

MTM VENICE - an 'abridged' version

A party of 27 delegates flew from around the UK to the Mid Term Meeting in Venice. We left on a cold dreary winters day but were greeted by sunshine (or a clear, cold, frosty night) on arrival.

The welcome party saw 100+ delegates from mid Europe and South Europe join together to sing happy birthday to Kayla Norman (Area 4 chairman) who celebrated her 40th birthday. We had a cake and candles - but not 40 as they would have set the smoke alarms off. It was back for drinks in Doreen's room who seemed to have landed a suite, Rhian was convinced they got her room by mistake.



At the MTM itself the majority of GB&I delegates attended - needless to say we filled the room. We discussed and debated all morning LCI business, from side by side initiatives, to the international project - The orphanage in Nepal. The international treasurer advised they had not received any donations yet. So Rhian got up, walked across the room and gave her 10 Euros from GB&I. She was well applauded. Helen Halstead our National CMLO spoke about our promotional activities, Natalie Woolnough about organising joint conferences and others too contributed to the debate. Lunch took two and a half hours and we returned for more debate. It was then back to hotel to get ready for the next party.

Following another 4-course meal, Mandy (me) won the table quiz along with her fellow Vice Presidents. I provided the pen and the translation into English, as I hadn't got a clue what the ingredients of the risotto were - other than rice! Michelle (Area 20 chairman) danced on the piano, with the girls from Malta and even the men got up to dance. At the end, some headed to a local bar whilst others partied on back at the hotel.

The next day we spent exploring Venice. It was a glorious day and wherever we looked there were

gondolas full of Circlers! (If I had a pound for every time I heard - Just one Cornetto, give it to me - I would be a rich woman.) When we weren't sailing we were shopping - even Gill Fisher, however there was a distinct lack of ladies clothes shops but they made up for it in exquisite glass and jewellery. The expeditions finished with drinking chocolate in St Marks Square at 4.30pm. Well when I say drinking chocolate, it was that thick you could stand your spoon up in it, but dipping biscuits in it was heaven.



The gala dinner - well no one can say the UK doesn't know how to party. Michelle (Area 20 chairman) danced and sang (She was good!) before singing duets with the male singer. She finally sang alone and ended up serenading the Chief Naval Officer. We all danced, we all chatted and we all danced some more, and in true tradition we were last to leave.

On Sunday it was time to head back home with bags of pasta and wonderful memories. Hopefully all those that attended have fully recovered, we had a wonderful time and are all looking forward to the next MTM in Austria (and there will be snow!)



The Circler



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Presidential Ramblings

Hello everyone,

Well girls, the Fun and Friendship continues. No matter where I've been the welcome has been amazing. To get the chance to see so many of you enjoying your Circling and really putting so much effort into everything you do is really a privilege.

Looking forward to the AGM in Killarney, I know the team are working flat out to make sure it will be the very best Conference of all time. I'm really excited about the debate and elections ahead of us. Don't miss out, the team have put together a brilliant entertainments programme, the venue is amazing and the local food and most importantly the Guinness are wonderful! Following the Preview weekend I found that woman can live on Guinness alone!

Now, a competition for you. As many of you know I have my little sheep bag that accompanies me everywhere, and I have decided that whoever guesses the nearest to the amount of miles we've travelled together will win a special prize at the AGM in Killarney. Not the bag itself though as I hope to auction him off at the AGM too. The money of course going to Cystic Fibrosis Trust. On top of all this, as we have been very busy selling shop items and collecting money for my haircut, we are nearly at the total I mentioned for this haircut. So you may also get to witness that too, but we still need more donations!

Four members of the National exec have just attended the second LCI meeting of the year, the Mid Term Meeting in Venice. We were joined by 19 other circlers and four tablers. A fantastic meeting, and all that fun and friendship too. For those people who ended up in the Presidential Suite... I hope you tidied up after yourselves!

Those of you not able to join us this year, make sure you get ready for Holland in September 2006!

The Council meeting will be held in Bingley, near Bradford on the 24th and 25th of February (Zebedee) This meeting is an opportunity for you to air your views and influence the future of NALC. Everyone is welcome to come as observers and will be given the opportunity if they so wish to address the meeting.

Ewe Can have fun with circle and when you're having fun you smile, and when you're smiling people want to know what you're up to!

Hope to see many of you "flocking" to the Council meeting, and AGM in Killarney Ewe'd be BAA-rmy to miss it!

Ewer's n friend-"sheep"
Rhian



IMPRESSIONS OF TRANSYLVANIA

I became a trustee of the charity, Fundatia Emanuel Betania UK last year, so I travelled to Romania to see for myself, what was involved.

My first impression of Romania as I crossed the border from Hungary was that everything could do with a lick of paint. The main road had recently been metalled, thanks to EU money but all other roads were rubble and grit. Houses were crumbling and the quality and style of the flats in the towns was poor.

On arrival in the small town of Teius, in Transylvania, I was exhausted, but the welcome I received by our two full time employees, Ana and Grigore instantly lifted my spirits. Their love for each other and their 3 children, 2 of whom are fostered, extended to provide a friendly and relaxed home for me as a visitor.

I saw the progress of building work at the Fundatia house. The family living space on the ground floor will soon be usable, the connection of the septic tank being the critical requirement. The basement will be used as a youth centre with table tennis and a pool table, although the lounge at the front of the house currently houses the table tennis table. Young people are using it regularly and this acts as an advertisement for the centre. I visited orphanages where Grigore leads activities for the children. Young people leaving orphanages are particularly vulnerable and the top floor of the Fundatia house will be used for sheltered accommodation.

On Saturday I met some of the young people at their regular youth club events. Here I met our third paid leader Lacra, she is 21 and was brought up in an orphanage. Some of the older children volunteer to help with the younger groups. Some of the children attending were gypsies. Apparently it is quite unusual for gypsies to mingle with other Romanians in this way but we successfully encourage an acceptance of all comers.

On Sunday I visited a Baptist church in the village of Cornesti. The bumpy drive highlighted how isolated some villages in Romania are. The three-hour service, in a foreign language, was interesting as it was so different. The men and women sat on different sides of the church although this seemed to only apply to the older members of the church; those at the front, the children, choir and musicians mixed, there were many mandolins, some violins and guitars.



The Ionescu Family

I visited a large family, the Ionescu's, for whom life is not so good. Their father was made redundant and the older children have not been able to find regular work. They are surviving on monthly payments and food parcels from the Fundatia. Like many rural Romanians they have a small plot of land and live as traditional peasant farmers. They keep chickens and will harvest vegetables in the summer but this is not enough to survive. The younger ones are at school but find it hard to concentrate and suffer with headaches and sight problems due to calcium and vitamin deficiencies. They seem bright but the temptation is to leave school and get a job to alleviate the immediate difficulties. Employment is badly needed and often fathers work abroad.

In a remote mountain village, I delivered three donated PC's to the school. Accompanied by the Mayor, we walked to a campsite, well a field actually that we hoped would hold our annual children's summer camp. As with most things in Romania you need "papers" for this so persistence and determination are required. This belief or "can do" attitude is something that has been worn away in some Romanians by the endless hard work. One of the objectives of the Fundatia is to feed and maintain the hopes and beliefs that all young people start life with.

Romanians are very conscious that their country has progressed since the fall of communism. They hope for continued development and a better outlook for their children. I was invited to share meals with many families and was treated as an honoured guest, at times I felt humbled, their gratitude more than I deserved. I suppose that in some ways I was received as a representative of everybody that has given support.

My objective as a trustee in visiting Romania was to ascertain that the charity work carried out was suitable for the local needs and that it was being carried out effectively. I believe that the Fundatia provides a suitable blend of material support and spiritual and emotional inspiration to encourage Romanians to find their own way forward. Romanians carry out all the work, this includes youth work by Grigore and Lacra, administration and supervision of building work by Ana. Romanian contractors carry out building work – a great deal

is carried out on a small budget.

I am chairman of Knowle & Dorridge Ladies Circle and have given a slide show and talk about my Romanian experiences to my Circle. If you would like to donate to this cause, contact me at mary.spencer@blueyonder.co.uk for more information visit www.fundeb.org.uk

Mary Spencer (Knowle and Dorridge)

5 NEW MEMBERS!

Long Eaton Circle no. 611, on a Tuesday evening in September, inducted 5 new members. They were a struggling circle with only 5 current members so they have doubled themselves. The prospective members have been visiting their circle meetings over the summer and decided to take the plunge and become fully-fledged 'circlers'.

Chairman Louise Roberts has worked on membership since she took the chair this year and so far her efforts are paying off. She already has another prospective lined up and the new members have taken it upon themselves to organise a 'New Member Night' where they are in control and can invite their own friends into circle.



Long Eaton Chairman Louise with Michelle Taylor and new Circler

Michelle Taylor (Area 20 Chairman)

Ed says: Well done girls!

THE MERRY WIVES OF WHITTLESEY

Thursday 4th August - Toilethorpe Hall

Whittlesey Ladies Circle travelled by minibus kindly driven by Sharon, one of our honorary members, to see an open-air performance of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' by the Stamford Shakespeare Company.

It had been an early start with no time for tea, so what a surprise when we discovered that two members of our Round Table (dressed in their dinner jackets and bow ties) had prepared a delicious picnic. We had pate and toast, meats and salads, with cheesecake for dessert. There was even a candelabrum on the table.



**Cheryl Cook
Chairman**

Whittlesey & District LC 1064
Area 25 Vice Chairman.

BOSOM PALS CHEQUE PRESENTATION

Southend Priory Ladies Circle presented a cheque to Bosom Pals at Southend Hospital on Monday 6th June 2005.

Bosom Pals is a charity that supports women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer at Southend Hospital. The money that they raise is spent on equipment, counselling services and improving the unit with soft furnishings, which helps to create a more relaxed atmosphere. Southend Priory Ladies Circle Chairman for 2004/5 Clare Rourke wanted to support a local charity in her year as chairman and as two of her close friends were diagnosed with breast cancer Bosom Pals seemed to be the logical answer.

Being diagnosed with breast cancer can be both a terrifying and frightening experience, so anything that can be done to help these ladies to come to terms with their illness and the treatment of it, is a very worthwhile cause.

Both of Clare's friends speak very highly of the unit at Southend Hospital and luckily both of them are now over their initial treatment and are feeling well.

All the members of Southend Priory Ladies Circle were more than happy to support Bosom Pals and we were able to donate £2,150 to them. This was most of the money that we raised last year by various activities.

Our largest fund raising event was a quiz night that was very well supported by our friends and families. It is nice to be able to support a local charity.

Ruth Sage



(Left to right) Laura Palmer - Clinical Nurse Specialist, Jenny Wadley Smith, Ruth Sage, Consultant Neil Rothnie, Sally Laking-Morris and Clare Rourke

THATCHAM EXCEED EXPECTATIONS



On a Saturday night in October Thatcham LC held our 4th ladies night in aid of Breast Cancer charities and it exceeded all our expectations!!!

If all monies come in as promised and there is no reason to suspect that they won't we will have raised a whopping £10 000 on that one night!!!!
How you may ask?...By holding a dinner disco with a 2 course dinner for 200 ladies.

Entertainment included a drag queen and our very own Thatcham - Round Table. Almost all costs were sponsored so everything was pure profit!!!!

We hope you are as proud as we are!!!

Wendy Bradstock
Thatcham ladies circle 1173

Ed says: A fantastic effort and why wasn't I invited?

IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST ACTION

Whilst at a recent Ladies Circle cookery demonstration at Mr Chu's Chinese Palace, Area 37 Chair Jacqui Etherington asked the chef "How do we do that?" so he told her it was all in the wrist action and asked if she would like to hold his wok.



ST NEOTS GO DUTCH

St. Neots Ladies Circle joined Table 441 for the Euro meeting in Winschoten Holland. St. Neots Round Table rekindled the Euro 41 meeting again a few years ago by hosting a very successful Euro meeting, with a number of nationalities attending. Now we all seem like old friends and every year we are reunited and new friends are made.

This year in June we met up with our friends in Germany before joining the meeting in Holland. The Dutch had a wonderful programme arranged for us. On the Friday was a visit to a citadel and the euro meeting was officially launched with canon fire. We then wine and dined inside the star shaped citadel before having a guided tour of the area. Saturday morning was business for the men in Groningen, while the ladies had some retail therapy. Meeting for lunch in the 'pancake ship' we were fortified for the afternoons activity of a boat ride in glorious weather. For the fit and able it was then a trudge up to the very top of the 'Martini tower' a tall church which gave wonderful views of the flat surrounding countryside, while others preferred to view from the bottom sipping their cooled drinks!



Saturday night was the gala dinner and after eating and drinking your fill each club does an entertainment or skit. This year we did a mummer's play of St. George and the dragon, which went down surprisingly well! Probably because the dragon, a circler, was much better looking than the saintly George!

We were lucky enough to be home hosted by a farming family, the hospitality was wonderful and seeing how dairy farming is done by our European cousins very interesting; especially if your husband is an ex 'young' farmer! On the Sunday morning a cow calved and then it was off to the traditional Sunday brunch in glorious sunshine where gifts and banners were exchanged and a fond farewell to everyone, with promises to meet up again next year in Austria.

I can thoroughly recommend supporting your Table on any European trip where I have found that everyone is included and made to feel most welcome. I am now looking forward to Austria when we will all meet again and I understand that some skiing is on the agenda, and maybe the odd glwein!

Nicky Mitchell St. Neots Ladies Circle
Working with Round Table - side by side

EDITORIAL

Welcome to our extra edition of the Circler magazine and a big thank you to all those who provided copy. This magazine has a very international flavour and I hope you enjoy reading it.
The next version is the Conference edition and this will be distributed in July but the deadline date is 31st March 2006.
No one replied to the caption competition last time, so I have drunk the champagne! Why not have a go this time - photo on page 12.

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South East Area Luncheon 2006



Area 8 Chairman Irene Holden and Luncheon Chairman Christina Wardle, invite you to join us

on

Saturday 18th March 2006

At

The Royal Lancaster Hotel, London

Tickets £38.50

Please contact Irene Holden via 'HoldIYH@aol.com'

or call

01483 723993



OUR FUTURE IN OUR HANDS

The National Association of Ladies Circles' will need to make one of its biggest decisions at the AGM in Killarney since changing the logo or the age rule. It is important that all circlers are aware of the decisions that need to be made and the options available, as they will change how the organisation is administered in the future. The National Executive have therefore decided that it would take the opportunity the spring magazine provides to ensure all circlers are fully aware of the situation.

In Summer 2007, our two members of staff will be retiring. We also have the opportunity to give notice on the lease on Provincial House, our Headquarters in Keighley. From previous AGMs you will have heard about the poor state of the building and with Jackie and Margaret retiring, this gives us an opportunity to consider our options. Should we stay or should we go and if we go, where should we go?

At the last Council meeting nine options were discussed by the National councillors (Our Area Chairmen) who had discussed these in their areas prior to the meeting. So many of you will be aware of these options, which were:

- We remain in Keighley and increase our staffing levels.
- We remain in Keighley and maintain our staffing levels.
- We remain in Keighley and decrease our staffing levels.
- We remain in Keighley with no staff.
- We relocate to alternative office accommodation with all of the above staffing options.
- We relocate to Marchesi House with all of the above staffing options.
- We employ a home worker.
- We contract out our administration.
- We run without an office and staff.

At the council meeting there was a ballot and the National executive have been asked to present more information on the three favoured options, which are;

- We relocate to Marchesi House and maintain our staffing levels.

- We relocate to Marchesi House and decrease our staffing levels.
- We employ a Home Worker.

The aim is that at the council meeting in February the councillors will agree which two of the three options will be placed on the AGM agenda. At the AGM the membership will be required to vote for one of the two options. It is important to remember that we have to make a decision on this at the AGM because the necessary plans will need to be put into place during the 2006/7 circling year to enable the closure of HQ in Summer 2007. We are not in a position where we can defer a decision to the following year.

There are two important considerations to make, firstly we have to decide whether we want to have an office, the second is concerning staffing, how many should we have and whether we want to be the employer.

The National Executive have had discussions with Round Table and explored the various options that moving to Marchesi House could offer. Ranging from renting space only and employing our own staff right through to the provision of all administrative services by staff employed by Round Table. We have discussed with 41 Club the experiences of their recent move to Marchesi House, we have visited the site and met with the existing staff to understand how they operate.

Morag, our Immediate Past President has been researching the options and at the February council meeting we will be looking at the advantages and disadvantages for the various proposals they offer. For instance if we employ our own staff that presents us with various employment responsibilities and liabilities but if we use a designated member of staff employed by Round table, then we have no issues regarding employment but we would need to make sure the service required is delivered.

Alongside this we will be looking at whether we would prefer not to have an office at all and employ a home

worker. Whilst this option would mean we retain employment obligations and need to consider health and safety etc it could be cheaper as we potentially could have reduced overheads. On the other hand an office enables, storage and provides a meeting venue.

In considering the number of staff required we hope to complete a comprehensive job analysis with our existing staff to identify exactly what they do. In doing this we will have a clearer picture of the volume and type of work required and it will give us the baseline on which to review our administrative requirements. In looking at the three options we have, we will need to make a decision on the level of staff. The decision will need to be based on whether we are on the side of caution and potentially employ more than we need or do we reduce numbers and look at how we can flex upwards during peak periods.

We will need to consider the cost of each proposal and whether we are prepared to make that financial commitment.

We cannot consider staffing without considering the location. Therefore we will be asking the councillors to identify the positive and negatives for the various scenarios in order that they can identify the best options for inclusion on the AGM agenda.

There are lots of arguments for and against each of these proposals and the AGM will be the time for the membership to discuss the merits of each proposal. This article is here to help you understand the process undertaken in identifying the final two options on the agenda and to give you an insight into some, not all, of the considerations so far.

Many of you will already have been involved in the debate, others will not. It is important that you discuss these agenda items at a local level. If your Circle is unable to attend the AGM then hopefully someone in your Area/locality will be able to attend as a proxy delegate for you. If you opt for a proxy delegate then it is important that you give them a mandate on how to vote so that your voice is heard. Details of those attending the AGM can be found on the Killarney web site. There are still places available at conference and we would love to see you there - it is not too late to book in. We have inserted the proxy delegate form on page 8 in this magazine, for ease, should you need it.

It is our organisation and its future is in our hands. 'Ewe can' make a difference and you can help shape our future.

Mandy Vines for the National Executive

STRICTLY SANTA

For a Christmas party with a difference why not give it a topical theme? So 'Strictly Christmas' was the Turriff LC event.

Thank goodness for EBay - where else would we have been able to buy our partners 'attractive' sequined shirts and where else would Stephanie Smith have sourced the skimpiest Latin costume?

With disco balls, tinsel and a tango competition we put Brucie to shame. Whilst some would consider 'The Highlight' of the evening to be when James McClauchlan from Strictly Dance Fever arrived and gave us a Salsa Lesson, those of us who love her would consider the highlight to be Marij Chalmers' shoes - 99p from EBay!



Picture : Chairman Jill McCaw with her admirers

FACTSHEET: GUIDELINES FOR PROXY DELEGATE AT THE NATIONAL AGM

TO: **Circle Secretaries (please pass to your Circle delegate/s)**
Area Secretaries
Area Chairmen

GENERAL INFORMATION

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Factsheet: Guidelines for Voting Delegates
Proxy delegates must be active Circlers
For information on claiming travel expenses, please contact the Secretary of the Circle you are representing

PRIOR TO THE AGM

The proxy delegate should attend the Circle meeting when the final AGM Agenda is to be discussed
The Circle should give her clear instructions on how they wish her to vote, or give her their mandate to make a decision based on discussion at the National AGM itself
Any Circle wishing to appoint a proxy delegate, must sign the Proxy Delegate Authorisation Form at the bottom of this page, and hand to the appointed proxy delegate.
Proxy delegates will only be allowed to register as voting delegates at the AGM, on presentation of the completed authorisation form.

FOR DETAILS ON REGISTRATION, ADMISSION, VOTING PROCEDURE, SPEAKING FROM THE FLOOR, ANY OTHER BUSINESS ETC, PLEASE REFER TO THE GUIDELINES FOR VOTING DELEGATES

If you have any queries on appointing or acting as a proxy delegate, please contact Headquarters Office

PROXY DELEGATE'S AUTHORISATION FORM National AGM 13th May 2006, Killarney

We confirm that we are appointing a Proxy Delegate to represent us at the National AGM

Circle Name Circle No Area No

Proxy Delegate's Name Memb No

Proxy Delegate's Circle Name Circle No Area No

Signature Signature

(Circle Secretary)

(Proxy Delegate)

This Authorisation Form must be handed in at the NALC Registration desk prior to the commencement of the NALC AGM

'ALLO ALLO' (I SHALL WRITE THIS ONLY ONCE)

Holbeach Ladies Circle chairman's day out -I have been a circler for 4 years and remember Chairman's day out to be a visit to a city where we shopped, wine, dined and took the last train home.

This has now grown to a Chairman's weekend away. Ten ladies (another 3 joined us Saturday) from Holbeach Ladies Circle set off from Peterborough dressed to kill in our Moulin Rouge tour polo shirts on Friday 22nd April. We joined the train only to find out, yet again, we were in quiet coach 'D'.

Uncorking champagne quietly is no problem!

Joining Eurostar at Waterloo we found we were scattered around different carriages (in spite of assurances on booking of seats together). Debra's negotiating skills not only gathered us together but also upgraded us to first-class for the return journey.

Our accommodation was at the Hotel Concorde, 4 stars with panoramic views of the centre of Paris close to a shopper's paradise with over 150 shops!

The first night spent touring the Montmartre where we had a brilliant meal - stylishly French with wine flowing and our grasp of French improving by the minute. Even our vegetarian Karen was persuaded to eat steak. Nightcaps were taken back at the hotel serenaded by the piano player.

Saturday and we hit the City stopping off at the Louvre (for culture) and soaking up the Parisian atmosphere in the 'Le Open Tour'.

Joined by 3 latecomers we became "les dames qui déjeuner" truly pampered by the very attentive waiters. Saturday night drinks started in Brigitte, Tracey & Kellie's room before boarding a Bateau Mouche to take the night scenes from the river.

The Highlight of 'le' weekend was the Moulin Rouge Show where we sipped champagne and enjoyed the varied acts and high kicking dancing.

No visit to Paris is complete without a visit to the Eiffel Tower and on Sunday we rode to the top for our first international induction of new member Tracey. To coin a classic French phrase it was a 'Mange Tout' of a weekend.

Veena Cornish, Chairman Holbeach & District Ladies Circle 1162



KEEPING UP THE PROFILE

One of Hull Wyke 814s annual fundraising events is manning the gates and handing out brochure packs at the annual Hull and East Riding caravan show in Cottingham. This year we also had the help of two future recruits, also dressed in their ladies circle T-shirts.

As well as the brochures we also put a ladies circle flyer in over 1000 of the packs. Many of the attendees were over the age limit but we hoped they might pass them on to a younger relative or friend.

Caroline Cosway (Area 37 Vice chair)



OH, WHAT A NIGHT!

Friday 18th November 2005 will stay in my memory as the best night that I have had as the Chairman of Derby Merlin Ladies Circle. It was our major fund raising event of the year and it was the culmination of months of planning and organisation. Even before I had been installed as chairman way back in April of this year, I had already decided what sort of event I wanted to put on. It would be just for us girls; it would involve pampering; there would be retail therapy; it would be called "A Sense of Well-being".

Jo, fund raising officer, was already on the case before the start of the summer. The venue was booked and letters had been sent out to local beauty therapists, hairdressers, gift retailers and, most importantly, people who made chocolate, inviting them to be a part of the event.

By October we had around 25 stands booked, but disaster loomed just around the corner! A mix up with the venue meant that we were "homeless" with less than a month to go and tickets already being sold. Thankfully an alternative was quickly arranged, tickets were altered and we were back on course.

We sold over 100 tickets and, on the night, the atmosphere was amazing! Over £250 worth of prizes sat on the raffle table; women were having treatments all round the room and demonstrations were taking place on the stage. A top local hairdressing salon provided a fabulous demonstration and supplied over 100 free goodie bags for our guests.

We raised over £970 that evening for the Child Protection Unit of the NSPCC and the National Osteoporosis Society, with the NSPCC taking a further £200 on their own stall.

Everyone commented on how relaxed the evening was – they obviously weren't aware of how un-relaxed Jo and I were, hoping that the event would work!

And the positive comments kept coming in – it made me so proud to be a part of Circle.

It was a brilliant event where we managed to promote ourselves, Area 20, and raise awareness for my chosen charities – it doesn't get much better than that!

Finally I would like to thank all members of Derby Merlin Ladies Circle for their help and support in making my dream a reality. Also thank you to the girls of City of Derby for manning the "make your own bath bomb" stand.

A special thank you goes to Will Ingleby – Derby Merlin Tabler and IPC Area 14 – for providing his services as MC for the evening. It was a tough job, being the only man in a room full of women, but someone had to do it, and no one could have done it better!

Here's to next year – yes, it looks like we might bow to public pressure and do it all over again! I'll be first in line for a beauty treatment this time!

Jacqui Haspel (Derby Merlin)



FUNDRAISING - EVERYTHING HELPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

CIRCLING WITH SANTA

This year Shirley Ladies Circle are delighted to report that their Christmas collection out with Santa and his sleigh on the streets of Shirley raised almost £1,000 for their charity NSPCC.

Here's one of Santa's little helpers (aka CMLO Helen) on an outing with Santa.



They are hoping to raise a similar amount with their fund-raising event on the 25th March which will be a casino night with a James Bond theme – For further details on this event please ring Shirley Chairman Nicola on 0121 744 9717

THIS SPRING - TAKE TIME FOR A CLEAR OUT...

Now's the time to have a clear out, make bags of room and help to fund life-saving research.

All you need to do is: -
Clear out your unwanted clothing and home wares.
Drop them off at your local Cancer Research UK Shop.
Sit back & admire your clutter free cupboards/spare room etc.

Please remember that one bag of good quality items could raise as much as £30 to help prevent, treat and cure cancer.

What better reason for having a clear out for cancer today!

CMLO Helen has always been a bit of a hoarder but has taken this opportunity to have a clear out and here she is ready to deliver a few bags to the Shirley Cancer Research UK shop in the West Midlands.



RAISING FUNDS AND RAISING PROFILE

Whittlesey & District LC 1064 (Area 25) ran a Tombola at Peterborough Greyhound Stadium on 14th October 2005.

We presented a trophy to the winner of one of the races, we had our name in the programme, and the racing manager kept announcing who we were and what we were doing.

I think you will agree that we certainly 'stood out from the crowd' and got ourselves noticed. Not only did we manage to raise the fantastic amount of £1530 for

Cancer Research UK, but we also raised the profile of Ladies Circle too.



Cheryl Cook
W'Sey
Chairman,
Area 25
V-Chairman

THESE FEET ARE MADE FOR WALKING

Walk to Scotland raises over £10,000.00 for Cancer Research

Kathryn Lloyd and Lesley Moss, two active members of Northwich Ladies Circle, have reason to be very proud of themselves this week. They recently spent nine days walking 226 miles from Northwich to Scotland to raise funds for Cancer Research UK.

Kathryn, who lost her Father to Cancer ten years ago said "When we started planning for this epic trip almost a year ago, we hoped to get £2,000 in sponsorship, making the effort worthwhile. To realise the final figure, which at the moment stands at almost £10,000, with monies still to be collected, will be absolutely fantastic".



Lesley added "With all the amazing support we've received from family, friends and all the interest and involvement from local schools, we were spurred on to get up every day and carry on, even though at times it was very difficult. But a very strong friendship has been forged between us and our two families."

Kathryn and Lesley and the other members of Northwich Ladies Circle met up this week with Peter Whalley, Community Fundraiser from Cancer Research UK to give him the good news and make a presentation to him.

Northwich Ladies Circle raises thousands of pounds for various local and national charities each year and this year is no different with an estimated total of £7,000.00.



Far left: Lesley and Kathryn with Peter

Left: Lesley and Kathryn on the walk

CAPTION COMPETITION



Please send your captions for this photograph to The Editor, Mandy Vines at mandyvines@btconnect.com

The prize is a bottle of champagne, the winner will be announced at the conference.

The photograph is of Rhian and Anke-Thea, the Ladies' Circle International Vice President.



Q: What do ewe call a sheep with no legs
A: A cloud

Bad Joke!

REGAINING THE SMILE



(Photo courtesy of Unicef)

Di Stephenson reports how she is working side by side with Tablers in Sri Lanka.

I Set off on New Years Day from Heathrow. I arrived safely in Sri Lanka on 2nd January and was met by Tushar Amaleon the Immediate Past President of Round Table Sri Lanka. I stayed with him and his family in Columbo on the first night and his secretary then arranged a hotel for me close to the schools I will be working at in the South.

My hotel is on the beach (it had been badly damaged when the Tsunami hit but is now repaired) and I wake up every morning to the sound of the waves (no big ones I hope!) and the birds chirping.

I am being well looked after here by the hotel staff who are all very grateful that a) there are people starting to stay there as it means they still have a job and b) as I am a volunteer, they are thankful that people have come to help them and their fellow Sri Lankans. My eyes well up at their gratitude.

I visited some of the stricken schools in the first few days in the Galle District which was the second most badly hit area after the island of Sumatra in Indonesia. The IPP of RT Sri Lanka drove me to each place, along with two other Round Table visitors from Germany who were checking progress on the Sri Lankan Tsunami projects being funded by the thousands of pounds donated by Round Tablers and Ladies' Circle groups from across the world to help in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. The money is being used to help rebuild the schools that were badly damaged or destroyed.

When we visited the first school in Kosgoda, I struggled to hold back the tears when I saw what the people had left. The school principle was killed in the Tsunami, many of the children and staff have lost more than one family member, some having lost both parents and despite everything they were smiling. Despite everything that has happened to them they have resilience beyond belief and they are still trying to live their lives no matter what. It certainly makes the everyday world we are used to, feel very materialistic. We are often focused on trivia and ungrateful for the relative luxury we expect as a basic human right. It would be good for us all to walk a mile in their shoes.

In the grounds of the damaged school, we saw where Round Table are building a magnificent classroom block which even has a dance hall for the children and electricity in the classrooms. Their current classroom accommodation can only be described as pigpens with black boards. School desks are no more than battered pieces of wood screwed onto tubular legs most of which are just what was salvaged from the debris after the waves struck. Many of the teaching materials and textbooks were all washed away with the water.

I met many of the children during a lesson and they tried to talk to us in broken English. The welcome we got took my breath away and the lump in my throat stayed with me for hours after.

The foreign donations are obviously going to good use and the Sri Lankan Tablers are donating their own skills and materials free of charge wherever possible. It is just fantastic what is being done for the community through charitable donations and volunteers from across the world in the rebuilding of schools and houses. I guess our money can help rebuild the material things but cannot replace their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and other family members that they are still grieving for.

When I offered a months free labour to the Sri Lankan Tablers following the presentation given by Tushar Amaleon at the National Conference in Glasgow last May, they asked that I use this time to go to some of the stricken schools and help improve the English communication skills of the children. They will need English skills as a means of getting better paid employment when they leave school. Having English language skills is something that is respected very much in Sri Lanka. I have to say I was a little daunted by the request and didn't know whether I would be competent enough to achieve what was being asked of me. I guess only time will tell if my time with the children makes a real

difference and also whether they picked up any swear words along the way!

I started teaching my first classes at the Patuwatha Lanka Saba School in Patuwatha. The school is situated only about 20 yards from the waters edge and was badly damaged by the waves.

I survived my first few days and so did the children. They can now tell you their name, how old they are, state 5 colours, count from 1 to 20 and recite the alphabet. Oh and we played Simple Simon says which I used as a last resort when I was running out of material! They loved this because they could jump up and down in lessons and hop on one foot. Another tearful moment came when the end of the first lesson the children all stood up, clasped their hands together to their chests and said thank you to me in unison. I know now after only 9 days it is going to be incredibly difficult to leave.

"Regaining the Smile" is a perfect name for the Round Table Sri Lanka Tsunami Project. Hats off to the Tablers who have worked so hard to make it happen. The fruits from their efforts are, and will continue to make a big difference to the lives of many. This work would not have been possible however without the fundraising efforts and donations from Round Tablers and Ladies' Circlers around the world.

Di Stephenson

Vice Chair for City of Nottingham Circle

Note from Ed: We hope Di will do another report for the next edition when she returns in April.



ROUND TABLE VISIT TSUNAMI STRUCK INDIA

International Officer, Huw Jones and National Vice President Richard du Bois packed their bags immediately after Christmas to visit the Tsunami devastated region of southeast India on December 27th

The trip was an incredible, and at times, humbling experience. That so much could be done, with what we would consider relatively little, is a testament to the Indian Tablers, their tenacity, commitment, diligence and hard work.

The people that have benefited are overwhelmingly grateful in just twelve short months their devastated lives and surroundings have been or are being rebuilt. They carry on their lives in what for many of us would have been impossible circumstances and we will have many memories of some very

special people whose lives - in desperation - we have been able to touch. For more information visit the Round Table web site www.roundtable.co.uk



Richard du Bois in India

IT'S SHOWTIME!

Area 20 played host to guest circles from Retford, Nottinghamshire and also Area 4 Chairman Kayla and her guests, who had travelled all the way from Birmingham to experience the unique atmosphere that is The Linda Tulley Challenge Evening!

Circles from within Area 20 enter teams each year to battle for the coveted prize with the theme of the evening usually a well-guarded secret. We bring our own "banquet" and drinks and do our best to be the best dressed table, as well as trying to out-do fellow circles in a series of different challenges.

This year's theme was music...but with a twist! No simple pop quiz for our girls, oh no, something much more fiendish than that! Instructions were issued several weeks before the big night - choose one of 3 nominated songs and act out a video presentation of it on the night. Points would be awarded a la "Strictly Come Dancing" by your fellow circlers. We all hoped there would be no Arlenes or Craigs amongst them!

Copacabana appeared to be the favourite on the night with only City of Nottingham opting for Duran Duran's Wild Boys.



So the room was one big cocktail bar, with feathers and tassels much on display. It's amazing what can be done with crepe paper, tassels and a couple of feather boas - just ask Jacqui from Derby Merlin who sewed on all her tassels by hand(now we are getting a bit like Come Dancing!!). The girls rose to the challenge well and there were some great performances, and some very amusing ones too! Area 4 won the best presentation but the overall winners, with scores combined from a pop trivia quiz and the video performance, were Derby Merlin.

CHARTER NIGHT INDUCTIONS

In November, as Chairman of Cardigan & Teifi Valley Ladies Circle I chaired our 43rd Charter Dinner.

The evening was well attended and our Area 46 Chairman Jan Caie also came along with the rest of the exec officers whom I do thank.

The evening was extra special for me as we were inducting two new members into our circle, Sally Anne Barker and Hazel Williams. The venue and setting was well arranged by Eirian and Heather so my thanks go out to them as they did a fantastic job. (The centrepieces were too big to slip into one's bag!!!!) I'll say no more about that.

We always remember to thank our girls for all their help and support on these occasions but this time I would also like to thank my husband who never says no when it

involves circle. Finally I wish Sally Ann and Hazel all the fun and friendship, and everything else that come with being a member of a circle .

Rhian Hives

Chairman Cardigan & Teifi Valley LC 520
Area 46 Publicity Officer

