



Soroptimist

Times

January 2015

Successful Charity lunch

Our first ever lunch raised over £780 for our International Charity 'Marys Meals'!

The meal, in September, was held at "Et Alia" on Aigburth Road and was attended by over 70 guests. The wonderful three course lunch was followed by a raffle. We were delighted that many donations were gift-aided and in effect the event raised nearly £1000 for the charity so far. We are well underway to achieving our target of £2,500 by next year! Thanks to everyone who supported us!



Annual Christmas and International lunch

We welcomed many guests to Childwall Golf Club for our annual lunch and celebration of Soroptimist clubs across the world. Candles were lit on each table as we listened to an impressive list of every country hosting SI clubs, bringing home the truly international nature of Soroptimism.

We were also delighted to the welcome Lord Mayor Erica Kemp and Regional President Margaret Baker (pictured with President Eileen). After a splendid lunch, we all joined, with great hilarity, in the actions and singing of 'The Twelve days of Christmas'. The afternoon was rounded off by an enjoyable performance from the 'Singing Our Socks Off' (SOSO) choir who regaled us with a variety of Christmas songs. A raffle and bottle tombola raised £240 for the International project, 'See Solar, Cook Solar'.



Remembrance Sunday 9th November 2014



The Civic Service of Remembrance at St. George's Hall was attended by Joan Felgate and Ann Mercer, who laid a wreath on the Cenotaph on behalf of SI Liverpool. On a cold but sunny morning, it was a moving experience to see the large crowds gathered who applauded the servicemen and veterans as they marched past. The occasion brought a sense of respect, sadness and rejoicing. A few of the service men and women were dressed in First World War uniforms to commemorate the anniversary of the start of WW1.

A happier Christmas for families affected by Domestic abuse.

In discussion with the managers of Centre 56, it was mentioned that the children attending the nursery and after school club had mentioned that it would be nice to be able to give their mothers a little Christmas present like chocolates. Taking this back to the PAC group focussing on Violence and Conflict, members eagerly agreed to help the children and the Food security group volunteered that they could help out with food goodies for the families at Christmas.

Due to generous support from the club, kind donations, research and hard work by members of the two PAC groups the families enjoyed rather more than what was tentatively asked for:

- 43 children were able to give presents to their Mums. The 13 nursery children gave gifts of a lovely mug, spoon and drinking chocolate. The 30 older children gave their mothers gifts of chocolates and toiletries.
- We gave the nursery children presents of warm cute hats and mittens and the older children had selection boxes.
- 28 families enjoyed the contents of a large bag of food treats for Christmas.



Anne and Iris from the food group with the food bags.



Checking the gifts before handing over for distribution



The club's gifts were distributed by Centre 56 staff the week ending the 19th December. Managers Maire, Diane and Pat, (pictured with the Xmas tree) were extremely pleased with the gifts.

(They were also delighted that the children's paintings helped the club win SIGBI photo of the month!)

President Eileen received the following letter, in a folder made by the nursery children, in January

Dear Eileen,

Many thanks to you and the rest of the ladies who have supported the Centre through thick and thin! I can only say you have done us proud this year, so organised with presents for the children all wrapped and colour coded, but also lovely presents for the children to give to their mums. As if that wasn't enough you produced a bag of goodies for each family- the families just couldn't believe it and it reduced a couple of them to near tears- this then started the staff off! I can only re-iterate how much of a difference your generosity makes, giving families something to smile about during the festive season when money is scarce.

Best wishes to everyone in 2015 & thanks from all at Centre 56 Ltd,

Diane Hill, Business support manager

Carols in the Palm House

Members and friends enjoyed a lovely evening at Sefton Park Palm House in December for a 'Carols by Candlelight' event.

We were entertained by the talented Liverpool Community choir. Wine, mince pies and carolling all helped put us in the mood for Christmas in this beautiful setting.

Lord Mayor Erica Kemp also attended and spoke about the charity CD which she and the choir had made. The sales of '*Liverpool Heart*' will help young people in Liverpool achieve their potential.



Scientists work on cure for Dementia diseases



Club members welcomed Professor Jeremy Turnbull from the University of Liverpool when he gave an excellent talk on the latest research and medication for the treatment of Dementia diseases. This work is funded by the charity ARUK which is President Eileen's chosen charity. Jerry spoke of how scientists have linked the development of the disease to the as yet unexplained trigger caused by glycogen to the brain structure. The university is one of only two institutions involved in this area of research. As ever, this vital work is underfunded and grants awarded by Alzheimers Research UK will be

boosted by money raised by the club later this year.

Enjoyable social event

A cheese tasting event was held at the Aigburth Peoples Hall in November. It was very well attended by members, family, friends and visitors.



The evening was hosted by the Liverpool Cheese Company. They provided samples of a variety of unusual cheeses with a talk giving interesting facts. One of the popular ones was a brown cheese from Norway which had been caramelised! The event was not only a social success but we also raised funds for our charities.

Attendees also enjoyed the wine on offer, the accompanying relishes, crackers and breads and the fun quiz!



Bring and Buy Coffee Morning

A Bring and Buy coffee morning was held at Gill's home at the end of November. It was wonderful to taste and buy the lovely homemade cakes made by members and to buy hand-crafted cards and gifts, with Christmas in mind. The event was thoroughly enjoyable and raised £225!

Welcoming our Sisters from India



We were delighted to welcome two Soroptimists from India in early November. Members of executive met with Nisha Ghosh and Naina Shah for dinner at Et Allia. We shared experiences of our projects as the conversation flowed. As the evening finished gifts were accepted from the guests. Naina, National Programme Action Chair, presented us with several different sachets of

specialist teas- each making 10 cups.

Nisha , SIGBI friendship link coordinator, gave each of us a strong woven carrier bag, designed to replace plastic carriers. These quality bags each came with a tag on which was written:

The Story of a little bag.

This small bag is a message. It is about changing ourselves, learning new values and taking responsibility. Every single bag can effectively prevent dumping of hundreds of throw away plastic bags. Making 100,000 bags will create jobs for 500 people for one month.



Naina and Nisha with gifts

We gave our guests souvenir books from Liverpool in return. The following day we took our visitors to meet the Widnes club and to join in with celebrations of regional President Victoria's year.

Dorothy raises Awareness of FGM

Club member Dorothy Zack-Williams was invited to be a presenter when SI Crosby organised an awareness day on 'Women Against Violence'. Dorothy was a part of a team of speakers including a survivor of arranged marriage, and a manager from south Liverpool supporting victims of domestic violence. Dorothy gave an enlightening presentation about FGM. The day was both challenging but educational for the guests and Dorothy's contribution was much appreciated, as seen in the photo. This event followed her presentation given at the regional meeting. Well done Dorothy!



Donation for 'Beat Abuse'



At the November club meeting, IPP Anne presented a cheque to Paula Smith from South Liverpool Domestic Abuse Services, on behalf of her former pupil, Kelsey, who died as a result of domestic violence. Paula gratefully received a cheque for £500, which will be used to fund a programme called "Beat Abuse" aimed at keeping teenagers safe in their relationships and led by some of Kelsey's friends.

It was really appropriate that during the same evening the club members dressed in orange to mark UNITE's Women Against Violence campaign.

Marking 16 Days of Action against gender based violence



The 16 Days Campaign is an international campaign that started in 1991. Since then, over 5,179 groups in 187 countries have taken part. The Campaign grows every year with more people getting involved and speaking out about violence against women.

SI Liverpool showed solidarity with women around the world working to support the campaign, marking its beginning by wearing orange. The colour orange symbolises a better future without this human rights violation. One in three women worldwide face abuse, violence and rape every day.

The 16 Days of Action ran from 25th November, the UN International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women, to 10th December, Human Rights Day. The campaign spans these 16 Days in order to highlight the link between violence against women and human rights

80th SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE-WOMEN LEADING THE CHANGE

A report written by club member Dorcas, on her first experience of attending conference.

On the 6th of November, I travelled with other Soroptimists from the neighbouring areas to Harrogate. There were three of us from Liverpool and I was glad that I had fellow sisters with me as they really took me under their "wing" as a "first timer". We got to our Hotel within two hours thanks to Maureen who had organised the coach and Dot for organising our hotel. We had few hours to rest, change and had dinner.



My objectives in attending the conference were to enhance my knowledge about Soroptimist international and find out more about all the activities where women have made differences and enabled those in need internationally to become more independent, have food to eat and

empowered to start small business like the women at the Kori village in Sierra Leone. The conference started at 8pm with the fantastic ceremony of presentation of the flags of the Federation, the United Nations and Soroptimist International flags which were carried by the SI Yorkshire members. The flags represented the countries of the 1400 delegates. We were welcomed by the conference Chair and President of SI Harrogate and District. The Federation President declared the conference opened. We were then entertained by the Harrogate Brass Band. What a way to finish a tiring day.

Friday began with the keynote speaker-Sahar Hashemi OBE. She told us how she started her coffee business and how she never gave up until she achieved her aim. She applied to 40 Banks for a start-up loan and had 20 interviews and only one did not reject her. Her motto to her success is "Leap and the Net will appear". She was inspirational and challenged us to believe in ourselves to achieve our aims and objectives. The morning continued with the Programme Action relating to Club Projects which educate. We had presentations such as Adult Literacy Drive Project by the SI Bombay by which the attendees were taught English language, numerical and job skills. SI Litchfield made dresses for girls at an orphanage in Burkino Faso and SI Enugu Coal City made donation of education materials to the Adult Literacy Centre. All the SI Clubs were supporting all the centres enabling the girls and women to learn.

We had a report back from the Programme Action Awards 2013 which is about the Kori Project at the Kori Village. We were informed how fewer girls were circumcised last year because of the work done by SI Thames Valley. The circumcisers were given money for another trade around the time of circumcision (Easter and before Christmas). Through the Project, women have been empowered to start trading and they are being empowered to manage themselves. We had emotional talk about the current state of the village due to Ebola. We were informed that money was needed to send container of items to Sierra Leone. It was so moving that over £7000 was raised by the end of the Conference



The AGM was held in the afternoon and there was a lengthy discussion on Associate Membership. The motion was not passed because it did not get 75% of the vote. The AGM was run in a very efficient way giving opportunity to members to ask questions or raise their views. The day finished at 18.00 hours which gave us a free evening to enjoy a Chinese meal together.

Saturday began with another inspirational speaker Professor Susan Vinnicombe. She spoke about the myths around women not getting to the top such as "women are not interested, they have no leadership style neither do they like taking risks". She gave us key factors for career success for example women should have confidence in themselves, be self-productive, be a risk taker and have a compatible portfolio.

At coffee break, "new first timers" to the conference had opportunity to meet the federation President and to network. I had the opportunity to speak to a new member from St Vincent, West Indies. After coffee our next speaker was Ann Garvie-International President. She was fantastic, funny and spoke the truth. Her speech was controversial challenging the Board to look "outside the box". Her challenge to members was that we all have to work together from local projects to Global voice. She finished by saying the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals will be a reality with women's voices together. What a motivational speaker.

The afternoon was about Projects presentations and Awards. Dr Barbara Phillips reported back on the progress of the Big Project-Birthing in Gambia with slides to show all the work which have been done. A total £144,539.51p has been raised so far by the Soroptimists. There were so many Projects-here are some examples:

- Health Outreach Project by SI Trinidad and Tobago-organised on World Health Day to reach communities in the rural area who have limited access to health services. People had a general check -up.
- Lighthouse Women's Project which supported women in Art and writing workshop and through this a book was written and one of the women went to the University (*Empowerment and Enablement*).
- Gender Sensitisation by SI India which was trying to breakdown barrier between boys and girls using drama at a Secondary School. (*Education*).
- Bringing the Bees to the Schools-using this project to raise awareness about the environment amongst young children- (*Environmental*).
- Spendwise-Credit Union a project by SI Ashton under Lyme. A School education resource to highlight aspect of wise spending (*Economic Empowerment*).
- Widowhood Rituals by SI Nigeria This project looked into these harmful practices in which widows are made to cry for four days or made to lie for two days with their dead husbands. They are also denied to have any of their husbands' properties. The Club has been working with the Nigeria Government, local leaders and councillors to pass laws against these rituals (*Empowerment and Enablement*).

There were five winners in the five categories and the projects really highlighted what the International Clubs are doing to make a difference. It is difficult to cover all the Projects within this report but they will be available on the Soroptimists website-www.sigbi.org. Our last speaker was Dame Jenny Murray-Radio 4 Woman's Hour gave her story about her life as a presenter and how she uses her work on the Radio to make a change as a woman.

I really enjoyed my experience as a "First timer". The conference was very educational and motivational for me. I also found it challenging and food for thought. It gave me in depth knowledge about the Soroptimist activities and opportunity to socialise with other members especially those from my area.

Dorcas Akeju, OBE

Dates for your calendar

18 th Feb	Charity lunch at Pruno *
25 th Feb	Club meeting
7 th Mar	Regional meeting
11 th Mar	Speaker meeting
14 th Mar	Public Speaking competition at Archbishop Beck school
25 th Mar	Club meeting
10 th April	Alternative grand National Ladies day *
18 th april	Concert in aid of Trussell trust foodbanks Ellermere Port Civic Hall
22 nd April	Club meeting

*Have you booked?- places going fast!