

Inner Wheel - The First Ten Years: From a Club to the Association



Mrs. Margarette Oliver Golding, (* 20th Nov. 1881 as Margarette Owen in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Merioneth, Wales; † 1939) a nurse, business woman 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 two-fold, 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**.