

Global Expansion - From the Association to IIW

Even before 1934, some Clubs were formed in other parts of the world, mostly in the Commonwealth, 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 Margarett Golding; the second, after ten years, in 1946 at Apeldoorn, 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 **104 Countries/Geographical Areas**, and has more than **108,000 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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