

## Winifred Violet Elesmore BSc (1900-1992)

Member of SI Bilston & District 1943-1965  
Member of SI Stratford upon Avon 1965 until her death on 3rd March 1992

A founder member of SI Bilston & District which was chartered in 1943. Miss Elesmore served as Club Treasurer and was Club President 1953 to 1955. She was an intelligent, quiet, independent lady and, like many thousands of Soroptimists worldwide, was committed to her club and the work that they did.

So what makes Miss Elesmore extra special? Violet Elesmore was the Head of a Secondary Modern Girls School in Bilston in the West Midlands. During the 50's and 60's, Bilston was a highly industrialised working-class area. She dedicated the whole of her working life to educate, empower and enable girls.



As Head of a Secondary Modern School, she took in 11plus 'failures' and made them believe they could achieve. The I CAN ethos ran through the school, girls competed in sports, dance festivals, public speaking and music. She was a strict disciplinarian, but extremely fair, always encouraging girls to go the next mile, motivating, raising self esteem and praising in equal measure, she could be very scary too. Miss Elesmore fought with the local authority to allow girls to stay on and take GCE's, as they were then no mean feat in the 1950's, and initiated incorporating a group of boys from the Secondary Modern Boys School, so that the GCE groups worked together. In her quiet way she was a pioneer for Comprehensive Education which came later.

On her retirement in 1965, she moved to a village in Warwickshire and transferred to SI Stratford Upon Avon, where she remained a member until her death.

Maybe she didn't achieve greatness in the Soroptimist Organisation, but like many others past and present she was at the heart of her club. She lived and breathed the Soroptimist values. Many many girls, two in SI Bilston at present, owe their confidence, commitment, drive, ambition and ultimate success to Winifred Violet Elesmore BSc