, some because they were born before our extensive polio vaccination programme began and others who had endured years of untreated leprosy. These were our two most important reasons for starting a New Hope Community Centre and Hospital in Muniguda.



"During my time in the UK I realized just how important it is to ensure people know that small charities like New Hope are entirely Volunteer led and run from people's homes. We don't have large offices or spend our funds on advertising campaigns. I smiled because we held our Trustees Board meetings free of charge in a public space in London! In the UK I travelled to other towns, visiting the groups and organisations which have faithfully supported us for so long.

"Please accept the enclosed Calendar Card from all of us all and do please have a look at the Hope Eternal Catalogue enclosed as it is a wonderful way of giving hope to many. May I wish you all a healthy and happy New Year, and thank you all for your friendship.

Yours sincerely

Eliazar Tumati Rose

Director, New Hope Rural Leprosy Trust, India.

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#### **PANCAKE PARTY 2016**

Again this year our Pancake Party was an evening of food, friendship and fun. Past President Fiona opened her house to us as she always does for this charity event, and was ably assisted by husband Paul and daughter Kiera. We enjoyed savoury and sweet pancakes, a fiendish quiz about pancakes (yes, they were invented in the 5th century BC!) games and a raffle.



Thank you to Fiona and family - same time next year?

**Val Moss**

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

PHYLLIS WARRIOR 6TH JUNE 1931 – 6TH MARCH 2016

It is sad to be writing an obituary to another of our long-standing members. Phyllis joined the Club in 1983 and served as Club Secretary, prior to becoming President 1998-1999. She also gave her time to different Executive Committees.



Having qualified as a nurse at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Glasgow, she went on to be a midwife and to work in the tuberculosis hospital. Her career was very varied and to satisfy her love of travel she worked in Bermuda and Toronto as well as many hospitals in England. I met Phyllis when she was appointed Nursing Personnel Manager to South Manchester, although our paths had briefly crossed in Sheffield.

After retiring from the NHS Phyllis had two spells in Dubai as part of the British team nursing the aged Ruler Sheikh al Makthoum. After returning home she then went back to Glasgow to care for a retired Headmistress, but Scotland was no longer her home; as she said, she had lived away longer than in the North. Whenever Shena or I spoke to her she remained interested in the Club and its members. She enjoyed crown green bowls and was a member of the Club Team when we competed in Regional games and in the South Manchester League.

Unfortunately, her last few months had been dogged by increasing frailty with several admissions to hospital. She remained a feisty lady, with all the characteristics of a Scot. Now she is at rest and will be missed by many.

Yvonne Mullen

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

|               |                  |       |
|---------------|------------------|-------|
| Peggy Howarth | 12 <sup>th</sup> | April |
| Ann Thomas    | 19 <sup>th</sup> | May   |
| Susan Hollick | 29 <sup>th</sup> | May   |



**Diary Dates**

|         |                                    |       |                                                                                                                           |
|---------|------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sat     | 12 <sup>th</sup>                   | Mar   | Regional Meeting at Leigh Sports Centre, WN7 4JY. (Bring own lunch)<br>PAC 10am for 10:30am, followed by Business Meeting |
| Thurs   | 14 <sup>th</sup>                   | April | AGM and Dinner, Pinewood Hotel.<br>Dinner 6pm for 6.30pm. Meeting 8pm.                                                    |
| Sat     | 14 <sup>th</sup>                   | May   | South Lancashire Regional Conference. Radison Blu Hotel, Liverpool                                                        |
| Thu/Sat | 10 <sup>th</sup> /12 <sup>th</sup> | Nov   | SIGBI Conference, Malta.                                                                                                  |

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PHOTOGRAPHS

May we thank Val Moss for all her lovely photographs.

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Should any of you feel you have a comment or anecdote that would be of interest to others, please play your part and send them to us for publication. Last date for copy for the next newsletter is Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> May.

**Kathleen Beavis and Maureen Heywood**