

Edwina Abbott, SI St Helens



Edwina was born into a farming family which has long roots in the Crank, Kings Moss and Billinge areas of St Helens. After completing her O-Levels she left school to become a State Enrolled Nurse with St Helens and Knowsley NHS Trust. Once qualified she worked nights from 1977 to 1999 – she found the hours were more regular plus the pay conditions better. She retired in 1999 after the deaths of her parents.

In 1998 Edwina married Alan Abbott, who, believe it or not is also a farmer. She has always been passionate about the environment and is incredibly knowledgeable about sustainability. This is clearly evidenced from the number of trees she has planted and continues to plant. Between 1997 and 2002, with her husband, she planted 33 acres of native trees under The Mersey Forest Scheme. They have permissible footpaths so that the general public can visit and enjoy the fantastic woodland.

Edwina champions tree planting and as a club St Helens has planted over 200 trees in Sherdley Park over the last few years. Edwina led the club to plant 100 trees for the Soroptimist International centenary (2001) plus 100 bulbs in our blue and yellow colours. This was particularly poignant as Ukraine has the same colours on the national flag.

Edwina joined SI St Helens in 2001 and was president in 2007. She notes that attending the Federation Conference in Glasgow made a huge impact on her. Her mother, Kathleen Cook, was a member of St Helens Club from the 1960s, and president in 1967. When Edwina joined she therefore already knew many members; and her mother is still remembered with much fondness.

In 2005 Edwina enrolled at St Helens Catering College to complete level 2 in catering; this was to give some grounding in running a farm shop and café, which is in a converted listed barn at her farm. Her qualifications were an asset to our club when holding fundraising coffee mornings and other events that required hygiene and food safety certification.

Edwina became Programme Action Officer over three years ago. She attends regional meetings and leads Programme Action at all club meetings. She is passionate about 'making a difference' to women and girls, and has led on many projects.

Her hobbies include walking, nature, travelling, horse riding, reading, gardening, theatre and films. Although a lapsed beekeeper, she still keeps a keen interest. Edwina has given fascinating and highly informative talks to club which members have enjoyed.

Edwina volunteers at Martin Mere WWT, Rainford Old Folks Lunch Club, the annual Parish Church shop, and Crank / Kings Moss community litter picks.