



# Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region Newsletter



AUTUMN 2015

## The winner of the 2015 Mary Hillary Award is: SI Halifax

Over the last 15 years, SI Halifax have awarded two annual Community Service Awards to girls who have shown outstanding service to their community. The awards were created to honour two long standing members of the club, both of whom had been the headteacher of North Halifax Grammar School. The awards are presented to the girls at their Speech Day; members of SI Halifax always attend this important event.

SI Halifax report that the awards foster the ideals of Soroptimism and promotes Soroptimist International within their community. The awards also support the recipients in their application to higher education or employment. Members of the club readily welcome the girls visiting them to talk about their work within the community.

More recently, the club has been more proactive in inviting the recipients to bring their mothers to club meetings and events. In addition, SI Halifax has identified opportunities to provide mentoring to the girls at the school, thus utilising the skills set of their club members.

**In second place is SI Bradford.** Although a very small club, members have been strongly driven by their Programme Action work. Following the sale of their

Soroptimist House, the club agreed to donate £50,000 to fund two Together Women posts; the full time post is based at TWP in Bradford. The second post is a two year part-time position at TWP in Newhall Prison where the child and family worker is responsible for the reintegration of women back into their families. Members of the club regularly meet the centre managers in Bradford and Newhall Prison to evaluate the impact the workers are having on the users of the centres.

The club has also provided crisis toiletry bags for women being released from prison, crisis baby care bags and dried food packs.

**In third place is SI Doncaster** for their project 'Changing Lives.'

'Changing Lives' is a multicultural resource centre focusing on supporting women and girls. The centre works with approximately 200 women and girls every year. The club provides goods for the centre, clothes and household items for homeless and vulnerable women. The current services include Positive Mental health Programme, Chrysalis Project working with women involved in criminal justice system and the Wild Project aimed at women with learning disabilities.

Changing Lives of Women (formally Platform 51) provides crèche facilities for mums and carers that are attending the centre for educational courses and or counselling and advice. The club also provides nappies, wipes, toys, stationery, squash and biscuits on a regular basis.

Other projects which are commended are:

**SI Aireborough** for their health project: raising funds to provide a defibrillator and arranging appropriate training for some key members of the community.

**SI Beverley** for the provision of a bursary for a mature student on a leadership course in Sweden in honour of Kate Goddard.

**SI Ilkley** for their 'Every Voice Counts' project where women and girls are given the opportunity to talk about something important in their lives.

**SI Sheffield** who have worked in partnership with Si Karachi raising money for their 'Learn to Earn' Project.

**SI York Ebor** for their child sexual exploitation awareness raising campaign on York Railway Station.

### Regional Council Meeting

- Mary Hillary Award Winners announced

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## News from Zimbabwe

### Zimlink September 2015

*Chris Bowran*

Members may be aware that the economic situation in Zimbabwe is deteriorating again and several have expressed concerns for our sister Soroptimists and their clubs. In the past (most recently in March) when asking what support the Zimbabwe Association needs from the friendship link with SI Yorkshire, the reply has been that they are just glad in difficult times to know that we are here. The Yorkshire clubs which have individual friendship links with Zimbabwe clubs do support their work in numerous ways and clubs elsewhere in the UK pay some of the capitation fees. However, prompted by Yorkshire members I have pressed the point in the last couple of months and am awaiting a response.

The Soroptimists in Harare report that the economic downturn has far greater impact on those living in the poorer, high density areas of the city and the lack of any welfare system exacerbates the hardship enormously. All the SI clubs continue to provide vital support to projects which have no formal funding and they are backed up by their friendship links in the UK.

SI Vabatsiri (SIV) has sent photographs of some of their recent activities: one of their members, Anna Fleming, runs an art gallery and holds an annual exhibition in support of



Preparations for the art exhibition. (The dog is not an exhibit!)

the Emerald Hill Orphanage. SIV provide the catering for the exhibition and they are hoping to use the monies raised to pay for a scholarship for a poor girl who would otherwise have to leave school.



Teaching the Melfort resident's how to make rag rugs

They have also started teaching the elderly women at Melfort Old Age Home how to make rag rugs out of old fertiliser bags. The initial efforts will go on the floor besides the residents' beds to keep their feet warm, but it is hoped that



Gogo Moyo making her first rag rug

eventually they will be able to sell their rugs by the roadside to give the women a small income. The chicken farm which SIV set up at Melfort a couple of years ago is still flourishing and supplements the residents' diet.



SIV installed solar panels in one of the staff houses and in the residents' bathrooms

SIV has given Hupenya Hutsva, the Government run boarding school, new mattresses for the beds. They then had the bright idea of contacting expensive private schools in Harare and asking them to clear out the shoes in their lost property cupboards. This allowed all but 30 children to have shoes for school and sports. The extra 30 were new arrivals and they will soon be kitted out via the same route.



Donations of fruit trees from SIV being planted by the staff at Melfort Old Age Home. These are avocado trees.

## Taking Control and Keeping Safe

Bradford's district wide project supported by West Yorkshire's Safer Communities Fund



In August 2015 SI Yorkshire's bid for grant of £5,000 to support their project, Taking Control and Keeping Safe was a resounding success. The project has to focus on specific Council Wards within the West Yorkshire area and the bid submitted related to the whole of the Bradford Metropolitan District.

Through the production and distribution of the 'Take Control Leave the Violence Behind' booklets, originally produced by SI Kingston upon Hull but now adapted to meet the needs of the specific communities within Bradford, we will raise awareness of the agencies available to support victims, across the district, who have experienced domestic violence and sexual exploitation. The booklets give advice on how to keep safe and, if women feel they are at risk, strategies about how to escape from a dangerous situation.

SI Yorkshire's experience of hosting the Sexual Exploitation UN GIFT BOX in Bradford in

October 2014 highlighted the need to ensure any materials are accessible to all ethnic groups and so the booklet is being translated to reach the main communities within the District, women and girls from Eastern European countries as well as those from the Asian sub-continent. The booklets will be distributed across the district including A and E Departments, Doctors' Surgeries, Libraries, Community and Children's Centres.

Hopefully, attendance at Bradford University Freshers' Week will give local Soroptimists the opportunity to raise awareness of what constitutes a healthy/unhealthy relationship so that the students understand how to keep themselves safe as they embark on their student life. The 'Loves me, Loves me Not' bookmarks and wallet sized cards are a great resource and will be given to the students alongside relevant Home Office materials.

Recognising the importance of raising the awareness with young children of how they can keep themselves safe, we are establishing a pilot to trial a more child friendly version of the 'Loves me, Loves me not' bookmarks prior to promoting their use within Primary Schools across the District.

In addition, booklets and bookmarks will be distributed during our awareness raising campaigns for Anti-Slavery Day in October and the Day of the Elimination of Violence Against Women in November.

 Mark Burns-Williamson  
Police & Crime Commissioner  
West Yorkshire

**Safer Communities Fund**

## Enjoying Good Company

SI Yorkshire Past Presidents met on Sunday September 20th for lunch at the Bridge Inn at Walshford .

"The food was excellent, it was so wonderful to meet up and also to remember absent friends."



**SI Yorkshire  
Past Presidents**

## Friendship Weekend with Lecco

### SI Bingley

Early in June, seven members of S.I. Bingley left Manchester Airport to attend the 40th anniversary of S.I. Lecco, our friendship link in Northern Italy. On arrival we met another member and her husband who had taken advantage of a few extra days on Lake Como. Unbeknown to us, we were embarking on a whirlwind weekend of meticulously organised events and traditional Italian hospitality.

Half an hour after arrival, we were swept off to a Welcome Supper at *Ristorante Larius* where we enjoyed a choice of pizza with every kind of topping imaginable – or as the more adventurous of us chose, fish freshly taken from the Lecco “leg” of Lake Como – followed by desserts to die for. Diets were immediately forgotten!

Next morning, a particularly hot Saturday, found us on a walking tour of the town which gave us a chance to admire the architecture, old and new, the cathedral dedicated to St. Nicholas and the lovely views along the lakeside.

Lunch was served in the restaurant of the town’s prestigious Canoeing Club where we were allowed to take a short break in the sun and then we were off to *Palazzo Falk* for a talk on the highpoints of the Club’s Programme Action achievements over 40 years. This presented a special challenge, being conducted in Italian but excellent visual prompts aided our comprehension.

Italy is at present hosting Expo 2015 “Feeding the World” in Milan and the whole country seems to have been caught up in Expo fever, so it was no surprise that Italian Soroptimist Clubs have been seriously involved in associated projects. On this busy afternoon we visited an exhibition arranged by the Lecco Club to celebrate its participation in the

international event, enjoying there a display of advertisements dedicated to culinary delights including chocolate, and reproduced from publications dating from 1900 to 1950. These also provided an interesting commentary on the position of women in the society of the time. The exhibition had been sponsored by a well known local chocolatier who also provided a gift of chocolates to every Soroptimist attending the anniversary Gala Dinner later that evening.

This was a glittering occasion, held in an elegant restaurant in the nearby Brianza countryside. Rain gave way to a fine evening permitting us to enjoy the antipasti ‘al fresco’ with plenty of Prosecco flowing and lots of high fashion circulating! An excellent meal was crowned by the arrival of an enormous circular birthday cake complete with the SI emblem and surrounded by a myriad of twinkling nightlights – a moment of sheer enchantment. Throughout the evening the spirit of friendship was tangible and, as visitors, we enjoyed an evening we will never forget.

Sunday morning saw us getting down to the business side of the weekend with a meeting that rounded off the Soroptimist year – at least, in Italy. Again the links with Expo were strong; two speakers gave presentations, one on “Bioethics in food production”

and the second on “Symbolism in the Language of Food”. A prize-giving followed for winning and highly commended entries in a culinary-themed competition organised by Lecco for Clubs throughout Italy and their work was exhibited.

After a hasty lunch it was time to attend another event in another palazzo. As part of its 40th anniversary celebrations, the Lecco Club had also run an international competition for the most attractive tablecloth made from materials that would otherwise have been thrown away. The ingenuity shown by the young designers taking part was extraordinary. Who would have thought that an attractive tablecover could be made from coffee machine pods? But a young Parisian did and his entry was a winner, as was the tablecovering made by allowing candles to burn down, dissolving into pools of wax, thus creating an extraordinary texture.

The final event of this wonderful weekend was a concert of light music performed by local students. Sitting in an Italian courtyard resplendent with crimson geraniums beneath an azure sky, we listened and reflected on our good fortune at having enjoyed this very special weekend with the dear members of our Friendship Link in Lecco.

Lesley Bateman



## Tea with Angela

For their Summer Outing members gathered for Afternoon Tea at the 17th century Monk Fryston Hall Hotel. It was a lovely afternoon and they had the pleasure of the President of Yorkshire, Angela, as guest.

It is now understood that Angela is going to be their link with 'Yorkshire'- to the delight of members. A cheque was handed to Angela for her Yorkshire Soroptimist Charity. It is hoped to repeat the occasion before Angela's year ends.



## SI Castleford, Normanton & District

## Enlightening Visits

Ilkley Soroptimists were visited by speakers and dogs from the charity Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Katherine spoke of the work of the charity including the tasks of the special centres in training both dogs and their deaf partners. Bonnie, who has a hearing dog spoke passionately and proudly of her two Hearing Dogs, Denver who is now retired and Roxy her new kid on the block. The hearing dogs make a huge difference to adults and their families. Not only do they alert their owners to doorbells, phones and cooker timers, but their special training ensures they detect smoke alarms and other dangers. Most importantly, the dogs give a tremendous boost of confidence to their owners, For children there is a sense of night



time security, leading to better sleep and well being for the whole family. Members then visited the Training Centre for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People in East Yorkshire. After a training demonstration and tour of the facilities, an afternoon tea was served by the centre's volunteers.

**Armchair Cinema:** Ilkley Soroptimists are enjoying their nights at The Movies. Ladies are eating their popcorn, being served with ice cream or something stronger whilst enjoying armchair cinema in members' homes. The Interval is something to relish with anything from simply good conversation to a light supper. The DVD is chosen by the host and added to listings for members to book their seats. Recent films included, Paddington, Pride, and the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. The local film club has also

## SI Ilkley



offered a library of DVDs for showing throughout the year. Members attending make a small voluntary donation for the experience to President Agnes' Charity, The Alzheimers Society and Takings so far, are exceeding expectations. The Box Office is open for the whole Soroptimist year and Ilkley members can't wait to see the next listings for Armchair Cinema for Alzheimers.

## Supporting Local Schools

### SI Richmond & Dales

SI Richmond & Dales are continuing the tradition, set up in 2013, of awarding the Soroptimist Cup to the child who has 'made a difference'. They were absolutely delighted to award the Soroptimist Cup to Year 3 pupil, Poppy Grey, age 8.



An inspirational story, as Poppy, then aged just 7, decided to grow her hair long,

and raised the fantastic sum of £635 for Cancer Research UK. She then had her hair cut, and donated her hair to the Little Princess Trust (who provide real hair wigs and hair pieces for children who suffer hair loss due to chemotherapy treatment).

The cup was presented at the Wavell school assembly (photo left), by Club President Judith Clark, with Christine Lunn and Elaine Walton. Parents were present, and a very happy afternoon was enjoyed by all.

Members of Richmond & Dales are proud to be working with the children of Richmond C of E school in developing an exhibition of the children's' research as part of the

WaterAid National Action in July.

The stand was set up at the school summer fair, and they were delighted when Rishi Sunak MP, and his family stopped by to chat.



Mary Lovell, Christine Lunn and Jenny Cathcart with Rishi Sunak MP

'WaterAid transforms lives by improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation in the world's poorest communities.'

## Touring Parliament

### SI Selby

Nine members of SI Selby were recently invited to the House of Lords by Baroness Harris of Richmond. As well as seeing the main meeting rooms, halls and corridors with their beautiful architecture and ornate decoration by architect and designer, Augustus Pugin, they were also invited to sit in the Lords' Chamber for Question Time. Of particular interest was the small cupboard in which the Suffragette, Emily Wilding Davison, hid on the night of the 1911 Census trying to qualify as a resident in order to get the right to vote.

Later they met up with Selby MP, Nigel Adams, who was able to take the group for a



brief visit to the House of Commons. President of SI Selby, Pat Griffiths said "The tour was fascinating and very informative. We now know much more about the workings

of the House of Lords. We are so grateful to Lady Harris for giving up so much of her time for us and also to Nigel who helped us at such short notice."

## Celebrating Long Service

### SI Wakefield

On Thursday, 23rd July the Club held a Friendship Evening at The Holmfield Arms, Wakefield. A relaxing way to enjoy a pleasant meal and the company of Members and their Guests. We also had the presentation of Long Service Award Certificates. Janet Sykes 50 years, Cynthia Speeden, Maureen Poulson and Eileen Farley 40 years, Marjorie Beardsell 35 years, Mary Lindley 30 years and Anne Wood 25 years. A great way to end the evening.



Soroptimist International  
Yorkshire Region

A Word from the Editor

A quiet Soroptimist summer gives a lighter newsletter this time, as everyone looks forward to the SIGBI Conference.

Congratulations to the Mary Hillary

Award winners.

Liz Hayes

**Diary Dates - 2015**

**OCTOBER**

Sat 17 Officers' meeting, Holiday Inn Ossett; morning

**NOVEMBER**

5-7 SIGBI Conference, Glasgow

Sun 15 SI Yorkshire Lunch, Bridge Inn, Walshford

Sat 28 RCM, Garforth Academy

**NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - November 15th 2015**

## Obituaries

### Joyce Dyson

#### SI Selby



Joyce passed away in August, she was a member for two years in which she did not enjoy good health. She was a lovely lady who was well respected. She devoted her life to civic duties serving on both the Town and District Councils and was a prominent member of Selby Civic Society. She will be greatly missed. SI Selby members attended her funeral service on August 27th at Selby Abbey.

### Ann Ciechanowski

**1.10.1961-26.8.2015**

#### SI York Ebor



Ann Ciechanowski SI York Ebor (and formerly SI Selby) died on 26 August after a long illness. The diagnosis of colon cancer 15 months ago radically shortened her life expectancy, but also changed the way she lived the last months of her life as she involved herself with the Arts Barge Project, the Theatre Mill productions, and continued to join members of the York Community in ventures which followed from the 2010 Mystery Plays, right up to her last weeks. 2015 marks the 20th Anniversary of Ann's involvement with Soroptimism first as a member of SI Selby, then as a Founder Member of SI York Ebor. Ann

was always the first to volunteer for any club project involving an element of creativity and she was especially proud to have been one of the main 'movers and shakers' in establishing a link with York College, and promoting a competition for Art Students to design new club 'regalia'. It was this, and the associated background work, which formed the basis of a much-admired exhibition at the Regional Conference in York, in May 2014. Both before and during her illness, Ann was a truly remarkable woman, and an inspiration. Her quiet dignity and sound advice in club meetings was coupled with a joie de vivre evident in her love of partying, socialising, and all events involving food and drink. She leaves an irreplaceable gap in the lives of family and friends who will cherish the memory of someone who brightened their lives and gave so selflessly of her time and talents.

### Newsletter Submission Guidelines

News Reports: maximum of 400 words in a Word document or email

Obituaries: maximum 150 words

Photos: Unmanipulated original images of high resolution sent as an attachment not embedded in a text document. No collage/montages.

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