
SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

OF MANCHESTER

President: **Stella Kay**

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Dear Club Members



December is a busy month for everyone and I hope you manage to do all that needs to be done and enjoy the preparations without stress.



VISIT TO SI ANGLESEY SPEAKER MEETING

In September I went to stay with Kathleen on the beautiful island of Anglesey for a few days. The visit was timed to coincide with the SI Anglesey meeting when Kathleen would take me to meet the Soroptimist friends she has made there (I helped with that –see below). The gods of the best laid plans, however, conspired against us.

It turned out that Kathleen became double-booked for that evening when a diocesan meeting of a financial nature was scheduled. She rightly felt that she couldn't off-load attending that meeting on to another member of her church committee as it involved taking in all the facts and figures and reporting back (who has Kathleen's grasp of finances?), so I was **abandoned to fend for myself in a foreign country!**

It was fine, however, as I had met some Anglesey members in the queue to check in at my hotel at the Gateshead Conference. Their eyes lit up when I said I was from Manchester as they knew Kathleen was living on the Island (Soroptimist jungle telegraph?) and wanted to meet up with her, which they indeed did.

As it was close to World Literacy Day, the speaker at the meeting was Joy Mawby, an author, who spoke about her books. She came to writing later in life after retiring from a teaching career. Her books, *Footsteps to Freedom* and *Broken Warrior* are based on the war time stories of two remarkable people who became husband and wife. She met them many years ago when doing research with an amateur theatre company for the production of an original drama. It took her a long time to realise that their stories needed to be told in full, and that she was the one to tell them in novel form. Also on the literary theme, the club members gave some poetry readings including Stanley Holloway's *The Recumbent Posture*. (I wasn't familiar with that one, but glad I am now)

The evening was rounded off with a delicious buffet. It was a pleasure to meet up with the Anglesey members and, as the gods of chance meetings would have it, they are staying in the same hotel as us at the Harrogate Conference.

In the photograph with me are (L to R) Marilyn Blackburn (Secretary), Barbara Dixon (President) and Rhiannon Jones (President Elect).

Val Moss



MANCHESTER – SNOWDROP CITY



Members supported the National Trust initiative to plant snowdrops and turn Manchester into 'Snowdrop City' next spring to mark the Centenary of World War 1. President Stella, Val and Maureen were joined by the President of SI Ashton-under-Lyne, Yvonne Cartey, and Regional PAC Chair, Margaret Molyneux of SI Leigh.

The National Trust arranged drop-in sessions to plant 100,000 snowdrops in September at various sites throughout the city, and the planting took place in Parsonage Gardens on the day we went. The Trust had bought in selected bulbs from Holland that are

expected to flower on the first year of planting.

We were given reflective jackets to wear and spent a few hours on our knees planting the bulbs in holes cut out of the turf (by the stronger volunteers) and replacing the divots.

The weather was kind to us (no Manchester rain) and many of the city workers came to take their lunch in the peaceful square and watch what was going on. Some of them even had a go at planting some bulbs. We will go back in February and see the fruits of our labour.



A VISITOR FROM HANOVER



An e-mail was received on the 6th August from a German Soroptimist, Sabine Geis, asking if she could attend one of our Business Meetings. I rushed to assure her of a warm welcome here on Tuesday, 2nd September. It was only then that I looked up the Club of which Sabine had said she was a member. The Hanover (Hannover in German) website is lovely; all in German which I struggled to follow. They have six Friendship Links, thriving Programme Action, good membership, Presidents who serve for two years and, from the beautiful pictures of their city, a lovely environment in which to live and work. Included was a photograph of their President and, yes, you guessed it, a certain Dr Sabine Geis!

As Sabine was staying overnight at an airport hotel, Yvonne generously offered to bring her to the meeting and drive her back there. We only had a short time to chat before our Programme Action session started at 6.30pm but Sabine proved to be a charming person, speaking perfect English. She listened carefully and quietly through one of our livelier meetings and at the end thanked us for our hospitality, saying she is very interested in learning how other clubs conduct their meetings and she expressed surprise at the speed at which we make our decisions. Sabine hoped to be able to visit us again in the future.

We presented her with an SI Manchester Club pennant and she had brought us a large box of German biscuits, (which lasted us through to Friendship Evening) and a pottery mug with the slogan "Keep Calm and Carry On", both in a plastic carrier emblazoned with our Union flag on one side and a slogan on the other. A very interesting leaflet enclosed explained that the Lower Saxony State (of which Hanover is the capital) was advertising an exhibition, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales (from 17/5/14 to 5/10/14) to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the coronation of the first of our five Hanoverian kings; (George 1st 1714 to William IV 1837).

I'm sure that more members than myself would have loved to visit the exhibition had we been able. However, I have kept the plastic carrier and use it often, though not always with the flag side outermost. Any day now I expect to be addressed in German simply because I am displaying the slogan side, which proclaims "Als die Royals aus Hannover Kamen". A nice touch, Sabine!

President Stella



OCTOBER SPEAKER MEETING

Naomi Norton returned to speak to members at the October meeting as she had promised in April. She told us about the International Society of Music Education Conference that she attended in Brazil in July. There she met up with many colleagues in the field of health education who have inspired her throughout the time she has been working on her PhD thesis. As before, she was happy to answer our probing questions about her work.



MARY'S MEALS RESPONDS TO EBOLA CRISIS IN WEST AFRICA

Following the launch of a new emergency relief effort, since early September Mary's Meals has been delivering food aid to thousands of people affected by the Ebola outbreak in Liberia – including patients infected by the deadly virus. Meals are being distributed at three holding centres in the townships of Tubmanburg, Robertsport and Brewerville.



Under normal circumstances, Mary's Meals reaches more than 128,000 impoverished children across Liberia each day, attracting them to the classroom with a nutritious meal in school. However, the recent crisis has brought a temporary halt to their feeding programme in the country, with all schools now closed. Striving to make effective use of their resources, expertise and significant community standing in Liberia, Mary's Meals has now launched an emergency response to the Ebola outbreak by distributing food to children in their homes.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters around the world, Mary's Meals can act quickly in times of crisis to provide vital food supplies to people in desperate need. Their crisis response has already seen around 10,000 children receive emergency food rations in their homes and is focused on two counties, Grand Cape Mount and Bomi – both of which have been cut off from the capital, Monrovia, by military blockade.

Currently, in various areas Mary's Meals is feeding 923,572 of the world's poorest children every day they attend school.

MARY'S MEALS BACKPACK PROJECT OCTOBER 2014



In October members made up 35 children's backpacks for the charity Mary's Meals. Every backpack contained school materials (notebook, pencil case, pens, pencils, ruler etc.) clothing items (t-shirt, shorts or skirt and flip-flops) a tennis ball and washing items (towel, soap, toothbrush and toothpaste).

Each backpack was labelled to show the intended age and gender of the recipient. Members had been



collecting the backpacks and contents for many months and, with many willing helpers, they were all filled within two hours. There were also two boxes of extra items that the charity will take and use to 'top up' other donated backpacks.



The charity will deliver these to children at one of their feeding stations at a school in a developing country. Such schools are often very remote with no shops nearby, and families are often too poor to buy school materials even if there were a shop.

When Tim Olsen came to talk to us about Mary's Meals recently, he told us of his field visits to feeding stations and of the joy and delight he saw when children were given a backpack.



HUD HUD CYCLONE RELIEF - IRONY AND REALITY

On the 18th October Kathleen and I received the following report from New Hope, Orissa.....

"There was a very short last-minute alert that the tracking of the Hud Hud Cyclone would actually hit the coast at Visakhapatnam. I had gone to Muniguda the previous day as normally the cyclones hit far more north in places like Berhampur and Puri where we have leprosy colony care programmes.

When I heard that the path had changed and Visakhapatnam had been struck I was stunned. However we had made basic plans on the possibility that we may suffer strong winds and that possibly highways would be blocked north of us. We purchased longer shelf-life vegetables and had vegetables growing. It was just as well we had done this. We always have diesel in store for the generator and tarpaulins if needed.

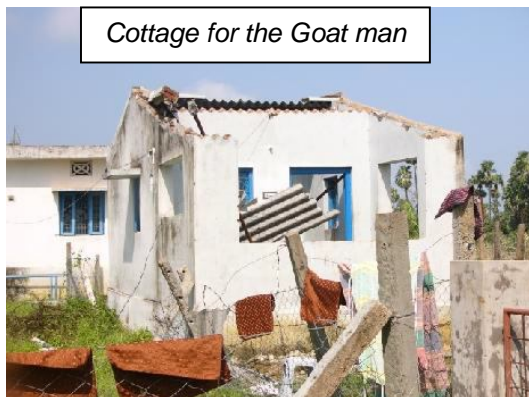
The irony is that I had come to Muniguda only to find the reality was where I had just left. Trains stopped for four days and roads closed and there was no communication with Visakhapatnam. It is incredible that less than 100 people died in the whole area of the cyclone area.

The destruction to our community centre is almost too hard to describe. We lost six of our biggest and oldest mango trees. Our 'Mother Mango Tree' under which children play and where guests sit in awe at its size, stands almost alone and without a leaf. The loss of the other five fruit-bearing mango trees, the total loss of our Papaya, Drum Stick vegetable tree and our Curry leaf tree and all vegetables in the Roellis Garden is painful to see.

Old Kitchen behind a Workshop



Cottage for the Goat man



Our Cowman turned the cows out in the storm and they went and stood and then sat in the playground. The cow shed roof flew off. A tree hit the goat house and its damage is hard to explain. The whole roof got knocked off centre and then damaged. Vasu, who many of you know from emails, had just supervised and worked on a new chicken house project and it 'flew away'!

The damage to the school structure was minimal. There are no formal classes this week but the children are organized with 'home work' and studies. There is very limited lighting at night as we use

the generator as minimally as possible due to the cost and shortage of diesel. Unfortunately the solar system was damaged – actually the electrical inverter and batteries, in one Home and in two others the panels have been damaged.

The simple room that Babu and his wife and child have at the side of the First Aid Centre lost its roof. They had shifted to the First Aid main building prior to the storm. The couple; who look after the goats and help in the garden were fortunate not to be hurt as they had a feeling to leave the cottage. Its roof crumbled and its destruction tells me the might of the **160 miles per hour cyclone that went on for 36 hours.**

After months of hard and rather stressful work getting the Bio-gas anaerobic digester to produce gas we lost all the gas as the tin sheet covering made to protect the dome from monsoon rain cracked the gas outlet pipe and blew off. The day prior to fitting new stove burners into the kitchen.

Any support would be appreciated.

Eliazar Rose - New Hope India

On hearing of the disaster, at a Business Meeting the Club agreed to send as much as we could afford. The Executive decided they could make £1,000 available. On receipt of the e-mail announcing our donation, Jill Ghanouni (the UK arm of the Trust) expressed her thanks and delight at the generosity of our donation and said that the New Hope India staff would be over the moon when they heard what Manchester Soroptimists had donated to their work.

The following extract from Jill's letter will, I am sure, bring home the extent of the disaster.

"Two trees fell across the crops garden and green house. The garden keeps the community centre about 65% self sufficient in its food supplies - all crops were flattened and of course the coming season's harvest of mangos was lost. The damaged anaerobic digester (as mentioned by Eliazar), when working at full capacity, provides 80% of the fuel needed for the kitchen to cook two meals a day for 300 people. "



BLOOD-SWEPT LANDS AND SEAS OF RED.....

The Tower of London remembered the First World War with this art installation, filling the moat with 888,246 hand-made ceramic poppies. Each poppy represents a British military death during the First World War. The last poppy was planted on 11th November, Armistice Day.

I went to see this on a Sunday in October whilst volunteers were still planting the poppies. Hundreds of people stood along the various vantage points but it was quiet and peaceful as we looked on in awe and amazement....it is truly stunning!

When this poignant spectacle is dismantled '10% of each ceramic poppy sold, plus all net proceeds will be shared equally among six service charities'. All of the poppies have now been sold at £25 each! (<http://poppies.hrp.org.uk>)



One of my earliest memories is of helping Mum collect for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal (Please note that there is no 'buying' or 'selling' of their poppies, you receive your poppy in recognition of your donation!) I would hold the tin until it got too heavy, then I would offer the pins, as Mum went from door to door on November evenings up to Remembrance Sunday. In later years Mum took a supermarket pitch and positioned herself by the trolley return bays in the hope of the retrieved pound coin going into the collection box!

Mum and Dad both served in the Second World War and both were involved in the work of the Royal British Legion.....but every year there was further conflict in our house as Remembrance Sunday approached, Mum would be marching but Dad refused on the grounds that 'his marching days ended when he donned his demob suit!'

I'm sure that they will have been watching the progress of the planting of the poppies at the Tower from their cloud.....and totting up the Poppy Appeal's share of the sale of the ceramic poppies!

Sue Underwood



FRIENDSHIP EVENING

President Stella, members and guests let their hair down at our Friendship Night event on October 18th. The entertainment was provided by 'Loose Change', a group of musicians who raise funds for the charity Cancer Research UK. They busk on a regular basis in shopping centres in Wilmslow and Chorlton and take bookings to play at events. They do not take any fees themselves and every penny they raise goes to the charity. They sing and play the pop songs we all grew up with which make you want to sing along, tap your feet or take to the dance floor, as did Rosemarie and the bandleader!



As usual for Friendship Night candles were lit for our Friendship Link clubs of Calcutta Downtown, Johannesburg, St Petersburg and Wichita, as well as one for SIGBI and one for Soroptimist International.

A delicious cheese and wine supper was served and a raffle held to boost funds for Cancer Research. We were pleased that members and Soroptimisters from SI Ashton and SI Stockport were able to join us for the evening.



YVONNE'S 90TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Please excuse this omnibus "thank you" for a wonderful; celebration lunch. It took me back to my 21st birthday and will remain a very happy memory as did the latter. I received so many cards and gifts, it would take me to Christmas to write individual letters (by which time I may be addicted to Champagne!) It was a day of surprises and balloons, a beautiful cake and unexpected friends attending. Soroptimism has given me a lot of fun and friendship as well as serious work.



Thank you all very much for making an old "lady" feel life has still lots to offer.

Yvonne



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thanks to Val and Molly for several of the unattributed articles, which were taken from our website.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Special Christmas greetings to Peggy and to Phil who, we hope, will soon be out of hospital.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Many Happy Returns to all members celebrating a birthday before the next issue of this Newsletter.

Clelia Gatley	8 th	January
Stella Kay	14 th	January
Kathleen Beavis	14 th	January
Yvonne Healing	19 th	January
Elaine Loader	23 rd	January
Sally Carr	31 st	January
Rebekah Readhead	25 th	February
Beatrice Leigh	27 th	February



COFFEE POT LUNCH

Don't forget to let Yvonne know if you wish to attend this event on 14th January.



A LITTLE REMINDER

A New Year approaches but don't forget that we have many ongoing projects requiring your renewed support.

Cornerstones – coffee, sugar, biscuits and tinned meats, etc.

Genesis – used bras to raise much-needed cash for this charity.

NSPCC – used inkjet cartridges.

Ruth – used postage stamps.



DIARY DATES

Wednesday,	14 th	Jan 2015	Coffee Pot Lunch, Wycliffe Hotel, 12.30pm.
Saturday,	7 th	Feb 2015	Pancake Party at the home of Fiona. More details later
Sunday,	1 st	March 2015	S I Manchester's 89 th Annual Lunch at Chancellors
Saturday,	7 th	March 2015	Regional PAC at Leigh Sports Centre, 10:00 for 10:30 Council Meeting, 1pm. Bring lunch.



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS:

We are grateful to all who, in lieu of cards, have sent their Christmas greetings on the following page. Some of the money received will go towards gifts for Cornerstones Homeless Centre.



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

Kathleen Beavis

Maureen Heywood

GREETINGS FOR CHARITY IN LIEU OF CHRISTMAS CARDS

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT STELLA

In sending the season's greetings to all our members in S I Manchester and their families, as well as to Soroptimist friends everywhere, I do hope we can all spare a thought for the real meaning of Christmas. Our efforts to spread the message of peace and goodwill are so worthwhile because we, as an organisation, are rooted in Friendship, without which neither peace nor goodwill can prosper. With these thoughts in mind, I wish you all a joyous Christmas and a very happy 2015.



Health and Happiness to you and yours. Cheers! Sue U

Seasons Greetings from Christine Gibbons



Our love and very best wishes to you all, and your families, for a joyous Christmas season and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.
Susan and David



Every good wish for Christmas and the New Year
Love from Yvonne

Peace and Goodwill to everyone
Love from Kathleen



With all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Ann



Barry and Shena wish all members a happy Xmas and a healthy New Year

Good Health and Season's Greetings to all with love from Margaret & Bill



We wish a joyful Christmas to everyone, and that New Year will bring peace and happiness to us all Barbara and Mario



Merry Christmas and happy New Year to all members and their families from Val

To wish all my friends at S I Manchester all the best for a happy and healthy new year, Celia



Maureen and Bill wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a healthy New Year. Much love from Fiona, Paul, Alex and Ciara

My very best wishes to all my S I Manchester friends. Thank you for your welcome to the Club. Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.
Barbara (Blaber)



Merry Christmas and happy New Year from Yvonne (Healing)

We wish everyone best wishes for the forthcoming festive season - Rosemary & Gus

