



Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region Newsletter



SPRING 2015

Ilkley Focus on IWD

International Women's Day was the focus for Ilkley Soroptimists to involve the local community in appreciating the importance of safe water. The average daily trek made by women and girls for clean water in the poorest countries, was replicated with a mid week five mile walk entitled 'Walk in her Shoes'. This directly supported the national initiative by the same name under the umbrella of CARE

International. At the weekend the Soroptimists held a very successful town centre happening of music and dance to celebrate International Women's Day and the joy of safe water. A full day programme featuring local Primary Schools, Choirs, Boy Bands, Soloists, Ukulele Groups and a Dance Academy drew the crowds at the bandstand. Information displays and quizzes about the transport of water by

women and girls attracted parents, children and the wider public. Local supermarkets provided wrapped sweets to children completing the quiz. Soroptimists had visited Brownies and Guides who provided 'feet bunting' for the Walk in her Shoes event as well as trailing the weight of carrying water. A parallel street collection staged by Soroptimists raised £650 for CARE International, who also promoted and on-line giving facility for the charity. This event attracted many different sections of the community as co-workers, performers and audiences, not only raising the profile of Soroptimists, but making real the benefits of safe water in bringing health, education, food security and a way out of poverty for many women and girls.



International Women's Day

- Events around Yorkshire

Inspiring Girl Rising

On Sunday, March 8th, SI York Ebor hosted a successful regional event for IWD.

In a York community hall, SI members from several SI Yorkshire clubs and their guests watched 'Girl Rising'. They also welcomed SI Yorkshire Past President Margaret Cook, SI Yorkshire President, Angela Edwards and SI Vice President, Jennie Levick. The film was inspirational and thought-provoking, telling the stories of nine teenage girls from

developing countries around the world. Egypt, Haiti, Nepal, Afganistan, India, Peru, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone. Their stories are narrated by well known Hollywood actors. After the film was shown, we were treated to a short talk from the remarkable York Quaker and Peace campaigner, Joyce Pickard. Her campaigning for various causes in her adopted city is legendary.

The film can be borrowed by clubs, as it cost £100 from the charity, Girl Rising www.girlrising.com. It belongs to Rita Leaman, now at SI Scarborough, who can be contacted on RitaLeaman@aol.com.



SI Richmond and Dales and SI Scarborough already have plans to show the film in the next year as part of their PA.

Refreshments were a selection of tasty Indian nibbles prepared by a local cafe, 'Love to Eat.'



L-R: Rita Leaman, Joyce Pickard and SI President Liz Curry

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Presidential thoughts after 3 months in office

Angela's Travels

It seems such a long time since the amazing welcome I received at the SIGBI Conference in Harrogate on November 2014. Since then I have, at times, felt overwhelmed by my new duties as President of Yorkshire, especially when it comes to planning for the RCMs this year and the Conference in June, but at other times it would have been easy to forget my new responsibilities. The Christmas and New Year period was very quiet, and allowed me to have some time with my own family.

Since November I have met with SI Hallamshire at their Annual Charter Lunch (Pictured below), SI Dewsbury at their Carol Service, SI Scarborough at their International Evening, attended 2 meetings at SI Northallerton, and been to my own Club meetings and Christmas Lunch, SI Richmond and Dales. It is already fascinating to meet so many members in different clubs and to hear what you are all doing. Thank you for welcoming me to every event.



In November the highlight for me must have been the combined RCM and Yorkshire Lunch at Hazlewood Castle Hotel (Pictured right). There were 119 Yorkshire members present, to enjoy an interesting meeting followed by an excellent lunch and brief talk by the Manager of the hotel. The feedback from this day has been overwhelmingly positive, with many members liking the combined event, especially in the winter when travelling can be difficult for some of us.

At the time of writing, (8 March), I have just begun a really busy 6 weeks, during which I shall be visiting 6 of our clubs and chairing the RCM on 28 March. SI Harrogate held a highly successful Murder Mystery Evening, at which I was the prime suspect for 2 murders! Thankfully, my innocence was proved before being held pending further enquiries, which would have prevented me from attending SI Bingley's excellent Charter Lunch. International Women's Day was a highlight, with several dozen Soroptimists and



friends watching the moving and powerful film, 'Girls Rising', hosted by SI York Ebor.

I am writing a blog which will appear sometimes on the Yorkshire website. I hope this will be of interest. Have a look when you have time! It is a new experience for me so I will be interested in your feedback!

I can't resist a final plea to you all to consider coming to Scarborough on **6 June 2015** for the Yorkshire Conference. It will, I am sure, be an interesting day, and might be an opportunity for some of you to extend your stay and visit Scarborough and the surrounding area. It is also perfectly possible to get to and from Scarborough in one day if that suits you better. By the time you read this the Registration form will have been circulated and the deadline for applications is **24 April 2015!**

Angela Edwards
President
SI Yorkshire

Celebrating Harare's 60th Anniversary

Chris Bowran reports:

This month, I was fortunate enough to go with my fellow club member, Michele Herdman, to join in the celebrations for SI Harare's 60th anniversary. This club (originally SI Salisbury) was the first Soroptimist club in Africa so the anniversary was really that of African Soroptimism.



Chris and Michele with Thandi Henson, President of SI Harare, at the celebration lunch.

Those of you who have visited our sisters in Zimbabwe know that they value our friendship highly and going there to see their work certainly brings home just how isolated they are in Soroptimist terms: there are five clubs of approximately 20 members each in a huge country with multiple problems. That's just 100 Soroptimists. Even if they had treble that membership, the amount they achieve would still be phenomenal.

We spent most of our time with SI Harare but members from all the other clubs joined in the celebrations, so we had a real catch up with everyone. I understand that each Zimbabwean club is linked with a Yorkshire club, though I'm not sure whether these are all formal friendship links. I think these are the links: SI Harare / SI Richmond and Dales, SI Uyanda / SI Keighley, SI Vabatsiri / SI Ilkley, SI Kwe Kwe / SI Wakefield, SI Bulawayo / SI Leeds.

Whilst there, I had a chat with several of them to find out what they need from the friendship link with SI Yorkshire. It appears that they are working on active projects with the individual



Chikupo School - this isolated rural school is a new project for SI Harare. The school has no reliable water supply and no electricity, but the head teacher is determined that the children need to be IT literate and fluent in English to get on in life.



The new call centre room at the Childline head office in Harare

clubs with which they are linked but that they see the SI Yorkshire link as an umbrella or mother organisation. They say that they just want SI Yorkshire to be there if needed: the economy is on another downturn and the future is always uncertain, so knowing that we are there to give support if needed is very reassuring to them all. Also we were asked whether, in the event of any joint projects between the clubs winning an award, we would highlight the national/regional link.



They have new chairs in the common room at the SODA home for the destitute elderly, but the soroptimists are engaged in a constant struggle to provide food and keep it edible with daily electricity cuts.

As for the time spent with SI Harare last week, here are a few pictures of the highlights.



The traditional birthing attendants hold up a placard saying "without SI we were nothing". They repeatedly told us how we are "their mothers". The aim of the project is to support trained village women to attend other women in childbirth and thereby reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity. The spin-off is that the TBAs themselves have achieved status in their communities and self-esteem.

Zimlink

Hats off to the Sailors

SI Beverley & District

Members of SI Beverley & District have been busy knitting hats for the Sailors' Society Woolly Hat Appeal to be distributed to serving merchant seamen. Here is a photo of some of their efforts.

As a result of fund raising this year we have given a donation of £800 to the local branch of Marie Curie Cancer Care to help with their work & also had a speaker on Fair Trade to raise awareness of this subject. We are collecting used bras to be used by the East Riding Breast Cancer care group who plan to dye them pink & use them to decorate Skidby Mill next month.



Hospices benefit from Events

SI Dewsbury & District

Once again Dewsbury Soroptimists and St John's Masonic Lodge got together for a joint social in February. The aim is to have fun, forge a link and raise money for a local charity. They managed to do all three.

A pie and pea supper was followed by a quiz based on the TV show "Family Fortunes", it was compered by Stephen Thomas who had most people in stitches. £250 was raised for

the Forget me Not Trust Children's Hospice.



A French Café themed evening of 'Allo, Allo' was held on March 12th. the hilarious plot

was performed by members and rounded off with a Can Can to bring the house down. Proceeds of £700 for the President's charity Kirkwood Hospice.



Copper Leaf Tree still bearing fruit

SI Garforth Elmet

Sheila Miller, a member of Garforth Elmet, dreamed of transforming a piece of waste land outside St. Gemma's Hospice where she works as a volunteer. Her idea was to make a small garden where relatives and patients could find peace and quiet. This dream evolved into another idea to make a tree with remembrance leaves which could be hung on the tree in memory of loved ones.

Sheila asked the club to help and raise money for the project which was agreed. Sheila sourced copper from a window display at Harvey Nichols, Leeds, who also sent her the copper from the London store.

A sculptor, a fabrication company and an engraver were found and Paul Spencer, husband of Garforth member Janette Hawkins-Spencer built the walls, fountain area, installed lighting and flag stones.

On completion in 2005 the Club held an opening ceremony and said prayers. In the intervening ten years, the Hospice has raised £155,481.00 in donations.

An author was so inspired by the tree in the Hospice, and wrote a children's book 'The Copper Tree'. It is set in a school where a teacher dies and the children cope with the grief with a Copper Tree.

Unfortunately the author did not know the SI Garforth Elmet involvement when she wrote the book; otherwise we would have been mentioned.



An Eventful Year

The President's Charity for 2014/15 is raising funds, also raising awareness and changing the attitudes towards Parkinson's sufferers.

In May, Bhanu Ramaswamy, an Independent Physiotherapist and Exercise Co-ordinator for Parkinson's Uk (Sheffield Branch) and Ben Russell demonstrated how we can all gently keep ourselves in trim.

In June a visit and supper at Lea Gardens near Matlock was thoroughly enjoyed by members and guests. The azaleas and rhododendrons were looking at their best, with the weather being fine, as it was for our fundraising annual barbeque in July.

We had a most interesting talk regarding Operation Christmas Child and were shown a short film of the children opening their boxes. We have again filled 40 boxes. The Club is very generous with their gifts.

Our annual fashion show was again fun, raising funds for our charity and was well supported

by friends and family. Our models are our own members and the clothes were for sale afterwards.



Our Annual Charter Lunch was held at Whitley Hall, and we were delighted to welcome members from our Friendship Link – Sutton Coldfield.

At Christmas Sue again demonstrated the making of wreaths, it was most interesting as everybody's was wreath totally different.

We were all delighted and very proud to learn that Jennie Levick had been voted in as Vice President of S.I. Yorkshire. This photo of Jennie shows her receiving her Long Service Award at our International

Supper in December. At this time she was our President and she enjoyed singing with the Gospel Choir who sang for us at Jennie's Charter lunch in November.



Despite the bitterly cold weather, we held our annual bowling challenge. The cup this year was awarded to Sandie Parfett, our new member who beat us all soundly. The evening was rounded off with 'an Italian'.



Murder! Yorkshire President key suspect

1960s HeartRate scenes were filmed in Harrogate at the Cedar Court Hotel but to the shock of the actors, extras and crew, a camera man and actor were mysteriously stabbed to death between breaks. Interrogation of all those on set took place by the local constabulary and not everyone could provide an alibi. Shockingly for members of Soroptimist International Harrogate and District and Yorkshire, who had been invited to take part in the filming as extras, their Yorkshire President, Angela Edward and club member, Val Hills, were listed as key suspects after all enquiries were held. Val Hills alibi, despite being late, soon came through and she was released. President Angela remained a key suspect but the murderer was soon identified as the make-up artist.

SI Harrogate and District's President Andrea Trimmer's charity for 2014/15 is Young Carers. With only 1 key worker to support over 200



young carers aged 8 -18 on a one to one basis the club has been aiming to raise money with a target of 100 hours support work to be provided. One 11-year-old carer said that because of his responsibilities, **"I can't have fun or be silly. I have to be sensible. I can't mess about."**Hearing words like this makes you more determined to support these young people to enable them to manage the issues at home but also build themselves a future. The evening raised enough money to provide a fantastic 34 hours of one to one support enabling us to surpass our target. Great fun too.

SI Hallamshire

SI Harrogate & District



Christmas Cheer

SI Northallerton & District

SI Northallerton and District President Ann Whitewick pictured with the Soroptimist Christmas Tree decorated by SI members Sheila Thompson and Barbara Collins at St Helen's Church Christmas



Tree Festival in Ainderby Steeple. As well as being very enjoyable it raises awareness of our group and it's aims in the community.

Member Sheila Stewart presenting a basket of toiletries for the Woman and Children in the Supported Housing Scheme in Northallerton. Throughout the year we collect toiletries from our members and also pick up donations of clothes from members of the public. Our member Sheila Thompson



sold home made jam to raise money for the Scheme which they put towards their Christmas lunch.

New recruiting tactics of SI Scarborough

SI Scarborough

At the International Night the speaker was Major Chris Hunter speaking on "A Woman in a Man's World". This event was very well attended by SI members and friends, Scarborough Mayor & Mayoress, Yorkshire President Angela Edwards, members of the Scarborough Inner Wheel, and several members from regional SI Clubs including Beverley & Hull. The International buffet prepared by Montrosa staff was fabulous and provided a lovely opportunity for people to meet and chat. A great success!



Member Ann Jones tries the new look!

Music to Stop the Trafik

SI Sheffield

On Friday, February 27, 2015, SI Sheffield played host to a wonderful Music Hall Evening. The event was held at Ashdell School in their lovely large hall that was loaned to us courtesy of the Headmistress of the school who is one of our members, Anne Camm.

The theme was the First World War and reflecting on how life was then for ordinary people.

The Master of Ceremonies was a real Soroptimister - Martin Parsons - a friend of some of our members who loves amateur dramatics. Martin did us all proud and presented all the acts with great aplomb and a dramatic flourish.

A number of local schools were involved as well as the Guides. We had music, songs, dancing, poetry and some

playlets. There was food provided during the Interval by another member, Wendy Peake and her husband, Ian from their catering business, Crusties.

The evening was a great

success and hugely enjoyed by the large audience. About 117 tickets were sold.

A grand total of £1300 was raised for Madam President, Christine Low's charity - Stop the Trafik.



Twenty Years of Caring

Twenty years ago, Skipton Child Contact Centre was set up by members of SI of Skipton in Craven as a form of community service. 20 years later, it is one of 403 Contact Centres across the country, under the parent body of NACCC – National Association of Child Contact Centres. On the first and third Saturdays of every month, volunteers welcome estranged parents to the centre, where the children can spend time with the parent they don't live with, in safe and pleasant surroundings with lots of toys and games and, in the summer, a small garden to play in. The other parent can meanwhile drink tea or coffee and read magazines, or go out into Skipton, knowing that the child is being supervised by volunteers while playing with Mum or Dad. The centre, in the Soroptimist Rooms in Otley Street, can accommodate up to 6 children in any one session. The average length of time for the parents to use the centre is about 6 months, as it usually becomes possible for the child to see the other parent outside the centre. Sometime the child will only come for 1 or 2 sessions; sometimes for a year or more. Initial contact with the coordinator of the centre is through the parents' solicitors and often follows

court proceedings. Recently, this has become more difficult because of the huge cutbacks in Legal Aid, which across the country has meant fewer children being able to see the absent parent. At the Skipton Centre, however, families are still seeking to use the facilities, which are free of charge thanks to the free use of the Soroptimist Rooms.

Will the need still be there in another 20 years? Sadly, it looks increasingly likely, but meanwhile the volunteers are kept busy. A session on a sunny Saturday, using the little garden attached, watching children playing happily with the parent they can't normally meet, is reward itself.



SI Skipton in Craven

Giving '1p 2p' raises a bucketful!

The Club had an idea to raise money for Water Aid with the inspirational motto "1p 2p". Dirty water and lack of safe toilets are among the top five killers of Women worldwide. Since the start of the New Year the Members have raised £215.40. This was presented to Geoff Roberts (Water Aid Representative) after an informative speech at the Clubs 81st Charter Luncheon on Sunday, 22nd March 2015, which was also World Water Day. Guests included Yorkshire President Elect, Liz Lyle and the Mayor and Mayoress of Wakefield.



SI Wakefield

Marking National CSE Awareness Day

Every year on March 18th, the UK National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) hosts [National CSE Awareness Day](#). The NWG is dedicated to helping combat CSE, raising awareness and supporting organisations fighting alongside. One such organisation is the York-based Jack Raine Foundation.

On Wednesday March 18th, SI York Ebor, in partnership with the NWG and the Jack Raine Foundation, held an awareness raising event in York station. The aim was to encourage passers-by to **think, spot and**

speak out against CSE and adopt a zero tolerance to adults developing inappropriate relationships with children.

Despite the arctic conditions, people too rushed to stop and speak and the avoidance tactics of people either out of their comfort zone or in denial that CSE exists (in York? Goodness me no!), we engaged with huge numbers of interested people throughout the day, including students, youth workers, teachers, even a magistrate, a barrister and a prisoner from Askham Grange. We handed out numerous posters, leaflets and cards, as well as 200 'Loves

me Loves me not' bookmarks. And the SI Yorkshire pull-up banners attracted much attention and possibly new recruits to SI Yorkshire.

So, a very successful day and one to be repeated while ever CSE continues to rear its ugly head in our society.



SI York Ebor

Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region

A Word from the Editor

A happy new year sees many clubs spring in to action again. SI Yorkshire celebrated IWD, World Water Day and SI Harare's anniversary.

The forthcoming Yorkshire Conference a special event to look forward to for all.

Liz Hayes

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Please could you email your reports, ideally as a Word document of no more than about 400 words with pictures as an attachment.

Obituaries maximum 150 words.

Diary Dates - 2015

APRIL

Mon 20 Officers' Meeting, Holiday Inn Ossett; evening

MAY

Sat 16 New Club Presidents' lunch

JUNE

Sat 6 Yorkshire Conference at The Spa Scarborough (all day)

JULY

Mon 6 RCM Leeds Grammar School; evening, hosts SI Leeds

9-12 SI International Conference, Istanbul

Sat 18 Regional visit to Richmond

Mon 20 Officers' Meeting, Holiday Inn Ossett; evening

SEPTEMBER

Sat 26 RCM, St Francis Xavier School, Richmond hosts SI Northallerton & District (with SI Richmond & Dales)

OCTOBER

Sat 3 Officers' meeting, Holiday Inn Ossett; morning

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - June 21st 2015

Obituaries

Elizabeth Wilson

SI Castleford, Normanton & District



Elizabeth (Liz) Wilson was born in Kippax, went to the local primary school before passing her 11 plus to go to Castleford Grammar School where she enjoyed dressmaking and design, various sports and became Head Girl.

She became Domestic Science Teacher, taught at Castleford Secondary School, lectured at the Yorkshire Cookery School in Leeds before joining the West Riding School Meals Service to become the Principal Catering Officer, she was also a Nutritionist and Dietician. She had been SI Castleford President Four times.

Liz also loved music especially

Opera. She was a member of the Leeds Philharmonic Choir and Patron of Opera North together with involvement with the Leeds Piano Competition. She also had a passion for travel - going all over the world.

A very well educated, independent lady who had a lust for life and will be sadly missed. Elizabeth died on the 31 January 2015 aged 92 years.

Eileen Appleyard SI Garforth Elmet

SI Garforth Elmet's much respected honorary and founder member Eileen Appleyard, died on 2nd February.

Her category was nursing and she was a Past Club President, long time Minute Secretary and club archivist. She epitomised Soroptimist ideals in her working life and was committed to female empowerment through effective family planning, training and education.

Betty Freeman

SI Richmond & Dales



Betty Freeman, MBE was a well loved and respected member of SI-Richmond & Dales. She joined the club in 1982, held office in various ways, represented the club at regional level and was Club President in 1986. She was made an Honorary Member of the club in 2012 after many years of service and commitment. With feet firmly on the ground, hers was the voice of reason, supporting appropriate change and development.

An English graduate, Betty taught hundreds of children - 3 generations - in various Richmond schools. Her gusto, humour and innovation were legendary. Always fun to be with, her enthusiasm for life

was stimulating. How we wish that we could have bottled her laugh! We shall always miss her.

Despite failing health last year Betty continued to be a committed and well informed member of the club. She was an excellent judge in the club's Writing Competition, shortlisting the winners and attending the Presentation of Awards Ceremony. She was welcomed at the Charter Ceremony in June 2014 when the newest club in Yorkshire, SI Northallerton and District, came into being; a development that she fully supported.

Betty was responsible for recruiting many of the current members of the club, who responded to her enthusiasm. Her colleagues are so proud that it was Betty who introduced Yorkshire President, Angela to Soroptimism.