



Midland Arden Region Newsletter

Women inspiring action,
transforming lives



Theme for the Year

YOU ARE WHAT YOU DO



Soroptimists from the Midland Arden region supporting Worcester and Malvern's 'Join me on the Bridge' event for International women's Day.

Letter from our Regional President Margaret Phillips

We have now had Christmas and the New Year, followed by much snow. I telephoned around the Region and was pleased to hear that everyone was managing and that many members were helping each other.

After a very good speaker at the December Regional Meeting, I was asked for a written copy of Ash Chand's presentation and this was forwarded to Denise for circulation.

The Support Day organised by Georgie Larsen-Archer, with much help from Mary Lloyd, was a great success. Everyone participated very well and I am sure much help and advice was obtained by listening to the different ways in which Clubs operate.

Several Clubs have expressed an interest in my Charity, Project TB. This will run until the end of my year in October. I am very happy that Clubs feel that they are able to support me in this Project.

Have all Officers downloaded the new Job Descriptions from the SIGBI site?

Looking forward to the Change of Insignia when I shall have the pleasure of meeting all Presidents and President Elects.

President Margaret

**Solihull and
District invite
you to their**

**Charter Cabaret
Saturday 30th
March 2013**

**Copt Heath Golf Club
Warwick Road,
Knowle, West Mid-
lands.**

7 for 7.30pm

Tickets £28.50

BROMSGROVE AND REDDITCH

When I last wrote, we were planning to support two food bank projects before Christmas – one in Bromsgrove with purely donations and the other in Redditch, with donations and practical help, both of which came to fruition. Two members supported the latter – packing food parcels and wrapping children’s toys for about 70 families.

In terms of Programme Action, it has been quite quiet since the start of the year, especially as a number of our projects are on-going. However in January, President Diane held an enjoyable and successful lunch in a local hotel for members, families and fellow Soroptimists from the Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Worcester Clubs – raising funds in the process for Worcester Beast Cancer Clinic.

At the beginning of February, The Dementia Café in Redditch celebrated its second anniversary and a number of members continue to volunteer at this monthly event, which is seeing increased numbers of those affected by dementia /Alzheimer’s disease and their family carers. Indeed, it is now so popular that a change of venue is being considered.

Another Club member has recently started as a volunteer at the Droitwich Cafe.

On a more social note, the Club has a regular Book Group which meets in each other’s homes for stimulating discussion, accompanied by drinks and snacks. One of the most positive things apart from

the social side is that we get to read books chosen by each



Our Club President, Diane Campbell, and some of her guests at the lunch held on 13 January at the Hilton Hotel Bromsgrove

member in turn and sometimes these are not ones we might have picked for ourselves – in other words, we are taken out of our ‘comfort zone’ and have our

CENTRAL BIRMINGHAM

Members, friends and Girlguiding Birmingham gathered toiletries, gifts, toys and knitted teddies for the Club’s annual *Christmas Gift Box* project for residents at the Birmingham Crisis Centre, a refuge for victims of domestic violence and their children.

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor John Lines, and the Lady Mayoress, Mrs Kathleen Lines, were guests at the *Christmas Supper* held at Olton Golf Club.

A *Debate on HS2*, organised by the Lobby Group, invited speakers Tom Magrath, Strategy and Policy Director of Centro and Jerry Marshall, CEO of the Arthur Rank Centre [a resource centre for rural churches and communities].

Janet Maye, CEO of the Esther charity and Club member, is being supported in setting up a *Food Bank* at Kings Heath Baptist Church.

Social events have included Race Nights at Wolverhampton and

a visit to the BBC studios in the Mailbox.

A *Bridge Day* on 5th March and a *Concert* featuring the Canoldir Choir and Bournville Junior School Choir on March 16th will raise funds for President Sharon’s charity, *The Hope Project*, which cares for destitute asylum seekers in the West Midlands.

CENTRAL BIRMINGHAM

An *Education Bursary* open to students at Queen Alexandra College, Harborne, has been set up.

We look forward to the visits of Maggie Jones, County Commissioner and Sue Burton, County President of the *Girl Guides* in March and Regional President Margaret Phillips and Janet Hodgson in April.

We continue to support Regional initiatives for Book Aid, blankets for the Fistula Hospital in Addis Abba and participation in the Public Speaking Competition.



HEREFORD

Opening of Worcester SARC

The President and several members of SI Hereford & District were very pleased to accept their invitation from the Chief Constable to the Official Opening of the Worcester SARC on 9th November 2012 when Lady S. Darnley, Lord Lieutenant of Herefordshire officiated in the grand opening.

Hereford members had been very industrious in 2011 when the Hereford SARC was opened and had also contributed to this more recent venture providing more elaborate care to take place in a thoroughly professional environment, which included legal, medical and counselling officers. Unlike the Hereford Branch the Worcester SARC is helping male, female and child victims of abuse.

What made it an extra special luncheon was that we were also able to share our time with the members of SI Worcester who were also invited.

The President and members of the Club held a very enjoyable coffee morning on the 10th December in aid of the President's Charity, Riding for the Disabled Hippotherapy Unit when a substantial sum was raised.

They also entertained visitors of the Hereford National Council of Women and residents throughout the area.





Hereford members at the opening of Worcester SARC

KENILWORTH AND DISTRICT

SI Kenilworth Program Action

Oxfam Bucket Project

THE 'SMARTIE' WAY TO RAISE FUNDS

President Ann's end of year project will launch at the business meeting on 14 March. You may be familiar with the old trick of emptying the contents of a tube of Smarties into your mouth, eating them and enjoying the experience....then filling up the empty tube with 20 pence pieces, donated by family, friends or from personal funds? It's an ideal way to save up for something special and we think that the Oxfam buckets with lids deserve some special attention, having had a demo by our Oxfam speaker, Jenna Wills, recently. They cost around £3 each and serve as a seat as well as a container for collecting water and a hygienic

means of dispensing it. Excellent idea.

The aim is to fill 48 tubes as soon as we can - or at the latest by the July dinner meeting - and donate the proceeds to Oxfam. The first to tell President Ann how many 20p pieces fit into a tube will win the prize...of another tube of Smarties.....

**The Kenilworth Centre
Volunteers wanted at the Kenilworth Centre**

The Kenilworth Centre have informed us that they have a real and immediate need for volunteers to help in the following areas:

- Finance and Administration**
- Building & Planning**
- IT Support**
- Young Person Support**
- Abbey Cinema**
- Radio Abbey**

And, most importantly, a **Volunteer Co-ordinator** to recruit and develop volunteers and promote volunteering opportunities.

The Centre would also be delighted to hear our suggestions if members have expertise in other areas and are willing to be involved.

Friendship Links

We have had an invitation, from **SI Remsheid** our friendship link club in Germany, to travel to spend the weekend with them, Friday 19th - Sunday 21st April 2013. We will be joined by our Soroptimist sisters from SI Arnhem-Oost on Saturday 20th. It will be a weekend of fun, friendship



Members of Midland Arden Clubs at the 'Join me on the Bridge' event for International Women's Day organised by Worcester and Malvern club.



After being inspired by hearing Margaret Jarman speaking on the difference a water well can make to families in Cambodia, Club members have raised £150 from donations and joined other Midland Arden Clubs in sponsoring their own water well, Number 523, through the UK Friends of Cambodian Child's Dream Organisation (CCDO). It has been built in Promkot Village, about 22 kms east of Siem Reap and is shared by five families with a total of 38 people using it. The Club is keen to continue their support and will be exploring whether more wells can be sponsored in partnership with Kidderminster Town.

In response to the condemnation of the shooting of Malala Yousafzai at the Belfast Conference, action taken by members of Kidderminster Club included signing the petition that Mr Gordon Brown, acting as United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, presented to the Pakistan Government. Also, two members, Stephanie Ainsley and Liz Broadfield joined other Midlands Soroptimists in the silent candlelight vigil held outside the Pakistan Consulate in Birmingham on 10 November.

As Christmas approached, members continued their support for the Food Bank in December helping with the collection at Tesco Supermarket together with the sorting and distribution of the 1500 kilos of food so generously donated. Help was also given at the Birchen Coppice Primary School Christmas Fayre with the bottle and chocolate tombolas being very popular.

Members spent an afternoon helping with the Christmas decorations at the Fred Bennett Centre in Kidderminster in support of Kidderminster's Friends of the Elderly. It was a fun afternoon and enjoyed by all and the Club wishes to continue to support the valuable work at the Centre.

Once again the Club joined in the fun at the Bewdley Christmas Lights Festival and this year provided entertainment with 'Roll a Penny' and 'Pick up Sticks' games. The proceeds, together with the monies raised at our Christmas Supper Raffle, will be given to the Women's Refuge.

A special treat was in store at our Christmas Supper when 40 members and friends were entertained by the Soroptimist Players with a specially commissioned version of Dick Whittington, by Jen Eglinton, Artistic Director of the Rose Theatre.

Membership

I was so encouraged by all the ladies (35 I think) that came to our support day in Solihull on 9th February. It was snowing well when I started out at 7.15am but still you all came, wonderful. All the Midland Arden Officers had a slot and a great deal of information was learnt by members old and new. We must keep working hard for new members, since November we have five. There are also some more in the pipeline for our A.G.M.s I have heard. Please let me know if I can visit and help Clubs at any time, just let me know.

LEAMINGTON AND WARWICK CLUB



June James, President of SI Leamington and Warwick, presents cheques to a total value of £ 8,500, to Anita Burrows, Community Fundraiser, Myton Hospices, and Tim Smith, Chair of Parkinson's UK

LEAMINGTON AND WARWICK CLUB

In November we welcomed Debbie Crisp to talk to us. She is a TB Nurse Specialist and in charge of the medical team who identify and treat persons with TB within the area. At the same meeting members collected several bags of children's toys for the Leamington Christian Mission to give as Christmas presents.

On 11th November the club took part in the Remembrance Day Service held in Warwick. Valerie Grimmer laid a wreath on behalf of the club at the War Memorial in the town .

On 11th December the club held its annual International Night. We were a large party including Regional President Margaret and members from the neighbouring clubs of Rugby, Solihull and Kenilworth. We were delighted when President June and Regional President Margaret inducted two new members, Shona Gwynne and Jane Kearey.

Our after -dinner speaker was Margaret Jarman, President Elect of S.I. Solihull. She spoke movingly of her work for the charity "the Cambodian Child's Dream". The money raised is used to help village communities become more self-supporting and to improve their health and education. We were delighted that the money raised on the night has been enough to purchase another well which has been named after the club and which will benefit four families (38 people) in a village in the Siem Reap Province of Cambodia. On 26th February the club held its Swimathon presentation (in conjunction with members from S.I. Kenilworth).

President June presented cheques to Anita Burrows (My ton Hospice) and Rev. Peter Jackson (Parkinson's UK) totalling £8758.



ex-
pec-

E Mail received from Cambodia

From: CCDO-Cambodia

Dear Margaret

Greeting from CCDO-Cambodia!

About the well number 554 donated by "SOROPTIMISTS INTERNATIONAL", I already completed with building it and it benefits for 04 families, there are 38 people use it.

They live at 25Km East of Siem Reap (Trach Village, Balang Commune, Bakong District, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia)

- Husband : Tao Toeu, he is 35 years old, a farmer
- Wife : Pov Yin, she is 32 years old, a farmer

They have 01 daughter and 01 son. Other people in the pictures are their father, their sisters and their nephews.

All members of Tao Toeu's family would like to extend their sincere thanks for your donation and your generosity for their family and their neighbors.

This water well is very helpful to improve health, life

tancy and living condition of people at the countryside in Cambodia.

Best Regards,

PANHA OU

Executive Director (Cambodia)

RUGBY



It was agreed prior to Christmas that members would donate food to our local food bank in Rugby instead of sending each other Christmas cards. The photographs shows the generosity of our members.



SOLIHULL

Solihull will welcome Anna Saunders, Development Manager at the Open University to their next business meeting, to provide an update on the President's charity this year. Chris Spriggs chose 'Lamps for Malawi' to be the focus for fundraising, and money from a number of events has already gone to the OU.

The Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) programme was awarded the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2009 for world-class excellence in developing the skills of hundreds of thousands of primary teachers in Africa. The Open University is the only British university which focuses on delivering learning through capacity building inside Africa, employing its expertise in teaching and research to enhance the educational infrastructures of developing nations.

The Saltire Scholarship Scheme was set up by the Scottish Government to provide pathways for rural women into teaching whilst allowing them to remain in their community. 500 Scholarships were to be awarded. These women may have completed secondary education but failed to achieve the

grades required for entry into teacher education programmes.

Malawi was chosen for the project as there are large classes in Malawi primary schools but there are few women teachers. There is also a high drop out rate for females in rural primary education and those that stay are generally low-achievers. This provides low numbers of suitably qualified female applicants to formal teacher training courses.

The Soroptimist part of the project was to provide wind-up lamps, sourced in Malawi, to enable these young women to study at home. The fun part was the decision to send a personal letter with each lamp, to provide a link from Solihull to the individual student. We even had a 'sweet shop' at one of our social events, where three members produced 18 letters between them! It has been wonderful to piggy-back on the partnership between the Scottish Government and the Open University, and Anna is delighted with our efforts. We hope to see some pictures of the 'ladies with the lamps' when she attends the meeting.

STOURBRIDGE

Stourbridge club members have been busy fund raising for their charities. This year they are supporting Acorn Hospice, which helps children with life limiting conditions and their families, the hospice is in Walsall. The other main charity is Farmers Overseas Action Group (FOAG).

There was an evening of entertainment by a local band Bev Pegg then in December Andrew Lound did a dramatic presentation of the Midlands connection to the Titanic.

Hanbury Hill Baptist Church in Stourbridge has though the Soroptimists donated toys to the Dudley refuges for a number of years and they once again

exceed their previous years donation and the Soroptimists delivered this to the refuges.

Members of SI Stourbridge joined a local Girl Guides group to teach them to knit and help them produce bonnets for premature babies. The event proved to be very successful and the guides have now gone away to knit more. This was part of our development work to join up with one of Soroptimists partner organisation and to help spread the word of Soroptimist International.

On Saturday the 12th January President Su one of the 65'ers Presidents ran a coffee morning

from her home for Target TB. Members of SI Kidderminster joined members of SI Stourbridge for the morning and they all enjoyed cakes and biscuits to accompany the teas and coffees. Members ran a raffle and together with donations made £129 for Target TB. Everyone who attended took away a raffle prize and the draw was made for the guess the stitches in the Royal Wedding party that was won by Ann Middleton from SI Stourbridge.

President Elect Jane Bridgewater Flint is running a Jane Austen Quiz to tie in with her afternoon tea that takes place later in the year.

79th FEDERATION CONFERENCE

I extend my invitation to you all to the NewcastleGateshead 79th Federation Conference at the Sage.

Our theme 'From Vision to Action – Soroptimists Educating to Lead' offers a realistic challenge to every member to become actively involved in the long term aim of our organisation and help to shape the lives and futures of women and girls throughout the world.

We expect encouragement, inspiration and time for reflection at our Conferences and our 79th will offer all those and more.

And what would Conference be without the important ingredients of fun and friendship? I assure you they will be self evident.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2013

We're back at the SAGE in NEWCASTLE/GATESHEAD the venue for our 79th Federation Conference with the theme

'FROM VISION TO ACTION - SOROPTIMISTS EDUCATING TO LEAD'

As Conference Chair on behalf of the Conference Committee I welcome you to this vibrant and dynamic Region of Northern England.

We are pulling out all the stops to bring you a Conference with a real Geordie welcome together

with all the flavours of the North East and the North West.

Newcastle and Gateshead have much to offer from the renowned art galleries of The Laing and The Baltic to the unrivalled shopping of Eldon Square and the Metro Centre, the Centre for Life and the Discovery Museum, more theatres per person than anywhere in the UK and more restaurants on the Quaysides than you can possibly visit.



Margaret Alderson
Conference Chair 2013

STRATFORD UPON AVON AND DISTRICT**Service with a smile**

As usual members helped to serve warming refreshments in the Town Hall after the **Springfield Mind Carol Service** held at the lovely-but-chilly Guild Chapel in Stratford every year.

(www.springfieldmind.org).

Collections are made every Club meeting for various packaging/ items for recycling for the MAR projects of **Water Wells in Cambodia and Preemies UK**

(www.preemiesuk.co.uk) as well as food for the Stratford Food Bank.

Our Club has been providing all-year-round **gardening for the local Stratford Hospital** since 2005. We renovated a small garden outside the Nicol Unit and have maintained it ever since with valuable financial aid from the Stratford Town Trust and our own fundraising. Recently the Friends of the Hospital undertook a huge re-vamp of the site to provide walkways accessible by wheelchair and raised beds for easy access. We have completed the winter planting and spring bulbs are about to provide colour that is appreciated by patients and staff alike in this quiet, flower-filled corner. Club members keep the garden tidy with regular maintenance and are now planning the summer bedding.

Small funds that go a long way.

The raffle at our well-attended Christmas lunch raised £160.00 for the **SIGBI 3E Project on Health-**

care. MAR President Margaret Phillips not only came to the lunch – accompanied by her husband – but was also welcomed to our early-in-the year 3rd January meeting together with Janet Hodgson, SIGBI Assistant Programme Officer for Learning Opportunities.

Our annual collection for the **SIGBI Benevolent Fund** (instead of exchanging Christmas cards with one another) took place at this meeting, raising £80.00.

60 shoe boxes were packed in November for the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child (www.operationchristmaschild.org.uk) and sent to their central packing station with a gift-aided cheque for £150.00 to contribute to transport costs.

Congratulations to club member Penny Freedman who recently published her second murder mystery, *All the Daughters*. This is a follow-up to her previous mystery *This is a Dreadful Sentence* featuring university lecturer Gina Grey and DCI Scott. We all enjoyed the coffee morning book launch that somehow made over £300.00 for this year's President's charity Chernobyl 2000.)

(www.chernobyl2000ltd.co.uk).

**MIDLAND ARDEN CLUB MEMBERS****BROMSGROVE AND REDDITCH**

27 members.

3 new members

Mary Marsh, Kathleen Hay & Pauline Westbury

HEREFORD

8 members including

KENILWORTH AND DISTRICT

44 members.

LEAMINGTON AND WARWICK

15 members. Two new members

Shona Gwynne

Jane Kearey

SOLIHULL AND DISTRICT

48 members

1 new member Nicola Forth

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

32 members.

4 new members

Sarah Pugh, Bernadette Rose, Susan Hollington and Sue Siddorn

WORCESTER AND MALVERN

24 members.



Stratford-upon-Avon members gardening at the Nicol Unit, Stratford upon Avon Hospital

WORCESTER AND MALVERN CLUB



The annual Presidents summer excursion was to Eckington Manor cookery school. A fabulous cookery demonstration was followed by a sumptuous lunch. Such an enjoyable day proved to be one of the highlights of a very successful year.

There was a full house on a frosty November night at the Advent Flower Arranging Workshop, where members had a jolly time making Christmas table arrangements. A demonstration by Lynda Owen plus a fragrant Advent table decoration to take home made this a memorable evening and raised £450.00 for the presidents Charity.

- The club supports
- West Worcester Live at Home - weekly activities for the elderly
- Abbeyfields - retirement home for the elderly
- Snoezelen - sensory environment for people with development disabilities.
- Women's Refuge
- SARC - Sexual Assault Referral Centre
- Powick Primary School - education supporting reading



Worcester and Malvern President Jo Smith and members at the Advent Arrangement workshop.

At every meeting a collection is made for the Worcester and Malvern foodbanks.

Members attended the Worcester SARC opening and a talk from the manager of the unit will take place in April.

An invitation to the Women's World Day of Prayer was extended to the Worcester and Malvern Club, and members attended the service which this year was written by the women of France.

WORCESTER AND MALVERN

Worcester and Malvern Soroptimist Club organised a "Join me on the Bridge" event in Gheluvelt Park, Worcester for International Women's Day on the 8th of March 2013. Members were delighted to welcome representatives from four other clubs in the Midland Arden Region and women from The Worcestershire Federation of Women Institutes and the local church who had managed to negotiate the roadworks outside the Park.

Twenty of us walked, carrying various placards including a picture of Malala, condemning violence against women and advocating education for all girls worldwide and for world peace. On each of the four bridges spanning the brook, we stood and listened to words spoken on these important issues, before moving on.

At the war memorial to the men of the Worcestershire Regiment killed in the first world war, we remembered particularly that although this was "The War to end all Wars" there is still conflict in many parts of the world. Many photographs were taken of us on the Bridges, including those by the press photographer so we hope for coverage in the local press in the near future.

Having completed our mission we went to the Park cafe to enjoy hot drinks and chat. We were delighted that the rain held off until the last of us left - and then it poured!



Jo Smith President of Worcester and Malvern giving a reading at the 'Join me on the Bridge' event held in Worcester.
Jennie Read and Anthea England organisers of the event for Worcester and Malvern Club starting the walk to the bridges.

Calendar

FORTHCOMING REGIONAL MEETING & EVENTS

Saturday 16th March 2013
MAR Public Speaking Competition
The Council Chambers, Town Hall,
Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR

Saturday 6th July
AGM & Regional Meeting (3)
The Leisure Centre, Wolston,
Nr Coventry CV8 3HL
Hosted by SI Birmingham Central

Saturday 20th April 2013
Regional Change of Insignia,
Temple Speech Room,
Rugby School at 6.30pm for 7.00 pm

Saturday 21st September
Regional Meeting (4) International Day of Peace
Redditch Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square,
Redditch B98 8AH
Hosted by SI Hereford

31st October - 1st November Federation Conference, The Sage, Gateshead.



There will be four issues of our new Midlands Arden newsletter
Please e mail club news (200 words maximum) and photographs
to

lyn@lynda-owen.co.uk

cut off dates for copy

Spring last day in February - publication end of March
Summer last day in May - publication end of June
Autumn last day in August - publication end of September
Winter last day in November publication end of November

Can we make this the best Soroptimist regional newsletter in the
UK?

We can with your help, our president is particularly interested in
programme action events and how your club is helping the
community in your area. (Maximum 200 words and one picture
PLEASE.)

Lets also celebrate new members of our clubs so send me their
names for inclusion in the newsletter.

Press and Publicity

Our regional press and publicity officer Joan Roberts is keen to
hear from clubs who have news stories printed in their local
papers. Can all press officers please send Joan copies of their
press releases. Also if Joan can help in any way with publicity
please contact her rose.roberts2@virgin.net

Do have a look at the monthly Programme Action Magazines
(PAM) for ideas!

You will find them on the 'what we do' link of the SIGBI web-
site. <http://sigbi.org/what-we-do/>

Your Regional Officers

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