



Soroptimist Times

January 2014

Celebration lunch

At the joint Christmas celebration/International day lunch in December, we were joined by special guests Lord Mayor Gary Millar and our new regional President, Victoria Smerdon. The candle lighting reminded us all of the truly



international nature of Soroptimism. This was followed by a cold buffet, a raffle with a wealth of prizes and then entertainment.

The beautiful singing from the award-winning Chamber choir of Archbishop Beck Sports College was most impressive. Guests tried to rival it with a very active rendition of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', although laughter did get the better of us!

Go Orange!

Members wore orange at the November club meeting to mark sixteen days of Activism against Gender Violence, lasting from the 25th of November to *Human Rights Day* in December. One in three women have experienced gender violence in their lifetime.



INSIDE.....

Cologne visit

Flower arranging

Conference Virgin

Dates to note

and much more....



"We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right."

**Nelson Mandela
(1918-2013)**

Women inspiring action.....Transforming lives



Flower Power raises funds



We recently hosted a flower arranging demonstration in aid of President Anne's local charities. June, from Hartley's Nurseries in Lydiate, not only entertained us with her demonstration skills but she kept everyone amused with her tales of her family's exploits. While her daughter's wedding day got off to a disastrous start, at least June could now laugh and had us laughing with her! At the end of the evening, all of the beautiful floral creations were raffled off. The sixteen winners were not the only lucky ones: local charities also benefitted by £544!



Soroptimist's Wreath at Cenotaph

Remembrance Sunday found six members of the club accepting the invitation to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph at St Georges Hall. The multi-faith Service of Remembrance, the two minutes silence, the processions to lay the wreaths and the final veterans and armed forces parade, made for a very moving occasion. President Anne laid a wreath on behalf of the Club. Anne said: "We remember and honour all those of past and present conflicts who have

suffered in the cause of freedom. In the words of the Kohima Message: "When you go home, tell them of us and say for your tomorrow, we gave our today."



In 1928, at the request of Liverpool Lord Mayor Margaret Beavan, a Soroptimist, the Club undertook the work of organising the very first Poppy Day. The Royal British Legion took on the task in future years.

ACTIVE 8

Please remember to bring donations to meetings:

- food items for the Food Bank.
- any loose change
- old towels for a homeless shelter
- Quality items for raffle prizes

Can you Volunteer?

- to help in maintaining planters at railway stations- please see Mary Andrews.
- to sit with 'end of life' patients- please see Sharon Bird.

Women inspiring action.....Transforming lives

Friendship Visit to Cologne

by Geraldine Poole



In late September Gerry and I had the pleasure of joining our President Ann and her husband Danny, for a weekend visit to our Friendship Link in Cologne. The weather was warm and sunny throughout our visit, which all added to the pleasure of our time in Germany. The weekend programme was due to begin on Friday evening, but, because of flight times, we had to travel on Thursday evening. We were kindly offered hospitality by one of the Cologne Club, Fadua Clasmann. Fadua is originally from Palestine, but has lived for over 35 years in Germany, since her marriage. She welcomed us into her beautiful home and after settling into our lovely rooms, were treated to a wonderful meal, which she had prepared for us, despite having returned that afternoon from a visit to her daughter in Istanbul. Fadua is a retired teacher of Chemistry and English, but now has a flourishing business as a landscape garden designer. Her own garden was a tribute to her artistry and she showed us wonderful photographs of other gardens she has designed in many parts of Germany. The warmth of her welcome was one of the highlights. We spent Friday morning being driven, by Fadua, around the local vicinity, looking at beautiful houses, gardens and the local shops. She gave so freely of her time, and we finished our tour with a stop at a local hostelry, on the bank of the Rhine, where we sat for some time talking and exchanging ideas. I think this was so important, as it gave us the chance to get to know Fadua, and through her the Club and to learn a little more about life in Cologne. We felt this was so important, as often on these trips, the Programme is so tight, that there is little time to get to know our hosts and exchange ideas. After coffee and cake in our favourite cafe outside Cologne Cathedral, which many

members will remember, we met up with the rest of our hosts. We were also joined by some members from Chalon and two members from The Netherlands. We first visited a project that the Cologne Club is helping to establish. It is in the centre of Cologne, which offers support and help to people suffering from Mental Illness. This is done through art and therapy, and as the building is large, there are extensive plans being drawn up to expand this project. We then went to a local restaurant where we met more of the Club members, and had a lovely evening, again the warmth of the welcome is overwhelming. We may not see our Friendship Link sisters more than once every two years, but there is such warmth in their welcome, and conversation flows easily between friends.

Saturday morning, after a wonderful breakfast from Fadua, we were called for in two black Mercedes (all the members seem to have black Mercedes), and driven to Bonn to visit the home of former Chancellor Conrad Adenauer. We were very fortunate to be accompanied on this tour by his grandson, also Conrad Adenauer. He was 21 when his grandfather died, and had lived in the house with him for many years. The house is built high above the City of Bonn, and commands a stunning view of



Continued on next page...

Women inspiring action.....Transforming lives

Continued.....

the City and the countryside. It was because of Chancellor Adenauer's love of this area that the Federal Government was, for some time, based in Bonn. This was a wonderful visit, and a great privilege, and was then followed by a delicious lunch again on the banks of the R h i n e .



We were then taken by Ferry across the River to Bonn City and taken to visit a Museum of Germany post war history. This was fascinating, very interactive and crammed full of artefacts about German life. Seeing the effort that was made by the German nation following the War, it was easy to see how their hard work and determination had enabled them to be the successful economy they are today.

The evening was spent in President Brigitte's house. This again was lovely, as we met yet more members of the Club. The highlight for us was the excellent speech which our President, Anne made not only in German but also in French! We all felt very proud of her.

Our last day, Sunday, we travelled into Cologne to the Cathedral for Solemn High Mass. This was wonderful. The Cathedral is so beautiful, the sun was shining in through the beautiful stained

glass windows, the full choir were singing accompanied by a full orchestra. It truly was a very special occasion. During that service, I really felt very close to our Soroptimist sisters in Cologne, and felt that these friendship visits can do nothing but good. Our final visit was to a nearby Museum and Art Gallery, where one of the members talked to us about several beautiful paintings. This was followed by an informal lunch together, before we all went our separate ways home.



During her speech, President Anne issued an invitation to our Friendship links in Cologne and Chalon for 2015.



"These visits are so important in helping us to understand the International dimension to Soroptimism, and so I would encourage any members who can, to try and take part in any such visits, and do our best to return the warm hospitality which we received in Cologne."

Geraldine Poole

Macmillan's Coffee Morning



Seven of us supported the Macmillan's coffee morning held at Blackburne House Bistro. Craft items (largely donated by Gill) went well and raised money to help the cause.

We enjoyed the lively Swing and Jazz music, played by the Hot Club of Knotty Ash whilst having refreshments and selling our goods.

Women inspiring action.....Transforming lives



Confessions of a Conference Virgin

by Mary Andrews

On a sunny October day I set off with six of my Liverpool sisters, to participate in the National S.I. Conference and AGM in Gateshead. With curiosity rather than trepidation, I wondered just what I would be getting from those few days, and I am delighted to report that it was very well worth the effort. We really did feel part of the bigger picture of Soroptimism, and glad that we are playing our part at local and national level. We arrived on Thursday afternoon, together with some members from Widnes and Bootle clubs, and relaxed with a good meal in the evening, after settling in to the hotel. We were therefore ready for the start of proceedings later in the evening, which began with the impressive ceremony of presentation of the flags of the Federation, the United Nations and Soroptimist International, all of which were presented by local Girl Guides. After welcomes and greetings from local dignitaries, we were royally entertained by State Express Five (all six of them!), with almost everyone in the audience – at three levels of seating – literally rocking in the aisles. What a way to start a conference!

Friday, November 1st, began with a Red Square event, where as many as wished to gathered wearing something red, to raise awareness of endometriosis. The business of the day got under way with a very moving presentation by Andrea Wood on "Sex, drugs and hot water bottles – living with endometriosis". This devastating condition is only now being seriously studied, many of the audience I think not being fully aware of all the problems involved. It was humbling to listen to and certainly gave food for thought.

This was followed by an inspirational talk "Ahead of the class" by Marie, Lady Stubbs, who had gone into the school where the murdered Philip Lawrence had been headmaster, and she was asked to turn the school round. It was not surprising that she succeeded in her objective when you heard the way she presented her thoughts and intentions. Next, Ulla Madsen, President of S.I. Europe, spoke about her work and her passion for sustainable development and a healthy environment. All this just in the morning session! After lunch the AGM was held and all the business was dealt with efficiently, leaving the evening free for delegates to socialize and catch up. We went to an excellent Italian restaurant and thoroughly enjoyed the food and the conversation.

The next day, Saturday, opened with the song "I am Woman" sung by Joanne Wagstaffe, followed by a presentation by Pontso Mafethe, Comic Relief

Women and Girls Programme Manager. She is a dynamic young woman, who impressed us all with all that she has done in her life, and her broad experience of various African countries. Then we heard several presentations and club projects (including one from S.I. Widnes), and an update on some resolutions. Coffee



was then followed by a talk by Jasvinder Sanghera, entitled "Empower". This was another powerful presentation, about forced marriage and honour killing, and how

she came to set up her organisation Karma Nirvana. Yet again, it made us think carefully about the situation of women and girls in certain cultures. There was no self-pity in what she said, but her difficult struggle to get to where she is now was apparent. Another speaker in the same session was Ailie Marks, standing in for Daniel Adams, founder of Mary's Meals. She gave an excellent and enthusiastic presentation about the organisation, and certainly enthused us.

After lunch, the S.I. Programme Director Hilary Ratcliffe spoke to us, Programme Awards were given, Votes of Thanks were made, before the keynote speaker was introduced. This was Baroness Helena Kennedy QC, and was entitled "Women Changing the World", which left us all buzzing on quite a high. The evening session involved the Change of Insignia ceremonies, the handover of the S.I. International flag, and some entertainment to wind things down. This consisted of some music from the Arco String Quartet and a hilarious time with performance poet Amanda Baker, using various regional accents.



All of the events took place in the Sage, a huge and extremely impressive centre on the banks of the Tyne, in Gateshead but directly overlooking Newcastle, and only ten minutes' walk from the hotel. It was an ideal conference centre – especially since there were at least 1200 of us there!

This was my first time at Conference. I was very glad that I had been, and will certainly not shy away from going again. There was so much to think about that it was difficult to know where to start, but it really did put a number of things in perspective. There was a wonderful combination of socializing, serious listening, entertainment and fun.

A bit like a club meeting, really, but on a grander scale.



In Brief...

- ♦ We did individual quizzes about Slavery at the November club meeting. Gill, PAC coordinator, told us later: "Well done ladies we scored an impressive average of 32 out of 40 in the Modern Day Slavery Quiz. Very eye opening facts I am sure you will agree." We did– many amazing facts were drawn to our attention!
- ♦ At October's Speaker meeting we all enjoyed a talk and activities delivered by Sharon Bird entitled 'From the Cradle to the Grave'. Sharon kept us engaged with a variety of group tasks, sharing outcomes with the rest of the club. We all left clutching informative pamphlets and with plenty to think about. Thank you Sharon.
- ♦ The late November Table sale at St Barnabus's church in Allerton drew in plenty of Christmas shoppers and trade was brisk. The club stalls of crafts, miscellaneous items and the yummy homemade cakes were all very popular, as was the hot drink and toast for refreshments on what proved to be a very cold day of the year! Thanks to all who helped make it a success.
- ♦ Rose Bowl entries displayed at the September Regional meeting. Ours, at the back, met the criteria but the worthy winner was 'Grab Bags' . Maybe next year.....?



Dates to note:

2014

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Jan 8 | New year party & fun quiz night |
| Jan 22 | Club meeting |
| Feb 21 | Cheese and wine evening at St Anthony of Padua -fund raiser event |
| Feb 26 | Club meeting |
| Mar 8 | Public Speaking Competition hosted by St Julies High School |
| Mar 12 | Speaker meeting: Richie the Ranger – a costumed talk ' Adventures of a millionaire ' -Henry Yates Thompson, his life and adventures. * |
| Mar 15 | Regional meeting at Leigh Sports Village |
| Mar 26 | Club meeting |
| Apr 4 | Alternative Grand National Ladies Day at the Liner Hotel-fund raiser event |
| Apr 26 | South Lancs regional conference at Crowne Plaza Airport Hotel |
| Apr 30 | Club meeting |
| May 3 | Annual Dinner and Change of Insignia at Childwall Golf Club |
| May 14 | Speaker meeting : The work of Mercy ships- Frances King concentrating on maternal aspects of their work, as well as maxillo-facial, and health education. * |
| May 28 | Club meeting– with guest Yvonne Gibbons & Mariama (representing the BIG project) |
| Jun 25 | Club meeting |
| Jul 9 | Speaker meeting: Gemstones and crystals: Robert Wood -the mysteries surrounding Gemstones and Crystals, it's light and entertaining, with a range of inexpensive gifts on sale later.* |
| Jul 19 | BIG Project Day of Action |
| Jul 23 | Club meeting |

** Visitors are welcome to Speaker events (let us know number of expected guests)*

