

## News from the Nations, Regions & Groups

### CILT(UK) Central Southern Region

### Hampshire & Dorset Group

27 April 2011

### Bottling a virtuous blend: Transaid, Women in Logistics and the CILT both at home and internationally



Planning well ahead should be a virtue. However, as the Hampshire & Dorset Committee of the Institute found out with the last event of its current season, firm dates for meetings can become a hostage to the unforeseen. Thus it was that a choice of date lying between double extended Bank Holiday weekends and facing the competitive attractions of glorious weather and European Cup football was an unfortunate one. It meant that our guest, Clare Bottle FCILT, was presented with an unexpectedly small audience. This was a lost opportunity for our Group's membership who therefore missed a particularly stimulating presentation.

Clare Bottle's opening slide carried three organisational logos which, she explained, represented the strands of a very individual combination that mark her career in transport and logistics. The first is that of Transaid, whose slogan is 'transport for life' and which was founded by the CILT and the charity Save the Children. Transaid's successful establishment was, Clare noted, very much due to the personal drive and intervention of HRH The Princess Royal who is, of course, the Patron of both its parent organisations. The rationale for this new venture was to overcome the problems that occur when outside efforts to relieve the effect of a natural disaster meet an inadequate transport and distribution infrastructure. However, Clare continued, the focus now is on the provision of long-term improvements rather than short-term crisis management. The argument being that the introduction of better transport methods in the developing world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, will lead to both a reduction in absolute poverty and a general improvement in living standards and livelihoods.

By using examples from her own early career, Clare's listeners soon became aware of how she values the concept of mentoring as a vital technique in transferring transport skills and knowledge. It was, she explained, the simplest way in any society to dispel ignorance and dependence and build confidence and independence. However, Clare cautioned, transport solutions in developing nations weren't always straightforward. To illustrate her point, she produced a simple set of figures that compared rates of maternal deaths and child mortality in the UK and Nigeria and highlighted the disparity in the number of ambulances which should have been a good indicator of ease of access to medical care. So, Nigeria needs many more ambulances? No, said Clare, the actual situation in one particular state was that the ambulances were there but their effectiveness was negated by poor standards of both driver training and vehicle maintenance. Further investigation also showed that in many cases taxis and even motorbikes were more effective as means of patient transport. Finally, and most illuminating to this audience, there is the concept of the bicycle ambulance, an innovative solution that costs around £240, a sum rather less than that raised for Transaid at the Hampshire & Dorset Group's annual quiz night last December.

It is these philosophies of providing tailored solutions for the developing world and mentoring new entrants to the transport and logistics profession that connect the other two logos shown on Clare's opening slide, those of the national and international CILT's. Here Clare drew on her own field visits to Zambia and her role in setting up the Women In Logistics organisation in this country.

Zambia now has a thriving CILT membership. Its principal external contribution to Zambian society is helping to provide effective actions to improve driver training through simple targeted techniques to reduce the carnage caused by poor driving and even poorer roads. These measures are now also being taught by Zambians to their neighbours in Tanzania. In addition, through the local efforts of Transaid, general improvements in transport management are also being deployed throughout the country. This is done by simple measures such as instructional handbooks and the concept of using key performance indicators that are easily tailored to the local facilities and infrastructure.

Finally, Clare Bottle's presentation turned to the objectives and achievements of Women in Logistics UK, a networking and mentoring group of some 1600 members. This is an impressive size, given that it has only been in existence since the autumn of 2008. How did it come about and why? Well, Clare was insistent that her own experience is a common one: that women find that the profession is refreshingly free of any significant discrimination against, or discouragement of, women. Nevertheless, a female support group was widely seen as a good means of providing additional mentoring and encouragement and it thrives on a unique free and voluntary business model. It also takes full advantage of social network groups such as LinkedIn to increase membership contact and participation.

In closing, Clare summed up some of the common themes that she saw as important. Knowledge and the confidence to use it must be tailored so as to support and encourage the recipient. That might be by appreciating that providing solutions to transport problems in remote parts of the world can be made by local people given simple instruction rather than by supplying sophisticated and expensive equipment. Equally, women who have succeeded in transport and logistics can provide a particular perspective to any real or perceived problems facing new female entrants to a world in which they are still under-represented.

Clare Bottle's messages are recommended as ones that can be profitably heard by any of the Institute's local Groups. Just don't repeat Hampshire & Dorset's mistakes when you choose the date of a speaking invitation to her!

[www.clarebottle.co.uk](http://www.clarebottle.co.uk)

[www.womeninlogistics.org.uk](http://www.womeninlogistics.org.uk)

[www.transaid.org](http://www.transaid.org)

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