



Soroptimist Times

April 2019

A Warm Welcome for President Mary



Club members were delighted to welcome Mary Andrews as President for the 93rd year of the club's history at this month's AGM. In her inaugural speech, she said, *"S.I. Liverpool, is a close-knit, enthusiastic and welcoming club, and I am very proud to be a member of it. We support various good causes and organisations but, just as importantly, we support each other. In turn, we too have the support of our family and of our 'Soroptimists'. I would like to pay tribute to them for their support and presence at the various functions organised throughout the year. It proves once again that it is hard, if not impossible, to work in isolation. Long may it continue!"* Mary also announced that her President's Charity for the year will be WHISC (Women's Health Information Support Service). Mary is a trustee and understands fully just what a valuable, yet underfunded, service it offers women from its premises in Bold Street.

The centre gives advice, runs group activities focussed around health advice as well as confidential counselling services. The centre also encourages women to take up leisure activities and to join a wide variety of clubs in order to help with mental health and loneliness. Their work is closely allied to the aims of Soroptimism- to educate, empower and enable women! We wish you a successful and enjoyable year in office, President Mary!

"The Play's The Thing": From Maud to Gemma

Our January club meeting was to be a relaxed 'party night' after the hectic holiday period and we were not disappointed! After a tasty buffet for members and guests, we listened to our guest speaker, Gemma Bodinetz, the critically acclaimed artistic director of the Playhouse/Everyman Theatre, who shared some insights into her journey and current role. Part of Gemma's passion is to introduce new plays and playwrights, for which she has been recognised by her contemporaries. She won Best Director at the UK Theatre Awards for artistic directorship of the Everyman Theatre in 2017.



Gemma also added wonderful touches of information about our first club President, Maud Carpenter, who was director of the Playhouse after becoming manager in 1923, later serving on the board until her death in 1967. Maud's choice of play relied heavily on her matinee "ladies" (Soroptimists?) whose critiques were carefully given consideration. Thankfully, Maud disagreed with their shock and horror at the new play by John Osborne, "Look Back In Anger" and the play was saved! The evening was rounded off with a fun quiz about famous Liverpool women. Gemma is certainly in that elite group! Pictured is President-Elect Mary presenting Gemma with flowers in the absence of President Dorcas (more about that later!) and Maud, our first club President.

Pipped at the Post!

Four members accepted an invitation from SI Widnes to pit our wits against other teams at a fundraiser quiz night on 12th March. Sue, Mary, Debra and Anne put up a very creditable performance, only to be beaten by two points into third place! It was a very enjoyable evening, lovely food and great value! We need to swot up on car logos for the next quiz! But we reckon the ultimate winners were the Alzheimer's Society- President Julie's charity! Thank you SI Widnes!

#209 Women- 'Open Eye' gallery Liverpool waterfront



Pictured are some of the club members who accepted an invitation from the Open Eye Gallery to attend their opening evening which celebrated the #209 women MP's currently in Parliament. The gallery, which specialises in photography, is marking a year to celebrate the role of women in society, one hundred years after women were first given the vote. The gallery's artistic director, Sarah Fisher, has invited SI Liverpool to be a partner and for our work to be featured this year! We are delighted to working with Sarah and to publicise what an amazing organisation we are!

'Breathe Easy' Foundation- Touching Lives, Saving Lives

Breathe Easy is a charitable foundation created by member Dorcas and her husband Claudius as a response to the devastating news the family received in 2009. Their beloved daughter, Omolara Caroline Akeju, had died while on holiday in Nigeria, from complications caused by asthma and allergies on 23rd April. Omolara's death was preventable, had there been adequate equipment and medication on hand. Since then, Dorcas and Claudius have returned to Nigeria every January, bringing vital equipment, medicines and education. The Foundation has developed a partnership working with two Hospitals -the University College Hospital of Ibadan and the Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospital. The partnership also includes an NGO Asthma and Chest Care Foundation. In January this year, Dorcas and Claudius went to Nigeria with donated inhalers, peakflow monitors and nebulizers which she distributed to hospitals and individual patients. Here are pictures taken on their trip in January 2019. Dorcas demonstrates a nebulizer.



On World Asthma Day, 2nd of May, the foundation goes to different venues in Liverpool to raise awareness to support their partners in Nigeria. For more information visit their website-www.breatheeasyfoundation.co.uk. We wish Dorcas every success and we will continue to support this amazing charity!

92nd Charter Celebration Lunch

President Dorcas was home in time to host the club's 92nd anniversary celebration of its charter on 24th February. The lunch was held at Woolton Golf Club and around sixty members and guests enjoyed a wonderful three course meal that received many compliments. Guests of President Dorcas and her husband Claudius included Regional President Sue Underwood, Dame Lorna Muirhead and her husband, President of SI St. Helen's Pam Wright and her husband and President -Elect Mary Andrews. Other guests included President of SI Heswall Maureen Sayer, President-Elect of SI Crosby Debbie Oulton, President of SI Widnes Julie Thornett, members of SI Bootle, SI St.Helens, SI Widnes, SI Crosby and SI Manchester.

After lunch, guests were entertained by Dame Lorna Muirhead, a former Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside and colleague of President Dorcas, as she regaled hilarious stories of her life as a midwife and as the Queen's representative. Like her dress, we definitely heard the 'inside out' as well as the ups and downs of the job!



Pictured are President Dorcas with Claudius and Regional President Sue Underwood, Mary Andrews, Dame Lorna and husband, Pam Wright and husband

“Time to Talk” Day 7th February

Federation President Sue William’s theme for her year, “Think On It”, focuses on issues around mental health particularly our own wellbeing. With that in mind (no pun intended!) the PA group for Health and Food Security arranged a coffee morning to coincide with the nationally designated “Time to Talk” day on 7th February. We met in the recently refurbished Mossley Hill church at 11 am. A number of club members and two guests attended. Not only did we enjoy coffee and cakes but we had a table quiz about mental health statistics, to get people talking.

So successful was the event that we have continued since then to meet informally for coffee on the first Thursday of the month. The next one is Thursday 6th June, 11 am at Toby Carvery, 531 Aigburth Rd, Liverpool L19 9DN. Please feel free to invite friends!



Regional Study Day at Southport- Membership and Publicity

Club member and Regional Membership Officer Anne recently organised a study day for almost thirty regional members in Baverstock House, Southport in March. Together with Regional Publicity Officer Debbie Oulton and using the federation initiative "Showcasing Soroptimism" as the theme, over thirty members enjoyed discussing issues on recruitment and retention of members, equality of opportunity and publicity. Some members were tweeting before the end of the day! It was good to hear the sharing of good practice and friendship. We also raised over £50 for Mozambique.



Liverpool "GreenUp"

At our February meeting, our speaker was Sophie Preston who is working in partnership with Liverpool University and the City Council to promote a new initiative called Urban GreenUP. The initiative is creating new green corridors across Liverpool that help to tackle environmental issues like air quality, lack of biodiversity and potential flooding. Sophie gave a very interesting presentation and showed how all of us can help in the critical improvement of our environment. Sophie made a request for club members to get involved in research in Sefton Park so at the end of April, some club members joined her with Friends of Sefton Park and others interested in their environment, for a workshop. This included taking part in a bee-count and learning more about each of us can get involved even through small changes to our environment. For more information, check out this website:

<https://www.merseyforest.org.uk/our-work/urban-greenup/>



A Liverpool Heroine and SI Liverpool President!

Last November, the club was contacted by Windfall Films, with an enquiry about a former President of SI Liverpool, Gertrude Riding. They were making three documentary programmes for Channel 5 about Liverpool survivors of the May Blitz 1941. There is only one person to turn to for such answers, our own Historian Ann Clayton! Ann was able to supply a photograph of Gertrude from a copy of our Club Presidents' Book, information about where Gertrude lived, as well as some events on the night.



Gertrude was a matron on duty at Mill Road Maternity Hospital on the night of 3rd May, when the hospital took a direct hit. After she was helped out of the debris, Gertrude discovered she had lost an eye and the other was so badly affected by the blast, she could only see by holding her eye open with her fingers. She then set about rescuing others though sadly 97 adults and babies died. Gertrude was awarded an OBE for her self-sacrifice, rescuing an Auxiliary nurse and the Chaplain who were buried under the rubble. With Mill Road out of action, she became Matron at Alder Hey. In 1943, Gertrude became the Club President. She said she hoped her year would be the 'year of peace'. She was concerned that before young people could be helped, their families had to have suitable housing. Gertrude is certainly one of our most heroic Presidents!



Gertrude as photographed by E. Chambre-Hardman

Supporting the Whitechapel Centre for the Homeless

Through the Health and Food Security group, SI Liverpool members continue to support the centre, based on Langsdale Street. Anne works in the kitchens for 12 hours each week, while many other members donate clothing, food, toiletries, art activities, crossword puzzles, bottles of water, hats, gloves and underwear on a regular basis. Thank you all so much for your much needed support!



The Red Box Project

One of the nominated club charities for this year is The Red Box project, a project designed to help girls to stay in education while on their periods. Many girls suffer from 'period poverty' and The Red Box project provides schools, youth centres etc with a Red Box that has free supplies available, including sanitary towels, knickers, fresh wipes etc.

Clare Duvall, who is the project coordinator for Prescott and Knowsley, with her daughter who also works for the charity, gave some club members an initial insight into the work involved and answered a lot of questions about how the role functions. Clare will be invited to club as a Speaker in the very near future. Since the meeting, members of SI Liverpool have been invited to be the area coordinators for S.Liverpool.



Know Your Lemons!

Federation President Sue Williams shared this poster on Facebook and it is a light-hearted but timely reminder that all women should be aware to check for signs of changes in their breasts! Look after your lemons!



Thank you President Dorcas.....

Club members had their chance to say thank you to outgoing President Dorcas at the AGM in April. She has had a very successful year as the club's ambassador, making many friends throughout the region. Dorcas has worked tirelessly throughout the year, committing herself to being a presence not only at dinners but fundraisers, Remembrance Day, UK PAC and regional conferences. The highlight of her year was her role in the Opening Ceremony of the SIGBI Conference in October, when Dorcas read the mission and vision and presented Federation President Sue Biggs with the UK flag. Thank you for your cheerfulness and enthusiasm, Dorcas! We can't imagine you putting up your feet however!



Dates for Your Diary!

June 11th **Executive Meeting** 7.00 pm

June 15th **Regional Council Meeting and Programme Action** Leigh

June 26th **Club Meeting** 7pm at Sefton Park Hotel

July 9th **Executive Meeting** 7.00 pm

July 24th **Club Meeting** 7pm at Sefton Park Hotel

AUG-NO MEETING

Sept 10th **Executive Meeting** 7.00 pm

September 14th **Regional Council Meeting and Programme Action** Leigh AGM

Sept 25th **Club Meeting** 7pm at Sefton Park Hotel

Oct 8th **Executive Meeting** 7.00 pm

Oct 23rd **Club Meeting** 7pm at Sefton Park Hotel

October 24th –26th **SIGBI Conference at Bournemouth**

Nov 12th **Executive Meeting** 7.00 pm

Nov 27th **Club Meeting** 7pm at Sefton Park Hotel

December 9th- **International Lunch** – Hallmark Hotel, Sefton Park