



Soroptimist International of Manchester

President: **Sue Underwood**

Winter
2023
Issue 84



Dear Club Members,
Welcome to your Winter Newsletter, barely six weeks since the last one!
.....Once this Newsletter has been 'put to bed' I promise I will catch up on the housework and start Christmas preparations!
Thank you for your contributions, I hope you enjoy your Christmas read.
Sue Underwood

President's Message – President Sue Underwood
It's been a busy six weeks or so, Soroptimist time has been spent on preparations for, and then taking part in the '16 Days of Activism'. In the meantime I've celebrated being a year older, over ten days in the Lake District, and had a major cull of my craft 'stash' to pass on to our projects (still plenty to go at!)



I attended the SIGBI Federation Conference in London. I was pleasantly surprised by the speakers but less so by the lack of breaks – both from the comfort* aspect and the absence of tea & coffee along with the chance to catch up with old friends.
(*Speaker Monty Halls even commented on our impressive bladder control!)



Regional President Pamela presented me with the Regional Vice President's Chain. It is an honour and my pleasure to again work to being Regional President from November 2025, I didn't feel that I'd finished the first time! All being well, I will be the South Lancashire Regional President during our Clubs Centenary year.

As a trustee for Act4Africa, I was pleased to help at the Altrincham Girls Grammar School Christmas Fair. Friend Sharon came too, here we are with trustee Lucy, having fun selling gifts made by the girls in Uganda or donated for the girls. We had tough competition from the 'Chocolate Tombola' opposite but consoled ourselves with some delicious Asian Street food prepared by a team of parents.



As you will see in later pages, the orange jumper has done another year of '16 Days of Activism', I'm beginning to be known as 'the one who wears that orange jumper'!

President Sue

16 Days of Activism: 25th November to 10th December



The **UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** on 25 November marks the beginning of the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign to raise awareness of gender-based violence. Over the course of the subsequent 16 days leading up to 10 December, **International Human Rights Day**, the United Nations, NGOs and women the world over draw attention to this violation of human rights by taking up the UN Secretary General's call to 'Orange the world'.

With one in three women experiencing physical or sexual harm worldwide, gender-based violence continues to be a global pandemic. For its **16 Days of Activism** Soroptimist International will use the colour orange to signalise our outrage at violence directed towards women and girls and our hope for a better future. Among other things, we will "orange" our social media presence and post pertinent messages, facts and figures.

The intention is to remind the world that violence against women and girls is a consequence of inequality and discrimination. By mobilising women from all backgrounds and cultures and by promoting greater awareness we can aim to stop violence. The more "orange" traffic we create, the greater the impact, and therefore we invite our Unions, Clubs and individual members to join the campaign.

SIGBI has taken this one step further, in acknowledgement that this is an all-round issue by holding 'orange cafes' on the 25th of each month. These involve wearing orange and meeting in local places to talk to people about the women we support through our projects.

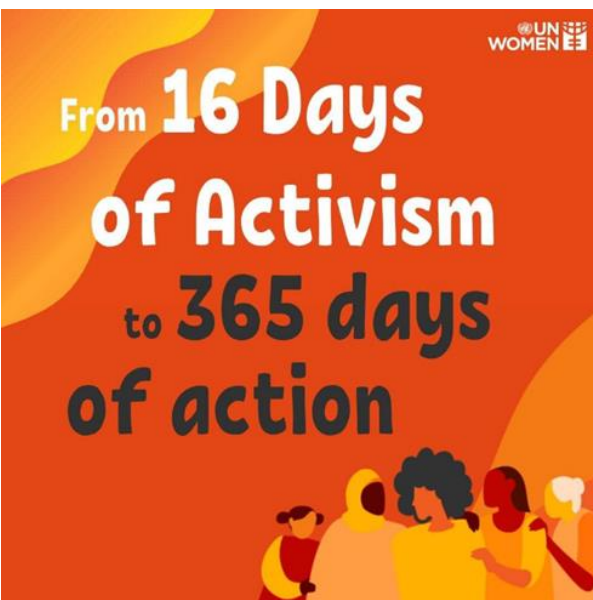
SIGBI's theme was 'Tech's Impact on Gender-Based Abuse'



Technology should be safe for everyone. Soroptimists promote digital respect and call for an end to gender-based abuse in the virtual realm.



WIREFORCHANGE #WIREFORCHANGE #WIREFORCHANGE



On December 10th 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

December 10th is World Human Rights Day & now Soroptimist International Foundation Day

On Day 16 we call for 365 Days of Action

Christmas at Emmeline's Pantry

In October Rose delivered Christmas decorations and books- children's and adults, thanks to our members who donated all the items

Then in December Rose delivered Pyjamas for the Mums, Lego toys for the children. Thanks to members who donated the pyjamas. The Club paid for the toys.



All will be distributed to families in need who are supported by the charity. Many of the women who receive help have fled domestic violence . We are always delighted to support this great charity

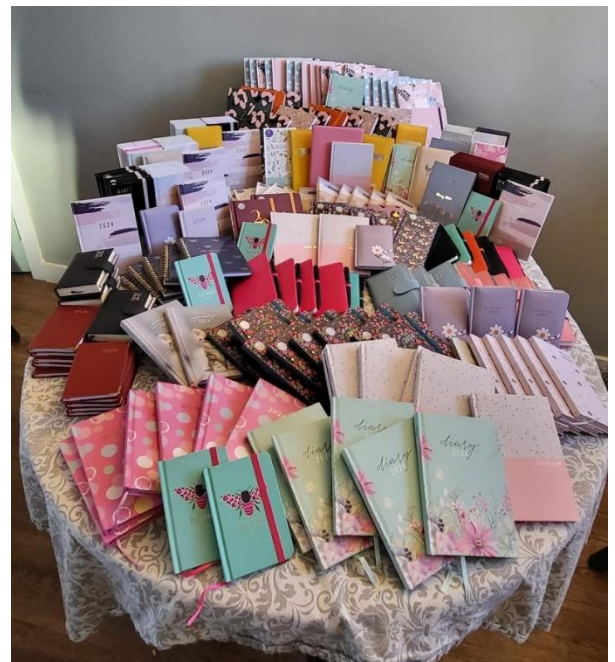


Three members plan to help at Emmeline's Pantry on 21st December.

Rose Marginson

Diaries for WomenMATTa

WomenMATTa make up Christmas packs for the ladies that they support, these include a few key items including a diary for the new year to help them to keep organised.



President Sue, Sophie and Elaine delivered the 250 diaries to [WomenMATTa](#) along with clothes, underwear, toiletries and a cash donation.

Hug-in-a-Mug' Packing

I have always enjoyed the annual mug packing event which enables us to work together to ensure that new arrivals taking refuge from domestic violence are welcomed with a gift showing that people care.

Having volunteered I had a mini panic and needed to put thought to the logistics required for a smooth and efficient process in fairly limited space. I suddenly thought back to 1969 when I was very excited to be promoted to the role of theatre sister at 24 years old which was considered by many to be far too young for the responsibility. The aspect which caused me much hassle was the management of the cramped and inefficient central sterile supply department, part of the theatre suite. I took advice from a family friend who owned a confectionary factory who informed me I clearly needed a human conveyor belt to move things quickly in the limited space.



So, I cleared our kitchen of unnecessary objects including fruit bowls, decanters, coffee machine and ice bucket and identified three work stations which resulted in an unbelievably smooth and fast packing process.

Four members were already wrapping and decorating packed mugs and in quick time the other five joined in and we all enjoyed contributing to a successful outcome.



I also recalled that over fifty years ago so much was recycled and sterilised instead of the disposable world which we now take for granted.

Rosemary Steven

Rosemary, thanks from us all for the generous supply of essential tea, coffee and biscuits!

Elaine, thank you for doing all of the shopping including the biodegradable wrapping.

Susan & David, thanks for delivering them all!



Manchester Women's Aid (MWA) REACH team

The REACH team who support MWA service users have begun to provide some wellbeing sessions at their new 'drop in' facility.

In October Rose delivered Arts and Crafts materials to Women's Aid, to be used in Wellbeing sessions for the women they support.

Thank you to all our members who donated.



During the '16 Days of Activism' President Sue and President Elect Carole delivered a load of craft supplies to REACH, part of Manchester Women's Aid, for use at their Craft & Wellbeing sessions. From new card and glitter glue to lightly used or vintage materials

Again, thanks to members who had donated lightly used supplies.

(Sue & Carole took 4 hours in The Range to spend £53.90 from the Club!)

Behind every crafter is a huge pile of craft supplies they're definitely going to use. Someday.....



Tree Planting in Didsbury Park

On a very wet Monday morning, with the help and support of Volunteers from 'Friends of Didsbury Park, we planted a Cherry Tree, it certainly won't need 'watering in'!



President Sue did her best to show some Orange! Thanks to 'Friends of Didsbury Park' Chairman Brian and the volunteers for looking after the 'Wedding Cake Tree' that we planted last yearin far better weather!



Our Cherry tree is very close to last years 'Wedding Cake Tree', just a few feet away, still in sight of the Pavilion Café where we adjourned to dry off and warm up! Poor Poppy didn't sign up for this!

The River's '16 Days of Action' Event

I was going to support The River's event as a spectator until I was getting changed to leave Barbara rang, stuck at work, and she was due to 'say a few words' about the '16 Days' and Soroptimism! I arrived with a hastily prepared piece, showed it to Donna, then Lydia adapted her piece so that we had everything covered (I think!)



Names of those who lost their lives to domestic abuse were read out followed by a short candle light vigil for remembrance.



It was a wonderful evening with stories, the vigil, pledges madeand of course wonderful cakes and a superb goat curry!

Sue Underwood



Susan and David supported the Christmas Afternoon Tea

Travelling the Slow Road II: Orkney

As we left Shetland for Orkney the temperatures rose and we, like the rest of the UK, experienced a heatwave. The highest recorded June temperature (previously 14 degrees) was blown away and we recorded 22 degrees whilst there. Having laughed at Paul for packing shorts I was sad not to have done so! The very blustery days of Shetland gave way to many sunny, but still breezy, days on Orkney which helped us to continue to explore.



We arrived in the capital, Kirkwall, and were surprised to see so many people, after Shetland. Kirkwall and some of the sites on the main island can become busy when large cruise ships come in, though most day visitors don't go far so we still felt as though we were on more remote islands. Orkney has far more trees than Shetland and so has a less wild beauty. It consists of a

large number of islands, seventy or so, and travelling over by ferry is generally easy. We were joined by friends in their campervan on the main island, also went to Sanday together, and then we explored Westray and Hoy as well. So, we left plenty to see for another trip.



Orkney too has amazing neolithic sites so again I was struck by what an organised and relatively wealthy society existed on the islands 5000 years ago. Skara Brae is an amazing village with nine houses excavated, you can see the stone dressers and beds in the roundhouses, artefacts found there like gaming dice and jewellery. It is again at a stunning location by Skail beach, and you can also see the nearby laird's house, Skail House which has an interesting history itself as well as being the estate on which Skara Brae was discovered, for example they hold Cpt James Cook's dinner service.

We were also really awed by the Ring of Brodgar which sits in a natural amphitheatre of hills and still has 27 out of 60 original stones standing. It is only just smaller than Avebury stone circle, but its use is still a matter of conjecture. We were there on a gloriously sunny day and able to wander inside the circle of stones, not permitted for large coach parties, and enjoyed a ranger guided tour. The rangers are amazing and similarly brought



the Standing Stones of Stennes to life for us on another day. The whole area has a haunting beauty and again we were lucky to be able to camp across the loch from the stones.

Maeshowe chambered cairn is nearby and really demonstrates that 5000 years ago there were some master builders to create such a chamber and roof. For many years it has been considered a burial chamber but may have had far more significance; the doorway to the tunnel is



aligned such that the inside lights up at the summer solstice which is quite extraordinary. I had not appreciated that the great majority of runic Norse that we have in the UK is in this cairn when a group of Norsemen, travelling across the island to go to the crusades (a 1000 years ago) broke in through the roof whilst seeking shelter from a storm.



They must have been bored as they scrawled their runes around the cairn as many of them apparently translate to the sort of things we might see as graffiti today (and probably on the back of toilet doors, yes really).



The mainland also has ancient broch remains at Gurness and on Birsay which is accessible at low tide via a causeway, and, in the future, we may be able to see the findings at the Ness of Brodgar currently being excavated and larger than any other site so far, which we found quite mind boggling.



We also explored and camped at cliff sites, often looking for birds, admired the sunset at the cliffs of Yesnaby, walked the geos there and at Marwick Head and navigated past more honesty boxes containing cake and jams. We travelled down the mainland and across the causeways of the Churchill Barriers to see the shipwrecks and sites around Scapa Flow particularly the Italian chapel. Italian



PoWs in the second world war decorated two Nissen Huts to create a spectacular chapel with very few materials, ingenious.



The smaller islands all feel very different. Sanday really is a collection of sandy beaches. White sands and beautiful seas, generally with only one or two other people walking on them. Many could be adverts for a Caribbean holiday, though it was too cold for a swimsuit most of the time. We stayed next to a pizzeria which also had excellent homemade cake (what's not to like?) called 59 degrees North, appropriately.

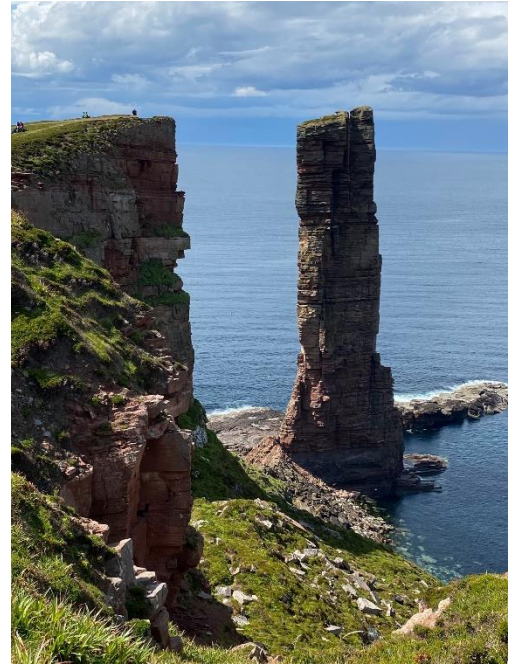




Westray had the largest puffin colony we saw, hundreds on the stack called the Castle O' Burrian and a perfect beach. I took lots of photographs of lighthouses for a friend. The Stephenson family were the incredible engineers responsible for them (yes Robert Louis, a grandson was probably inspired to write Treasure Island because of the islands he saw).

We had been able to see the mountains of Hoy across the other islands we had visited. Arriving on Hoy we visited the Scapa Flow Museum which is newly done and really fascinating. So now we were putting into context the importance of Orkney in relatively recent history. The British Fleet was stationed there during WW1 and 2. We then visited the Martello Tower and Battery and recommend a trip there as the conservationist there gave us an

extraordinary personal tour and we saw the museum and personal story of the owners through the wars before they gave the land to Historic Scotland. Camping at Rackwick Bay enabled us to walk over the mountains to see the largest sea stack, the Old Man of Hoy which is truly spectacular.



There are lots of other hidden gems from Stromness to Ophir we found. We explored to the east too finding a new distillery at Deerness and walking the clifftops of the nature reserve.



Like Shetland there is a creative trail supporting artists of all disciplines around the islands so we could punctuate the history, scenery and nature with visits to galleries and studios on our travels. I now possess some beautiful earrings and necklace inspired by Scapa Flow as my 25th anniversary gift. Back to Kirkwall for a concert in the beautiful red sandstone cathedral of St Magnus as we were there for the international festival. The Royal Scottish Conservatoire accordion ensemble demonstrated the beautiful acoustics in the cathedral. Playing Bach, and sounding almost like an organ, to Hungarian folk dances and modern pieces they mesmerised us. So yes, Orkney also won a special place in our hearts, and we look forward to going back.

Fiona Spencer

Life In The Fast Lane (of the M56!!)

Steve started working as the team truckie for 'Track Focused', a motor racing team based in Ellesmere Port, at the beginning of 2023. Shortly after, the boss – Sean – started asking if anyone knew a decent accountant who could keep the books and run the office. To be fair to Steve, he did keep quiet for several weeks but eventually gave in and admitted that his wife was an accountant, albeit a rather elderly, semi-retired one (my words not his 😊) After a few more weeks of pleading from Sean, I popped over to Ellesmere Port for a chat and the rest, as they say, is history. It was just a no brainer for me because I love motorsport (as a spectator not a competitor)



Mercedes GT3 at

I started in mid-June to find a rather daunting backlog of work – bank rec not done since April, 3 months' worth of invoicing (at least!) – but one of my first tasks was to get all the bookings and paperwork done to take one of the race cars to Portugal! I vividly recall Steve and I taking an Aston Martin to Le Mans for Speedworks a few years ago. The only "checks" that were carried out were when the UK Customs wanted to have a nosey at the car on our return! That, of course, was pre-Brexit. For this trip we had to complete a listing of everything in the truck, with value and weight – 192 items ranging from a £450,000 race car to the brush that Steve uses to

clean the top of his truck!! Our submission got rejected 3 times before they would send us the official documentation. I've arranged several foreign trips since then and I'm glad to say I can now get the paperwork through without rejection – who says you can't teach an old dog....!



This KTM GT4, racing in the British Endurance Championship, was our most successful car this year



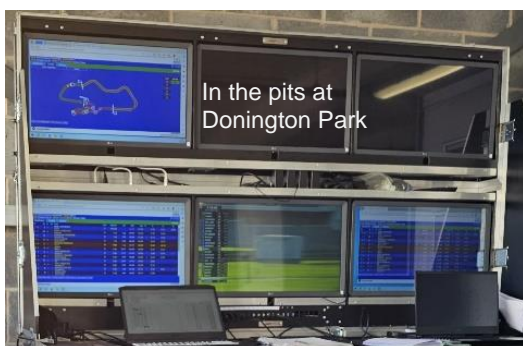
Anglesey office

Unfortunately, I haven't yet been able to go on any of the foreign trips, but I have attended several UK based race events and track days. My first away day was at Trac Mon, Anglesey, which is a lovely venue. Steve set up the back of the truck as an office (pictured left), and very comfortable it was too. It's also been good for me to see a little bit of what goes on behind the scenes. But the

back of a race truck can be a busy place. As well as an office, debriefing room, and refreshments area, it's also where the drivers get changed into their race suits. Most of the time, they don't bother who else is watching when they do it! 😞



Ginetta G55 at Anglesey



In the pits at Donington Park

Donington Park in Leicestershire remains our favourite venue and the Track Focused team calendar quite often says "Barbara in Donington office". It's a very accessible circuit with some great viewing points and a campsite right next door where we can park our motorhome and safely leave the dogs for a couple of hours. It's also very convenient for visiting Steve's family in Leicester and Nottingham.

Disappointingly, there is still a severe lack of diversity in the motor racing world, but it is changing, albeit slowly. There are an increasing number of young girls now competing in junior go karts and Mini Challenge; we have a 12 year old relative who races in junior British Autograss along with her Mum (Dad is the chief mechanic 😊). Two of the European drag racing classes this year were won by women (both Scandinavian, interestingly) and Jade Edwards remains a beacon of hope on the BTCC circuit. But the bizarre financing of motorsport, where even the most talented drivers must rely on their own private means or personal sponsorship, makes breaking into the sport very challenging.

At the senior levels of the sport, however, it is increasingly being recognised that you don't have to have been a driver to be able to run the show! Just a couple of examples here in the UK: Justina Williams – Owner of Excelr8

Motorsport, who compete in British Touring Car Championship (BTCC), and Claire Hedley – Managing Director of the British Endurance Championship.

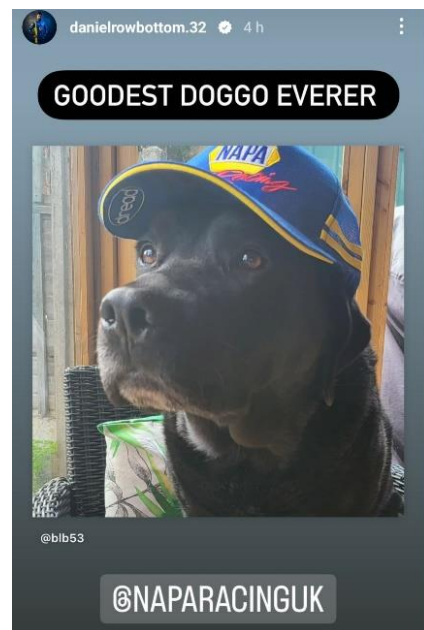
There is now a joint initiative between the FIA (the governing body of motorsport worldwide) and Motorsport UK called “Girls on Track” – well worth a look at their website: [Girls on Track UK - Motorsport UK](#)

Team Brit, whose vision is “Changing Motorsports. Changing Lives” aims to “Support, inspire and motivate people facing physical and psychological challenges by demonstrating what can be achieved through motorsport.”

[CHANGING MOTORSPORT. CHANGING LIVES. - TEAM BRIT](#)

I couldn't finish this piece without a mention of my “petrol head” dog, Jamie. It all started when we won a racing cap signed by the 4 NAPA Racing UK BTCC drivers. I photographed Jamie wearing it and put it on Instagram, where it was almost instantly reposted by one of the drivers. Jamie now has his own social media presence, has clocked up likes and reposts from all 4 drivers, including the current BTCC champion, and has a small but international following! I might have to give up this job to be his agent!! 😊

Barbara Blaber



WITH VERY BEST WISHES FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

FROM BARBARA & STEVE BLABER



New Hope Orissa – Sponsoring Roshini’s Nursing Training:

It began with Eliazar sending a request....

Dear Maureen,

I have a request to ask if Soroptimist ‘group’ – can SPONSOR A NURSE.

Maureen I will give you the girls details. But – ohhh Maureen it’s incredible – this girl – from a sad background has ploughed through her education – not easily but by sheer persistence. She is very quiet BUT she badgered a teacher for not explaining a biology class – several times – worth a clearer explanation!!! (Teacher reported this to me!!!) I sided with the girl and the teacher was not happy with me!

She has said for the last 3 year ‘NURSE’ – Easy to say – Difficult to get a seat anywhere – with scholarship reduced 50% fees. We applied to 3 places. She has been accepted. The Nursing College called me directly. She had 24 hours to ‘accept’ and be at the College. Long way away but we have ‘friends in that city.

We know the College as one of our first ‘Nurses’ was trained there too. It’s a very prestigious college in this State. The fees we have to pay are related to books, uniforms and part charges of Nursing Hostel fees.

It’s a total of GBP 700

Eliazar

Members agreed to use some of Yvonne Mullen’s legacy so that we can be involved...

Roshini’s Story

ROSHINI – Strange story – but many children at New Hope have ‘strange’ introductions to us. A man came to the office with a girl and a boy and simply said their mother had died and he could not care for them. He didn’t say “I am their father.” He really gave the sense that he just did not want them. After getting the two children to go and play with a group of children near a swing he explained he was their father and their mother had died suddenly. He showed the death certificate. There were no relatives. That is odd as there is usually an aunt or a grandparent somewhere – one would think. NOT here at New Hope though. We have children who simply don’t have anyone to connect with. In the summer of June 2017 she said in front of her brother and he nodded that their mother had said their parents were of very different caste and the marriage had been a love marriage. They had never seen anyone from their mother or fathers family.

Roshini did well in 7th class and that is a difficult year for students here. She moved to 8th class and started well. ..

Last summer (2022) their father came but he was so erratic in telling us what he did and where he lived. Both children said they did not wish to go with him. So we did not allow them to go with him. There was something not right. He just walked off without saying anything.

Roshini kept studying and studying and daringly told the Teacher/s if she did not understand or had serious questions – and at the same time you would say – ‘she was a quiet young girl’.

Next 10th class. No joke study and exam year. Its results often set where a study will progress to. She passed. We were fortunate that her then sponsor paid for 2 years of study. (Sponsor sadly passed away/COVID).

Roshini has been to 8 weeks of Skill Training – Many senior girls are going as it teaches them ‘life’– Handling money’ banking, (smile) change a light bulb, how solar works.

Next the Government announced Nursing courses.

Roshini passed and has been appointed and had to leave and be at the Nursing College in 24 hours.....

Incredible – We are over joyed for her.

Eliazar

.....We look forward to hearing about the progress of this determined young woman!



Act4Africa's News: Kathy's Kindergarten Graduation Day

November 24th marks a momentous occasion as we celebrate the graduation of twelve bright stars from Kathy's Kindergarten to the primary level of education! A heartfelt thank you to the incredible parents, generous donors, dedicated teachers, and visionary administrators at Act4Africa who made this milestone possible.



At Kathy's, we take pride in our innovative hybrid learning techniques that equip our young graduates with a diverse set of skills. The testimonies from parents speak volumes about the exceptional performance of our pupils as they transition to primary school. It's truly inspiring to witness the impact of our collaborative efforts to nurture these young minds.

Here's to the future leaders!
Let's continue to empower and support the next generation.
Congratulations to our graduates, and a big thank you to everyone who played a role in their journey!





Fiona's Visit to Kathleen

It was really wonderful to see Kathleen last month. She was on great form as we (Paul and myself) shared a celebratory fish supper with her and her son Mike.

I hope you approve of the photos Kathleen.

We all wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Fiona Spencer



*Pleased to see the fish knife Kathleen, 'standards'!
you are your mother's daughter, 'though I seem to recall
 that that was to do with a butter knife!
 Sue x*



South Lancashire Regional Past Presidents' Lunch

Once again Kathleen, Val* and I met for a very enjoyable lunch at Statham Lodge together with other Past Regional Presidents.

Both Val & I were surprised and delighted to see Kathleen there as we both recalled her declaring that last year's lunch was to be her last – and that was three days before she broke her hip!

Sue Underwood

**Val Moss is now a member of SI Morecambe*

Fiona's Ultimate Achievement

Fiona became a Soroptimist whilst working as a Registrar in Ophthalmology in Glasgow, she subsequently moved to Nottingham as a Senior Registrar and Lecturer in her chosen post graduate specialty. She was appointed to her first Consultant's post at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital in 1998 to specialise in the future development of Glaucoma services. She also transferred as a Soroptimist from S I Nottingham to our club.

I was delighted to meet her and welcome her as a new member, as I had spent some considerable time in my own career in Ophthalmic nursing working as a theatre sister at Sunderland Eye Infirmary. Many years later in 1981 I was appointed as Director of Nursing at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital and subsequently also appointed as General Manager, a post I remained in till 1989. During this period in 1986, I also became a Soroptimist. In 2001 till 02 I was President of our club and worked closely with Fiona in her role as President Elect and subsequently in her first term as President in 2002 till 03.

Her career and lifestyle always fascinated me as she juggled her Consultant Ophthalmic clinical sessions, lead responsibility for the Post Graduate education of future Ophthalmologists, not only in Manchester (where she was also an Associate Medical Director) but nationally through her work with the Royal College of Ophthalmology. Internationally she worked with 11 countries in Africa developing the training and syllabus opportunities for doctors in those countries to work in her chosen specialty. At the same time, as well as being an active Soroptimist, she had 2 babies, Alex now 21 and Ciara now 19, both now University students. WOW!

A few years ago Gus was diagnosed with Glaucoma and became her patient, I had the opportunity to observe as an accompanying relative how she impressively coped with huge Glaucoma clinics, never failing to smile and greet each and every patient with empathy and care.

The highest accolade that the Royal College of Ophthalmologists can bestow is an Honorary Fellowship which is awarded to individuals who have made a significant and inspirational contribution to Ophthalmology.

Each year 2 or 3 individuals are recognised at the annual Admissions Ceremony and this September, on a gloriously hot sunny day, our member Fiona Spencer received this prestigious award. Fiona was nominated by her colleagues at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital (MREH)



and is the first person from the MREH to be recognised in this way.

The ceremony in London is attended by all the doctors, with their families, who have completed their postgraduate fellowship exams and is a joyous celebration. Fiona's husband Paul, son Alex and daughter Ciara were able to share the day with her. Her esteemed work colleague and friend from MREH, Cecilia, gave the citation.

Fiona has previously been awarded an Honorary Fellowship from the College of Optometrists for her contribution to establishing multidisciplinary team working for Glaucoma patients.

Fiona has achieved a tremendous reputation, at the forefront of the development of glaucoma services, Post - Graduate Education.



In the 1960's I did not work with one woman doctor in Ophthalmology. In the 1980's as the Registrar of the Ophthalmic nursing board I visited and assessed 19 specialist eye units and very rarely met any woman in leading roles in this specialty, how times have changed with our Soroptimist member Fiona having received the highest accolade possible.

Fiona you so deserve your retirement with the opportunity to enjoy your fabulous lodge in Bassenthwaite and travelling extensively in your new mobile home, and of course your ongoing commitment to Soroptimism.

Rosemary Steven

Friendship Link SI Gdansk

Dear Malgorzata

Thank you for your email with the news from SI Manchester club. Your newsletter is second to none!

Our new board is as follows:

Ewa Oleszczuk – president

Agnieszka Majewska – vice-president

Ewa Markowska – treasurer

Ksenia Bagniewska – secretary

Elzbieta Latocha – programme director (among others, responsible for action funds)

Maria Banaszak – past-president



We are working in the main 3 areas: Ukraine, projects based on Action Fund money (from European Federation of SI) and our own projects that require organizing fund-raising events.

Ukraine - We are slowly coming back to our club goals and projects as the Ukrainian issues completely dominated our work within the last 18 months. We are still buying necessary things for people living on the frontline and sending them with reliable convoys. In Gdansk we support professional trainings for Ukrainians, like medical Polish courses for doctors and nurses.

At the beginning of the war, within the 2021 we received significant financial support from SI clubs in Germany, Japan,

the UK, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium and the European Federation SI Clubs (Disaster Recovery Fund).

Altogether the amount was around 130,000 EUR, which enabled us to help thousands of Ukrainians in Ukraine and Poland. We still have some money left to supply necessary things to the people living close to the war zones.

Action Fund – the project to help victims of family violence, living in a shelter run by the Gdansk city and a foundation – psychological, medical, legal support, involving our personal involvement, e.g. meetings with children and mothers to spend Times on Christmas preparations, games, trips.

The Gdansk Club's activities - We are coming back to our flagship project – a scholarship fund for young women who would like to get additional qualifications, publish a book on women-related topics, release a music album, etc. It requires raising funds so we are planning to come back to our successful events – Christmas Carols Concerts, with music from different countries. This year it is held in the Old Town Hall, on 11 Dec.

There are some more ideas but we are not sure how viable they will be.

Now we are preparing the Orange the World event – one of our members is an owner of a popular art gallery in Gdansk and she is arranging an exhibition of paintings with the orange colour as the dominating one.

I am attaching some photos from our ceremony of new board appointment. Many more photos are on our Facebook site*

Maria Banaszak



*The link is

<https://www.facebook.com/SoroptimistInternationalGdanskPoland>

Friendship Link SI Grosse Pointe

Here are photos of a group of us who attended a non-Soroptimist event that starred one of our members AND put us in Christmas Spirit. Don't know if you've ever seen the play, 'National Lampoon's Christmas Ain't for Relatives,' with American star Chevy Chase, but this play was based on that movie. Very funny. We needed some laughs considering all that's going on in the world that is so unfunny.

Nancy Solak



L-R Mary Ellen Burke, Diana Langlois, Karrie Blankenship, Carolyn Barth, Deb Rowe and Kerri Green.

L-R Kerri Green, Mary Bryk, Nancy Solak, Rich Solak, David Bryk, and Roseanne Horne.

Soroptimist Grosse Pointe, Michigan, USA, wishes each and every one of our colleagues in Manchester the very best of holidays!



Painted by Rob

May the Christmas Season bring only happiness & joy to you and your family. Love from Cath & Rob x

Early Essentials (www.earlyessentials.org.uk)

The recently submitted and approved Project Initiation Form (PIF) explains....

“Early Essentials is a charity that was set up 8 years ago by two Manchester mums from Ivy Church. We are now heavily relied upon by local NHS maternity services, health visiting teams, safeguarding babies teams, social care, women's refuges etc. Our Moses basket packs are saving lives within our communities. We are considered to be an integral part of the Manchester vulnerable babies death prevention strategy. We are the go-to agency for the Infant Death Prevention Team, the Vulnerable Baby Prevent and Protect Service, the Thriving Babies Team and Safeguarding Children's Service. They use Early Essentials for the needs of mothers and babies so that they can provide a safe place to sleep to ensure babies are better able to survive and thrive.”



Today I dropped off 6 Linus Quilts and about 12 knitted blankets from Village Stitchers, Heald Green and their friends....

Also, hats knitted by Soroptimist friends...



The PIF lists the contents of these Moses baskets...

We will be looking to continue the connection for more essentials in the new year
Fiona Spencer



Friendship Link SI Johannesburg

Hi Fiona - Please thank everyone who contributed to your last Newsletter, it was so full of wonderful activities and you are making so many people very happy. Thank you so much. I especially liked the quote from Monty Halls.
Kind regards **Mary Scholes**

**“Have a wonderful Festive Season and a Blessed Christmas”
From SI Johannesburg**

Dates for Your Diary

Tuesday 2 nd January	6:30 for 7pm	Club Meeting
Wednesday 10 th January	7pm	Zoom – Programme Action Meeting
Tuesday 16 th January	7pm	Executive Meeting
Saturday 3 rd February	7pm	Act4Africa's Curry & Quiz Night
Tuesday 6 th February	6:30 for 7pm	Club Meeting – Time for Reflection
Tuesday 20 th February	7pm	Executive Meeting
Sunday 25th February	12:30 for 1pm	98th Charter Lunch – replies by Friday 9th February please
Thursday 29 th February	7pm	Zoom – Programme Action Meeting
Saturday 2 nd March	From 10am	South Lancs Region PAC & Council Meeting
Tuesday 5 th March	6:30 for 7pm	Club Meeting
Tuesday 19 th March	7pm	Executive Meeting
Tuesday 2 nd April	7pm	Club Meeting – The Rowley Project
Monday 8 th April	7pm	Zoom – Programme Action Meeting
Thursday 18 th April		Annual General Meeting – details to follow
Tuesday 23 rd April	7pm	Executive Meeting
Saturday 11 th May		South Lancashire Regional Conference – ‘Rise Up & Roar’



Christmas Greetings:

We are grateful to all who, in lieu of cards, have sent their Christmas greetings.
The donations will go to our General Charities Account.



Copy for the Spring edition of the Newsletter by **Sunday 31st March**, please.

Looking forward to articles from each of you!

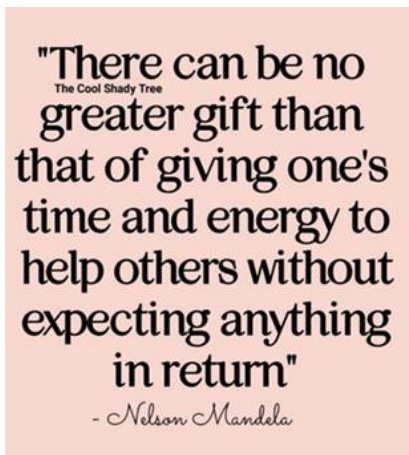
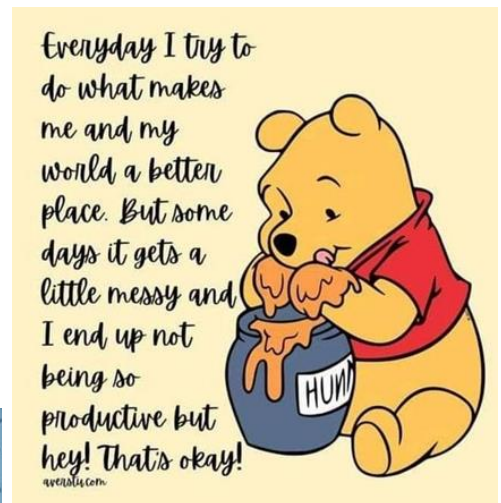
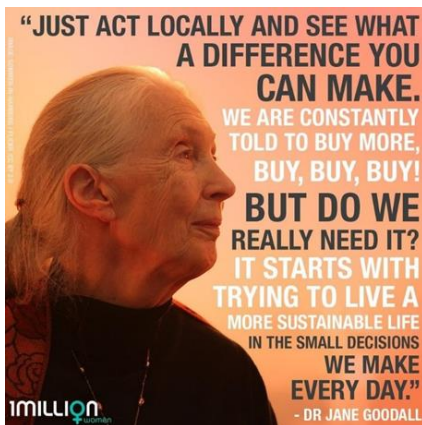
Share your **S-O-R-O-P-T-I-M-I-S-T** words

Tell your story ... Review your Soroptimism ... Newer Members please introduce yourselves!

Anything else you would like to share? Personal anecdotes always welcome

Sue Underwood sueuhome@sky.com

Last Words from a Woman, a Man, a Bear & a Dog, who could/should have been Soroptimists!





Wishing you and your loved ones a very merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.
Love Susan and David

Merry Christmas!
Wishing You & Yours
Health & Happiness in 2024
President Sue X



Wishing you and your loved ones, a happy, healthy & peaceful New Year
Elaine



We wish all our Soroptimist friends and families a wonderful festive season and a healthy and happy New Year.
Rosemary & Gus



Wishing all our Soroptimist sisters and families a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.
Much love,
Sophie & Kev xxx

Wishing Everyone A Very Merry Christmas and A Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year!
May I take this opportunity to say A Big Thank You to everyone for support, friendship and all the hard work the past year!
Best wishes Liz 🎄👶



Wishing all our members a Very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful, Healthy New Year
Best wishes from
Rose and John



Wishing you all a peaceful and happy festive season from
Kathleen in Wales



Peace, Love
and
Joy to All
Olive



Thank you for all your friendship and support through this year. My very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.
Hilary





Wishing all my Soroptimist friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
Sue Harris

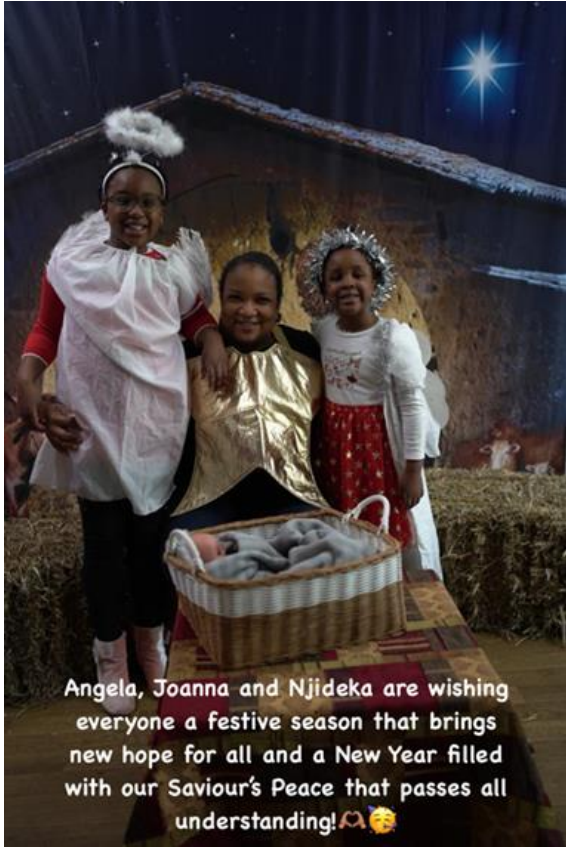
Wishing all our Soroptimist friends a wonderful Christmas and a happy and healthy year ahead. Looking forward to working together on our projects
Love Fiona,
Paul, Alex and Ciara



To All SI Manchester Members
Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for a peaceful 2024.
Ann



❄️❄️
Val wishes all members of SI Manchester a very happy Christmas and a prosperous 2024 with sincere thanks for their love and friendship
❄️❄️
Val



Many thanks for your continued friendship and support. I hope all my lovely Soroptimist family have a wonderful, joyous and peaceful festive season surrounded by those whom you love and all good wishes for 2024.
Carole



Let the world find a pathway to Peace, supported by All Soroptimists across the world.
Malgorzata.



Season's Greetings for Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Love Shena & Barry



Warm greetings for Christmas and for a happy and healthy 2024
Love from Maureen





Fun, Food and candles for our Friendship Links



**Merry Christmas
& Happy New
Year**

**To All our Members,
Friends and Family**



