

## Report on the 38<sup>th</sup> World Convention of the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union

Over 200 members gathered at Stavanger, Norway for this Convention from May 12 - 17.

*This Convention started on a sad note with the news of Mrs Vivienne Walker from New Zealand, dying suddenly after collapsing at Frankfurt airport while in transit.*

The Radisson Blu Atlantic hotel was the venue for the convention - a beautiful setting opposite a lake, with the WCTU flag flying from the front of the hotel. The bedrooms were very comfortable, the meals fantastic, the Norwegian members gracious and generous hosts and the opening ceremonies something to write home about. Time was spent partly in fellowship with like-minded people from 39 countries.

Days began with early morning praise followed by breakfast, then opening devotions before being called to order by the World President, Miss Sarah Ward for essential business. We heard and watched the power point projections of the Triennial Reports of the countries, listened to the keynote address and presentation **"Tobacco or Health, Alcohol or Cancer" by Professor Tore Sanner of the Norwegian Radium Hospital, University of Oslo.** In his address, he traced the history of cigarettes and how, while the shape and content of these have changed, the associated diseases have not. We heard that Snuff is again becoming popular and fashionable in Norway and that 14% of deaths in that country were attributable to tobacco. He stated that "tobacco is the only substance that causes death when used as it was intended" and "Tobacco should not be advertised, glamorized or subsidized". Alcohol, too, came under scrutiny with facts regarding alcohol and cancer.

We also heard about rehabilitation with information about the 50 year old Riisby Treatment Centre from Tove Kristin Jevne and Ragner Enger. The "Gutta Boys" a singing group made up of former addicts or alcoholics, provided some entertainment. The delightful "Tasta Children's Gospel Choir" sang one evening. The talent of members attending was showcased with a Grieg Concert and then Rune Laarsen and Helge Nilsen, long time entertainers, had us laughing and singing while listening also to their temperance message. Of course, most countries contributed to a Talent Night.

A special ferry outing to Flor Fjaere - an island with palm trees and exotic plants, growing in profusion sheltered from the cold winds - where we enjoyed a delicious lunch and stunning sea views was a highlight.

Norway's National Day was on 17<sup>th</sup> May and it was amazing the national pride displayed with citizens of all ages out in national costume, waving flags and supporting their country. WCTU members walked in the procession of organizations and earlier we had applauded the school children marching past in their hundreds.

Of course business matters were well covered with the election of World Officers – re-electing for their third and final term – President (Miss Sarah Ward), Secretary (Mrs. Margaret Ostenstad), Treasurer (Mrs. Dorothy Russell) and our own Australian Recording Secretary (Mrs. Anne Bergen). 4 Vice- Presidents were elected – Dr. Jung Joo Kim (Korea); Mrs. Brita Nilssen (Norway); Dr. Dora de Barrientos (Guatemala) and Mrs. Joy Butler (Kenya). Two Australians are among the Department Directors – Education - Mrs Dawn Giddings and Children – Mrs. Glenda Amos. The other Department Directors are: Christian Outreach - Pastor Irja Erskelinen (Finland); Home Protection – Mrs. Desiree Lanigan (Canada); Social Service – Mrs. Hyun Sook Lee (Indonesia); Youth – Dr. Yetunde Odeyemi (Kenya)

The whole Convention was built around the Theme – "Go! Light Your World!" and this was constantly reiterated in various ways – a special theme song, a brooch and card given at the luncheon on Flor Fjaere, puppet plays, Bible readings and times of worship including a candle-lighting ceremony for the installation of the world officers and directors.

The Invitation was given to attend the 39<sup>th</sup> World Convention in Australia in 2013.

*Ellen Chandler – National President (Australia)*