



Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region Newsletter



AUTUMN 2017

Digging For Victory



The annual presentation of the Mary Hillary Award is a celebration of the programme action work completed by clubs over the year. Following this year's evaluation of the Programme Focus Report Forms on the Federation Database, there was one project which really stood out and this was SI Harrogate's Meru Garden for Life.

They created a Kenyan Garden at the Autumn Horticultural Show in Harrogate to tell the story of how women and families in Meru are getting the opportunity to be educated, enabled and empowered to be self-sufficient and earn money through the sale of their cash crops. This is

possible through the learning of good agricultural practices, getting the tools they require and by mentorship. The garden that members created put the woman in the centre, around her the seeds for different crops, tools and a water-butt and ultimately the market place to show the outcome of her labours.

In creating this Meru Garden, members learned a lot more about the Meru Garden Project and, as a result, the project team are now the Yorkshire Meru Ambassadors. Hundreds of people visited their garden and so learnt more about how Soroptimists are helping educate, empower and enable women in Meru. The



garden had a half page spread in the Programme and received a Silver Award and £120 in prize money. A donation box also raised £600.

An email from Child.org says, 'this is fantastic news, what a wonderful outcome that was. All of the team here were so impressed with your Meru garden and creative efforts to raise funds for the Meru Women's Garden Project. We are hoping adding this to the newsletter will inspire other Soroptimists to raise money for the project.'

Mary Hillary Award winner

- Hot off the press news



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Growing Our Brand

SI Yorkshire

Attendance at the second 'Growing your Brand in the Community day' at Cedar Court Hotel Wakefield in July.

Soroptimist International Hallamshire had two meetings after informing Club members in order to get their views for the GoB homework from the first meeting in May. Using all the ideas and suggestions President Angela summarised them into the format required for the presentation and attached it to the Orbit plan, a Single page plan which summarises next steps and the start of a Marketing plan.

These are just a start and as can be imagined it was quite hard to do in the time available but it is a really good start to work with at future meetings.

Clubs had 10 mins to present their work. It was good to hear all the ideas from other Clubs and the different ways they had completed it.

The main 5 areas we agreed on are:

Increasing Visibility of our Club

Communications/Social media in the broadest sense

Having clarity of our purpose as Soroptimists

Programme Action

Reviewing Social Activities

Conclusions :Communication is key and to take this forward it would be helpful to have a

focus group that uses and implements the information from the social media workshop, developing a poster and leaflet and a Club Facebook page. This is too much for one person so Club members will be asked to think if they can help with this before September's meeting.

Another suggestion is a yearly Club report where members have the time to feedback on their work. This will give new members an opportunity see what skills are in the Club.

Programme Action changes have already been implemented, with leads for each area. and as one member gave feedback from her Australia visit, speakers from other charities could be invited to help the Club decide which charities might be supported in future years.

Comments from the day:

Keep Clubs Healthy to be in a position to do Programme Action

Health check for a Club to do audit of finances, growth, PA

Affilius the company facilitating the day for FMB are sending round a web portal for every Club to access all the work Clubs have done in the UK re 'Growing our Brand'.

Now almost every Region has had these events.

In the afternoon a member from each Club had to be

videod for 15 secs saying how the workshops had helped. These videos will be on the portal. President Angela said the involvement of new members as well as more long serving members had been really good to get new ideas and constructive feedback.

There was talk about negativity and the effect on people in that one negative comment affects the brain chemistry for 27 secs whereas a positive one is much less.

SI Leeds is sponsoring girls football team getting their logo on their kit at Leeds United

Size of club not important quality rather than quantity

.In the remaining time, we were shown how to set up an advert in Facebook at minimal cost and examples of leaflets and posters that had been effective.

Richmond and Dales told of links with RAF Leeming and running a conference for girls on STEM subjects as a good example of partnerships. They had got a new member from the base.

We were shown Yorkshire Choice Awards which put people forward for volunteer or fundraiser free publicity if short listed.

These are ideas - we cannot all do but are just good to share and give a flavour of the day.

Jennie Levick

Linking up again

2008-9 Chain Gang Lunch

Nine past club presidents and a guest met at the Bridge Inn, Walshford for their 2008/2009 Chain Gang Lunch.

Big thanks to Pat Shore for arranging it but due to an accident whilst on holiday she was unable to attend the lunch. Get Well soon Pat.

Photo L-R: Christine Iles, Angela Edwards, Ann Jones, Irene Kerr, Linda Davis, Margaret Cook, Joan Tonks, Sue Fox, Judith Alce



September Update

It was lovely to see Shirley Suter from SI Harare at the Diamond Jubilee celebrations for SI Richmond and Dales. It gave us a chance to catch up with all that's going on in Zim and realise again just how difficult everyday life is becoming for everyone there.

The sad news is that the number of clubs in the Zimbabwe Association has declined from five to three. We have long been aware that SI Uyanda doesn't communicate with the other clubs and I have repeatedly failed to obtain news of them. It appears that, although the erstwhile members are very influential women and individually are actively working towards making the world a better place, they aren't operating as part of Soroptimism. In addition, SI Kwe Kwe has folded which is a great shame. This means that there are now two clubs in Harare (SI Harare and SI Vabatsiri) and SI Bulawayo out on it's own on the other side of the country. During the jubilee lunch at Richmond Shirley managed to discuss the situation with Ann Hodgson as, in their reduced state, the Zim clubs don't now qualify as an association which will, on the plus side, reduce their payments to SIGBI.

A year ago the economic situation was such that the banks had run out of money and a limit of \$100 was put on each withdrawal. This has now been reduced to \$30 and even this small amount is routinely unavailable: people are queuing for several days, sleeping in the queues, to withdraw their \$30. Credit and debit cards can still be used of course, but businesses are putting three prices on any given item or service: the cheapest for cash, more expensive for cards and the most expensive for the Zimbabwe bonds which the government has introduced because, being bankrupt, it can't pay public service workers. These bonds are only valid

within the country so no good for anything which is imported, hence businesses have no use for them and avoid taking them if possible. On a smaller scale, the workers at SODA (society for the destitute aged) which is supported by SI Harare, haven't been paid for several months, though donations we sent back with Shirley have gone some way to rectify this (and pay the electricity bill). This situation is echoed across many, if not most, charitable organisations.

Shirley also took back with her the cash donation from the SI Yorkshire 200 club, voted for at the last RCM, to be divided between the three remaining clubs. Needless to say, all their projects are struggling along with the rest of the country and any funds, especially those in cash, are carefully eked out to keep them afloat. It's very humbling to know that our Soroptimist sisters are carrying on supporting others despite the daily difficulties they're coping with in their own lives.

As a region we have recently been collecting old mobile phones to be sent to Childline Zimbabwe (CZ). They still haven't been sent as the process of getting them through Zimbabwean customs without paying duty is still going on. I've completed all the paperwork which CZ sent me and have been instructed to wait until they have obtained the necessary waiver, so they're still sat in a box in my dining room. When the time comes to send them, I'll find a courier who can do the job within our budget: we now have 48 phones to send and Royal Mail would charge about £200! However, there are several couriers who offer better terms so it should all be accomplished in due course.

Chris Bowran

Zimlink

Grant of Friendship Visit Reports

A very successful visit took place to SI Yorkshire in June/ July 2017. Natalia Kurhaluk, SI Slupsk, Poland, was the recipient of our Grant of friendship and travelled to spend 3 weeks with us.

She was hosted by SI Hallamshire, SI Dewsbury, SI Selby, SI Northallerton, SI Halifax, SI Ilkley, SI Beverley and District, SI Scarborough, SI Harrogate and District, and SI Bingley. She attended and spoke at the SI Yorkshire Conference and attended the SI Richmond and Dales 60th Charter Lunch in Leyburn.

Natalia was introduced to a very varied range of places and activities during her stay. She attended Club meeting, visited several Museums and places of interest, went to the Yorkshire

Sculpture Park, Salts Mill, York and Kingston - upon - Hull, walked on the beach in Bridlington and Scarborough, and spent many happy hours eating and drinking with members, both within their own homes and in various pubs and restaurants.

Everyone has commented on her unfailing interest in all we showed her and discussed with her, and felt she is a role model for us all when we learnt how hard she works at home, both in her professional life, as a wife and mother, and as a Soroptimist.

We hope the links with Natalia can be maintained and perhaps someone will be able to visit Poland in the future to learn more about life there.

The photo shows Natalia

feeding back to her own club about her visit, only 3 days after she returned home.



She talked to them about everything she had seen, showed them all our gifts to her, and baked scones for her club members, courtesy of a baking lesson undertaken



with Linda Davis, SI Dewsbury, *Angela Edwards*
SI Richmond and Dales

Harrogate & District Soroptimists were delighted to welcome the Yorkshire Grant of Friendship guest Professor Natalia Kurhaluk, Professor of Biology and Physiology at the Akademia Pomorska in Slupsk.

During her stay Natalia met a number of our members and found out about our Club's projects and activities, whilst enjoying Yorkshire hospitality taking afternoon tea with members, overlooking the beautiful Nidd Gorge. There was also the opportunity to visit RHS Harlow Carr which was much appreciated as Natalia is a keen gardener as well as a cell biologist. Before she left us, there was chance to have a whistle stop tour around Harrogate.

Meeting Natalia gave us an opportunity to find out more about Poland and Soroptimist International in Poland. She was a delightful lady to entertain. We had a very social two days



before Natalia left us to spend the final two days of her visit with SI Bingley.

PHOTO: Natalia Kurhaluk with SI Harrogate & District members: Irene Kerr, Christabel England, Judith Webb, Janet Hutton and Val Hills

Linda Davis of SI Dewsbury hosted Natalia and showed her around the local area visiting the Bretton Sculpture park and The Wildflower Garden at Crow Nest Park where the club maintains an area of the garden. Beth hosted a welcome evening at her home for members to meet Natalia. The following evening Natalia gave an illustrated presentation to the club, President Julie presented Natalia with a gift from the club. Everyone then socialised with drinks and nibbles.



Stepping out for Africa



On June 3rd, members and friends of SI Bingley took part in a Sponsored Walk to raise funds for the 500 Miles charity which provides prostheses and orthoses for individuals in Africa who are disabled either from birth or as a result of injury or war. The group had been inspired by the fund-raising efforts of Olivia Giles, the charity's founder member, herself a quadruple amputee.

The interesting circular walk was led by the Bingley Walkers are Welcome group and,

including monies from a social evening which also raised awareness of the work of the HALO Trust, raised a grand total of £651 to continue the work of 500 Miles.

Hearing the 500 Miles song by the Proclaimers will always bring back memories of this enjoyable event!

On July 25th, members and friends of SI Bingley helped valued member Prue Bray celebrate a very significant birthday whilst supporting the

Meru Women's Garden Project!

Prue opened her beautiful garden for an evening party and, in glorious sunshine, members and friends enjoyed a delicious supper whilst admiring the wide variety of plants and decorative features. Members from local SI groups also supported the event.



A wonderful Yorkshire hamper provided the main raffle prize, won by a member from SI Keighley. A tombola also raised funds. Over £600 was raised during the evening and - in true Soroptimist fashion - fun, friendship and generosity was very much in evidence whilst supporting this ongoing and worthwhile project.

SI Bingley

Weekend of Festivities

SI Dewsbury celebrated their 75th Anniversary weekend in style, together with Soroptimists from Kiel in Germany and friends from America and the UK. The first episode was a wonderful meal at Heath Cottage on Friday, followed by afternoon tea at the National Coal Mining Museum on Saturday afternoon.



Hilda Wood (1st left), president from the club's 40th Anniversary and President Julie (3rd from right) with guests from friendship club SI Kiel, Germany and (former) SI Staunton, Virginia in America with memorabilia, gifts and the Club

charter from 1942.



The highlight of the weekend was the Charter Lunch on board the North Yorkshire Moors Railway from Grosmont to Pickering. Members and officials from a number of UK Soroptimist clubs also joined us including SIGBI President Ann Hodgson and SI Yorkshire President Jennie Levick, pictured above with President Julie.

The finale of the celebration weekend was a talk by Margaret Watson at Dewsbury Minster on Monday about the Dewsbury Tapestry.

SI Dewsbury & District

Tea and Games Afternoon

SI Doncaster

18th June 2017, a special day for the four members of S.I. Doncaster, when we held a very successful "Contact the Elderly" tea party at the TARA clubhouse in Tickhill.

Our visitors happily tucked into the food and especially enjoyed the trifle made by Janet Erridge.

We had a fun raffle and the mechanical bingo machine made easy reading of numbers.

I smile because I'm sure that these "elderly" are younger than the servers – still, we have the next one booked for December.

Val Mullins



Events for Alzheimer's & others

SI Harrogate & District

Undeterred by the wet and windy July weather, a team of Harrogate & District Soroptimists had a stall at Ripon Market on 20 July, to raise awareness of the Meru Garden Project as well as sell the Meru Jams.

It was also an opportunity to promote who we are as Soroptimists and SI Harrogate & District's projects, including raise awareness of the Alzheimers Society, which is one of President Nicola's charities.



Photo L-R: members: Judith Webb with Sylvia Purser

Group 'Shades of Grey' provided plenty of colour to the fund raising evening

The evening began with members and friends meeting on the terrace at The Hub to savour the fantastic view over the Nidd Gorge in Knaresborough over a glass of Pimms.

We were then excellently



entertained with the varied music of 'Shades of Grey', who are a local vocal group from the Ripon area.

Their repertoire included music from the 60s and 70s, such as the Moody Blues, Elvis Presley, Mungo Jerry and the Mamas & Papas, which, together with the sound of feet tapping and guests singing along, created a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

There was a break for everyone to enjoy a tasty buffet supper, before being entertained once again with more well known tunes.

Funds raised on the evening from the raffle and sale of drinks are for the Alzheimers Society and the Harrogate Renal Satellite Unit.

After President Nicola thanked the Group, all guests and those who had worked so hard to make the evening such a success, everyone bid their farewells still singing or humming to the tunes that had

brought back so many memories.

Harrogate & District Soroptimists raised over £600 for their Club charities on a very busy refreshment day at St Peter's Church, Harrogate.

It was a lovely September day which brought lots of people wanting tea, coffee, cakes and light lunches, whilst enjoying a catch up with family and friends or just having a break from shopping.

President Nicola Harding said 'The Soroptimist team worked really hard throughout the day. A fantastic result that will really make a difference, as we raise money for the Alzheimer's Society and the Renal Unit in Harrogate'.



Open Gardens Event

Ilkley Soroptimists organised an Open Garden Event, plant stall and cream teas, raising over £1450 for the Meru Women's Garden Project. Margaret Cook persuaded eleven householders to open their gardens in Ben Rhydding on a Saturday afternoon whilst club members grew plants, baked scones, or donated crafts and books. There was also a display of information about the Meru Project long with publicity about Soroptimism. A Garden Quiz, devised by David Humphreys, a volunteer at Harlow Carr, ran alongside the event with the winner receiving a gardening token.



SI Ilkley

A Trio of
Events for
MERU WOMEN'S
GARDEN PROJECT

Sunny Garden Party

Keighley can assert a variety of claims to fame but rarely does glorious weather feature in it's C.V. However, when S.I. Keighley planned their fund raising garden party for the Meru Gardens Project in Kenya, the date June 17th proved to be appropriately hot and dry. Mrs. Lynne Hibberd's garden easily accommodated members and the public. A constant supply of tea/coffee/juice and cake was enjoyed by many while they sat in sunshine or shadow. Under the shade of two gazebos were found a Soroptimist display about the project, a tombola, raffle, cake stall and face painting. Also on offer were a plant stall, Roll-a-penny, Hook-a-duck and toy croquet.

S.I. Keighley were pleased to have raised £277.10 during the afternoon.



SI Keighley

Strawberries Galore

SI Skipton-in-Craven has been busy throughout the Strawberry season, serving wonderful strawberries and cream teas at the homes of a number of their Members, in aid of the Meru Women's Garden Project.

On 30 July Sheila Tattersall ably assisted by fellow Soroptimist Barbara Sanderson and



supported by their respective Soroptimisters hosted a delicious Strawberry Tea and Raffle, which raised £206 for Meru Women's Garden Project.

This was followed on 5th August at the home of Helen and Peter Johnson

The Strawberry tea was held in Helen and Peter's lovely garden on Saturday. Apart from the food / drink, handmade jewellery and crafts were for sale, as well as quiz sheets put together by Helen. Helen and Anne Reeve were assisted by Jill Spensley and Helen's daughter and husband (Alice and Peter).

The event raised £242.50 towards our collective events for the Meru project. Well done everyone and a big thank you to our supporters!

These proceeds, in addition to the money raised at an earlier event of Gardener's Question Time in May, now brings the Skipton total to £1004.50



SI Skipton in
Craven

Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region

A Word from the Editor

An eventful summer with plenty action for Meru Garden events. Congratulations to the Mary Hillary Award winners

Liz Hayes

Diary Dates - 2017

October

Sat 7 Regional Officers' Meeting (Morning)

26-28 SIGBI Conference Cardiff

November

Sat 25 RCM and Yorkshire President's Lunch, Holiday Inn Barnsley

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Delightful Arrangements

We were invited to decorate a room at Kiplin Hall, a Jacobean County House outside Northallerton for their flower festival.



President Sheila Stewart together with SI members Sian Goodwin and Cynthia Peacock made the delightful arrangements.



SI Northallerton

Jubilant Celebrations

The Diamond Jubilee celebration weekend began with a friendship supper, with an International flavour. Friends from SI clubs in Harare, Basel and Scotland, as well as Soroptimist friends from many locals club, joined us as we enjoyed a lovely supper and musical entertainment by our very own folk singer Wendy Arrowsmith, accompanied by a singing group comprised of Richmond & Dales members.

Saturday was busy day with a coach trip through our lovely Yorkshire Dales and lunch at Wensleydale creamery, and then in the evening a private film show and supper at Leyburn TOSH - a showing of South Pacific - just about as old as the club!



Sunday was a celebration lunch in the wonderful new Cloisters at Tenants, Leyburn. 80 members and special guests were welcomed by President Shirley Thubron, and enjoyed an interesting talk by Maurice Bates on his experience of walking The Appalachian Way. The fire alarm and evacuation during lunch only added to the excitement!

A wonderful weekend enjoyed by friends old



and new, and a busy year ahead for the club.

It is an honour to be able to congratulate and celebrate Baroness Hale of Richmond, our Club's Patron's appointment as the next President of Supreme Court so becoming head of the UK's highest court and Britain's top judge. This is yet another first for Baroness Hale having been the first woman and first family judge to sit on the Supreme Court. She was the first woman law lord in the Supreme Court's predecessor, the House of Lords appellate committee.

Lady Hale has been a champion of diversity in the judiciary throughout her career. On becoming the first female Law Lord in 2003, she created her new coat of arms bearing the motto "omnia feminae aequissimae", meaning "women are equal to everything". Something Soroptimists everywhere would surely echo. Lady Hale says she plans to use her new role to "develop closer links with each part of the United Kingdom, for example by sitting outside London, and improving the ways in which we communicate our work to the public".

We wish Lady Hale a continuation of her outstanding and remarkable work in a much deserved appointment.



Obituary

Betti Thomas

SI Scarborough



Elizabeth 'Betti' Thomas passed away in her sleep on July 1st, 2017. Betti was born in Wales in 1930 and as a child, moved with her parents to Scarborough. Betti joined SI Scarborough in 1977 and regularly attended meetings and club activities. She was Club President from 1985/86.

Betti loved travelling, music and was also known for her tailoring talents. Betti was a long standing and active member of the community of Albermarle Baptist Church, Scarborough.