

## Mrs Alice A. Mackenzie MBE

Alice Mackenzie is a 92 year old with more zest for living than many 50 year olds. She may be less mobile than she once was, but her mind is active and agile, constantly coming up with initiatives and ideas for both Soroptimist and Community action. Alice is the founding member of Soroptimist International Kirkintilloch & District. A librarian by profession, she had been appointed Head of Library Services for Strathkelvin, a semi-rural district with Kirkintilloch being the hub for eight surrounding villages. Having been a Soroptimist in Paisley, she started to gather interested, suitably qualified women to form a new club hence SI Kirkintilloch & District was chartered in 1974.



In 1980 Alice helped form Strathkelvin Arts Association which flourished in the area, bringing international youth orchestras to play in the Town Hall, meeting up with youngsters from Strathkelvin Schools' Orchestra. The Library introduced many innovations, local history classes, recitals, author evenings, and a mobile van to serve outlying villages. Club members volunteered at educational activities for women. In 1987, Alice became President of the Scottish Libraries Association, a most prestigious position.

In 1989 after the Romanian Revolution, the Club and community raised £10,000 as one of our members, a senior nurse, was going to work in a Romanian orphanage for a year. Alice and two others took out clothing and essential supplies. Finding that Universities were starved of books in English, SI Edinburgh, through their member who worked in the orphanage, supplied many books. Then a Romanian librarian was invited to Scotland to enhance her training. On Alice's second visit she brought two children to be educated here, and over subsequent years she fostered five young people who have adopted her as their 'Scottish Granny'. These relationships continue happily into the next generation, all of whom visit Alice regularly.

In 1993 Alice was awarded an MBE for her work with Save the Children. In 2016 the club became involved with Syrian families staying locally, and Alice along with another club member, set up an association to foster friendship between the generations, and the culture of each, called Jasmine and Thistle. She is supporting a mother to complete her studies as a psychologist, and encouraging her daughters in their educational progress.



Alice founded the local Talking Newspaper group. Club members deliver books to the housebound, provide reading sessions in Care Homes, and hold an annual Book Sale on International Women's Day. There is a History shelf in her name in the Glasgow Women's Library. Alice recently took part in two Heritage projects studying the lives of women living in the district over the years since 1830. For many years Alice was involved with Girl Guiding including camping trips abroad, and becoming Division Commissioner.

Club service at Broomhill Hospital, founded in 1876 by local philanthropist Beatrice Clugston, has inspired Alice to sponsor a group to honour her memory. A 'Woman in the Community' award with Soroptimist trophy proved popular, and this year a photographic contest for all ages is her current project. This remarkable woman recently received the Paul Harris Award which is the highest honour Rotary can bestow to a non-member. Alice's Soroptimist service has been truly local, national and international over her 56 years as a member.