

## S I LINCOLN

Prior to the 'lockdown' period, Lincoln Soroptimists had agreed as part of Programme Action to support the Women's Aid refuge in a neighbouring town, which lacked formal support and sponsorship. Continuing our support and recognising the challenges the refuge is facing during this period is important. We are therefore undertaking collections of basic food essentials, cleaning products and some toiletries, which they have identified as requiring. Those members not isolating are making the collections, calling on those who are remaining at home in a way which safely enables them to be involved.

From May, our new Programme Action co-ordinator is Jill Anderson, who joined the club last year. Just before the end of her presidential year, and the lockdown, Christine Metcalf divided the club into contact/friendship groups, encouraging us to keep in touch and offer support to each other. Our Executive has held Zoom meetings and intends to try a Zoom Virtual coffee morning in June.



*Several members have sewn protective scrubs and bags to put them in for NHS daughters, and made masks for friends and neighbours.*

One member took part in a Corona virus research project and our President, Hilary Baxendale, makes hand sanitiser to distribute in her community. She was also approached by three older ladies who asked her to be their Tena Lady supplier, as they didn't want their children or delivery men to know of their need. She is happy and proud to help!

Lots of us have shopped for the 'shielding' and vulnerable, delivered their medicines, phoned, Skyped, emailed and sent them photos of countryside and wildlife, posted cheering cards and treats to the housebound and to parents in care homes, and still found time to look after our own physical and mental health; Garielle Bradbury by joining a Zoom Choir, others by walking, cycling, doing online yoga and Pilates, bird watching, gardening, reading and baking. We hope to emerge fitter, happier and wiser!

## S I PETERBOROUGH

It is 15 weeks since we last met in person as a club and like other clubs, we have had to adjust to how we come together and continue our work in the community and beyond. Several of our members are still working, especially in the healthcare sector with care homes and pharmacies. We also have many members still providing essential volunteering work.

In March, our member Jessica organised a virtual quiz where we all donated £2 to play and all proceeds went to the Lightbox project, supporting homeless people in our local area. This in total raised £40. Our friendship links officer Pat Wells has used this time to update our five links with our activities over the past few months and it has been lovely to keep in touch with other members near and far.



Member Anne Smith has been busy preparing shoeboxes for the Samaritans Purse, which she has been collecting donations for, and Ann Rowe has been recycling greeting cards to resell to raise



money.

As we have not been able to meet in person, we have been having fortnightly Zoom calls and have arranged for speakers in the future. Members have also kept in touch via phone and a WhatsApp group.

## S I LEICESTER

SI Leicester has been keeping in touch with our members some of whom are in the older vulnerable group and those shielding. The Club also has some very new members who we are keeping in regular contact with.

Individual members are shopping for friends and neighbours and running errands. A number of our members are working, some from home and others at work, trying to cope with the problem of establishing and providing services online to vulnerable families at this difficult time.

Regular Club Bulletins are being circulated electronically and posted to those not on E mail. The weekly SIGBI News Briefing is circulated to all members and hard copies posted out.

The Club has not had any virtual meetings but is aware that individual members are holding zoom meetings with friends and family.

## S I DUKERIES

With 13 Members, many isolating being over 70 years, or shielding due to personal or family members' medical conditions, we felt unable to undertake any Club volunteering.



*One of S I Dukeries fortnightly Zoom meetings. 9 members present.*

Keeping in touch by telephone, ensuring those living on their own were safe and in good spirits, we have enjoyed fortnightly Zoom meetings involving most Members relaying news to Members without the technology and sending a photocopy of the online Soroptimist News.

Without an official AGM, our Treasurer Denise ensured our accounts were audited, sent copies to Members, who agreed to give £100 to both our local Bassetlaw Hospice and the nearby Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice. With increased domestic violence reported in

the press, Members donated clothing, stationary, toys etc. initially collected for Mary's Meals, to the local Women's Refuge.

# SI MIDLAND EAST Newsletter JUNE 2020



Our Member Ginny normally assists at the fortnightly 'Singing for the Brain' sessions for Alzheimer Patients and Carers, joined in their Zoom singing meetings and contacted Members to join the Charity's online fundraising Quiz.

Caroline has been busy making her recycled Cards and Tags etc. ready for fundraising sales once we are able to meet, have Craft Fairs etc. Judith, a willing Hospital volunteer, found out the local Hospital's decision to use the new crisis volunteers instead.

All Members have kept in touch with known vulnerable people, living on their own. Being unsure when we shall recommence our usual meetings, we may have a Garden Meeting, sitting outside, taking the necessary social distancing precautions.

## SI KETTERING

I am sure this is a most unusual time for all of us. I have my two west highland white terriers to keep me company. As we cannot meet as a club, I have telephoned all of our club members and I am now telephoning them for a second time.

It is lovely to chat with them and here what they are doing, most are coping well but for some it is a trying time. Many have had offers by kind neighbours to do shopping for them and this is very much appreciated.

I look forward to the time when we can all meet up again.

## SI NOTTINGHAM



During lockdown SI Nottingham has had very successful Executive and Club Meetings on Zoom with members without internet facilities joining by phone. Plans have been made for Programme Action initiatives that can be carried out while restrictions remain in place. These include raising funds by raising money on Ebay and an Aloa Vera event to be held online

We have continued to supply our Refuges and Emmanuel House, a homeless shelter, with toiletries and sanitary wear.

We have kept the garden at We R Here (counselling service for survivors of abuse) weeded and under control and have been encouraged to get involved in lobbying.



The club has divided itself into small groups to better keep in touch, be it by zoom or phone, or email. This seems to work well and is appreciated especially by members in the extremely vulnerable category for self-isolation.



Individuals have been busy learning new skills by knitting intricate and colourful animals for friends and family, playing bridge on line and joining in matches and tournaments, sorting out years of photos and filing away in plastic boxes, joining in U3A classes as well as Pilates and other exercise classes, walking and doing jigsaws. Some have been running businesses and shopping for neighbours and friends, supplying fruit and vegetable cuttings for neighbours' chickens and receiving eggs and tomato plants in exchange as well as providing the odd Sunday lunch for an elderly neighbour.

Our outlook is positive and we move ahead with confidence and enthusiasm.

## S I MANSFIELD

Well, just to sum up my time since lockdown, it has been eventful. As a Face to Face advisor for the local authority, I was dreading the home working scenario and was anxious of how I will be able to cope at home. Bearing in mind, I have not been able to face my late husband Paul's study (spare room) for nearly two years with all his computer and stuff still untouched and intact.

From the beginning, I was re-deployed to help out in the crematorium which was rewarding but only for a short period of time before the management decided to limit the amount of staff at any one time in the office of course adhering to social distancing's protocol. So, they decided to place me on calls and in order to do so, I had no choice was to pull myself together and to undertake the offer. Hence, I thought, this will enable me the opportunity to at least sort the office/spare room out to utilise as a base with proper guidance from management.

Well, initially, I felt I was at a complete lost, although I am ok with navigating round the software but not technically minded with the hardware dept. So, I stayed focus and tried to figure out how to connect the computer with our main framework system at the same time hooking into the 3CX online telephone network. So now here I am working now daily on calls since the beginning of April. I realised being on calls for vulnerable people in the district working with CVS in partnerships with NHS and the local governmental bodies on a befriending service made me feel fortunate to be able to make a small difference in the community at such unprecedented times.

However, I do have my "ups and downs" overall I am a positive person and will embrace changes. To be honest, given the time to reflect and we have been responding to this crisis/pandemic will have a profound and different outlook for us as a whole in society in the foreseeable future. Keeping our mental and physical health fit, although it is easily said than done?



In between my free time, I use social media and face timing to keep in touch with family and friends at least once a week as they are located all over – the nearest London/Sheffield/Derby and furthest Sydney/Bangkok/Copenhagen - only me here in the Nottinghamshire area, dealing with the NEW NORMAL and of course with my Soroptimist sisters.

Seeing how things have changed with the virtual world, Still, I am missing the human interactions, hopefully, we will meet up again soon but don't know when? Well, I can hear a song emerging? Finally, I shall end here by quoting two

eastern sayings.

"It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop"

"Heal the past, live and love the present and dream the future"

## S I BUXTON

In Buxton, we have been trying to keep the name of Soroptimists at the forefront.

Before we were all quarantined, the Buxton Soroptimist Group provided a seat in the conservatory of the Pavilion Gardens. The purchase of this seat was made possible by a bequest from Mary Daybell a Senior Health Visitor and staunch supporter of the Buxton Group.

This seat is inscribed "Happy to Chat", "Sponsored by Soroptimist International of Buxton and District", and welcomes all, both inhabitants of Buxton and visitors too, to share this resting spot and the opportunity to chat to anyone else who happens to be there at the time. The seat is 6ft wide and so, even with the present social distancing regulation, there is seating space to engage in a conversation with one other.



*Joint President Jo Holdway and founder member Thelma Fraser sitting on the bench.*

We will always be indebted to Mary Daybell for this generous legacy and we are certain that many, many people will benefit from the opportunity to sit and chat.



Some of our ladies, President Jo included, have been busy making aprons and masks. The local Scrub Hub charity distributes scrubs and aprons where they are needed in NHS and Care homes. 40 masks, and aprons which are modelled here by Joint President Jo, were made by members.

Trying to get hold of fabric was difficult at the start with shops closed. However, once we were told that bed linen could be used, then beds have been stripped and the carers we supported through "Scrub Hub" are sporting fairly glamorous aprons looking amazingly similar to a duvet cover I saw some time back in John Lewis.

Face masks tested me. The first one took a whole morning to make despite explicit instructions from Anne, our Treasurer. The second one I made completely incorrectly and had the piece inside out. By mask number 3, I had begun to understand the making!! My husband proved to be helpful as he produced pipe cleaners. No, he was never a smoker, but these were left over from teaching days. Did you know that a pipe cleaner inserted inside the mask helps to mould it to the nose?

Individual members have also helped in the community. Some have helped elderly people with errands. Others continue vital work within the community.

Elaine McDonald continues to work with Crossroads, the Women's' Aid charity. Sue Barber runs the High Peak Diabetic Self-Help group. During lockdown, support has been needed more than ever for people with diabetes across High Peak and Derbyshire Dales, and further afield since closure of Diabetes UK Chesterfield branch.

Joint President Sue and her husband raised more than £260 for NHS and First Responders selling their vegetable plants, while Joy Bramley is raising funds for UNICEF with her plant sales.

Our Garden Trail supported by SI has had to be postponed. However, our plan is to create a virtual trail and we will be able to mention the Soroptimist movement as supporters of the project. We hope to have this ready mid-July and also on Facebook.

Who knows where our next scheme will take us or indeed, how long we will be isolating/distancing? For sure, if this continues for some time, we will think of something new to do, supporting all in this amazing country.

## S I DERBY

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, meeting for the first time in three months and socially distanced, a small group of Soroptimists from SI Derby got together for a walk to celebrate World Environment Day. Originally, we had intended to walk the Limestone Way in stages, our own mini trek, the best we thought we could realistically manage to emulate trekking in Nepal, whilst at the same time raising funds for Empowering Girls in Nepal, the project between SIGBI and Chora Chori.

The day started with torrential rain but as we all arrived the sun came out and it was a beautiful day. As we walked, a man offered to take our photographs, and he asked what is a Soroptimist. After saying we were a worldwide organisation with a focus on women and girls we mentioned that our walk had originally been to fundraise for a project in Nepal. The man's grandfather was Sir Ralph Turner was well known in Nepal and words he had written were on a Gurkha memorial. What a coincidence! We took the man's details in case we could persuade him to talk to the group about his grandfather at a future meeting!



*Margo Broadhurst, Frances Rothwell, Judy Doenhoff, Judie Anderson, Celia Beizsley, Maaie Wolff and Jan Stopher Clark.*

Sir Ralph Turner 1888-1983, had three careers, firstly in the Indian Army in World War One, commanding Gurkhas and was awarded the military cross. Secondly as a distinguished Indo-Aryan scholar, (he produced The Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali language)

and finally becoming the director of the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University. The Gurkha Memorial in Horse Guards Avenue, Whitehall, unveiled in 1997 has the following words:-  
The GURKHA SOLDIER

Bravest of the brave, most generous of the generous, never had country more faithful friends than you

Professor Sir Ralph Turner MC. It seemed a serendipitous meeting with Sir Ralph's grandson, given the patron of Empowering Girls in Nepal, Joanna Lumley, also has close links with the Gurkhas.



*Marion Merkens with her gowns.*

We hope to make a start to our original planned fundraising walk of the Limestone Way on around Constitution Day in Nepal, September 19<sup>th</sup> 2020.

SI Derby have met on Zoom a few times. Our AGM took place in March before lockdown. Some members made gowns for Care workers and laundry bags. Baby Bundles for new Mums which were already assembled were collected by a Community Parenting organisation. Plans for a garden for a mental health NHS facility have been submitted to them for consideration and future action.

There are other photos on our website.

# SI MIDLAND EAST Newsletter JUNE 2020 S I LOUGHBOROUGH



This has been a time of challenge with silver linings for members of SI Loughborough. Looking through our messages to each other it is evident that we have been practising our Soroptimist strapline of 'Educate, Empower and Enable', for ourselves, in our local communities and also with our international friends in France and India.

We have learned new and polished up latent skills such as learning foreign languages, hairdressing, acquiring expertise in electronic communication, bird watching, sharing quizzes, star gazing, enjoying nature and taking exercise whilst enjoying a wonderful Spring. Members also celebrated V.E day in their locality and recently we laughed at Pam Ayres latest poetry offering!

We have needed to care for loved ones and friends with health problems during this time by offering virtual hugs, also delivering books and jigsaws. More widely we have supported those working hard to shield us by organising the sewing of 400 scrubs from donated bed linen for the NHS in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire and now Rainbows our local children's hospice.



We have welcomed one new member and have another prospective member who we are looking forward to meeting at a garden party hopefully in August when we are allowed out!

Through all this we have felt the love and support of members and the wider community and feel very fortunate to belong to such a forward looking and strong group of women.

## S I CHESTERFIELD

During lockdown nine members of Chesterfield Club have met fortnightly via zoom. As well as discussing club business we have been able to support each other and lighten our mood with laughter.

We have recently donated toys and games to Fairplay and are discussing with Chernobyl Children's Lifeline how we can best support them this year. Children will not be visiting Derbyshire this year, but the virus has hit their communities hard and they are still in need of financial assistance.

## S I AMBER VALLEY

Many of our members have been shopping for family neighbours and friends also cleaning for elderly relatives and taking in and collecting prescriptions.

One of our members is Lead Matron for Infection Prevention Control in the NHS covering Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Leicestershire so has been working very long hours. As well as her normal role she has led a team supporting front line staff making sure they have the right equipment and know how to put on and take off PPE. Fit testing all high-level protection masks for use in prisons as well as in all types of hospitals and also for use as specialist community care workers. On top of this, writing and interpreting national policies for use locally.

Another member is head of department in a secondary school and has been teaching the children of key workers. One member has been writing a daily blog on social media accessed by fellow members and other regular followers. One member has made 20 face masks in child friendly fabrics for the staff at a local nursery and one of our members is in a prayer chain at her church. Another has organised zoom meetings and telephone conferencing for U3A members and regular contact has been made via email to all our members.