

**A Poem given to Ina Coles while preparing to take her V.D.B. vows**

**S**earching for God  
**E**verywhere, everyday  
**C**alled to a life of  
**U**nity  
**L**ove  
**A**vailability  
**R**eady to respond, to give all  
**I**nvolvement with God's people  
**T**rusting and continually growing  
**Y**es... my Lord, I reply, this is the path for me.




**SALESIAN COOPERATORS**

**U K PROVINCE NEWSLETTER**



**CHRISTMAS 2006**

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★ **MERRY CHRISTMAS** ★  
★ & ★  
★ **A HAPPY NEW YEAR** ★  
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*Designed by Salesian Cooperators,  
Huyton, Liverpool*



As Salesian Cooperators we should let ourselves be guided by God's love for life.

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## COOPERATORS RETREAT—OCT 06



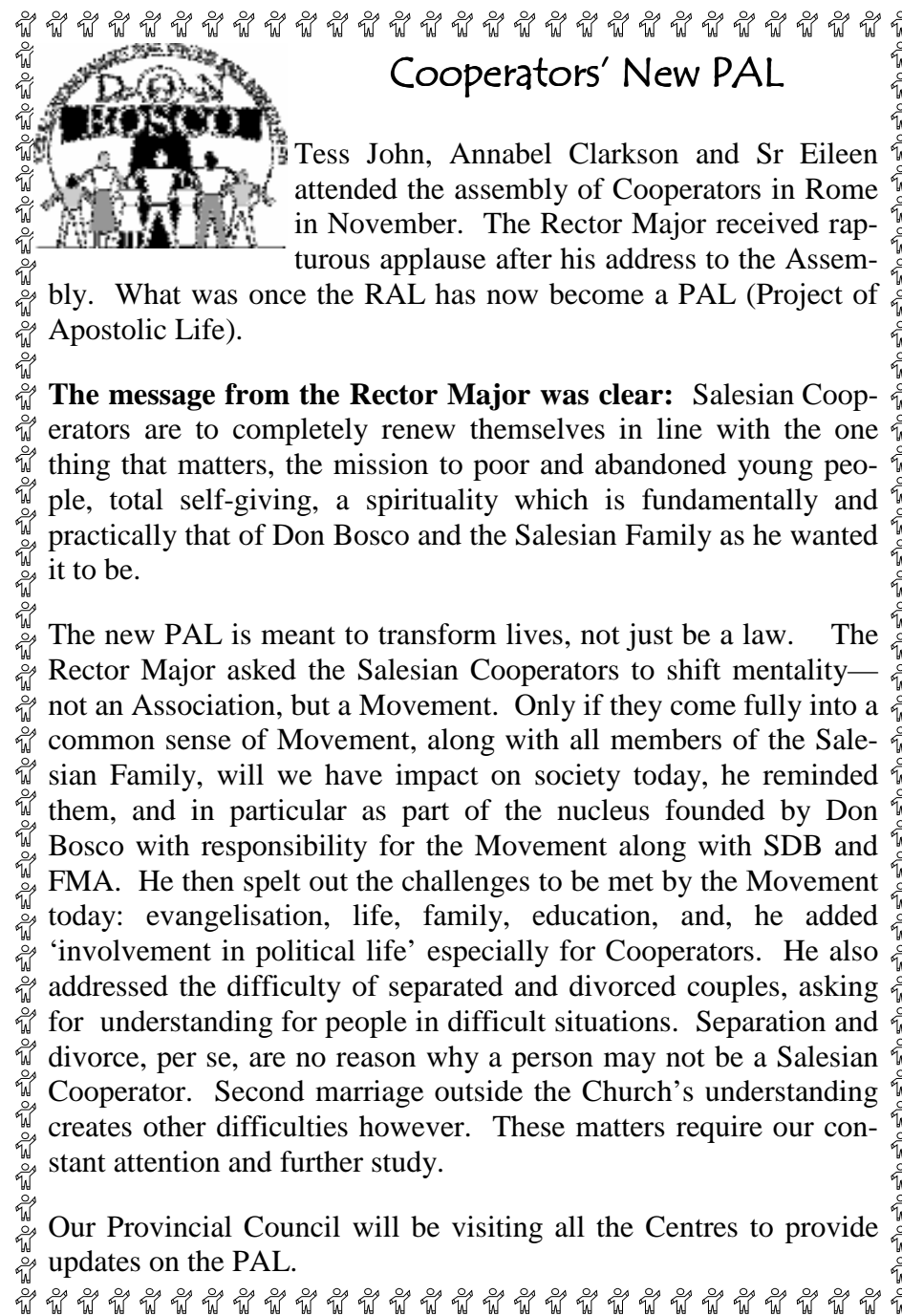
Noreen and I did not have the most auspicious start to the weekend. We left Farnborough mid morning on Friday to drive to Bollington but encountered torrential rain on the Motorway which resulted in us taking almost six hours instead of four.

However on arrival at Savio House we were greeted in true Salesian fashion by the Scottish group already in residence and so wrapt in the ambience of Savio we soon forgot the journey.

The theme of the weekend was “God is Love” and as usual Tess has made for each of us a tastefully handworked card incorporating the theme.

The retreat was jointly led by Frs Hugh Preston and Bernard Parkes. Fr Hugh gave what might be described as the keynote address which was based on the Gospel of Luke Ch.7 vs36-50 and quoted from Pope Benedict’s first encyclical “Deus Caritas Est” i.e. “God is Love” while Fr Bernard led and guided us through the discussion sessions. During these sessions testimony was given by various cooperators in relation to their own involvement with Salesian life and its influence on them. We heard contributions from single as well as married couples. Of particular interest was the joint contribution from two couples of the same family but of different generations, as were also the offerings from our Coordinator Tess and from the only British member of the Secular Institute for women within the Salesian Family (V.D.B.s) namely Ina.

In addition to the formal part of the weekend we did enjoy a social evening on Saturday where interspersed with songs, poems and stories. We were entertained to a display of



## Cooperators’ New PAL



Tess John, Annabel Clarkson and Sr Eileen attended the assembly of Cooperators in Rome in November. The Rector Major received rapturous applause after his address to the Assembly. What was once the RAL has now become a PAL (Project of Apostolic Life).

**The message from the Rector Major was clear:** Salesian Cooperators are to completely renew themselves in line with the one thing that matters, the mission to poor and abandoned young people, total self-giving, a spirituality which is fundamentally and practically that of Don Bosco and the Salesian Family as he wanted it to be.

The new PAL is meant to transform lives, not just be a law. The Rector Major asked the Salesian Cooperators to shift mentality—not an Association, but a Movement. Only if they come fully into a common sense of Movement, along with all members of the Salesian Family, will we have impact on society today, he reminded them, and in particular as part of the nucleus founded by Don Bosco with responsibility for the Movement along with SDB and FMA. He then spelt out the challenges to be met by the Movement today: evangelisation, life, family, education, and, he added ‘involvement in political life’ especially for Cooperators. He also addressed the difficulty of separated and divorced couples, asking for understanding for people in difficult situations. Separation and divorce, per se, are no reason why a person may not be a Salesian Cooperator. Second marriage outside the Church’s understanding creates other difficulties however. These matters require our constant attention and further study.

Our Provincial Council will be visiting all the Centres to provide updates on the PAL.

## THE COOPERATORS

The Cooperators who can they be,  
A lively lot as you can see,  
A friend to all, a kindly face,  
Someone who fits into any space.  
Don Bosco's their patron as you can see  
The Salesian spirit lives on endlessly  
But it is spread around by people like you  
Who wants to see Don Bosco's dream come true  
So why not join his team today  
Learning to live the Salesian way  
We love children, youth and the old  
We welcome anyone into the fold  
So come on Mary, Joan or John  
Why not be a Salesian.  
Don Bosco and we would welcome you there  
With a cup of tea, so pull up a chair.  
Let's follow Don Bosco's dream to the end  
Are you going to join us? Who?  
The Salesians my friend.

By Freda Renton, Liverpool

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### **A New Salesian in St Dominic's—Huyton**

We welcome Fr Tony Frain to our Parish. He joined us in September and is focusing on the Youth Work in the area. His first experience of saying mass at the Doms went with a bang— a thunder storm took out all the lights. It never put him off as he is still with us.

Magic Circle—Brian Barnes. An unusual feature of the final "Goodnight" was the story told by two of our Liverpool Cooperators of a wheelchair bound lady whose kitchen surfaces were conveniently installed for her. On one occasion she had the misfortune to accidentally knock over the kettle and a sugar bowl both of which disgorged their contents over the surface, the floor and her feet. Naturally she was unable to clear up the mess and while wondering what she could do and getting more and more distressed there was a ring on her doorbell which at first she ignored. The caller persisted and so reluctantly the lady opened the door by her remote control and a young woman, who she had never seen before entered and said "I'm a carer and I have come to help you". After making a cup of tea and setting everything to rights the carer left. She had given her name but on later enquiry no one had ever heard of her. The wheelchair bound lady is convinced that in answer to her agonised prayer for help she had been sent an angel!

Curiously enough some of us in a position to see the glass door between the hall we were in and the adjoining games room saw as the story came to its conclusion this door slowly opening and closing again—of its own volition? I offer no comment.

After a beautiful Mass on Sunday morning following by usual good lunch, cards and gifts were presented to Fr Hugh in celebration of his birthday.

We left Savio House feeling uplifted by the weekend and refreshed with Mamma Margaret in our thoughts to inspire us by her example. As always it was such a pleasure to be with our fellow cooperators and to enjoy their fellowship.

***Matt Murphy, Farnborough Centre***

## MOTHER OF DON BOSCO

This year on Saturday November 25th, 150 years after her death, Mamma Margaret, the mother of St John Bosco, has been declared Venerable, the first step on the way to being canonised or made a Saint.

Margaret Ochiena was born on April 1st 1788 in a little village called Capriglio in north Italy. The people were mainly poor peasant farmers.

She married Francis Bosco on June 6th 1812, aged 24. Francis' first wife had died leaving him with a four year old son, Anthony, Margaret and Francis lived in part of a farm house and had a little land. They had two sons, Joseph, born in 1813 and John, born on August 16th 1815.

Sadly, Francis died on May 11th 1817 aged only 34. He left



Margaret, aged 29 with a step-son Anthony aged 9 and two sons, Joseph, 4, and John, 2.

She had to sort out Francis' affairs and complete the contract he had undertaken for working part of the farm. Then she had to set to work to be both father and mother to the three

boys. Anthony had lost both his parents and it is not surprising that he was a difficult child.

Margaret, with her firm common sense, motherly love and deep Christian faith was able to create a wonderful family atmosphere in spite of very real poverty and her lack of formal education.

Finding ways to help John in his clearly felt call to the priesthood meant letting him leave home at a comparatively early age and supporting him in whatever ways she could, even at times having to beg for help from friends and neighbours.

It was a great joy for her to see John ordained on June 1841, to be at his first mass in his home parish. She then saw him leave to work in the big city of Turin.

## Mamma Margaret



## MOTHER OF THE SALESIAN FAMILY

After only five years, Don Bosco was worn out and almost at death's door. He returned to his home village for a rest and Margaret nursed him back to health.

He was desperate to return to his work with the poor youngsters of Turin and asked his mother to leave her home and come to help and support him.

So on November 3rd 1846, Margaret, now aged 59 and a grandmother with nine grandchildren (relations with Anthony had now improved) left the village she had lived in all her life to walk to Turin where only a couple of bare rooms



awaited them.

Over the next ten years she was there with Don Bosco, as he laid the foundations of what was to grow into the Salesian Family. Often she was left in charge of the house and the youngsters while Don Bosco was away preaching in other towns, looking for support for his work and becoming involved in the complicated affairs of church and state at that time.

During these ten years all the major facets of Don Bosco's work came together. His style of dealing with the difficult youngsters of Turin was modelled on his mother's way of bringing him and his brothers up back in their poor little farm.

The youngsters who were to become St John Bosco's helpers and the first Salesian priests and brothers grew up under her influence.

She was the first and the greatest of the **Salesian Cooperators**, lay-people who try to live by the Salesian Spirit and share in the work for young people, especially those who are poor and in need.

**WITHOUT HER THE SALESIAN FAMILY AND ITS METHOD OF EDUCATING WOULD NOT EXIST**

*We pray for her beatification*