



Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region Newsletter



SPRING 2017

SI Yorkshire Anti-Slavery Group

Modern day slavery is a term in common usage with professionals and politicians. It is not too long ago that Soroptimists were shouting to these people that slavery was still very much alive- in its many forms- and that it was time something was changed. Sexual exploitation, forced marriage, domestic abuse, FGM and trafficking were not high on anyone's agenda.

In Yorkshire, in 2005, Sylvia Wilson- then Region PA Chair- headed up a conference about this subject and from it the SI Yorks Anti-Slavery Sub Group was born (ASSG) which became the ASG - SI Yorks Anti-Slavery Group in 2012. Its membership is drawn from clubs in SI Yorkshire. Since then there has been much work done in raising awareness, advocacy and action to change the situations in which many women and girls find themselves. This is some of the work done

Purple ribbon campaign



Stop the Traffick march through York

Gents toilet sticker to challenge perpetrators decisions

Development of learning packs for schools

'Loves me Loves me not' bookmarks designed and distributed- later

other resources were developed from these



Worked with many groups raising awareness of the issues and forming working partnerships such as the Co-operative Membership, NSPCC, UKHTC, Domestic Abuse Forums, West Yorkshire Probation Service and others

A coaster with a clear message about sexting and help available produced with help from NSPCC

Three very successful Conferences have been held focusing on aspects such as safeguarding. These were aimed at those working in the field and the feed back from all has been excellent.



Hosting of the UNGIFT Box in Sheffield on Anti-Slavery day in 2013

Attending Fresher's Fairs around the Region- now

widespread- to engage students in the importance of safe and healthy relationships.

Development of the 'Friends' bookmark after the need was highlighted at a Fresher's Fair! This aimed at a younger age group.

All this work has been achieved through persistence and hard graft. Sponsorship has played a large part in enabling us to realise dreams and move forward in the work that needed, and still needs, doing.

It still goes on- there is much to accomplish to equip women and girls for their relationships. However we do also need to include men and boys in this work. Please join the dedicated group which continues to carry out this vital work. We can come to your club and talk further- please ask.

Thanks go to Val Jenkins, Pat Kilbane, Val Michie, Chris Clark, Linda Gerraghty, Jenny Heppenstall, Chris Low, Julie Thompson and Elizabeth Hughes for all the work they have done and are continuing to do in this Region.

Margaret Cook

Chair ASG Group



Yorkshire Region

- The story of the ASG - Continuing to Raise Awareness

Inside this issue:

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Zimlink | 2 |
| Clubs news | 3-5 |
| Diary Dates | 6 |
| Obituaries | 6 |

Can we help to answer the call?

Zimlink



SI Harrogate held an open speaker meeting last month and we were so glad we made the effort to go on a dark, wet night to hear such an inspiring talk by Stella Motsi, Director of Childline Zimbabwe. Childline Zimbabwe (CZ) was set up 20 years ago by a soroptimist, Dr. Liz Robb, and there are still several soroptimists on the board, representing the three Harare clubs. (Stella isn't a soroptimist - yet - but we're working on it!)



Its early development was supported by Childline UK and Childline South Africa, but in the ensuing 20 years CZ has gone on to develop services far beyond those provided by their erstwhile supporters. Because of a chronic lack of resources many of the public services are not functioning, so instead of being a signpost to appropriate help, CZ is having to provide those services itself. To this end, CZ has set up 26 drop-in centres across the country, covering all but two regions of Zimbabwe. These centres work alongside the call centres in Harare and Bulawayo, providing information, counselling and social worker follow-up for children in rural areas.

The figures are quite staggering:

In 1997 there was one call centre with one counsellor on one phone: there are now two call centres with, in Harare, 20 counsellors available day and night 365 days of the year.

In 1997 there were 1500 calls, 57 of which led to social worker intervention: there are now 50,000 calls a month, every month. Stella was at pains to remind us that behind each number is a child.

The drop-in centres receive an additional 7,200 cases a year beyond those in the call centre figures.

In total over the past 20 years 4,207,353 calls have been received, 46,803 of which have gone on to require social worker intervention. The drop-in centres have recorded a further 67,948 cases.

CZ currently has 50 staff members and 250 volunteer counsellors.

All this represents a huge amount of abuse and most of the calls relate to sexual abuse. Many of these cases involve the early marriage of young girls and we saw a very moving film about a young girl who had been married to a much older man as his fourth wife and who, because their religion forbids her to give birth in hospital, spent two weeks in obstructed labour before someone in the village phoned CZ. She was taken to hospital but sadly her baby had died. She had to have a hysterectomy and was later found to have developed a fistula. CZ cared for her following this terrible experience. Polygamy and marriage before the age of 18 are illegal in Zimbabwe but continue nevertheless.

Despite the development of the drop-in centres, some areas of the country are still not covered by CZ. This is addressed as far as resources allow by taking roadshows to remote areas and providing mobile phones which can be accessed by children in remote communities. On average, 19 calls per phone are received from these phones each and every week.

What does CZ need to continue to provide and develop its services?

The Bulawayo call centre is very small, housing only four counsellors. A donation from the UK is going to purchase a bigger property so the service can grow.

Two more call centres are needed in the north and south of the country.

More drop-in centres will fill in some of the gaps in current coverage.

The mobile helpline platform needs to be upscaled in line with developing technology.

More vehicles would facilitate home visits in rural areas.

What can we do? Through the friendship link between SI Yorkshire and SI Zimbabwe we have a ready made conduit for aid. Stella told us that they are in great need of our old mobile phones which they will reconfigure so that they can only be used to call Childline and distribute among children in particularly, though not exclusively, rural communities.

Here's how:

Go through your cupboards and drawers to find those old phones you left there 'just in case'. These need not be smart phones - any mobile phones will do.

If you still have the charger, attach it to the phone.

Bring it to the RCM.

When we have enough phones we will send them to Zimbabwe. Getting them through customs is a potential problem but CZ has enough clout to have an arrangement with customs, so if we let CZ know in advance they hope to receive them without paying duty.

This method means sending them by post which will be very expensive. Perhaps when members give a phone it would be acceptable to donate £1 with it towards the postage?

Chris Bowran



Food, Fun and Floats

Members took up the SIGBI challenge to raise money for the Meru Garden project by doing what they do best – eat, drink and have fun.

They held a series of events: Carolyn and Linda had a Spicy Curry Night, June hosted a Cheeky French evening, Jackie and Elaine's Saucy Italian job hit the spot. Sue's Naughty but Nice coffee morning put the Bake Off team to shame and Julie's Intimate lunch with friends (pictured below) rounded off the fun fund raising events. With a little help from their friends over £600 was raised.



SI Dewsbury & District were asked by local MP Paula Sherriff to support Cervical Cancer Week and Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust. On one January Friday they set up in the foyer of Dewsbury Hospital to raise awareness of an 18 year low in cervical smear testing, unfortunately, Paula was leading a debate in the House of Commons that day, but, her assistant Karen Rowling came along.



They also took the opportunity of promoting the club.



SI Wakefield invited SI Dewsbury to join them for a visit to the rhubarb sheds at Wakefield on Saturday February 11th. The rhubarb farm is actually owned by SI Wakefield member Susie Westwood's husband. It was really interesting, followed by lunch at Bella Roma in Wakefield. Besides Susie from SI Wakefield, there were SI members from Hallamshire & Sheffield.



One of the highlights of last year was entering a float in the local Gawthorpe Maypole event gaining second prize with more prizes for the individual and group fancy dress, as well as promoting the work of the club in the community. To raise funds for materials for this year's entry members enjoyed a lovely coffee morning at Jackie's and raised almost £170.

SI Dewsbury & District

Tea Time Challenge

Doncaster Soroptimists had to think on their feet at the December Contact Tea party, held at Tickhill Community Centre.

Approximately 25 people were expected for tea and plans were made to provide a Christmas Tea for that number, fortunately we over-catered (as usual) as a total of 40 people sat down for tea.

Gallons of tea were consumed as the participants chatted over tea, sandwiches and cake to people they had not seen since the summer tea event.

Musical accompaniment to the Christmas Carol was provided by Hugh Bland one of the groups "Soroptimisters" with all singing along with great gusto!

The only quiet time of the event was for the Bingo game which is a traditional inclusion!



The volunteer drivers who make the event possible

SI Doncaster

Festive Celebrations

SI Harrogate & District

COMMUNITY SPIRIT AT CHRISTMAS

SI Harrogate and District joined with the Rotary Club of Harrogate in the Harrogate Christmas Shop Window Competition, which brings together shops and businesses in a shared community spirit of Christmas.

The judging of the shops and businesses, organised by Rotary Club of Harrogate involved Rotarians, Soroptimists, together with students from Harrogate College. Working in pairs they judged and scored the shop windows on the basis of illumination, innovation and the Spirit of Christmas and all the scores were brought together to agree the outright winners and any highly commended windows. For the first time the overall winner of the competition, Adage Dance of Harrogate, received a silver rose bowl trophy.

SI Harrogate and District judged the window displays in charity shops across the District on the basis of Innovation, Impact and Spirit of Christmas. The district was zoned into three areas: Harrogate; Knaresborough with Starbeck; Ripon with Boroughbridge.

St Michael's Hospice, Starbeck, was the overall winner of the Charity Shop Window category.

A whole range of other charity shops participated in the competition across the District, including shops from Shelter, Save the Children, Oxfam, St Michael's Hospice and Leonard Cheshire Homes.

It was great to see so many shops getting involved. There were some super displays that really demonstrated innovation, impact and the spirit of Christmas. The time, effort and thoughtfulness that had gone into many of the windows was really impressive.

One of the Charity Shop managers said 'We were only



able to put on such a fabulous display because of all the items that people donate to our charity shop'.

The winners were invited to the Harrogate Borough Mayor's parlour in Harrogate on 29 November to receive their certificates. The overall winner, Saint Michael's Hospice charity shop, Starbeck, also received the Soroptimist International Shop Window Cup from President Pat Shore and Cllr Nick Brown, the Mayor of Harrogate.

Ray Osman, Vice Chair of the Harrogate at Christmas Group, congratulated all the retailers and charity shops for making that extra effort to decorate their window for Christmas and at the presentation of the awards said 'Their efforts give Harrogate, and the surrounding District, that festive feel'.

SI Harrogate & District celebrated in true traditional style, the life, poems and music of Scotland's most famous poet, on 21 January 2017, at Harrogate Town Football Club Venue 1919.

Over 50 members and guests joined in the celebrations as Diane Walsh piped in the Haggis, with the Address to the Haggis being superbly recited by Keven Millar, ending with the haggis being raised in triumph and greeted by the guests with rapturous applause and a tot of whisky!

A very tasty traditional menu of haggis, neeps and tatties was enjoyed by all, thanks to the Soroptimist Team and the staff of 1919.

The Speech to the Immortal Memory was given by John Shore, with the Humorous Toast to the Lassies, being given by Roger Frier and responded to in a similar vein by Irene Kerr.



Pat Shore, President of SI Harrogate & District; Diane Walsh who piped in the Haggis

Between the speeches, a number of Harrogate Soroptimists entertained us with the poems and songs of Robbie Burns such as 'Honest Poverty' and 'To a Mouse'.

President Pat Shore, our Chairman for the evening, kept us on track. On bidding us farewell, we all sang a hearty rendition of Auld Lang Syne, accompanied by Jonathan Hills on the accordion, before wending our way home.

It was a superb fun evening which raised over £400 for Soroptimist charities.

Travels Abroad

President Terry King, inspired by the SI President's appeal and discussions with Rachana Upadhyaya from SI Kathmandu, applied for and was successful in her bid for a Rank Fellowship travel award (usually only given to under 35s!) to assist with travel costs so that she could spend several weeks volunteering and working with charities who support enterprise for women who have been rescued from trafficking to Indian brothels or other abuse. Her days were to be a combination of fieldwork alongside Nepalese women, attending conferences and information exchange with NGOs and other organisations.

Much of her time was to be spent with Maiti Nepal, one of the organisations being supported as part of SI President Yvonne Simpson's appeal, which works to prevent trafficking of women and girls and domestic abuse. In her update during the SIGBI conference in Malta President Yvonne talked about a new project in partnership with Maiti and of course the organisation's aims make it an excellent partner for Soroptimists.

"Maiti" denotes a girl's real family, the one she was born into. The word has a sentimental value especially for a married Nepali woman as she then solely belongs to her husband and his family forever.



However, Maiti Nepal is a home to all women and girls regardless of whether they are married or not. It's a safe haven for those whose rights are exploited, violated and neglected by society. A crusade to find such victims a home for their protection from social evils gave birth to this organization in April 1993.

It was started by a handful of conscious professionals - teachers, journalists, and social workers committed to combating the social crimes of domestic violence, girl trafficking, child prostitution, child labour and various forms of female exploitation.

More information at <http://www.maitinepal.org/>

SI Leeds

A Dry Start to the year

Members of Richmond & Dales were surprised when fellow member Chris Bowran offered to raise funds for our friendship link SI Harare in Zimbabwe, by partaking in Dry January!

Richmond & Dales are a very sociable group, and everyone enjoys a glass of wine, so quite a challenge for Chris. However, as usual, the support from the group was excellent and Chris collected over 600 dollars to be taken to Zimbabwe by friend, Elspeth Robinson, a member of SI Darlington. Elspeth would then meet up with Miriam, President of SI Harare and hand over the dollars to Miriam direct, where we can be sure they will be put to very good use. Well done Chris!



Pic: Elspeth handing over the dollars to Miriam.

STEM: jobs for the girls

SI RICHMOND & DALES are celebrating their Jubilee Year 2017/18, and it has been suggested that they plan a celebratory year like no other! An event that will produce a lasting impact on women and girls in their area, and also challenge members to do something new, innovative and

memorable - So it was, that the idea for a conference evolved to raise awareness, engage and promote the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and opportunities, to young women in the North East and Yorkshire. And the idea is now a reality!

The one day conference, STEM: jobs for the girls will take place on 5 October 2017 at RAF Leeming. Members have worked in teams on tasks such as fund raising, networking, contacting schools, on sponsorship and many, many other details, to make the day a huge success.

Our own SIGBI

president, and incredible role model Margaret Emsley, will be attending with many other inspirational speakers. 100 year 9 girls will be invited to this free conference, together with 150 teachers, parents and careers advisors, to partake in a range of exciting workshops, listen to speakers and network with employers on the day.

BE INSPIRED - BE INVOLVED - BE THERE

SI Richmond & Dales

Soroptimist International Yorkshire Region

A Word from the Editor

A compact newsletter this time featuring SI Yorkshire topics, club events and the sad loss of some well loved members.

Don't forget your Spring news for the next edition

Liz Hayes

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

Diary Dates - 2017

April

Mon 24 Regional Officers' Meeting (Evening)

May

Sat 6 New Club Presidents' Lunch at Jennie Levick's home

June

Wed 14 RCM, Mercure Hotel, Wetherby (Evening)

July

Sat 1 Yorkshire Conference/regional development session
– The Source Academy, Meadowhall Sheffield

Mon 24 Regional Officers' Meeting (Evening)

September

Sat 16 RCM, St Xavier School, Richmond

October

Sat 7 Regional Officers' Meeting (Morning)

26-28 SIGBI Conference Cardiff

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE - June 4 2017

Obituaries

Florence Alcock-Smith SI Castleford, Normanton and District



Florence Alcock-Smith died on the 29 September 2016. A committed and active member since 1974, President 1979 and 1989, and Regional Rep for a number of years. She was family orientated, a member of Pontefract Golf Club, loved holidays especially cruising. Strong, independent, a pillar of the local community and School governor.

She will be sadly missed.

Dorothy Williams SI Bingley

Dorothy died on 24th October 2016, aged 69 years. Dorothy's category was that of Assistant Head Teacher of a Primary School in Bradford. She joined in May 2010. Dorothy did not hold any office, but she was supportive of club activities when family commitments and latterly her own health allowed.

Gillian Smith 1930-2016 SI Harrogate



Gill was born in India and came to England when she was 16yrs. Having completed her formal education she trained as an Occupational Therapist and came to Harrogate as Head Occupational Therapist in the Rheumatology Department at the Royal Bath Hospital. In 1962 she was invited to become a Soroptimist.

Throughout her time in SI Harrogate and District Gill held many roles. She was President in 1971/72, Division Union Rep; Convenor of the Coffee Club; and the Club's correspondent with Luchon.

Gill attended Federation Conferences, 3 International conventions and had Soroptimist friends in Helsinki, Luchon and Aarlon. In 1991 she became an Honorary Member, a role which she fulfilled with great dignity and authority as well as with kindness and consideration for every member of the Club.

She has often spoken of the

friendship and support she has received but we all recognise how much she gave.

Kathleen Wilson SI Ilkley

Kathleen, who has died at the age of 94, was a long time member of SI Ilkley and before that of SI Bradford. With her good friend, Marlene Bower, she was an enthusiastic attendee of international conferences.

Kathleen had loyally supported the work of Abbeyfield, both as a member of the Yorkshire Region Committee and their secretary. Latterly she was an Abbeyfield resident.

She has told of her early determination to learn to sew, resulting in her earning, by her own endeavours, a sewing machine at the age of 10.

In co-operation with 2 other Soroptimists she founded the Wharfe Valley Project aimed at combating social isolation and she served as secretary and chairman. An accomplished church organist and pianist, Kathleen also enjoyed painting and was still active in organising concerts and exhibitions at Abbeyfield home.

For her loyalty, determination & wisdom she will be greatly missed.

Dr Brenda Jackson J.P. 1932-2017 SI Sheffield



Brenda was born and lived in Sheffield for all of her life. She became an administrator for the Sheffield Family Planning Clinic in 1966 and spent 20 years working for the British Red Cross where she was a Director. She was accepted to be a magistrate in 1975 and as a result of her work, charity involvement and the magistrate work she was awarded an honorary doctorate by Sheffield University. She was a member of the Sheffield Health Authority and became Vice Chair in 1990. Dr Jackson was a Trustee of the Talbot Trusts and was very involved in the Yorkshire Cancer Research.

Brenda became a Soroptimist in 1964 and the President of SI Sheffield in 1975-76. She went on to become President of Yorkshire Region in 1982-83 and Federation President of SIGBI in 1992-93.

She was delighted to be given Honorary Membership of SI Sheffield. She epitomised a Soroptimist Woman and was an inspiration and example to us all. She will be remembered with much fondness by all who met her.