

21 Today



*Wendy Barnard
District 21 Chairman*



Inner Wheel at the Heart
of the Community for 100 Years

*The Association of Inner Wheel Clubs
in
Great Britain and Ireland*

Well, here I am again – second time round, like Sally before me!

It's been a very different year for me. Instead of zooming with Clubs I have actually been able to visit! That part of the job has been so enjoyable, finding out about you all, actually talking to members, the fellowship – I can honestly recommend it!

By the time you get this magazine you will have heard something (a lot, I hope) about penguins and icebergs. I hope you will have had the opportunity to discuss it at your club.

Inner Wheel has a real problem.

We have lost 5000 members and many clubs over the past three or four years.

Our clubs are sometimes struggling with numbers, find it difficult to get new members and retain them. Certainly, there is a problem with members stepping up to be President/Secretary/ Treasurer in Districts AND in Clubs.

If we don't find ways to alter this then we are in danger of sinking altogether. It's as simple as that.

We all have members who dislike radical change, quite comfortable as we are thank you. I'll call them the 'no nos'. But we have to make some changes – we are not attracting new members. We need younger members who perhaps can't join us in evening/daytime meetings, will want a meal/meet without a meal following the same format as Inner Wheel has for the last thirty years.

We can't just change things – all of us have to be a part of that decision to ensure success. Change cannot be imposed because the President wants it, or the Secretary wants fewer emails from Association.

Real discussion is needed. It is vital that clubs discuss our future earnestly and that all members take part so that all views are listened to.

Quite a task confronts us all.

I sincerely hope you all want to be part of that discussion. Most voluntary organisations are facing the same problems.

As we approach 100 years it would be gratifying to think that Inner Wheel is thriving. We have a lot of work to do if we wish to see that.

We can achieve it together.

Sincerely

Wendy



DISTRICT CHAIRMAN'S CHARITY FOR 2023 – 2024

Nationwide Association of Blood Bikes (NABB)

NABB Mission is to support our member groups in providing a professional rapid response medical transport service, to the NHS, free of charge.

Our member groups are all staffed by unpaid volunteers, who provide this service to the NHS, free of charge.

Our members also work with other charitable organisations, e.g., for transporting donor milk used to treat babies that may be in intensive care, or Air Ambulance charities for both routine and urgent replenishment of their 'Blood on Board'.



ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT ANTHEA'S CHOSEN CHARITY 2023-2024

Beat

Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity. Founded in 1989 as the Eating Disorders Association, our mission is to end the pain and suffering caused by eating disorders.

Our national helpline exists to encourage and empower people to get help quickly, because we know the sooner someone starts treatment, the greater their chance of recovery. People can contact us online or by phone 365 days a year. We listen to them, help them to understand the illness, and support them to take positive steps towards recovery. We also support family and friends, equipping them with essential skills and advice, so they can help their loved ones recover whilst also looking after their own mental health. And we campaign to increase knowledge among healthcare and other relevant professionals, and for better funding for high-quality treatment, so that when people are brave enough to take vital steps towards recovery, the right help is available to them.

The work we do means that every year lives are saved, families are kept together, and people are able to live free of eating disorders.

Dear fellow members of Inner Wheel

Welcome to your winter copy of 21 Today.

As ever there are great reports included of all your Club activities, from 'toilet roll tossing' to 'a Blooming Great Tea Party', to name but 2 events and everything in between. All events valuable and important to the annual programme for your Club. Members of Inner Wheel know how to have fun and raise vast amounts of monies for the host of charities that you support.



I hope you enjoy Jenny's report about the International Rally at Lilleshall. Another great day of fellowship and fund raising. If you've never attended, do come along next year to see what goes on, it's well worth the trip.

And then there are the penguins and their melting iceberg! I am sure that the initial discussions and work started at the event held on October 19th is hopefully resulting in much discussion in your Clubs, on a positive way forward for Inner Wheel.

Thanks as always to the Club Correspondents. There are a few of you who are taking on your first year on behalf of your Club, so I hope you enjoy the role, which is key to keeping your Club's activities on the radar, both within Inner Wheel and to your wider local community. You are all doing a great job!

Chris our printer, thanks again, you make my job a lot easier!

Wishing you all a safe and peaceful festive season

Yours in Inner Wheel Friendship

Nesta

As you know 2023/2024 is a milestone achievement in the life of Inner Wheel in GB&I..... our centenary!

I wonder when Margerette Golding, held the very first Inner Wheel meeting in Manchester, if she had any idea in 1923, quite what an organisation this would become! I think she would be rightly very proud, and we should be too!



For the summer edition of 21 Today, I would like to produce a magazine that records, all the celebrations that you attend, be they at the IIW Convention in Manchester, the Centenary Lunch in London and most importantly, how we all celebrate this milestone in our own Clubs and communities.

It is a key opportunity to showcase what Inner Wheel is about, so whether you make post box toppers, attend further Iceberg workshops, have Club celebrations, attend the IIW convention or the Centenary lunch, please share it in 21 Today, on the District facebook page and on the Association website.

Your Clubs are receiving information from Association on a regular basis about everything that is planned. I have circulated additional information to Club Correspondents about Centenary logos to be used this year, 100 for 100 ideas etc. If you need further information, please get in touch.

Good luck with anything that you are planning and as well as celebrating the centenary we've achieved, let's set Inner Wheel off into our next century on a proud, positive, and cheerful note!!

Nesta



It was good to see so many members and friends at the International Rally on Thursday 12 October. All the stalls were set up and busy selling long before the tea/coffee/cookies were served at 10.00 am. The Club stalls were provided by Stone, Brewood & District, Penkridge, Stafford, Shrewsbury and Wednesfield. Janet Smith ran a jewellery stall and Pauline Grainger the Inner Wheel Sales table.

In the car park donations for NPAC, ChildAid to Eastern Europe and shoe boxes for Teams 4U were loaded onto vans by members of Newport Rotary Club aided by Stan Jukes and Barry Picken. Once again, we are very grateful to the Rotary members for their help and assistance.

The members of the host club, Stafford Castle, did an excellent job carrying out their duties ensuring all donations were deposited correctly, assisting charity representatives as necessary and making sure fire exits were kept clear and the areas around the stalls were free from hazards.

District Chairman, Wendy Barnard, opened the Rally and lit the Candle of Friendship. She welcomed Rotary 1210 District Governor Dr Mukunda Chidrawar, and Steve Evans, Rotary International Officer, together with the speakers, members, and guests. PDC Sally Herbert gave the Health & Safety briefing.

Our first speaker was Kate Mawer from Practical Action a charity being represented at our International Rally for the first time. Kate, a retired geography teacher is a volunteer for Practical Action whose vision is to build a world that works better for everyone.

Kate discussed the work of Practical Action under four headings. First, she talked about The Enabler where Practical Action believes people living in poverty have the ability to change their world. They just need the right plans, tools, and knowhow to work in effective partnerships to empower change in their lives and overcome injustice, especially for women and vulnerable groups.

Secondly, Kate talked about Farming. Seventy-five percent of the world's poorest people rely on farming to make a living, many of whom are women. In order to make agriculture work better for struggling smallholder farmers and ensure they can adapt to climate change and achieve a good standard of living, Practical Action promotes the use of agroecology – an approach to farming that values people and planet and offers a sustainable alternative to intensive agriculture.

Energy transforms people's lives and Practical Action's ambition is to help more people harness the transformational power of clean affordable energy and reduce avoidable deaths caused by smoke from indoor fires and stoves. They are innovating in clean cooking and energy solutions including solar and water powered electricity.

Kate talked about Practical Action's work within cities. By 2030 there are expected to be two billion people living in slum cities and they are working with slum communities and utility companies to deliver sustainable sanitation, water and waste management services and protect the safety and dignity of waste workers.

Practical Action issues Briefing Sheets in many languages and they are all available online.

Our second speaker was David Gordon from the Book Bus charity, the nominated charity of Pam Boyes, Association International Service Committee Chairman. David reminded us that the charity began work with schools in Zambia and has now opened further reading schemes in Malawi and Ecuador. He talked about outreach work, providing safe and secure reading environments, i.e., schools and libraries and working within communities to provide the best use of the books. He said regular monitoring and evaluation has shown that primary children's literacy has risen from 11% to 33%. Monica, David's assistant, talked about two people from Malawi who the Book Bus had supported, that had gone on to university, one to study Economics and then to work for the World Bank.

David thanked Inner Wheel for its support in donating many thousands of books and funds towards the cost of purchasing and equipping a new bus. The target is £40,000 and with another year to run over half of the money has already been raised and David is very hopeful the target will be met.

Stephen Barbor from ChildAid to Eastern Europe was our third speaker of the morning. He told us that the charity was working in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. He spoke about the Isle of Hope in Belarus a Day Care programme that is vital for disabled children as without it those children would be sent to jail. In Ukraine ChildAid is giving support in many areas where people are unable to flee because they may be vulnerable, disabled or orphaned. He also mentioned the Tony Hawks Centre in Moldova where ChildAid assists in the care of children who are disabled or who have been traumatised by the war in Ukraine.

Before we broke for lunch Dr Mukunda Chidrawar, Rotary 1210 District Governor addressed the meeting. He was unable to stay for the afternoon session so in bringing the greetings from Rotary he said how impressed he was with the work Inner Wheel does with international charities and hoped the Rally would be successful.

Following lunch Simon Cooke and Joshua Murindwa from Teams4u gave us an update on their work. Simon told us that the shoe boxes this year are going to deprived children/vulnerable adults/families in Ukraine, Romania, Bosnia, Moldova, and Georgia – many will be from Mariupol. He played a video which showed just how excited the children get when they receive a shoe box. Simon mentioned that a shoe box delivered to a young girl in war torn Sarajevo thirty years ago can now be seen in the Sarajevo War Childhood Museum. Apparently, the young girl was so thrilled to receive the box she never used the contents and kept the box under her bed for all those years.

Joshua spoke about his work in Uganda in sexual health education. Teams4u are working with the Welsh Government to develop a dignity programme to support schoolgirls in Uganda and Sierra Leone with washable sanitary pads and basic menstrual health education.

Our final speaker for the day was Claudia Domin from InterCare. Claudia told us that recycling is a very big part of their work – mobile phones, stamps, coins, ink cartridges etc. – for example one bag of mobile phones will raise about £130 which will purchase 5 wheelchairs for Sierra Leone. InterCare also distribute used medical devices, dentist chairs and items from GP practices that would otherwise go into landfill, to Africa. The InterCare Christmas campaign this year will take place between 4th to 13th December. Claudia said any donations made to the Charity during those dates would be match funded.

Following the presentations Wendy was invited to announce the numbers of the winning raffle tickets and then Jenny presented her with flowers.

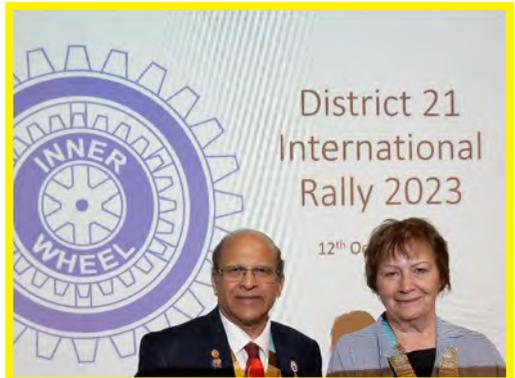


REPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL RALLY - JENNY PICKEN

Cheques were presented to the Charities as follows – Practical Action £450, The Book Bus Foundation £300, Child Aid £300, Teams4u £300, and InterCare £300 – a wonderful effort by all members.

As the Rally ended Jenny thanked Steve Evans, Rotary District International Chairman for attending, international committee members for their help, District Treasurer Alison, the host club Stafford Castle, the Clubs who ran the stalls and members and friends who came and gave great support to the stalls.

However, the biggest thank you went to Steve Antill, together with his wife Helen, for overseeing all technical matters thus ensuring a stress-free day. Steve had taken a day's holiday from work to support us and everyone who attended the Rally expressed their thanks by loud applause. Jenny then extinguished the candle of friendship and wished everyone a safe journey home.



INTRODUCING ALISON MURPHY, DISTRICT TREASURER

Originally from Cornwall Alison moved to the Midlands to attend university and has stayed ever since. She trained as a chartered accountant in Birmingham and until recently worked as the UK finance director for a chemical manufacturing group.

Alison first attended Inner Wheel meetings when her husband, Jim, was president of the Tettenhall Rotary club in 2010/2011, and she very much enjoyed the friendship offered by all members. Alison joined the Inner Wheel Club of Tettenhall in 2012 and has served as treasurer and president. She is in her last year as club treasurer and will be club vice president in 2023/2024.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to you all from your fellow members of District 21

BREWOD AND DISTRICT - Jagdish Kaur

NEWPORT - Dawn Maley

SHREWSBURY – Ingrid Dalglish

STOKE ON TRENT – Margaret Bootherstone, Lorraine Moores

TETTENHALL - Jasveer Bougan

WHITCHURCH – Christine Collen, Linda Robinson, Linda Danton, Chris Cope

Transfers

**IRONBRIDGE - Diana Dummett, Anne Shelmerdine,
Shirley Hellewell**

TETTENHALL TO WARSOP – Jenny Morrison

RETIREMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

BREWOD AND DISTRICT - Shirley Plowright, Sue Sheldon

NEWPORT - PDC Pat Rex, Barbara Gedye

PENKRIDGE – Ann Richards

SHREWSBURY – Mary Pascoe

STAFFORD – Joy Simpson, Jonquil Goacher

STAFFORD CASTLE – Shirley Moore

TETTENHALL - Jo Hill, Sheila Carver, Nirmala Ram

UTTOXETER - Jackie Edwards

**WEDNESBURY – Annette Ward, Brenda Timmins, Margaret Powell,
Georgia Mosedale, Alison Danks, Lynne Edge**

WHITCHURCH – Jan Wruszek

IN MEMORIAM

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of:

SEDGLEY AND WOMBOURNE – Elsie Dunn

SEDGLEY AND WOMBOURNE – Pam Garrington

STAFFORD – Margaret Hassall

STAFFORD – Mary Boden

STAFFORD – Joan Potter

STAFFORD – Brenda Morris

TETTENHALL – Linda Mary Francis

WEDNESBURY – Barbara Brace

WEDNESBURY – Rtn. Reverend Peter Rainsford, husband of Pamela Rainsford.



Our President's chosen charity for 2022/23 was Blood Bikes. We were delighted to present Helen Bunday, Coordinator for Blood Bikes, with a cheque for £1000 at our Club meeting in May. This amount was as a result of the various fund-raising events, we have held in the last 12 months.

It was decided that charitable donations should be made locally this year and so far, two charities have been approved: the Alzheimer's Society, Stafford, and Rockspur, a user lead charity for people with learning disabilities in South Staffordshire and Cannock.

Three major fundraising events have been scheduled for 2023/24. The first was our inaugural "Open Gardens" event on Sunday 23rd July. 10 local garden owners kindly opened their gardens to the public who paid for a programme to the event. This was an over-whelming success. The sun shone for most of the day, and we collected over £1,400 for distribution via our charity fund.

The generosity of the garden owners was immense, both in the preparation of gardens prior to the day and on the day itself, not to mention the worry regarding the weather! We had lovely comments throughout the day on the gardens, the owners and, of course, the refreshments.

Our thanks go to all the ladies who provided cakes for sale, to those who worked tirelessly all-day serving refreshments and working across the venues and to the members who visited the gardens and brought friends along.



Visitors enjoyed looking around the gardens and enjoyed the tea and cakes on offer.

Meetings in the last six months have included a fish and chip supper, our AGM and an address by the District Chairman, Wendy Barnard (who is also our President this year), about the District's activities and challenges for the forthcoming year. We have also been treated to "Tales from a Travel Agent" by Sally O'Hara and were honoured to have Nick Morris, the registered manager of Rockspur as our speaker. It was fascinating to hear about the work Rockspur undertakes on behalf of adults with special needs in South Staffordshire, and we were pleased to present Nick with a £1000 donation from the proceeds of our Open Gardens event in July.

Collections of donated items have been ongoing, and an impressive collection was delivered to the Solace Community who provide specialist supported housing for individuals who have experienced homelessness.

We donated numerous collections that have been taking place throughout the year to the relevant charity at the District's International Rally. This year, thanks to members' generosity and "good housekeeping" in keeping suitable items rather than discarding them into landfill, we were able to donate to Child Aid, National Police Aid Charity (NPAC), Intercare, and to the Craft Stall. In addition to the various collections donated, we organised and ran the Produce Stall. Our thanks go to all members who made and donated items for sale and to those who came on the day to help to run the stall as well as to those who attended the workshop to assist in preparation of the items for sale. This was truly a team effort. We should all be justly proud that our hard work both before and during the event raised a sum of £389.50 towards the total amount of money raised on the day.

A team of knitters excelled themselves by supplying knitted squares and one of our members, Barbara Mead, then spent a lot of time stitching the squares into blankets. The blankets are around 1 metre square and are big enough for mothers to tie their babies/toddlers onto their backs.

We were presented with some knitted blankets and baby clothes that were very kindly made for us by a member's neighbour. These were all passed on to Child Aid. They are beautiful garments and blankets, and we are in awe of the talent and generosity shown by making and donating these beautiful items.



In September 2020 during Lockdown, John Wilson, an Ambassador from the Buddy Bags Foundation, gave our Club a presentation on Zoom. We donated sufficient funds to buy four Buddy Bags for children in emergency care. A Buddy Bag is something a child can call their own, no matter where they go. They include toiletries, pyjamas, socks and underwear, in addition to comfort items such as a book and a teddy bear.

Everything in each bag must be the same and so when we offered to knit some teddies, we had to choose a specific pattern and wool from information on their website. It turned out that our member Joyce Pegg was the only experienced 'knitter' and she knitted a quantity of teddies with special 'teddy' wool that she bought with money that some of us donated to her. The teddies were stored in her office and when she thought that she had made enough, she intended to give them to the Foundation. Sadly, Joyce died before that day came and John, her husband, brought them to us when he found them, not knowing the story behind them. The teddies were carefully packed up and sent to Buddy Bags in Sutton Coldfield, with a covering letter explaining how they came to be with us. We received a very touching response back from them.



In the summer President Kath arranged an afternoon tea at Love Coffee at Salop Leisure. We had a lovely afternoon and were welcomed by Tony Bywaters the Chairman who showed great interest in our charity events.

In September President Kath welcomed our new member Ingrid at our first lunch meeting after our break.

At our October meeting we presented the final cheque to Hope House and a cheque to John, a pilot for The Air Ambulance after a very interesting talk and slide show. What brave people they are.

We presented Secretary Marion with a gold rose and card for her golden wedding anniversary.

In November we are celebrating our 80th Birthday and will be welcoming District Chairman Wendy Barnard as our speaker.

Ironbridge Inner Wheel have been donating toiletries and women's hygiene products to Families in Telford, for young mothers, and they are very grateful for our donations. They are operating at Sutton Hill, and Dawley Christian Centre, as well as the Park Lane Centre, Woodside. At Christmas they are planning to give a wrapped book to each child, so while we are all out and about, we will be looking for books for 'little ones', and will add some toiletries for the mothers, something more in the pampering line than we usually give, for a Christmas gift bag for them.

The International Rally was a great success, with excellent speakers. Ironbridge Inner Wheel donated a large amount of goods for Child Aid and the NPAC, which were gratefully received. The speakers were very good as usual, but we were particularly impressed by the speaker from Practical Action, a new charity for us.

In September Ironbridge Inner Wheel held a Pudding Evening at the home of President Sheena. The District Chairman was in attendance, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening of gorgeous puddings and a raffle. We raised £281. This was a welcome boost for our Charity account and followed the success of a concert earlier in the summer, which was entirely 'in house' - we have very talented musicians and singers in Ironbridge Inner Wheel.

Some other charities we have decided to support in kind, are Forget-Me-Not, and Kip. Forget-Me -Not is a local dementia charity, and we have decided (at their suggestion) to buy memory books for the clients, to jog their memories of past events and traditions. As usual Kip, the Telford Homelessness Charity, will be the recipient of our Reverse Advent Calendars in January for Inner Wheel Day. Reverse Advent Calendars are an excellent idea for homeless charities and food banks, consisting of 25 non-perishable food stuffs from each of our members.

Ironbridge Inner Wheel continues to meet monthly at The Water Rat, Ironbridge. We have recently welcomed two new members from the closed The Wrekin Inner Wheel Club, Anne, and Shirley. In November we are going to make Christmas crackers under the tutelage of Treasurer Liz, followed by our Christmas meeting on 13th December. Former members will be invited too, we are always delighted to see them. In January we meet on Inner Wheel Day, so can we bring our Reverse Advent Calendar foodstuffs to that meeting. At the January Meeting Christine will speak about and demonstrate musical instruments.

At the final Club meeting of 2022-2023 held in June, outgoing Club President Nicole presented a cheque for £800 to Katie Foster for Nicole's chosen charity Alzheimers Research UK. This was followed by the handover to incoming President Jane Chadwick.



The much-anticipated Club outing/luncheon at the Tile Press Café, Maws Craft Centre, Jackfield took place at the end of June. Delicious food, with good friends and an interesting location – result - a super day out.

Our first meeting of the new Inner Wheel year was notable for the induction of a new member, Dawn Maley – welcome Dawn.



In September a joint service with Newport Rotary Club held at All Saints Church, Forton, gave us focus for the year ahead. We had a very interesting talk by a lady from HSBC on scams, at our September Club meeting.

It was my pleasure to speak at our October Club meeting about my involvement in Inner Wheel and about the Harry Johnson Trust. A donation of £100 has been sent to the Trust.

21 members and friends attended the District International Rally at Lilleshall Sports & Conferencing Centre in October. Donations of goods were made to the various charities represented including 42 shoe box gifts. Meeting up with friends from other clubs is always a bonus and makes the day very enjoyable and worthwhile.



We are looking forward to a Bring & Buy Club event in November, and a December Christmas meal with family and friends.

Season's greetings to one and all.



Having celebrated our 40th birthday this summer, Past President Kath Caine passed over the chain of office to our new President Claire Holden, who had lots of ideas for activities and fund raising.



At our October meeting our guest speaker was Linda Gilmore who demonstrated Tropic skin products.

October was a very busy month with the emphasis on international charities. Our international service officer, Jackie hosted a coffee morning when we filled 50 T4U charity boxes, packed 1000 pairs of spectacles and bagged and labelled mounds of beautifully knitted garments. I think she was very pleased and relieved to get her house back.



Eight of our members, heavily laden with bags and boxes, attended the International Rally, where we enjoyed listening to excellent speakers from the various charities, as well as going round the many stalls. Inner Wheel Club of Penkridge was responsible for the raffle on the day, which was very colourful and successful.



Later in October a large group of us went to the Red Carpet Cinema at Barton-Under-Needwood where we had breakfast and then saw 'The Great Escaper' starring Michael Caine. That was a fun day out.



Our November meeting is dinner at the Moat House when we can invite partners and friends. Our speaker for the evening is Andrew Stilton who is a lawyer and author.



We started the new year with an international evening at the home of Past President Alison and husband Joe. A super evening in the garden with food from various countries.

The proceeds went to enable Rotarian Viquar Quarashi to provide 100 limbs and 20 hands to people in Nepal where he makes these prosthetics from drain pipes. Together with Past President Alison, I attended the District changeover. I hope Wendy will have a better year this time.

In July, Wombourne village has a carnival and each year we take a stall and once again we had our mug stall, so several members had an evening of packing 240 mugs. It was quite a marathon, but we sold them all and made funds for our charity. For many years we have started the year with a church service, and this was held on July 30th when one of our own members Reverend Jean Spragg conducted the service. Afterwards we all enjoyed a meal at the local vineyard.



For many years, I have hosted a Blooming Great Tea Party for Marie Curie Nurses and once again the sun shone, so we were able to enjoy the afternoon, raising money for a worthy cause. In October we welcomed District Chairman Wendy and brought food for the local food bank. Our birthday comes in November, and we decided once again to have a small celebration amongst ourselves with District Chairman Wendy and Rotary President Harry Kerridge, with afternoon tea at the local restaurant the Courtyard. We look forward to celebrating Christmas with our Rotary club at a local hostelry.

This year has been tinged with sadness with the loss of two of our older members. Pam Garrington and Elsie Dunn both ladies were 96. Over the years they have contributed much to our club, and we miss them.

The Club has continued to meet at the Barbanell Centre in Stafford. We have had speakers at all our monthly meetings. These have included a tasting session during a talk on 'All about Gin'. We have heard about the amazing work that the charity Blood Bikes undertake and in November a local historian will talk about 'From Staffordshire to the Somme'.



We were very pleased to welcome District Chairman, Wendy to our October meeting and we had a very useful discussion on how Inner Wheel needs to look to the future, without forgetting its objects and maintaining fun and fellowship in everything we do.



This discussion was continued when members attended the Iceberg meeting at Coven Village Hall. A very good morning, which has given plenty of food for thoughtand action!

We ran a successful bottleola at the International Rally and enjoyed the day, meeting friends from other Clubs and listening to the interesting speakers.



Sadly, several members have passed on to higher service in the last few months. Joan Potter and Margaret Hassall, and retired members, Mary Boden, and Brenda Morris. They have all held office at the Club and they will be sadly missed.

At Stafford Castle Inner Wheel we have held our regular meetings. At our September meeting we had a speaker from the InterCare Charity. At the meeting she was given knitted blankets, knitted baby garments and other items donated by members. At the same meeting President Joy welcomed a very special guest, Helen Hepton, who was presented with the Honoured Active Member badge. Helen has been a member of our club for a very long time and remains an active member in spite of long-term health issues. She remains an inspiration to us all. It is only the second time the award has been presented in the club's history. Our October Meeting will be our birthday celebration dinner.



At our November meeting we are holding an open evening for members to bring friends and prospective members along. In December we will have our Christmas celebrations. January sees us holding our international lunch at member Jo Mason's house. In February we will welcome District Chairman Wendy to our meeting. In March the speaker will be Will Morris from The House of Bread charity and in April we will have a speaker talking about autism. At our May meeting we will welcome a speaker from the Stafford Gatehouse Theatre. June meeting will be a business and social event.

Social events included a strawberry tea in August, 2 MacMillan coffee mornings. Eight members attended the International Rally at Lilleshall, with donations of goods and shoeboxes being taken.

In November a wreath will be laid for Remembrance Sunday on our behalf by members of the club. A Christmas tree will be decorated in St. Mary's church in Stafford. Members are looking forward to a Christmas lunch. In the new year President Joy will be holding her charity breakfasts. We look forward to the MacMillan Quiz, and Beetle Drive fund raising activities. An annual walk will be organised, and possibly a visit to the Leather Museum.

We continue to support Rotary with Race Night, Firework Display, Carols at Compton Close and Santa Sleigh.

All in all once again we have a full calendar. On behalf of all members of Stafford Castle Club, may I wish you all a Happy Christmas and NewYear.

In May, we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles. The tables were full of colour, tablecloths, flowers, flags etc all in red, white and blue. Members also dressed in the same traditional national colours.



In June, President Rosemary and her husband Rotarian Brian hosted a coffee morning. Being a beautiful day, most members sat in their beautiful garden. The event spilt over into, and past lunch time, being enjoyed by all, much chatting and laughter could be heard, a very happy event.

In July, President Rosemary welcomed new member Mary prior to handing over Presidency to past President Marylyn Hillman.



In August, President Marylyn welcomed new member Lorraine into the club. We had many interesting speakers during these months also.



The Inner Wheel Club of Stone were asked to create a craft stall for the International Rally at Lilleshall on October 12th 2023. A sum of £312.75 was raised due to the efforts of all our members. The photo shows President Helen Whetnall, along with some members and a former member who were manning the stall.

On October 19th President Helen Whetnall and Elaine Robinson attended the Iceberg meeting at Coven Memorial Hall, where there was a very lively discussion about the future strategy for Inner Wheel in our District and nationwide. We look forward to further meetings on this subject.

We held a very enjoyable afternoon of chatter, tea, and cakes in a member's garden in August.

We had an interesting speaker Jodie from the Baddeley Green hedgehog centre. She brought along 'Barge', and the interest was such that the Trefoil guild of Stone shared our meeting.



Members of Club continue to enjoy their regular meetings. We ran a very successful beetle drive, which raised a considerable sum of money for the Air Ambulance charity.

We were shocked and deeply saddened by the passing of our Immediate Past President Linda Francis, a good friend, a loyal and much-loved member of our Club. She will be sadly missed by all.

On the International Day of Peace, Rev'd Alison Storer led us in a moving service held in the Royal School Chapel with readings by club members. Following the service, we headed to Victoria Hall for a chance to catch up with friends over tea and biscuits. School prefects were on hand to make sure we didn't get lost and they also spent some time with us, one of them playing the piano beautifully.

We are still enjoying our monthly healthy walks, weather permitting, followed by a light pub lunch!! Last month we enjoyed a sunny walk around West Park and admired the beautiful glass house. Our industrious knitting group making up blankets for Hamlin Fistula

Another wonderful "Audience with Jay Blades" was held at The Pavilion in Wolverhampton on November 7th. Our own member, Christine Cox, conducted a superb interview. Jay proved to be an inspirational guest speaker. Over 200 people attended the event, which was brilliantly organised by our fund-raising Team. Proceeds will go to two local Wolverhampton charities: Beacon Centre and Base 25.



As we approach the end of 2023 and look back on a summer which has been disappointing as regards the weather, we don't let it stop us. We Inner Wheelers carry on organising events, raising money for charities, and providing for those less fortunate than ourselves.

In the summer edition of our magazine, I mentioned we were to hold a Coronation Lunch to celebrate the occasion of Prince Charles becoming our King. This was well attended, and a good time was had by all, with a delicious meal and a 'Royal Quiz' which was great fun. Our profit amounted to £630.

The District Meeting on June 21st, at the Moat House was Sally's last meeting as District Chairman and she handed the chain of office to Wendy Barnard.

Our AGM and Handover meeting were held on July 13th at the home of Fiona Kerby, where we enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea, with lots of chatter and laughter, with some discussion for future events. Immediate Past President, Sue Higginbottom passed the chain of office to President Sue Davies.

Before our summer break, Sue organised a trip to The Burrows Gardens, Ashbourne, to an outdoor theatre production of Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor, performed by the Folsy Theatre Company. Thankfully it was a beautiful evening, so we took picnics and some liquid refreshment and enjoyed a very entertaining evening.

Our first fundraiser was a quiz and raffle which took place in September. As always, we provided a supper, this year of lasagne and various puddings, and took our own drinks. Once again, a worthwhile event which raised £400.



We were delighted to have District Chairman Wendy Barnard at our meeting in October and we really enjoyed her company. A cheque was presented to her for Blood Bikes, her chosen charity.

A good day was had at the International Rally when 6 of us made our way to Lilleshall in cars laden with bags of clothes etc and 127 filled shoe boxes!!

President David Rushton of the Rotary Club of Uttoxeter invited us to their 88th Charter celebration which was held on 20th October at the Uttoxeter Golf Club. It was a very enjoyable evening with a good meal and great entertainment by singer Lola Lamour.



As usual we have had a busy time during the summer despite some headline-grabbing weather. In June five members had great fun manning a stall at a local community car boot sale which raised £145. A great result and well worth the very early start!

A few weeks later at our July meeting, cheques were presented to the Whitchurch based Fort Boxing Club which is doing great things to develop character and social, as well as sporting skills, for the town's local children. We supported the Whitchurch Food Bank too. A third donation was given to Cancer Research UK. We were entertained during the evening by a local dance school that we support. Oh, to be young again and as agile as these children. A very talented group.

We work very closely with the local Rotary club for fund raising events, but we thought that it would be good for both clubs to share a purely social occasion. So, in July we held a garden party. Picnics, Pimms and games – including croquet, lawn golf, horseshoe tossing and 'Splat the Rat' - made for a fun afternoon that we hope to repeat next year.

Our members enjoyed a very interesting talk about medical detection dogs at our October meeting. Using their amazing sense of smell these dogs can be trained to identify minute odour changes emitted before an emergency and alert the person to take preventative action. These dogs are currently working for people with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (PoTS), Addisons disease, severe allergies, type 1 diabetes and other endocrine disorders. We had been looking forward to meeting Mabel, one of these amazing dogs, but unfortunately it was a very hot evening which would have made for a very uncomfortable time for her. A big disappointment for our members but we still very much enjoyed listening to our speaker Mr Illey and presented him with a cheque to help with the continuing work of this organisation.

The D21 International Rally in October was thoroughly enjoyed by 9 of our members. Good to meet up with old friends, make new ones and hear interesting talks. A week later four of us attended a meeting at Brewood entitled 'Our iceberg is melting', a debate about the future of Inner Wheel. Although our club has had three new members in recent months, giving us a total of 29, we need to ensure we retain this number and continue to increase it. We came away from this meeting with many ideas to help us achieve this.

We continue to collect toiletries and other useful items for the local domestic abuse centre and currently have 16 bags plus some outdoor clothing to donate. This venture makes a huge difference to so many people who are coping with stressful, difficult times.

We have another of our major fundraising events planned for November – a retro bingo night with a modern twist. If last year is anything to go by, we should have an evening of laughter and, hopefully, be more adept with our dibbers!

Of course, it won't be long before we celebrate Christmas and come to the end of another successful year. Our best wishes to you all for a healthy, happy 2024.



President Karen Jerrison took office on July 3rd, at a meeting attended by the new President of Wednesbury Rotary Club, Mr Tony Wigman and his wife Jane. At this Meeting, Mr Darren Bent gave a talk about his charity work at the Gap Christian Centre, which is our chosen charity for the year.

In July we ran three fund raising stalls at the Wednesbury Carnival, which is organised by the Wednesbury Rotary Club. We had a raffle, a play your cards right game, and a game that all the children loved which entailed throwing toilet rolls into a box topped with an open toilet seat. Despite a few showers of rain, we had an enjoyable day, and raised a substantial amount for our charities.

At our September meeting, Emma Robinson, a representative of Acorns Children's Hospice gave a talk about the organisation and the care they provide. During this meeting we had a bring and buy sale and were able to donate the proceeds to the Acorns Hospice. We also welcomed three new ladies to our meeting, who we hope, enjoyed the evening, and will become members of the Inner Wheel Club of Wednesbury.

In October, our local MP Shaun Bailey, will be attending our meeting, and then in November Ian McDermot from the Friends of Brunswick Park, will speak about the work they do to help preserve this local park for future generations to enjoy.

Our end of year celebrations in December will start with an evening of carols at our new meeting venue the Open Heaven church hall.



Golden Leaves of Autumn

*I walk upon the fallen leaves
Before me a carpet of gold.
The crunch of the newly fallen
And the softer cushion of the old.*

*I stop and gaze in wonder
A myriad of colours in sight.
The youth of the greens now turning
To the richness of reds with delight.*

*Heavenly columns reach for the skies
Entwined with natures charms.
Branches holding their offerings
Of splendour on their arms.*

*Like jewels they fall from branches
Their time to now let go.
Their beauty at their final hour
A last and fiery umber glow.*

*A swirl of breeze from Gods own breath
The freshly fallen dance once more;
A celebration like confetti
Then settle peaceful on the floor*

*Keeping warm the treasures below
The golden blanket at one with the earth.
Whilst winter sends her icy blast
The buds are safe till Springs re-birth.*

*How wondrous then these treasures
A delight ours free to behold.
With a timeless beauty evermore
And life that will never grow old.*

written by JudiWhitehouse©14/10/20







The Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in Great Britain & Ireland

