

# SI MIDLAND EAST Newsletter JANUARY 2021



## S I BUXTON AND DISTRICT

Well, 2020 came and went leaving some of us dazed and bewildered. Not us, in Buxton!

Every Remembrance Sunday for the past 30 years, our club President has laid a wreath at her home memorial. This year the wreath was placed on the Tideswell memorial privately because the Parades were cancelled due to COVID.



The High Peak Diabetic Self-Help Group has been unable to meet, but demand for assistance has been greater than ever. Joint President Sue Barber has supported people across the Buxton area who have diabetes. Biomedical Scientist Sue runs a phone service with the help of group President Tracy Gill. They are accredited by Diabetes UK.

We sent copies of the Region Calendar to our friendship links in Stockport and Leek, and to our International Link with Kerteminde in Denmark. Kerteminde joined in with our most recent Zoom meeting.

We were fortunate to be given a space to decorate in the Pavilion Gardens. A tree was purchased and Anne Needham and Jo Holdway plus our two Soroptimisters spent a lovely morning building and decorating the tree.

We know that many families enjoyed our spectacle whilst awaiting entry to the events that were held in the Octagon, in the run up to Christmas. We hope that we helped to lift the spirits of our visitors whilst continuing to spread the word of the good work that the Soroptimists do.



## S I DERBY



This terrible pandemic has taught us much, not just how to use Zoom but the importance of staying in touch and bringing out our optimistic side, the best of us. Many members made bags or gowns for the NHS or made donations, we joined in with the regular weekly applause, helped neighbours and offered support to friends, our community and our members as sisters would.

Our approach was to be inclusive and supportive, we held our usual monthly meetings using Zoom which meant we could see each other, as restrictions lifted we met for walks including a sponsored socially distanced walk.

We met at the National Stone Centre for a walk along the High Peak Trail. Enjoyed a summer walk along the Bonnie Prince Charlie way followed by a picnic and a walk at Carsington Water.



We continued to support our chosen local charities and partners, whether monetarily or materially. Our speakers this year have reflected those interests and partnerships and have included speakers from the Red Cross on trafficking, Derby Parenting Project and from the Rosie May Foundation. We have also enjoyed being in touch with our region welcoming both the previous and present Region Presidents.

## SI DUKERIES

The current restrictions imposed by Covid have limited our activities during the past year. However, we were able to repeat our annual donations to the Nottinghamshire Women's Aid Worksop branch. We collected toiletries, which filled four large boxes, and this time we also collected toys for the children. Members delivered these to the centre just before Christmas, where they were most gratefully received.

We volunteer to help at Singing for the Brain sessions run by the Alzheimer's Society, usually at Carlton-in-Lindrick, but of course these cannot currently be held live, so weekly meetings are now on Zoom and include several Nottinghamshire groups, led by the same teacher Angela. The sessions are themed e.g. Happiness, toys and games, Singing and Dancing and consist of general chat, group discussions, quizzes, gentle exercise, as well as singing, much enjoyed by all participants.

## SI KETTERING

The last 12 months have been challenging in many ways – as the Scottish Bard said, 'the best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley'!

Last February/March we were busy collecting Easter Eggs for a mammoth Easter tombola being planned to raise funds for HomeStart – which was cancelled! Thankfully, the organiser was still happy to receive our many chocolate eggs and make up Easter parcels for the families they support. That need for support has grown over the intervening months so at Christmas we provided chocolate for their Christmas hampers.

We have collected general food items for one of the local food banks and have just agreed to provide Easter food items for a Soup Kitchen at which one of our members helps.

Away from food, we continue to support the education of 3 girls in Uganda and we receive updates on their progress. Taking on board President Johanna Raffan's request to plant a tree, one of our members has had two trees planted in a nearby country park.

We are also delighted to have been able to present two of our members – Janet Spence and Eileen Burley with long service awards and we thank them for their commitment to Soroptimism and, in particular, SI Kettering. Since autumn we have held monthly Zoom meetings, so we keep things ticking over - those unable to join in receive a report in the post.



## S I LEICESTER



A CHALLENGING 10 MONTHS. Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2020 Charter Lunch was the last time we met as a club face-to-face. Since then Leicester has been in almost continuous lockdown. Club meetings have been held by *Zoom*, mostly with an outside speaker. S I Loughborough are invited to join us.

Fund-raising has been concentrated on our two local charities: ADHD Solutions and Women's Aid. Members have been baking, sewing, even making handbags and bird-boxes! A magnificent quantity of cakes, mince pies, pickles, chutney, jams and marmalade raised £500 at our Christmas Market stall for ADHD Solutions.

We raised funds to furnish a room at Juno House, part of Women's Aid accommodating 16-to-24-year-olds and their children. All rooms also receive new towels, which residents retain when they move on. One member sewed bags for towel sets. We provided craft boxes to keep everyone occupied. For Christmas they received enormous hampers of food, napkins, tablecloth and presents.



Members have received Christmas and birthday cards, and flowers if they were ill. Members not on computer receive regular telephone calls. Just two of us were allowed to attend the recent funeral of our oldest member, instead of the usual crowd.

## S I LOUGHBOROUGH

Always looking for the positives, we have capitalised on the potential of virtual platforms. We've had talks on zoom including an update on the Khasdobir project and a fascinating job talk by new member, Becky.

Judy, our link member, produced her annual quiz which was bought by family and friends. Barbara collected donations. Pam distributed the quiz to Region members and we are grateful to them for their generous contribution towards the grand total of £585 split between our charities, Save the Children and Rainbows children's hospice.



Janet has continued producing organic jams and marmalade, raising £150 so far. Talking News for the visually impaired has resumed with recordings made in members' homes. Blankets have been knitted or crocheted and sent to Africa.



At Christmas, inspired by Hilary, we produced gift baskets and boxes which were sent to carers and people living on their own. We have maintained weekly telephone contact with our 'befriendees'. Ann has spent a day a week supporting a food bank. Calendars and good will messages were sent to our friends in France and India.

Hazel has kept our finances up to date when going to a bank has been difficult. President Kate has been a voice of calm and reassurance in these difficult times. We are grateful for the support and encouragement from family and friends near and far.



## S I LINCOLN



This winter, Lincoln SI members have become adept at online Zoom meetings for business, speaker and coffee mornings. Business and Executive meetings have been combined, so all members can join in and contribute.

Liz Foyster, who organises events and speakers, has tracked down people comfortable with adapting their material for an online presentation. Recently, members enjoyed a lecture about Agatha Christie, which gave us an insight into her life and works.

In addition to writing the new Region Safeguarding arrangements for her new role as the Region's Safeguarding officer, Jill Anderson downloaded the posters for November's '16 Days of Activism', which were circulated round the club and uploaded onto social media. She researched and put together possible projects for Programme Action 2021 and designed two posters to publicise supporting events, such as our Orange Coffee Morning.

Our treasurer and the Regional Treasurer, Stephanie McHugh, organised and delivered a collection of a variety of donations for Newark Women's Refuge, in time for Christmas. We thank other clubs who have joined our social events and who have sent us invitations to theirs.

## S I MANSFIELD

We have been disappointed to have to cancel regular and planned events which usually help us to fund our projects, support charities and raise our profile in the wider community. However, we are still pleased to report that we have managed to cover all our annual financial commitments and have submitted 5 approved Programme Action Report forms since November.

Club members collected jars of coins which have been donated to supporting the women's refuge, Portland Training College Woodland Café refurbishment and Liver organ transplant. Members donated by a "penny a pee" to Toilet Twinning, providing 4 toilets. Our Joint President Sue has sold her homemade marmalade and cakes, raising so far more than £200. Other working members have continued their employment, contributing to the welfare of our local community.

During the 16 days of activism on Domestic Abuse, one of our joint Programme Action Officers, Rita Hallsworth, was invited to be interviewed about our work on local radio and this solicited 2 enquiries from listeners to the programme. We have continued our work supporting the local refuge for victims of Domestic Violence and their children. Our link person is a senior administrator at the refuge, and we



have supplied filled toilet bags, single bedding, toys and games for the children and adult colouring books and pens for the adults who are having to isolate on entering the refuge because of Covid 19. Prior to Christmas we filled a further 12 toilet bags and included along with

essential items, some luxuries such as hand cream and body lotion. We received a donation of children's books and we were able to purchase more adult colouring books and pens, which were all gratefully received.

We continue with our Buddy system to keep in touch and held our annual Christmas Coffee morning on Zoom on the nearest Saturday to the International President's Appeal. Members contributed anecdotes about Christmas traditions, and it was a lovely opportunity to see each other virtually, and to wish each other the compliments of the season.

We continue to hold our monthly Club Meetings on Zoom and we were delighted to induct a new member, Gill, at our first meeting of 2021. Our Programme Action officer, Rita, has been contacting the local council and researching the kinds of trees we might choose for our contribution to the Centennial Project. To plant for the future is a sign of Hope; we look forward with this in mind and hold fast to the idea of a better year ahead!

## SI NOTTINGHAM

We have been meeting twice a month using ZOOM. Attendances have been excellent. Potential new members have joined us and we've offered individual socially distanced short walks to encourage them. Two new members have been recruited this way.



Our Programme Action has continued apace. We started lockdown sewing face masks to be sold by a local hospice. Through partnership with a local independent eco-business, we re-imagined our welcome packs which we give to 3 x local refuges. Out went potentially harmful chemicals and in came gentler, paraben free shampoos, deodorants etc. which were locally sourced. We did away with non-recyclable plastics and introduced bamboo toothbrushes and face cloths. We raised £1,300 sponsorship for the new packs from local businesses.

On toilet twinning we have sponsored a block and twinned it with the Playhouse.

Come Christmas we provided 2-3 gifts for every woman and child in the three refuges, again thanks partly to some very generous sponsors.

Our biggest project now as we move into Spring is tree planting. Several members have already donned their wellies to do local planting. In April we will be planting a mini forest along with specimen trees at the Castle and Sneinton Windmill.

## S I PETERBOROUGH

SI Peterborough are so pleased to have supported local and international causes over the last few months, including:

**No Gain, No Pain UK:** we donated chocolate oranges and hat covers knitted by members to help this local charity raise money at Christmas. In total, they raised £1,427! This will buy one new syringe driver machine for use in the local communities and go towards another.

**Peterborough's Women's Refuge:** Christmas gifts were donated to give to the children at the local women's refuge, but we also donated gifts for the children to give to the women – because everyone deserves a gift at Christmas.



### **Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child:**

We helped SI Peterborough member Anne Smith collect toys, stationery and toiletries to go inside over 30 shoeboxes for children all around the world to enjoy.

We also had a write up in a local magazine that resulted in a couple of potential new members expressing their interest in the Club, which is great. We are continuing to meet on Zoom every two weeks to hear from a range of speakers, including Fawcett Society, and social evenings such as "SI Peterborough does Countdown".