

President: **Molly Robinson**

Issue No 63
Winter 2016

Dear Club Members

After a somewhat tardy Autumn, Winter is truly upon us: snow on the mountains, hard frost on the grass and a real nip in the air. The lead up to Christmas is so packed with activities and things that need to be done that time seems to fly by but we get there in the end. I hope your preparations go well and that you all have a truly enjoyable festive season.



A FOREIGN PRESIDENT, LIVING IN A FARAWAY LAND



"Ask me why I'm a Soroptimist" – that is the question we have all been asked. The answer, for me, is I am a Soroptimist to be of service to those in need, and to improve the lives of women and girls worldwide. I know it sounds generic, but I can't think of a more perfect reason. As a famous women's rights activist once said "human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights" and I feel our club exemplifies this in the work we do. But there is still a lot to do, and that is why I am a Soroptimist.

I am now officially halfway through my term as President and am not sure where the time has gone! As a first time president (and the first foreign one for this club, I am told), and a relatively new member, I am still learning the ropes. Luckily I am in a club where the breadth of knowledge and support is limitless. A lot has happened in the last six months; the highlights for me include meeting a member of the royal family (thanks to Val's letter); meeting members of and forming relationships with some of the other local women's organisations, WI Cottonopolis, Women of Srebenica and the National Women's Register; attending the Spirit of Manchester Awards to see the Pankhurst Centre win and hearing all the stories from other members about their work with our projects and charities.

It has been an eventful year so far with new projects and relationships. We are steadily approaching our goal for the HEAL project and doing some great work raising awareness of human trafficking through our work with Hannah Flint and Stop the Traffik. As the holidays approach, we are looking for new ways to help the community in addition to our annual holiday donations to WomensAid, the Pankhurst Centre's Emmeline's Pantry Parlour, Cornerstone's and St Ann's Hospice. In the New Year, we hope to continue with our fundraising for the HEAL project as well as our local charities - hopefully with the help of some of our new links to local women's organisations. I feel so grateful to have been given the opportunity to be President of such a fantastic and active Soroptimist club, and am so proud of the progress we've made. And, finally, never did I think when I took over in April that I would be president of SI Manchester from London! But here we are, 6 months in, 180 miles away and separated by a common language, I am a foreign president living in a faraway land!

President Molly



Greetings from the Fundraising Committee!

The Fundraising Committee first came together in February 2016 to focus on fundraising activities for the Club's 90th Project, Act4Africa's **HEAL** – Health, Empowerment and Livelihoods for disadvantaged women in Mchinji, Malawi.

With the help of a donation of £1,000 from last year's International Evening, funds from the Hilda Swindells Bequest and a variety of individual and group activities, we have now raised **82%** of our £9,000 target.

So many people have contributed to the amount raised to date but particular mentions to **Alex Charlton** whose wonderful tea party brought in £466, **Yvonne Healing** who ran a half marathon raising sponsorship of £160, and the band of hardy souls who got up VERY early on Sunday mornings in August and October to brave Bowlers Car Boot Sales!! Special thanks also to **Therapy First** who have donated £200 and pledged their ongoing support.

Now we need your support to raise that final £1,600!

Our main fundraising event is a **CHARITY LUNCH AND FASHION SHOW** which will take place on **Sunday, April 9th 2017** at Swinton Park Golf Club. **Please note that this is a change from the original publicised date.** The Fashion Show is being provided by **Shuffs of Worsley** - I defy anyone to visit this shop and not buy something! Tickets will be available from January but please, please put the date in your diary and invite your family and friends. We also need good **raffle prizes** for the event. Do you have a favourite hairdresser, beautician, shop or restaurant? Could you ask them for a voucher? Please let me know.

Here are a couple of other things you can do:

- ❖ Are you a keen online shopper? Sign up to **Give As You Live**, choose Act4Africa as the charity you wish to support, and the stores you buy from will donate a percentage of your purchases. www.giveasyoulive.com
- ❖ Need a Christmas present? Buy a HEAL Malawi ethical gift card. Visit <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/gifts>

Finally, a reminder of what it is all about. Here are the 10 community mentors who have been trained using the initial donation of £5,000



Barbara Blaber

90 th PROJECT Target £9,000	
Amount to target	£1.615
Super Skills	£60
Regional Meeting Stall	£132
Sponsored Events	£160
Smartie tubes	£204
Car Boot Sales	£315
Alex's Tea Party	£466
90 th Birthday Challenge	£501
Other donations	£546
International Evening 2015	£1,000
Hilda Swindells Bequest	£4,000

RUNNING FOR SOROPTIMISM!



On Sunday 4th September, SI Manchester's Yvonne Healing successfully completed the Salford 10k road race in 55 minutes. Not content with this, she also completed the same distance around the historic Aintree Race-course just a month later. In doing so, she's raised an amazing £160 towards the club's 90th Year Project – HEAL Malawi.

She says many people passed her and commented on her distinctive 'Ask me why I'm a Soroptimist' t-shirt!

The club wishes to thank Therapy First who sponsored her entry in both races and for the donation of £200, which they raised by providing before and after race massage treatments



STOP THE TRAFFIK – SPEAKER MEETING

On the 15th September, at our Speaker Dinner on Modern Day Slavery, we had a very inspiring talk from Hannah Flint from Stop the Traffik. It was wonderful to have members from our other clubs there, including Regional President Elect Margaret and Regional Vice President Margaret, to hear Hannah as it is such an important and relevant topic. She gave us valuable information on what we all should be looking for with regard to modern day slavery and whom to contact if we have any concerns. Thanks to Val for arranging such a great speaker.



MARY'S MEALS



We had an enjoyable few hours packing 30 back packs again this year for the Mary's Meals Charity. It is a great charity supplying meals for children in their schools who would otherwise go hungry and the backpacks are an added bonus for these children. Thanks to everyone who supplied the clothes, educational material, towels etc that we packed. It's one of the things that makes me happy being a Soroptimist - doing something practical like this. I look forward to doing it again next year .

Rose Marginson.

Val received the following letter of thanks from, Mary's Meals:-

Dear Friends

Thank you so much for your generous donation of 30 backpacks and supporting Mary's Meals. For many of the children, the backpack they will receive from supporters like yourself is the only gift they have ever been given. Children attending Yorodano Primary School in Malawi tell us how important the Backpack Project is to them:

"I am happy to have a book to help me learn." – Innocent Charouza, age 8

"This is my first school bag, I am happy" – Tiwonde Taendo, age 6

Many children receiving Mary's Meals don't have basic learning tools such as pencils and notebooks or even clothes to wear to school, so your support is helping these children to realise their full potential and go to school equipped with the necessary educational items.

*With your help our school feeding programmes have continued to grow. We are currently feeding over **1,000,000** children all over the world for just **£12.20** a year.*



Our vision is that every child in the world receives a meal a day in their place of education. Mary's Meals is a simple idea that works – by providing a daily meal in a place of education, chronically poor children are attracted to the classroom where they can gain a basic education that provides an escape route from poverty. Supporting Mary's Meals through the Backpack Project is a practical way to enable children to get the most out of their education.

Thank you again for your contribution towards our work.

*Yours sincerely,
Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow
Chief Executive, Mary's Meals*



FRIENDSHIP EVENING



Friendship Evening was a bit different this year. We had invited other local women's clubs to join us for the evening in the spirit of friendship.

We welcomed Katie Pegum from W.I Cottonopolis, and Alma Elmsley and three other members from the Women's Register from Wilmslow.

It was a Lancashire themed evening with Lancashire Hot Pot on the menu, followed by Manchester Tart, Apple Pie with Lancashire cheese and crumble all cooked by our members.

Val produced a great quiz on Lancashire and asked John and Susan to read two poems. It was great fun and very enjoyable meeting people from the other clubs and learning more about how their organisations work. Katie gave a short talk on the W.I. and Alma on the Women's Register. We hope to keep contact in the future.

Rose Marginson



NOVEMBER SPEAKER MEETING

President Elect Rose and members were pleased to welcome guests from the Act4Africa team to our November Speaker meeting at the Pinewood Hotel. We enjoyed a meal with CEO Martin Smedley and

Hilary Yeates, Project Manager, followed by an excellent presentation to bring us up to date with the HEAL Malawi project, which we have undertaken to support to mark SI Manchester's 90th year.

Hilary told us about Bernard Makupete, their Malawi Team Manager, and how he is getting on with the project. The aim is to train 20 women as Community Mentors and for each of them to form a group of around 25 young women. This is being done in two groups of 10 and the first group has received their training and formed their own mentoring and savings groups, with a current average of 15 young women in each. At this early stage these figures compare favourably with the charity's experience of their HEAL project in Uganda. So far six of these groups have opened bank accounts for their savings and received seed funding from the charity.

Hilary also told us the stories of two very different young women who are benefiting from the project. One has never been able to speak out about how she feels and is gaining confidence from the group, and the other is a budding entrepreneur with lots of business ideas. We appreciate hearing these individual stories of the young women we are aiming to help.

The photograph shows Hilary Yeates, our own Barbara Blaber (Finance Administrator Act4Africa), President Elect Rose and Martin Smedley.



Val Moss



SIGBI CONFERENCE, MALTA 2016 OR 'OUR HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS ON TOUR'!

Some celebrities cross Africa on a motorbike; our stars do Malta on mobility scooters!

Our journey began with very smooth passage through Manchester airport, Yvonne and Kathleen being wheeled direct to the front of the check-in queue with Hilary (Kathleen's daughter) and me following in their wake. Then we passed through 'Oversized Baggage' (cheek!) to security and beyond. The Hilton Malta had been very helpful organising suitable rooms for us, but nobody had told Dennis who was on reception when we arrived at 11pm! All was well after some furniture rearranging by a very helpful porter. After breakfast on Tuesday Kathleen and Yvonne collected their mobility scooters and Hilary and I put on our running shoes!



After an afternoon chatting with friends old and new we headed to the 'Blue Elephant', a Thai restaurant in the basement of the hotel. The final half flight of stairs was achieved by driving the scooters onto a platform, directed by the very helpful staff. It was only later in the bar that the first design fault of the scooters was identified – 'Where do you put your drink whilst trying to read the menu?!'



As we made our way to the table the manager decided that the scooters should be parked in their China Shop.....I'm afraid that we don't have a photo because neither Hilary nor I could watch!?!
The banquet was generous and delicious with a host of flavours and colours. We did return for another meal, but lessons learned, the scooters remained at the top of the stairs and we only ordered one dish!

On Wednesday morning our HLM's settled on their balconies whilst we were sent out for some fresh air – we got soaked! Returning to the rooms, still dripping, we pleaded to be allowed to stay indoors! So, back to the lounge for more lively conversation!

Registration was painless on Thursday morning. After lunch we delivered our HLM's to the hairdressers and enjoyed a pot of tea whilst we waited for them to return.....but we missed them and had our exercise running up and down stairs to be reunited and persuading our keys to let us into our rooms!

The Opening Ceremony was a little 'flat', somebody had decreed that we shouldn't applaud the individual flags onto the stage?!? (We managed to do as we were told for most of them!)

Friday began far too early as we prepared to be 'Pink by the Pool' – as the website reports, 'one Member on a mobile scooter was dressed as a Victorian bathing belle'.....it was Kathleen!



Miraculously, we were all back in the auditorium on time, and a little less pink!

Dame Professor Sue Ion spoke of the achievements of women engineers throughout history and demonstrated how early in their education children define careers as male or female.

S I Malta's 'Novawoman' project aiming to empower young girls, from 7 to 17, in creative skills training, was ably represented by two of the school girls who confidently quoted Dr Edward de Bono 'If you never change your mind, why have one?'

Club projects were presented: 'Spoon badges', 'Toilet Twinning', 'Singing for Memory' and 'STEM' (Note to SIGBI: Please could we give some basic PowerPoint Training for Member presentations?!?)

Bandana Rana, a journalist and activist from Nepal, working for women's rights in Nepal, urged us to 'Walk together for women's causes – change IS possible'

After lunch, the AGM was lively and informative. SIGBI is to be allowed to apply for Charitable status, but the resolution to remove the Immediate Past Federation President from the Board was defeated. Common sense prevailed!

Saturday was a truly inspiring day, with superb speakers (who knew how to use PowerPoint!)

International President Yvonne Simpson urged us to work to **FRIENDS**:

- F** Friendship in Federations and beyond
- R** Report your projects on the Programme Focus Reports
- I** Increase membership, be inclusive
- E** Educate to Lead
- N** Nepal – support the S I President's Appeal
- D** Deliver the Mission
- S** Stand by and support each other

RoseMary Reid, President S I Americas spoke of their work for younger members – 'Live the Dream'.

Theresa Lyford, President S I South West Pacific, quoted – 'An Optimist is someone who figures that taking a step backward after taking a step forward is not a disaster, it's more like a Cha-Cha!'

Sarah Ezabe Malliue, a law student at the University of Malta and recipient of the Queen's Young Leader Award who launched the social media anti-discrimination campaign '#RedefiningUS' quoted Angelina Jolie to explain her determination to wear a hijab 'it is who I am...it is my identity...I feel like an empowered female'

Steve Arthur from Water Aid suggested that women and girls should not be seen as victims but as engineers, innovating bringing safe water and sanitation to their world.

Dave Coplin, Chief Envisioning Officer for Microsoft, began by telling us that we, as an audience, terrified him! But he soon turned our heads around as he spoke of 'The Rise of the Humans'! A technology alchemist, he explained how we should benefit from the potential of technology rather than simply using it to do the same things, only slightly better – we need to work smarter not harder!

Dr Helen Sharman, Britain's first Astronaut, had to follow that and she was equal to the challenge! Helen took us from the advert 'Astronaut wanted – no experience required', through her training, to the actual launch and journey into space 25 years ago. She gave us some examples of the mission leading to technical improvements for drugs using protein crystals grown in space and a better understanding of health issues. However, the mystery remains as to why we cannot grow fruit and vegetables in space!

The Closing Ceremony and Change of Insignia had its challenges!

President Margaret reviewed her year in office. From the 'zip-wire' challenge to places less travelled (Sierra Leone and Cameroon). She expressed her sense of privilege and the honour of serving.

Change of Insignia was followed by **President Ann Hodgson's** Inaugural Address, her theme and challenge for next year is '**Step Up and Lead the Way**'

Entertainment by **Red Electrick** was a missed opportunity – they could obviously sing and play (if not spell!) but the volume was vamped up so high that their sound was distorted! We left early, with many others and

had our own party in room 413 with our HLM's enjoying a shot or two of Brandy, purely medicinal, of course!

Finally, there were a couple of 'Remind me why I'm a Soroptimist' moments to share - soaped from head to toe at 8am when the fire alarm and 'please evacuate the building' was sounded – false alarm! Then on Friday at 6am, either no cold water and trying to rinse in scalding hot water, or no water at all and abandoning the idea of a wash! Thank you Hilton Malta for the timely lesson in 'running water' appreciation!?!

So, an inspirational trip packed with friendship and laughter! Looking forward to next year in Cardiff!

Sue Underwood



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Special Christmas greetings to Stella, Rebekah and Peggy who are in our thoughts although not able to attend meetings.

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

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.

Pankhurst Centre – toiletries, etc.

Beatrice – used postage stamps.

DIARY DATES

Sunday,	29 th	Jan 2017	90 th Birthday Party for Kathleen. At the Pinewood. Details to follow.
Friday,	24 th	Feb 2017	S I Manchester's 91 st Annual Dinner at Northenden Golf Club.
Sunday,	9 th	April 2017	Lunch and Fashion Show – please make sure that this is in your diary!

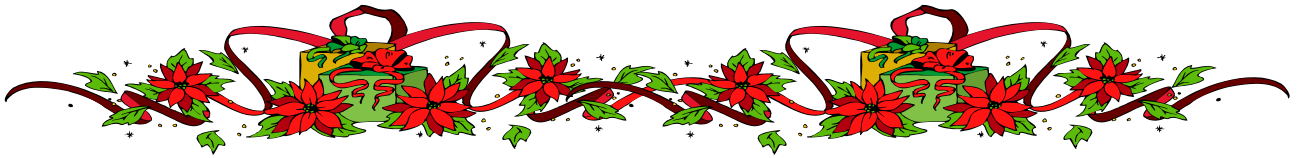
CHRISTMAS GREETINGS:

We are grateful to all who, in lieu of cards, have sent their Christmas greetings on the following page. Donations will go to our General Charities Account.

Copy for the next edition of the Newsletter by Friday, 17th February, please. Personal anecdotes would be welcomed.

Kathleen Beavis and Maureen Heywood





Happy holidays and best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year! Love from President Molly and Andrew

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to members and their families from Val

Happy Christmas to everyone and a Peaceful New Year from Rose and John

Every good wish to you and your family for Christmas and the New Year - Yvonne

Peace and Happiness to you all for Christmas and the coming year. Love Kathleen

Health & happiness to you and yours - Sue U

Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year - Pat

With all Good Wishes for Christmas and 2017 - Ann

**These greetings
come to you in lieu
of cards in order to
raise money for
our charities**

With best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year Barry and Shena

I hope you all have a Christmas that's exactly how you like it and with the people you like the most - Elaine

Much love and happiness to all our Soroptimist friends and families - Fiona, Paul, Alexander and Ciara

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from Rosemary and Gus

Our good wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year from Maureen and Bill

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and good health and fortune in the coming year. Love Susan and David

To all my Soroptimist friends
Wishing you and your families
all the very best for the Festive Season. Barbara B

Seasonal Greetings to all Soroptimist friends with sincere good wishes for a Healthy and Happy New Year from Stella

