



4-8 July, 1999 XVI Soroptimist International Convention,  
Helsinki, Finland

**Helsinki City Reception, City Hall, Pohjoisesplanadi 11-13**  
by *Eva Tyson, Dunfermline Club, Scotland South Region, SIGBI*

The first working day of the Convention finished off in style with the City of Helsinki extending an invitation to the Soroptimist delegates to attend a reception in the City Hall. This magnificent building, built in the neo classical style, dates from the beginning of the 19th century and has recently been renovated. It used to be a cordon bleu restaurant, where the cognoscenti used to gather. Today the hall sports a beautiful pale Wedgwood blue colour and overlooking the harbour, where all the boats from the Baltic tie up, making it an exotic setting. The Hall is also the official residence of our hostess for the evening, Lord Mayor Eva-Riita Siitonen. The fact that her family lives in the City Hall, made for a warmer atmosphere than is normally found in such an august place.

The delegates were welcomed by the Mayor. International President Hilary Page, who is having a great conference, followed with her enthusiastic greetings. We all sampled the exotic food, which included reindeer meat from Lapland.

As benefits an international conference, a veritable Tower of Babel ensued, showing that International Goodwill and Understanding is high on the agenda.

If I could just finish on a personal note, Monday was my Wedding Anniversary and when I returned to my hotel room the most beautiful bouquet of yellow and blue flowers awaited me from my husband in Scotland.

Note from Kate: I sent a Wedding Anniversary EMail to Eva's husband for their Anniversary - and addressed it "Dear Soroptimister" since I didn't know his name. He sent a lovely reply back - addressed to "Dear Soropti Ma'am"!