

## **INTERNATIONAL INNER WHEEL HISTORY**

### **1. THE FIRST TEN YEARS FROM A CLUB TO THE ASSOCIATION**



**Mrs. Margarette Golding, a nurse, businesswoman and the wife of a Manchester Rotarian, started the Inner Wheel movement in 1924. Prior to 1924, wives of Rotarians in many cities and towns, prompted by a concern for public welfare, had been voluntarily, in the background, giving their time and energies to help in any service being undertaken by their menfolk.**

**On the 15th November 1923, twenty-seven Rotary wives, led by Mrs. Golding, met in a Cooling Room (because it was free of charge) at Herriot's Turkish Baths, St Mary's Street, Deansgate, Manchester; they discussed the possibility of forming an independent ladies' group run on Rotary lines. The objects of the Club, they explained, would be twofold, to foster friendship and to offer much more in the way of service.**

**The next meeting, held at the Social Club in Lower Mosley Street, Manchester, which became their regular meeting place, was on 10 January 1924, and marked the actual commencement of Inner Wheel with the formation of the Manchester Club. Since 1970, January 10th has become universally recognised as **WORLD INNER WHEEL DAY**, when we celebrate the anniversary of that first meeting.**

**Margarette Golding, the founder, was elected as the first President and Mrs. W. A. Nixon, the first Secretary. Thirty members were present, and six basic rules were agreed. The first rule was 'The name of the Club shall be 'The Inner Wheel'. Thus ingeniously, they**



respected the wishes of Rotary, and the use of the word 'Rotary' was avoided, while the link with the men's organisation was symbolized by

reference to their badge – the Rotary Wheel. This link is still nurtured today and we proudly share the same ethical values and objectives.

The basic rules laid down that day, with slight variations, continued to be used until the formation of the Association of Inner Wheel Clubs in Great Britain and Ireland in 1934. This was the beginning of a beautiful adventure, which is the

heritage of the Inner Wheel organisation, known and shared by every member.

Since 1924, there are important dates and developments to remember, which show the evolution of our Organisation and its diffusion, first in Great Britain, then worldwide. News of the formation of the Manchester Inner Wheel Club, and its achievements, began to spread. Rotary wives who had been meeting together, contacted Mrs. Golding and gradually the movement spread throughout G.B.&I. and by 1927 another five new Clubs started their journey: Liverpool, Macclesfield, Nelson, St. Helens, and Warrington. In 1928, thanks to the collaboration of the Rotarians of District No 5, the 1st Inner Wheel District was formed, "No. 5 Inner Wheel District Committee".

The administration of the Districts, which followed, was the same as Rotary District procedure (Officers were elected by ballot, two Delegates from each Club had representation, three if the Club had sufficient membership, and decisions were agreed by vote). As more Districts were formed, they took the area number corresponding to their Rotary District.

In 1931 there were 56 Clubs and by the end of 1932, 4 new Districts had been formed, 3 more in 1933 and the need for a central organisation was being suggested.

**On 6th May, 1934, at the RIB.I Conference, held in Douglas, Isle of Man, the delegates of the 79 Clubs from the existing 8 Districts, aware that it was necessary to have a Governing Body capable of guiding the growing number of Clubs and Districts, approved and ratified the Constitution, and adopted the name: -**

## **THE ASSOCIATION OF INNER WHEEL CLUBS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

**The first elected President of the Association was Mrs. Golding, and the first Secretary Mrs. Nixon. During the first meeting of the Council in September of 1934, the Treasurer Mrs. Gladys Young (Canterbury) and Vice President Mrs. Shakerley (Clapham) were elected.**

**The Association grew, and after 10 years had passed, there were 79 Clubs (76 in England, 1 in Scotland, 1 in Wales and 1 in Ireland). These Clubs, which founded the Association, are still known today as the "The 79ers".**

## **2. GLOBAL EXPANSION**

**Even before 1934, some Clubs were formed in other parts of the world, having heard about the Inner Wheel Association in Great Britain & Ireland**



**- such as Ballarat (1931), North Sydney (1933) and Bendigo (1933) in Australia**

**- in the following years, more Inner Wheel Clubs formed, for example, the Napier Club (1936) in New Zealand,**

**- Port Elizabeth (1938) in South Africa,**

**- and Winnipeg (1943) in Canada.**

**From 1945 Inner Wheel continued to expand globally, with the formation of at least 15 Clubs in remote places.**

**Equally, Inner Wheel's penetration into Europe is extremely interesting.**

**The first European Club outside of Great Britain and Ireland was formed at Bergen (Norway) in 1935, thanks once again to Margarete Golding;**

**the second, after ten years, in 1946 at Apeeldom, Holland.**

**The Association began to change from a national organisation to a worldwide organisation, and it was felt that a closer connection was necessary. Thus in 1947 the words "in Great Britain and Ireland" were removed from the title and Inner Wheel became known as**

### **ASSOCIATION OF INNER WHEEL CLUBS**

**In 1948 the six Clubs in Holland formed the first District outside of Great Britain and Ireland, District no. 26.**

**In 1950 Club Rules were translated into the European languages, and by July of that year every member received a copy of the Association Magazine with the news of Overseas' Clubs.**

**In the early sixties, the Association, mindful of the increasing number of Clubs outside GB&I, and glad to have Districts formed in Europe, gave much thought about ways to make Inner Wheel more International in government and the need for personal contact to be made with some more remote Clubs.**

**The first steps towards the creation of an International Governing Body were taken in 1962 during the Association Conference, held in Blackpool, England, when a resolution was approved, to include on the Governing Body, representatives from Districts of the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark. This resolution was put in place for the first time at Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, at the Annual Assembly for Officers, when members from countries outside Great Britain and Ireland were invited to sit on the Governing Body.**

**On the 1st of July 1967 all Clubs became Members of**

### **INTERNATIONAL INNER WHEEL**

**and Mrs. Lavender Weightman became the Founder President; there was then the opportunity for qualified members, from any country, to become Officers - President, Vice-President and Treasurer.**

**The first Board Meeting was held in Copenhagen on the 3rd, 4th October 1967.**

**One of the important tasks was to approve National By-Laws, so that all the Countries, while remaining faithful to the Constitution, could interpret Inner Wheel with their own culture and traditions.**

**In 1967 National Governing Bodies/Associations were recognised in Australia, Denmark, Great Britain and Ireland, India, The Netherlands, Norway, The Philippines and Sweden.**

**In 1970 the First Convention of INTERNATIONAL INNER WHEEL was held at The Hague, the Netherlands.**

**International Inner Wheel was, and is, supported by a Governing Body, which, up to 1993, included an elected Executive Committee with Officers - President, Vice President, Immediate Past President and Treasurer; and also Board Members - representatives from every Country, possessing the necessary qualifications as laid down in the Constitution and Handbook. Each Board Member had a number of votes equivalent to the number of Districts of her Country.**

**In 1993 it was agreed to restructure the Governing Body with an elected Executive Committee (consisting of the Officers), plus 16 elected Board Directors, each of whom had the right to one vote and also have the responsibility to be in contact with the Non-Districted Clubs.**

**In 2006 the Chairman of the Constitution Committee was admitted as a member of the Governing Body of International Inner Wheel. Then in 2012 she was admitted as a member of the Executive Committee.**

**A notable landmark in our History: - In 2012, at our 15th Convention in Istanbul, members voted to open up membership. *Women, who have no connection to Rotarians or Inner Wheel members, can now be invited to join Inner Wheel.***

**Today International Inner Wheel is present in 103 Countries/Geographical Areas, and has more than 103,000 members, and is structured in Clubs, Districts and National Governing Bodies.**

**It connects together members of Clubs in the various nations, from Europe to Africa, India, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, United States of America and Canada and many others, all working to uphold the objects of Inner Wheel:**



**To promote true friendship**

**To encourage the ideals of personal service**

**To foster International Understanding**

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