



Soroptimist International of Manchester

President: **Carole Swarbrick**

Summer
2024
Issue 86



Dear Club Members,

My thanks to those of you who have not only written articles but also sent them to me in advance of the deadline so that I could get a head start! It's been a busy couple of months with a trip to Zambia, supporting Jeff after his Hip Op and looking after Albert (French Bulldog) while his Dog Father was first on holiday and then recovering from burning his hands and arm....we're all doing very well now!

Again, my challenge to you all is that you should each contribute at least one article for the Autumn/Winter edition, either emailed or hand written. I must also ask you to think about your 'Christmas Greetings' in lieu of sending cards to Soroptimist friends, in exchange for a donation to our General Charities fund.....maybe a photo to go with your greeting? If you need help with photos or anything else then please ask.

I hope you enjoy your Newsletter!

Sue Underwood



President's Message:

President Carole Swarbrick - Letting Go, Moving Forward.



I must apologise if I have seemed preoccupied of late but I moved out of my home of 36 years at the end of July. The 4 months leading to moving day were filled with uncertainties not least because my new home is not due to be completed until at least the end of October.

However, in true Soroptimist manner, I received offers of accommodation from many in the club for which I will be forever grateful.

As I left with my son the new owners arrived. Mr and Mrs Chow insisted on photographs and were so excited I couldn't feel sad. It was time to hand it over to be cared for by the next family.

President Carole



I'm delighted to say that Carole will be house sitting for me this September while I am on holiday in France!

Albert is looking forward to showing her around his Quays!

Sue Underwood

New Member Helen Kenny-Levick 'In Her Own words'

Hello I am Helen.

My husband and I are waking up to the feeling that we will soon be 'empty nesters' as our second 'child' Lucy has achieved in her A levels and will be off to study Environment and Planning at The University of Liverpool. Just close enough for her to bring home her washing ... (but then again do students need to do that these days with the more bespoke and not to mention expensive residences available which must include an ensuite?) Things were quite different for Julien and I when we met in Leicester in the 1990's.

She is following somewhat in her parent's footsteps as my husband and I are both chartered surveyors (thankfully we do not work together; I will try and demonstrate below how hard we try not to be boring), and have worked in central Manchester for over 20 years dealing in commercial property.

We are nervously and rather hopelessly out of our depth with our son Max's choice of Film and TV production but we have our fingers crossed as he starts his final year in September.

I started my career in Newcastle upon Tyne leaving my much loved home town of Stokesley in North Yorkshire where I lived amongst dogs, ponies, cats bikes and chicken and a family who I would describe as strong characters. I loved Newcastle and was so sorry to leave the north east but an exciting job in Manchester and not least my future husband were calling for me. Two children later and what seems like a lifetime juggling full time work at Co-operative Estates and parenthood, I am presently a proud civil servant managing part of the Government estate including leasing premises for Job Centres and the like. The experience has been quite humbling as I hear more and more about the most vulnerable in our society.

In between times I have somehow managed to keep up with my love of horse riding and cycling and everything outdoors. I would love to own a dog but having just relinquished some responsibility for my offspring, I find I am not ready to sacrifice my dreams of heading off exploring the UK on a bike, horse or perhaps on the back of Julien's motorbike. I explored Segovia on horseback with my mother (who was then 72!) a few years back and she has inspired me to think I can manage another adventure next year in North Macedonia, this time with my sister. I can feel a section in the newsletter next summer assuming I make it. (*Noted! Sue*) The 5 – 8 hours a day in the saddle on VERY forward going horses at a fast pace plus staying in the mountains in tents on the Miyak Tribe Trail will be something quite challenging when compared to my day to day existence of being at a desk in front of a computer screen. I do get to ride every week on a horse that belongs to a good friend, plus Julien and I are keen and regular cyclists but I will have to build up more fitness for next year!

I have realised over the years that life can bite you on the bottom sometimes when you are least expecting it and getting through those times be they brief moments or life-altering, are only possible with the support and friendship of others. I am regularly in awe by the inspiring stories of people who have overcome life challenges and hope I can do something that will help the lives of others.

Helen Kenny-Levick



Most women are
Soroptimists...
they just don't know it yet!



Women, Whiskey and White Walkers



Soo and myself went for a short break to Northern Ireland. Here are a few snaps.

We were impressed to see that Belfast is ahead of the game with statues of women. Winifred Carney (women's suffragist and political activist) and Mary Ann McCracken (social reformer and activist) are in pride of place outside Belfast City Hall. For more information see [here](#).



Outside a main transport hub is the Monument to the Unknown Woman Worker. This commemorates the countless unknown women who shaped Belfast with their badly paid and unpaid labour. It has an interesting history – the city council both commissioned it and then banned it. Fortunately, it was privately funded and offered a prominent place on private property. See [here](#) for more details.



A swift visit to Bushmills Distillery, meant I could cross one off my bucket list. But I need to go back again for a tasting – ideally staying very close by!

I'm a Game of Thrones fan, so we visited the Studio Tours in Banbridge. Soo's never watched it but she quickly picked up that if you see a White Walker, you don't hang around.

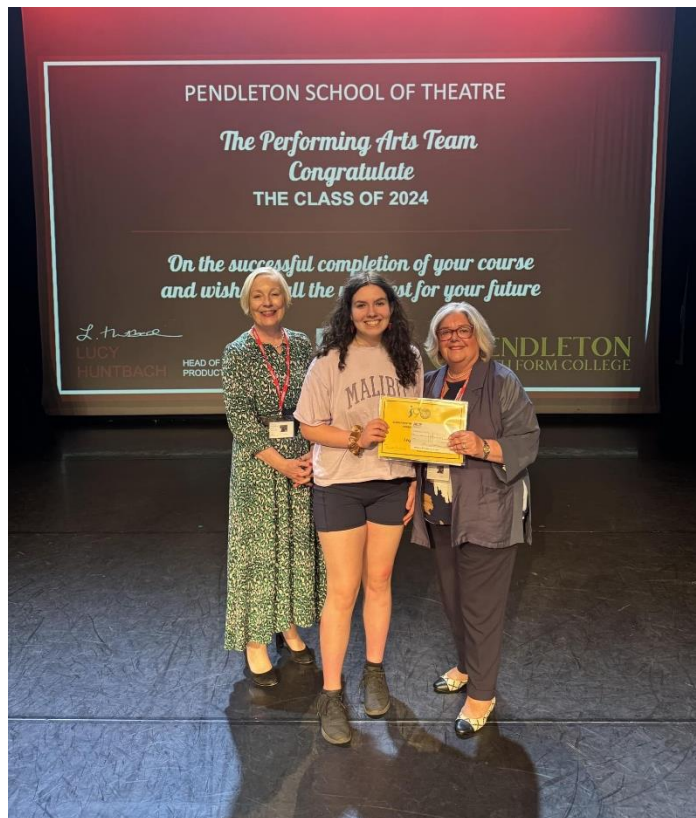
Elaine Loader



Soroptimist Manchester Arena Memorial Award 2024

The recipient of the **Soroptimist Manchester Arena Memorial Award 2024** was **Leigha Tandy**.

On a beautiful sunny afternoon Rose and myself went along to Pendleton College to present Leigha with her certificate and cheque for £250. In addition we watched performances by the performing arts students which were dramatic and thought provoking. One snippet from the play *Road*, written by the Bolton born playwright Jim Cartwright set in a northern town in the 1980's, had overtones of life today for some of the women we support and help as Soroptimists.



Members may remember that in the aftermath of the horrific Manchester Arena bomb in 2017 the club decided to set up an award to a performing arts student at Pendleton College. Many young people attended the concert and were affected by the events of that terrible night. The girl student is chosen by the staff at the college following criteria suggested by the club.

As we came away Rose and I felt very positive that the club had made a difference to both Leigha and the college with the added bonus that we were able to give a brief overview of the work of S I Manchester.

We wish Leigha great success in her future career.

President Carole & Rose Marginson

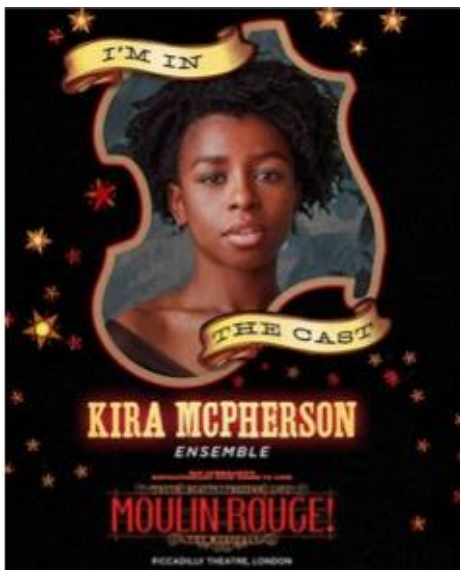
Previous Recipients:

- 2018 **Kira McPherson**. Kira, a dancer, won a place at the Urdang Academy. She is currently in the West End company of 'Moulin Rouge The Musical' (@kiramcphersonn)
- 2019 **Maria and Imogen**
- (2020)
- 2021 **Tameka Cunliffe**
- 2022 **Yna Montarde**. Yna achieved a place at the Urdang Academy in London to study for a Professional Dance and Musical Theatre Degree. The pledge of the Urdang Academy is "Say It Loud!"
- 2023 **Joy Mills**, a musical theatre student

Kira McPherson, the First Recipient of the Manchester Arena Memorial Award 2018

Our first recipient of the Soroptimist Manchester Arena Memorial Award is doing well, she's been in 'Moulin Rouge' and 'Matilda'

Great to see
Rose Marginson



@kiramcphersonn



The 'Matilda' gang



Junior Royal Northern College of Music Annual Prize Giving Tea

As President of S I Manchester it was a pleasure to attend the Junior Royal Northern College of Music Annual Prize Giving Tea. I had the company of Susan Hollick and her husband who love attending this event. The RNCM is a valued partner and members will remember the wonderful speaker at the charter lunch Karen Humphreys MBE who was about to retire as Head of Junior Programmes.



It was a delight to present the **Helen Latto Soroptimist Prize** for singing to **Charlotte Dear**, a soprano who travels from West Yorkshire for tuition.

During the course of the afternoon I spoke to many young people who were celebrating the end of their A levels and looking forward to the next stage of their musical journeys. Several had accepted offers at Conservatoires both in the UK and abroad.

My overwhelming impression was that I was made most welcome and thoroughly enjoyed spending the afternoon with these bright, articulate, ambitious and delightful young people.

President Carole



A Quilting Journey

30 years ago I was inspired by the quilts at the American Museum, Bath and attended a patchwork and quilting evening class. I produced two quilts and was full of enthusiasm. Then other aspects of life took over, I met my husband Paul and had two children, and I had no time to sew.

Roll on 2020 and the world changed again. COVID had a big impact of course, although I was still at work daily in the hospital and lockdowns made me feel a creative outlet would help keep me mentally strong. I was also panning ahead for my retirement 2 years later, and having "an empty nest", and so decided to start patchwork again. I found only being able to buy fabric online strange at first but successfully navigated this and renewed some sewing skills to produce a sampler quilt. Reassured that in the USA sending your quilt for longarm quilting was common, I started searching for a helpful UK expert. I discovered that (of course) my quilt was actually too large for some frames so I eventually sent it off to North Yorkshire!

Encouraged by the outcome, and how much I had enjoyed the process, I knew I would be doing more once retired. I embarked on another quilt in 2022 for my daughter, followed by a 70th birthday quilt for a dear friend, they both pored over books with me to choose colours and layout. Somewhere along the line I became completely hooked!



As I retired one of my gifts from the hospital was a book about the quilt designer Kaffe Fassett and some of his fabric and since then my library of books and stash of fabric keeps growing. He designs some very vibrant fabric and quilts and so it is not surprising that they have featured in my sewing.

So now my son has a quilt and we have two for our Lake District lodge. I belong to two quilting groups already (because we know I can't do anything half-heartedly) and have made new friends and of

course I am learning all the time. The longarm quilter, another Fiona, in Yorkshire has quilted all my large quilts so far brilliantly. In between I have made lots of cushions and zipped cosmetic bags, pin cushions and table runners for Christmas and birthday gifts.



In between the big quilts I can join in with projects in the quilt groups such as producing quilts for the Linus Project. This provides quilts as gifts for babies and children in hospital. Due to our work with Early Essentials I was able to offer them baby Linus quilts for some of their Moses baskets and have even made some baby quilts myself between bigger projects. As our Linus coordinator is moving I am now assisting in the Linus project which will continue the Soroptimist connection.



So what next?

Perhaps I can make a quilt for us to raffle as part of our centenary project.

Fiona Spencer

Food & Friendship



On a very warm evening in June some members enjoyed the [Kargo Market](#) on Salford Quays.

As we overlooked the water, enjoying the atmosphere, we tucked into Korean, Vietnamese and good old English food which was all delicious.

Thanks to Sue (and Albert) for the suggestion.

President Carole Swarbrick

Albert – Sue – Hilary – Val – Carole - Rose

Well behaved Women seldom make History



GM4Women2028 – Dialogue, Deeds, Determination

*July 2nd – Summer Event – The University of Salford
A full day of discussions, workshops, a sprinkling of
visiting football trailblazers, ample networking plus a
touring #SheVotes24 Centenary Action Van for good
measure!*

& we, President Carole & I, were there with a stall promoting Soroptimist International of Manchester as well as other Clubs in Greater Manchester. We were joined by Angela Holmes (President SI Wigan & Region Membership Officer)

We were delighted to meet Helen Pankhurst again and suggested she might like to be part of our Centenary Celebrations....she asked us to keep in touch and send some possible dates with as much lead time as possible. *(I had already booked the stall after the Reveal event in February, but Helen contacted us about the Centenary Van through Molly in the Greater London Club!)*



Angela - President Carole – Helen Pankhurst – Sue U

A 'Political Participation Panel' included

Carol Ann Whitehead founder of The Zebra Partnership working towards a 50/50 split of Women in Politics, Council and Parliament

& the 'Muted Voices' project encouraging more women of colour to run for Council and Parliament



Hilaria Asumu Salford Councillor (Walkden South Labour)

striving to help other women in her community to achieve their ambitions. Also raising awareness of Kidney disease particularly in the African community.

(Hilaria used to be a member of SI Manchester)

Teresa Pepper member of the Salford City Council Mayoral Team on Work, Skills & Business Support', encouraging women to be 'the best they can be'



'The Corinthian's Culture & Active Lives'

Helen Tither presented the fascinating tale of women's football in the 1950's assisted by four ex-players

Ann Grimes (Germany 1957)

Monica Curran (Italy 1961)

Marlene Cook (Portugal & South America)

Margaret Griffiths (1950's South America Tour)

In 1957, with just 5 days notice of going, they went to Berlin

and beat Germany in the final – they brought the Cup Home!

The boots they were given had been a shock, big and brown like Stanley Matthews wore!

They had the cultural feeling of going out into the world – in Madeira & Portugal they travelled by Seaplane and the

1950's one month tour of South America was extended for three months in the Caribbean!

Sponsored by the International Red Cross they played all over the world in proper stadiums to crowds of around 65,000, so the charity did very well too!

Sue Underwood



Save the Date – 2025 GM4Women2028 Data Reveal – February 22nd in Stockport – we will have a Stall!

The Group photo – I can see Angela but I can't find Carole or my 'Deeds not Words' rosette hat! We were there!



Restore Nature Now – London 22nd June 2024

Over 60,000 people joined Chris Packham, Steve Backshall, Dame Emma Thompson and Feargal Sharkey for a peaceful, legal march and rally. It was also promoted by Dame Judi Dench and even Jonathan Pie!

We called on everyone to recognise and reverse the damage done to nature and a call to action to avert the climate crisis.

It's unusual to have so many groups that have not previously worked together. It was organised by the RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts, WWF, Friends of the Earth, WWT (wetland restoration), Woodland Trust, Rewilding Britain, National Trust, Wildlife and Countryside Link, Plantlife and Extinction Rebellion.

In all, participants from 350 charities, businesses and direct action groups took part. It was very colourful and many thought-provoking banners expressing the frustration at the state of our land, water and air and the hope that it might not be quite too late.



Here's me with my very poorly(-made) bee and full marks to you, if you can spot me in the group picture!

Elaine Loader



SIGBI Day Of Action: Emmeline's Birthday Celebrations at the Pankhurst Centre

The Pankhurst Centre was celebrating the birthday of Emmeline Pankhurst by offering a fun day of activities to the public. People could make appointments to visit and have a guided tour of the centre and all the artefacts relating to Emmeline's work and the work of the Pankhurst family.



As well as the tour, workshops were available for writing poetry or creating cards. There were activities for children. A highlight was a performance by an opera singer.

Fiona, Rose, Sophie and Val from Manchester Soroptimist International club helped with the day by providing refreshments for the visitors. We had baked cakes such as lemon drizzle cake and blueberry cake, brownies, cookies, buns and chocolate crunch. We served these while visitors helped themselves to tea or coffee.



There were many grateful compliments which made all our efforts worthwhile.

Val Jenkins



Val, Rose & Carole at last year's event



& in 2019

Cakes & Crafts

At the [South Lancashire](#) Regional Meeting on 8th June our club had a stall selling baked items – cup cakes, cheese scones, muffins and more – and craft items from [Act4Africa](#), one of our partner organisations. We were delighted to raise funds for Act4Africa as well as some of the other charities we support.




Pat Usher

Afternoon Tea at 'The River' – No Baking, Just the Raffle & Auction!



What a great afternoon!!
The hospitality was superb.
SI Manchester supplied the raffle and auction prizes and raised a fantastic £202 for this very deserving charity.
Thank you so much
Sophie Kennedy



 **The River Manchester**
15 June · 🌐

We had such a fun time at our Father's day afternoon tea, it's been the best yet and thank you all who came and made it so fantastic! Again, thank you for your amazing support!

We had an auction and Donna was such a natural auctioneer! And especially our bakers, Emily, Sue, Marcia, Aliyah and Sandie who made such dainty and delicious selection of sandwiches and cakes. And the wonderful [#volunteers](#) who worked behind the scenes.
[#soroptimistinternational](#) [#soroptimistmanchester](#)

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

We will be celebrating our Centenary over TWO years

The Inaugural Meeting was held on February 18th 1926

Our Charter was granted on June 16th 1926

So, Fiona Spencer will be President for our 100th year and will host our 100th Charter Dinner or Lunch in February 2026

& Sophie Kennedy will be President when we are 100 and will host the celebration of the granting of our Charter in June 2026

****A Call for Action: Celebrating 100 Years of SI Manchester****

As we approach the centenary of Soroptimist International Manchester, it's time to reflect on our remarkable journey and the impact we've made. To honour this incredible milestone, we invite each member to participate in a special challenge: a pledge to celebrate our 100th year by committing to the number 100 in a unique and personal way.

****A Century of Service and Empowerment****

For 100 years, SI Manchester has been dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls through education, empowerment, and enabling opportunities. This centenary year, we have the chance to amplify our efforts and create a lasting legacy. We are calling on each member to take up the challenge and pledge to do 100 of something meaningful.

****Your Centenary Pledge****

Your pledge can be as creative and impactful as you like. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Walk 100 miles****: Promote health and well-being while raising awareness for our cause.
- **Raise £100****: Fundraise through bake sales, sponsored events, or creative projects.
- **Bake 100 cakes****: Host a bake sale or donate the cakes to local shelters and community centres.
- **Knit 100 hats****: Provide warmth and comfort to those in need during the winter months.
- **Plant 100 trees****: Contribute to environmental sustainability and beautify our community.

****Making Your Pledge Count****

We encourage you to share your pledge with fellow members and the community. Document your journey through photos, stories, and updates to inspire others and showcase the collective power of our efforts. Together, we can make a significant impact and celebrate our centenary with pride and purpose.

****Join the Movement****

This is more than just a challenge; it's a celebration of our history and a commitment to our future. Let's honour our past by taking bold steps forward.

Pledge your 100 today and be part of a monumental year in SI Manchester's legacy.

*****Let's make our 100th year unforgettable, one pledge at a time*****

Alison Forster

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Centenary suppers are up and running!

On a warm, if damp Friday evening on 2nd August, Fiona Spencer hosted the first of SI Manchester's Centenary Suppers. In addition to Fiona's guest Paul (who supported the hosting duties), the remainder of the supper party comprised Rosemary and guest Gus, Sophie and guest Kev, as well as Val and me. The evening was full of lively conversation. Many warm memories of past events were shared as well as excited discussion about future centenary planning and jokes were shared.



Our host set the bar high in culinary terms. After a warm welcome and a drink in hand we were treated to a delicious roasted carrot puff pastry tart, salmon fillets and accompanying vegetables.

The pudding was equally lovely. Guests were torn between the option of a beautiful pavlova or an orange polenta cake with cardamom and orange syrup with accompanying orange slices and creme fraiche. Some guests had both. After all the effort to produce these delicious desserts, it would surely have been rude not to and we were sure they wouldn't keep!

The evening was relaxed and convivial and we were united in our conclusion that Mr Jamie Oliver is a national treasure whose cookery books are essential in every home. Of course, the execution of these recipes is a matter of individual skill and Fiona excelled.

We left for home happy and sated and most importantly, the evening was a fund-raising success with £80 raised for the coffers.

Roll on the next Centenary Supper, which is sure to build on the success of this one and would be an excellent opportunity for existing members and newer members to get to know one another.

Cathrine Holland



Centenary Fact

The Club was Chartered and known as the 'Soroptimist Club of Greater Manchester' for 10 years until it became the 'Soroptimist Club of Manchester' in 1936.

Fun, Food, Friendship & Fundraising at Our Summer Garden Party

What a wonderful afternoon was had by members and friends at this year's annual fundraising garden party, hosted by Rosemary and Gus and organised by Alison.



A welcome drink and afternoon tea was served to over 20 guests.



Thanks to Sue for running the tombola, Fiona for serving the cakes from the bake stall, and Gus for manning the bar.



Thank you to all the guests for making it such a lovely afternoon.

Thanks to all those who came, and those who couldn't and so donated money and prizes.



*Really enjoyed it.
Thank you everyone
Susan Hollick*

Thanks Rosemary and your dear husband for a lovely afternoon. We loved every single bit of it. Well done to Alison and everyone who made it colourful.
Lillian Kympaire

Thanks to Rosemary for opening your home & to Alison for the superb presentation of the delicious afternoon tea & all the hard work that you both put into making this afternoon a memorable one.
Catherine Ngaira



*It was a beautiful afternoon
The afternoon tea was sensational!
My thanks to Alison for her catering and to Rosemary for the use of her garden*
Sue Harris

Many thanks for an excellent Tea and pleasant afternoon
Olive Doody



All in all the afternoon raised in the region of £600 which will go to the projects we support.

Sophie Kennedy

**A Huge Thank You to
Rosemary, Alison & Gus**

Dates for Your Diary

Tuesday 3 rd September	7pm	Club Meeting – New Venue, 'live' only.
Monday 9 th September	7pm	Programme Action - Zoom
Saturday 14 th September	From 10am	South Lancs Region PAC & Council Meeting
Tuesday 17 th September	7pm	Executive Meeting
Tuesday 1 st October	7pm	Club Meeting – 'Once Upon A Smile' Charlotte Brown
Friday 4 th October	7pm	Centenary Supper hosted by Sophie
Tuesday 15 th October	7pm	Executive Meeting
Thursday 17 th October	10am	'A Scarf for Lewy' Central Hall, Manchester (Lewy Body Soc)
Thursday 24 th October	2pm	'Greater Manchester is 50' Afternoon Tea
1 st , 2 nd & 3 rd November		SIGBI Federation Conference Edinburgh
Tuesday 5 th November	7pm	Club Meeting
Tuesday 19 th November	7pm	Executive Meeting
25th November to 10th December		16 Days of Activism
Saturday 7 th December	From 10am	South Lancs Region PAC & Council Meeting
Tuesday 10 th December	7pm	Club Christmas Party hosted by Fiona

Further information & Social events – Watch for emails! - See <https://sigbi.org/manchester/meetings-and-events/>

Copy for the next edition of the Newsletter by **Saturday, 30th November**, please.

Looking Forward to the Autumn/Winter Edition with articles from each of you

Christmas Greetings in Lieu of Cards:

Do you wish to send your **Greetings** via the December Newsletter (and make a donation to Club Charities)? Please send me your **Greetings** (Maximum 20 words or a photograph) before the **November 30th deadline** (I will be happy to receive your **Donations!**)

Sue Underwood suehome@sky.com

Last Words from Women, a Man and a Bear who could/should have been Soroptimists!

