

## Report from 2010-11 District 5040 Global Scholar Sladjana Dobric

Hello all.

**London** is still very cold, and I am patiently waiting for the sun to appear. The weather is truly unpredictable, and I have been struggling with constant colds and a few occasional fevers. My flat's insulation has been a bit of a challenge, and I have become very innovative when it comes to its improvement. Anything from bath towels to foil and tape is hanging on and around my windows. It's great to be a student.

**School** as the top priority, has been taking most of my time. Studies are going well and I am very satisfied with the caliber of professors, tutors, and guest visitors at my program. My 5-year-old laptop (motherboard in particular) decided to give up on me in the midst of my final project. As I had already completed it, I was faced with having to rewrite my 5000-word paper, re-assemble the entire project, and hunt for my references and bibliography. All in the magic period of three full days. I was the first person at the school library at 8am and the last one to be kicked out at midnight. While I'm waiting for my files to be recovered, I am also looking for another laptop, but first need to research my options as everything is beyond expensive in this country.



UNIVERSITY OF LONDON  
Enjoying an evening with good food and friends from class

**London's 'talk' scene** is very active and vibrant, so I have been engaged in a number of presentations, talks, and seminars on the future of sustainability, alternative energy, bio-fuels, and the overall future of a fuel independent world. Very politically charged but engaging and brilliant events on our somewhat speculative sustainable future.



BRITISH-SERBIAN NETWORKING EVENT IN LONDON  
Conversation with female professionals

At the end of the month, I will be traveling to **Belgrade, Serbia** to start my ethnographic research for my major thesis project; Community and economic development of a war torn site, through architectural/building regeneration. I am realizing that this particular topic is very controversial. The site has been named a cultural monument, by those groups who wanted to protect it from being completely demolished. That being said, there are a lot of investment groups who are interested in purchasing it, purely for new development and profit. While in Belgrade, I will be visiting the two Rotary Clubs, Rotary Club Belgrade Singidunum and the Rotary Club Belgrade Metropolitan, whose members have already extended their welcome.

**Speaking of Rotary**, I have been very busy with the Rotary related events as well. I was asked to sort of stay aside while all 28 Ambassadorial Scholars complete their required 10 presentations each. Rotary clubs in London have been overwhelmed with the amount of scholars presenting and still to present, so I have been contacting any and all Rotary related groups willing to have me as a guest.



CHRISTMAS AT THE SALVATION ARMY  
Gift wrapping for the local Children Hospice



I coordinated a visit to the Rotaract club of Hampstead, Hendon & Golders Green, which is a very small but very active Rotaract club in London. I was invited back and am on their mailing list so will make a point of seeing them again. I have also visited the Rotary Club of Radlett, whose members have mistakenly introduced me as a scholar from the USA. To make the situation even more 'interesting', they continued with a suggestion of Canada being one of the US states. They were forgiven at the end of the evening as I had a lovely time, a few laughs and a wonderful dinner.



ROTARY CLUB OF RADLETT VISIT  
With the club president Barry Sawyer

Moreover, and more informally, I was invited for a day's reunion with the four members of the Rotary Club of Maidenhead Thames, in the District 1090. They were the hosts during my GSE trip to England in 2009. It was so great to see them all, discuss their Rotary work, personal accomplishments and my experience in London. I was invited back for an official visit during their anniversary celebration some time in June.



ROTARY CLUB OF MAIDENHEAD THAMES  
Reunion with the GSE 2009 Hosts

Especially moving was the presentation of Colin Powell, also a Rotarian, who has lived his life as a Polio survivor. I was lucky to be seated right next to him, so we chatted about his every day struggles,

or as he referred to them, realities. Such an inspiring evening, and I truly felt lucky in presence of such a great man. Under no circumstance, should a person's mobility be restricted in today's world, yet the following experience provided an upsetting dose of reality. I was saddened with the fact that Colin's wheelchair had to be assembled and he had to get out of his wheelchair (not an easy task) just so he could fit into a service elevator to get to the boardroom, floor below. This is what this man and every other individual faces on daily basis in London.



ROTARY'S POLIO CAMPAIGN EVENING  
With Colin Powell, Polio survivor, and RC Kensington President and guest



ROTARY'S POLIO CAMPAIGN EVENING  
RC of Kensington President Charlotte Pragnell with guests

Also, the same evening, the president of my host club, Charlotte Pragnell, talked about her recent Rotary trip to India for the National Immunization Day. She shared her amazing experiences, talked about their challenges and very engaging work her group did. This was another moment, another experience, that will always stay with me.

My life in London has been filled with great experiences, social gatherings, new friendships, networking events, concerts, pub evenings, and I have enjoyed every single moment of it. Rotary, thank you for this once in a life time opportunity.

Sladjana