
SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

OF MANCHESTER

PRESIDENT
Susan Hollick

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Dear Club Members

Spring at last! Or am I being too hopeful? I have snowdrops, elephant's ears, primulas, periwinkles and forsythia in flower and daffodils in bud. The sun when it shines is quite warm but the winds are strong and biting and torrential rain continues to be spasmodic.

I trust that you have all survived the winter storms with your gardens and houses intact.



OLD ENGLISH NIGHT



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S.I. Manchester in conjunction with King Edward V11 Masonic Lodge participated in a very enjoyable evening on the 6th December at Stanley House, Audenshaw. The purpose, as well as an evening of fun and friendship, was to fundraise for Soroptimist and Masonic charities. The evening certainly achieved its objective with each organisation receiving a cheque for £1,000 resulting from the generosity of all present.

The food was superb, excellent value for money and the entertainment provided by the Masonic Lodge very good. I don't think I am the right person to comment on the singer provided by the Soroptimists, but he gave his usual enthusiastic performance and has received many compliments.

The tremendous efforts of Barry on behalf of both organisations were wonderful. He has worked tirelessly for our charities on so many occasions; we thank him most sincerely. Thanks also to all who gave auction and raffle prizes ensuring excellent financial results.

**Rosemary Steven**

### AN UNUSUAL GIFT

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On a Tuesday in the midst of the gales, I had a birthday. My son, Mike, came over from Belper on the Monday and we all enjoyed a celebratory family meal together.

Next morning, as we were sitting over a leisurely breakfast whilst I opened my birthday cards, Hilary arrived clad for an outing and suggested we make the most of the break in the weather and drive through the forest to Llandwyn, a favourite beauty spot.

In recent months I have found it increasingly difficult to walk any distance over uneven terrain but was happy enjoying the view from the car or a convenient bench while the others went further afield. I was



therefore surprised when we pulled into the nearest car park, I was even more surprised when Hil and Mike proceeded to unload from the boot and assemble a fold-up, mobility scooter which Hil had hired for the day from a shop in Menai Bridge.

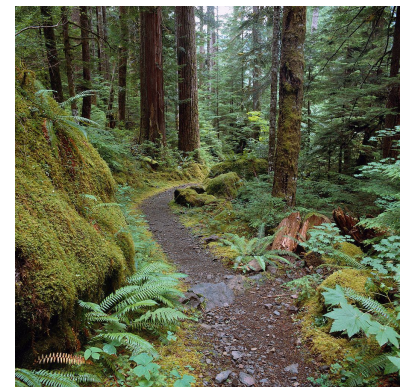


I was highly amused to discover that the speed control on the handlebars was a small lever with a picture of a tortoise at one end and a hare at the other. The uneven camber of the narrow forestry paths made balance somewhat precarious but we made good progress until our way was blocked by a fallen pine tree. Hil cleared the debris and Mike managed to raise one end sufficiently for me to “hare” under it crouched low over the handle bars.

This was only the first of several obstacles. Due to the storms there were deep rivulets at either side of the wobbly path but all went swimmingly until we reached the locked barrier. We ascertained that the scooter would go through the narrow side gate – just – with perhaps a couple of inches to spare, the problem being that the whole of the gate-way was one deep muddy puddle. With instructions to drive fast and steer straight, I was told to “Go for it Mum” and I made it.

A wide path now lay before us but to counteract the mud it had been covered with nugget-sized shale. Travelling over this with solid tyres and no suspension gave my kidneys a shaking that bordered on the painful. After this things got easier and we explored further recalling things we had enjoyed in the forest when Mike and Hil were children.

We had been told that the battery life was four hours on good terrain so we decided that we had better wend our way back to the car. Our calculations were a little out because I suddenly realised that travelling with the hare was no different from travelling with the tortoise. However, with Mike’s firm hand on my back to aid the dwindling battery we arrived safely back at the car park.



It is a long time since I laughed so much and we had such fun as a family. We returned home, cleaned up and smartened up and went off for a birthday lunch in a restaurant overlooking the Menai Strait. A perfect ending to a memorable birthday.

No, I am not about to buy a scooter because I couldn’t lift it in and out of the car but there could be occasions in the future when I would hire one.

A VISITOR FROM SWITZERLAND



In January we were contacted by Sylvia Shwarzenbach, a Swiss Soroptimist. Sylvia was to be in Manchester for a few days, attending a Conference at the Royal Northern College of Music. She is an Honorary Member of ISME (International Society of Music Education), and was a teacher of music for over 40 years. Her main interest is in the health of musicians, especially students, for example repetitive strain injury in the wrists and shoulders of violinists; hearing problems for those musicians who are constantly blasted by the close proximity of loud instruments in the orchestra, etc.

Yvonne kindly hosted a coffee morning at her home, which was attended by half a dozen Soroptimists, and we spent a couple of hours chatting and listening to a CD which Sylvia had presented to the Club and which featured herself on clarinet and three other Soroptimist musicians.

Maureen Heywood

A VISITOR FROM SI WARSAW

President Susan was contacted at the end of January by Agnieszka Parlinska, a member of SI Warsaw, who was coming to Salford University during February and was keen to make contact with our club. Eventually, despite some communication difficulties, Agnieszka met with Susan and I on February the 19th at my home.

Agnieszka is an economist specialising in the public sector and as part of her PhD studies had spent a period at Glasgow University and has now commenced a post doctorate thesis leading eventually to an academic chair at Warsaw University.

I met her and took her on a short tour of Worsley Village and she was very interested in its historical aspects. We also visited the excellent refurbished Worsley Old Hall. Susan joined us for supper and we had a most enjoyable and informative evening discussing and comparing lifestyles and Soroptimist activities in Poland and the UK.



The Warsaw club was opened in 1990 - the first club in Poland to be chartered. There are now another nine clubs in other cities in the country. It was wonderful to see videos of such an enthusiastic group. Agnieszka's mother is also a Soroptimist and was a founder member of SI Warsaw. The club has several friendship links and has participated in exchange visits with a club in Holland and plans to visit another link club, SI St Albans, later this year.

Agnieszka is a delightful young lady, who is club treasurer and hopes eventually to be President. She is arranging to return to Salford University in the near future which will give more members the opportunity to meet her. We look forward to seeing her again soon.

Rosemary Steven

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#### **ACTIONAID IN VIETNAM**

Ruth received the following letter and photograph from a young girl she supports through ActionAid and she thought you would be interested.

".....My name is Tarn. I'm 15 years old and I've lived all my life in Tu Tarn, a small village in the district of Ninh Phuoc in southern Vietnam. Ha Chu, from ActionAid, has asked me to explain how your support through *The Next Step* has meant I can continue my schooling.

I live with my grandparents, parents, older sister and younger brother. Like many other people here, my parents work as farmers earning very little. My mum didn't get the chance to go to school and my older sister had to drop out of school to help on the farm. I felt so lucky to be the only girl in my family in school. However, I was unsure how long my luck would last, discrimination between boys and girls is strong in my community. Compared to boys, few girls go onto study at high school. Many girls are forced to leave school early, to marry and then devote their time to their husband and family.



Two years ago, my dad told me that I would have to leave school at the end of the year. He thought I should marry young, like the other women in our village, and spend my days doing household chores and farm work. He felt the longer I stayed at school the more difficult it would be for me to find a husband. This made me sad and disappointed because I enjoyed going to school with my friends; I did not want to live a hard life without schooling like my mother and older sister.



However, thanks to ActionAid's work in our community many girls like me are able to continue going to school. Over the past few years, ActionAid has held many meetings, involving thousands of men, women, and children in our community. We were given the chance to discuss and learn about the national education law, gender equality law and the rights of all children to access education. We also discussed how education can bring positive changes to family life and the development of the community. Over 100 girls, me included, jointly drew a big picture to depict our dream of being treated equally at school and having the opportunity to go onto higher education.

By attending ActionAid's meetings, I now understand that education is my right, and can bring me a better life with a stable job. I now spend more time and effort studying. My dad attended the meetings with me; one day he told me that I would not have to leave school. I was overjoyed and now am in grade 9. My dad has said I can move to high school next year and go to university if I pass the entrance exam. Dad also promised to send my older sister to ActionAid's evening classes where she will be able to learn to read and write together with other women in our village.

Besides helping my dad and the whole community understand the importance of girls' education, ActionAid also provided some of the poorest girls in the community with scholarships, school bags and text books. They also organised an annual book festival to promote our love and passion for books. Now I go to the library once a week to borrow books for relaxing and to improve my knowledge.

ActionAid has played an important role in my life. I used to think I would never leave my village, now I dream of going to a big university, where I hope to learn how to become a journalist and travel the world.

Thank you for supporting ActionAid. I know that with your support, ActionAid has been able to help me and other girls like me to study in school, bringing our hopes and dreams back to life. Thank you and bye bye, Tarn

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COFFEE POT LUNCH

Once again, Yvonne organised our annual Coffee Pot Lunch, which was held at the Wycliffe Villa Hotel towards the end of January. The food and service were superb; Soroptimists were outnumbered by friends (8 to 6) but It was a very happy occasion with lots of chat and laughter. Thank you, Yvonne.

Maureen Heywood



PANCAKE PARTY

Our Annual Pancake Party was kindly hosted by Fiona and Paul on Saturday, 8th February. Fiona had returned on the previous day from a pressurised academic ophthalmic tour in Kenya, but with her own enthusiastic style, she nevertheless calmly entertained 23 guests to a great evening.

A selection of delicious savoury and sweet pancakes was enjoyed by all, followed by a quiz devised by Peter Halliwell, which made most of us realise how little we knew about our home city. The organised board games and the generously supported raffle ensured that the evening was a really enjoyable occasion, which resulted in over £300 being raised for the club's charity funds.



Thanks once again to the Charlton family (including the highly efficient sous-chef, Ciara) for their much appreciated efforts.

Rosemary Steven

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## ANNUAL DINNER

The Annual Dinner was held once again at Chancellors Hotel, reverting to an evening function rather than lunch. President Susan had arranged a musical entertainment by "Loose Change" in lieu of a guest speaker. This group, led by Bernard Dolan, Ambassador for Cancer Research UK, do not take a personal fee but donate any monies they receive to the cause.

The Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Naeem al Hassan, responded to the President's toast to the City and Ports of Manchester. The toast to Soroptimist International was proposed by David Hollick with a response by



Victoria Smerdon, Regional President of South Lancashire.

President Elect Stella gave a well-earned vote of thanks to 'Loose Change' and presented them with a cheque for £200 for their charity.

The proceedings were in the capable hands of our good friend, Peter Halliwell.



## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We have just learned that Phyl Warrior has been taken into Hospital for tests. Phyl has not been well for quite some time so let's hope that they can do something to make her more comfortable. We send her our good wishes and the following details will enable you to send your personal greetings, should you so wish.

Miss Phyllis Warrior  
Ward 14  
Wythenshawe Hospital  
Southmoor Rd, Wythenshawe,  
Manchester, M23 9LT,  
Tel: 0161 998 7070

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



|                 |                  |       |
|-----------------|------------------|-------|
| Sameem Ali      | 17 <sup>th</sup> | March |
| Peggy Howarth   | 12 <sup>th</sup> | April |
| Christine Miles | 26 <sup>th</sup> | April |
| Ann Thomas      | 19 <sup>th</sup> | May   |
| Ruth Jackson    | 23 <sup>rd</sup> | May   |
| Susan Hollick   | 29 <sup>th</sup> | May   |

## Diary Dates

|         |                                  |       |                                                                        |
|---------|----------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sat     | 15 <sup>th</sup>                 | Mar   | Regional Meeting                                                       |
| Thurs   | 10 <sup>th</sup>                 | April | AGM and Dinner, Pinewood Hotel.<br>Dinner 6pm for 6.30pm. Meeting 8pm. |
| Sat     | 26 <sup>th</sup>                 | April | Regional Conference. The Crowne Plaza. John Lennon Airport, Liverpool  |
| Thu/Sat | 6 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> | Nov   | SIGBI Conference, Harrogate.                                           |



## A THOUGHT FOR THE NEXT CLUB YEAR

What the mind can conceive  
That the heart can believe  
We will achieve



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

**Kathleen Beavis and Maureen Heywood**