

NCW NEWS Issue 39 - SEPT 2012

FROM THE PRESIDENT....

This is my last President's Message for NCW News; my four years as President ends at the Conference AGM in October 2012. The time has flown and it has been a huge learning curve; a roller coaster ride of nightmare situations and times of great joy. I have met some wonderful people and made good friends, both nationally and internationally. During these years the country has experienced a major financial crisis, reported to be the worst on record, with women suffering the most; particularly in terms of employment. Funding became difficult to obtain and many organisations closed. However NCW survives and is making progress in many areas; we are seeking sponsorship and planning an event for 2013.

My term of office has been a period of transition for NCW as we adapt to the twenty first century and seek more efficient ways of working. We have embraced electronic communication, and use email extensively for information to members, affiliates and



management discussion. Our accounts etc. are computerised and records deposited with the relevant archive departments. The website is now updated, we use Skype and the social media, including Twitter and a Blog for instant responses to topical issues. Our National Council of Young Women thrives with links to school sixth forms and colleges and they have a page on our website. Policy committees are working with satellite groups and producing *outcomes*. There are now Individual Member Regional Branches with Council voting rights.

Good relations with Government have been established; we attend meetings with Ministers and have responded to consultations on a wide range of social concerns with progress on a number of sensitive cultural issues; including forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and the protection of women and girls from rape in conflict situations. Further achievements, resolutions and campaigns during this time have been reported electronically and in other publications including the annual Directors Report.

I would like to conclude by thanking you all for your support during my Presidency, especially the Management Committee, without your help this valuable work could not have been accomplished. Exciting times lie ahead and I wish **Elsie Leadley**, **the President Elect**, every success and hope she enjoys her time in office as much as I have.

Sheila Eaton

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN

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EDITORIAL

We can all be proud of the effort, the endeavour and dedication of the whole Team GB in the London Olympics. As the National Council of Women we can also rejoice not only in the contribution of women participants to GB's success but also in the welcome news that every country now allows women to participate. Changing cultural attitudes takes time, as we well know, especially with reference to a number of the issues which are featured in this edition. However 'NCW's Team GB' can also be proud of its successes and can go forward with renewed vigour to meet challenges and continue campaigning for change.

The Olympics have reminded us that sport teaches teamwork, respect for rules, and respect for each other as competitors as well as providing the groundwork for a healthy active lifestyle, a legacy which would benefit the young people on whose future we all depend.

Gwenda Nicholas

NCW sends congratulations to Her Majesty on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee and wishes her many more happy and successful years as our Queen.

Sheila Petersen sets out the facts on this important issue

Police and Crime Commissioners: Changing Times in Policing

'The arrival of police and crime commissioners will be the most significant democratic reform of policing in our lifetime.'

Nick Herbert, Policing Minister, January 2012

On 15 November 2012 everyone in England and Wales who is eligible to vote will be invited to elect their first **Police and Crime Commissioner** (PCC), who will represent the public in policing their area and hold the Chief Constable to account, in reducing crime and deliver an effective and efficient police service.

The new PCC once elected will hold office until May 2016 when a further election will take place. There will be 41 new PCCs elected across the country.

The PCC in turn will be held to account by a **Police and Crime Panel** which will be made up of locally elected district and county councillors.

The PCC will replace the existing governance provided currently by the Police Authority.



- We, whether as individuals, or collectively as NCW members, should be asking the **candidates**, **what their priorities are** in tackling violence against women as part of every force's policing and crime plan.
- Every force should have, or be a partner in, a local Violence and Abuse against Women and Girls (VAAWG) strategy and plan, which should be referenced in the PCCs policing and crime plan. In this way, the 'hidden' VAAWG issues and areas of specific concern such as FGM, forced marriage, trafficking for sexual exploitation, crimes against street sex workers, etc., are visible and reinforced through partners' regular attendance at strategy meetings.
- The PCCs should support prevention programmes and have specialist officers trained to work in this field, and commit to partnership working with specialist agencies.

More information available on :

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/

THE XY FACTOR - Men's Health and the Impact on Women's Health

NCW delegates, along with students of midwifery, health visiting, school nursing and social work were privileged to hear from the Immediate Past (known as Deputy) Lord Mayor of Birmingham Councillor Anita Ward, as she opened the day. We then heard from three male keynote speakers. Dr. Jonathan Ives shared his thesis on the moral sense and partner support in transition to first-time fatherhood; lan Quigley gave us hopeful statistics on the decline in unwanted pregnancies and sexually- transmitted infections in a forthright and unembarrassed talk on the changing work of the Brook Clinic since its beginnings in 1966; Phil Denley came on in character as an Irish gypsy, to educate us on the differences between his own identity and that of the Tinker, and – with the help of a young Romanian woman – of the true Romany.

The 4 afternoon workshops were attended by all delegates in rotation, and covered: Offenders and health; Fathers' experiences; Substance misuse (from the Saxion University in Holland, which has co-operative arrangement for students with BCU) their team spoke of domestic violence in Holland and the very different way it is addressed from here in the UK; and a biographical talk from a man who has suffered from mental disorder since his teens.

The speakers will provide Maureen Beauchamp with their power-point presentations and permission to use them, so a full report will be available later. NCW uses these Reports to fulfil its obligation as an educational charity; these Reports are also used by the University to publicise their work.

Dr Maureen Beauchamp Secretary Health Committee

A full report of this well received seminar will be published

FAMILY PLANNING SUMMIT LONDON JULY 2012

On 11 July 2012 the UK Government, with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the UN Family Planning Association and other partners hosted a ground-breaking summit that will mobilise global policy, financing commitments to support the right of an additional 120m. women and girls in the world's poorest countries to family planning information, services and supplies, without coercion or discrimination, by 2020.

It has been proven that family planning saves lives, improves health, strengthens communities and stimulates economic growth. Now is the time for developed countries, donors, international agencies, the private sector and civil society to come together to help the world's poorest women. The summit aims to revitalise global commitment to family planning as a cost effective and transforming development priority. Reaching this goal would result in over 200,000 fewer women and girls dying in pregnancy and childbirth and 3m. fewer infants dying in the first year of life. Each US dollar spent on family planning can save up to six dollars on health and other public services.

Events at the summit included a number of seminars: one led by the IPPF and Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition concerned monitoring and evaluation to promote accountability. Women and Girls' Empowerment was led by Save the Child UK and Women and Children First. Universal access to family planning was led by the UN Population Fund. For the Gates Foundation, the Quality of Care Framework is a core guiding principle: access to high quality, voluntary family planning programmes, with counselling on effective methods and range of choices, and continuity of care. Results should be monitored every twelve months rather than five years to achieve a realistic picture. Communities can take on a watchdog role to hold their governments responsible for promises made.

Melinda Gates, married to Bill for eighteen years, did not speak in public for the first fourteen years, but since she decided to make sexual health her signature issue, she is seen as a pre-eminent philanthropist. She will donate £375m from her charitable fund to a campaign to provide birth control to women in the less developed world. This would reduce the estimated toll of 9,000 women and children who die each day because of unwanted pregnancies. "This will be my life's work," she says. From being the self-effacing wife of America's richest man, she has morphed into a dynamic public figure, on first name terms with world leaders and rock-star humanitarians. Taking to the airwaves to endorse her cause, she sounded intelligent and well briefed, providing statistics and geo-political analysis, together with stories of women she had met on various world tours in less developed countries. "We are talking about giving women the power to save their own and their children's lives, and to give their families the best possible future." She puts not letting women die above the tenets of her personal religion, desiring the greater good of saving lives.

Marie Stott

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

NCW has a long history of work against this practice. Following our consultations with the Royal College of Nursing at our Centenary Conference in 1995, we urged Her Majesty's Government to take steps to enforce and strength the existing legislation forbidding this practice. More recently a presentation on FGM was given by the Health Committee at our 2011 conference. We shall be again calling on the government to take steps to enforce the legislation at our 2012 conference.

The issue of FGM has been highlighted again recently through a BBC 2 television programme, Newsnight, on 23/24 July. Not only did Sue Lloyd Roberts report on the increasing number of FGMs is in the UK but a group of young women in the studio spoke frankly of the effect of this mutilation on many aspects of their lives, as the practice leads to serious long-term health consequences, emotional and sexual difficulties. It is a violent form of physical abuse against children and young women which is not approved by any religious authorities.

In France girls are routinely checked to see that all their genitalia are in place and there have been 100 convictions in France for cutting girls. One woman who was imprisoned for this in fact now campaigns against the practice, together with her lawyer. Doctors and nurses are in a position in the UK to check young girls and it need not be seen as 'abuse' if correctly approached. The women who spoke on the Newsnight programme supported this action.

Lynne Featherstone MP Minister for Women, has said that she is holding discussions on FGM with the medical profession and the police this October. NCW President Sheila Eaton has written to her regretting that our concerns on this issue have not led to any implementation of the law and has requested a meeting with the Minister to address this point.

Gwenda Nicholas

FORCED MARRIAGE- AN UPDATE

The Prime Minister's Office has issued a statement that the decision to make forced marriage a specific criminal offence follows a 12 week consultation which took views from the public, victims, frontline agencies and charities (including NCW). David Cameron says: "I have listened to concerns that criminalisation would drive this most distressing issue underground. That is why we have a new comprehensive package to identify possible victims, support those who have suffered and prevent criminality wherever possible. I want to send a clear and strong message that forced marriage is wrong, is illegal and will not be tolerated."

This was endorsed by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, who emphasised that legislation alone is not enough and an Action Plan is in place. From January to May 2012 the Forced Marriage Unit provided advice and support to nearly 600 cases. UK embassies and High Commissions work to rescue British victims facing forced marriage overseas and help them to return to the UK. The Government will invest more than half a million pounds over three years to help deliver further measures, building on the work being done nationally and by frontline agencies and charities.

In her interview on BBC World News, our President said that making forced marriage a criminal offence sent out a strong message to the perpetrators and would reassure the victims that the law is on their side. Sheila pointed out that NCW had worked for many years on this issue and had collaborated with Asian charities to highlight this concern. Freedom Charity, an NCW affiliate, is distributing the book "But It's Not Fair", by the founder Aneeta Prem, to raise awareness in schools. NCYW Link groups have received the book and held discussions, with their reports uploaded on to their webpage on the NCW website

In an interview with Matt Frei on Channel 4 News, Aneeta Prem said that, since criminalisation, there had been a 50% increase in the reporting of cases of forced marriage but she felt it was more widespread than was acknowledged because there is a tendency not to talk about what can be a delicate situation. She confirmed that there might have been too much political correctness in not offending cultural values. It was time to stop using the term honour killing and call it murder. Cultural protection cannot be given to barbaric practices, highlighted by the killing of Shafilea Ahmed, a completely dishonourable act in execution and cover up.

Marie Stott

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG WOMEN

Young Women's Viewpoint

FROM the NATIONAL COORDINATOR NCYW

On behalf of all members of NCW, best wishes to you for success and satisfactory outcomes in the coming year, as you begin a new term. As a valued part of NCW you are linked to enthusiastic older women who work to improve the quality of life for all. We campaign in various ways and often work with affiliated organisations to raise awareness of injustice and the needs of vulnerable people, addressing Government and organisations which can help to bring about change. Since 2008 NCYW students have been part of this. The challenge is now yours to keep up the momentum in the coming year.

The past year has seen the number of Links double and NCYW now has bases in Darlington, Durham, Gloucestershire, North and South London, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Sheffield. Exciting things are being planned for 2012- 2013 so don't miss out! Five years ago NCYW was an idea. Now it is a reality. As young enthusiastic women you inspire us to give of our best. We hope it is the same the other way around and that out there, there are more young women ready to learn and work in partnership with us.

You have one tremendous advantage over us -- your youth! Look for the opportunities! Use them to good effect not only to enrich your own self-development but also for the benefit of others. Go for it!

Barbara Maddison

On offer to members of NCYW:

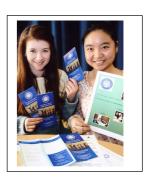
Intergenerational seminars - Older and younger women meet, focussing on a theme during a learning and sharing together day. The Sixth Nottingham and Notts Intergenerational seminar takes place on Tuesday 5th March 2013 on a Citizenship theme

Picnic Pow-wow - hosted by an NCYW school, with students from nearby schools invited. Delegates each bring a packed lunch. There is an update on NCYW plus a chance to learn about and discuss an important issue in a friendly atmosphere. *Pow-wows planned: Croyden 8th November 2012: Heathfield School Pinner 28th June 2013* **Interschool session**, organised by local schools. NCYW students from nearby schools meet each other to explore an issue of mutual interest. These events are locally planned. *Two events at Bulwell Academy October 2012* and *July 2013*

Information on important issues: Keep up to date via the NCYW webpage, which is on the NCW website (links to items on the website too), and not only on this page in the newsletter, but look at the other pages for information on our concerns – see page 3 for a report on a seminar for NCW members and health and social work students.

NCYW Report goes to Seoul, South Korea

The NCW delegation is taking copies of the NCYW leaflet and a report on the progress of NCYW to distribute to representatives from member countries of the International Council of Women during their Triennial Conference, who are interested in this initiative. Can we look forward to contact with young women's groups in other countries? We shall see. Meanwhile find out what is happening at this Conference, see page 6.



Action for change! NCYW members will know that NCW has been campaigning for a change in media and commercial attitudes to young people. We had a resolution on this at Conference 2010 and at a seminar in Cheltenham a sixth former spoke inspiringly on the negative consequences of advertising and marketing pressures on young girls.

It is always encouraging when we can report a change. 14-year-old Julia Bluhm started an online petition calling on Seventeen magazine to stop altering photos of girls to make them <u>look</u> 'impossibly thin with perfect skin'. The petition collected a staggering <u>84,000</u> signatures and asked the magazine to print one unaltered photo each month. Ann Shoket, Seventeen magazine's editor in chief, <u>responded</u> by declaring that the magazine would be more transparent about its photo shoots an 'celebrate every kind of beauty' in their images. In the August issue the Editor published a 'Body Peace Treaty', a sort of pact (signed by the entire staff) in which the magazine promised to only feature images of 'real girls' who are healthy.

News from the International Council of Women

The 2012 ICW Triennial Conference will take place in Seoul, South Korea from 17 – 22 September. The NCWGB delegation includes Elsie Leadley, NCWGB President Elect, who will represent us and our Affiliate members, and will be accompanied by Monica Tolman, Co-ordinator of the ICW Standing Committee on Status of Women, and by Sheila Petersen, ICW Adviser on Peace and International Relations. The theme of the ICW Conference will be "Caring for Women, Caring for the World". As Vice-President of ICW, I attended a meeting of the ICW Board in Lausanne at the beginning of May to work towards finalizing arrangements for the Triennial meeting, with Jung-Sook Kim, President of the Korean National Council of Women, who is an academic and former Member of Parliament.

The Korean women look forward to welcoming many visitors to their capital city, and have arranged a programme which will show us as much of their national culture as possible, including an evening at a Korean cooking academy where we shall have the opportunity to prepare a typical Korean "feast". There will also be optional visits, after the official programme has been completed, to the very beautiful islands which lie close to Seoul. A visit to the demilitarised Zone lying between South and North Korea has also been included, covering some unspoilt wildlife areas, together with some miles of tunnels (now out of use) linking South Korea to the North

The official programme will include presentations on subjects such as: Climate change and natural disasters; women and transformative politics; the impact of the world financial crisis on women; and work on the ICW development projects for the benefit of women in developing countries. Resolutions will be debated on a wide range of subjects: from saving the rhinoceros, which is close to extinction (submitted by South Africa), to the protection of children from pornography, submitted by our own National Council of Women of GB. Monica Tolman has also submitted (on behalf of the ICW Status of Women Committee) a resolution on protection of women from rape in conflict, post-conflict, disaster and post-disaster situations. (more information on the single page insert) Other subjects for debate include the gender pay gap, and protection of the rights of migrant women workers. It should be an interesting Conference reflecting the world-wide nature of ICW membership.

ECICW visits Greek Women

The Spring meeting of ECICW was held, on the invitation of the Greek National Council of Women, in Athens in May. Greece was then at the height of the internal discord resulting from the major financial crisis affecting the country. ECICW was requested to visit Athens as a gesture of solidarity with Greek women, and to join in discussions about the future of the Greek National Council. Members from many National Councils across Europe, including NCWGB attended, together with Cosima Schenk, ICW President and myself, as ICW Vice-President. Our Hotel was situated close to the main Square where demonstrations were held every night, fortunately peaceful during our short visit.

Full discussions were held about the difficulties faced by Greek women and the country as a whole. The Greek Council was involved with others in organizing food banks for those who had been left with no source of income. Many women had been affected by severe cuts in pensions, increased taxation including some back-dated measures, and the need to support their own children, many of whom had lost their employment. A Seminar – "European Societies in Economic and Social Crisis – the Role of Women" was held, and a statement was sent to the European Parliament emphasising the need for women to be included in negotiations on the crisis, and for the talents of women to be recognized in work towards recovery. It was felt that the bonds between the Greek Council and ECICW members had been strengthened by these joint consultations.

Although this was an austerity programme, very generous hospitality was provided by the Greek Council, and a short visit to the Athens Archaeological Museum was included before we left.

Grace Wedekind, ICWGB and Vice President of ICW.

UN Women - women in the workplace

UN Women is launching a new forum to discuss how women's participation in the workplace can aid global economic recovery. UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet will participate in roundtable discussions with the Economic and Social Council, to highlight the role that women play in stimulating economic recovery and growth. According to Ms Bachelet:: "There can be no sustainable recovery for the global economy without the full and secured participation of women in generating that recovery. Empowering women economically is not only the right thing to do, it also makes good economic sense." Initiatives discussed will include women's access to education, jobs, agricultural land, work initiatives, social protection and other resources to help boost large scale employment for women.

GM Crops - Some Recent Developments

Research is being carried out at the John Innes Centre, Norwich, to enable plants such as corn and barley to extract nitrogen from the atmosphere, making them less reliant on fertilisers. British scientists are benefiting from a multi-million pound grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. However there are concerns about the pursuit of experiments in GM. Dr Michael Antoniou, a molecular geneticist from King's College Medical School (your Editor reported on his presentation at a Women's Food and Farming Union seminar in Aberystwyth in an earlier NEWS) says that there are safer, proven technologies which are cheaper and have the potential to meet global food needs and provide long-term food security. Furthermore far from reducing the need for pesticides there is information that GM crops have required an increase in pesticides and herbicides and have led to the emergence of super weeds. The issue remains controversial and we should continue to watch developments.

TWITTER UPDATE

It is nearly a year since Wendy North began NCW's engagement with Twitter, commenting on a wide variety of events and issues of concern to us. We are now following over 100 individuals including Government Ministers and organisations relevant to our interests. We are both following and being followed by a number of our Affiliates, which enhances our contact with them on shared topics. If you would like to see what NCW is saying in 140 characters in this medium, which has growing political clout, you can sign up today. Details in Wendy's 'Let's Tweet' supplement with April NEWS or ask for a further copy from NCW's Administrative office!

NCWGB BLOG

Sheila Eaton announces NCW is moving with the times and has launched a BLOG!

You will all be aware I'm sure of the social media. You may not understand how it all works or the huge impact it has on communication, but you will have heard of Facebook, Twitter, Linkedin, YouTube and Blogs; also hash tags etc. a bewildering world it is often difficult for our members to get their head around. It is hard for the Management Committee too, but we have to make sure the organisation functions in the world as it is today – we cannot ignore the social media. It is used by all sections of the public, Government, organisations, business and professional groups; it is more powerful than newspapers. If NCW is to have a high profile we cannot afford to ignore it. Already we have a valuable website, use Twitter and now a Blog. This enables us to comment and respond quickly to topical issues of concern to us; for instance on the BBC 2 Newsnight programme on Female Genital Mutilation, support for the farmers milk campaign and my roundtable meeting with Lynne Featherstone, Minister for Women and five other specialist organisations to discuss supporting older women. Traditionally we have used authoritative detailed reports and newsletters and these will continue, but blogs are a quicker means of communication for today's world. Please check out and follow the postings for up to the minute news!

ncwgbblog.com

Protecting Maternity Services

The Royal College of Midwives has an e-petition, demanding 5000 more midwives. The RCM recognises there is currently pressure on public sending and difficulties resulting from the upheaval caused by reform in the NHS but see the need to pursue this petition, lodged with Government, and which requires 100,000 signatures. The RCM is an NCW Affiliate and midwifery services have long been a concern of our Health Committee. To sign this petition, go to: www.rcm.org.uk/protectcampaign

NCW Annual Conference Holiday Inn Maidenhead 12th,13th,14th October, 2012

REMINDER! If you haven't booked for Conference yet, please send your booking form (in June NEWS) to the NCW Administration Office in Darlington as soon as possible. We are really pleased to have **Theresa May**, MP for Maidenhead, Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities, as our Gala Dinner Speaker.

The conference **seminar** this year is "**Social Media – Blessing or Curse?**" and the <u>theme</u> "Concerns of the 21st Century"

Diary

September 27th MC

October: 12th -14th Conference (see box)

November: 5th Science and Technology

6th Arts 7th Joint ICWGB/Foreign Affairs

14th Consumer 15th (RCN, Birmingham) Health

20th Education 21st Media

All meetings at Danbury Street, unless otherwise stated

DIAMOND DAY CELEBRATION, HEREFORD 11th July 2012

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH 11 and PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH visited Hereford for its Diamond Day Jubilee celebrations. NCW Hereford branch's stand (right) at this event featured a photograph of Her Majesty at the 1970 NCW Jubilee Reception held at what was then our London headquarters in Lower Sloane Street. Daphne Glick's book 'The National Council of Women of Great Britain – the first one hundred years', page 80 reads:

'The 1970 Conference was the 75th Jubilee of the founding of the National Council of Women and the occasion was marked by a reception at headquarters for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth 11. Everybody present was charmed by Her Majesty's friendliness. She signed the Visitors' Book and presented the Council with a signed photograph which now hangs in the meeting room at headquarters.' (now in Danbury Street)



NCW Affiliate NATIONAL TREFOIL GUILD'S AGM in CARDIFF - 14,000 attended

NCW's display of leaflets and photographs of events aroused much interest. Trefoil Guild members were pleased to have the opportunity to find out more about their connection with NCW.

If you know of an event where an NCW display board could be arranged, please contact NCW's Administrative office for help with leaflets, publications, posters and photographs

MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

If you have found some items of interest in this newsletter, and you are not already a member of NCW, you are invited to find out more about the benefits of membership from our Office Administrator. NCW can keep you better informed and enable you to participate in policy-making either through Branch or Individual Membership. Information about our organisation is available on our website: www.ncwgb.org

For membership information, write: Administrative Office at 72 Victoria Road, Darlington, DL1 5JG Tel 01325 367375.

The Editor thanks all contributors and proof readers and invites items for inclusion in NEWS. Please send to:

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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the National Council of Women of Great Britain, unless so stated