



Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region Newsletter



WINTER 2016

Regional Officers 2016-17



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Jennie Levick



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Regional Council

- The new team line up for the camera

Inside this issue:

SIGBI	2
Conference	
Zimlink	3
CE Cluster	4
Group	
'Ben' Fund	4
SI Yorkshire	4
Meru Garden	5
Clubs news	6-9
Diary Dates	9

Getting the bird!

Read all about it

Page 4



82nd SIGBI Federation Conference— Malta November 2016

Engineering the Future



Liz Lyle, Ann Hodgson incoming Federation President and Jennie Levick

Almost 1,000 Soroptimists gathered in Malta, to enjoy the sunshine and attend their Federation Conference.

President Margaret Emsley welcomed us all at the moving Opening Ceremony, when the flags of the participating countries are carried in. The UN flag was carried by Hilary Ratcliffe, accompanied by Thelma De Leeuw, Past International President and member of SI Yorkshire. After greetings and announcements we were entertained by The Paul Curmi Dancers, a folklore group who presented dances relating to both the peasantry and aristocracy of Malta.

The first day of Conference began with a fantastic gathering – 'Pink by the Pool', to raise awareness of Breast Cancer. A collection raised 1,542 euros!!

The keynote speaker on Friday was Dame Professor Sue Ion, Vice President of the Royal Academy of Engineering, who gave an inspirational address about her career and emphasised the need to promote STEM subjects for girls, from as young as 3 or 4 years old.

We were entertained and impressed by a variety of information about this year's Programme Action Best Practice winners. More disturbing was the update we received about the situation for women and girls in Nepal, and our speaker, Bandana Rana, speaking about Working for Women's Rights in Nepal, reminded us of the need to

a difference.

In the afternoon we were enthralled by two excellent speakers. David Coglin, Microsoft, gave an informative, and very funny, presentation about the way forward using technology – the skills young people need to be taught, and a recognition that technology is not actually the answer to everything. The crucial question to ask is – 'Can technology help me get the answer?' If the answer is no – leave your mobile at home!!

And finally, Helen Sharman, OBE, Britain's first astronaut, told us how she reached this pinnacle of her career, and how her experiences have influenced the rest of her life. Her photos of outer space, taken from her 'bedroom' were amazing and I felt honoured to hear her speak.

Last but not least, the Closing Ceremony and Change of Regalia, followed by the Yorkshire Party. We celebrated the arrival of our new President, Jennie Levick, with a delicious meal enjoyed by almost 60 people.

Look on the SIGBI website for lots more information, and lots of photos, and **COME TO CARDIFF IN 2017.**

Angela Edwards

The Yorkshire Quartet: Angela Edwards, President Jennie Levick, Chris Clark & IPP Liz Lyle



November Visit Update

I spent several days last week in Harare staying with Miriam Mukorombindo, the president of SI Harare. It was only a short visit owing to other commitments and the purpose of it was not primarily Soroptimist business: my brother and I went to give the money donated at our mother's funeral to a high school in Epworth, a township outside Harare.

Things are currently not good in Zimbabwe. The government is bankrupt and workers in the public sector, nurses, teachers, police etc never know whether they will be paid in full, or indeed paid at all. There is a shortage of \$US and the banks are rationing cash withdrawals. Miriam is a private customer at her bank (like our premier accounts) and she can take out \$300 at once.

She goes to the bank first thing every morning to withdraw her \$300 - she has to do this to have enough money to run her business and pay her employees at her events management company. Many banks are rationing customers to \$100 or even \$50 per withdrawal and we saw many queues at ATMs. We were told that people sleep in the queues to get cash.

The supermarkets seem well stocked but we were told that some items are beginning to disappear from the shelves. People are fearful of a repeat of 2008 when there was literally no food in the shops.

The rainy seasons in recent years have not been good, resulting in a drought which caused the harvests to fail this year. The last rain they had was a shower last March. Thankfully, after promising to rain throughout our visit, it finally started the day we left and continued over the weekend. Lets hope that's the start of more to come. However, the water shortage is a longterm problem which will take a lot of rain to alleviate, more rain than is likely to fall in one season. Most people have bore holes which pump water from the water table into large overhead tanks in their gardens. Some bore holes are no longer deep enough to reach the falling water table. Whilst at Miriam's we ran out of water completely one morning - nothing with which to wash or flush the toilet. Great consternation! Miriam had to buy some water which was delivered while we were out. It costs about \$55 to fill the tank. This is life in the household of professional people: in deprived areas it can only be much worse.

Unemployment is running at 90%. However, Zimbabweans are very resourceful and they do anything they can to earn a living, such as growing a few vegetables or making garden furniture and selling them at the roadside or standing amongst the traffic on the main roads. For the first time I saw beggars in the streets, many of them children - we were told that much of this is organised begging.

The police set up road blocks at frequent intervals, pulling vehicles over because ostensibly

finding something wrong with their tax disc or similar, but in reality just taking bribes. They demand \$30 and if the motorist refuses to pay this they demand \$20 then \$10. The indomitable Soroptimists we travelled with refused point blank to pay up and were allowed to drive on. The police officers obviously find that faced with a determined stroppy woman, discretion is the better part of valour. The drivers of the ramshackle minibus "commuters", which provide the only form of public transport, have to pay a daily bribe to be able to go about their business. The road blocks aren't just in the city or on the highways, they're set up throughout the residential suburbs and the Soroptimists I spoke to said they feel like prisoners on the roads.

However, the Zimbabwean spirit is alive and kicking and they continue to amaze me with their fortitude and optimism in the face of such difficulties. The way in which people struggling with their own problems still look after those even less fortunate is inspiring. Getting goods into Zimbabwe is increasingly difficult. There is now a scanner in customs through which all bags have to go. They searched our bags which were full of baby vests, books and soap and by some miracle, I blagged my way through through. I can only think that the jumble of hand knitted items the customs officer was faced with looked like my clothing. We were told that we were very lucky and that five of anything is generally considered to be an import, and duty is charged. (They even charged duty on an envelope of letters from Richmond children to Chikupo children when it arrived in the post!)



At a club dinner I presented \$900 in cash on behalf of SI Yorkshire to the Zimbabwe Association to be divided between the five clubs. They are extremely grateful and I can see that anything we send is carefully stewarded and will provide for basic needs in their projects - no one is providing any frills! On behalf of the Zimbabwean Association, SI Harare sent their warmest wishes and grateful thanks.

Chris Bowran

Zimlink

Central East Cluster Group

Friendship Walk

Members of the Central east Cluster Group enjoyed a 6 mile walk round Ackworth. It was a lovely autumn day. The company was great and the lunch at the Brown Cow very much appreciated.

The plan is to take more walks in the future – every 2 months.

L-R: Jane Richardson, Pat Griffiths, Margaret Middlemass, Hilary Putman, Angela Stocks, Val Jenkins



SIGBI Benevolent fund

Don't Forget the SIGBI Benevolent Fund

SIGBI Benevolent Fund is a totally confidential service for women who have been Soroptimists for 3 years or more, in the UK or the Republic of Ireland. The purpose of the fund is to ease the financial difficulties of members where income does not cover annual needs or an unexpected financial commitment arises, which cannot be covered by income or savings.

There are a wide range of issues which can be addressed by the Fund's Trustees, and women of any age and circumstances can be supported through the Fund. Don't just decide that your problem does not fit our criteria. We want to help – just contact me to discuss your situation!

Please contact me, your Regional Representative, if you feel the Fund could help you,

or a friend or sister Soroptimist. Your application will be dealt by me in the strictest confidence.

Angela Edwards
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SI Yorkshire

The Girls on the Train

SI Yorkshire steamed from Pickering to Whitby. On a bright September Saturday 27 members, friends, relations and former Soroptimists (plus dog Lucky and puppy Fudge) met up at Pickering station for a trip back in time to the age of steam. All wallowed in nostalgia, apart for the soot smuts getting everywhere and an over excited Fudge on a very first train journey. Once at Whitby after the obligatory team photo all set off to enjoy the delights of the town, and of course being Soroptimists this included food and drink for most.

It was also "Pirates" weekend, an RNLI fundraiser, so there were complete families dressed



as pirates, including the dogs, as well as individuals in the most amazing costumes. Two and three quarter hours later after a quick headcount the group settled down in the reserved carriage for the return trip, swapping tales of pirate encounters, shopping and places visited. Once back at Pickering a very tired puppy

was carried off the train and several Soroptimists had to rapidly adjust to being back in 2016 again. It all made for a very leisurely and sociable "grand trip to the seaside". Thanks to Hilary Putnam (SI Selby), Jenny Capstick and Helen Hyams (SI Scarborough) who made it all happen.

Raising our profile!

It started with our club asking the question - how to raise our profile and attract active members? We decided that promoting SI Harrogate and District should centre on Programme Action. A stall at the Autumn Flower Show sounded a good idea but instead we were offered the option of creating a community garden! This was a challenge as we only had 2 weeks to get the application in and, if successful, just 10 weeks to create the garden.

Our Project Team made up of Val Hills, Sandra Jowett, Sylvia Purser, Pat Shore, Sue Slocombe and Judith Webb, set about designing the garden. President Pat persuaded her brother to produce a visual risk assessment, the plan of the garden was prepared and Sylvia and Val wrote the specification. Surprisingly our plans were accepted and we then worked frantically to convert the plan into a Kenyan garden.



Sandra, the designer for the group, put together a wonderful sectional wooden ground frame and artistically painted a backboard surmounted by the Meru Shield. Baskets were sourced and our gardeners, Judith and Sue, grew herbs and vegetables, in pots.

Putting the garden together proved challenging and we certainly needed the expertise and muscle power of a couple



of Soroptimisters John and Ken. Matting was donated for the grass within the frame and corrugated iron sourced from a scrap merchant in Ripon for the backdrop. A ton of red sand followed and was spread like a desert, and a ton of gravel spaded into place to create rocky outcrops. Pallets formed a market stall at the front of the garden. We sourced a manikin from M&S to become our Kenyan lady, Mani. What a lady she became surviving wind, gales, an electrical storm and becoming the heart of the garden.



A removal van delivered 5 apple trees and home grown tomatoes, peppers and sweet potatoes started to arrive. A water-butt and garden tools took their place plus a little bowl for loose change to be donated towards our project. After a couple of days of hard graft, we had the garden we wanted and we were ready for judging. Friday morning arrived as we hastily tried to erect the gazebo with wind and rain lashing down. The Flower Show opened with excitement and anticipation. The judges said 'Remind us who you are? Ah yes, the Soroptimists. You have a silver medal.'

Publicity was fantastic; we were mentioned on BBC news, local radio and local press. Visitors from across the Federation supported us and a big thank you to Barbara Dixon, Programme Director, Patricia Gatherum, Federation Ambassador for Meru. Margaret Clarke, APD Advocacy, Liz Lyle, President SI Yorkshire and many other Soroptimists from across the region who also viewed our novel garden. We had several visitors from Kenya who decreed our garden to be wonderful and authentic.

WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

We certainly raised our profile, attracted media attention, won a Silver Award and had over £600 in loose change for the Meru Project plus £120 prize money.

We were well on our way to being able to support 3 projects in Meru by the end of this year. Then the Autumn Flower Show Committee decided to match fund our efforts by their charitable donation, meaning we had some £1,500 or 5 gardens.

The project team remain elated from their success, energised and enthused and have become the project Ambassadors for SI Yorkshire - endeavouring to create and maintain enthusiasm across the region for the Meru project.

Pictures: The Start; Red sand delivery; Manikin Mani arriving; The Finished Garden; Silver Award



SI Harrogate & District



Award for Initiative

SI Bradford

Marion Le Pla JP a member of SI Bradford was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship by Rotary District 1040 of Rotary International, at their conference in Scarborough in October 2016. The Fellowship was given to mark Marion's achievement as a founder



member of the Bradford Schools Drug Prevention Initiative.

In 1992 Marion, who was President of SI Bradford and also a Magistrate on the Bradford Bench, was very concerned about the number of offences being committed by young people to fund a drugs habit. As a consequence of this, she contacted a Rotary colleague and also West Yorkshire Police to explore the possibility of working together in this field. From this the idea of the Bradford Schools Drug Prevention Initiative was

formed. The aim of the Initiative is to motivate and reward schools which positively address the issues of drugs, tobacco and alcohol misuse. The Charter Award is given to schools which can demonstrate an effective commitment to addressing these issues.

The Award can be reviewed every three years and the Assessors are mainly Soroptimists and Rotarians who have been trained in the assessment process. Since 1992, many Bradford Schools have achieved this Award.

Fundraising Events

SI Dewsbury & District



Photo shows Front: SI Dewsbury member Dorothy and her sister Effie, a resident in the home who helped to start the fund raising efforts, Back: Roger, SID member Maureen and President Hazel

In October members held an Antiques Evening where Auctioneer and Valuer John Walsh came along to assess the value of items brought along by members and guests. Although nobody became a potential millionaire, the evening and supper was enjoyed by everyone.

Pic: John Walsh, Jane Macaulay and President Hazel



SI Dewsbury members have been helping a local care home Tentercroft Court with their Macmillan coffee morning for an amazing twenty years. Various stalls of cakes, bric a brac, guess the name and an ever increasing tombola all help to swell the coffers alongside the coffee and biscuits. A celebratory cake was made and local celebrity Roger Ram made an appearance, A total of £562 was raised this year.

Twiddle Appeal

SI Doncaster

We have had resounding success in our request for buttons for our Twiddle Muff project, many thanks to those people who responded and helped us. You have helped us to help others, a batch of Twiddle Muffs (see picture) has just been sent to the Mallard Ward at Doncaster Royal Infirmary for the patients there.

We can still use buttons and trimmings if you have any to



spare. Some people sent wool, lace, ribbons, bells, keys, and lots of other useful trimming items, so tidy out that cupboard and contact me!

NEW REQUEST!

You were so helpful that we may run out of wool! So if you have some lurking in a cupboard please let us have it. It doesn't matter what thickness we just knit double strands if the wool is too thin

Please ring Carol Shillito on 01302 530833 if you can help us, I will arrange collection. I look forward to your calls!

Raising Funds For Educate To Lead: Nepal

SI Harrogate and District celebrated International Friendship Day with a candle lighting ceremony in recognition of their ten friendship links across the world. President Pat Shore welcomed fellow Soroptimists, Soroptimisters and guests, including Yorkshire President Liz Lyle. President Pat spoke about International President Yvonne Simpson's Educate to Lead: Nepal Appeal and how the aim of the appeal is to focus on helping to rebuild lives, whilst providing educational opportunities for women and girls in some of the most remote areas of Nepal.



Candles were lit for each of the Clubs as well as Soroptimist International. All the Clubs Friendship Links were asked to nominate a 'special woman' who has contributed in some way to improving the lives of women and girls. Some Clubs also sent gifts for the Silent Auction which was held during the evening. The event raised a fantastic £530 for the International Presidents Appeal.

Highly Commended Award

Fantastic news - President Pat Shore and Press and Publicity Officer, Sandra Frier, received, a highly commended award, on behalf of the Club, at the Harrogate & District Volunteers Awards Ceremony (in the Organisation of the Year category) for 83 years of service to local and international



SI Harrogate & District

National Honour

SI Ilkley member and a Past President Anne-Mary Inglehearn has been honoured with the National Mentoring Award 2016, by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). Anne-Mary is the Librarian at Leeds College of Building and received her award from Kate Robinson of Bath University the Chair of the CILIP Qualifications Board.



SI Ilkley

SI Leeds Literary Prize 2016

Another memorable night

SI Leeds was delighted to host the third award event for its literary prize on 12 October at Ilkley Literature Festival. We initiated this biennial prize for unpublished fiction in 2011. Our aim is to act as a loudspeaker for Black and Asian women's voices, and provide a means to discover exciting new talent, from a group largely under-represented on our bookshelves. The prize is run in partnership with Ilkley Literature Festival and independent publishers Peepal Tree Press. We also work closely with other literary partners to offer additional support and development to the winning writers.

SIGBI has maintained a close interest in this venture. We were particularly delighted that Margaret Oldroyd, who as SIGBI President for the 2014 prize award herself presented the prizes, was one of our judges for the 2016 prize.

As part of the event, each of the six shortlisted writers was asked to read a short extract from her entry. The winners were then announced. The picture below shows the 1st prize winner, Amita Murray, with the winner's trophy, presented by SIGBI President Margaret Emsley, together with Head Judge Kadija George. Amita's winning entry is a collection of short

stories, *Marmite and Mango Chutney*. She also received a cheque for £2000. Second prize (£750) went to Winnie M Li for *Dark Chapter* and third prize (£250), and the SI Readers' Choice award, went to Jamilah Ahmed for *Recognising Strangers*.



As you will see if you visit the prize website: <https://www.sileedsliteraryprize.com>, winners and placed writers from all three prize rounds have been enjoying considerable publishing success. We are so pleased to have been able to contribute in some small way to their professional development.

Val Saunders
Chair, SI Leeds Literary Prize Steering Group
Photo: Max Farrar

SI Leeds

In the Pink

SI Northallerton & District

SI Northallerton and District held two Zumba Classes to raise funds for Breast Cancer Awareness month in Bodytalk our local Ladies Gym. As you can see from the picture our members rose to the challenge!

At our previous meeting we had a "Pink Night" for the same charity and held a Pink Raffle, sold home made cakes and produce, took part in a Yorkshire Quiz and had a Guess the Baby Competition.

We have raised over £200



Autumn Activities

SI Richmond & Dales

A busy Autumn for SI Richmond & Dales, as the club welcomed three new members. The Art Exhibition was a great success, and raised money for the Meru Women's Garden Project.



Photo 1 - Members were delighted when Baroness Hale, their Patron, joined them at a club meeting. She gave an

impromptu talk on her work at the Supreme Court.



Photo 2 - The Holiday Inn (where some club meetings are held) have been saving shampoo and shower gel for the club, and President Sue was

delighted to hand 260 handy sized bottles for use by people in need, through the Northallerton Refuge.

Photo 3 - The club teamed up with volunteers from Home-Start (President's charity) and raised £200 from the generosity of shoppers at Tesco, Catterick Garrison.



An Enlightening Evening

SI Skipton in Craven

"An Evening with Dr. Helen Pankhurst", organised by SI Skipton in Craven, took place before a packed (mostly female) audience at St. Andrew's Church, Skipton, on Monday 19th September.

Dr. Helen, great granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, invited questions on three topics as a starter to the event: the Suffragettes; the work of Care international; and how much things have changed for women over the last hundred years.

Her answers and the subsequent discussion covered subject such as: how the film

"Suffragette" had combined historical fact with fiction in creating some characters, eg: Maud, who were composites rather than actual people; how providing wells and pumps for places where women still walk miles every day to fetch water can bring many benefits but also unforeseen consequences such as increasing a women's fertility; and how much still remains to be done to achieve true equality for women in pay, in business and in politics.

After a brief talk about Soroptimism by the Regional Membership Officer Pat Kilbane, the evening finished

with refreshments.

Photo: Dr Helen Pankhurst and Mrs Jan Taylor, President of SI of Skipton in Craven..



Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region

A Word from the Editor

An enjoyable conference in Malta gives SI Yorkshire a new President, Best wishes to President Jennie and Congratulations to IPP Liz Lyle on a successful year.

*Merry Christmas
& Happy new Year*

Liz Hayes

Newsletter Submission Guidelines

News Reports: maximum of 400 words in a Word document or email

Obituaries: maximum 150 words

Photos: Unmanipulated original images of high resolution sent as an attachment not embedded in a text document. No collage/montages.

email: ehayes@lineone.net

Diary Dates - 2017

January

Sat 14 Regional Officers' Meeting – all day (tbc)

March

Sat 11 RCM, Rendezvous Hotel, Skipton

April

Mon 24 Regional Officers' Meeting (Evening)

May

Sat 6 New Club Presidents' Lunch at Jennie Levick's home

June

Wed 14 RCM, Mercure Hotel, Wetherby (Evening)

July

Sat 1 Yorkshire Conference/regional development session – The Source Academy, Meadowhall Sheffield

Mon 24 Regional Officers' Meeting (Evening)

September

Sat 16 RCM, St Xavier School, Richmond

October

Sat 7 Regional Officers' Meeting (Morning)

26-28 SIGBI Conference Cardiff

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - February 26 2017

Wedding Dress to Work!

Amanda Potts SI Wakefield, wanted a reason to wear her wedding dress again! So, after being advised to lose weight, she decided to put the dress on, to her delight she was now too large for the dress and it needed to be taken in!

Having said that if she could fit into the dress and if she could achieve pledges for £100 she would wear the dress to work. On 30th August 2016 Amanda drove to Bradford from her home in Featherstone, complete with tiara! attended meetings, walked through Broadway

Shopping Centre Bradford, met the Bradford's Lord and Lady Mayor danced in Bradford City Square, met SI Members for a photoshoot, gave a telephone interview for Radio Leeds, all whilst wearing



the Wedding Dress.

Amanda raised £520 to be shared between Bradford Lord Mayor's Appeal, YoungMinds and SI Wakefield President's Charities, Breast Cancer Now and Alzheimer's UK.

In addition, she raised awareness of SI with photos and reports in Bradford Telegraph and Argus, Wakefield Express and YoungMinds website, plus a video on T & A Website.

SI Wakefield