



Region President Louise Parry

I have been looking back over the past 6 months and despite the restrictions, I have attended quite a few events, albeit virtually and I am gratified by how much the clubs have managed to achieve during the restrictions. I congratulate you all.

I want to say thank you again to Sue Challoner, and her colleagues for the play to mark the 100 years of Soroptimist International. It has been performed again, and recorded, and is now being seen across our Federation, as it should be.

I attended the UKPAC study day, virtually, and in the breakout rooms our project 'The Glass House' was discussed. There was a lot of interest in the project from other areas in the Federation. My congratulations for the forward thinking in this area, and for the continuing work being done.

My thanks also to Esther for organising our talk in Mental Health week from the National Garden of Wales, for which we were joined by members from South Wales. It is so nice to make new friends.



At our Regional Meeting on 5th June we have Federation President Johanna speaking in the 'Moving Forward' section, please do join us – still virtually for now.

Finally I hope that we will shortly be moving on from the restrictions of the pandemic to a more normal lifestyle. My wish, however, is that we will establish a 'New Normal' where women are enabled, educated and empowered and I look forward to working towards this for the rest of my year.

**Women inspiring action,
transforming lives**

Anglesey

President Gwenda Parry



My main priority this year is to bond the Club together following this horrid period away from each other.

As with my last period in the Chair, children still play an active role in my life and causes. My Theatre work days unfortunately are now behind me but it still runs healthily in my veins so organising and presenting skills are going to be used to their best advantage. I still work part time in the College but I now teach Independent Living Skills to young people with any form of physical, mental or emotional disability.

My theme for the year is Health and Wellbeing as I feel at this time in our lives we are in need of supporting others, and not forgetting ourselves through this difficult period. My greatest aim this year is to organise screening with the aid of C.R.Y (Cardiac Risk in the Young) which detect any abnormalities with the heart. This is hopefully going to avoid Sudden Death Syndromes in young people. If we can detect one person with a defective gene, it will have been worth it. For the Centenary, I have come up with an idea called Target 100 whereby everything will be done in multiples of 100 and we will fill in a square on our chart of 100 squares. This will cover activities, collections and achievements.

Some of the 300 used bras washed and dried by 6 members of SI Anglesey, which will be sent off to the Refugee Camp in Lebanon. Well done laundry girls.



Bangor & District



President Gudrun Reick

I was born in Germany and studied medicine at the Karl-Ruprecht University Heidelberg. I specialise in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and now work as a Consultant at Ysbyty Gwynedd Bangor. It is a great honour for me to be President of SI Bangor & District in this 100th Anniversary year of Soroptimists.

We will be supporting North Wales Life Trust and Women's Aid which is especially important during this pandemic.

Brave Shave - Gudrun raised over £1400 for Macmillan cancer services

- £1000 donated to Ty Gobaith from benevolent funds
- Mary's Meals-£340
- Masks, scrubs and uniform bags made for the local hospital
- Vicki raised in excess £1000 selling rainbow NHS mugs for the benefit of YG and Ysbyty Penrhos
- Prescriptions and food delivered to vulnerable people
- Donations sent to Nepal project and Water Aid
- Total Donation to YG Dementia services £2,600
- Cathedral Foodbank £660

TOTAL Donations- £4,500

Repurpose / Recycle / Reuse

- Alzheimer's Society benefitted from donations of bags of old jewellery
- Cash Cow donations -£321
- Duvets, pillows, warm clothing destined for refugees
- Children's books for Books 4 home
- Bric-a-Brac North Wales Blind shop
- Bottle tops for recycled furniture and can ring pulls for Purple Tear Fund
- Caren's knitted woolly hats for the homeless
- Mavis' knitted Angels
- Stamps collected for Dog's Trust
- Pendinas homeless hostel, Bangor - Winter monthly soup rota; Chocolates, scarves and woolly hats
- Women's refuge - Christmas hampers and toiletries

.....and finally,
a very fond farewell
to our
Honorary Member
Lucille Hughes



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Bebington

Our two Joint Presidents were voted into their positions at the Club's online AGM in April.



Debbie Moulding and Helen Byrne have held the roles previously and are looking forward to their year in office.

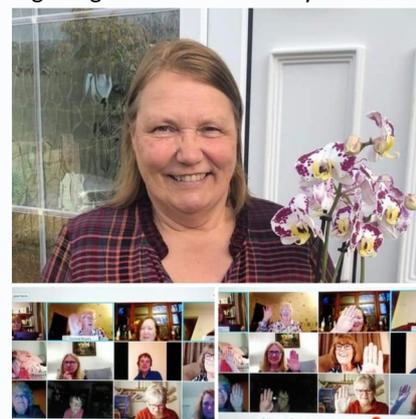
Their Presidents' Charity is OAKS school in Bo, Sierra Leone and fundraising plans are now underway including a sponsored walk which will be launched in May. It is 4,300 miles from Bebington to Bo and club members will be walking all of those miles throughout the year. A just Giving page will be set up where updates will be posted regularly.

Other Programme Action projects will be revived as lockdown restrictions ease.

As Soroptimists celebrate 100 years of action, friendship and fun, SI Bebington's activities for the year will be based on the number 100. We intend to make 100 gift bags for the parents with babies in the Neo-natal Unit at our local hospital; 100 toiletry items will be donated to **Rape And Sexual Abuse** service, and 100 bags of groceries will be donated to our local foodbank. Other ideas will emerge through the year and we look forward to turning them into reality with our fantastic team of club members and officers.

We are disappointed that the SIGBI Conference cannot go ahead as planned in Llandudno this year but we will work with our Region to support the online conference that is being planned to replace it. We send Soroptimists everywhere our very best wishes for a successful and enjoyable centenary year.

Immediate Past President Jane showing her gifts earlier in the day before our AGM



Birkenhead

S I Birkenhead Half yearly report:

Circumstances mean that we cannot meet in person at the moment. However we do have a WhatsApp group which is used regularly with videos, jokes and greetings which keep us all amused.

We also held our AGM on Zoom, very different from our usual AGM but we managed to work through our Agenda.



We continue to collect green milk bottle tops and also the drug blister packs to take to Superdrug in conjunction with Terra Cycle as suggested by S I Preston.

Chris, our programme action co-ordinator, got in touch with the Woodland Trust. We will be giving them a donation as they are creating new woods, protecting existing woods and restoring ancient woodlands.



Recently we met in Arrow Park to take photos of the copse and plaque where in 2008 we planted 75 trees for our 75th anniversary.

Although we have had some outdoor meetings in local parks, we are looking forward to the time when we can return to our normal venue for business and social meetings.

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Chester

The intrepid S I Chester Planet Group fought against all weathers (blazing sunshine!) to plant 36 trees in the King George V playing field in Christleton.



(L-R: Susan Haywood, Geraldine Garrs, Penny Danczak, Wendy Thompson)

This was done on 29 March 2021, when Covid restrictions were lifted enough for us to work as a socially distanced group of four and Wendy T, Penny, Geraldine and Susan worked tirelessly and good humouredly to reforest the nation as a part of our S I Centenary Year celebrations.

We planted 6 Acer Campestris, 10 Sorbus Aucuparia, 10 Prunus and 10 Betula in groups and linked with short rows. Each tree was supported with a cane and protected by a spiral, which would also aid the grass mower not to cut them down.

So much has happened since Debbie was instated as the President of S I Chester in October 2019. Our Club has survived and continued to meet throughout, not only with Club Meetings, but sub-groups, socials and Officer's meetings. Little did Debbie know that this would be one of her most challenging tasks, but the club sustained the objectives of Soroptimism, and in fact exceeded it by having speakers as far flung as India and by joining other Clubs and webinars. We even managed some fund raising, despite the odds.



We will all want to thank Debbie for her extended time as President – something she hadn't anticipated when she was handed the regalia.

Denbigh, Ruthin & District



**President
Mal Ward**

I took over the Presidency of our club just after the first lockdown in Wales when the word zoom was the noise traffic made as it rushed past!

We are a very small club totalling 11 members, mostly elderly and covering a large area.

Our first zoom meeting was attended by 3 members, eight months on everyone takes part which is wonderful considering our lack of IT skills!

We have continued making mastectomy cushions for our local cancer unit, supported 3 food banks, supplied cuddly toys to North Wales Police to comfort children after child abuse, supplied 53 bags, plus a donation to Mary's Meals, supported a Gambian teacher, sponsored a hospital in Ethiopia which is close to our hearts, nearer home supported DASU in Denbigh.

Our limited fundraising has included a member making and selling chutney, another member paying £10 for every cm her hair grew in lockdown (twice), a raffle during a zoom meeting and a quiz for International Women's Day.

Also, new initiatives include supporting Young Carers, North Wales Air Ambulance, to date we have 11 trees to plant, one for each member.

We've all stayed strong, sane and very good friends and can definitely see light at the end of the tunnel.

Because of lockdown, all our officers decided to continue for another year which made an easy and smooth transition at our AGM. President Mal and members send their good wishes to all for a better and brighter 2021

Ellesmere Port



**President
Dorothy Cartwright MBE**

I have been a member of S I Ellesmere Port and District for 36 years and I feel proud and privileged to have the honour of taking the club through the Centenary year of Soroptimist International

I am very proud of members past and present for the service they have given to the club and its projects since it was chartered in June 1943.

During my years as a member, I have held various Region Officer posts and was Region President in 1996 / 1967.

My theme for the year is "Women as Achievers. I will be inviting women who have achieved in whatever capacity to be my speakers for the year with current and past members amongst them.

In 2006 I was privileged and humbled to receive an MBE for my work in the Crown Courts.

The highlight of our year will be our Centenary lunch in November when we will be delighted to welcome Maureen Maguire International President Elect as our special guest.

The club looks forward to coming out of lockdown enabling us to work to our full capacity again " it's not been easy to achieve our goals ."

So, we intend to "celebrate all things Soroptimist." and have fun and friendship along the way.

Heswall & District

SI Heswall & District have plenty to celebrate after new **Presidents Cynthia Duggan and Jenny Wilson** were elected at their recent virtual AGM for 2021.



The club is also celebrating an exciting new venue for their meetings with a return to Heswall at Heswall Hall. The new Presidents are looking forward to resuming their twice monthly meetings as soon as Government guidelines allow.

Their chosen charities this year are Tomorrows Women Wirral, a centre looking after the welfare of women. Parkinson's Disease UK and Health Help International, an organisation providing medical equipment in Zambia and India.

With our return to Heswall, it brings to mind our inaugural meeting held in November, 1948. At the Spinning Wheel Café, 78 Telegraph Road.



Proprietor, Mrs Astin was elected founder member and the annual subscription was 2 guineas.

The Insignia was designed around the Spinning Wheel at a cost £50 to produce.

Llandudno & District

Janet Murfin

Will continue to be club President; we are hoping some of the meetings and events which she had planned for last year will go ahead.

Janet feels honoured to be President in the year that we celebrate the centenary of Soroptimism and plans to walk a total of 100 miles along the promenade in Llandudno to raise funds.



We continued to meet virtually for business and speaker meetings, including a representative of Feed the Minds, one of Janet's chosen charities, and Jasmin Ahmed, on MARAC with regard to modern slavery.

We held a virtual meeting with our friendship link club, SI Bombay Chembur who told us about their many projects supporting the local community during the pandemic, before the latest wave that is now affecting India. We have a combined virtual meeting with two friendship clubs, SI Sternberg-Herrsching in Germany and SI Belvedere Vienna planned in the near future. One of our members held a virtual pamper party which raised £200 for charities.

We have been fortunate to recruit a new member, Kelly Bowsher, who works locally as a funeral director. Kelly was involved in the funeral of a former club member and was interested to find out more about Soroptimists, contacted SIGBI, and subsequently joined at the AGM in April.

Some of us met Kelly recently when we took coffee and chairs to a local park for our first distanced in person catch up which was very pleasant.



Nantwich & District

- Celebrated Club's 71st Birthday with a Murder Mystery Play via Zoom raising over £200 for Macmillan Cancer Support.
- Dr Violet Pritchard was selected as one of this year's 4 inspirational women of Crewe in our #seeitbeit campaign.
- A Virtual Women's Day event was organised by Motherwell Cheshire – Women supporting Women, the theme being 'Choose to Challenge'. Opening speaker was Jackie Weaver!! There was a 'Jobs for the Girls' event where one of our members talked on what it is like being a female engineer, in a 'man's world'.
- Donated £2,500 to Cheshire Without Abuse raised from dinner donations and Masks made by one of the members.
- Donated 30 hot water bottles to YMCA for their families.
- Gave 60 Hot Water Bottles to Chance Changing Lives for women who said they couldn't afford to have their heating on all day.
- Supported foodbanks in cash and kind.
- Tracey Bentley, of Crewe YMCA, gave a presentation on helping women and families through these difficult times. A suggestion was brought to Club to purchase Slow Cookers to allocate to families in need.
- Sent cards of Kindness to Dementia sufferers. At Christmas members prepared cards in the form of an advent calendar for a local care home. Members included their memories of Christmas with questions to spark conversation amongst the residents.
- Members were invited to engage in acts of kindness in 'Random Acts of Kindness' week.
- Members are knitting blue squares & forget-me-nots to decorate benches and trees in Nantwich Square for Dementia Action Week.
- Working in Partnership with Morrison's and Crewe YMCA, supplied 100 Easter Eggs and chocolates for the children and mums of single parent families.



L-R Tracey Bentley Community Team Lead YMCA
Helen Piddock-Jones Nantwich SI
and Tracey Morgan from Morrisons

Northwich

SI Northwich currently has no President but the club executive committee has continued to meet virtually to plan project work. Members have been kept up to date through a very active regime of emails, phone calls and snail mail.

Members have used Zoom for social events such as an afternoon tea and the club AGM was also held via Zoom.

Since restrictions have eased on outdoor contact, members have been meeting in socially distanced groups: it is so good to speak face to face again!

The club has continued to support Motherwell with toiletries to be distributed to girls in the Winsford, Northwich and Crewe areas. The Mid Cheshire Foodbank received over 40kg of food items in March as well as a cash donation.

A new initiative came about through a contact with Transition Northwich who were asking for donations of empty crisp packets to be re-purposed to help the homeless. Macclesfield Crisp Blankets take the foiled packets and turn them into 'bivvie bags' for rough sleepers which can be used to keep clothes dry during the day and during the night use them as insulated sleeping bag covers.



The packets need to be split open, grease washed off and kept flat. Club member, Barbara Dean delivered packets to a collection point in Northwich.

Club members have knitted tiny baby hats for the neo natal unit at Leighton Hospital and donated Twiddlemuffs also at the request of the hospital.



To celebrate International Women's Day a Zoom coffee morning was held on March 6th and members joined events as part of the virtual Fair Trade festival (22nd February – 7th March) including online cookery demonstrations and a virtual tour of the Hadeel Craft Workshop in Bethlehem.

We are all looking forward to a face to face social meeting in July 'Prosecco and Strawberries'.

Rhyl & District



President Sylvia Bolshaw

It has been a difficult year, affecting so many people locally, nationally and worldwide. We will go forward with the challenges of this year. Hence my theme is 'Meeting the Challenges after COVID'.

Plans for the coming year will focus on lifting spirits, restoring our wellbeing, and supporting mental health.

For this purpose, it is intended to form a gardening group as an aid to recovery by way of promoting outside activity and creativity with flowers to bring peace and enjoyment.

Our aim now as a club will be to consider how the pandemic has affected women and girls who need our help, rebuilding trust for the future, and working for the needy.

We have had a visit to the famous Bodnant Gardens where we were able to walk outside, see the beauty of our natural world, enjoy the freedom of the open air, and glimpse the very famous Laburnum Arch, although not quite in flower.



Zoom sessions have been utilised as a way of staying in touch and providing an opportunity to discuss topics relating to Programme Action such as the 16 days of activism, at the same time observing awareness days and also receiving an invitation to join a club meeting with our Friendship Link, Crieff. Notes on these sessions have been distributed to all members.

Those who have been isolating have been supported by regular telephone calls, letters, offers to get in shopping and even on occasion supplying meals.

We continue to promote the work of Soroptimists through our Facebook page and now have 468 followers.

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Runcorn, Frodsham & District

A significant and very sad event for the Club has been the death of Noreen Yule in January.

Noreen was born and brought up in the North East of England where she also met and married Walter her long time 'Soroptimister' of 60 years. Noreen trained as a teacher and this was her career for all her working life.

In the early 1970's the family moved with three young children to Runcorn where they brought up their family and involved themselves in Runcorn life and Noreen became a member of Soroptimist International.

Noreen was a Club member for 35 years. She loved being a Soroptimist and was a wonderful support and an encouragement to so many in the Club and the Region, she served the club in many roles including Club President several times and in 1999 - 2000 was Region President. Noreen was a great organiser and her fundraising events for club projects were legendary. If you were to ask Noreen what was the best part of being a Soroptimist she would say 'the friendship' which both she and Walter valued greatly.

Being a Soroptimist was a huge part of Noreen's life and of who she was. For this reason, her family made the decision to ask for donations in her memory to be made to the Diamond Education Grant. The club were so pleased to hear recently that £2,500.00 was raised in her memory – a wonderful tribute to Noreen.



South Caernarfonshire

Once again the COVID pandemic has played with all our lives in the last 12 months but hopefully there is a light beginning to shine at the end of a long tunnel.

Like everyone else, our AGM was attended by members on a zoom meeting which ended with us all raising a glass to all Soroptimists around the globe.

We raised £320 for our local food bank at Christmas as they wanted cash not goods.

We gave a new mattress to a family to support the work Amethyst was doing with them following serious abuse.

Once again we have no impending Presidents, so as a Club two different members will chair our meetings once a month. This has worked well in the past with each pair choosing a speaker or an event for that month, and it provides a good variety for the members at each meeting.

We have been in touch with our schools around the Llyn Peninsula and they have more than welcomed the idea of local heritage fruit trees in the school gardens and fruit and cherry trees in and around "The Edible Trail" around the area. All trees are ordered ready for autumn planting, all our members having donated towards these.

Two of our members are putting the finishing touches to the centenary banner. As our Club encompasses such a spread out rural area, deciding on the final design was no mean feat, but we got there in the end!

Wallasey

No longer the large Club it once was, Members of SI Wallasey remain committed Soroptimists with all but one confirming membership renewal for another year: 12 in total.

All SIGBI essential roles are covered as well as others that enhance the Club's efficiency. We will carry on with a flexible and democratic management style i.e. without a Club president and ensuring all members have a clear say in how the Club functions.

During this last year of repeated lockdowns and social distancing, communication between members has been challenging as a huge part of being a Soroptimist is to work together and enjoy each other's company. Two newsletters, a report about the Federation Conference and the forwarding of key information have helped to keep members up-to-date: even if it means using 'snail mail' for those who don't use a computer. The telephone has even been used!

Mindful of the Covid 'rule of 6' and with Members approval, five Club Officers met in a garden during April for an AGM /planning meeting. Despite being a bit chilly, it was a successful meeting with some key ideas being agreed subject to Members approval.

We will continue to support Mary's Meals, Tomorrow's Women Wirral, and the local Foodbank but we need to do some fundraising first. Members of the Craft Group have knitted and sewn items ready for sale as soon as we can. We have, after all, had a bit of time on our hands.

