

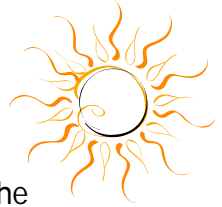
# SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

## OF MANCHESTER

**PRESIDENT**  
Stella Kay

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Dear Club Members



If "Variety is the spice of life," the weather over the last ten days has done its best to ensure a truly lively time. In rapid succession we have enjoyed a couple of warm sunny days, endured a cold wind and torrential rain followed by a pleasant day for working in the garden. But just as one thought that summer was nigh, the sky became dark, thunder rumbled and hailstones the size of a fingernail bounced on the roof and the road. The subsequent piercing shaft of lightning knocked out my router hub and left me without internet and e-mail for four days, until a replacement hub could be obtained from BT just in time to do this Newsletter with Maureen.



### ST MARY'S SEXUAL ASSAULT REFERRAL CENTRE

In March, Val sent us the following extract from "Insight", Central Manchester Trust's house magazine. To put our newer members in the picture, S I Manchester has supported this Centre from its inception, at first by supplying toiletries and then raising funds to set up a relaxing sensory room.

## OBE recognition



**Dr Catherine White, Clinical Director at St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in this year's New Year's Honours List.**

Dr White has been Clinical Director of St Mary's SARC since 2003 and a forensic physician since 1995. During her career, she has constantly sought

### Dr Catherine White, Clinical Director of SARC

to drive up standards in the quality of care for rape and sexual assault victims and has been instrumental in delivering comprehensive training and teaching for practitioners working in this field.

Dr White commented: "I am delighted to see that the work done by those trying to improve the plight of sexual assault victims and increase understanding around the whole issue of sexual violence has been recognised. Hopefully it will help to raise the profile of this pervasive problem and encourage more to help tackle it. St Mary's SARC has an

amazing dedicated team, caring for some of the most vulnerable people in society and it has been a privilege to be part of it."

Dr White has written extensively on the subject of rape and sexual assault and has provided training and lectured both in this country and abroad. She was sponsored by UNICEF and CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre) to provide training in Cambodia in 2006, 2008 and 2010 and she has been working with the UN to develop sexual assault services in Palestine since 2012.

I am sure you will all agree that this is a well-deserved honour.

## NEWS FROM ORISSA

We have recently received a Newsletter from Orissa (which will be going out to you all soon). On page 9 is the following:-



## Thank you to Soroptimists International of Manchester

Our lifelong friends, Soroptimists International of Manchester, are a tremendous support to New Hope's cataract patients.

Their generous-hearted members have found wonderful ways to raise funds for sight saving surgery. Some have requested that instead of gifts for their special wedding anniversaries or significant birthdays, that friends and family make a donation towards New Hope's cataract surgery.



Over the years their loyal support has enabled well over 200 people to be able to see again, giving them back their lives. On behalf of every patient with regained sight, and their families, our heartfelt thanks go to the Soroptimists.

### Used Tights for Orissa:

A little while ago, Fiona informed us that Orissa no longer required our used tights. This puzzled me so I wrote to Jill Ghanouni who runs New Hope Community Trust, the UK arm of New Hope Orissa, to ask why. This is her reply:-



".....It's one of these sad situations which is out of our hands; we used to do corrective surgery for leprosy deformities. The tights were cut into customised sized pieces for each patient and used to hold gauze in place on joints and shins. They are excellent for this because they allow the wound to breathe and also give flexibility to the bending knee, elbow, wrist etc.

We have a great little hospital out in the sticks, amazingly high standard of sterile conditions maintained, spacious recovery area and a rehab and physio room attached with a team working there daily.

To provide this service, we worked in conjunction with the big charity LEPROA who gave us 50% of the funding for it. A few years ago, LEPROA changed its policy of working and it was decided they would only work out of cities where they have an admin' base. This meant that they pulled out of our area completely because we work in the rural districts. This was a huge loss and we have not been able to find another organisation to take their place. So we diverted our energy into cataract surgery instead. Of course this is hugely needed and we are just as busy caring for people who would otherwise be blinded were it not for cataract surgery, so we are still benefiting the community which needs us – it's just sad that we can't do what we always did so well!

This is why we no longer need to request used nylons."

I am sure you will be sorry to learn that Jill, who has been our point of contact with Orissa for many years, is suffering from cancer. I enquired after her health and this is her reply:-

".....As regards me: many thanks for your thoughts and care - my next surgery date has been scheduled for 22nd May so, all being well, I'll be back in contact with you by June. Until the surgeon has had a chance to see what's going on, I can't tell you how long the recovery time will be or whether I'll need radiotherapy again - but as soon as I am able, I will definitely let you know how things are. (I have a fairly large tumour in my neck; it's attached to my jaw and ear bone and has a lot of facial nerves wrapped around it. The surgeon has been very good and honest and explained to me the length of time required for the operation and the complexity of it and about 'damage limitation', so the most I can say at this point is that I am focused on looking forward and onward, contemplating recuperation and returning to active life again. All will be well."

I am sure you will all join us in sending our good wishes for Jill's recovery.

**Maureen Heywood**



### THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF A CRUISE



Our holiday did not get off to the best start, as our ship, "Saga Pearl II" was three days late coming from Lisbon due to high seas. We finally left on 10<sup>th</sup> January instead of 7<sup>th</sup> on our lovely little ship (400 passengers).

After five minutes in our cabin, April from Manila introduced herself. What a lovely girl! All the staff were from the Philippines and they never stopped smiling. She commences work, seven days a week, at 7am until 1.30pm, then time off until 5pm, working until 9pm. This means that she rarely leaves the ship as, if in port, the departure time is usually around 4pm. Her husband, Herbert, is a waiter on board ship. Their eight month old baby is back at home with Granny for nine months. The hairdresser used to have a salon in Oldham; the drama group came from the Lyceum in Oldham and the on-board art teacher was also from Oldham – a small world!

It is just as well that my hearing is reasonable, as the constant stream of scooters zooming along the corridors at 20mph was a constant threat. Entering a lift was a danger – when the doors opened and you were just about to enter, a scooter would shoot into reverse, speed out and you had to jump aside.

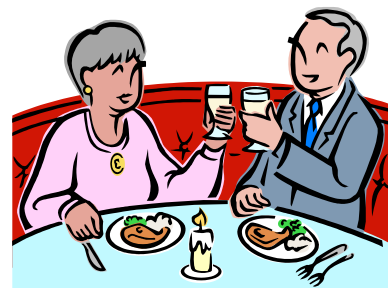
The laundry room was the centre of gossip. Machines, driers and detergent were all free and, thus, were constantly in use. No fights broke out during my regular laundry visits – not unknown on ships when one passenger comes along, takes out another passenger's washing from the drier before it is dry and proceeds to use the machine. Actual fights, particularly between male passengers, do occur. No fear of Barry being involved as he never paid one visit to the laundry room! Actually, I am wrong! I sent him down to put our washing in a drier as I knew the cycle would be over. When I went to collect our dry washing – you've guessed – another passenger's washing was bone dry and ours was still in a machine waiting to be dried.



I attended a jewellery class on every sea day. That was really enjoyable – unlike so much of the rubbish I have seen on other cruises. I came home with 16 necklaces (some with ear-rings). A few will be for myself but most will be for presents. In addition, every morning I spent 30 minutes doing armchair exercises – 30 minutes of torture - but I am trying to continue them at home.



We had decided prior to our trip not to have a set table in the dining room but would move around each evening and meet different passengers, always sitting at a large table. However, on the first evening, we were seated between two couples and ended up always sitting together for the whole cruise. We had two spare places for "floaters". Food was the best ever – so rich that I could not wait to arrive home to a pan of mince.



Speakers on board were of an excellent standard. Brigadier Hugh Willing spoke on African military history. He was a mere boy in his early 60's and at our table on a regular basis. Fortunately, he had a good sense of humour. Mary was the choir mistress – a lovely lady from Ireland who, along with her husband, ran the ferry to and from Rathin Island. Andrew Schofield from Cape Town was an ecologist who had such an interest in and knowledge of wild animals.

Due to being a smallish ship, we visited ports not frequented by larger cruise ships. As Barry pointed out, there was hardly one African port of call where there had not previously been unrest, eg Sierra Leone, Luanda. We also visited two ports in Ghana, Sao Tomé et Príncipe, Namibia. It was our first visit to Cape Town and even the Captain said that though he had sailed into Cape Town on many occasions, he had never sailed in on a more perfect afternoon. A lasting memory!

St Helena offered much more than we had imagined and the memory of Napoleon's tomb, nestling amongst the backdrop of flowers, shrubs and trees, will remain forever. Unfortunately, the seas were a little too rough for the tender to go ashore at Ascension Island, much to our disappointment. The Heritage Centre on the island is run by young graduates from the UK, who stay for around nine months at a time – probably long enough. We were supposed to visit Madeira but again the seas were too high. Barry and I were disappointed as we had never been there.

When we returned from our holiday (the longest ever) we were met with devastation. A car had skidded into our garden wall which in turn had twisted the metal support of our electronic gates. Once in the house we realised that the heating was not working. After experiencing 30° plus on holiday, the house felt like a fridge. To crown it all, the chest freezer had broken down and we had to throw out ten bin bags of food!

**Shena Cuttle**

#### **TAKING TEA WITH THE DEPUTY LORD MAYOR**

At our annual dinner, the Lord Mayor had extended an invitation to Susan Hollick and members of our Club to take tea with him in the Lord Mayor's apartments at the Manchester Town Hall.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> April, several members (plus one Soroptimister) met in the magnificent Sculpture Gallery of the Town Hall and had lunch together before going up to the Lord Mayor's apartments. We were greeted by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Susan Cooley, who comes into office in June. Councillor Cooley asked pertinent questions and appeared to be very interested in our organisation. It was a leisurely meeting and we were given the opportunity to look around the splendid apartment.

**Maureen Heywood**



## **SOUTH LANCASHIRE REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2014 – “MUM’S THE WORD”**



The 2014 South Lancashire Regional Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, John Lennon Airport, Liverpool, on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April. President Victoria Smerdon was pleased to welcome delegates from not only South Lancashire but also from the neighbouring regions of North West England and the Isle of Man and Cheshire, North Wales and the Wirral.

President Victoria says:- *“My theme is Mum’s the Word, and all the speakers are linked into this theme, talking on female*

*and maternal health, and also on how we can promote our organisation, as I say we are the best kept secret in the world, and we shouldn’t keep ‘mum’ any longer.”*

**Jenny Vince, Federation President Elect**, was the first speaker of the morning. She spoke about what the Federation officers are doing to strengthen Soroptimism and challenged us to think about what we are doing in our clubs.

**Laura Redhead, APD for Enviromental Sustainability**, gave us an insight into the topic and talked about the demands made on the environment by our daily needs. She made special reference to the impact the environment has on women and on maternal health.

**Rose Moriba Simbo**, a member of SI Thames Valley and the most charismatic of the speakers, gave delegates a frank insight into female genital mutilation (FGM). Rose is a midwife and now works with student midwives as a placement facilitator. She is originally from Sierra Leone and suffered circumcision (FGM) herself when aged 15 years. She showed us diagrams of the three types of FGM and explained how it affects women’s own health and that of their babies. Her club has founded the Kori Women’s Development Project in Sierra Leone which empowers 250 women and girls in the Kori region to take part in agriculture and education relating to healthcare. The project is supported with material goods and through education for the girls there to live their lives ‘without the cutting’. Her presentation was very moving but also full of good humour. More information about the project can be found at [www.sitv.org.uk](http://www.sitv.org.uk)

**Maureen Thompson, Bench Chair of Wirral Magistrates**, spoke about Tomorrow’s Women Wirral (TWW). This is a centre, housed in a former school in Birkenhead, which offers help to women in the justice system, including those released from prison on licence and those on probation, and can be used as an alternative to imprisonment. She told us about how the centre was started in 2010 and how it now offers safety, integration, empowerment, links with mainstream agencies, mentors and practical help for these women. It is comprehensively supported by Wirral Soroptimists with at least two attending every day. Two women who have been helped by TWW were brave enough to tell us their stories.

**Dr Val Coupes** is a Consultant Paediatrician whose speciality is working with vulnerable children and she spoke about maternal health both in the UK and world-wide. She told us how adequate (and inadequate) pre-natal care affects the neonatal and infant mortality rates and gave us insight into the effects on the child caused by maternal nutrition (both malnutrition and obesity), illnesses which are poorly treated or undiagnosed such as HIV, diabetes and malaria, and lifestyle issues such as drug and alcohol abuse.

The afternoon ended on a lighter note when **Liz McConnell** (née Deborah Marsh) gave an amusing account of her life in pharmacy from teenager to retirement.

## MARY'S MEALS

At some date in October, Yvonne has kindly offered to host at her home our usual meeting to make up backpacks for Mary's Meals. A list of contents required will be distributed soon so if you wish to contribute, please put your name against an item, eg pens, pencils, backpacks (try the charity shops for these!) it would be much appreciated.

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Congratulations to Christine for completing the 10K Manchester BUPA Run on an extremely hot day when most of us just wanted to sit in the shade with a cold drink. Unfortunately, Regional President Victoria who also intended to compete had to pull out at the last moment through injury.

S I Manchester has sponsored Christine on behalf of St Ann's Hospice (of whom she is Deputy Chair of Trustees). Very well, done!



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We know that in the last few months several of our members have suffered illnesses and various health problems. We wish them well and trust that everyone is making a good recovery.

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

|                 |                        |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Phyl Warrior    | 6 <sup>th</sup> June   |
| Pam Harris      | 10 <sup>th</sup> June  |
| Maureen Heywood | 18 <sup>th</sup> July  |
| Molly Robinson  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> August |



## EXCITING DATES WHICH REQUIRE YOUR SUPPORT – so why not enter them in your diary NOW !

Social and Events – Yvonne and Ann have had a meeting and produced a rough plan for the year, as follows:-

|                       |                                                                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Aug   | Garden Party at Yvonne's home                                   |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> Sept | Macmillan Big Coffee Morning at Susan Hollick's home            |
| 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct  | Friendship Evening (possibly musical with cheese and wine)      |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> Nov  | International Evening (possibly American theme)                 |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Dec   | Christmas evening - mince pies and mulled wine at Yvonne's home |
| Jan                   | Coffee Pot Lunch (date to be advised)                           |
| Feb                   | Pancake Party (venue to be decided and date to be advised)      |

## OTHER DIARY DATES

|                          |                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sat 14 <sup>th</sup> Jun | Regional PAC and Council Meeting at Leigh Sports Complex.<br>10am for 10:30am PAC; followed by lunch (bring own) and Council Meeting. |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Last date for copy for the next Newsletter 25<sup>th</sup> August. Surely some of you are prepared to put pen to paper or fingers to typewriter to share your views and holiday experiences with the rest of us!

**Kathleen Beavis and Maureen Heywood**