



Corona Worldwide NEWSLETTER

Autumn
2023
Edition

President's Message



Greetings.

It is always so interesting to read the branch reports that come to the HQ office throughout the year and to hear of some of the various local causes that you respond to and support. Funding for medical supplies, school equipment, meals for children and help for a women's refuge are just a few of the causes that our members have and continue to support this year. Corona members are appreciated for their friendship to one another and to their wider community.

A special event for us this year is the 70th Anniversary of the Branch in St. Helena, the second oldest of our family, just pipped by Fiji which was founded in 1952.

Many congratulations to the branch which continues to be so vibrant in fulfilling the ethos of Corona, helping their community in so many ways.

With best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy 2024.

Angela Mizner

Chairman's Message



I am finding that this year is rushing past, not least because of all the wonderful celebrations around the Coronation. London was on fine display and thronged with visitors from all over the world. Many of our branches also marked the occasion in fine style and it has been fun reading about their events.

HQ's main concentration this summer has been on redeveloping the Corona website which had become very out of date and cumbersome. Thank you so much to everyone who has sent photographs and text to populate the pages of the website, relatable to their branch. It has been a lot of work and I want to thank Vicky Gallop for being the liaison with the Web designer and Iris Pitman for doing the proof reading. I hope that you will find the redesigned website interesting and that it will be attractive to potential new members in your community. One particular advantage is that we (volunteers in HQ) shall now be able to update and amend entries on the site, so that items are fresh and events are pertinent. Also, in line with our project on the new website, we have been busy renewing and updating the Corona database to try and make our operations more efficient.

This has been a year of floods and fires, and many people are still suffering, but as we go into the autumn, may I wish you every good health and happiness.

Yvette Bavin

Where are you now?

We have been busy this summer tidying up our Membership database and card index files, trying to ensure that they are accurate and up to date. If you have not been in contact with a particular branch or Headquarters for a while, do get in touch with us and let us how you are getting on. You have been part of Corona for many years and we would love to hear from you and any other Corona (or ex-Corona) members that you may be in touch with.

Mailing of the Newsletter

With the enormous rise in the cost of postage, the Board of Trustees has reluctantly made the decision to send out the Spring and Autumn Newsletter by email in the future. This will commence with the Spring 2024 Newsletter. If you are not able to receive the newsletter by email, or particularly wish to continue having it posted to you, please write to Headquarters (Corona Worldwide, Room 148, China Works, 100 Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ) or leave a message (0207-793-4020).

BATH SUMMER LUNCH

Several members from other branches were able to attend the Bath Branch Summer Lunch at the Cumberwell Park Golf Club, although the plans of some were thwarted by traffic problems and rail strikes.

Yvette Bavin, Corona Chairman, arrived after using various modes of transport from London with Sarah from Chichester.

We were greeted and treated with the warm hospitality Bath offers. The venue was impressive and offered amazing views over the golf course and surrounding countryside. I was happy to be able to connect with a friend from a long time back in Saudi and a local member.

Thank you Bath for a lovely lunch and the friendly follow up email.

Emmie Pollard

LONDON EVENTS



London Events have continued through the year.

In April, we were at the Petrie Museum of Egyptology. A small group with a guided tour, we looked at the more intimate lives of ancient Egyptian women. London was busy with the Coronation in May so our next event was on a gloriously sunny day in June. A big group, welcoming members from outside Jubilee, we enjoyed the hugely knowledgeable guide's description of the medicinal qualities of the plants in the Chelsea Physic Garden.

In August, we visited the Handel and Hendrix House in Brooke Street. Recently renovated, the kitchen area has been brought back into the house being used as offices. We saw Handel's bedroom with a rather short bed and appreciated how his house looked in Georgian London. On display is a beautiful old harpsichord which is used for concerts in the house.

A little closer to our own time was Jimi Hendrix's apartment with his collection of vinyl, guitars and some recognisable items around the room. The October event was in the Museum of London giving the opportunity to visit the Docklands area and the juxtaposition of old warehouses restored and used for the Museum of London and the new areas of Canary Wharf. The Fashion City Exhibition traced the East End Rag Trade's international influence with the expertise of the Jewish immigration into the area. It was a good exhibition with some examples of hats, bags and clothes as well as interesting archive material. At the beginning of November celebrating the quatercentenary of the Worshipful Company of Gold and Silver Wyre Drawers at the Guildhall we look forward to seeing examples of their skills from Queen Elizabeth 1 to modern interpretations of their skills.



Chelsea Physic Garden joined by members of Jubilee Branch

NEWS ACROSS THE UK

BATH

June saw the start of our summer events. We were very lucky to have a lovely day for a Trailer Tour around the grounds of Cumberwell Park Golf Club. The conservation team showed us the areas that are left for the wildflowers and wildlife to flourish. Some areas have not been treated or mown for 30 years and lots of lovely wildflowers including orchids native to our shores were on show. There are lovely old oak trees, some as old as 600 and 400 years. Nesting boxes

help the birds of prey in the area, which have been very successful raising the numbers of Red Kites, Buzzards and Kestrels.

Cont/



100 Club

Results of the second draw of the 2023-2024 100 Club Drawn at the Executive Meeting on 19th October

1st prize £120.00 – No. 29 – London Jubilee Branch

2nd prize £90.00 – No. 24 – Jenny Dabbs

3rd prize £60.00 – No. 42 – Susan McVeigh

4th prize £30.00 – No. 20 – Jill Girling

Congratulations!

BATH Cont.

The weather for a coach tour to Sezincote House and Gardens was not so good in August but the light rain did not spoil the day. Everyone enjoyed the gardens where the Surya Pool cascades down, under an Indian themed bridge, to the snake pool and on to the island pool. There are statues of elephants, cows, snakes and goddesses around the grounds. The House with Onion domes is very attractive. We had a very experienced guide who brought the house to life with stories of Queen Mary and others. When the Prince Regent visited Sezincote, it is thought he got inspiration for the Brighton Pavilion from there. We had tea and cake in the Orangery, with a Persian style garden to gaze on. Well worth a visit if you are in Gloucestershire.



In August we held a drop in coffee and cake morning, everyone just catching up with tales of the summer.

September was the first of the Autumn lunches. Lunch was well attended, and our members enjoyed catching up with friends, with a very entertaining talk, which brought back many memories for some.

The speaker was a new member to our group, Jane Adams. Jane has written a book "Bush Girl" which she finished during Covid lock downs. Jane spoke of her time and experiences in a small Northern Nigerian town. Jane served as a VSO, Voluntary Service Overseas, teacher to boys in this small remote town, which she described as challenging, surprising and joyful. She loved her time in Nigeria so much, she returned to a larger town Kaduna, in Nigeria for a further four years. Do come and join us for lunch if you are in Bath. We meet the last Wednesday of the month.



Pauline, Gurli, Jane the Speaker, Mary and Catherine

Mary Lawrance

BERKSHIRE

Since June we have enjoyed coffee mornings and lunches as usual which has allowed us to send donations to Head Quarters.

In August we were delighted to welcome Yvette Bavin, our Chairman, to join us for lunch at The Toby Carvery in Caversham followed by a boat trip on The River Thames to Mapledurham near Reading. Weatherwise it was a doubtful day but we did beat the elements by sitting on the outside deck where we were able to enjoy the riverside views of palatial riverside homes together with the site of where the Reading Festival is held at the end of August. We were all amazed at how much land it takes over from both sides of the river with special bridges built just for the event. Thank you to Yvette for joining us. We enjoyed your company.

I would like to take this opportunity to say what a valuable organisation Corona WW is in caring for members who are experiencing difficult times and values the friendship of others who have been through similar circumstances. This has certainly been a factor in The Berkshire Group.

Vicky Pitcher

BRISTOL

Bristol Corona enjoyed meeting and lunch at Cleeve in July. Plans are already being made for our Christmas lunch.

Linda Prys-Roberts



Patrick Cowan (left) at lunch with Linda and Cedric Prys-Roberts

The Alverton Hotel, Truro April 2023

CORNWALL



Cornwall Branch May Lunch

Our speaker, Wendy Hindle, in red in the centre, gave a talk about "Canada then and now". She had originally moved there with her new husband; her children and grandchildren live there but she returned to Cornwall some years ago. Her talk on how it has changed over the years was most interesting.

CORNWALL Cont

The lunch was held at Christine's house with lots of help from Enfys and her daughter Sarah. This was our annual International Lunch, held at a member's home, and with an always delicious selection of glorious food. This year Enfys's Peanut Chicken (much cooked in Zambia) was a particular hit and the recipe will be included in our next Newsletter.

*Our hostesses,
Enfys Johns and
Christine Horwood*



Our monthly meetings continued throughout the summer when we were delighted to welcome some new members to our branch. Recent London events organised by Emmie Pollard have been keenly supported by Jubilee branch members who enjoyed visits to the Chelsea Physic Garden, Handel/Hendrix Museum and 'China' at the British Museum.

Angela Mizner



This is Viv Ebbs wearing her Buckingham Palace outfit to our annual International Lunch, worn when she went there to receive her award as a Coronation Champion for her volunteer work with swimming. There were just five from Cornwall. Viv was also recently invited to meet the King on a more personal level when he was visiting St Ives. We are all very proud of her.

Abigail Kirby-Harris

SOUTH BUCKS

The good news is that we still exist. Four of us continue to meet bi-monthly for lunch sometimes welcoming a guest. Joining up for outings and liaising with the Berkshire group on several occasions has proved to be very successful.

In June two of our members were able to participate in their visit to Grey's Court, the National Trust Estate near Henley, reportedly an "enchanted place, picturesque house and gardens, set in rolling countryside.

In August, after lunching together at a restaurant in Caversham, a boat trip to Maple Durham rounded off the afternoon.

For our September get-together, we thought it would make a change to have lunch at a venue other than at someone's home. Phylis Court proved to be a good choice for our leisurely relaxed meal, courtesy of a member who is a club member.

My thanks again to Christine Brunskill for all her help and coordinating skills.

Valerie Tattershall Dodd

EDINBURGH

At the AGM in March, the ladies voted to meet once every two months instead of the usually monthly meeting. The lack of a venue to meet limits our programme. Hopefully a new venue will be found and we can return to monthly meetings where we can offer a more varied agenda. We had an outing in June to the Tapestry of Scotland which was enjoyed by all and have another planned in October to Eskrigg Nature Reserve to see the tree we planted for the Jubilee.

*The ladies at the Scottish
Tapestry Outing*

Lilian Clephane



WEST SURREY

This is a picture taken at 'the Refectory' to celebrate the coronation of our new King Charles III. It was a joyous lunch that we all enjoyed. Our group may be getting smaller but we still have the Corona spirit and meet regularly once a month and for special occasions.

In the picture are from left to right: Pam Kenny, Christine Kateley, Mavis Rauch, Ursula Quinlan, Eileen Torbet, Alison Latter and Linda Melville-Smith. Unfortunately two other members could not make it due to ill health.

Christine Kateley

JUBILEE

London Jubilee branch celebrated Founder's day in June with a lunch at the Westminster Catering College for 18 members.



NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

HONG KONG Chairman Karin Moorhouse

Hong Kong continues to welcome new members representing twenty different nationalities. This year they have initiated more in-person activities. Cooking classes are proving extremely popular. They recently conducted two classes for Mid-Autumn Festival, where members learned to make traditional Chinese mooncakes. Recently, they have replaced the arts group with a broader Arts & Crafts group, "Art-Zoom" and plan to run a series of workshops for Chinese ink painting, wood block printing, photography, crochet and more, in addition to arranging visits to art exhibitions.

They continue with popular weekly activities; morning coffee, Canasta, Mah-jong and hiking and a monthly book club in addition to Special Events. Recently, over 30 members joined together for a bi-annual Happy Hour event to welcome new members. Other recent special events have included "A Night at the Hong Kong Philharmonic," an art tour of MTR subway stations, a private kitchen dining experience, and a visit to the renowned botanical artist, Sally Bunker.

One of the most significant changes they have made this year is in how they communicate with members and now work with a WhatsApp Community for group activities and for broadcasting events.

MAURITIUS NORTH Chairman Nicholas Harmer

This branch has a very busy schedule of talks and other events. In June they held a Quiz Evening and a substantial donation was made to SOS Femmes Shelter for Abused Women.

In July they decided to hold a Bingo morning which went down very well. At their August meeting they were given a talk by Dr. Karen Hertenberg on Intermittent Fasting. She provided information on historical aspects, the myths and misconceptions and the scientifically proven evidence of the benefits of following such a programme.

International Alzheimer's month is celebrated in September and they had a speaker from the Alzheimer's and Dementia Association of Mauritius. Throughout the months their smaller groups of book club, play reading and Scrabble groups meet each month.

On 27th October they held their annual Cup for Cancer fundraising coffee morning. The money raised goes to 'Link to Life' a non-profit organization whose main purpose is to provide support and counselling to cancer patients and their families.

MAURITIUS PLATEAU Chairman Rosemarie Domaingue

They are half way through the Branch year, their AGM is in March each year. Winter is nearly over so their activities should be more plentiful in the next few months. They held a coffee morning in a new shopping mall which gave them the opportunity to see around the mall and enjoy some excellent coffee and pastries.

During last month's meeting they enjoyed a talk and demo on skin care and makeup. This was very interactive, with multiple probing questions concerning problems with ageing skin, sun care, etc. Oncoming events will be dominated by Divali and Christmas activities with opportunities for fundraising in preparation for donations to three charities early in the New Year.

Corona Plateau ladies send you all their best wishes for your End of Year celebrations, wherever you may be in the World.

MAURITIUS WEST Chairman Claude-May Harel

In February, the Branch was very proud to have received their Corona Certificate from HQ. They hosted their first *joint Corona lunch* at the Restaurant Le Dix-Neuf at Tamarina Golf Estate which was attended by 50 members from the various Mauritian branches.



Due to the fact that this venue is surrounded by vegetation, straws, coconut, green leaves and roses des bois, picked from 'mother nature', were used.



In keeping with the 'eco friendly' theme, raffle prizes had been wrapped in craft paper and straws replaced ribbons.



Just before leaving, a little token was offered to everybody. It was a small Mauritian cake known as 'Napolitain' and beautifully packed in a little box with a rose des bois glued on its lid.



Welcome speech by Claude-May Harel
President Corona West



Mauritius West hold their meetings on the first Friday of each month and guests speakers are invited to their meetings. In March they invited Corona Central branch members to join them for an historical cruise in the South East Coast in the unique ecological boat called Folkloric Explorer.

In August, they visited Quartier des Serres, situated at Domaine de Labourdonnais, which is a unique project combining a shopping centre under a greenhouse and surrounded by lush greenery, with a good restaurant and office space. Earlier in the season after the heavy rains the Branch helped 15 families residing in the West by offering them groceries and other goods.

MALAWI Chairman Daryl Sheppard

Update on Chombo Children's Home.

"We are happy to see that the Home is doing well. The children are happy. Some highlights, I'd like to share with you:

- Ursula distributed children's clothing, sharing t-shirts and trousers for 33 children.
- On Sunday, we presented each child with a towel, a bed sheet and pillowcase, a toothbrush, and a tumbler X 33.
- Yesterday, we installed a new 5000 litre water tank. The previous one was leaking badly. I am excited that we managed to complete this.
- We've hired a carpenter to carry out repairs in all the buildings. We bought 15 locks. And now we are re-painting all the rooms.
- We paid for Aggie's tailoring course.

Thank you for partnering with Chombo. We appreciate your support. Our aim is to provide a stable home and long-term care for Blantyre's children in need. Zikomo!

On behalf of Chombo children, thank you very much".
Sandra Wendland



After the tree planting, they went to a nearby restaurant for lunch and the owner very kindly provided four bottles of complimentary wine in honour of the occasion. Two of the guests who joined them were new members to Corona.

They were grateful to receive a donation of wool which was given to the ladies of Shingirirai Trust in Old Tafara, Harare. The ladies are paid a small amount to knit donated wool on behalf of our branch, and they knitted some delightful jerseys for a group of children. Pat Yaxley and the ladies of the Cotswold Branch very generously donated £180 when they were sadly closing down their branch. This money was sent to Shingirirai Trust to pay towards the education of one of the young girls in their care. Harare was very grateful to Pat and the ladies, and thank them for their support over the years.



Knitted Jerseys

ZIMBABWE (Harare) Chairman Eilidh Craster

Over recent months some of the members have been away but those that stayed have met every second week trying out new and different venues. On average they have an attendance of 8 ladies at each coffee morning. Their eldest member celebrated her 92nd birthday in August.

The Branch members are kept busy with knitting beanies and jerseys for the children who have cancer which they donate to KIDZ-CAN for distribution to their patients. Even though Zimbabwe is heading towards the height of summer, there is still need for knitted articles for ill children.

In April the SPCA appealed for blankets for the kennels around the country with the onset of winter and it was lovely that the branch was able to donate twenty-five blankets. These were actually given to another re-homing facility, Friends Animal Foundation, as the SPCA had an overwhelming response to their appeal.

The branch celebrated the King's Coronation by sending a letter of congratulations to the Palace and on Thursday 11th May they had a tree planting celebration in Ballantyne Park in Harare.

It was decided to plant two Prince of Wales feathers trees (*brachystegia boemii*, or mufuti). It was a lovely sunny morning and they had a turnout of 20 people, three of whom were brave husbands.



Whilst in the UK Eilidh met up with Sally Perkins (Trustee of Corona) and enjoyed afternoon tea at a London hotel.

NEW ZEALAND Chairman Beverley Teague

A selection of photographs from New Zealand.



Celebrating the King's Birthday



Celebrating the King's Coronation



Rosemary Beesley

Sadly, in August, Rosemary Beesley passed away. Rosemary has been a member of Corona Bath for more than 20 years. She was a lovely, friendly warm lady. Rosemary trained as a Physio. She lived in Cyprus, Germany, Libya and Singapore with her husband, Richard. Rosemary served as deputy director of the Somerset Red Cross and worked with disabled people. She was a keen bridge player but had to give that up when her sight failed.

Gill Connacher



would take a taxi to Leuchars, train to Edinburgh and a taxi to our venue. This was true dedication to Corona. Gill will be truly missed by the group.

Edinburgh Branch was saddened to learn of the passing of their oldest member, Gill Connacher, who died a month shy of her 100th birthday. As the daughter of Quaker Missionaries, part of her childhood was spent in India before finishing her education in England. At the beginning of WW2 Gill began training as a nurse in Birmingham She also gained her licence as an ambulance driver. She moved to Edinburgh where she continued her nursing at the Royal Infirmary. It was here she met her husband Gordon, a doctor, and as a couple they moved with the Colonial Medical Service to Tanganyika. The onset of Tanganyika's independence saw Gill relocate to Ethiopia, Malawi and Vanatau. Gill and Gordon also spent time in Pakistan as missionaries. On retirement Gill and Gordon settled in St Andrew's Fife. Gill was known to be a very determined lady and this was proved with her monthly jaunts to Edinburgh for our meetings up until the Covid Pandemic. She

Patricia Edridge

Sadly our oldest Corona Worldwide Bath member, Patricia Edridge, passed away peacefully at her home on 1st November. Patricia celebrated her 105th birthday on 25th September this year. After leaving school, Patricia joined the Army as an officer in the Royal Signals, serving with distinction through out WW2. Afterwards she trained as a teacher, rising to be head of an English department. In 1956 she went to Uruguay to teach and it was there she met her husband Kit. Often on the move, they lived and worked several times in Peru. Returning to the UK, Patricia worked for Age Concern and collecting library books for the housebound. She lived in Bitten for a good part of her life before moving to Bath. She was the first lady to contact Pauline Bates our President, when the news went out for interest to start the Corona Worldwide Bath Branch, and was an active member attending most lunches right up to the Covid Pandemic. Patricia was a lively, stylish and remarkable lady who we will miss. Her great friend Sandy Nott was able to take care of Patricia in her final weeks. Sandy, who kept in touch with Pauline the past weeks, has told us there will be no funeral as Patricia's body is being donated to science.

Gwen Norman

Gwen Norman became a member in 1962 when the family went to Kenya. She gave the following speech at a lunch to celebrate 40th anniversary of Corona.

"I remember well the meetings we used to have in the Railway Club in Nairobi. I think we had a lot of cookery demonstrations as I seem to have a lot of recipe leaflets from those days. There was the Keep Fit group that some of us started, when all the good done by the exercises was undone by feasting on coffee and cake afterwards. I was just starting to enjoy the lunches in the Grand Hotel in Kampala when the political troubles in Uganda unfortunately curtailed them.

"Through our UK Branches and Groups we help our members to adjust to life back home again too, for it can be very disheartening to find that few people are interested in where you have been and what you have done but are more concerned about what's happening in the next episode of Neighbours." Gwen's daughter continued,

"We were well aware of the hugely positive impact Corona had on Mum's life and having found the speech we were able to use some quotes from it in the eulogy my brother gave at her funeral service. Thank you for remembering her."

Paddy Payne

It is with sadness that we inform of the death of one of our members, Patricia (Paddy) Payne. Paddy was not only a member of North West Branch but she was also chairman before Sue Chappelle took over from her.

Paddy has been a regular and faithful member of the West Surrey branch for many years, sadly she died on 18th. July after a brave fight with Cancer. she was 87. Paddy had lived in Egypt, Oman, Turkey, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Taiwan. She will be sadly missed by us all.

Ann Robinson

Sadly, Ann Robinson died in June this year. Ann was a warm, friendly Liverpudlian and a very good friend to Joanne Cook and Iris Pitman. They all met in Washington where Ann accompanied her husband, Paul. Ann made quite long journeys to enjoy Bath lunches, she enjoyed meeting like-minded ladies.

Forever friends, may they rest in peace

Hazel Muriel Stevens

Hazel was born on 10th July 1946, the second eldest of 10 siblings. She played a major part in helping with the upbringing of her younger siblings and always maintained a close bond with them. After leaving school, Hazel worked in the family bakery business before becoming a clerk in the Social Welfare office and for a time joined the staff at the newly built Prince Andrew School.



Hazel had some very interesting outlets within the Island Community as Leader of the Girl Guides and various sporting activities, especially tennis. Her Christian faith led her to become involved in the Anglican Church and she set up fund raising for the renovation, and new organ, of a small Village Church, St Mary's, taking up the duties of running the St Paul's Women's Guild, the core fundraising Group for church maintenance. Hazel played the organ for various services around the Island and undertook the flower arrangements for the altar in St Paul's Cathedral. If flowers were scarce, she would often get involved with scrambling the hillsides for Arum Lilies (our Island Emblem Flower).

Hazel was married to George 55 years ago. They have a daughter, a granddaughter and two great grandchildren. During their married life they moved house several times but on each occasion Hazel befriended the neighbours. When George became the manager of Cable and Wireless Hazel found herself involved with the social side, organising indoor games and tennis tournaments, the famous Old Years Night Balls, children's Christmas parties and much more.

It was in the mid to late 1970's that Hazel became a member of the Women's Corona Society of St Helena. She loved going to monthly meetings and getting involved with various fundraising activities and other public events. All Corona members, past and present, loved Hazel for her unstinting work and help, even in difficult times. She held the post of Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary over the years, always saying "leave it to me, I'll manage" and she almost always did. She had a wonderful memory for recalling some of the events and fund raisers we had over the decades. We remember with much fun and laughter the Miss St Helena Contests, the wheelbarrow race through the Streets of Jamestown and on Francis Plain Sports Field. We also remember Hazel's passion for the women's rally she once organised, a fancy hat and floral arrangement competition and our annual fetes – so much to remember Hazel's involvement in our beloved Society.

Now, we have reached our 70th Anniversary Year and Hazel was looking forward to being involved with our plans for this Celebration. Sadly this was not to be as she passed away on the 20th April 2023 but in her honour, and in loving memory of her, we will endeavour to carry out all that we have planned throughout our year's celebration. We all miss Hazel for the many good things she did for the Women's Corona Society, St Helena Branch and as a friend to all of us.

Now may our beloved Corona Member and Christian Friend Rest in peace.

Gillian Lindsay-Stewart 1934 -2023



We were very sad in Mid Sussex Branch to suddenly lose Gillian Lindsay-Stewart to cancer. She was a stalwart member of Mid Sussex Branch in the UK and a keen member of the mah-jong group, and a supporter of many of the branch's activities. She was also one of the members selected by the committee to go to Buckingham Palace. Overseas, Gillian had been in Zambia, and Gretta Hudson, a friend from that time writes:

"Gillian and I were not in the Colonial service together or, if so, were never in touch. John and I were mostly in Barotse-land a protectorate within the protectorate of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), while she and Robin were on the Eastern border a couple of days and nights apart. But there was a general sort of camaraderie in the Overseas Civil Service, and she welcomed me when I got to the UK".

Hilary Temple

Hilary was brought up in a family where the schooling of girls was firmly believed in and in 1944 she went up to Newnham College, Cambridge, to read Mechanical Sciences (Engineering) where she met Phillip. Upon graduation, he was appointed as an engineer in the Colonial Service in Nigeria. They married, causing, not for the last time in their lives, the authorities considerable angst as Hilary was almost sent down. Reason prevailed, however, and she was allowed out of college at weekends to spend time with her husband, provided he certified that she had been in bed before midnight. She finished her course, with good results, but without graduating (not yet available to women) and went to join Phillip in Nigeria, where they spent the next 17 years. It was against Government policy to employ wives so Hilary was only able to be an unpaid assistant to Phillip as they surveyed areas outside Lagos, travelling on motor bike or bicycle. When in 1947 it was determined that Lagos needed a new telephone exchange, there was no one to do the structural engineering work so the Government was persuaded to look the other way as Hilary was employed to do the design work. Lagos has a very high-water table and as the building was five stories high, the foundations had to be a concrete raft: Young Hilary did all the calculations with a slide rule, had no professional help and the building was still standing, with an additional floor, decades later.

In 1948, Hilary and Phillip moved to Katsina, in the far North of Nigeria, immersing themselves in the community and both becoming fluent in Hausa. The 1950s saw them in Makurdi where Phillip was the sole engineer responsible for all government construction in an area of more than 20,000 square miles. By then, responsibility for local government had been transferred to Nigerians and they did not take long to show that they were more farsighted and progressive than the British authorities, quickly decreeing that the only other engineer in the province should be employed by the Government. Hilary was put in charge of the housing programme, climbing ladders to check the roof work even when heavily pregnant. Of course, the local labourers, although very supportive, saw nothing unusual in this.

After finally leaving Nigeria, Hilary and Phillip settled in Walton-on-Naze where they were able to indulge their love of sailing. Not content to be just a housewife, Hilary set up and ran a hotel booking service for businesses (she had been the General Manager of the Rest House in Il-lorin, Nigeria), while also learning Greek and Spanish. After ten years running this business, Hilary concentrated on her voluntary work with Corona and the National Association for Gifted Children (Potential Plus). The couple retired, became Friends of Imperial College and again threw themselves into local activities: Hilary's efforts may not always have been appreciated by the local Kensington planners, but her efforts were recognised with an award by the Mayor of the Royal Borough. In 1998, Hilary finally graduated when Cambridge formally admitted those surviving women who had previously been denied graduation.

When Phillip died, Hilary was determined to remain active, taking up art classes, becoming very involved in the Cyclamen Society, and travelling to Crete, Turkey and Havana although well into her eighties. She continued her interest in art, keeping fit and going to lectures at Imperial. A clever woman who led a remarkable and interesting life.