

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF CROSBY EIGHTY YEARS OF SERVICE

Our 80th anniversary year, **2018/2019**, would seem a good time to take stock of what has been achieved by Soroptimist International of Crosby since its formation just as the Second World War was about to cast a shadow over the lives of millions.

The decades since then have encompassed huge social change, especially in the position of women in society, along with a technological revolution and massive international upheaval and humanitarian crises.

Throughout it all Soroptimists in this country and abroad have been striving to improve the status of women near to home and in some of the poorest parts of the world. Through important and exciting projects they have given women and girls dignity and opportunities to enhance their lives and sometimes those of their families.

SI Crosby has always played an important role in the life of the local community as well, supporting women whose lives are blighted by domestic violence to rebuild their lives, improving life for the elderly and people who are coping with disability while also inspiring young girls to reach for the stars in their careers and realise there are no gender barriers to what they can achieve.

Pausing to look back on our past 80 years gives some insight into what has been achieved by SI Crosby and its members working together in an atmosphere of friendship spurred on by the desire to bring about change.

Sometimes we all feel helpless in the face of the world's problems. Belonging to SI Crosby gives us the opportunity to make a difference.

President Sheila Chatterton's message for 2018/19:

Crosby Soroptimists this year celebrate 80 years of striving to transform the lives of women and girls around the globe. I am honoured and thrilled to be President during this special year and look forward to working on our projects with our Club members.

We will continue to work locally in the community supporting Sefton Women's and Children's Aid, the Foodbank and Age Concern Crosby by our support for the luncheon club. Further afield, we hope that we can make a difference to reduce trafficking and modern-day slavery by raising awareness about this terrible scourge.

My chosen charity is one very close to home and my heart – Sefton Young Carers. The support that young carers give to their families is inspirational and I know, from being an adult carer, the demands that must be being placed on young shoulders.

Soroptimism has given me the opportunity to give service and make a difference locally, nationally and internationally, and to have fun and friendship on the way, as we work together on projects and organise social events

THE MILLENNIUM YEARS

1999 - 2005

Colette Connell was installed as president in April, **1999** and an outstanding event of the year was a visit to the House of Commons with a tour of the Palace of Westminster with lunch and tea on The Terrace.

The club's fund-raising and service activities were also successful. Members helped to entertain a group of children from Chernobyl with a visit to Heatwaves Swimming Pool and a barbecue party, sponge bags were filled for SWACA (Sefton Women's and Children's Aid) and, at the end of President Colette's year, the club had 50 members.



President Colette with immediate past president Shirley Smith and First Vice President (now termed President-Elect) Norma Marshall

In **2000/01** the Blundellsands Hotel, where the club had held its meetings for more than 50 years, was rapidly closed and sold to be redeveloped as a retirement complex. Various venues were considered for club meetings with Streatham House being the favoured choice.

Funds were raised for local good causes with President Norma Marshall taking club members to her old school, Merchant Taylors' Girls' for a gala concert with Liverpool Male Voice Choir conducted by club member Doreen Forbes. The £520 raised was put towards the purchase of a vehicle for Crosby Old Peoples' Welfare (later to become Age Concern) Housebound club to take old folk on outings, holidays and to lunch club. There was also support for the Operation Christmas Child shoebox appeal. The value of the Miss Milton Prize was raised to £50.



President Norma left presents a cheque to Peg Malley and Edna Gaskin, longstanding stalwarts of Crosby OPW (seated) with back row from left, Fundraising Chairman Jane Daly and club representatives for OPW Shirley Higgs and Clare Baxter. Shirley went to become administrator for OPW

The club sponsored a schoolgirl from Malawi, Minor Kumwenda, through Plan International and undertook to contribute to her education and wellbeing until she reached the age of 16. A donation was sent to a fund for those suffering the effects of flooding in Gdansk, Poland and another went to President Margaret Yarwood's chosen charity Ovacome, which helps those suffering from ovarian cancer. She chose to raise awareness about ovarian cancer in memory of a friend who had died of the disease.

President Margaret also wanted to draw attention to the difficulties faced by young carers and nominations were invited for a local Young Carer of the Year award. This was presented to a student of Chesterfield High School who cared for her mother and still managed to shine at school.

Members gathered for a photograph with the club tablecloth, which contains the signatures of past presidents, which is used at each club meeting. Honorary member Peg Malley, had been responsible for the embroidery of names, since she joined the club in **1942**.



President Margaret Yarwood, fourth from left back row with from left, Norma Marshall, Shirley Smith, Elspeth Cooper, Marion Howel, Dawn Patterson, Pam Stubbs, Stella Atherton and Marjorie Lawley. Front from left, Irene Emlyn, Pat Murphy, Peg Malley, Edna Gaskin, Jane Daly

Club members turned tourists and enjoyed a bus tour of Liverpool with a Blue Badge Guide, rounding off the evening with a good pub meal.

President Eileen Taylor's year, **2002/2003**, saw the club host a most ambitious programme action day-long event 'You Can Do It' at the Linda McCartney Education Centre of the Royal Liverpool University Hospital. Organised by Ann McCracken this was an inspirational call to young women from seven Sefton Schools who were invited to hear from successful women – including our then local MP Claire Curtis Thomas, herself a Soroptimist, about how they had each made their way to the top of their chosen careers. The students were then invited to take part in workshops. The event received much publicity with interviews on Radio Merseyside and articles in the Liverpool Echo and the Crosby Herald, which devoted a whole page to its coverage.



Ann Dickinson with her MBE

A request for information about how much voluntary work was done by club members, in addition to their Soroptimist duties, came up with an impressive total of 311 hours per month.

As the decade progressed, club continued to expand its activities in the community. Girls between 15 and 18 were invited to a Fitness and Fun event to improve their general fitness. It attracted about 150 young women. Not to be outdone, President Pam Higgins undertook a 23-mile sponsored walk and attended the Liverpool Club's charter dinner the same evening!

Ann Dickinson went to Buckingham Palace in December, **2005**, to receive an MBE.

A longstanding member – Marjorie Lawley – was granted honorary membership in recognition of her 45 years of service.

The first signs of the increasing importance of information technology were recognised – club members visited 3tc, an IT and resource centre and a committee was mooted to investigate the possibility of an SI Crosby website.

In a special gesture to mark club's close relationship with Sefton Women's and Children's Aid a donation of £3,000 was made to the charity in **2006**. The relationship owed much to former presidents Dawn Patterson and Pam Stubbs and SWACA named its purpose-built centre Dawn House in acknowledgement of Dawn and club's support.

Over the years there have been many enjoyable club outings including pamper breaks, Gawsworth Hall open air concerts and a visit to the Stoneyhurst Flower Festival and the National Arboretum. The popular Spirit of Christmas Concert at the Philharmonic Hall has become an annual event as has the annual Christmas fund-raising journey around local roads with the Rotary Club of Crosby carol float.

As time went by a venue for meetings had been a matter of much discussion and after periods at Streatham House, Crossroads and the Northern Club, a move to West Lancashire Golf Club was agreed. The new venue was booked from January, **2005**, and this has been our comfortable meeting place since then.

Just before Jenny Stanistreet finished her year in office a temporary charity shop was set up for one Saturday in Crosby Village and sales from donated goods raised £750. Customers asked why it could not become a permanent feature in the village. It certainly opened members' eyes to the art of shoplifting.

2006/2010

As the Club entered the year **2006/2007**, meetings rang out with music of every kind and secrets were revealed as President Ann McCracken invited members to choose a piece of music which meant something special to them. At the start of each meeting members would listen to the music and the story behind each choice. Ann surprised everyone by compiling a CD of all the music and giving each member a copy. Her own favourite? Dancing Queen, of course. It was a novel idea which brought fun, laughter, tears and memories.

Club also raised its profile that year when the landmark billboard at the junction of Haigh Road and Crosby Road North, Waterloo, was emblazoned with the Soroptimist name and logo. It certainly drew attention to our organisation.

The SI Crosby website went live in **2006** with Crosby being an early adopter of a website using SIGBI's template.

President Julie Nadin came into office in April, **2007**, at a time of great excitement on Merseyside. Liverpool was celebrating the 800th anniversary of the granting of its Charter and preparing for the city's year as 2008 Capital of Culture

The club was well represented in London that year: Dr Maggie Tatam completed the London Marathon and Pat Murphy was invited to Downing Street as a guest of Tony and Cherie Blair.

Pat also saw success winning a category in the Merseyside Women of the Year Awards and was invited by David Alton to lunch at the House of Lords as a thank you for her work with Jospice and the wider community.

The club website, managed by Jenny Stanistreet, was now firmly established.



Cynthia Ashworth demonstrates her skills as saleswoman

Jenny also set up Baggatelles – a small Programme Action project to make and sell bags. The aim was to help safeguard the environment by reducing the number of plastic bags in circulation and to fundraise. Linen vegbags and colourful heavy cotton tote-bags proved popular and sold at club, regional meetings and many other events. As time went by SI Crosby's "bag ladies" expanded their enterprise to include other items. All proceeds from the sale of Baggatelles (**2007-11**) went to SI's quadrennial Project Sierra: A Family and A Future. Members raised £1,111. Since then Club has donated proceeds to Sefton Women's and Children's Aid (SWACA)

A contingent from club took part in the Hospice Midnight Ladies' Walk in pouring rain and their sponsorship contributed towards the £60,000 raised for the hospice. Help was also given to the Waterloo Partnership through the collection and packing of household items and other goods into a container which was sent to Waterloo in Sierra Leone.

In preparation for club's **70th** platinum year members took an interest in resurrecting the relationship with the Crosby Festival of Music and Dancing and at the **60th** Festival in 2008 club sponsored four bursaries (one for each discipline) at £70 each. President Julie attended the Open Piano Class, for which Crosby Soroptimists had originally provided a prize, met the winner and then attended the prize-winners' concert. Members took up the invitation to help with stewarding at future festivals.



President Pat making the first presentation of the Tricia Fahey Cup

Pat Williams, president in the club's Platinum anniversary year **2008/9**, continued the club's involvement in important events such as Sefton No Limits, the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Five Lamps on Remembrance Sunday and the presentation of the Soroptimist trophy to a talented young musician at the Crosby Festival of Music and Dance. She was especially proud to make the inaugural presentation of the Tricia Fahey Cup to the highest individual scorer (and non-league player) in the South Lancs Regional Inter Club Bowls competition.

The cup was named in honour of Tricia, who was club president in **1985/86** and Federation president in **1995/96**, and marked the **20th** anniversary of the tournament she started.

Club members clocked up many service hours helping Jospice send its first container to its overseas hospice in Honduras. Packed with goods of all shape and size including a tall statue of St Joseph, which had to be wrapped in many yards of bubble wrap, the container and its contents were very well received and put to good use.

March, 2009, saw members creative sides come to the fore with the costumes produced for the Murder Mystery fundraiser with the theme "The War Years". A photograph from the event, organised by Linda Glenn, certainly showed members in a new light.



L-R Terry Francis, Eileen Taylor, Shirley Smith, Miriam Lucy, Helen Pfeiffer, Yvonne Atkinson and Cynthia Ashworth



President Pat with representatives of Sefton Council and club members

The panoramic plaque on the seafront at Blundellsands was re-installed after its refurbishment. It is still there today though now perhaps in need of some TLC.

The Platinum anniversary celebrations included a successful club visit to London to the House of Commons and an evening performance of The Jersey Boys.



President Pat Williams, seated left with Tricia Fahey. MP Clare Curtis-Thomas is pictured centre back

Crosby Soroptimists began its association with Lions in **2008**. A joint effort with Lions, Rotary and ourselves, culminated in a successful barbecue for the visually impaired. Each year since we have helped provide some of the food and members use their cars to transport some of the guests to and from the event.

2009/10

One Voice was the theme chosen by Doreen Forbes for her year as president. As musical director of Liverpool Male Voice Choir she was delighted to bring along the choristers to sing at the club's Charter Dinner at Formby Hall Golf Club. Proceeds from popular concerts given by the choir also helped raise money for club donations to Jospice, Project Sierra and Water Aid.



Regional president Jenny with her predecessor, Sriya Kulupana

That same year saw former club president Jenny Stanistreet become president of SI South Lancashire Region. A celebration party, hosted by SI Crosby at Christ Church Hall, Waterloo, was attended by representatives from clubs throughout the region. Highlights of her year included judging at SI Liverpool's Public Speaking Competition and compering the SI St Helens Macmillan coffee morning at Knowsley Hall. This annual event is attended by hundreds of Soroptimists and friends from across the region. Jenny also enjoyed working in partnership with SI Cheshire/Wirral and North Wales region and the International Slavery Museum to promote SI's quadrennial "Project Sierra: a family and a future" to mark the **50th** anniversary of independence in Sierra Leone. Jenny clocked up more than 4,000 miles over her regional president's year attending dinners and events.

The Mary's Meals Backpack Project was spotted by Terry Francis and Shirley Smith at a stall at the **2009** Federation Conference in Cardiff. The project seemed to be so simple. The charity supports schoolchildren by providing a daily meal in their place of education and a backpack containing clothing, footwear and educational items. Approval was sought by PAC from the club to support the project.



Maggie Tatam had an unusual start to her year of office in April, **2010**. Intrepid traveller Maggie was marooned in Mumbai, India, because of the Icelandic ash cloud. She was unable to return in time for the annual general meeting and her installation was postponed until May. It was certainly an action-packed year with more than £5,000 being raised for club charities. Maggie kindly contributed to the total by offering the use of her cabin in the Lake District and donating the hire fee to club

The first Mary's Meals Backpack evening was held at the Formby home of Pat Usher.

Club's involvement with Age Concern Crosby, previously Crosby OPW, increased with members agreeing to help at the weekly Wednesday lunch club at Christ Church, Waterloo. The club was in danger of closing because of a lack of volunteers and members agreed to step in to help while Jane Daly became a trustee. Club members continued to help at the Spring coffee morning and summer fair, selling raffle tickets, baking cakes and donating mystery parcels.

The "Clear eyes, full hearts – can't lose" was president Sandy Taylor's theme for her year in **2011/12**. Sandy's chosen charity was Sightline North West but support was also given to research being carried out by the cardiac team at Alder Hey Children's Hospital where Sandy's granddaughter had received treatment.



Busy stripping wallpaper are from left Norma Marshall, Shirley Smith, Sandy Taylor, Pat Williams and Maggie Tatam

Practical help was also delivered at Ronald McDonald House with members helping to decorate rooms where families can stay while their children are in hospital. Festive hampers were also filled for families who would be using the rooms over the Christmas holidays. It was a Programme Action project which made a huge difference to the lives of others.

Past president, retired GP Maggie Tatam was chosen to help alongside medics as volunteers at the London **2012** Olympics.

Club members helped organise a celebration for the Queen's diamond jubilee. Local senior citizens who attended Age Concern's three lunch clubs enjoyed a three-course lunch and entertainment by soprano Claire Hyams, accompanied on the piano by club member Ann Dickinson, who had recently returned from a garden party at Buckingham Palace.



The club's bowlers won the **2012** team trophy in the regional bowls competition after a fiercely competitive tournament. Club captain, Shirley Smith, pictured left, was delighted to accept the trophy from Regional President Denise Baldwin.

Four members received the accolade of honorary membership (Shirley Smith, Norma Marshall, Pat Usher and Jenny Stanistreet) and were presented with their badges by Sandy.

President Yvonne Atkinson's year (**2012/13**) saw a great many service hours in October spent on the preparation and filling of a second container to be sent to Jospice overseas hospice in Honduras. The whole community came together to donate, clothes, toys, play equipment, office furniture, hospital equipment with members taking on the onerous task of sorting, checking and logging

items. It was hard – and often cold, grubby work, but the ultimate reaction at the hospice, where the container arrived before Christmas, was well worth it.



President Yvonne at Sialkot Hospital, Pakistan

In January, **2013**, Yvonne made an emotional return to Pakistan – 34 years on. A newly-qualified midwife in the 1970s Yvonne worked in the Memorial Christian Hospital, Sialkot, Pakistan as Midwifery Tutor.

After a long career in the UK health service Yvonne re-visited the hospital and even made contact with some of her former students, two of whom now had senior positions, one as Director of Nursing and one as principal of the School of Nursing.

Yvonne was delighted when club agreed to choose the school as one of its charities for the year and made a donation of £1,500 towards the cost of improving and updating teaching materials.

The first friendship visit to Sigdal in Norway took place with twelve Crosby members meeting up with Scandinavian sisters from SI Kalundborg, Denmark and the new friendship link of SI Falkenberg, Sweden.



Soroptimists who took part in the first ever four-way Scandinavian friendship link weekend pictured in Prestfoss, Norway.

Yvonne helped establish a link with SI Keighley whose member Jean Gee came to speak at the club's charter dinner about its project - Soroptimists and Mothers of Eastwood - helping women originating from Pakistan and Bangladesh meet together in a social setting with local Soroptimists. SI Keighley went on to become a friendship link with SI Crosby.

Yvonne dedicated her year to the memory of Miss Ethel Jones, who had been her head teacher at the former Crosby Manor Girls' School and a much-respected member and past president of SI Crosby.

2013/14

Terry Francis was president in the club's 75th year **2013/14** and celebrations started with a party at St Michael's Church hall attended by the South Lancashire regional president Liz McConnell and members of our mother club, Liverpool and sister clubs, Southport and Bootle.

Terry's theme for the year was "Food for Thought – Food for the Body, Food for the Mind". Three good causes which came to the fore were the Book Bus which provides books for children in the developing world; Sefton Green Gym, a community allotment and the Crosby area Foodbank which gives emergency food supplies to people who are going through difficult times. Members' donations of non-perishable items, brought to meetings, are taken to the Foodbank. Club also donated two large vacuum flasks to enable clients to have a hot drink while collecting their supplies.

The club's link with Lions continued with members' involvement at the barbecue for the visually impaired. Members also took a stall at the Lions' annual carnival where they helped man one of the gates, initiatives which helped raise club awareness and charity funds.

Activities continued with a friendship visit to Sweden in June, a first to SI Falkenberg. Once again members of our two other Scandinavian friendship clubs joined in making our four-way club link a great success.

Members were to meet up again in September when SI Crosby hosted its own anniversary friendship weekend at CHET. Twenty-three Scandinavian Soroptimists (from Denmark, Norway and Sweden) travelled to Crosby with most staying in members' homes and a small party staying at the Royal Hotel. Two dinners, impromptu entertainment, particularly that from Falkenberg Soroptimists accompanied by Margareta Lagnell on the ukulele, were great fun. There was a coach trip around Liverpool with Blue Badge guide Hilary Oxlade and a lunch hosted by the Scandinavian Church in Liverpool. The weekend concluded with a Sunday morning visit to the Gormley statues on Crosby beach and a photo call from which pictures featured in a full-page article in the Crosby Herald. Club expressed its thanks to CHET for the free use of its facilities without which the weekend would not have been such a resounding success.



The opening evening of the friendship weekend at CHET



President Terry with the Scandinavian presidents meeting one of Anthony Gormley's Iron Men

There was club triumph on the bowling greens with club bowlers winning the team trophy and a further trophy haul with club winning the Regional President's Rosebowl Challenge for its SWACA 'grab bags' project.



A typical bag packing evening for Mary's Meals

Support for the Mary's Meals Project continued apace and members packed a total of 43 backpacks for children in Malawi.

Club's friendship link with SI Keighley was cemented with a visit to support its International Women's Day event. Five members attended the evening function organised by SAME – Soroptimists and Mothers of Eastwood – where guests enjoyed dishes cooked by women, mainly of Pakistani origin and cakes made by Keighley Soroptimists.

There was classical Indian dancing and a display of Bollywood dancing with Soroptimists encouraged to take part.



President Terry with Frank Cottrell Boyce and regional president Victoria Smerdon

A good year was crowned when Terry welcomed author and scriptwriter Frank Cottrell Boyce to be the speaker at the club's **2014** Charter Dinner.

In 2014/15 there were than more than 40 members in club. President Pam McKee chose to support SWACA and Mary's Meals and the charity Thrive at 5, an initiative to help children develop their reading skills. She welcomed inspirational speakers to a very successful half-day conference at the Hightown Club. With the theme "It's a Matter of Survival" its aim was to raise awareness of FGM and of domestic violence and abuse. The speakers were from women's aid organisations, the police, victims of abuse and forced marriage and medical practitioners who help women who suffer from the lasting effects of FGM.

Club continued its support for CHET running the tearoom during the Open Garden afternoon serving hundreds of slices of cake and scones to visitors.

Crosby Festival of Music and Dancing, which Club had supported, ceased operation and the Soroptimist Trophy was eventually returned to Club.



The joint project with the Rotary Club of Crosby to refurbish the memorial in Alexandra Park culminated in a service of re-dedication at which principal guests included the Earl of Derby, the Mayor of Sefton and Frank Cottrell Boyce. Members were out in force to help at the ceremony and at the afternoon tea which followed.



The first club visit in 17 years to SI Kalundborg in Denmark took place in August.

December saw members take to the roads of Thornton with the Rotary Carol Float and help out at the St Joseph's Hospice Association Light Up a Life Service.

In March club welcomed Margareta Lagnell and Margareth Johansson from our friendship link SI Falkenberg on a flying visit to attend one of our club meetings and report back upon our activities to their Swedish club members.

Jane Daly was made an honorary member in recognition of 40 years of service to the club and received her honorary members badge from President Pam.

2015/2018

Club continued to put Programme Action at the heart of its endeavours in President Margaret Cole's 18-month term of office which began in April, **2015**. There were several round-table discussions at club meetings about PAC projects, which existing ones should be continued and which new ones considered. A working template was adopted for future use. It clearly set out how our projects align with the SI Programme Objectives and Focus areas and how future speakers might help increase our awareness of them.

We held a Girl Talk evening with tickets priced at £12.20, the cost of feeding a child for a year with Mary's Meals; a garden party at the home of Patsy Worth and a fundraising pamper party for Look Good Feel Better. We provided toiletry bags, gifts and clothes for vulnerable families and sizeable donations of food for the local Foodbank. Practical help with the Age Concern Crosby lunch clubs continued and several members joined the board of trustees. The CHET open garden afternoon and the Jospice teddy bears picnic saw Soroptimists teams out in force helping with refreshments.

The weather was kind for a garden party at the home of president-elect Annette Hughes. A grand total of £600 was raised for the Meru Garden Project.

Fourteen members travelled to the National Arboretum in August to meet up with the club's oldest UK friendship link, SI Chichester and District. Its long-standing friendship link officer Mollie Fisher arranged a lunch and a talk about the arboretum before members of both clubs posed for a photograph by the flowering cherry tree planted in memory of Sheila Peate. Sheila was the sister-in-law of Moira Peate (Crosby president **1978/9**) and it was through both their efforts the friendship link between the clubs was formed. Former Crosby member Reidunn Green travelled from her new home in Aylesbury, to take part in the visit. The group also visited the Soroptimist International Garden. Also within the magnificent grounds of the national memorial, a tree has been planted in memory of much loved past Club president and Federation president Patricia Fahey, who sadly passed away in August, **2011**.



Members SI Crosby and SI Chichester members at the Arboretum pictured by the flowering cherry tree

The club's bowlers enjoyed considerable success winning the Regional Inter-club bowls team trophy while Joan Spencer, won the Tricia Fahey Cup, awarded to the highest individual scorer.

A large contingent from club travelled to Glasgow to the Federation conference to support Margaret Emsley as she was installed as Federation president and to watch as Sandy received her chain of office as regional president. On the way the party stopped off to tour the headquarters of Mary's Meals. Two cheques, together totalling £4,963.46 which included match-funding from the Government and £750 via Pat Williams from Barclays, were handed over by President Margaret and by Terry Francis who had been the driving force behind the club's back pack collections and fund-raising initiatives for Mary's Meals.



To celebrate Sandy's regional presidency an afternoon tea party took place in December at CHET to which representatives of all the clubs in the region were invited.

The Christmas Carol float tour around Thornton also took place in December with members once again enjoying post tour refreshments at the home of president-elect Annette Hughes.



Collection tins at the ready

2016 was a busy one with regard to our friendship links. There was a get-together with SI Keighley members at Boundary Mill, Colne, followed by a lunch at the Alma Inn overlooking the moors. Then in April it was off to Bruges to meet with our three Scandinavian friendship links at a neutral venue, where no single club had to take on the cost of hosting a weekend. While several members flew to Brussels, a dozen travelled in style by Eurostar for the four-day visit attended by nearly 40 Soroptimists.



Members of our 4-way friendship link in Bruges

A few months later SI Joondaloo, near Perth, a club which had been visited by Sandy Taylor when she was on holiday in Australia, became the club's newest friendship link. Sadly, it was farewell to the friendship link with SI Chichester which closed because of falling numbers. Some members transferred to SI Gosport, while others opted for Linked membership.



International Women's Day **2016** was marked with a visit to the new Royal Liverpool University Hospital site. A small party, pictured left, donned hard hats and was allowed access to the area earmarked for a 'crisis room' for victims of violence which Crosby, Liverpool, Southport and Bootle clubs had agreed to jointly fund as a Programme Action project within the focus area of healthcare.

There was excellent support from SI Crosby members for the **2016** Regional Conference over which Sandy presided at the Radisson Hotel Liverpool.

May also saw a visit to HMP Styal prison restaurant 'The Clink' at which meals are cooked and served by women inmates. Organised by club Programme Action officer Helen Pfeiffer the visit enabled members to see at first hand the results of the training which women prisoners receive to prepare them for rehabilitation into their communities, on their release.

Plans had begun early in the summer for a new Programme Action project, the hosting of a half-day conference to encourage girls from local secondary schools to engage more in STEM - science, technology, engineering and maths.

President-elect Annette Hughes, who works in her family engineering firm in Liverpool, and whose daughter Amanda is an aeronautical engineer, had been inspired by the challenge issued to clubs by Federation president Margaret Emsley. Margaret, a structural and civil engineer and university academic, believed Soroptimists, who are committed to women's education and employment, could do more to encourage girls to consider the sciences for GCSEs, A-levels and higher education to help them pursue careers in STEM disciplines.



*Speaker Jessica Jones, a microbiologist,
at the STEM conference*

A date was set for **September 28th 2016** and young women, most below the age of 30, were invited to speak at the conference about their current roles, the subjects they had studied and how they had made their career choices. Pupils were also given the opportunity to question speakers further when they dispersed into smaller groups in the function suite of Crosby Comrades club. The event enabled the girls to find out more about careers in aerospace, microbiology, mechanical engineering, construction, biomedical science, optics and optometry. There was also a science activity corner arranged by Margaret Davidson which challenged the pupils to have fun with Lego construction, aerodynamic paper planes, photochromic lenses and a host of other materials.

The afternoon was hailed a great success by the five local schools and their pupils, by Margaret Emsley who attended and by visiting Soroptimists, some of whom from Warrington used the Crosby event as a template for their own STEM conference the following year.

Crosby members agreed that the conference should become an annual Programme Action event.

In October Margaret Cole handed over the chain of office to Annette Hughes who began her 18-month term as president.



The Federation Conference took place in Malta where Sandy Taylor, pictured left, met the President of Malta. She said she felt privileged so attend the Remembrance Service on the island which was awarded the George Cross for courage and bravery during the Second World War. A contingent from Club watched as Margaret Emsley and Sandy handed over their respective chains of office having both enjoyed successful terms of office

Support for local good causes continued apace with club welcoming Ruth McCaughley of the White Chapel Centre to talk about the organisation's work in combatting homelessness in Liverpool. Ruth received a donation from club as did Crosby Youth Centre, which put the money towards the purchase of much needed equipment.



Crosby youth centre members receive a cheque from President Annette and Patsy Worth



Girl Guide Hannah Thompson, pictured left with president-elect, Sheila Chatterton, impressed members when she came to give a talk about her proposed trip to Nepal in support of the Classrooms in the Clouds project. The UK-based charity builds classrooms and supports teachers in remote villagers in Nepal. Club and individual members were able to give Hannah a donation towards her costs and she promised to come back and give a talk about her trip.

September saw the hosting of the club's second half-day STEM conference at the Comrades Club. Some of the original young women speakers were joined by new faces who were able to inspire the teenage pupils from local schools who had come along to learn more about careers in STEM disciplines. It was extra special for President Annette to welcome her daughter Amanda as one of those speakers.

Honorary membership was conferred upon Ann Dickinson who received her badge and certificate from Annette. Handing over the chain of office Annette reflected upon what she described as a very busy term of office.

A more than usual air of celebration surrounded President Sheila Chatterton's inauguration as president for **2018/2019**. For not only was it the club's 80th anniversary year- Sheila herself was due to celebrate her own 80th birthday.

Her year began with a unique event at the Artists Club in Eberle Street, Liverpool. The private members' club has a strict 'gentleman only' policy at its premises where it has been since 1889. But the rule book was thrown out of the window to allow 40-plus members of SI Crosby and guests to hold the first women's luncheon there.



President Sheila with Helen and Uli

It all came about thanks to member Helen Pfeiffer whose husband Dr Uli Pfeiffer was that year's President of the Artists Club. The popular retired GP and Honorary German Consul for Liverpool arranged the lunch as part of SI Crosby's 80th celebrations. He also gave a talk to members on the history of the Artists Club which was formed to give artists the opportunity to meet with businessmen in convivial surroundings.

To add to the feel-good factor, the 80th charter dinner was held on the same day as the wedding of Prince Harry to his American bride Meghan Markle in a memorable ceremony at Windsor, watched by millions all over the world. A great campaigner for opportunity and equality for women, Meghan had expressed the view that often women knew what they wanted to say but sometimes needed a voice to express their views. This immediately struck a chord with President Sheila who said in her presidential speech that she was proud that Soroptimism gave women that very voice. A highlight of her dinner was a performance by the Liverpool Signing Choir with members and guests joining in.



President Sheila, with regional president, Margaret Davies, cutting the 80th anniversary cake, made by Pauline Clark

Sheila's charity for her year of office was Sefton Young Carers. Her aim was not only to raise funds but to draw attention to the heavy responsibility their role can lay on young shoulders. As Sheila launched her campaign, it attracted the interest of a young member of the catering staff at West Lancs Golf Club, Dawn Dodd. She has been a young carer for her mother since childhood. She quickly became interested in the club's campaign to raise funds and raise awareness about the work of young carers - and to Sheila's delight, she was eventually welcomed into the Club as our youngest member.



Discussions began about the future of the Club's presidential regalia and a sub-committee was set up to discuss and make recommendations to the executive. The President wears a heavy enamelled medallion suspended (**since 1991-2**) from a chain containing the name-bars of presidents from **1938** to **1999**. More recent presidents' name-bars are sewn on a separate blue Petersham ribbon. The medallion features elements of the coat of arms of the old Crosby Borough Council (**1937 -1974**) –a cross patee, a wreath, a demi griffin and the motto "vis unita fortiori" (power united is stronger)

Another highlight of Sheila's busy year was to lead a reunion with old friends from Soroptimist clubs in Scandinavia for a friendship weekend in Glasgow. The president and several members of SI Glasgow accepted an invitation to attend as did former Crosby member Reidunn Green.



Crosby members, with Scandinavian Soroptimists at the Glasgow friendship weekend

Sheila's year was certainly action-packed. The Federation Conference was held in Liverpool in October, with Sheila leading a large contingent of Crosby members in taking an active part in the event.



The cast of Ello Ello

In November club members showed off their comic genius and theatrical talents in an Ello Ello fundraiser which as well as being a fun night raised funds for Sefton Young Carers.

In February, Club went on to hold another STEM event for local girls, encouraging them to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and maths. As well as the overall success of the day, club enjoyed a publicity coup with member Steph Stephenson, the Head of Human Resources at Jaguar Landrover Halewood, being invited to speak on Radio Merseyside alongside one of the STEM speakers, Danielle Flynn. Danielle, a higher apprentice, combines work at the Halewood plant with her studies at the University of Warwick and is a STEM ambassador as well as being the holder of two Apprentice of the Year Awards. Steph was able to promote Soroptimism and its Programme Action work locally and globally in the discussion surrounding STEM.



Steph and Danielle in the Radio Merseyside studio



President Sheila thanking members for the lovely surprise party

And to round off the 80th year, a surprise afternoon tea party was organised by club members, as a “thank you” to Sheila for her hard work in making her year such a success, despite difficult personal circumstances.

As the decades have gone by and the world has changed dramatically, SI Crosby has succeeded in following its early guiding principles of transforming the lives of women and girls in this country and around the Globe. Like Soroptimists in other countries, our club has been adaptable, keeping pace with the swiftly moving technological, social and cultural changes of recent decades without sacrificing any of its early aims and ideals.

As President Sheila said so eloquently, Soroptimism gives us the opportunity to give service and make a difference locally, nationally and internationally, and importantly to have fun and friendship along the way as we work together on projects that change the lives of others.

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