



WOMEN IN KENYA

THE JOURNAL OF THE EAST AFRICA WOMEN'S LEAGUE

ISSUE 21, MARCH 2025



Spring Valley



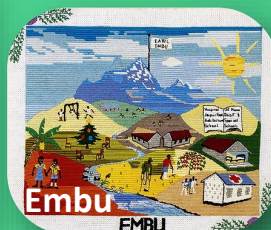
City



Rosslyn



Lavington



Embu



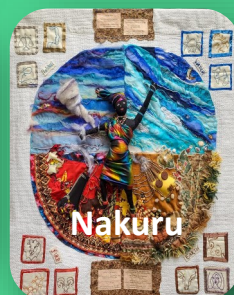
Karen /Langata



Muthaiga



Nanyuki



Nakuru



Thika



Eldoret



Gilgil



Kisumu



Machakos/Ulu



Malindi/Watamu



Nandi Hills



South Coast



Mombasa



Kilifi

DAYLIFE

Dependable Quality

NI YETU

NOBODY
Knows More About
PUMPS

The Brand of



**DAVIS &
SHIRTLIFF**

know **H₂O**w through experience



Dayliff.com

AVAILABLE FROM BRANCHES AND STOCKISTS COUNTRYWIDE



WOMEN IN KENYA

THE JOURNAL OF EAST AFRICA WOMEN'S LEAGUE

ISSUE 21, MARCH 2025



Dear Readers! This is the last time I will be addressing you from the editorial pages of the Journal. After 8 years in the Chair, I have decided to hand over the reins to someone else – although who it will be we do not yet know for certain. I have very much enjoyed my years as Editor, and I hope that you have enjoyed the fruits of our labours. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Cathy Coyte who for the past several issues has put things together in a printer-friendly format, thus greatly enhancing the quality of our magazine, and also making life a lot easier for the Editor. Thanks also to all of you for providing the material to work with, for without your articles and photographs there would be no Journal. Please keep up the good work, and support the next Editor in a similar way. One more thing – printing the Journal costs money, and we need more advertising, so if you are a company owner, or know someone who would like to support us, please put them in touch with the editorial team. We have a small group of dedicated and loyal supporters who advertise in every issue, but we would like to expand our reach. Many thanks again. I wish the new team the very best of luck.



God bless you all. Clare

Note From assistant Editor Cathy Coyte: My apologies that some of the photos from HQ and Festival of Arts & Crafts are not up to the standard I would like as my good Camera was happily sleeping in Eldoret at the time...



In this issue:

News from Hq	3
AGM 1st & 3rd Council	
Festival of Arts & Crafts	8
Around The Branches	
Rosslyn	11
Could you fall in love with a microbe	12
Nakuru	13
Spring Valley	14
Muthaiga	17
Kilifi	18
Gilgil	19
Karen/Langata	20
Mombasa	21
Lavington	22
City	23
Nandi	24
Eldoret	25
Nanyuki	26
Early Days	27
Hatches Parmley	29
Dispatches	29
Brenda Goodman	29
Violet Otero	30
Olive Taylor	30
Suzanne O'Gorman	31

Associated Country Women of the World

Sadly, the East West & Central Africa Area of the ACWW lost a stalwart supporter and advocate when former Area President and incumbent **Deputy World President Irene Chinje** lost her long battle with cancer in July 2024. Many of our members will remember Irene visiting us in 2018 when she attended the 2nd Council in Gilgil and reported to us on the activities of the Association. Subsequently she also attended – virtually – the Area Conference that was held at EAWL HQ in November 2022. Irene was a wonderful, warm woman whose passion in life was the advancement of rural women across the world, and she is much missed.



In August 2024 – in line with their responsibilities in ACWW's Constitution - the ACWW Board appointed **Judith Awuor Juma** to serve as Deputy World President. Judith is a member of the Machakos/Ulu Branch of EAWL, and an advocate of the High Court of Kenya. She is co-founder and Vice-Chairman of the Social Justice League, a community-based NGO that works with rural communities focusing on women, youth and people living with disabilities. Their focus is on Human Rights Advocacy, Strategic Litigation, Research and Economic Empowerment.

EAST AFRICA WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Affiliated with the
Associated Country Women of the World

National Chairmen: Mrs Stephanie Mwite

& Mrs Anne Sanders

Editor: Mrs Clare Jethwa

Assistant Editor: Cathy Coyte

Address: Weal House, Bishop's Road

PO Box 40308-00100 Nairobi

Email: eawlhq@gmail.com

Website : www.eawl.org

Tel: 0758 290 459

Mpesa Till No: 4112474

News from Headquarters - AGM

The **2024 Annual General Meeting and First Council** were held in the Anderson Hall on **Thursday, 21st March**.

The AGM was presided over by the outgoing National Chairman, **Mrs. Susie Edwards**, who said in her address

"When I took office on this stage back in March 2019, I didn't really know what to expect or what I was doing! But I do know I felt very humbled by the vote of confidence from the members. I was full of doubt that I would be able to live up to the expectations of the membership and at that time I was very definitely winging it.

Five years on and I am still winging it! Nevertheless, it has been an enormous privilege to have served you as your National Chairman for five consecutive years. It has been a rocky road at times – revisit Covid and a global lockdown, so much uncertainty and fear. We bounced back and moved on up.

*I am immensely grateful for the support and guidance from the team that has surrounded me. The Vice-Chairmen who have served alongside me: **Nancy Warshow, Pauline McKenzie, Marlene Burnett (twice!), Anne Sanders, Stephanie Mwite, Satarupa Banerjee, Redempta Muibu and Sue Haworth.***

*The Executive Committee and especially **Jane Parmley**, who was Chairman of Executive for most of my tenure, and **Clare Jethwa** this past year. **Frances Cattermole** for her constitutional knowledge and unwavering commitment to the League. The WEAL House staff, **Christine, Sammy and Jennifer**, who have kept me fed and watered over the years. But it is not just those here at WEAL House. All of you out there in the branches up and down this country who have welcomed me into your homes and hearts, always made me feel like the star of the show and shown me such friendship and affection, that is something that will stay with me forever.*

*I must also pay tribute here to my long-suffering husband **Carlos**, who has been my chauffeur, purveyor of Gin, listener, counsellor, mainstay and all-round good egg! I feel that I am part of one big happy family. A family is a group of people, who have each other's backs and are willing to go that extra mile to bring a smile to each other's faces. True family definition is the sense of loyalty, selflessness, love and genuine care and concern for others. I find all that here within the EAWL. Especially now, as I have experienced tragedy*

and deep sorrow on a personal level. Just the feeling that there is someone within this extended family, who will be there for me is very comforting. Family means having someone to love you unconditionally despite your shortcomings (of which there are many) Family is loving and supporting one another, even when it is not easy to do so. Family is unrelenting, secure and reliable. Family isn't just important – it is what is MOST important. And that is what I feel here in this historic hall.

*I have had so many letters and messages of support and love from so many of you and it is extremely reassuring and heartening to know someone has got my back in good times and bad. As I take leave of you for a while, thank you all for the love, friendship, compassion and care you have afforded me over the last few years and also in the years to come. **From the bottom of my heart a humungous THANK YOU."***

As usual Susie rounded off her speech with a funny story:

Three men were hiking through the forest when they came upon a large, raging, violent river.

Needing to get to the other side, the first man prayed "God, please give me the strength to cross the river." Poof!!! God gave him big arms and strong legs ... and he was able to swim across in about 2 hours, having almost drowned twice.

After witnessing that, the second man prayed "God, please give me the strength and the tools to cross the river." Poof!!! God gave him a rowboat and strong arms and strong legs ... and he was able to row across in about an hour after almost capsizing once.

Seeing what happened to the first two men, the third man prayed "God, please give me the strength, the tools and the intelligence to cross the river". Poof!!! HE WAS TURNED INTO A WOMAN. She checked the map, hiked one hundred yards upstream ... and walked across the bridge".

In the course of her report Susie also imparted the good news that **Mwalimu Plus**, currently renting **Harrison House**, had put in an offer to buy the property. This matter was now with the lawyers and hopefully would proceed without a hitch. They had been excellent tenants and would be exemplary neighbours.

Following the National Chairman's address the National Treasurer, **Mrs. Rose Kinuthia**, presented the accounts for 2023, and was then re-elected to the post of National Treasurer.

Mrs. Clare Jethwa was re-elected to the post of Editor of the Journal with **Ms. Cathy Coyte** as Assistant Editor.

It was announced that **Mrs. Stephanie Mwite** and **Mrs. Anne Sanders** would be Joint National Chairmen for the year 2024-25, and their Vice-Chairmen would be Mesdames **Marlene Burnett, Sue Haworth, Redempta Muibu** and **Ludmila Shitakha**.

It was resolved that: *the annual subscription for Ordinary Members would be increased to Kes.3,500/- from 1 January 2025 and to Kes.4,000/- from 1 January 2026.*

It was further resolved that Article 28 (2) Terms of Office of the National Chairman be amended to read *"The National Chairman shall be eligible to run for another term of office not exceeding one (1) year after the end of the initial two (2) year term. Provided always that the maximum term of office for National Chairman shall be three (3) consecutive years. Thereafter they may not offer themselves for election to the Executive Committee."*

Mrs. Janet Barlow, Chairman of the EAWL Trustees, announced that **Mr. Nigel Parmley** had stood down as a Trustee but two new Trustees were in the process of being appointed, viz. **Mr. Robert Clarke** and **Mr. Charles Campbell-Clause**.

Outgoing Chairman **Mrs. Susie Edwards** presented the new National Chairmen with their badges of office, and was herself thanked by **Mrs. Barlow** for her 5 years of dedicated service, and presented with a gift – to which all the branches countrywide had contributed - of a notebook with a wooden cover etched with her name, a bottle of Prosecco and a Travel Voucher.



The AGM was followed by 1st Council, presided over by Joint National Chairmen **Stephanie Mwite & Anne Sanders**.

A minute's silence was held for those who had passed away since the previous Council meeting, and the Chairmen then introduced themselves, each with a few biographical details:

Mrs Mwite explained that she is married to Mr Tony Mwite and lives with their two youngest children in Nanyuki. The older three are now studying in Canada and the USA. She is currently engaged as the Principal and Co-Proprietor of Hampton Online School with students studying from home within different parts of the Country. Her initial training was in Hotel Management, and she had worked with Block Hotels and later Kichwa Tembo in Maasai Mara. She later moved from Tourism into Government, where she and her husband both worked in the office of the Vice President.



Mrs Sanders' love for Africa came at the age of 12 when her mother gave her the books Born Free, Living Free, Forever Free – she was definitely going to look after Lions! However, after training and working as a Nurse in London and Oxford, working for a medical company covering the whole of the UK running a medical unit, and completing several University courses over the years she ended up working for Humanitarian Organisations - mainly Save the Children Fund and The International Committee of the Red Cross - in conflict and natural disaster zones around the world. She

did find her Lions, cuddling one who loved being scratched behind the ears in Southern Sudan (and she has the photo to prove it). She also found her husband Nigel who in fact was born in the plot next door to the League. Living in Uganda she joined the International Women's Association, managed their catering and got involved in the Mahjong group. Moving to Kenya she wanted to continue playing and find a similar organisation to join. A friend there said there was a group that played Mahjong in the Rosslyn Branch of EAWL - and that in its very abbreviated form was how she had ended up in this position.

The Chairmen formally addressed the meeting, thanking **Mrs. Edwards** the outgoing Chairman for mentoring them to take over her role. They explained that they had agreed to work together because neither of them was in a position to devote their full time to the Chairmanship. They pledged to take all important decisions together, and stressed that the League is something we must all steward and cherish for the generations to come. They reiterated the importance of WEAL house to our organisation for *"without Headquarters the Branches would not exist"*.

They called on all members to *"embrace their diversity by working together as equals, helping each other, respecting and being kind to each other bringing the Spirit of the League - friendship, fun and laughter - into our meetings as we enjoy our time together."*

Mrs. Mwite was hoping to explore ways to make it easier for members to be included in all aspects of the work of the League by using technology more effectively, and reported that she had recently proposed to the Executive Committee that Digital Virtual Membership Cards be introduced, a system whereby one's Membership Card would be on one's phone for quick and easy display at Headquarters.

They asked Branch officers to encourage members to drop into the League on a Friday to enjoy the fabulous Friday Market, and to contact the Zone Vice Chairmen if there was anything they wished to discuss.

This year's National Chairman's project would be to support technical skills colleges within the community, thereby empowering women to create jobs and earn a living.



There followed elections to the Executive Committee run by Nominations Committee Chair **Frances Cattamole** :

Mrs B Achieng, Ms M Ang'awa, Mrs J Davey, Mrs R Lotay Dr J Ogundo and Mrs J Parmley were elected unanimously.

The Zone Vice-Chairmen's branches were allocated, and all the Branch Chairmen & Councillors present were introduced.

The Chairmen of Executive and Benevolence delivered their reports for the year.

Lists of those elected to the Standing Committees were read out.

Under AOB **Mrs. Jethwa** encouraged members to participate in the ACWW Women Walk the World exercise on 29th April.



After the meeting lunch was served by **Spring Valley Branch**

SECOND COUNCIL, which was scheduled to be hosted by **Nakuru Branch**, was cancelled due to the unstable political situation on the ground across the country. **Nakuru** did however continue with their raffle which was well supported by all members of the League.

THIRD COUNCIL 2024

was presided over by the Joint National Chairmen and attended by 72 League members.



Renate Lotay of **Muthaiga Branch** offered a prayer, and the meeting was then officially opened by Zone Vice-Chairman Marlene Burnett.

Apologies were read by Zone Vice-Chairman Ludmila Shitakha, and Mrs. Burnett announced those who had passed away since the previous Council meeting.

The Minutes of 1st Council were confirmed as a true record of the meeting, and the National Chairmen then addressed the members **Mrs. Sanders** noted that this was her favourite week in the League calendar with all the Branches getting together for the **Festival of Arts & Crafts**, and **Mrs. Mwite** echoed these sentiments with a quote from Maya Angelou:

*It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally.*

Regrettably 2nd Council had had to be cancelled because of the security situation in the country, but it had proved to be a wise decision. Today we would hear from **Nakuru Branch**, denied the opportunity to host that meeting, from **Muthaiga Branch** who were also serving coffee and lunch, and from **Pauline McKenzie**, that very special lady who had started the Goat Derby at South Coast and would be giving us a brief history of that event. There would also be a report from **Zone Vicechair Mrs. Redempta Muibu**, who had unfortunately broken her foot the previous day so **Mrs. Burnett** would read it on her behalf. The meeting wished Redempta a speedy recovery.

Mrs. Sanders reported that on behalf of the League she had attended the annual Remembrance Service at the

War Cemetery in Nairobi where she had laid the EAWL wreath. She found it a very moving experience and urged members to attend at least once in their lives, and to encourage the younger generation to keep the memories alive.

She thanked all the **WEAL House staff** and **Ms. Cattermole** for organising the **Festival of Arts & Crafts** with energy and enthusiasm, and **Jane Parmley** for her time and dedication setting up the annual **Christmas Raffle**, ably supported by **Jolene Wood**.

Mrs Sanders ended by quoting the Immediate Past National Chairman who had said at a previous Council that

"Council is one of the most important and integral functions of the League; everything that is done under the umbrella of the League is done with the approval of Council. It is not the National Chairman, the Vice Chairman, nor even the all-powerful Executive Committee who make the decisions that affect what the EAWL does and stands for - it is the Council"

Mrs. Mwite reported that she had visited several branches during the month of October, viz. **Thika, South Coast, Mombasa** and her own Branch, **Nanyuki**. At **Thika** she took part in their fun event and really enjoyed the quiz, although she missed lunch as she had to rush off to **South Coast** for the **Goat Derby**, where the Executive Committee's goat **Broomstick** really frustrated her by consistently coming in 4th or 5th! This was her first time at the Derby, and she thoroughly enjoyed the fun and laughter. At **Mombasa's** Shilling for Shilling fundraiser they played Bingo, and then had a lovely lunch and a mini raffle. **Nanyuki** also had a Bingo session which engendered lots of laughs.

She announced that *2 committees that are key to the League- the WEAL House committee and the Finance committee - are now up and running very well.*



She thanked all the Branches for their support for the Christmas Raffle, and for the efforts they go to – each in its own way - to

- ◇ *Ease Pain*
- ◇ *Stop Calamity*
- ◇ *Prevent Abuse*
- ◇ *Curb Hunger*
- ◇ *And bring a smile to a woman or child!*

and urged them – again quoting Maya Angelou -

Therefore "Don't grow weary of doing good. **BECAUSE:**

*Now you understand
Just why your heads should not be bowed.*

*When we see you passing
It ought to make us proud.
I say*

*It's in the click of your heels,
The bend of your hair,
The palm of your hand,
The need of your care,
'Cause you're a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's you.*

She thanked **Susie Edwards** and **Frances Cattermole** for their *"stroke of genius"* in persuading herself and Anne to co-chair, and setting up a milestone in the history of the League for *"though we all here consider ourselves Kenyans I am the first Black Kenyan to hold this high office. This has encouraged other native Kenyans to shun the notion that it's a white-only organisation. I look forward to another year of serving the League".*



3rd Council Continued:

Following this joint address the **2023 final accounts** were presented by **Hon Treasurer Rose Kinuthia**, copies of which are available in the Secretary's office. Rose also reported that *"moving forward, efforts are continuing to enhance revenue generation particularly through increased activities at WEAL House, streamlined expenses, and optimised tax planning to improve our financial health."*

We are also appointing new Auditors, Kody Africa LLP, for good governance, as the prior auditors have served an adequate term. In addition, I would like to encourage branches to take action to recruit new members which will ensure sustainability and continuity of the League."

It was unanimously RESOLVED that **KODY Africa LLP** be appointed as auditors for the year 2024.

Mrs. Burnett delivered reports on her own Branches (**Watamu/Malindi, South Coast, Mombasa, Kilifi &**

Machakos/Ulu) and **Mrs. Muibu's (Eldoret, Gilgil & Nandi Hills)**.

Cheryle Robinson, Nakuru Branch Chairman, **Pauline McKenzie**, South Coast Member of Honour, and **Renate Lotay**, Muthaiga Branch Chairman all delivered reports from their Branches.

(The reports are too long to be reproduced here but are attached to the Minutes of 3rd Council which can be obtained from Headquarters. Ed.)

At the end of the meeting the National Chairmen presented trophies to the Festival of Arts & Crafts winners.

They awarded the **Cumberlege Cup** to **Jane Parmley** for: *Her tireless work and energy for the League: Chairman of Executive for 5 years and stepping in for one more year 2024; running the EAWL National Raffle since 2017; chairing Rosslyn Branch every other 3 years since for ever, and virtually running it when 'by committee'.*



Christmas Executive Coffee mornings would not be the same without her carols and organisation. She always offers help when needed with a smile.. For her integrity, support, efficiency, and enthusiasm; we thank you Jane and long may you remain amongst us .

After 3rd Council
Muthaiga Branch
served a delicious lunch.



In September Joint National Chairman **Stephanie Mwite** and Executive Secretary **Christine Ngao** welcomed the Nairobi City Fire Marshall and his team of inspectors to WEAL House. They made a thorough investigation of our fire readiness, strengths and weaknesses. The following week they returned to do a training session with the WEAL House staff. Christine then presented a full report to the WEAL House Committee.

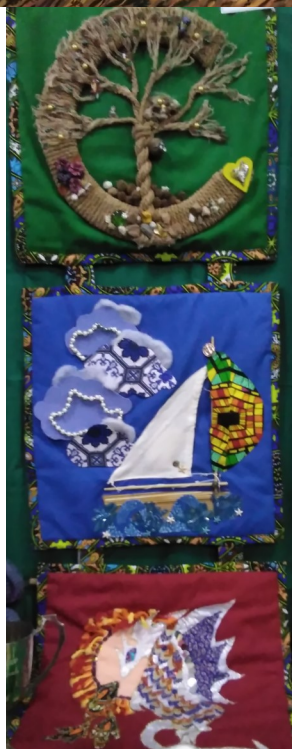
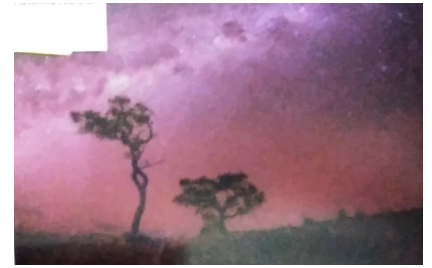
22nd November 2024: Anne Sanders, Joint National Chairman, presents **Maureen Rego** with the first prize in the annual Christmas Raffle, of which all the proceeds go to enhance the Christmas experience of orphans and the elderly in homes all over the country.

Before the Raffle was drawn many members enjoyed the Christmas Fair and the traditional "Bangers & Mash" provided by **Lavington Branch**



Festival of Arts & Crafts 2024

Theme “Earth Wind & Fire ”



Stand Results

1. Rosslyn
2. Thika
3. Spring Valley
4. South Coast
5. Nandi Hills
6. Nakuru
7. Nanyuki
8. Muthaiga
9. Karen/Langata
10. Lavington
10. Eldoret
12. City



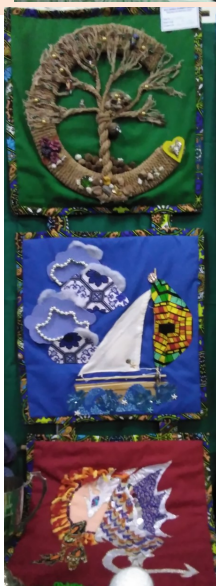
Spring Valley's Stand was just a mass of silver including the **Grigg Challenge** for the branch gaining the most points



Diana Allen of Nanyuki receiving the **Freddie Dumbleton Mug** (Over nineties) on behalf of **Frances Cuthill** who won it for her knitted cardigan .



Caroline Cattermole of Rosslyn branch won the **MARGERY DUGDALE TROPHY** for the most stylish exhibit



The **Keshavjee Trophy** was won by **South Coast Branch**, the first time they had entered the team challenge. The cup was received by **Vanessa Kamau**



So many cute creations

Final Branch Placings

1. Spring Valley
2. Thika
3. Karen/Langata
4. Muthaiga
5. Rosslyn
6. Eldoret
7. Nanyuki
8. Lavington
9. Nakuru
10. South Coast
11. City
12. Nandi Hills



Spinners Web Kenya Ltd

1.3A Kitusuru Road, Nairobi

0750 986 246 or 0731 168 996

hello@spinnerswebkenya.com www.spinnerwebkenya.com

Open: **TUESDAY – SUNDAYS 9.30am – 6:00 pm** CLOSED ON MONDAY

Check out our American style café with our signature carrot cake grandma's apple pie



We have been
supporting African
craftsmen for 40 years.
Our shop is over 1500 SM
hosting handmade

products from over 500
workshops, groups and
individuals.

**We have something for
everyone**



Farmers Market every 1st & last Friday of month 10.30am

Check out our website for events and fun classes

Around the Branches - Rosslyn

Rosslyn has been run by Committee for the past year and will continue in the same vein in 2025.



We didn't do anything wildly different as a branch in 2024 but did manage our Beetle Drive in July at Jane's house, **Pierre Boileau** being the winner that day.



Our coffee morning and "Do Tell Tales" was great fun and we were regaled with stories of, in no particular order, meeting Queen Elizabeth II, extracting a pangolin from a living room in Tanzania, being an extra in the film "Shadow on The Sun", meeting Prince Charles and Diana Princess of Wales, an egg timer bobbing in the water with the egg as it had not been explained

that it should remain outside the pan, meeting Margaret Thatcher, Elton John, and many more. Who knew that our members had led such exciting lives and



We had had to postpone our earlier attempt to have **Rhodia Mann** talk to us about her mother's fascinating life, but we succeeded in September, at **Spinner's Web** and had just under 40 people there. What an exceptional woman **Erica Mann** was.



Our Bridge/Mahjong/Scrabble afternoon tea is always well supported and 2024's was no exception.



Our Rosslyn calendar would not be complete without Christmas carols and lunch at Janet's house with this year's singing being led by member **Meble**.

In 2024 we made donations to **League HQ**, **Pat Dixson's Feeding the Elderly** programme, **Body of Christ School**, **Cheshire Home** (for girls with disabilities), **Sweetwaters School** (under the Keep Her in School project) and **ACWW**. We also applied for funds from the Christmas Raffle, with which we bought items for **Mogra Children's Home**.

Sadly, during the year 3 of our members lost their husbands and we lost a stalwart branch member in **Suzanne O'Gorman**.

Jane Parmley, Rosslyn Committee

COULD YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH A MICROBE??... I HAVE..

I have a smallholding (5 acres).

In January 2023, I started a food forest (plant anything that feeds or heals the soil, humans and animals). I now have over 100 different varieties of plants growing, including herbs/fruit trees/fruiting vines/veg/ indigenous trees and shrubs- During this process I learnt about microbes in the soil via the online:

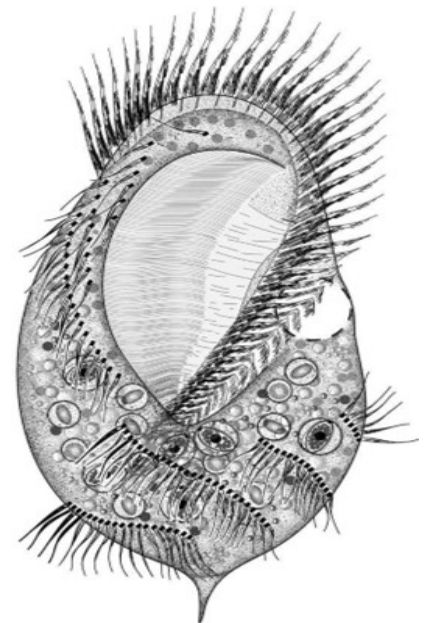
iCow Soil Advocacy Course
(www.icow.co.ke)



In conclusion: Why does it matter and why shouldn't we all be in love with microbes?

We could all be combating climate change through carbon sequestration. Making a safer world for our children and grandchildren – We should all work towards supporting healthier ecosystems, building soils and preserving biodiversity. Even the little creatures matter – now don't get me started on bees, hover flies or ladybugs ---- we need them and they need us to protect their space. Let's all live together in this space for a very long time...

How cool is this drawing of a **CILIATE** (*Hypotrichidium bichromum*), a protozoa, preys on bacteria and other microorganism, regulating populations/ recycling nutrients in soil – Picture courtesy of Omar et al. 2025)



I would like to end by encouraging you to compost, grow organic vegetables, or simply take a closer look at the ground beneath your feet by joining the iCow Soil Advocacy Course! <https://icow.co.ke/soil-advocacy-program/>

Lucy Vronitamitis – Nakuru Branch



Now, I am in love with the creatures in the soil, they work for me and in turn I am trying to protect them by avoiding the use of any synthetic chemicals, such as fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides. Even some that are considered "organic" still kill the microbes... Read your labels ..

Microbes are the heart of organic farming, working with rather than against nature. I first encountered these creatures through the online course and viewed them on screen. They are microscopic and I will never know when I have them in my hands -- but I know they are there as my soil now feels rich and is dark in colour. As they are invisible to the naked eye, we have to imagine these heroes of organic farming as they connect us to nature in unexpected ways.

I would have to send a sample for analysis to learn what is living and alive in the secret world beneath my feet — I would be thrilled to be informed that it is teeming with microbes, fungi and other organisms. But I am still a long way from getting it completely balanced. I first have to feed the soil and activate the

creatures. We need microbes (bacteria, fungi, nematodes, etc.) they work like a digestive system, but in the soil - their job is to break down organic matter, recycling nutrients, and building soil structure - Compost/ Compost/Compost... Then add them back to the soil where they can get to work – they have a communication network with the roots in all your plants – chatting and send out shopping lists ie “ I need calcium,” down the line it comes, somebody has it and is ready to share . Did you know that all plants fix nitrogen through the liquid carbon pathway in the root zone? Fascinating stuff..



I grew up as a daughter of a conventional farmer, I never saw compost being made, not real compost... we would dump all the animal manure in the 'midden' watch it heat up (sometimes catching fire...) cool down and be spread – what was in the 'muck' nobody spoke about.

Now with my love for organic farming I can differentiate between conventional and organic farming – I will not deplete the soil life by using synthetic fertilizers/pesticides or ever grow a monoculture.

Nakuru Branch had a successful year, although unfortunately all the preparations for 2nd Council went by the board when it had to be cancelled last minute. We have opted to celebrate our Centenary year at the same venue – **Kenana Cottages & Restaurant** for a fun-filled day to which all branches will be invited in May 2025



We held our plant sale in **Lucy Vrontamitis'** lovely garden where Lucy explained the principal of syntropic farming - integrating growing vegetables & fruit with our flowering plants, using only natural organic fertilisers & pesticides to create a healthy, vibrant & productive garden.



Redempta visited the **Arap Moi Children's** home to present our donation, and **Wambui** took much needed baby food & diapers to the **St. Luke's Children's** home in Section 58 on our behalf.



Led by **Anna & Farzana** our branch once again had a great foray into the Festival of Arts & Crafts in 2024 including our vibrant group entry for Earth Wind & Fire which a number of ladies enjoyed creating



Finally just before Christmas our co-National Chairman **Stephanie Mwite** visited us and joined us for our Christmas party in Rongai, which as always was great fun and attracted a good turnout including Secret Santa!

SPRING VALLEY BRANCH 2024 at a glance

SANITARY PAD DONATIONS:



Kyumbi Mixed Secondary School

We were able to extend our support to the O level girls of 2 schools with sanitary pads for the entire year. We wanted the learners to stay focused on their studies and not have to worry about their monthly cycle.



St.Martin's School Kibagare



COFFEE MORNINGS:

We enjoyed our Valentine themed Coffee morning in Feb. With beautiful decorations made by Zina. We also had an appreciation board and asked people to write why they love the league on little hearts. You will find some of the comments up on the notice board in HQ.



AGM & 1ST COUNCIL LUNCHEON:

In March we hosted a successful AGM luncheon. Team work keeps SVB strong. We also had a raffle for gift baskets which our members put together beautifully.

WHITE ELEPHANTS:

We had 2 white elephants one in Feb and the other in Sept. We applied for our shilling for shilling with the money we collected at our sept white elephant and put the funds towards buying stationery for our Turkana project- to support refugee school camps. We presented the same to Sr.Consuela to take to Turkana.



GOODBYES:

Our branch said good bye to Maggie, who moved to Nanyuki to be closer to her family. Maggie was always a sweet loving smile we saw at the league each Friday and we miss her.



HOPE FOR CHARITY: has become very dear to our hearts. We helped them a few times this year with all items required by little babies. Sr.Maria & Sr.Monica are very grateful each time we visit.



SPRING VALLEY Continued

FRANCISCAN SISTERS:

Sr. Maryanne and the other sisters were very grateful for the unsold white-elephant clothes we gave them- to distribute to the working women in the slum areas.



We also gave them some cushions that our SVB ladies made as part of another project.



EARTH ANGELS:

The Earth Angel's' (Paloma & Renee) visited us at HQ. They thanked us for supporting their Welfare School bag drive & their efforts throughout the year. We were able to support them with 85 school bags - 25 of them filled with stationery.



NATIONAL CHAIRMAN - 2024 Project - Langata Women's Prison

We Purchased materials for the Langata Women's Prison to teach them patchwork and quilting - giving them a chance to learn a new skill. Different techniques are taught with the simplest method using the basic tools. 'Sewing by hand' works as therapy to relax the mind and soul, it also releases stress and gives them a chance to earn a decent living when they return home. This project is run by Amber Siddique. May God bless her! Local yarn, Fabric, thread, scissors, small beads, foam sheets & storage containers were purchased for them. They were very grateful and appreciated our thoughtfulness.



SCHOOL FOOD DONATIONS:



We were able to donate foodstuff for a rehabilitation centre for boys in Thika. The boys were very grateful.

Sr. Rosaliah from St. Francis school-Kibera greatly appreciated our efforts towards helping her school. (1 term milk donation)



HELP TO THE ASHRAM - OLD AGED HOME:

The ladies at the Ashram thanked Spring Valley for our kind support. We gave them the detergent, disinfectant & soap to assist them with their efforts.



SUPPORTING EDUCATION STAFF:

SVB supports Karen Adero, a social worker, at Nairobi Children's rescue centre with an appreciation fee each month for her tireless work.

The children are very fond of her.



SPRING VALLEY Continued

ACWW Women Walk the World 2024:

The lovely ladies of Spring Valley met on 29th April for a good walk at Riverside Park. Cumulatively we walked 32 Kms! We had a great time!



CELEBRATIONS:

We were blessed to celebrate our Chairman - Lesley Sardelli's 80th Birthday. Her unwavering dedication and relentless pursuit of excellence serves as an inspiration to us all.

Thank you Lesley for all you are to us!

SVB - 75TH ANNIVERSARY!

Spring Valley has been in operation since 6th Dec, 1949. So we ended this year on a high note, celebrating our 75th Anniversary together with our Christmas Party.



We learned that our Chairman has been with SVB for the last 65 years



ARTS & CRAFTS EXHIBITION:

This year we enjoyed preparing for the Arts & Crafts exhibition. Especially the group project.

Thank you Maureen for guiding us to success.



SVB won 11 trophies! Including the highest points scored - 164!



The Branch is grateful for the work done by the outgoing team and wishes the incoming team every success.

The year 2023 ended well for the Branch. Most planned activities took place. 2024 started with the Annual General Meeting in February. Reports were received from various teams including the financial statement. Our gratitude to the Treasurer and her team for a job well done. The meeting conducted elections for branch officials, and we adopted a "membership/ leadership" style where each position had a second person (in most cases a younger one) to understudy the substantive office bearer.

The joint leadership team for 2024:

Chairman: Renate, Maryanne & Chantal

Treasurer: Majo Gacheche & Shabnam

Secretary: Flo Makori

Councillors: Mary, Jean, Rashid & Alice

Library: Alice Abok

Ed & Pub: Alice Abok



2024 floods: As we are all aware the 2024 floods had a negative impact on many of our communities. The Kenya Red Cross report states that they set up 189 camps to accommodate the displaced. It was estimated that about 63,000 families were affected. In some areas many homes were destroyed. Additionally, houses constructed on or near riparian land were demolished by the Government for safety reasons. Muthaiga Branch contributed iron sheets to a family in Kibera to reconstruct their house. Additionally the Branch helped families from Mukuru Kwa Njenga with donations of blankets. We are grateful to members who contributed in cash and in kind to make these interventions possible.

In April the Branch meeting was held at Sharon's home, where we reviewed the success of our support to the needy communities. Thereafter members participated in an exciting game of Bingo which proved interesting for the mix of first timers and experienced players. As well as raising funds for our charities we had a lot of fun, and the winners were awarded some amazing prizes.



In June the Branch served coffee at HQ's Friday Market, which was a big success with a variety of sweet and savoury bites. We held several meetings at the Chairman's home, where we discussed among other things plans for a White Elephant Sale in July.

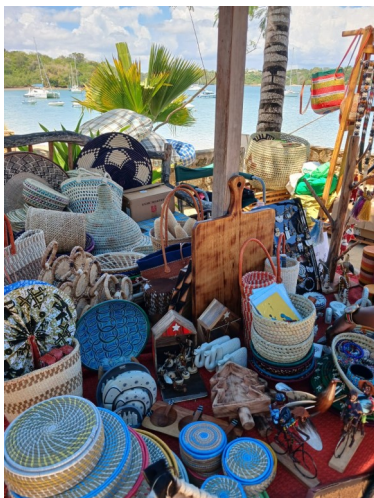


In November the Branch participated in the Festival of Arts & Crafts, where we were awarded three trophies. Our gratitude to Sharon for leading & guiding the team.

Maxine Mwajuma, Muthaiga Branch

Kilifi

The year ended well with our Christmas party on 5th December at the Boatyard with over 40 members & guests attending. It was a lot of fun with a new format introduced, as following a late traditional Christmas lunch with all the trimmings the disco started, the men were invited to join us, and there was dancing on the sand under the stars until late.



The raffle was a great success, raising the sum of Kes.87,500/=, so well done to all who collected and donated prizes, and a special thank you to Peter & Estelle and their staff for hosting this event once again, and for making it so enjoyable.

Wild Market have held three market days this past year at The Cave. Thank you, Miriam and Suzi, for your contributions from the gate money.

Our AGM was held in February at the stunning home of Dicky Detrie, and we had a good show of members. Our committee remained the same with the fortunate addition of Vanessa who replaced Pat as Treasurer. Pat has done a wonderful job for many years. Cherry remained as

Secretary and the other committee members were Pat, Pam, Jo Ann, Celia and Jayne, with me in the Chair for yet another year! We have had regular meetings throughout the year with interesting and varied speakers.

Our Bridge & Mahjong Day in April was hosted by Ann & Rod Edmondson at their beautiful home overlooking the Creek. It was a tremendous success with a very good turnout of Bridge players, many of whom came from Malindi, Watamu & Vipingo. Ann served a delicious curry lunch and with the money raised from a raffle we managed to bank Kes.58,000/=. Thank you so much to all involved for making this event so successful.



The Boatyard has also hosted Market days, enabling Pam to sell books for EAWL and Katy has been busy with her bakery sales from which she has made generous donations to our branch. At one of her sales all the vast amount of goodies she produced were completely sold out in 39 minutes!!! Another Quiz Night was hosted by the Boatyard and proceeds went to our Branch – a very popular event with challenging questions set by Katy.

We support several projects, including

- The Rescue Centre
- Sarafina Orphanage
- The Accessibility Institute (who make wheelchairs)



- The Mombasa Hospice for morphine
- The Fistula Programme

- Three Degrees South (a community sailing and swimming project),
- Benevolence and the League of Mercy.



Jo with Caroline from Sarafina Orphanage as she delivers Kilifi's donation to the children

We hope that 2025 will be as productive and as much fun, as several fundraisers are in the planning following our AGM at the end of February.

Veronica Hammond, Chairman

What a fantastic year 2024 was for the EAWL Gilgil Branch!

While we didn't manage monthly meetings, we more than made up for it with fabulous events, cozy coffee mornings, and plenty of laughter along the way.

We kicked things off in **February** with our AGM, graciously hosted by Pauline Beaton. The highlight was having Redempta join us—what an honour!

In **May**, we got our hands dirty (in the best way) at a terrarium workshop with the team from Planty Kenya. Karen Shepherd generously hosted us on her stunning verandah, and it was a morning bursting with creativity and camaraderie.



June saw us dive into the world of personal growth with an inspiring talk by transformational coach Charlene Waiganjo, hosted by Sue Brendon. Charlene guided us through stress management, brain health, trauma healing, and how to shift our mindsets—an incredibly insightful session!



September brought one of our signature events: the 3rd annual *Walk in the Wild* at Soysambu. The weather was picture-perfect, and the turnout was even better. Participants tackled either the 5km or the more challenging 10km route, with everyone rewarded by scrumptious packed lunches from Posh Nosh. It was the ideal mix of exercise, nature, and delicious food.

In **December**, we wrapped up the year in style with a festive Christmas lunch. We were thrilled to welcome Stephanie Mwite, our National co-Chairman, who joined us with her family.



Later in the month, we spread some holiday cheer by visiting Saidia Children's Home in Gilgil, delivering Christmas Angel gifts that included school backpacks, shoes, and supplies. Sharing hot dogs with the children after their delightful tour of the home made the day even more special.



On the charitable front, we're proud of the impact our contributions had this year:

- **Shelter Yetu (Naivasha):** Our donations helped 25 children transition from the streets to primary school by covering uniforms, fees, food, and supplies.
- **Kivuli Trust:** Funds were used to install a water purification system, improve dormitory security with new lighting and caregiver accommodation, and provide much-needed mosquito nets and mattress protectors for children.
- **Saidia Children's Home:** Contributions went toward repairing a leaking water tank, installing new ceiling boards, repainting the building, and handling essential maintenance.



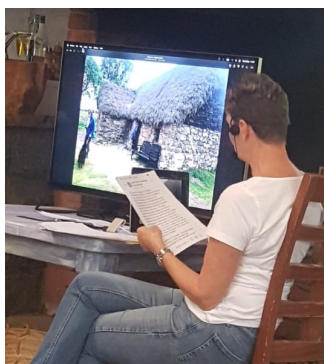
We're so grateful for the unwavering support of our members, who enable us to make a meaningful difference in our community.

With 2024 behind us, we're already excited about what 2025 will bring. Here's to another year of fun, friendship, and fantastic work for the causes we hold dear!



Karen / Langata

Led by a hard-working Committee comprising **Dee Huth**, **Jenny Davey** and **Terry Antrobus** - as it has been for several years now - and new recruit **Wamuyu Kariuki**, Karen/Langata had a productive year with regular Branch meetings at the Makutano Restaurant in Langata.



In May **Terry Antrobus** entertained the members with a talk on her travels in Canada, Scotland and Brunei,



while **Colleen Antoine** "manned" the bric-a-brac table.



Hilary Byrne from the UK combined with **Wamuyu** to give a talk on their project "**I ride for Helmets**", where Kenya's lady bike-riders are provided with properly protective helmets.



In June the lucky winner of the month's plant raffle prize was **Maryvonne Rose**, seen here receiving her prize from **Wamuyu**.



Pat Jentz organised a quiz which was won by **Anne Daykin & Jasmine Morelli** - clever ladies!



In August **Zoe Gibbs** of the **Raptor Rehabilitation Trust** gave an interesting talk on her work



September saw **Alexandria Bagot**, a medical herbalist, give an informative presentation on Iridology.

The Branch's annual Plant Sale was held in October in **Frances Ogilvie-Scornea's** beautiful garden, and raised a significant sum to help with donations to the underprivileged.



Karen/Langata Cont...

December the Branch visited the children at **Dream Home** when they were each given a special box of goodies for Christmas, collected and prepared by the Karen/Langata ladies.

Jenny Davey,
Branch Treasurer



Mombasa

Branch activities during the year included :



Lunch at at Vipingo and a TV show.



In August four of us met up for coffee



In October we held our annual sh4sh fundraiser where we welcomed our co-National Chairman **Stephanie Mwite**, and a large contingent from South Coast Branch including **Pauline MacKenzie**.



In December we held our Christmas party.



Don't you love our beautiful centrepiece, and the creative ways of folding napkins that our ladies came up with?



Himadri Dhutia, Branch Chairman



Lavington

As always, the Branch has had a busy year. In April **Chairman Rose** organised a trip to the **Fairview Coffee Estate** near Kiambu, where the ladies enjoyed a tour of the beautiful grounds, and a talk on the production of the coffee. Later that month their sales staff brought some of their produce to Friday Market at HQ.



A few weeks later **Rose, Nancy & Parveen** went back to present a cheque to the Fairview workers' kindergarten for the purchase of playground equipment, and subsequently **Rose** took milk and snacks for the children's delectation.



In May we held our meeting at **Shariffa's** house where **Rose** presented our hostess with a cheque for her **Hawkers' Market Girls** project, and **Naazia** accepted our donation in support of her **Kenya Kesho Education** group.



In June we made a special collection of clothes and household goods to help the victims of the floods in **Mathare**, which we channelled through the **Muslim Youth Association**. As usual our wonderful **Nancy Warshaw** was the prime mover in this initiative, collecting them at her home and personally handing them over to the **MYA Chairman**, along with a cheque to purchase foodstuffs and water.



Our Councillor **Joyce Achola Ogundo** introduced us to **HESED Africa**, an NGO that aims to empower women and children through Health, Social & Economic Resilience. We presented them with a cheque, and later **Joyce** visited their centre to present our donation of sanitary packs.



At our November meeting we celebrated the birthdays of two of our most longstanding members: **Kirsten** was 94 in October, and **Tatyana** turned 80 in November. The beautiful cake was enjoyed by everyone.



Lavington Cont...

At the end of November the Branch entered the Festival of Arts & Crafts, and although we did not do brilliantly in terms of points and standings our enthusiasm was rewarded when we won the **Mingi Cup** for the Branch with the highest number of ENTRANTS. Well done ladies! **Clare Jethwa** collected a cup for her amazing knitted Scottish Scarecrow family, and **Sarita Sheth** for her beautiful quilt in shades of green.



On the Friday of FAC week Lavington served coffee and its usual Bangers 'n' Mash lunch, and raised nearly Kes.85,000 for its charities, a welcome addition to the coffers.

Over the previous few months, we had several times served coffee at HQ Friday Market and the funds thus engendered were used for our sh4sh application, which was donated to the Franciscan Sisters of the Heart of Jesus' children's feeding programme in Gatina.

We also raised a lot of money during the year through **Nancy Warshow's** tireless efforts selling White Elephant items. Nancy is very persuasive and could sell ice to the Eskimos! Her other initiative was setting up a special "*Lavington Biashara*" Whats App group where people can post items for sale, or buy what is advertised, and the money goes to the Branch.



At our AGM in January 2025 Chairman **Rose Kinuthia**, having served a full 3 years, stepped down, and **Nancy Warshow** was elected to serve for 2025-26. Rose was presented with a voucher for a spa treatment and a bouquet of flowers as thanks for all her hard work.

Clare Jethwa, Senior Councillor

City

City Branch ladies meet regularly at HQ Friday Market. During the year they participated in the Festival of Arts & Crafts. They won 3 trophies – the Committee Cup for the exhibitor with the most points in the Open Embroidery Classes, the ROWING CUP for the most meritorious exhibit in the Upcycling classes by a Child, and the TOTO SHIELD 2 for the most meritorious exhibit by a child 7 - 10 years old. Both the latter were won by Musa.



Joan and Beryl travelled to Kisumu to donate sanitary pads to the girl pupils of Ndege Secondary School.



The Branch has for many years been kept afloat through the efforts of Beryl Achieng & Lynn Yaya, and recently they have been successful in recruiting some new, younger members who are active in the Branch.



And of course nobody is ever too old to appreciate Santa Claus – Farmers' Choice Christmas delivery day at HQ.



Nandi Hills

A glance at the last year 2024.

Both **Kobujoi** and **Tach Assis** disabled schools received Shuka blankets for their dormitories and we planted a number of fruit trees in their compounds so that in time they will benefit from them.

Givavei deaf school also received and planted some fruit trees in their compound.

The children from **Kobujoi** and **Tach Assis** were taken on an educational day out to the **Kisumu Museum** and had an interesting guided tour and traditional lunch with dancing afterwards.

The children from the top 2 years of **Givavei** were taken to the **Impala Park Wildlife Sanctuary** and had a very informative guided tour with their interpreters – just watching the children's animated faces and excitement seeing 'wild animals' for the first time was such a joy. They were later taken to the **Wildlife Clubs** to have a lunch provided by us and given a short talk and magazines. The three schools were later made members of the **Wildlife Clubs of Kenya**.



Two of our members had babies this year- a little girl, **Raven**, to **Amanda** and a little boy, **Arlo**, to **Katie** – congratulations to them both.

Sadly **Violet Otero**, one of very senior members, died later in the year, two weeks short of turning 93. She was the life and soul of everything and was sent off with traditional Trinidadian music at her home in Kisumu – she is missed by us all.

Edna organised a car boot sale at the **Nandi Bears Club** which was a success and hopefully another one will be organised soon.

Laura once again organised a bicycle ride from **Nandi Bears Club**, through the tea estates, down the rough, rocky escarpment road and a long gruelling uphill route through the sugarcane to **Karebe**. This event raised a whopping K. Shs. 150,000/- for the branch. Thank you to Laura and her team.



The Nandi Hills Branch entered the Festival of Arts and Crafts held annually at headquarters in Nairobi in November – we did not have so many entries this year but I would like to thank those who participated and helped with taking the entries down to Nairobi, judging, and setting up the stand.



We went back to having our traditional **Christmas Tombola Table** in the evening at the **Nandi Bears Club**. The Tombola table was laden with goodies, there were fantastic raffle prizes and delicious supper afterwards. We managed to raise K.Shs. 90,000/- that evening



We finally placed the plaques by the two trees we had planted back in 2018 at the **Nandi Bears Club** to commemorate both 60 years of the Nandi Hills Branch and 100 years of the East African Woman's League.

On that note as I step down as the Chairman I would like to thank everyone who managed to come to the successful Annual General Meeting at **Marlene's** home, the outgoing committee for all the tireless work and support over the many years, Mags and Marlene, and welcome the incoming committee, **Betty, Rosa** and **Irene** - exciting times ahead. Congratulations to **Margaret** for reactivating the **Kisumu Branch**. We look forward to an active 2025.

Shelagh Ballard, Chairman



Donations: In keeping with the National Chairmen's project we decided to support the Musembe Technical and Vocational Training Institute that our member Khayanga Wasike was instrumental in setting up. Following guidance from Khayanga we made a substantial donation to upgrade their Cosmetology department.



Hope Homes, run by Moira and William Thompson, received a visit from four of our members. Following Khayanga's usual excellent talk on changes to the body and mind that occur during adolescence, we presented the girls with reusable sanitary wear and the boys with boxer shorts.

We also collected funds for the **Jesus Loves Ministry's Home**, where we presented them with duvets and foodstuff.

We visited **Living Room Children's Accommodation** for kids undergoing chemo or radiation treatment and were well received by the staff. We donated our 2023 winning group project "Up in the Air"

In the past, we had done a great deal to help **Neema Children's Home** (mostly AIDS orphans). Unfortunately, Miriam and Joshua, proprietors of the Home, suffered two tragic accidents within a week of each other. The first was a fire that destroyed the animal shelter, with only a few pigs surviving. The second was a road accident involving a van carrying staff and Miriam and Joshua's son. They were on their way to Joshua's graduation when they were rammed by a lorry. There were serious injuries and a great deal of shock and pain, but fortunately no fatalities. The branch and individual members were quick to provide support.



Fund Raising: Our biggest fund raiser is the annual **Eid raffle**; members donate goodies to go in baskets of goodies. The raffle is advertised via social media and tickets bought mostly with Mpesa. The draw takes place the day before the end of Ramadan, so the winners can enjoy their prizes during the celebrations.

This year the raffle will be an **Easter Raffle** with money going to the **Eldoret School for the Hearing Impaired**

At the end of our meetings we ask members for **Happy Shillings** where they tell us about something good (or bad) that has happened to them and at the same time they donate a hundred bob or so.

Activities: We did not do a group project for the **Festival of Arts & Crafts**. Members concentrated on their own personal entries. **Cathy & Michelle** transported the entries to Nairobi and were ably assisted in setting up the display by **Josie Sandhu's** daughter **Shelly**. No cups this year but it was a valiant effort and we were well pleased with our results.

The year ended with a fabulous Christmas Lunch at the home of Peter and Janet Boit. All members contributed to the delicious feast, and enjoyed the camaraderie and jollity of the occasion. A wonderful end to the year 2024.

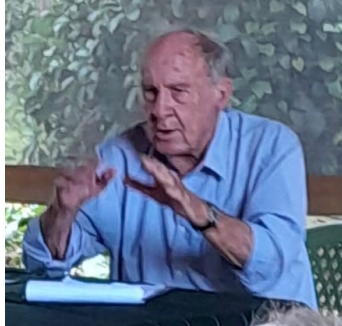
Cathy Coyte



Nanyuki



In May members of the branch were treated to a sumptuous lunch at **Sarova-Maiyan Hotel** in Nanyuki.



In August a well-choreographed talk on **Old Nanyuki** was given by **Mr. Littlewood**, and attracted a large audience.



EAWL have been faithful and generous supporters of the **Epilepsy Self-Help Group**. Thank you all so much **Gill Pulei** and **LAWE Team**.



In December, courtesy of **Barbara Brown** a beautiful spread was laid out at the **Nanyuki Cottage Hospital Louis Decker Centre** where the carol singers started their rounds of the town. They then proceeded to **Huruma Hospital** and the **Prisons**.



Jayne Mathenge represented the Branch when they donated foodstuffs worth 50,000 to **Likii Special School** in Nanyuki.

Out-going Chairman **Sophy Grattan** and **Jayne Mathenge** with **Furaha Children's Home** officials who received mattresses,

bedsheets, buckets, and toiletries for the Home.

The Branch made a generous contribution towards buying fleece blankets for the **Paediatric Ward** at the **Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital**.



Jayne Mathenge, Nanyuki Branch

Early Days in Nairobi

The following two articles were found among the effects of Anne Vaughan, long-time member of the League and stalwart of Homecrafts, they were sent to us by Anne's daughter Pauline. Mary Buckle, who was an EAWL Member of Honour, was Anne's mother and Pauline's grandmother - Editor

Notes for EAWL from Mary Buckle – Part 2 (sadly no record of Part 1)

After the war ordinary ranks looked for cheap housing in Nairobi, captains and people of commissioned ranks also looked for cheap housing which was extremely difficult to get. Luckily, my husband David had already rented a house in Karen for £11 per month. The floor of the house was full of holes where the cement had given way. A Mrs Henfrey was the landlady, and she arrived one day to say she was going to knock it down. I told her it was unnecessary as it would surely fall down one day soon.

Jobs were also extremely difficult to get. After David was discharged from the Army and decided to settle in Nairobi, he got an engineering job at Hartz and Bell. He also went into partnership with his great trout fishing friend Ernie Campbell making fire-works. One day they nearly blew the whole house up. That was the end of that!

When I told David that I was learning to drive, David said I was not to do so as women were a menace on the road. I wonder how he would have got on in later years, had I not done so. David had an old box body car, which we had for several years. Everybody had a car like that then. It had an engine, then the front with 2 seats for driver and passenger, and then the box body was the back with a bench where kids and others sat.

Whilst we lived in Karen David told me that all women went to work, and it was very easy to get a job in those days. I got a job working for a lawyer in Nairobi, near where the post office is now. I used to have to walk each morning to the end of the lane and get a bus from the main Ngong Road into town, sometimes I was lucky and got a lift.

Later, John was born in the Maia Carberry maternity hospital in Nairobi - within one hour of me walking into the hospital.

Next, we bought a piece of land in Kiambu on Ridgeways estate, it was on the edge of the swamp as it was then. We lived there 7 years. It had been part of a cottage coffee farm which was split up and we bought one section. Our first house was a 3-roomed wooden structure that David built in the daytime. One bedroom was for adults, one for kids, and one a communal room. A tin bath was carried in every now and then and filled by hand. The kitchen was a separate outhouse one side of the building, and the lavatory was a long-drop on the other. John had a wonderful ayah called Majuma. Anne was a small girl and went to the plot with her father each day, whilst he built the house out of wooden packing crates. Anne remembers lunch as being a kettle of water on a primus stove where he boiled an egg each, the water was then used for making tea. We were very happy there. We picked tea (*I thinks she means coffee – Ed.*) in *debbies* (sic) which David put through a little pulping machine each evening to separate the beans which were then dried on trays in the sun the following

day. We paid the pickers 65 cents per Debbie for the ripe red berries. That's also how the children got their pocket money. When we had enough dried beans they went to the factory for processing. There was also a forest of big old trees on part of the plot. David employed a guy to make bricks in a little pressing machine each day, which were also left to dry in the sun. Each day the man made bricks, and each evening David built a bit more of the house from the dried ones. It had a fireplace and veranda, and a bedroom each. We thought it was quite smart and big - it was built around the original old wooden packing crate house. (It's now part of a boarding block for a boys' school, and looks very small in comparison with their school and pool).



By the time we left Kiambu we had a lovely stone house and a big lawn with 2 enormous trees. I drove a Morris-Minor into work each morning at the Railway Station until one day it was not there, as it had been stolen in the night by the British Army who rented the house next door, and later found in a terrible state.

David got a job as an engineer at the Portland Cement Company which was originally in the Industrial Area on the outskirts of Nairobi, but when it moved to Athi River we had to move too, because of the distance. It was 46 miles return.

When we arrived at Athi River I thought it was the wildest place on earth. The cement company had built 7 houses in a row along the ridge of a hill. I put a fence of bougainvillea all around the house, plus a row of trees to try and stop the wind. And there we were for the rest of our working days. David became Manager of the Portland Cement company. I heard that Mr. Roberts of the Meat Commission was looking for a secretary, so I went to ask him if he was interested in employing me. Those were the days of shorthand and the old typewriters. I was shaking like a jelly when I went to the interview, but I needn't have bothered because Mr. Roberts took one look at me and said I would suit him, and that was the end of the interview. In the meantime, my husband's bosom friend Mrs Hay took the job of secretary at the cement company, I was not allowed to also work there.

10 years later we left Athi River to retire to Kilifi. We had a small stone house which the neighbour built for us, in about 1963/1964. One day when I was sitting looking at the creek Mrs. Graham who we had known from Athi River days, came and said she had been waiting for me to arrive as she wanted to start a Kilifi branch of the Women's League. We had a good chair lady, secretary and Treasurer which got us off to a good start.

As far as I know I am about the oldest member of the Women's League since Gladys Wright fell over the frying pan in the Weal House flat.

Mary Buckle (written in Nov 2011)



Mary Buckle with her two daughters collecting the Family Cup after a very successful Homecrafts

Early Memories of Women's League Meetings

I first went to Naivasha in 1964 as a young wife, and that is when I joined the Naivasha branch of the Women's League and heard about the Home Crafts Exhibition. As a young girl my mother had become a member sometime after we arrived in Kenya and that was in 1946 (we were on the same ship, the *Chitral*, as Anne Palmer, known to many as Hon Treasurer for many years). I can't remember Mum being much involved in the League then, as she was too busy working at the Railway Station straight after the war. I do remember though, a small room at the back of the Bank of India (?) opposite the lion statues in the front of the Macmillan Library. I seem to remember a little room with a typist, and a rest room with a bed for those tired of shopping - a bit like the little room off the Ladies' at Mombasa Club today. I remember those lions well, because on Saturday mornings, a non-school day, I went into town with my mother, in her little black Morris Minor, and whilst she worked, I walked up to the Market and did the shopping, waiting on the lions for her to come and pick me up at lunchtime before heading off via Pangani to Ridgeways in Kiambu where we lived.

In no time at all, I was making the quarterly trip to Anderson Hall in Nairobi, along with the others from my branch, to go to Council meetings. Always a bit daunting! But looking back, very high expectations and things were done in a very "proper" manner. Top table on the platform was comprised mostly of "ladies", or at least those with an MBE. Generally, Jean Anderson, MBE, Mary Johnson MBE (these two always at loggerheads!)



Lady Sidney Farrar addressing Council - 1958

Dress code was very proper. One wore high heels, stockings, hats, and sometimes gloves. The Hall was always full to overflowing, and beside every chair was an ash tray or saucer for smokers. The front row always consisted of the same regulars: I particularly remember Hester Dykes, who was a friend of my mother-in-law, all the way from Rumuruti. She was quite a short fattish lady - who retired to Scotland whence she had come - and spent the whole of council either smoking or knitting, alternately. Another strong memory is of Jean Anderson, the National Chairman, accusing Mary Johnson of "sitting on the calendars" whereupon Mary leaped up and said "Of course I am not *sitting on the calendars* - I am sitting on my chair!" I think the most elegant of the chairmen after the "Ladies" was Liz Anne Cumberledge, who was frightfully elegant with lots of strings of pearls.

In due course, I also helped with Homecrafts. At that time, it was held in conjunction with Royal Agricultural Show of Kenya, at Jamhuri Park, where we had our own big building quite near the main arena entrance in the front, and the Kenya Regiment bar in the back. June Hirst and I made a massive patchwork banner which was

hung outside during show week, (it must be under the platform in HQ now) and we camped all week in the show-ground camp site, along with all the cattle exhibitors and other entrants. We arrived in the old farm station wagons with tents, bedding, and everything we would need for the week, plus all the branch entries. Judging was on Monday morning, and then all branches collected their things for display. All branches entered, 50 items per branch, plus 50 items for children who had a lot of their own classes. They were great times and lots of fun, and we enjoyed those carefree days tremendously, meeting up with all sorts of *up-country-ites* displaying bulls, cows, sheep, farm produce, rabbits *et al*, and we were right on site for exciting main arena events of choice, marching bands, and anything that caught our fancy.

When I joined Naivasha Branch Billie Nightingale was Branch Chairman, and after volunteering Jean Knight and I become very involved in the Nyandarua school for the Deaf on North Kinangop for many years.



We drove up regularly, taking donations in cash and kind, and sponsors. I even have a photo of us donating the first typewriter, a good 45 years ago. The dirt road was long, windy and very often wet and muddy, but we saw many deaf children on their way to a future, regularly finding jobs for school-leavers, and we were delighted when a proper training centre was opened up in Thompsons Falls. I sat on the Committee of the Deaf Society of Kenya, and we found speech therapists, got hearing aids for the children where possible, even once loading up Millicent Morson's Range Rover with 8 kids and setting off for the Deaf Centre at Nyeri/Nanyuki where the kids were tested, and then stuffed themselves full of the complimentary lunch! Millicent's car broke down on the outskirts of the town and we had to get a *matatu* home via Naivasha to Kingangop. Security was good, and people were helpful and there was no fear of being robbed driving on a dark night. Somewhere I still have the letter from the Headmaster wishing me all the best for my future, when I gave up my charity work and went back to Nairobi to work.

We had a Council Meeting at the British High Commission house in Muthaiga in 1987. I can recall an event with Jill Simpson MBE getting into *matatus* and all sorts of fun and games, still in stockings and high heels! (This was the 60th anniversary celebration - Ed.)

Annie Vaughan, 10th July 2012

Hatches, Matches & Dispatches

PARMLEY: It's a girl - **Keith Parmley** and **Georgie Dreher** have blessed **Jane** and **Nigel Parmley** of Rosslyn Branch with their first grandchild. **Willow Wren** was born on 8 January 2025.



Brenda Goodman

June 1929 - August 2023



Brenda Gadsdon was born on 19th June 1929 in Peterborough England where she spent her early days. She loved school, was very bright, so much so that she skipped a year, and ended up in the same class as her older sister Maureen, much to her sister's chagrin.

Her family moved to Norfolk just before the start of the war. Brenda however was not one to stay still. In 1952 when her Uncle offered her a job in Northern Rhodesia, she jumped at the opportunity. She spent a few years there, enjoying life and playing league tennis and national hockey. She was the Lady Captain for the Northern Rhodesia's hockey team and in 1954 was one of three nominees for Sports Woman of the Year for that country.

The ship back home stopped in Mombasa for a few days and Brenda took the train to Nairobi to stay with her uncle. He took her to see the Rift Valley and she declared, "This is where I plan to live the rest of my life". She quickly succeeded in securing a 3-year contract to come

out to Kenya with the Crown Services, arriving in 1956. Brenda fell in love with the man delegated to meet her at the airport on her arrival in Nairobi – Benny Goodman. Within 6 weeks they were engaged.

They were married in 1957 and family quickly followed - Gail born in 1959 and Glen in 1963.

They were together for nearly 30 years until Benny died at the age of 56 in January 1987. During this time they both took a great interest in Theatre and spent many a happy day and night treading the boards with Nairobi City Players.

Brenda had always played tennis and once her children were older, she took on the role of Lady Captain at Nairobi Club, serving several terms. When the Nairobi traffic got too bad, she started playing at Muthaiga Club and once again was Lady Captain for quite a number of years. She was last seen on a court still wielding her racquet just before her 90th birthday.

Brenda was a lifelong Girl Guider. From becoming a Brownie in 1936 to serving as a Patrol Leader during WWII, then a Lieutenant and Captain for the Guides and Akela for the Cubs in Norfolk. She continued her Guiding in Rhodesia and again in Kenya and by 1968 she was District Commissioner of the Girl Guides for Nairobi. In 1991 she was awarded a Life Membership of the Kenya Girl Guides Association. She continued helping the Guides through the Trefoil Guild from 2002, being the National Chairman of the Guild from 2008-2012. In 2002 she joined the

Olave Baden-Powell Society and attended many international conferences visiting India, New Zealand, Canada and England but her favourite trip was to Denmark where she met Princess Beatrix, the Patron of the Society.

In addition, Brenda joined the Spring Valley Branch of the East African Women's League in 1989. During her time at this branch as well as being Treasurer and Chairman, she helped organise many fundraising activities and visits to factories etc. She also produced a booklet for the branch's 50th anniversary. Eventually the driving through the traffic was yet again too onerous and Brenda transferred to Rosslyn Branch where she became a keen participant in their events.

In the summer of 2019 Brenda decided to go on a "*Grand Farewell Tour*" (as she called it) of the UK. She spent six weeks there, travelled over 3000 miles visiting all her family and old friends, catching up and saying a last goodbye; she was that type of an organised lady! Brenda even supplied me with many of the notes to help me write this oh-so-brief story of her very full life.

Brenda passed away suddenly in August 2023 at the age of 94. She was a much-loved lady, who supported innumerable charities, and helped friends and colleagues wherever she could in often unseen, discreet ways. She will be sorely missed by all those whose hearts and lives she touched.

Violet Juliet ODERO Nov 1932 - Oct 2024

A Tribute to Violet: A Mother, a Friend, a Legend

Today, we gather to honour the life of a truly remarkable woman, Violet. She was more than just a friend; she was a mother figure, a confidante, and an unwavering source of love and wisdom. Violet lived a life that spanned nearly a century. In those ninety-three years, she touched countless lives with her kindness, compassion, and infectious laughter. She possessed a unique ability to make everyone feel seen, heard, and valued. She was a pillar of strength, always offering a listening ear and a shoulder to lean on. Her advice was sound, her guidance unwavering. She taught us the importance of family, the power of forgiveness, and the enduring nature of love.



Over 20 years ago Violet was also an EAWL Zone Vice Chairman, she used to attend every Exec meeting travelling by bus from Kisumu! - Ed



Violet was not

just a wise woman; she was also a woman of great humour. Her quick wit and playful spirit brought joy to every room she entered. She had a way of turning even the most ordinary moments into extraordinary ones. As we mourn her loss, let us also celebrate her extraordinary life. She will be deeply missed, but her legacy will live on in the hearts of those she loved.

Rest in peace, my dear Violet.
Your spirit will forever be a beacon of light.

Rosa Okwaro



Olive Taylor 3rd March 1934 – 8th February 2025

Olive Taylor arrived in Kenya in 1966, embarking on a new chapter of her life in a country that would become her beloved home. She met and married Gerald Taylor, whom she had first encountered in Dublin while he was sourcing new products for Kenya Breweries at Guinness. Together, they had two children, Gerald Jr. and Orson, and she was also a devoted mother to Geoffrey and Dianne, children from Gerald's previous marriage. Adjusting to life in a new country was not without its challenges, and Olive found both friendship and purpose in the East Africa Women's League (EAWL). The League, a respected institution founded in 1917, has long

been dedicated to philanthropy, social welfare, and fostering a strong community among women in the region. Olive quickly became an enthusiastic and proud member, supporting its charitable causes and forming lifelong friendships. For many years, one of her greatest joys was attending the League's midweek bake sales, where she shared warm conversations and a cup of tea with fellow members. Even in her later years, when she could no longer attend in person, the Women's League remained close to her heart.

Olive will be remembered for her kindness, her unwavering support of the community, and the friendships she nurtured. She leaves behind a legacy of warmth, generosity, and a life well-lived.

Gerald Taylor jnr

Suzanne O'Gorman 1930 -2024

Suzanne was born in 1930 and spent most of her childhood in England but did go to the United States during the war, after which she returned to the UK.

She came out to East Africa in the early 1950s and lived in Kenya for more than 70 years. She was married twice, the second time in 1970 to Tom O'Gorman. Together they bought a house on Thigiri Ridge Road, where she lived for the rest of her life. Tom started the RAF Club here in Kenya, and Suzanne was Club Secretary, continuing to represent the RAF at various times events after Tom's death in 1995.

She joined the League in the late 1970s and was a member of the Rosslyn Committee for over 20 years. She took on many roles including Branch Councillor, Balloting Officer, and Homecrafts co-ordinator for the Branch.



Suzanne was a prolific knitter, with embroidery and crochet also among her many crafting hobbies.

She had a love of the Far East, especially Thailand which she visited often over many years. One of her greatest achievements was the writing and publication - in 2024

at the age of 94 – of a book called “A Wartime Adventure”, a biographic tale which covers her life up to her embarking on married life in East Africa.

Suzanne was an absolute stalwart of the East Africa Women's League, and will be greatly missed.

Frances Cattermole, Rosslyn Branch





Lets Go Travel
Uniglobe

"Committed to Sustainable Travel and Tourism"



Experience unforgettable adventures with Lets Go Travel
Uniglobe, a trusted leader in sustainable tourism.
We offer expert trip planning with a commitment to
protecting nature and supporting communities.