



Spring  
2025  
Issue 88



President: **Fiona Spencer**

Dear Club Members,

Prepare to say farewell to the logo of our 90's, it will soon be replaced by our Centenary logo!

I look forward to receiving your articles telling of your Centenary experience and thoughts, please remember that YOUR Newsletter reaches a far wider audience than the WhatsApp Group!

**Sue Underwood**

### President's Farewell – President Carole Swarbrick

Another busy year for Soroptimist International Manchester supporting some of our well established charities but adding some very worthwhile new ones too.

The newsletter regularly gives updates on all of our ongoing projects with photographs but one recent addition is **Contact Hostel** which provides accommodation and practical support for homeless teenage girls. In addition this football season has seen our wish to sponsor a girls football team become a reality. This year has seen the club move to a new venue Sale Conservative Club which coincided with being joined by 5 new members who are most welcome and are already making a significant contribution to the life of the club. The year began with the club being awarded the Rose Bowl Challenge. Members who attended the region meeting were thrilled when the winner was announced and the cut glass bowl presented.



We continue to support students at the Royal Northern College of Music and Pendleton College. I attended both award ceremonies and was very impressed with the wonderful young people I met at both events.

In order to support our ongoing projects we of course have to raise funds and the usual pancake party and garden party were both very successful. In addition there has been specific fundraising events for the forthcoming centenary in the form of **Centenary Suppers** which continue to be popular as a fun social occasion.

In October the Mayor of Bolton hosted an afternoon tea in order to showcase the work of Soroptimists across Greater Manchester. We were joined by the president of SIGBI Ruth Healey and the proceeds of the raffle contributed to our fund raising.

Some members attended an environmental awareness day which was so much more than revisiting our recycling habits. It was thought provoking to say the least.

The club continues to be represented at the GM4Women events which is an opportunity to showcase our work.

We maintain strong friendship links and members are in regular contact with the growing number of clubs globally who have reached out to Manchester this year. We have added clubs in Turkey and Australia.

S I Manchester is a busy vibrant club and members work very hard not only to support the women and girls through our partner organisations but in many different ways. Friends and colleagues are often recruited to knit, raise funds through sponsorship or attend events which will lead to improving the lives of women, girls and their families both locally and internationally.

Our tech savvy members have ensured our activities are posted on social media as we know this helps to highlight our projects. Members also monitor the social media of our partners in order that we can respond quickly to any additional requests.

In April we begin our centenary year and are only the second club in the UK to reach this milestone after London. The club would not have survived the last 100 years without caring committed women who are not frightened to roll up their sleeves and make a difference to those whose lives are very difficult for a variety of reasons. You are those amazing women so thank you for our Soroptimist journey together. A special thanks to members of the executive and to those who have offered me advice borne out of experience. It has been a pleasure and privilege to be the President of the club 2024/2025 and I now look forward to our very special centenary year.

## Sue Silk - Hello All!

My name is Sue (one of many in SI it seems!) and I joined Soroptimist International Manchester in spring last year. I wanted to meet new people



and get involved in local activities and this seemed to have many opportunities for exactly that. Strangely enough an old work colleague who I hadn't seen for over twenty years is part of the same group and she has been great at explaining some of the bits and pieces that it's good to know about SI.



My husband Mike and I moved to Manchester at the start of 2022 having lived in Wakefield for 34 years. Although this was a big upheaval, it was prompted by a wish to be closer to our younger son and three youngish granddaughters. It also had the advantage of having a good clear out of the stuff that we had been accumulating some of which we had completely forgotten we had anyway! This is still a work in progress. We are also adjusting to living in a more 'modern' house (1961) having lived in Victorian properties all our married life and this is going really well particularly as it's not as draughty.

Our other son has lived permanently in New Zealand since 2012. We have an older granddaughter there who has just had her fifteenth birthday and we enjoyed celebrating that with her in December on one of our frequent visits there. This is us in Hamilton Botanic Gardens on a road trip with our son in January.

I was brought up in Manchester and went to Whalley Range High School for Girls but left home in 1970. Of course the city has changed considerably so it's a bit of an adventure finding new places and reconnecting with old haunts. I have worked in education settings all of my professional life in both teaching and management roles. I am still very much involved in a voluntary capacity as a trustee and board member of a large multi-academy trust which is responsible for forty one schools. It takes up a fair bit of my time but I really enjoy making a small contribution to developments that impact on the lives of around 30,000 children and young people. The ethos and activities in SI link in with this interest.

Mike and I spend as much time as we can on our narrowboat Mabel Catherine which we have had now for twenty two years. We have been all over England on her and a bit of Wales. There are so many highlights including trips up and down the Thames into Limehouse Basin, across The Wash from Boston Lincolnshire to Wisbech Cambridgeshire, Stratford-upon Avon, Birmingham and this year a trip into Liverpool mooring the boat in Salthouse Dock.



We now keep the boat at Stone in Staffordshire but on our travels we have got to know so many places that we would probably never have visited. It's a keep fit holiday! We fortunately have friends who are very keen to join us each year for a stay that involves quite a bit of hard work on the locks as well as good food and a few drinks at the end of the day. Many people ask why it isn't moored at Sale near where we live. Well, basically if you're going for a weekend away it's nice to be somewhere completely different.

Apart from canals we also have an involvement with classic MG cars and meet up with the same group for weekend or longer holidays once or twice a year. We have also joined a local group who meet a couple of times a month. It's lovely for us being closer to the family and we can easily pop back to Wakefield to catch up with friends over there. We see more of our grandchildren and I am looking forward to getting more involved with SI. There's a lot going on and a lot to learn.

**Sue Silk**



## Rachelle Manders – Hi!

I grew up in Gosport, a naval town on a peninsula opposite the Isle of Wight. Half the dads in my class went to serve in the Falklands, my dad had left the Royal Navy by then, but was a submariner for 17 years. I didn't realise at the time, but Gosport was a nice place to grow up being able to see the sea on my cycle to school & I've always enjoyed being by the sea & cycling from A to B since.

I studied at Leeds Uni, French & Greek Civilisation and joined Courtaulds Textiles' graduate training scheme where I started my career in product development & sales. My first job was at Aristoc Hosiery in Belper, Derbyshire. Here I became friends with my-to-be sister-in-law who set me up with her brother, after much denial from both Rich & I that we were at all interested. (Can't date your best mate's brother can you?!)



Meanwhile Mum moved back to Paris when I was 19 and I'm very lucky to have been a frequent visitor to Mum's home city ever since. We enjoy exhibitions & I share my Mum's passion for history, independent cinema & Mum definitely instilled my feminist streak!

Later I moved to London to work on Nica & Fiorelli Handbags and now I work for a US company Centric who hold the license to make accessories for Coach, Michael Kors, Kate Spade & AllSaints. I look after the Jewellery Department, my selling territories are France & EMEA Middle East & South Africa & India.

When I met Rich he designed sewage plants, which didn't sound particularly sexy, but it has taken us to some great places. We lived in Sydney for three years whilst his company installed Sewage Plants to clean up Sydney Harbour, We then moved to Dubai where Rich's firm designed the sewage treatment plants for the Palm. Dan was born in Sydney which he is very proud about. Leah was not born in Dubai, as I ensured I left just in the nick of time 8 months pregnant, as the mid wives didn't believe in any kind of pain relief! Leah is bereft as she was born in Derby instead!

Daniel is studying Economics at Notts Uni and Leah Geography at Leeds Uni, which I love reminiscing & boring her about how Leeds was in my day!

Rich & I love walking in the peaks, which has now progressed to going on quite strenuous walking holidays. I'm not always convinced they are holidays, with daily walks of 12 miles & a couple of 1000m ascents! We did Cinque Terre last year, this year Rich has planned Lake Como (with equally high & numerous hills!!)



I also foster/overwinter juvenile hedgehogs who are too small to hibernate from [www.facebook.com/hulses.hedgehogs](https://www.facebook.com/hulses.hedgehogs). I take them in November time and, once they are a good weight, they are released where they were found in Spring time. This winter I have Lola, who is really friendly. They are one of the few wild animals that you can handle & pet (I have to weigh her weekly) and after a week of no human contact they revert to being completely wild again.

**Rachelle Manders**

## The Pancake Party

On Saturday the 1st of March members and friends once again enjoyed the hospitality provided by Fiona & Paul at our annual Pancake Party.

As usual the savoury and sweet pancakes prepared and cooked by Fiona were delicious accompanied by a variety of assorted salads.

The spirit of fun and friendship added to this most enjoyable event the raffle helped to ensure an excellent amount of funds raised in support of our many worthwhile charities.

The only plea is in future could the quiz be a little less challenging as we did not appear to have many aspiring masterminds judging by the scores obtained!

Thanks again to the Charlton family.

**Rosemary Steven**



*Special thanks to Rose Marginson for remembering to take the photographs!*

*A few of the SI Social WhatsApp comments:*

Catherine Ngaira: Always a pleasure to have fun and good food around you and your warm family.  
Thanks to you Fiona and Paul. 🙏🙏

Fii Pendaeli: Great evening, thanks Fiona and Paul. We did our best with the challenges 🐼😁, I think 50% is a good score 😁😁. Have a blessed Sunday 🙏

Val Jenkins: A great pancake party. Thank you so much for the food, the company and challenges. xx

Sue Silk: Thanks Fiona and Paul for a lovely evening. Great food and company and mind challenges (which we were fairly hopeless at)!

### **Fiona Spencer:**

Thank you everyone who made last night a success. The lovelies who brought salads, soft drinks, icecream and apples, who ran the bar, sold raffle tickets, helped in the kitchen and washed up, those who came and brought raffle prizes and then tickets, those who couldn't come and donated.... A huge thank you .... And to my son for help printing out for games and my husband for a huge effort getting the house ready. You are all fab and why I enjoy being a Soroptimist!!! 😊🙏



## GM4Women2028 Scorecard Event

The GM4Women data reveal was held at the Stockport County football ground and I attended with one other Soroptimist from Wigan.

Members will know that this initiative came about in 2018 after Helen Pankhurst issued a challenge to Andy Burnham to improve the lives of women and girls in Greater Manchester by 2028. This date is significant as it will be 100 years since women were successful in their struggle to secure the vote.



Helen Pankhurst was one of the speakers along with Kate Green, the deputy mayor of Greater Manchester.

Both speakers emphasised the importance of data collection in the areas of women's safety, career paths and earnings, health care, housing and participation if gender equality is to become a reality. They emphasised that we must follow the 3 Ds **DATA, DEEDS, and DETERMINATION** if the lives of women in our communities are to improve.



The GM4Women website has more data information but, although the Culture and Active lives group showed some improvement in outcomes for women, overall there was disappointment at the perceived slow progress thought to be in line with the national picture.



The day was a useful networking opportunity and interesting to be with lots of women of all ages and backgrounds. It is good to be reminded that there are some amazing, inspirational women in our area working hard on behalf of women in Greater Manchester.

There was one very interesting slide. Recognise anyone?

**Carole Swarbrick**

Pankhurst-Fawcett report

Here is the link to the full report.



The overall message is that we can do better, and **we must do better**



**Save the Date!**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2025**

**GM4Women2028's next Dialogue, Deeds and Determination event in Bolton (venue to be announced)**

## Our 99<sup>th</sup> Charter Lunch

We enjoyed a delightful afternoon of good food and good company!

Skilfully managed by Toastmistress Alison, President Carole welcomed members, friends and guests to SI Manchester's 99<sup>th</sup> Charter Lunch.

We were pleased to be joined by Soroptimists from 8 Clubs of South Lancashire: Regional President Sandy from SI Crosby, President Josie and members of Leigh & District, President Linda and members of St Helens, President Sue and members of Stockport & District, President Angela and members from Wigan. Also members of Ashton-under-Lyne, Bolton and Southport. Former Manchester member Val Moss, now the Regional President of North West England & IOM, was accompanied by Lancaster members.

President Carole proposed the 'Toast to the City and Ports of Manchester' and Carl Austin Behan, a former Lord Mayor of Manchester, responded.

As Graeme Simister proposed the toast to Soroptimist International the afternoon became a very different event when Soroptimister Jeff\* collapsed and three of the Doctors in the room went into action!

President Carole closed the proceedings and most guests adjourned to the bar to continue their conversations.

President Carole is determined that we will hear Carl Austin Behan speak, he had declined President Rose's invitation when he was Lord Mayor, so is negotiating with Carl for an event during our Centenary celebrations.

In between courses I rapidly attempted to capture a snapshot of each table.....I apologise if I caught you mid mouthful!

### ***Sue Underwood***

\*Jeff and I are extremely grateful for the prompt action of doctors Rose, John & Catherine and Novotel's Daniel. We are pleased to report that after six hours in Salford Royal A&E, Jeff was given a clean bill of health. Jeff apologises for disrupting the afternoon, but, if there is a good place for a medical drama, then a Soroptimist 'do' with so many doctors and nurses attending is it!

Soroptimist International of Manchester

President  
Carole Swarbrick

## 99<sup>th</sup> Charter Lunch

1926 – 2025



Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2025  
Novotel, Worsley









From Our Website: <https://sigbi.org/manchester/>

## Ashton on Mersey Chiefs



We are supporting Ashton on Mersey Chiefs under 11 – a girls' football team in the South Manchester League – by providing home and away kits.

It's a new team and we were pleased to hear from their coach, Peter, that they are making steady progress.

Peter Fletcher says:

"We are making steady progress this season and have lately managed some well fought draws and even a win" They certainly look as if they are enjoying themselves!

## Inspirational Women on International Women's Day

At our club meeting members spoke about inspirational women –

**Esther Ghey** – mother of murdered teenager Brianna, she now campaigns for social media reform, is the founder of Peace and Mind UK and has written a book, 'Under a Pink Sky'. *Hilary.*

**Gisele Pelicot** who faced her husband and multiple rapists in court, charting a new course for victims of sexual abuse. *Fiona.*

**Clara Zetkin**, a German Marxist theorist, activist and advocate for women's rights, her efforts led to the first International Women's Day being celebrated in 1911. *Sue U.*

**Melanie Reid**, a journalist, became tetraplegic following a riding accident. She wrote a weekly column – 'Spinal Column' – for The Times and a memoir – 'The World I Fell Out Of'. She has received a number of awards, including an MBE. *Carole.*

*Thanks to Pat Usher for keeping our website up to date*



## The River Manchester



A big thank you to Rose on behalf of Soroptimist International of Manchester for their donation toward supporting the travel for women fleeing domestic abuse attending our courses. (This was our International Women's Day donation)



The Easter Eggs and Raffle Prizes donated by Members were delivered to The River for the families they support and for the fundraising musical evening they are having in May . It was lovely to meet some of the volunteers and counsellors too .

*Rose Marginson*



At the February Club meeting, we were very lucky to have a speaker from our latest project - Contact Hostel.

They are a charity providing accommodation and practical support for homeless teenage girls from the Manchester area. They've helped nearly 1000 young women get back on their feet, and help them move onto better, happier future.

# Climate Projects Update

## Printer Cartridge Recycling

When SIGBI made Climate Change a priority for 2020 we undertook several initiatives, one of which was to reduce waste by recycling.

We discovered that every year in the UK up to 45 million printer cartridges end up in landfill. It can take a thousand years for a cartridge to decompose.

We were delighted to find that we could raise funds for Act4Africa, one of our partner charities, by collecting printer cartridges and sending them to Recycle4Charity.

Soroptimists from across the Region give us their empties!

**Pat Usher**



## Blister Pack Recycling – as seen on Facebook

@BootsUK have launched a blister pack recycling scheme at 800 stores across the UK after their successful pilot.

Plastic packaging in the UK accounts for nearly 70% of our plastic waste so this is a big win for recycling.

The empty blister packs taken back to Boots stores will be recycled into playground equipment and furniture.

If that's not incentive enough, those who have a Boots Advantage Card, can earn 100 points (worth £1) for every five empty blister packs you recycle at store!

<https://bit.ly/3CUxRqA>



## 'Virtual Trees'

Back in Spring 2021 we were introduced to TreeApp to plant trees.

It is completely free – you watch an advert and can plant a tree a day. If you remember to plant 7 days in a row then you get another tree planted!

Each tree 'planted' offsets your carbon footprint & you can monitor your impact on carbon emissions absorbed.

Some points from the TreeApp website:

- There are planting projects all over the world – you can choose where you would like to plant your tree
- Trees are planted by local non-governmental organisations which *"create local jobs opportunities, reduce air, water and soil pollution and bring communities together"*
- More information [here](#)

Several members started planting & I have had current planting figures from Sue Harris & Pat Usher to add to mine, so for the three of us:

As at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022, our total was **1,210** in **12** countries

Now by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, our total is **3,891** in **13** countries

**Sue Underwood**



PROJECT - TREES PLANTED as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 by Sue U, Sue H & Pat (June 22)			
Conserving and restoring threatened ecosystems in <b>Brazil</b> Erosion Control	189 (57)	Bringing marine life back to the coast in <b>Madagascar</b> Erosion Control Riparian Restoration	206 (69)
Rehabilitating species-rich lowland forests in <b>Burundi</b> Erosion Control	186 (62)	Rehabilitating native animals & forests in <b>Madagascar</b> Species Restoration Biodiverse Habitats	228 (102)
Taking action against desertification in <b>Ethiopia</b> Community Impact Soil Stabilisation	206 (72)	Restoring degraded coastal areas in <b>Mozambique</b> Erosion Control Riparian Restoration	196 (61)
Combating Climate Change in <b>Guinea</b> Community Impact Climate Stability	198 (62)	Anchoring mountainous soil to prevent disasters in <b>Nepal</b> Soil Stabilisation Climate Stability	576 (340)
Cultivating sources of nutritious fruits in <b>Haiti</b> Community Impact	213 (79)	Supporting farmers' reforestation efforts in <b>Peru</b> Erosion Control	206 (63)
Rebuilding marine wildlife along shorelines in <b>Indonesia</b> Biodiverse Habitats	345 (119)	Supporting local farmers through mountainous reforestation in <b>Tanzania</b> Biodiverse Habitats Community Impact	190 (62)
Providing landslide protection and economic growth in <b>Kenya</b> Erosion Control Biodiverse Habitats	195 (62)	Restoring Woodland biodiversity by planting native species to attract wildlife in the <b>United Kingdom</b> & '7 Day Planting Streak Free Trees'	629 (0) 128 (0)

## Supporting Vulnerable Young Women: Why Contact Hostel is Close to My Heart.

As a member of Soroptimist International Manchester, I have always been passionate about championing causes that empower women and girls. This year, I am particularly proud that our club has chosen to support **Contact Hostel**, a vital charity based in Manchester that provides accommodation and support for young women aged 16–19 who find themselves homeless or in crisis.

This cause is especially close to my heart. Having spent over 20 years as a secondary school teacher, I have worked with many teenage girls who have faced significant challenges—some with turbulent home lives, some struggling with mental health, and others navigating complex personal circumstances. Despite these difficulties, I have always believed in the power of support, stability, and encouragement to change their futures.

As a mother of two daughters, now adults, I know firsthand how crucial guidance and security are during those formative teenage years. Every young woman deserves a safe space, a chance to grow, and the opportunity to build a brighter future. Contact Hostel provides exactly that—a lifeline for young women in need, offering not just accommodation but also practical life skills, emotional support, and a pathway towards independence.

When I first visited **Contact Hostel**, I was struck by how homely, welcoming, and normal the environment felt. More than anything, it felt safe—a place where young women could begin to rebuild their lives with dignity and stability. That sense of security is something many of us take for granted, but for these girls, it is absolutely life-changing. Knowing they have somewhere that feels like home, rather than just a place to stay, makes an incredible difference.



This Christmas, our club was able to bring a little extra warmth to these young women by raising money to buy each resident a dressing gown. It may seem like a small gesture, but we all know how comforting it is to receive a gift at Christmas, especially something that provides both warmth and a sense of security. It was truly heartwarming to know that we could make a

difference during what can be an incredibly difficult time of year for many of these young women. I hope we can continue this tradition and find even more ways to support them in the future.



Our club's decision to support **Contact Hostel** fills me with pride. As Soroptimists, we stand for the empowerment of women and girls, and by supporting this incredible organisation, we are living out our mission in a truly meaningful way. I would love to hear ideas from our members on how we can continue to support these young women—whether through volunteering, donating essential items, or finding new ways to raise awareness of the incredible work **Contact Hostel** does.

For more information about **Contact Hostel**, visit <https://www.contacthostel.co.uk/>

**Alison Forster**

## Cathrine is Running for Contact Hostel

Dear SI Friends, I am lacing up my running shoes at the end of May (25<sup>th</sup>) to run the Edinburgh Half Marathon in support of Contact Hostel.

Please consider making a donation or sharing the link more widely

The donations will spur me on at about mile eight when the pain starts to kick in and I question why I entered!

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/cathrine-holland-4>

**Vice President Cathrine**





## Clarissa Forster Volunteering at the Perfect Vision Women's Shelter in Tanzania

For the second year in a row, I had the privilege of travelling to Moshono, Arusha, Tanzania, where I spent five weeks volunteering at the Perfect Vision women's shelter. This incredible organization provides crucial support to women living with HIV and young mothers who have faced challenging circumstances beyond their control. Many of these women have had limited access to education and economic opportunities, leaving them vulnerable and struggling to carve out a future for themselves and their children.



Women's rights are human rights, yet millions of women around the world continue to face systemic barriers that limit their access to education, healthcare, and economic independence. My time at the shelter reinforced the vital role that education plays in breaking these cycles of poverty and oppression. Through teaching English and basic business skills, I witnessed firsthand the transformative power of knowledge. These essential skills not only improve employability but also restore confidence and self-worth, enabling women to reclaim their independence and build brighter futures.

One of the most inspiring aspects of this experience was seeing

the determination and resilience of these women. For many, it was the first time they had been given the tools to envision a future where they could support themselves and their families. The empowerment that comes from education extends far beyond economic opportunities; it instils hope, fosters self-reliance, and strengthens communities from within.

None of this would have been possible without the generosity of those who supported my journey. I am deeply grateful for every donation that helped fund my trip and allowed me to contribute to this life-changing work. Your kindness and commitment to advancing women's rights have made a tangible difference in the lives of these courageous women. Every contribution has played a role in providing them with the resources they need to succeed.



This experience has forever changed my perspective on the world and reaffirmed my belief in the importance of creating opportunities for those who need them most. As we continue to advocate for women's rights globally, let us

remember that true empowerment begins with access to education, support, and the chance to dream of a better future. Thank you for being part of this journey and for standing in solidarity with these incredible women.



**Clarissa Forster (final year law student at the University of York & Alison's daughter)**



## Act4Africa – ‘She Leads’ – Project Goals, Objectives & Expected Outcomes.

*Advancing Economic, Health, and Leadership Opportunities for Women*



### **Project Goal:**

To empower women and girls by providing them with essential skills, fostering entrepreneurship, enhancing health knowledge, and building networks that enable full participation in economic, leadership, and community life.

### **Objectives:**

#### **Skills Development & Vocational Training:**

Offer vocational training (tailoring, hairdressing, catering) and financial literacy to help women gain employable skills, financial independence, and business acumen.

#### **Entrepreneurship & Business Support:**

Provide startup capital, mentoring, and business development for women-led enterprises, enabling sustainable growth and financial empowerment.

#### **Mentorship & Peer Support Networks:**

Develop mentorship programs with experienced female entrepreneurs and peer networks, fostering knowledge-sharing in business, health, and wellbeing.

#### **Leadership, Life Skills & Wellbeing Workshops:**

Conduct workshops on leadership, health, decision-making, and stress management, promoting women's personal and professional growth.

#### **Community Gender Awareness:**

Raise awareness on gender equality's benefits and engage men and boys in supporting women's empowerment.

#### **Health Education & Services:**

Integrate health services, including SRHR, family planning, and mental health support, ensuring comprehensive wellbeing.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

Empowered women with marketable skills, financial independence, improved health, leadership roles, community support, and access to vital health services, creating more equitable and thriving communities.

### **Success Story:**

*Sumaya*, an early beneficiary of the ‘She Leads’ project, used her profits to buy 3 birds and has started poultry farming – step by step, turning her dream into reality.



*The ‘She Leads’ initiative began late last year and is aligned with our criteria. The funded pilot is going well.*  
**Sue Underwood**



## Heat Pumps

If you didn't catch the Channel 5 programme on 29<sup>th</sup> Jan, I recommend it on catch up...

**"Heat Pumps: Are they really worth it?"** It's prompted me to write about my Heat Pump experience.

They referred to it as a greener heating revolution and I'm happy that I'm no longer producing CO<sub>2</sub> directly.

I'm on a green tariff with Octopus Energy, so in theory I'm paying for renewable electricity. But the government needs to do more to increase the amount of renewable electricity. Rant over!

In the programme, everyone said their houses were warmer and cheaper to heat. It's hard to compare with me – I used to keep my heating completely off in the winter and wear 3-4 extra layers, hat and gloves. So my bills are slightly higher, but I've been nice and cosy. I was worried about the noise, but it's just a quiet constant hum. It's on the wall next to my downstairs bedroom and my lodger said he thought it was a train going past 2 miles away. It took them five days to install and with the grant it cost me less than £2,000. This included everything including 5 new radiators. They offered to provide electric radiator whilst the heating was off, though not really needed in July! I even got some lovely flowers and a get well soon card from Octopus when I had to cancel an after-care visit due to COVID!

If you'd like further information or to come to see it, please let me know.

**Elaine Loader**

***If it helps.....***

*A heat pump is a device that transfers thermal energy in the opposite direction of spontaneous heat transfer.*

*or*

*A heat pump is a device that uses electricity to transfer heat from a colder place to a warmer place. Specifically, the heat pump transfers thermal energy using a heat pump and refrigeration cycle, cooling the cool space and warming the warm space. In winter a heat pump can move heat from the cool outdoors to warm a house; the pump may also be designed to move heat from the house to the warmer outdoors in summer.*

*As they transfer heat rather than generating heat, they are more energy-efficient than heating by gas boiler.*

**Wikipedia**

*(Editor: Is this a bit like the 'Off-side Rule'?!?)*

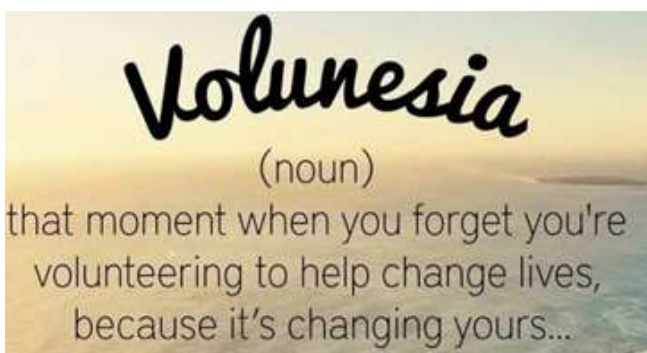


## MASH's Innovation

Spotted in the Manchester Arndale.

What a great idea by one of the charities we support - promoting their work and receiving donations at the same time.

**Elaine Loader**



# CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

We will be celebrating our Centenary over TWO years

The Inaugural Meeting was held on February 18<sup>th</sup> 1926

Our Charter was granted on June 16<sup>th</sup> 1926

So, Fiona Spencer will be President for our 100<sup>th</sup> year and will host our 100<sup>th</sup> Charter Dinner

SAVE THE DATE Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup> 2026

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

\*\*\*\*\*

Since the last newsletter we have spent most of the centenary planning meetings thinking about organising the afternoon tea and the Africa night. I believe the early meetings have given a good opportunity for everyone to get involved and come together to help us get fundraising projects off the ground. It has had a huge benefit involving newer members to get involved early on in the planning of our events and they have added in lots of great ideas and enthusiasm. Lorraine's project planning proposal form has really helped us to consider all the aspects of our events and I am sure will contribute to their success.

I feel that we have some lovely and different things planned during the year which will make it fly past. So now is a good time for us to think again about a couple of areas.

This year we have had more invitations to create friendship links and to attend other club celebrations. Even when we have not been able to visit we have been delighted at the invitations. This, and feedback from some of our friendship links, has made us realise that some of them may want to join us for our centenary celebrations. Potentially then we should think about what else we could do around our Charter celebration on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2026 that would put together a visitor programme. So, ladies put on your thinking caps about what we could do to showcase Manchester, and our Soroptimist projects, to visitors.

We started off last June thinking about pledges for our 100<sup>th</sup> year. What could we do individually for the year? I am hoping some of you may have added your pledges to the newsletter for Sue but perhaps we could also share them at club meetings? I started charting dates I went to or joined online Soroptimist events and also assisted our charity partners. I am also adding in days I quilt for Early Essentials and so far have 26 dates in the diary completed and hope that by the end of the next club year I will have reached 100. I am excited to see others ideas as that will give me further inspiration. Of course I may have made 100 brownies or cups of tea by the end of the afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup> April, so may have to make more than one pledge!!

Finally I know that we have had volunteers to get involved in putting together archive material and I think we should prioritise this as it would be lovely to have some displays at some future events. Please let us know how we can take this forward.

So back to something we are practised at...Centenary Suppers. I think the opportunity to spend time together and make friendships stronger is helping all our project planning and allowing us to eat fabulously yet raise money for our dinner funds. I can arrange another one at some point in the summer, anyone else?

**President Fiona**

## *Centenary Fact*

*In 1927 a committee was formed from the 3 English Soroptimist Clubs – Greater London, Manchester & Liverpool – this British Union became part of the European Federation, until, in 1934 at the International Convention in Paris, Britain withdrew to form the new Federation of Great Britain & Ireland*

*.....Yes, Soroptimists from the North West played a pivotal role in our Brexit!*





## Review of the Lovely Valentine's Centenary Supper at Sue Silk's House

Last week, Sophie and I had the pleasure of attending a truly enchanting Valentine's Soroptimist dinner at Sue Silk's beautiful home. From the moment we arrived, we were greeted with warmth and hospitality that set the tone for a lovely evening.

The ambiance was welcoming. The attention to detail was impeccable, and it was clear that every element had been thoughtfully curated to make the evening special.

The menu was a delightful blend of flavours, featuring a perfectly cooked main course, and a decadent dessert with a pretty heart shaped biscuit to mark Valentine's day. Each dish was beautifully presented, and the quality of the food was exceptional. It was evident that a lot of care and effort had gone into preparing such a memorable meal.

The Soroptimist members and guests were wonderful company, and the conversations flowed effortlessly. Sophie and I felt so welcomed and enjoyed getting to know everyone. The evening was filled with laughter, and heartfelt stories.

A special mention must go to Sue, whose gracious hosting made the night so memorable. Her kindness and generosity shone through, and her home provided the perfect backdrop for such a lovely gathering. We look forward to many more of these Centenary Suppers in the future.

**Kevin Gascoigne**  
**Soroptimister**

## Celebrating a Centenary: An Evening at Sue & Mike Silk's House

A Memorable Soroptimist Supper on valentines evening with 6 members and 4 'Soroptimisters'.

Sue and Mike were wonderful hosts with a highlight being Sue's delicious valentine themed desert.

We were entertained by tales from Kev and Sophie's motorcycling adventures in the Peak District and from Rosemary's travels.

Another £100 raised for the Centenary fund!

**Helen Kenny-Levick**



### **\*\*Remember Alison's Call for Action: What is YOUR Centenary Pledge\*\***

Now that the Centenary of Soroptimist International Manchester has begun, 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.

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

**Are YOU ready to declare YOUR Pledge?**

## Sharon Marriott Went For A Walk For Us!

"Are you being sponsored?" I asked.....

### Sharon's Camino to Santiago de Compostela, Spain 120km



Soroptimist International Manchester will receive all of Sharon's sponsorship for the **Centenary Charities Fund** 🙏 **£837 to date!!!**

Sharon sent us photos and a daily report of her progress so that we could share her journey if not her pain!



All I had to do was post her reports & photos on her 'Just Giving' page and Facebook 🙏

**Sue Underwood**

#### Day 1 & Sharon's off to a very early start! Ferrol to Neda....

##### Day 1 completed!

16.7 km as shown on the map

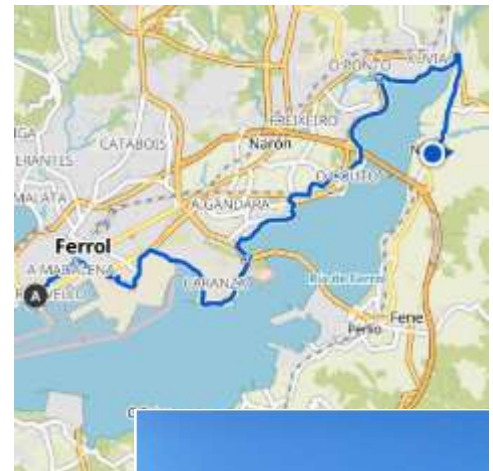
Sharon reports:

Set off early, wanted to get the first one done, completed by lunchtime, just a bit achy but I can rest this afternoon.

No other pilgrims & felt a bit anxious through a Eucalyptus forest but some beautiful scenery even though mostly urban today.

Absolutely no English spoken here. Am having to garner my scarce espanol resources supported by Google 😊

The red fish marks the way of St Andrew which coincides with the Camino Ingles in places 😊





## Day 2 Neda to Pontedume (14.5 km)

Sharon reports....It was another beautiful hike today, the sun shone and the path was clear. A lot more uphill today, still mostly road walking with stunning coastal views but some lovely forest pathways too...Cala lilies line most of the route celebrating your journey.

They say that the Camino invokes reflection and that happened to me today. As I was setting off I had a moment of doubting the way when I couldn't see a sign. A voice in my head said 'trust' and I had an insight that after a difficult childhood, I have struggled with trust, and consequently fear...I decided to give in to the impulse. I turned the sound off on my Kamoot (kept it recording to share) and just followed the signs.

I found them to be completely reliable. I missed the odd one but developed an instinct for it and would wend my way back within metres (you'll see a few little spikes on the route).

Then I realised I'd brought the wrong connector for my power pack. I've been in the habit of calling a friend for company in isolated sections but I didn't dare drain the battery so I went with it. Halfway through a forest section I realised that I'd forgotten to be afraid. I laughed out loud! My breathing was good and my shoulders were relaxed....A Camino gift 🍷

Life in Galicia seems amazing. Beautiful scenery, an amazing climate, great houses and people seem happy. I have found them friendly and helpful.

I'm sitting now in the square pictured drinking a glass of tinto with a couple of pinchos, I'll be off for a siesta soon. My ankles are a little sore, not used to so much road walking but I'm feeling muy contento, we will see what tomorrow brings....❤️





Day 3 of 6 🙌 53.2 km walked 🙌 £460 raised...that's 93% of target....A-maze-zing Sharon ⭐

Sharon sums it up....

All in all a special day. Am sore and stiff but I think I can make it to the finish now 😊

..... the full story follows 🙏🙏

### Day 3, Pontedueme to Betanzos (22 km)

Pontedueme is my favourite place so far. I loved the way it rose up the hill from the estuary. It is so quaint and unspoiled and people were lovely, from the kindly restaurateur who wouldn't let me pay for my glass of wine with dinner, to the friendly woman who gave me water to walk with this morning at Hotel Falúa. I just felt I could live there....

It was a day of hills and valleys. Really steep out of Pontedueme. I don't recommend a big breakfast 😊 but great views from the top, then up and down all the way to Betanzos.

I stopped off in Meno for coffee and coming out of there I wasn't sure if I got a bit lost through a woodland...the signs got scarce. There were yellow painted signs but they looked worn and the pilgrim water stops looked overgrown. I don't know if I wandered onto the old path. If I did, it joined up with the new one again on the other side of the wood at the Church of San Pantaleon Das Vinas, so all was well.



It felt like a very spiritual day for me today. I met a white horse in the middle of the road - honestly true, see pic. I went to pet him and give him a polo mint. The first group of pilgrims I've met on the road, three Spanish men passed by me as I was with the horse and one said to me the horse seemed like my brother....My actual brother died three weeks ago and I had been missing him and asking him for a sign that he's okay- I know this sounds bonkers but it's true 🙏.

On the way into Betanzos I passed another church, Santuario da Nosa Sra do Camiño, and was inspired to call in to light candles for loved ones.

All in all a special day. Am sore and stiff but I think I can make it to the finish now 😊





## Day 4 Betanzos to Hotel de Bruma

26 km today!

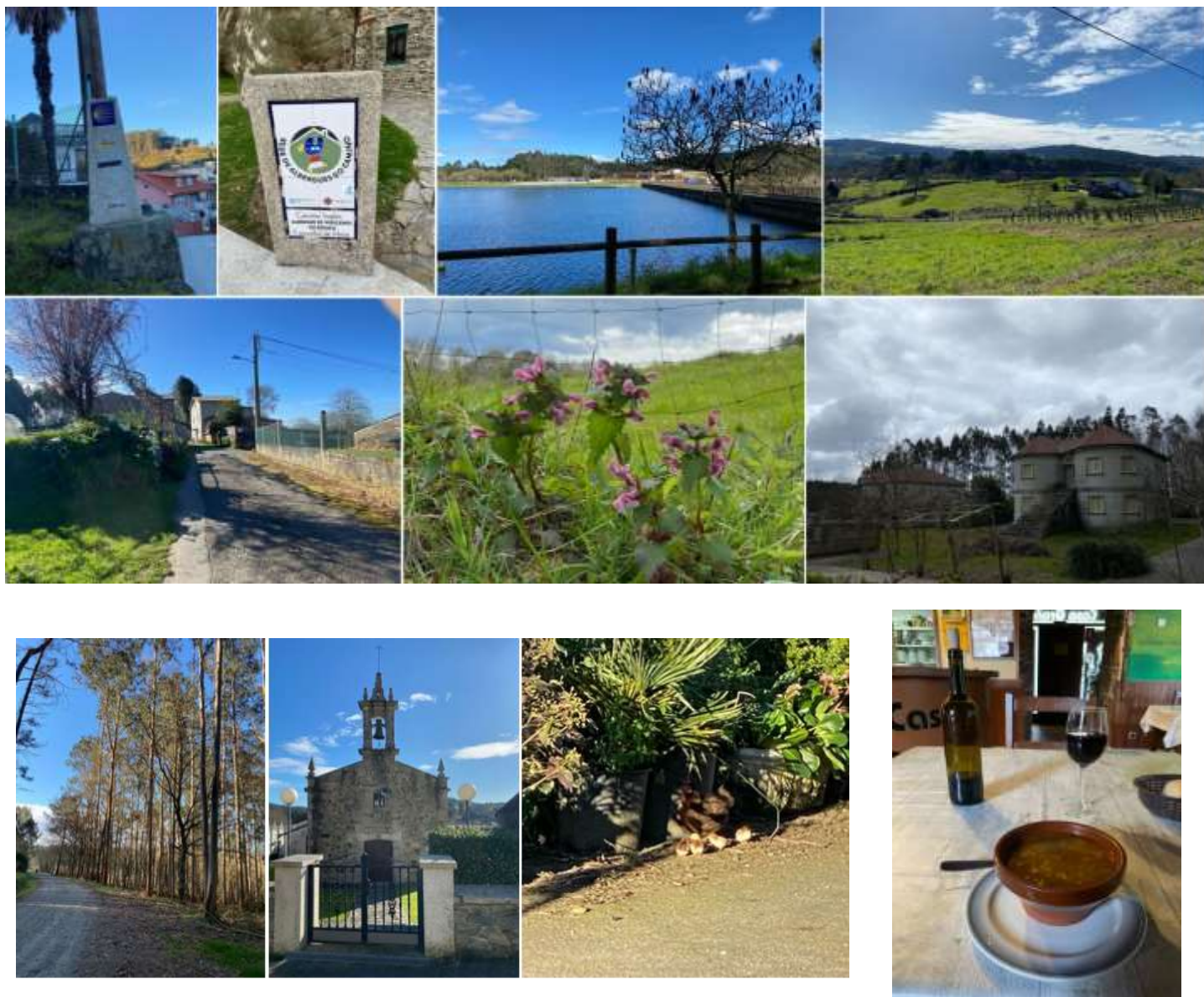
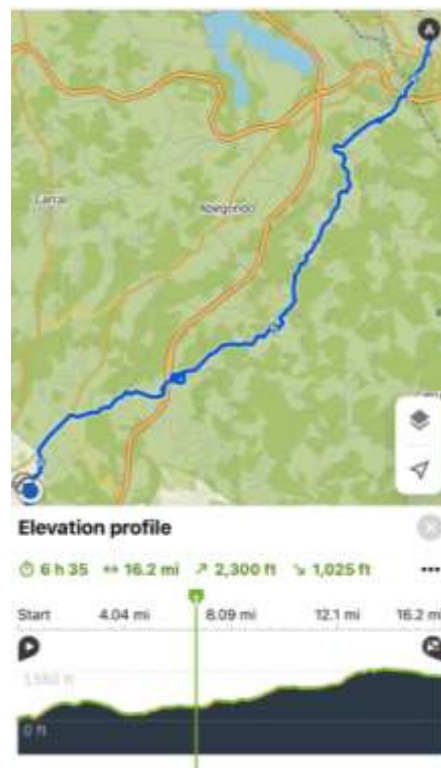
£580 raised so far 🙏

Sharon reports:

Finally, pelegirinos at breakfast in the warm and cosy Hotel Garelos this morning! Friendly Ewan and Patricia from Melbourne, the three Spanish men from yesterday were also there, along with a guy from Puerto Rica. Then there were three more Spanish people along the way and a lovely woman from London called Ferdinanda, hiking with a healing metatarsal injury (respect!) It was great to finally see people and say buen Camino.

It was a bit of a slog up and out of Betanzos this morning, then a mix of farmland, winter bitten eucalyptus forests and road walking. There were some stunning long views from the tops. It all felt safe. The Galician's love their pets and many have small holdings so there were some cute sights along the way.

That 2200ft ascent at the end was HARD and I felt every step of the last two miles. I'm writing this after a lovely late lunch at Casa Grana at Hotel de Bruma while wondering how I will repeat the distance tomorrow 😬😬. But I know I can finish it now 🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷🍷





## Day 5 Hotel de Bruma to Segueiro

Another 25 km 🏃 £650 raised 🙌👏

★ Sharon reports:

Hello all, so today was the penultimate day of the hike. This section was easier and harder at the same time. The path is pretty gentle and mostly downhill through farms and small villages, but my body was definitely protesting today. Even taking it easy, on the last 4 miles I was very slow and sore and I realised at the end that I had got my first blister.

I've never hiked by myself always with friends or my Ramblers's group. Talk about jumping in at the deep end! I was really anxious about having to do this hike by myself after my friend Vicky fell ill. Now I feel really comfortable here travelling on my own and it is definitely increased my confidence to step out alone again.

After the first few kilometres, I passed some very striking sculptures as you can see in the pictures. The weather stayed dry but there was such a high wind and as I passed by the red house it had a definite Wizard of Oz feel.

The landscape on this section was the least interesting and, as many guide books say, the last few miles since the path was rerouted alongside the motorway on a gravel road were gruelling and unpleasant. I would definitely say on this section drop off onto the old path and walking in through the trees... I met Patsy and Ewan as I came into Segueiro, it was lovely to see them again and they recommended the Cortez cafe bar for food (thanks both). They had taken the path through the trees.

Last hike tomorrow. Will see how my sore feet hold up...





## Day 6 Sigüeiro to Santiago de Compostela 16.6 km



Sharon reports:

Hello all, I've finished the Camino!

I decided to put a march on this morning to get here in time for the 12 o'clock mass and it was worth it. I didn't understand a single word of the mass, but I definitely felt the spirit of it.

The weather was horrible for the first time, galeforce winds and rain like bullets but only for the first hour or so, then it settled down.



The walk was mostly suburban today with some lovely woodland paths and especially on the last section.

The last two hikes don't quite have the edenic landscapes of the middle two days .



It was a great sight seeing the top of the cathedral as I came down into Santiago de Compostela. I'll go back tomorrow to be a tourist at the cathedral.

So that's me done with the Camino for now. Next, is a hike of the Istrian coast in May... But of course I have my sites on the Camino de France now 😊.

Thank you for all of your kind words, and support on my lonesome hike. Buen Camino on whatever path you are taking ❤️





## 🙏THANK YOU Sharon Marriott 🙏

Sharon, all Soroptimist International of Manchester members send our grateful thanks for choosing to donate your sponsorship to our Centenary Charities Fund 🙏

Thank you for sharing your photos and insights during your incredible journey. You are an inspiration to us all 🙏

Many thanks to your friends who have sponsored you.... every £ will go to support women & girls in need. 🙏

Some of the comments from members.....🙏.....We enjoy fun, food & friendship while fundraising, so we now owe you the fun, food & friendship 🍷🍷🍷.....🙏.....We Manchester Soroptimists are so grateful that you chose our charities to support, especially in our centenary year. So well done, a supreme effort 🍷.....🙏.....How incredible she is! 🍷.....🙏.....Wonderful ❤️That's great. Well done Sharon 🍷.....🙏.....Congratulations Sharon. What an achievement. You are amazing and thank you for the link to S I Manchester. Donations will certainly boost our centenary fund 🍷.....🙏.....This is amazing .. well well done 🍷.....🙏.....This is incredible. I hope Sharon will tell us all about it and we can thank her in person. 🍷.....🙏.....Brilliant achievement. Well done 🍷.....🙏.....An INCREDIBLE achievement especially on your own! Amazing 🍷.....🙏.....Terrific achievement! Congratulations 🍷.....🙏

🙏 £837 Raised to date 🙏



Sharon was our special guest at our Afternoon Tea and was delighted to receive this beautiful bouquet!

## Memories of Walking Santiago de Compostela

I freely admit that prior to 2021 I had never heard of the famous walk in Northern Spain. A friend of mine who lives in Greece told me that her son, who was in a personal life crisis, for therapeutic reasons, was going to commence this challenge to walk in the path of the pilgrims to allow himself a time of peaceful contemplation.

When Sharon was commencing the same journey I asked Jean (my friend) if her son Greg would share some memories of his experience. Jean and Dave are both so very proud of Greg on this achievement.

Below is Greg's experience and also my friend Beverly's story, one of our 'Chorley Knitters'

**Rosemary Steven**



## Greg's Story

*"I walked the Camino for myself. After my life fell apart. I was made redundant, 11 year relationship ended, lost my home, mental health in the gutter all within 3 days. So I booked a one way ferry to Santander, purchased everything I needed online (due to Covid restrictions) to walk, camp and survive across the north coast of Spain.*

*My ferry left on the 4th of July and it really was my independence day. I found mine again on the Camino Di Santiago. I found a lot more too, I wasn't a religious man when I got on that ship in Plymouth, but i experienced some moments while walking alone through forests, hills and cliffside paths that felt like what I imagine is what people mean when they say they heard God talk to them, or experienced a higher power. I also met amazing people some days from all over the world of all ages, sizes and with a million reasons for their walk and all of them happy to bare their souls to a stranger for 5 hours, before bidding a Buen Camino at the end of the day to never be seen again.*

*It was the happiest time of my life."*

## The Camino de Santiago – Friendship & Reflection

My 35-year-old son John is an avid long trail walker. In April last year he set off from Sagres, southern Portugal to walk the Camino de Santiago. He took the coastal route, through Porto, across the Spanish border at Tui, into Santiago de Compostela, the holy city of the apostle St James the Great, to finish at Gijon on the north Spanish coast, a total walk of 1500Km over 6 weeks.

For many years I had wanted to join him on one of his 'pilgrimage' walks, the experiences always sounded a mixture of fun, physical endurance and enlightening self-reflection. After all, who hasn't been moved by Martin Sheen in the 2010 film, 'The Way'?

So, at the end of May 2024, I set off with a heavy rucksack (the first challenge - to keep the contents to basic essentials!), to join my son for a five-day section of his walk. Having flown into Porto and taken the scenic train journey north, I met him in the picturesque old Galician town of Pontevedra to commence my mini pilgrimage.

Firstly, I had to acquire my paperwork, the 'Credential de Peregrino', a fold up log, which to be officially acknowledge at the Pilgrims office in Santiago, requires at least two stamps per day from supportive cafes, churches, hotels and hostels along the way. Then to look like a true pilgrim, I bought a Camino scallop shell, and duly attached this to my rucksack, et voila, I was ready to go!

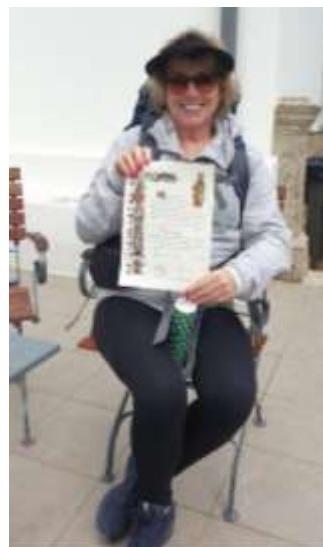
From the moment I took my first step on the Camino, heading out of Pontevedra, I found myself in a completely different world, one where people of all ages, backgrounds and origins ebbed and flowed along the designated route. Sharing conversations as we walked along, different people, different paces, it was clear that most were undertaking the pilgrimage for personal, not religious reasons as had the original pilgrims. Nevertheless, we all had a common belief, that we could overcome the physical, and mental challenges, to complete the Camino. The end objective, the 'holy grail', for all those I spoke to was to conclude their journey by walking into Santiago de Compostela, receiving the official Pilgrims Certificate, and attending a 'Mas de Pelegrino' in the city Cathedral, the final resting place of St James.

Walking much greater distances than I had ever done in my life, talking to people or just being lost in self-thought, was amazingly uplifting and enjoyable. Often this was despite the physical discomfort of sore feet, aching legs, or the vagaries of the weather! The sense of finding oneself was a strong theme of fellow Camino pilgrims' experiences, and the bonds of many enduring friendships were forged over the days spent together.

Having completed my mini 5-day pilgrims walk, I returned to the UK feeling a different person than before, yes I had a true sense of achievement, and I felt more at one with myself, but there was something else, it was a feeling of being part of something much bigger out there, not easy to define.

Until the next time.....

**Beverly Peacock (Chorley Knitters Group)**



# CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

## Afternoon Tea with Speaker John Travis “Fabulous Jewels & Their Famous Owners”

Soroptimist International of Manchester kicked off their year of Centenary celebrations with a very successful “Afternoon Tea With Speaker” at Heald Green village hall. All the tickets were sold, food was prepared by club members, the hall was decorated with bunting, pretty tea plates, cups and saucers were laid out and many club members were on hand to see that the guests were served and had a very enjoyable time.

The proceedings started with a glass of sparkling wine followed by a most enlightening illustrated talk by **John Travis** entitled “Fabulous jewels and their famous owners”. He showed us pictures of jewels from Queen Elizabeth I to Queen Elizabeth II. It was very interesting to learn how the precious jewels were used again and again being incorporated into different styles of crowns, tiaras, necklaces, rings and brooches according to the fashion of the day. Fascinating!

Then the sandwiches, savoury pastries, scones and variety of cakes were served with endless cups of tea and coffee. Conversation flowed between friends and guests and visitors from other Soroptimist clubs.

The raffle brought the proceedings to a successful conclusion.

**Val Jenkins**



Several years ago we were invited by Barry & Shena as their guests to a very special function at Worksop College ( Barry's boarding school and where their two grandsons currently attend) It was a fantastic occasion which I remember for three reasons, the first being that the coach driver which Barry had booked to transport his Manchester guests had been given the wrong postcode by his employer and we arrived at the wrong venue in all our finery at the working men's club in Shirebrook, fortunately Gus knows the area well as his brother lives in Nottinghamshire and we eventually arrived at our destination about half an hour late. Secondly it was the first time that we had ever eaten Wagyu beef , which was delicious, now available in many upmarket restaurants but a rarity then. Thirdly we were seated next to extremely friendly guests John Travis and his mother, the conversation freely flowed and even I could hardly get a word in , the whole event was fantastic.



Shortly after Carole was installed as President she asked us all to focus on the forthcoming centenary of our club and to consider any ways we could raise considerable funds to celebrate this momentous occasion. Shena contacted me and asked me if I remembered John, I certainly did, once seen never forgotten, and she informed me that he had kindly volunteered to be a guest speaker at a fund raising event, free of charge, on a topic of which he is held in high regard. Carole, Shena and I had lunch together and the idea of an afternoon tea seemed to be an interesting potential event.

The rest is history now as, due to the tremendous planning of President Fiona and her team, 80 of us enjoyed a highly successful afternoon. John was truly amazing speaker, Gus who usually thoroughly enjoys a Saturday afternoon channel hopping between golf, horse racing and football, whilst I enjoy a ladies luncheon, had to be reluctantly persuaded to attend the event, however even he was enthralled by John's amazing ability to fascinate his audience by his extensive knowledge of jewels and there famous owners. You really could hear a pin drop ! Thank you so very much John for entertaining us all and travelling such a considerable distance to assist us in raising funds towards our centenary target. Thanks also to Shena for gaining his interest and commitment.

***Rosemary Steven***



This is the first big fundraising event I've been part of since I joined. I was so impressed how organised everyone was and their quiet efficiency. I was delighted to be able to play a small part and be involved xx

***Lorraine Whitehouse***

Beautiful event well organised, everything was on point well done to the ladies in service you did an amazing job 🙌👏

***Lillian Kympaire***

**Fun, Food, Friendship & amazing Fundraising .....**

**Over £1,700 raised!!**

**Congratulations & thanks to President Fiona & the team!**



## Dr Donnell Davis Visits Manchester

Sue, Rosemary and I met recently met with Dr Donnell Davis who is the Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific Programme Director. Donnell was visiting an old friend and work colleague in Manchester on her way back home to Australia from the United Nations' 69<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69) meeting in New York. Donnell had delivered a paper in New York with good news as well as highlighting areas of concern. Her message was whilst there has been progress on climate change there is a need for greater focus on adolescence issues and women's reproductive health.

*(See the Hub to register for a free webinar "CSW: What's All The Fuss About" on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April)*

We arranged to meet at The Pankhurst Centre the former home of Emmeline Pankhurst who, along with her sister Christabel, were the charismatic leaders of the Women's Social and Political Union. The movement became known as the suffragettes.

We had lunch in the Whitworth Art Gallery with the added attraction of an exhibition entitled 'Women In Revolt: Art & Activism in the UK 1970-1990' which gave rise to some interesting discussion.



Sue then gave Donnell a tour of Salford Quays which included the Centenary

Walkway. Alongside the waterfront twenty four plaques each with a beautiful piece of poetry commemorating the famous docks and the workers who created it.

Donnell was very appreciative of the time spent with members of S I Manchester and we had a fascinating insight into Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific.

**Carole Swarbrick**

Donnell and I headed into The Lowry after the very windy walk along the quayside for some light refreshment! This extended beyond 5pm when the Lowry Gallery closes so I wasn't able to introduce Donnell to L S Lowry..... but Donnell had some free time the following Saturday so we had a plan!

Donnell hopped on a tram to Media City where I was waiting for her, we had lunch and headed to the Lowry Gallery and Donnell's familiarisation with L S Lowry.

As usual with visiting Soroptimists, topics were many and varied, pausing only for refreshments!

**Sue Underwood**

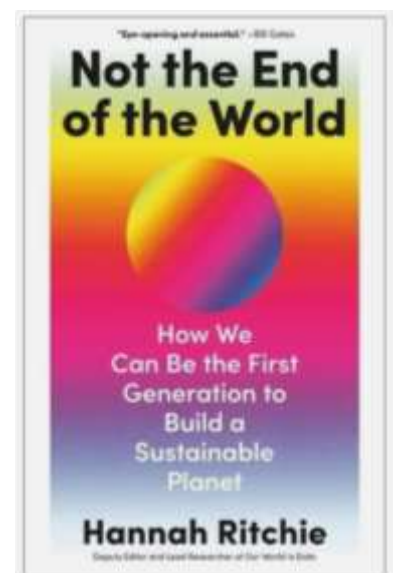
## A Book Recommendation

Climate change hits women and children the hardest, especially in vulnerable communities. This was a fact played out vividly as part of two-day carbon literacy training course I undertook through work as part of the Carbon Literacy Project. I was reminded how our everyday choices impact carbon emissions. On top of that, I started listening to *Not the End of the World* by Hannah Ritchie. It won't tell you that everything is going to be ok but Hannah gives what I think is an optimistic and refreshing take on the climate crisis, busts common misconceptions and points us to where we can be most impactful in our everyday choices.

One big change I've now made is cutting back on beef, which I learned is one of the most climate-damaging foods by far. It might seem a small step, but the training reminded me that the impact is massive and that every choice we make adds up.

Instead of feeling powerless I'm now feeling inspired that we can all make a real difference!

**Helen Kenny-Levick**





## Annual General Meeting & Change of Insignia 10<sup>th</sup> April – Our 100<sup>th</sup> Year Has Begun!



Thirteen members enjoyed a very nice meal before the Annual General Meeting began at 8pm. More members arrived and Shena managed to join in on Zoom. Shena was delighted to be reminded that she was the first Manchester Soroptimist that President Fiona sat next to.

After the formal business of the AGM came the 'Change of Insignia' Carole handed over the Presidential chain to President Fiona.

President Fiona then presented Immediate Past President Carole with her Past Presidents badge.

Sophie will receive the Present Elect's chain and hand the Vice President's chain to Cathrine at the next Club meeting

Here is the story of the Presidential Chain for our newer members

### President Fiona

I am hugely honoured and excited to be President of the Manchester club for our 100<sup>th</sup> year. As I was thinking about the year ahead, I also thought back to the first Soroptimists who must have been pretty extraordinary and interesting women. Of course Manchester has changed hugely in the last 100 years as have the Soroptimists. However what hasn't changed sadly is that there are still people out there who need our support and help in our locale and nationally and internationally. When I look around at our club members now I think they are just



as interesting and amazing women as those early Soroptimists as we too want to give something back to our community, in particular to disadvantaged women and girls.

I first became a Soroptimist at my father's suggestion, as a trainee in Glasgow in 1990.

As the only female trainee on the rotation I

was hoping to meet other women from outside of medicine. I was then a member in Nottingham and finally Manchester having moved here for my consultant post in 1998. Each time I have met truly inspirational women from very diverse backgrounds and have found this a huge blessing. I certainly feel, as Carole said in her closing address, that not only do we owe it to ourselves to make our centenary a success and a big celebration, but also to honour those pioneering women who have been Soroptimists over the last 100 years, we should carry on their legacy.

Recently I feel the club has had a renewed enthusiasm as we approach the exciting milestone of our centenary, and that we are working together really cohesively and enjoying the great injection of energy and enthusiasm our newer members have brought. I feel very optimistic about the year as I believe we have a great range of skills between us and I will do my best to help bring our plans to fruition. My aspiration for the year ahead is for every member to feel involved and listened to and to really enjoy every minute of our centenary year. This weekend is the first event, the afternoon tea, and I must say that when we had sold 80 tickets I did feel a moment of anxiety as I so want it to be a successful event. I then thought about how much everyone has contributed to the planning and realised that of course it will be as I believe we make a great team!

**President Fiona**



### The Chain

The Presidential chain was commissioned in 1936 - a gift of the Past Presidents. It was designed and executed by the Red Rose Guild of Designer Craftsmen, which had been started by Miss Margaret Pilkington, sister of the Founder President, Dorothy Pilkington.

It is worked in silver and enamels to typify the many different aspects of the City of Manchester. The Chain is made up of cotton bobbins interspersed with small blue wheels of industry. Two Red Roses for Lancashire lead to the jewel itself which shows the Cathedral, the blue ripples of the Ship Canal and at the base, three diagonal stripes symbolising the three rivers which run through the centre of Manchester; the Irwell, the Irk and the Medlock; the whole "shouldered" by the chimneys of the factories and mills.

## Dates for Your Diary

Friday 25 <sup>th</sup> April	7pm	Centenary Supper at Carole Swarbrick's home
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> April	7pm	Programme Action Meeting at Sophie's & Zoom
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May	6 for 7pm	Club Meeting (6pm Africa Night Plans) + Speaker
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> May	All Day	NWE&IOM Regional Conference – 'Step Up'
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> May	7pm	Executive Meeting
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	6:30 for 7pm	Club Meeting
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> June	From 10am	South Lancs Region PAC & Council Meeting
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> June	7pm	Daisy Cross Zoom
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	6.30 – 11pm	Africa Night
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> June	7pm	Executive Meeting
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> July	7pm	Club Meeting
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> July	All Day	GM4Women2028 Deeds, Dialogue & Determination (Bolton)
Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> July	7pm	Executive Meeting
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> July	7pm	Rachelle & Helen's Centenary Supper
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> August	6:30 for 7pm	Club Meeting

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

**Copy** for the Summer edition of the Newsletter by **Sunday 20th July at the latest**, please.

Looking forward to articles from each of you!

Declare your Centenary Pledge!

Review your Soroptimism during our Centenary... Newer Members please introduce yourselves!

Anything else you would like to share? Personal anecdotes always welcome

**Sue Underwood** [sueuhome@sky.com](mailto:sueuhome@sky.com)

Last Words ..... from a Man, Women & a Dog who could/should have been Soroptimists!

