

# Job project success

Leigh's Just The Job initiative is just the ticket, and that's official.

The project, which aims to help women back into work, took the Best Practice Programme award for Economic Empowerment at the SIGBI conference in Malta.

Just The Job has its own premises where women are offered confidence-boosting grooming advice and makeovers and interview preparation. Just The Job also provides suitable outfits for interviews and if a client gets a job she can get another outfit suitable for going to work.

Leigh and Districts' Margaret Molyneux, who is also our new South Lancashire Region president, was thrilled that the after-party could be a double celebration.

Congratulations also came from former Region president Margaret Baker, who described the win as brilliant.

"It's a well-deserved reward for this excellent project. South Lancashire is very proud of you all."

With 2015-16 Federation President Margaret Emsley being a South Lancashire member, there was plenty of regional involvement at the conference, both on and off the

stage. Outgoing Region president Sandy Taylor and Valerie Dunning assisted at the flag ceremony and Margaret Cole and Ann McCracken were joint MCs at the inauguration ceremony, plus many of the stewarding and other roles were filled by willing South Lancashire members.

Crosby members Margaret Cole, Valerie Dunning and Pauline Clark found stewarding the doors an interesting but tiring experience.

They reported that SIGBI delegates ask stewards the strangest questions, such as "Where is the nearest pharmacy?" and "Have you seen my friend Sue from South Africa?"

Sandy Taylor said the conference started with emotion and ended on a high, with dancing in the aisles.

"Fun, friendship, food and dancing – what more could we ask for?"

There was praise, too, for Margaret Emsley's appearance live on Malta television. One conference delegate said Margaret was calm and collected and highlighted her theme, Engineering the Future.

The next SIGBI conference will be in Cardiff at the Wales Millennium Centre from October 26 to 28, 2017.





## WARRINGTON

Warrington members have had to point out to a new member that not every project gets a visit from a Federation President and the International President.

Julia Blair, one of the club's newest members, originally approached SI Warrington after reading that SI Plymouth supported Dress A Girl. She was interested in a community project for the charity. Julia was persuaded to join and was immediately put to work helping organise a sewing bee at Statham Lodge.

On the day, Federation President Margaret Emsley called in with International President Yvonne Simpson, who was flying from Manchester airport later in the day.

As well as making 30 dresses members also started knitting hand puppets to go in the pockets.

The project got plenty of international attention, featuring on Yvonne's blog before she'd got on to her flight and in the slide-show at the conference in Malta. The club, federation and international presidents also featured in a good-sized story and picture in the Warrington Guardian.



**Top: Warrington members with International President Yvonne Simpson. Bottom right: Warrington President Betty Irving checks the work of the Federation and International Presidents.**

## BOOTLE

Those who attend Regional Council meetings will have seen the jewellery display near the entrance at some meetings and wondered what it's for.

Sriya Kulupana (right), president and PAC officer for SI Bootle, buys the pieces from two companies who buy rough stones directly from the mines and have workshops in India.

"One company has built a clinic and a school in Zambia," she said.

"Their employees working in the mines are paid well in comparison to the pay rates in the country.

"The other company started a project in the poor areas in India called One to One. Every time a purchase is made they provide one meal to a poor child. So far they have provided five million meals to poor children."

Sriya says all the profits are for club charities, mainly for The Royal Liverpool Hospital project to fund a sanctuary room for women victims of domestic/sexual violence or FGM.

Sriya is ideally placed to deal with

gems—her home country of Sri Lanka was previously called Ratnadeepa, or Isle of Gems. She worked as a medical practitioner in a city called Ratnapura—City of Gems—and has gained some knowledge of gemology.

Most of the pieces for sale are genuine gems in sterling silver and gold.

"Sri Lanka produces the best sapphires in the world and also rubies in addition to many others," she said.

"However, my collection comes from all over the world.

"Amongst them are rubies from Africa, Burma, Thailand and Madagascar, emeralds from Columbia and Siberia, peridots from Russia and China, opals from Ethiopia and Australia, tanzanites from Tanzania, sapphires from Sri Lanka, Burma, India and Madagascar, and diamonds from many countries. There are of course citrines, amethysts, moonstones,

pearls, abalone shells. . ."

She points out that the sale of the jewellery helps many people at both ends of the chain.





## LIVERPOOL



**Just a little of the 1927 glamour that marked the start of SI Liverpool's 90th birthday celebrations. More next issue.**



## CROSBY

More than 60 schoolgirls attended SI Crosby's STEM event at the end of September.

The idea originated from Federation President Margaret Emsley's speech at the Glasgow conference. Crosby president-elect Annette Hughes took the lead in organising the whole event with huge support from other members of the club.

The club found seven female speakers under the age of 30—engineers from Rolls-Royce, Cadbury and Johnson Construction, a researcher from St Paul's Eye Hospital, a recruitment staff member from BAE and two speakers from the School of Tropical Medicine.

The speakers spent 10 minutes with each group of 15 girls, talking about their jobs and answering questions.

It was clear from the moment the

first speaker took to the stage that SI Crosby was on to a winner. The young ladies stole the show with their confidence, intelligence, warmth and humour.

Crosby members were delighted that the Federation President, Margaret Emsley, was able to attend to add her encouragement and



## WIDNES

advice to the students.



Thirty Soroptimists, partners and friends enjoyed a coach trip to The National Arboretum. After a meal in the marquee they toured the site on the land train. Unfortunately they found the Soroptimist garden looking neglected. On the way home, Madam President's raffle raised £85 for Macmillan.

Therapy Dogs Nationwide brought some of the organisation's therapy dogs to SI Widnes's July meeting.

The dogs are used in places such as nursing homes, special-needs schools, prisons and hospitals.

The Oncology Department at Clatterbridge is visited regularly, the dogs being



given a good wash before they enter. After the talk about the dogs, their owners brought them into the body of the club, where many members were eagerly waiting to make a fuss of them



## SOUTHPORT

Four members of SI Southport plus two husbands visited Gdansk to celebrate and join in the Polish club's 20th anniversary celebrations.

The visit started at a Gdansk member's home, where they sampled the delights of traditional Polish dishes such as beetroot soup, wild boar and boiled parsley root (yes, parsley!) – helped along by some traditional Polish beverages.

After a day's sightseeing, the visitors spent the next evening at an informal welcome ceremony. "We were made to feel very welcome, and the Polish have a charming way of shortening their highly consonanted names, so remembering them was not as hard as expected," reported Janet Williams. "Most of them speak pretty good English, which certainly helped."

The main ceremonies were held the following day, Saturday. Gdansk has eight Friendship Links and had joined with their links in Germany and Japan to plant trees at the University as a symbol of friendship and peace. The ceremony was also attended by the mayor of Gdansk, Senior Officials of the university, Danuta Walesa (wife of Lech), and members of clubs from all over Europe, as well as 15 members of SI Kanasawa, Japan. Southport's own



**Beata Kowalska helps at the tree planting.**

Beata Kowalska was invited to participate in the tree planting.

After the tree planting and group photos, came a meeting at the university. The speeches included an inspirational one by the president Elect (Europe), Renata Trottmann Probst – her messages included how SI Gdansk was working with others "empowering women to empower other women . . . all of us working together, greater than the sum of the individual parts."

Projects by the Gdansk club include providing a retreat for children of women prisoners, and sponsoring a young Kenyan woman through university to study medicine.

The ceremony was followed by the official lunch in Sopot, the spa town to the North of Gdansk – more food, wine and good company! After a quick change at the hotels, everyone

attended a concert in aid of the prison project.

Sunday saw the visitors on a guided tour of Gdansk. The city was almost completely devastated during World War II, but the Poles have rebuilt it in the original style.

At the new Solidarity museum, the guide showed pictures and films of the events, including her own personal account of what it was like to live through it all.

"For me, it was extremely interesting, and unexpectedly moving," said Janet. "It was good to see so many young Polish people taking such an interest in their very recent history. The Poles have certainly come a long way since living under martial law in 1981. We look forward to meeting the Gdansk club again – possibly for our own celebrations next year."

## ST HELENS

SI St Helens is changing, now being organised by members split into three teams who take the lead for their own sector of the SI year.

Team B are just finishing a very successful four months following a varied programme. After Christmas, Team C takes over.

The club donated £3100 to Macmillan after a successful coffee morning at Knowsley Hall.

A stall selling scarves and jewellery raised £77 for the Meru garden project.

The club is donating toys to the Family Support Unit in St Helens for children from families in need.

Members marked Breast Cancer Awareness month in October by donating unwanted bras to the Charity in partnership with the Bonmarche store in St Helens.

A recent quiz evening raised £700 which will be donated locally within St Helens.

Four St Helens members attended the Malta conference.

Members are looking forward to Team C activities in the New Year.

## BURY



Bury Soroptimists delegated publicity to an unusual couple recently—two scarecrows.

Jack and Jill were made by member Jean Foster for a local scarecrow festival with a theme of characters from children's stories or rhymes..

To promote Soroptimism, Jill was dressed in a blue Soroptimist "Ask me why I'm a Soroptimist" T-shirt supplied by President Joan Rees, and the pair had a pail filled with Soroptimist information leaflets.

The duo drew much interest from the members of the public visiting the scarecrows in the area and members hope the fun effort also educated people about SI.

Left: President Joan points out the merits of being a Soroptimist to Jill.

**Deadline for the next issue of the Leader: March 1, 2017**