Ethel French (1925 – 2014)

SI Croydon & District

Following a move to Croydon, Ethel resumed teaching in 1955. She was promoted to Deputy Head and then Head of a Girls Primary School and when this school amalgamated with an adjacent Boys School, Ethel gained the Headship of what was one of the largest Primary Schools in the Country. During the years she worked in Croydon, Ethel was very involved with the organisation of the Croydon Schools Music Association and other Croydon Education Projects.

Ethel joined the Croydon and District Club in 1967. During her membership she served as Club President in 1972 and Treasurer. She was President of the South East Divisional Union in 1982-83, was Registrar for the SIGBI Eastbourne Conference and Secretary to the ‘63’ Management Board and was actively involved in the refurbishment there. In addition, she updated indexing of the Soroptimist Magazine in 1980 and, in connection with the Golden Jubilee History, indexed SIGBI’s Executive Council and Civic Action minutes.

Ethel was awarded two bursaries to visit Mandeville, Jamaica, in 1974 and 1978 where, in partnership with the Women’s Auxiliary Service, she was involved with setting up the Soroptimist Training Centre and the ‘Basic School’ and ‘School of Hope’ for children with learning difficulties.

In retirement, Ethel took up voluntary work. She had many hobbies, but was noted for her cake-making and decorating. She became involved with the National Sugar Art Association, and ran sugar-craft classes. Ethel made many ‘celebration’ cakes for the Club. Ethel was made an Honorary Member of Croydon Club in 1986.