

MISS EDITH BASE

Miss Base was a founder member and President of SI Newcastle upon Tyne when the club was chartered in November 1937. She held a post as a journalist with the "Journal" newspaper. In November 1936, Yorkshire Soroptimists travelled north to meet with Miss Base. A fortnight later, they visited again but this time to a larger gathering held in the Rendezvous Cafe within the famous department store Fenwicks. On 10th November 1937, the Club received its formal Charter. In June 1938, Miss Base represented Newcastle at the first International Soroptimist Convention in Atlanta City, USA.

The club grew rapidly and there were 85 members gained within two years. At the outbreak of World War II in 1939, club members became involved in supporting the war effort. The original Club Membership Book reports that 27 members left the club due to joining the armed forces, relocation of their job away from Tyneside or evacuation for some working in education, and others left due to pressure of work.

Miss Base reports on her time as President with project work including a Youth Careers Advisory Service, members welcoming refugees from other countries, studies in recent political history and international trends and collaboration with 20 other women's organisations in celebrating "Status of Women's Day". However, her leadership of the Club was evident in her words that she wrote in 1942, "... but we have kept our vision. As far as possible that vision has still been translated into action. And so, in spite of the war, we have gone on. Twenty years ago there was only one Soroptimist Club in the world. Now there are hundreds of clubs and we trust that when peace is established, the clubs in countries now under Nazi domination will be able to raise their heads again. We have abundant evidence that their spirit is still undimmed. In the near future lies PEACE. When peace does come, we shall be needed. We must be ready to help in building that secure edifice of international goodwill and service in which all past tyrannies can be forgiven and forgotten".

In June 1942, Miss Base moved to London to a new war-time post. She was appointed to be the Women's Press Liaison Officer to the Rt.Hon. Ernest Bevin MP, who was Minister of Labour and National Service in Churchill's Wartime Coalition Government. She transferred to the Greater London Soroptimist Club where she formed a friendship with Miss Elizabeth Hawes, National President, whom she also met at the Atlanta City Convention. In 1947, Miss Base returned to regular journalism as Editor of a London-based fashion trade monthly magazine. She was then required to yield up her Soroptimist membership due to classification rules. Edith Base made renewed contact with Newcastle Soroptimists in 1987, their Golden Jubilee year, when there was a lively exchange of letters.

