

Friends of Sangam (UK)

Newsletter – Autumn, 2018



FoS (UK) is a UK-registered charity: 1077376

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The Editor Writes

Namaste!

You'll notice this is a much slimmer Newsletter, than last time – because, once again, contributions were in very short supply. Were it not for the trustees, there would be no Newsletter. Last time, I asked everyone for their favourite “Only in India!” moment – and was sent... precisely nothing!

You don't need to worry about being a literary genius, or using a particular format, because I can do the needful, to include **your** items in the next Newsletter – as long as they are with me **by 30th March, 2019**, please.

Tina Powell

From the Chairman

Victoria's report from the 2018 AGM will appear in the Spring Newsletter.

I was at the Darlington Trefoil Guild's meeting, at which there was a Powerpoint presentation by Diane Evans on a recent visit to Sangam – following by a fundraising cake-sale.



Victoria Bagshaw

A Few Words From the President



That sounds quite formal, but my role is far from that on most occasions.

What a super time we had at the gathering in Liverpool, this year. Diane and her team hosted us at the iconic Adelphi Hotel, for a very interesting weekend. We were treated to a fascinating and amusing introduction to the city, when the Giants visited Liverpool – the Giants turned out to be magnificent, huge scale puppets; a traditional Welcome Ceremony and a morning of activities; the business of the AGM and an informative and entertaining walk round the area, led by a Blue Badge guide.

Trish Halmshaw

Amendments to the Constitution - Update

As you are aware, from the last newsletter, the trustees recommended some amendments to our present constitution.

At the Gathering, in Liverpool, in September, the amendments were accepted unanimously by those attending the AGM, and will now be sent to the Charity Commission for (hopefully) ratification. Once the outcome of their decision is known members will be notified in the following newsletter.

At the meeting thanks were expressed to Christine Doughty and her team for the work put into this.

Hilary Taylor - Secretary

Membership Update

I can confirm that TODAY we have 338 fully paid up members and 48 suspended members. Numbers of members having the email version of the newsletter have risen since we sent the last edition to every member with an email address.

This year we have had so far, 4 new members - but we have now 83 INACTIVE compared to 69 last December. These are members who have died or decided to discontinue membership. After the last mailing four were 'returned to sender no longer at this address'. So there will be more to remove!

Gill Shepherd – Membership Secretary

Annual Gathering, 2018

We all gathered together on the Friday evening, at the Adelphi Hotel, in Liverpool and, after settling in and being fully refreshed, we met to be entertained and informed about the Giants (extra-large puppets). This was well-received, especially as some members had not heard of them.



Saturday morning found us meeting in one of the conference rooms in the hotel, for our Sangam-inspired Welcome Ceremony – garlands, coconut and prasad were distributed, as we stood in a horseshoe.

Then our “Taste of Sangam” activities began, with tiger plaques to paint, Warli art to experience, paper seviette lotus flowers to make and Indian kitchen items to identify. Our fundraising activities included a bottle stall, with a

prize for every ticket, raffle tickets to buy by the strip, and the trading and handicraft stalls for our purchases. We, of course, socialised with friends old and new, so a good time was had.



We were delighted, by the end of the day to have raised £76 from the Trading stall, £356.24 from the fundraising activities and £15.38 from the first Cupcake Challenge, for our funds. During this time, we were lucky enough to have a Skype hookup with Jen Barron, in Pune, who answered our questions about Sangam at the moment. Thanks to Rachel for organising this.

After lunch, (a choice of Indian or English), we settled down for the AGM.



On Saturday evening, we had the chance of an hour's walk to see some of the buildings of interest near the hotel, with Helen, a blue badge guide. We finished our day with a trip to Wetherspoons, for dinner.

After breakfast on Sunday we all made our way home. A big vote of thanks must go to Diane and her team for a most enjoyable and well-organised Gathering. I am looking forward to next year's Gathering already.

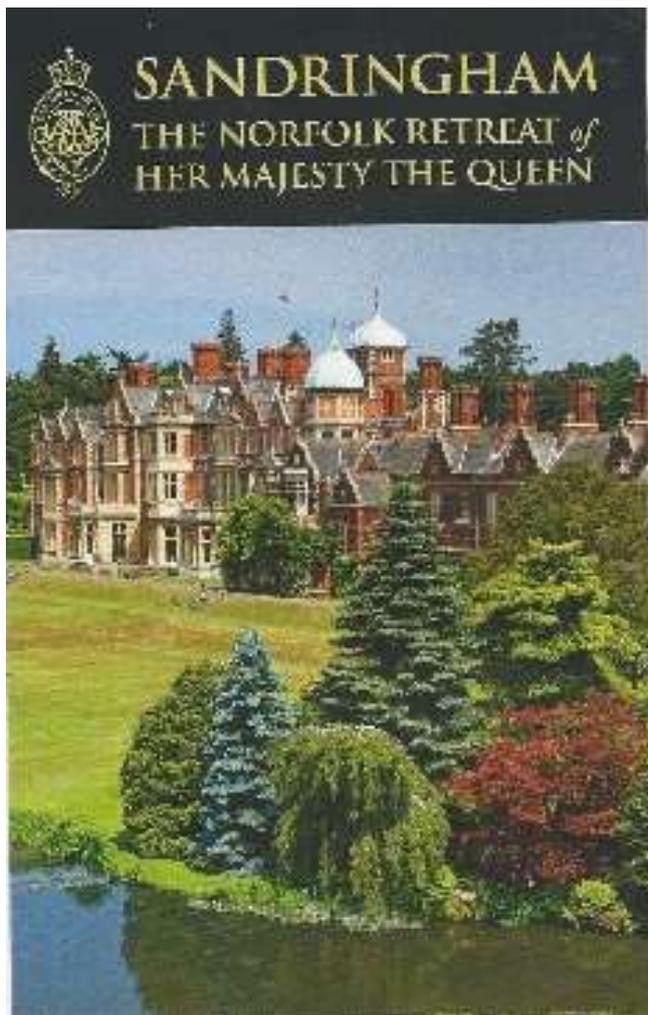
Jean Sutherland

Speaking of Which...

Keep this Date: **20th - 22nd September, 2019**, for next year's Gathering

A few Nottinghamshire Friends have just spent an enjoyable few days in Norfolk with the Notts. County Trefoil Guild, celebrating 75 years of Trefoil Guild at Hautbois – Girl Guiding Anglia's Outdoor Activity Centre, on the outskirts of Coltishall, near Norwich.

We enjoyed a very relaxed atmosphere, with very friendly staff and good, home-cooked meals. On Saturday, we had the opportunity to travel on the Bure valley steam railway, between Wroxham and Aylsham, getting on at the Coltishall station, after flagging the train down and explored both towns.



Another pleasant day was spent at Sandringham, which was an hour's coach trip away. We were met by the Sandringham Trefoil Guild and given lunch in the Sandringham Scout and Guide HQ, before being accompanied around the church. We had a tour of the House, Museum and gardens. What a privilege to walk through the Queen's winter family living rooms!

Another day, we had a two hour boat trip on the river Bure visiting various Broads, with a very good, informative commentary on the wildlife and history of the broads. On our return to the centre, we had a tour of the **Archive Resource Centre** which is the first purpose-built Guiding one, in the UK.

I am pleased to say we have been able to book the full Hautbois House for the Annual Gathering next September. Anne Allery has paid the deposit and there will be more details, with a form, in the Spring Newsletter, next year.

Gill Shepherd

Looking Forward to Next Year

Those of us who were lucky enough to go to Liverpool in September thoroughly enjoyed the weekend thanks to the excellent organization by Diane Davies and her team and the somewhat faded splendour of the Adelphi Hotel. We were kept busy for the whole weekend and shared many happy memories of Sangam. How amazing it was to be able to talk to Jen Barron and hear first-hand from Sangam, in real time. Not without technical issues but, nonetheless, a miracle.

But onwards and upwards – the thoughts of the FoS Committee turned to 2019 and an opportunity to have another great experience. Some of you may be disappointed that we could not manage to arrange a weekend in London which had been our aim. Gill Shepherd and I visited Pax Lodge and the Indian YMCA Hostel. Both had their attractions – advantages and disadvantages. We enjoyed a particularly good Indian lunch at the latter – but in the end found there were too many obstacles to overcome and the cost was likely to be prohibitive for many of us. However do not let this put you off visiting either!

You will see that we have settled on a worthy alternative. The decision to go to Hautbois (which I am assured is pronounced Hobbis but do not take my word for it, as it sounds neither English nor French) was confirmed after a number of Nottinghamshire Trefoil members passed an enjoyable few days there. For those who don't know, it is close to Norwich and is an Activity Centre owned and managed by Girlguiding Anglia. If you want to see what it has to offer please Google it. Plans are going ahead already and as it is a Guiding establishment, there will be local help available and the opportunity to meet up with local groups.



Some FoS members may not be happy to travel alone or may worry about it being a “closed shop”. I can assure you that this is not the case. We would like as many members and friends as possible. Please feel free to bring a friend and let them share in “The Spirit of Sangam”.

Book early when the booking form comes out and you will see that there is a variety of accommodation suitable for all. We are hoping to arrange

transport from Norwich Train Station for those who intend to let the train take the strain. For those who prefer to drive it should be possible to make car-sharing arrangements so do not be put off by the location.

More news in the next Newsletter but, in the meantime, please put the weekend of 20th September in your diary.

Christine Doughty

Nomination of Trustees

Trustees Victoria Bagshaw (chair) and Gill Shepherd (trustee) complete their second three year terms of office (and so cannot stand, again); Christine Doughty and Trish Robinson (trustees) complete their first three year terms of office, in September 2019. Nominations are invited for these positions.

FOS (UK) Trustees – nomination form

We wish to nominate the following person as Trustee for Friends of Sangam (UK)

Candidate's name

and signature

Address

.....

Telephone

Email

This person would be willing to be put forward for the position of chair, if elected: Y/N -
Please delete, as applicable.

Name of proposer

Signature of proposer

Name of seconder

Signature of seconder

Please send to : Hilary Taylor Whitesmocks. Smallhope Drive Lanchester Co. Durham DH7 0SJ, by 1st January, 2019.

Visiting Sangam

Most but not all of the members of FoS UK have been lucky enough to visit Sangam at least once. Some have visited many times but others like me once or twice. For others it is something to think about but does not happen. Why not? Obviously cost, travel and health



worries are among the reasons. The other is finding like-minded people who want to do the same thing and can do it at the same time. Can I please encourage everyone who has been to Sangam, either as a group or individually to write a piece for the Newsletter to include photos? For me, that certainly whets the appetite.



There are so many choices – an event organized by Sangam, a group event tailored to the group, volunteering at Sangam or with one of the community partners. The list goes on... Then do you go for a week or a month or longer, and do you travel before or after.

I am no expert but I can share my own experiences. I would also hope it could be possible to bring together people who want to visit Sangam. I have a number of ideas to get this going and look forward to further suggestions.

- Anyone planning a trip advertising it through the Newsletter or through FoS UK by other means to invite others to join the group. We have done this successfully in the past and it provides some economies - coach hire etc. Sometimes we feel we don't have the time or experience to make the arrangements but are glad to join in
- Contact us if you are interested in joining a group or teaming up with another traveller
- Ask for advice about travel arrangements and preparations from those who have done it before
- Ask for a visit from someone who has been to Sangam to come and talk to your group

My last visit to Sangam was for the 50th Birthday party and what an event that was. Anne Allery and I travelled together and met up with some we knew and some we didn't from the UK whilst at Sangam. We also met many from so many different parts of the world. Travel arrangements were second to none – by Emirates from Birmingham at a cost cheaper than our first visit over 25 years earlier. We toured Southern India including Kerala after Sangam, on a tailor-made tour arranged for us by Perfect Travels in India. (Check out their website, at <https://www.perfecttravels.net/>) They have been for many years arranging tours for Sangam visitors and we had the comfort of a luxury car and a night on our own boat on the backwaters of Kerala. It was hard to return to daily life at home!



My email address is doughty.doughty@btinternet.com. Please feel free to contact me to ask any questions however trivial or difficult they may seem. I will do my best to help or find someone who can.

Hopefully we can help to swell the numbers at Sangam and help many more to share in the experience. I hope to put further news in the next Newsletter perhaps with a "Lost and Found" column to match people up.

Christine Doughty

Remember...

- Sangam isn't only for members of Guiding and Scouting – friends and family can stay there, too
- Events are planned 18 months in advance – so you can check out their schedule on the website, at <https://www.waggggs.org/en/our-world/world-centres/sangam/>
- If you don't want to attend an event, then consider staying as an independent guest
- A member of Girlguiding UK, aged 21, or over and fancy a longer stay (3.5-5 months)? Why not consider applying to be a Sangam Volunteer, helping to deliver the programme and guiding participants through Pune? Details are on the website: <https://www.waggggs.org/en/our-world/world-centres/sangam/volunteer/sangam-volunteer/> Applications have to be submitted by 31st December, for the following season (June – April).
- Have specialist skills? Check out the Sangam Intern openings, on the website: <https://www.waggggs.org/en/our-world/world-centres/sangam/volunteer/sangam-intern/>
- Aged 18+? Have you considered becoming a Tare (*Hindi for “star”*) by applying for the Sangam Community Programme: <https://www.waggggs.org/en/our-world/world-centres/sangam/volunteer/community-programme/>

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