



Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region Newsletter



AUTUMN 2016



The Mary Hillary Award is a celebration of the programme action work completed by Yorkshire clubs over the year. In recognition of over 80 years of Soroptimist service to their communities and beyond by members across the Yorkshire Region, the panel agreed that in this very special year the award would go to Soroptimist International of Yorkshire for their 80 years of Soroptimist service.



It was very fitting for Regional President Liz to receive the Mary Hillary Award on behalf of all Yorkshire Soroptimists, past and present for their contribution to Programme Action from Audrey Bell, a member of SI Keighley, as Mary was her cousin. She gave us a wonderful insight into her cousin and Pat Hems from SI Ilkley shared her memories of Mary when they both were their Club Presidents together. All clubs will have received a copy of the certificate.

From the evaluation of the Programme Focus report forms submitted 10 clubs have been involved in

addressing issues such as:

- modern day slavery, raising awareness of healthy relationships through the Loves me Loves me not bookmarks at Freshers' Fayres progressed initially through the ASG group, but now more frequently through local clubs,
- the ASG Conferences,
- our work with the Prison Reform Trust supporting women's refuges including those for trafficked women, our involvement with Askham Grange and New Hall Prisons and the Together Women Project.

The latest initiative has been the development of the Friends bookmarks for Primary aged children through the Safer Communities Initiative, thus we are reaching a much wider age profile.

This is excellent! Certainly this does not reflect the work of all the clubs in the Region as sadly not all clubs have submitted Programme Focus Report Forms.

However, there were 3 club projects which were recognised for their outreach into their communities.

SI Ilkley – International Women's Day Fairtrade Big Breakfast



The club worked with the Fairtrade group in Ilkley, Girl Guides and local schools to

raise awareness of the importance of Fairtrade. Money raised through the Big Breakfast went to 'Fairtrade Women in Coffee' project in Kenya which has life changing benefits for the women and their families.

SI Richmond and Dales – The founding of the Richmondshire Museum

This community project was established in 1978 and has been a significant educational and recreational resource for the area. Soroptimists worked in partnership with local organisations and businesses in Richmond and Dales to set up the museum and it continues to be open for 6 months of the year and is now run by volunteers and a part time curator. One quote recorded – "Excellent - this is the best town museum I've ever visited."

SI Bingley and SI Keighley for their Aire Valley Child Contact Centres

Keighley Contact Centre opened on 16th October 1993 to provide a safe place where parents who do not live with their children can meet them in a warm and comfortable setting. In order to meet the growing need to accommodate supported contact SI Bingley and SI Keighley were asked to open another Contact Centre in Shipley at Owlet Family Centre in April 1997.

The Contact Centres have opened on 1005 occasions and the service provided by the volunteers will be approximately 13,200 hours; this does not include time for training undertaken by the volunteers.

Of the 20 Soroptimist volunteers attending on a rota basis, 11 are founder members and will soon have completed 23 years service.

Stop press

- SI Harrogate's Meru Garden wins award at Harrogate Flower show

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Safer Communities Project with SI Bingley

Children inspire campaign to help youngsters to develop safe relationships

The aim of our BRADFORD-WIDE initiative is to educate the children in what constitutes a healthy relationship and to empower them in making appropriate choices in order to keep themselves safe and avoid sexual exploitation. It was launched at Trinity All Saints CE Primary school on 22nd June 2016. These special bookmarks were developed by SI Bingley with the financial backing of the West Yorkshire Safer Communities Fund. The project initially involved the Soroptimist Clubs in Bradford, Ilkley and Keighley but now also includes the Skipton Club.

The original ideas about what makes a good friend were collected from the children at Trinity All Saints, collated and a first draft produced. Working with the PSHE Consultant ensured that the qualities complemented the Sex and Relationships education programme, especially as SRE is not statutory in England.

Once the design had been agreed with the printer, this was taken into a range of schools for wider consultation and subsequently the approval for us to continue with a large print run of 50,000 bookmarks. The idea of the red and green was thought appropriate as children know red means stop or danger and green means safe to go.

The green side lists the actions and behaviours a good friend would exhibit such as politeness,

encouragement and a willingness to listen.

The reverse side is red with a list of warning signs and behaviours that suggest that someone wanting to 'be your friend' may have a hidden and dangerous agenda.



Some 'what if...' scenarios were offered as a resource as it is the discussion which helps to educate, empower and enable the children to develop the skills needed to keep themselves safe.

As a result of this initiative, we are now asked to support schools in delivering relationship education, especially in secondary schools where some teachers lack confidence in discussing difficult issues. Secondary schools are requesting both the Friends bookmarks and the 'Loves me, Loves me Not' bookmarks. This is giving Soroptimists the opportunity to discuss issues such as grooming, so-called honour-based violence, FGM and forced marriage. Grooming and rape are particular problems within the district and this is resulting in many court cases.

The launch of the bookmarks at Trinity All Saints Primary School clearly demonstrates how they can support not only SRE but the wider curriculum. Classes across the school interpreted

'friendship' at the level appropriate to the age of the children and produced some



excellent work. For example, 'A Friend Ship - The only boat that never sinks' and a Friendship Quilt and superb creative writing.



Mr Burns-Williamson, West Yorkshire's Police and Crime Commissioner reported in the Bradford Telegraph and Argus, (Photo courtesy of above) our local newspaper; "The 'Bookmark' project is a great idea for children. It's part of their education, giving them a benchmark on how to live their lives. Longer term it will help them as they grow and integrate into society in general.

The marvellous displays and the issuing of friendship 'Bookmarks' makes it obvious how important this project has been to the schools' young people.

The whole process demonstrates what can be achieved by working together, an important lesson at such a young age, which will help them as they go forward in life."

Ladies who Lunch

Past Yorkshire Presidents' Lunch

On Sunday 11 September 2016, Past Yorkshire Presidents met for a delightful lunch at Middlethorpe Hall Hotel York. It was good to catch up with friends and have an enjoyable time doing what Soroptimists do well, eat and drink.

Present were:- Thelma de Leeuw, Val Jenkins, Julie Thompson, Sylvia Wilson, Judith Alce, Elizabeth Hughes, Lesley Berry, Pam James, Margaret Cook, Eileen Morgan, Andrea Hunt, Angela Edwards & Janet Haywood and Val Mullins (not pictured)



Insight into Current Affairs

Chris Bowran

This article was sent to me by one of the Soroptimists in Harare. She says that it is written by a prominent journalist and is unbiased. It gives a vivid description of the current state of affairs in Zimbabwe.

Yesterday was a bizarre experience. In the morning I planned to take part in a march that was due to be led by 18 political parties to the Headquarters of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission where a petition on electoral reform was to be handed over. All previous MDC marches had been peaceful, happy events, virtually no Police presence and not a hint of violence or trouble.

Well before I got to the rallying point, I saw people running and vehicles turning around and going back the way they had come. This was two hours before the event was due to start. When I got to about a kilometer from the point we were meant to start from, I saw the first tear gas and water cannons.

I saw a group of young people looking down the road and stopped to ask what was happening. They said "we got clearance from the Courts to march and were going to Freedom Square (Zanu PF calls it Robert Mugabe Square) when we were tear gassed by the Police". They advised me it was dangerous to go any further. I proceeded to the collection point through rock strewn roads, burning tires and saw running battles between young people and the Police. I saw water cannons in action with blue dye in the water and one machine putting out a fire.

The main road through the City was totally deserted, the Agricultural Show grounds, normally packed with visitors and opened officially the previous day by the Vice President of Sierra Leone, was also abandoned – not a vehicle in sight, the only people were the Police and the small running groups of protestors. There was drifting clouds of tear gas and smoke everywhere. I left the area and drove to Parliament to wash my face and get the tear gas out of my eyes. Then I tried to go back but was completely blocked by cars fleeing the battles in the CBD. Subsequently the street battles raged over much of the City, business closed down and the streets deserted. The army was deployed and helicopters were put up to monitor the people.

Was there any need for this? Absolutely not! I had participated in four previous marches and had not felt for one instance, any threat or danger. Just cheerful thousands celebrating their right to protest the state of crisis through which we are all living. The violence was instigated by the Police who were totally responsible for what followed. I had previously warned colleagues in Parliament that the tension on the streets was palpable and that everyone needed to be careful when handling any protests.

The previous Wednesday, a tiny demonstration by 200 MDC Youth in the CBD had also been attacked by the Police – perhaps more justified because they were defying a decision to turn down their request to demonstrate. But what then happened should have taught the authorities a lesson – the general population joined in and mayhem reigned for the next 4 hours eventually shutting down the whole City. Cars were burned, shops looted and a great deal of damage was done.

Yesterday, I drove away from the mayhem in the CBD and went to my next meeting which was a lunch with the Centenary Club – now over 120 years old and located in the Royal Harare Golf Club. The Club was busy, the car park full of expensive cars, the waiters courteous and well trained, the weather perfect. It was a world away from the harsh realities just 4 kilometers away.

Zimbabwe always confuses visitors – they stay in our expensive hotels and resorts, enjoy the friendly people and the near complete safety on the streets. See our packed Churches on Sundays and play golf or watch cricket in circumstances that rival the very best.

An inch away from all of that is another reality – 5 million people on the edge of starvation and being fed by the international community, 90 per cent unemployment, banks with their doors closed because they have no cash, one third of all children are orphans, the lowest per capita incomes in the world. Corruption that takes a third of all we produce out of our mouths and is then used to feed the appetites of a tiny minority who are wealthy by any standard. A President who drives in a cavalcade that would do Obama proud and flies to Singapore once a month for a medical checkup in one of the most expensive clinics in the world.

But it cannot go on for much longer, the disparities are just too great, the suffering of the great majority has gone on for too long and the people's legendary patience is running out. Zimbabwe is on the edge of a precipice and its own leadership has not got a clue about what to do. Certainly what they did yesterday was not the sensible thing to do in any way.

This week the Elders – a grouping that includes Tutu, Mrs Mandela and Annan, called on the SADC leadership, meeting this weekend in Swaziland, to recognise that the crisis in Zimbabwe must be addressed. They noted that a peaceful, dignified, legal and democratic transition is possible, but only if leadership is exercised. Left to our own devices with a paralysed leadership, we can only commit suicide. In Tolstoy's play "The Cherry Orchard", a scarecrow in a wheat field plays a key, if symbolic role. In Zimbabwe, the Old Man of the country was taken from his bed, given a shot of something by his doctors and then trundled out in public to show that he was alive. He nearly fell as he climbed out of his car, had to be helped to walk in slippers at the Show Grounds and then sat silent and half asleep while the Vice President of Sierra Leone opened the Show. This is the leadership that is supposed to guide Zimbabwe away from the precipice. It is just not possible and everyone can now see that.

Like the scarecrow in Tolstoy's play, he is not going anywhere and this shameful farce in terms of leadership continues while Zimbabwe burns. Our national debt is now approaching 3 times our GDP; interest on the debt alone is equal to one third of all State revenues. The budget deficit has spiraled out of control. The Civil Service is being paid with virtual money by electronic means but they cannot draw their salaries out of the banks. Even a child can sense that this state of affairs simply cannot go on.

South Africa has suddenly woken up as a result of a massive collapse of the trade with Zimbabwe. Tens of thousands of South African industrial jobs are at stake. Suddenly they appreciate that there is a leadership crisis in the country and that the crazies in the G40 and the Presidents bedroom are trying to take power from the scarecrows hands. That would toss us out of the frying pan into the fire.

The international Community agrees with the Elders that an orderly rescue mission is possible and could result in a legal, democratic transition. But it is not going to happen by itself. Leadership of a high order is required and quickly, or else this country is going to plunge over the edge of the precipice and will in turn drag the dual worlds represented by our smoking streets and the Harare Golf Clubs down together into the abyss.

Eddie Cross

Harare, 27th August 2016

ZimLink

Twiddle Muff Project Grows!

SI Doncaster

Jean Boyle is leading a project on behalf of Doncaster Soroptimists, she has recruited volunteers to knit "twiddle muffs" for dementia sufferers. The volunteers include day patients at the hospice, they have been busy knitting twiddle muffs whilst in day care and even taking them home as homework! So what is a "twiddle muff"? It is a knitted handwarmer with buttons, ribbons, pompoms and other tactile items firmly attached. The holding and touching of a twiddle muff can have a very calming and relaxing effect which is why they can be helpful to dementia sufferers.

Picture L-R: Chris Smith (from rdash), Jean Bland and Jean Boyle (from Doncaster Soroptimists) meeting at St Johns Hospice.



The project has hit a technical "hitch", we hope you can help! They have been so popular that we have run out of buttons to attach to them! If you have buttons, or ribbon, or pom poms to spare we

can use them! We are happy to collect or welcome people to bring them to our social events. So if you can help, ring Carol Shillito 01302 530833 to arrange collection or find when our next social event is.

Helping 'Our Angels'

SI Harrogate & District

SI Harrogate and District welcomed, Liz Lyle, SI Yorkshire President, to their Strawberry Tea, which was held to raise money for the children of Seyama Primary School in Malawi, to enable them to have uniforms, shoes, school bags, books and pencils.



L-R: Christabel England, member of SI Harrogate and District; Liz Lyle, SI Yorkshire President; Pat Shore, President of SI Harrogate and District.

Everyone enjoyed a magnificent spread of food in true English traditional style. A glass of Pimms did not allow the odd shower of rain to dampen the spirits. A book sale, the upcycling of scarves and a raffle all contributed to the fun.

The funds raised will help their Friendship Link members of SI Club of Blantyre in their work to support girls to stay in school by providing them with uniforms and learning materials.

SI Blantyre are, this year, celebrating ten years since the foundation of their club, which aims to support vulnerable girls and women in areas of education, socio-economic empowerment and health.

Christabel England, a member of SI Harrogate will be visiting SI Blantyre later this year and will be able to hand over the money personally.



Children from Seyama Primary School, Malawi with members of SI Blantyre (back row).

At their July meeting, Sue Williams, immediate Past President of SI Harrogate and District, was delighted to present a cheque for £2350 to Emma Lofthouse, Chairman of 'Our Angels'. This was Sue's nominated charity during her term of office.

'Our Angels', is a Harrogate based charity which supports families who have lost a baby either in pregnancy, at birth, or shortly afterwards. They also raise funds for the provision of

specialist bereavement training for healthcare professionals in how to best support families at such a difficult time and provide counselling for bereaved parents.

The £2350 will provide SANDS intensive bereavement training for healthcare professionals and will also be used for providing bereavement counselling for individuals and couples.

Emma Lofthouse said 'Our Angels are very grateful to Soroptimist International of Harrogate and District for choosing to support them and for raising such a fantastic amount'.



L-R: IPP Sue Williams, SI Harrogate and District, with Emma Lofthouse.

Further information on Our Angels charity can be found on their Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/-Our-Angels-Charity-and-Support-Group/171069199582613>

The Big Knit



Angela St John of S I Ilkley was challenged by the Knit and Natter Group of the Together Women Project in Bradford. Having taught some women to knit and encouraged knitting of squares, and garments, others attending this Thursday Group were keen to try their hand at knitting a rug! Husband Graham made these giant needles, about two feet in length, to enable Angela to start an exciting new phase of creative rug making. No orders for carpets are being accepted, to date.

SI Ilkley Bloggers become Eco warriors

Following a talk from a visiting speaker to the club more SI Ilkley members have taken up the cause and are trying to reduce their personal carbon footprint. The visitor, a self-confessed eco warrior from Airedale hospital, consultant anaesthetist Dr Frank Swinton explained how he had come to fear the dangers of excess CO2 on our over - heating climate after he had spent a year with the British Antarctic Survey learning climate science. Some of the Ilkley club are using their work on carbon footprints to post blogs and in some instances to learn how to blog. As you will be aware a blog's success and thus its influence is judged to a large extent by the numbers of Views and Comments and then Followers it generates. We are now open for comments from SI Yorkshire. Please, sisters, follow our site and add your comments by logging on at www.ourfuturefootprintblog.wordpress.com If you would like to check your own carbon footprint here is one of the many places where you can check the number of tonnes of carbon you are consuming. Our aim is to reduce our own to 10 tonnes per person.. <http://footprint.wwf.org.uk/>

SI Ilkley

Happy Anniversary

On Sunday 10th July five members of Northallerton and District Soroptimists took part in the 5k Race for Life at Ripley Castle, Harrogate. We joined the other participants for a warm up before the event. The atmosphere was tremendous, everyone was so supportive. The weather was very kind lovely and warm but not too sunny. We all enjoyed the event and are pleased to say that we have raised £720 for Cancer Research UK.



Photo L-R: Jennifer Davis, Pauline Jagger, Sheila Stewart, Hilary Dodd and Barbara Collins

SI Northallerton and District enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea at the Cleveland Tontine to celebrate the second anniversary of their charter.

President Barbara Collins welcomed SI Richmond and Dales President Sue Young and SI Yorkshire IPP Angela Edwards to the celebration.



SI Northallerton & District

Well Deserved Awards

SI Richmond & Dales

At the last RCM Richmond & Dales were delighted to receive their award for the successful Domestic Abuse Forum held in Leyburn last year. The Mary Hilary Award was announced and Richmond & Dales received a commendation for the founding and establishing, 42 years ago, of the Richmonshire Museum - a wonderful hidden gem, situated just off the Richmond market place. Three of those involved all those years ago, in the setting up of a local history museum, are still active members of the Soroptimist club.

Photo: President Sue Young with both certificates.



Members of SI Richmond & Dales spreading the word on Richmond Market place (pic above right), and showing off their new T shirts! It was a very productive morning, with lots of interest by people passing by, as we handed out leaflets on Soroptimist International, and our local charity Homestart.

Three years ago, the SI Richmond & Dales presented a cup to Wavell School, Catterick Garrison, to a child



or children who had 'made a difference to others'.

This year we were delighted to present the annual award to Imogen, who had her waist length hair cut off, and donated to a charity which makes real hair wigs for children who have lost their hair through illness.



The cup presented by members Jenny Cathcart and Christine Lunn.

The Annual Soroptimist Award for citizenship and outstanding leadership, The Soroptimist cup is a way of recognising students who volunteer or contribute to their school community in a way that makes a real difference to others.



The award was presented to Abbie Whittall, Risedale School, Catterick Garrison by President Sue Young.

Bags of Welcome

SI Scarborough

SI Scarborough held a successful August Auction, raising over £350 for their charities. Lots included a quilt, mini hamper, wines, books and toiletries. Members also auctioned promises including making celebration cakes, a vegetarian casserole, a hypnotherapy session and help with household tasks.

At their September meeting, members made attractive drawstring bags for women's refuges. Members provided the materials from remnants. Club member, Richinda Taylor, CEO of EVA Women's Aid (2nd left), was happy to receive bags



for welcome packs of necessities and laundry bags. They would replace recycled plastic bags.

L-R: Janine Maw, Richinda Taylor, President Rita Leaman, President Elect Carole Ireland, Past President Claire Feather.

100 Challenge – The Results Are In!



Soroptimist International of Selby have successfully completed their summer challenge – to get 100 women to walk 100 miles and eat 100 cakes and all in 100 days.

Throughout July, August and September, the members of SI Selby encouraged family, friends, neighbours and other Soroptimists to sign up for the Challenge. Last week the results were announced and all targets were successfully achieved.

149 women took part
420 cakes were eaten
1116 miles were walked



And £622.05 was raised in donations for Yorkshire Cancer Research

Organiser and Soroptimist, Judy Kent said “We are thrilled to reach all our targets and, in doing so, have so much fun in the beautiful Yorkshire countryside. This was a great

way to raise money for such a special cause as Yorkshire Cancer Research.”

(Photograph above left was the first to take place at Birkin, whilst the photograph above was after the walk around Fairburn Ings.)

SI Selby

Congratulations

STOP PRESS



Congratulations to SI Harrogate & District for obtaining a Silver Award at the Harrogate Autumn Flower Show for their Meru Garden Project. Thanks to all those Soroptimists from Federation and Region that visited. Full article in next newsletter.

Soroptimist International
Yorkshire Region

A Word from the Editor

Plenty news from a long hot summer. Well done to SI Yorkshire for 80 years of service recognised with the Mary Hillary Award.

Liz Hayes

Diary Dates - 2016

October

Sat 8 Regional Officers Meeting, Holiday Inn Ossett (Morning)

November

10-12 SIGBI Conference, Malta

Sat 26 Combined RCM and Yorkshire Lunch at Holiday Inn Barnsley

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - November 13th 2016

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.

email: ehayes@lineone.net

Obituaries

Maureen Poulson

SI Wakefield

Maureen passed away aged 83 at Wakefield Hospice on July 4th following a long and spirited battle with illness, peaceful and clear-minded to the end. Maureen was an Honorary Member of S.I. Wakefield, serving as Club President in 1988/89, and received her 40 year Long Service Award in July 2015. She regularly attended Yorkshire Regional Council Meetings and SIGBI Conferences, keeping abreast of the many constitutional changes over the years. The ethos of Soroptimism meant a lot to Maureen, and she always supported her sister members with the many projects undertaken, locally and regionally.

Alongside her Soroptimist activities Maureen was a keen bridge player and horse racing enthusiast, always enjoying dressing up for a day at the races.

A special lady to her family, friends and colleagues, she will be affectionately remembered and sadly missed by us all.

Joyce Hudson

SI Ilkley



Joyce died on 20 May 2016 having battled through a long spell of poor health.

She joined Soroptimist International of Ilkley in 1975 when she was manager of a Care Home in the town. Over the years she served on numerous committees within the club and represented us on outside organisations. In this capacity she supported Cheshire Homes and Ilkley Road Safety and after retirement in 1988 she worked with the Insight Group and in the drop in coffee bar at the Clarke Foley Centre for older people.

Joyce was President S I Ilkley 1980-81 and enjoyed the wider aspects of Soroptimism, attending Region, Federation and International Conferences.

Joyce was always ready to help with our social and fundraising events and to support and care for other members. She will be much missed as a valued member of SI Ilkley.

Barbara Lockwood

SI Ilkley



Barbara died on 3rd July 2016. She had been an active member of S.I Ilkley since 1979, and was Club President 1982-83.

She was an enthusiastic supporter of Ilkley Talking Newspaper, taking a number of roles and helping new members of the team. As correspondent with our Friendship Link of Greater Victoria, Canada she was pleased to visit the club when she was on holiday in Canada.

Barbara's great love was music. She enjoyed playing but preferred to pass that love to others by teaching, latterly at a large Middle School in Bradford.

Barbara was a wonderful accompanist and was in great demand locally. She played for our Soroptimist Yorkshire Mixtures Choir and was encouraging and patient with mistakes. S I Ilkley will miss our friend Barbara.

Agnes Tomlinson

SI Ilkley



Agnes Tomlinson, an Ilkley Soroptimist and mother of four, was born in South Ayrshire. Having worked as a Principal Officer in the Department of Work and Pensions in Scotland and England, Agnes was seconded to the Child Support Agency and to OFGEM, the Electricity Regulator. Agnes has been an Ilkley member for five years serving as Club President, Regional Representative and cementing local links with Fairtrade, Oxfam, Dementia Friends and the Bandstand. Her love of ballet, baking, poetry alongside her enthusiasm for Soroptimism and life will be much missed. Agnes died on August 6th after a short but determined battle with cancer.