



# ***Soroptimist Times***

April 2020

## **Virus lockdown brings President Mary's year to an abrupt end**

Who will ever forget March 2020? The world came to a full stop while everyone held their breath and turned towards a Plan B of life for the foreseeable future. So it was with our club members but in true Soroptimist style, we have moved forward and found not only new ways of communicating and carrying out our project work but also new strength in friendship and support for each other during these challenging times. More of that later! President Mary has this message for the club-



*"What a strange feeling of powerlessness has been engendered by the present situation, but there is also the challenge to find the positive in everything. Whilst we are not allowed to go out, it has brought out new attitudes and the realisation of just what can be done, even with all the restrictions imposed on us.*

*I feel that I have not been able to do all I wanted to and at the same time I am very conscious of the support and good wishes of the Club. It has made me realise even more what is our purpose as Soroptimists and appreciate better the problems of the girls and women we are trying to support. Even with the discomfort and difficulties of lockdown, we are still privileged and lucky to have so much support ourselves. Is it not therefore our duty, as well as pleasure, to maintain our utmost efforts to achieve the tasks and goals we set ourselves?*

*President Mary with Lord Mayor Cll. Anne Rothery*

*My year in office (albeit somewhat shortened) has been busy, and I have done my best to promote the interests of my chosen charity WHISC, and also the other events we have held. I want to thank all the members of Exec for their enthusiastic support and hard work; everyone has pulled their weight and has made it possible to go forward optimistically. I wish Anne, as new President, a very successful year and promise all my continuing support in everything she does. I am sure that each club member will also continue to support our work. Thank you all for the confidence you have shown in me."*

We are sorry not to be able to celebrate Mary's year at the Charter Lunch but will find an appropriate way to say thank you soon. We wish Mary all the very best and congratulate her on raising £1,000 for her charity. We know the women of the city will greatly benefit from this additional funding. Thank you, Mary!

---

## **RIP Buddug Curtis**

We were saddened to hear of the recent death on 17<sup>th</sup> April '20 of former club member Buddug Curtis. Buddug was originally a member of SI Garston and District before joining SI Liverpool on the closure of the club. She was a Soroptimist from 1987 until two years ago when she struggled with the onset of dementia. She was a good friend of Yvonne Davies and like Yvonne, taught Home Economics in a number

of secondary schools in Liverpool before her retirement. We send our sincere condolences to her family. Thank you for your many years of service for women and girls, Buddug! Rest in peace.

## Latest news on our Programme Action

### "The Dark Figure" by Amy Romer -Open Eye Gallery 20<sup>th</sup> February 2020

This exhibition was sponsored by Stop The Traffik and highlighted in photographs and stories, the hidden effects of modern day slavery on the victims of trafficking. A number of club members attended, not only to support of our own member, Annette, who with her team was responsible for creating the exhibition, but also to learn more about the present day situation around enslavement.



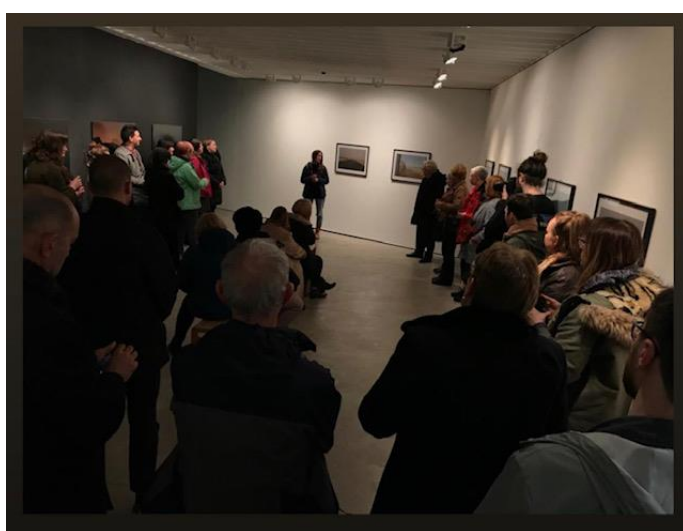
The 'Dark Figure' is a reference to the unknown number of people currently enslaved, still hidden from the authorities and living within our communities. While 5,145 victims were known to the National Crime Agency in 2017, it is estimated that the dark figure is between 10,000 and 13,000 victims.

This was a really informative evening and it was good to hear a talk from both Amy and Annette. Thank you Annette for promoting our club as a partner of Stop the Traffik Liverpool! Through the project work of our Violence and Conflict Resolution group, we will continue

to support the work of education and enlightenment about modern slavery, one of the issues this group addresses.



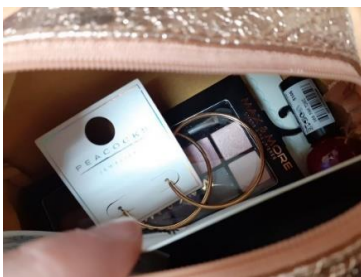
A poster on slavery in the Whitechapel centre





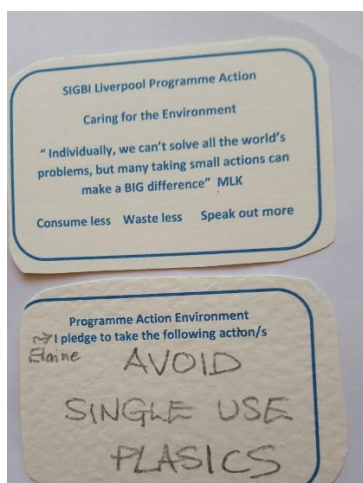
## WoW bags and buckets delivered just in time!

The Healthcare group met in February to begin putting together over fifty 'WoW bags', so named after the 'Women of Whitechapel'. These bags are designed to add a little more luxury into the lives of women, who make up about 30% of clients who rely on the day to day services offered by the Whitechapel Centre for the homeless in Langsdale Street. Whilst people generously donate toiletries, its often the extras that can make you feel better about yourself. So our bags were more like a make-up bag, with hair accessories, make-up remover pads, eye-shadow, nail varnish and varnish remover, tissues and even false eyelashes! We also included a little inspirational message to help lift the spirits of the women too. Jackie, the Centre Support manager, was delighted to receive the first batch of bags. Little did we realise how timely they were as the lockdown started 10 days later! Also a timely gift were five buckets with cleaning aids inside for anyone moving into accommodation. As everyone since then has been moved into temporary accommodation for the duration of the lockdown, these would still be a very useful gift indeed!



---

## The Environment Matters...



The group of club members who are focussing on Education, Environment and Economic Empowerment have recently focussed our attention to their work on upcycling, whether it is plastic trays, cards, bottle tops, ring pulls!! We were asked to sign a pledge and at the end of the year, there will be a review as to what we have collectively achieved. Being more environmentally conscious when shopping is a challenge for most of us, but it is urgent that we do so! Alongside action will go advocacy too, campaigning to MP's, companies, amongst the general public and in schools. At the moment, some of these activities are limited but keep up the upcycling and don't forget to save any cards received!

---

## Oh no! We're on Police records!

Company

Kate Arnold – 6 minutes ago

A big thank you to the Soroptimist International Liverpool ladies who have kindly donated reading material for our detainees in custody. Anne Grimes of the Soroptimists supplied reading material to myself and T/Insp Allinson at Copy Lane Custody Suite. Several of the books and magazines were the much-needed foreign languages of Polish & Latvian. Providing reading material to customers can be a useful tool in building rapport, not to mention a god-send to those who are in for long hours and bereft of stimulation.

IF ANYONE IS HAVING A CLEAR OUT PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO ONE OF THE CUSTODY SUITES! WE ARE ALWAYS APPRECIATIVE OF MAGAZINES AND BOOKS - NATURALLY WE ONLY ACCEPT APPROPRIATE READING MATERIAL GIVEN THE ENVIRONMENT IE NO REAL-CRIME BOOKS, OVERLY POLITICAL OR ADULT MATERIAL - JUST EASY READING/LIGHT MATERIAL PLEASE. EMAIL ME DIRECTLY IF YOU HAVE ANY DONATIONS.

A bit more about the Soroptimists:

Soroptimist International Liverpool is part of a worldwide organisation. Together we work through service projects, fundraising and advocacy to advance human rights and the status of women and girls.

We support local and international initiatives through raising awareness and fund raising. We aim to serve our local communities as much as possible.

We have a diverse membership, many of our members play a leading role in local businesses and organisations whether as part of their job or as a retired volunteer. This diversity strengthens our club's activities. We are women aiming to make a difference to the lives of women and girls whilst having fun and making new friends.

Our club was chartered in 1927 and we have recently celebrated our 90th charter anniversary. - collapse

cc: Kris Allinson



No! You are not expected to be able to read every word! I'm just presenting the evidence, m'lady!

In response to a request from members to support, in particular, women who are in police custody, Copy Lane Custody Officer Kate Arnold asked club members if we could supply appropriate reading material for those being held in police cells? At weekends, sometimes women are brought in because of domestic violence or having been trafficked, but they have to wait until Monday morning for the courts to open. Not only do those in custody get bored but they can distract the police just to pass the time! These magazines and light reading books were very gratefully received. A special thanks to club member Rasa, who with the help of friends, supplied much needed eastern European reading materials, as seen in Kate's article. This article was published by Kate on an internal police memo and acknowledged our support for their work. Some magazines also went to Whitechapel for the Polish community there.

---

## A well-deserved accolade for Carol from the Law Society (and from us!)



One of the great things about being a Soroptimist is the flexibility we have in how we live our mission and vision. This can be in our project teams, as a club or as individuals. Each of us has opportunities to make a difference to the lives of others with our different skills, strengths and opportunities and none more so at this time of the pandemic, than club member Carol Mason, who is a partner at Liverpool law firm Morecrofts. She is the appointed trustee for a number of family and charitable trusts and has helped direct funding to charities hit by the coronavirus crisis to the tune of more than £100,000.

The lockdown, implemented as a result of the virus, has been devastating for both businesses and charities, despite some Government support packages. In recognition of the urgent need faced by charities, and under Carol's direction, many have been given a much needed boost of income, including Garston Animal Rescue, Shy Lowen Pony Sanctuary in Netherton and the Beechley Stables (Riding for the Disabled) in Calderstones Park, plus many more.



Carol said: *"Liverpool has a proud history of philanthropy and our team is in a unique position of trust, where clients empower us to make day-to-day decisions about donations or investments on their behalf. At this time of unprecedented crisis, many charities are facing serious financial challenges, so we are pleased to be able to direct some support their way. More than ever, we know it's crucial that we continue to support our communities as much as possible. Our local knowledge means we are well-placed to identify those charities most in need and we also make every effort to match those needs with the specific interests or passions of the philanthropists who created the trusts in the first place."*

Thank you, Carol for all your dedicated work, supporting much loved local charities and in the true spirit of Soroptimism, making a difference to the lives of others!

.....and talking of making a difference to the lives of others! Here are some more of our club 's heroes!



Guess who's behind the mask?

One of the highlights of the week is the opportunity on Thursday evenings to show our appreciation for those heroes who have dedicated themselves to caring for others , especially courageous when our instinct is to do what the government say and "Stay At Home!" But we can only do this if others take the risk and enable us to do so.

Many people in the caring professions and service industries have continued to work, often at great personal sacrifice. So we celebrate and thank one of our club members for their dedication and long hours working in a Care Home. Yes it's Rasa! Well done and we are really proud of you!



---

And another.....



Yes, our club secretary Debra! Not only does she keep us informed and updated with the latest Soroptimist news but since the lockdown, Debra has taken to heart the need to support not only our health but our mental wellbeing too! Who doesn't look forward to their Saturday "SI Liverpool Together"? With the help of budding poets, comediennes and inspiring stories from club members, Debra adds her own spice of interest and little funnies too.

A big Thankyou, Debra for keeping us smiling!

....and many more talented members!

...Thank you, Maureen for making knitted jackets and hats for the baby unit as well as mask extenders. Dont they look lovely! If anyone would like a copy of the pattern, please email Debra.



....also a big thank you to Ann for freely offering your time and expertise to help club members trace their ancestry during this lockdown. We know three members so far have taken up the offer. We are intrigued to know if you found any skeletons....?

We also owe Ann a huge Thank you too, for our wonderful hand-painted Birthday cards that arrive on our birthdays! They really are unique and reflect Ann's amazing artistic talents.



### March 8<sup>th</sup> International Womens Day in Liverpool One:



To mark International Women's Day, members took time out to distribute literature about Soroptimism in Liverpool One and to talk to women about our work as Soroptimists. The sun was shining although the wind was a little gusting but it was a busy afternoon.

The **2020** campaign **theme** was #EachforEqual, which raises the issue of gender equality. The idea is drawn from the notion of "collective individualism" in which our individual actions, conversations, behaviours and mindsets can have an impact on our larger society. The organisers say, "An equal world is an enabled world".



And finally a reminder about our current international projects:

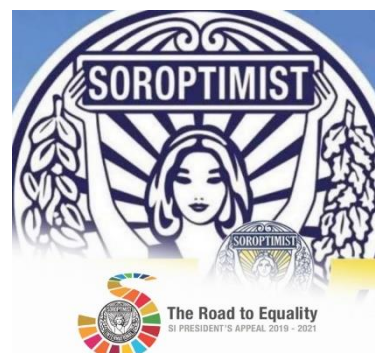


Look out on our new website for up to date information on our Federation partnership with Chorachori Project. See the information on

<https://sigbi.org/what-we-do/our-projects/girlsinnepal/>

Also International President Sharon's appeal "The Road To Equality ", which begins with work around FGM. All information is on

<https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/action/road-to-equality/>



---

### Social events:



#### A Visit to the Town Hall

Club member Dorcas was invited by Lord Mayor Cll. Anna Rothery, following a meeting they had both attended, to come to the Town Hall with two other club representatives. The Lord Mayor also invited along representatives of The Townswomen's Guild.

She had been so impressed by the work our club does for women and girls that she expressed a wish to extend the use of her contacts to our service so that we could reach out to younger women and schoolgirls in particular. She would like us to share our life-gained experience with younger people, as mentors. She has put her publicity machine at our disposal!

This is certainly a road we must take as soon as we can, helping and empowering girls in the city to share in our work!

Sharing ideas about how to do this best will be one of our focuses in the next few months !

---

#### The President's Chain Gang Lunch in January

Each year in January, the Regional President invites serving club officers to a lunch. This year, five members attended at Widnes Masonic Hall. The afternoon was informal and good fun, with each club member dining with regional members, a great way to get to know other Soroptimists and share fun. This year, each table had the name of a particular female expert and his was followed by a quiz about them. It certainly engendered cross table discussions and was followed by a fun quiz too- all friendly though no-one wanted to let their table down! Pictured below are Anne, Debra, President Mary, Dorcas and Lynne from the exec.

The second picture shows the three Regional Presidential officers, Dorcas as Regional Vice-President on the left, with President -Elect Josie Carter from SI Leigh on the right. In the middle is Regional President Yvonne Gibbons from SI Widnes. It was a relaxing afternoon after the strains of the Christmas festivities!



---

### Dates for the Diary

Until we are able to meet again, the following meetings will be by Zoom:

**12<sup>th</sup> May Exec meeting 2.30pm Tues**

**27<sup>th</sup> May Club meeting 6.30pm Wed**

**6<sup>th</sup> June Regional exec meeting 10.30 am Sat**

**8<sup>th</sup> June Exec meeting 2.30pm Mon**

**13<sup>th</sup> June Regional PAC meeting 10.30 am (Sue W only)**

**Regional Council Meeting 1pm (Mary A only)**

**24<sup>th</sup> June Club meeting 6.30pm Wed**

**14<sup>th</sup> July Exec meeting 2.30pm Tues**

**22<sup>nd</sup> July Club meeting 6.30pm Wed**

**11<sup>th</sup> Aug Exec meeting 2.30pm Tuesday**

**26<sup>th</sup> August Club meeting 6.30pm Wed**

**15<sup>th</sup> September Exec meeting 2.30 Tues**

**23<sup>rd</sup> September Club meeting 6.30pm**

---

### CORONACOASTER

noun: The ups and downs of a pandemic. One day your loving your bubble, going for long walks, baking cakes and pottering in the garden, the next your crying, drinking gin for breakfast, eating party rings and missing people you don't like.

Stay safe everyone! Keep in touch and it won't be long until we can get together again!