



Congratulations !



President of S.I. Leigh & District, Dorothy Bowker awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the community

Conference Update



Belfast Conference 27-29 October 2022—Registration closes soon

Good News, Registration will remain at £175.00 until end September 2022. Read more on the Conference Registration page – <https://sigbi.org/belfast2022/conference-registration/>

Bloggers and Authors required to write a blog for the website and an article for Soroptimist News December 2022. See SIGBI news for details

Queen Elizabeth II 1926 - 2022



Club News from around the Region

SI Ramsbottom – Celebrate getting back together

To end our activities before our summer break we once again held our celebrated Charity lunch buffet at Ramsbottom Cricket Club. Our spread is classed as one of the best in the area and no-one goes home hungry!

It was wonderful to welcome everyone again after three years of not being able to hold the event. The cricket Club were pleased too, as we also sponsor the cricket match for that day - 2nd 11 v Haslingden.



We raised over £1,000 which will be added to our charity "pot" to be distributed amongst our local charities later in the year.

Pictured: some of the food and the ladies who provided it!

Contributed by Ann Bennett

SI Liverpool – taking care

In August, the Club's first delivery was made to the Women's Hospital of items for the Care Boxes by Pat and Josie on behalf of the Health and Food Security PAC group. Items had been donated by all club members.

The Care Boxes are provided to women who turn up at the hospital in emergency situations e.g., when experiencing miscarriage or when having a baby but don't have toiletries, underwear or nightwear with them.

Contributed by Annette Maudsley



SI Widnes – Ladies who Lunch

Jubilee Afternoon Tea

Our members celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee at the end of May by replacing our usual monthly meal with an afternoon tea. It was suggested that we should wear hats for the occasion and the pictures show that a number of us did so.

It was a very pleasant occasion. There was plenty of food, including enough cakes for us to take some home.



An outing to Llandudno

On Friday 12 August, our Ladies and guests enjoyed a day trip to Llandudno. The weather was glorious, and perhaps a little too hot at times, but there was a lovely fresh breeze on the pier and Llandudno appeared very Mediterranean. All the ladies met up for lunch at the Imperial Hotel which was quite grand. We had a lovely meal with very enjoyable company. We also managed to raise £38 for charity by having a raffle on the coach.



Contributed by Sheelagh Dayus

SI Stockport & District are in the Pudding Club

Stockport and District jointly held a Pudding Evening with Buxton Club. Members and Friends made puddings and Sweets to be shared on the night, there was also a quiz and raffle.

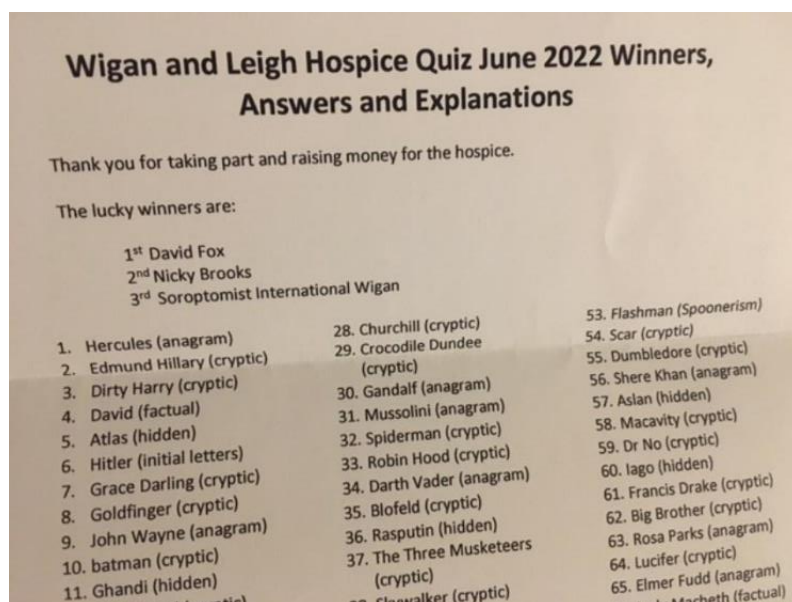
Members from Manchester and Ashton Clubs also supported us along with members from the Tennis and Bowls Club where Stockport hold meetings, other friends came along making a total of 45 attendees.

A total of £476 was raised on the night to be shared with Buxton Club - our part will go to The Hearing Dog.



Contributed by Joyce Garside

SI Wigan – Queens of Quizzing



As you can see, SI Wigan were amongst the winners of this year's Hospice Quiz. The cash prize will go into our charity fund.

The quiz is one of the Hospice's annual fund-raising events - clues are a mixture of anagrams, hidden words, factual and cryptic clues. There is always a theme for the answers and this year it was 'Heroes and Villains'.

Whilst this is nothing to rival the Club who successfully challenged the Egg Heads on national TV some years ago, it was nevertheless worthwhile.

Contributed by Ann Parr

SI Manchester update from MASH

SI Manchester have a long-standing relationship with MASH (Manchester Action on Street Health).

MASH works with women who sex work, providing support in the form of a drop-in centre in the middle of Manchester- a welcoming space just for women, as well as a clinic providing medical care, screenings, contraception, etc.



The team also provide an outreach service on foot and in their van which travels around the streets providing a safe space, emotional support, free condoms and needle exchange - sometimes simply a warm cup of tea.

The van also provides confidential support to any women who are possibly sleeping rough or begging and has interpreters where needed.

SI Manchester have developed a comprehensive Programme Action plan over the year which includes; collecting and donating a variety of much needed items (depending on the time of year) including, as seen in the picture, flip flops delivered during the recent hot weather.

Contributed by Sophie Kennedy



SI Manchester Welcomes a Soroptimist from SI Bangkok

It was my absolute pleasure to meet Mamta Bajaj from SI Bangkok for the afternoon before our August Club meeting. We strolled around the Quays exchanging stories and experiences of life in our worlds.

Mamta then joined us for our club meeting and listened to our speaker from MASH (Manchester Action on Street Health).

SI Bangkok recently celebrated their 45 years by publishing a superb book of their history and Mamta presented us with a copy. The book is made up of the memories of 45 years of their Presidents, or contributions from the Presidents' families - a fascinating read and it is doing the rounds of the members maybe that should be our goal for our 100th anniversary in 2026?



Mamta presented me, as President, with a T-shirt & medal from their fundraising 'Run for Education 2022' and explained that this had been their first major fund-raising event since the pandemic.

(I'm pretty sure that that'll be the one and only medal for running I'm likely to possess!)

The evening passed far too swiftly. We did manage a group photo with Mamta, but sadly we couldn't include the Zoomers!

Of course, now I want to visit Bangkok!



Contributed by Sue Underwood

SI Leigh & District

CONGRATULATIONS!! President of S.I. Leigh & District, Dorothy Bowker was recognised in the Queens Platinum Jubilee Birthday Honours List, with a British Empire Medal. Such a deserved reward for the work she does in our community.



August Bank Holiday saw us once again fundraising with Lucky Bags and a raffle. We attended the Firs Park festival and raised £413 for our charity fund. We couldn't have done this without the generous donations from members and The Bridge who supported our efforts and provided many of the items in the bags. A very worthwhile effort with members working on a rota throughout the day.



Tony Doyle from WN7 OUTREACH gave a very informative insight into the valuable work being carried out with young people and adults in WN7 and surrounding areas. From providing school holiday activities for hundreds of children, to setting up of a hub in the town centre to help combat Anti-Social Behaviour. President Dorothy presented a donation of £200 and said that we hoped to find ways to support some of the planned activities and build a positive relationship. We also provided a bag of hygiene products for the WN7 OUTREACH hub as part of our Kindness Project.

We agreed that the proceeds of our Lucky Bag stall at the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations at Pennington Hall Park would be for WN7 OUTREACH, so a further £500 was donated when we went to see the progress being made on the hub. This work towards creating peaceful communities fits with our Peace goal.

Contributed by Lynda Lilley

SI Leigh & District

PLANET AND PARTNERSHIPS - 100 TREES FOR 100 YEARS



Together with Wigan Soroptimist we worked in partnership with Bickershaw Primary School, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Wigan Council and with the support of Brighter Borough Funding. We planted 100 trees at Bickershaw Country Park, this area of derelict slag heaps, a remaining legacy of coal mining in the area, is a work in progress for Lancashire Wildlife Trust and a suitable site was identified where we could plant the trees to mark 100 years of S.I.

A competition was held in the school to design the centre of the sign which would be placed next to the site. The picture shows Ava who created the winning design unveiling the sign.



BEAUTY FOR ASHES



We welcomed Becky Barlow from Beauty for Ashes refuges to speak to us about their amazing work. It was wonderful to hear their inspirational vision to transform the lives of women with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' who are fleeing domestic violence.

These are women seeking refuge in this country but have no legal status and therefore receive no financial support. Beauty for Ashes provide temporary refuge accommodation and tailored support. Leigh Soroptimists are happy to partner and support their wonderful project.

The club donated period products and toiletries and look forward to forming a strong partnership.

Contributed by Lynda Lilley

SI Crosby – Food, Fun & Fundraising.....and Fish!



SI Crosby members joined with Soroptimists from Liverpool and Bootle at the Artists Club, for lunch and conversation in the Halliday Room. The Artists Club was founded in 1877 and is the last remaining all-male private members' institution in Liverpool. Portraits of Artists Club presidents are amongst the art collection in the Halliday Room. Dr Uli Pfeiffer, whose late wife, Helen, was a loved and now much missed Crosby Soroptimist, is a member of the Artists Club and urged everyone to return soon to enjoy more artistic hospitality.

Debbie Stephens, Executive Officer of local charity Fun4Kidz, gave an interesting and informative presentation to the Club. The charity, based in Netherton, provides out-of-school clubs for local children and has developed its work in the community and with families to develop services that meet specific needs. 850 local children benefit from activities each week. The local community are encouraged to plan, organise and carry out activities that fulfill their wishes. The L30 Community Centre has become an activity hub and resource for residents of all ages. A donation from 2021-22 Crosby Soroptimists' fundraising efforts was made to the charity.



Also receiving a donation from Crosby members' fundraising, was Peterhouse School, a non-maintained specialist school for children and young people aged 5 to 19 who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition. Lesley Fleming, Autism Lead Practitioner at the school in Southport, explained that the school works with children as individuals, looking and working with their strengths and skills and supporting the development of their self-esteem. Key to this is working with families. And the work of the school is both life-changing and empowering.

SI Crosby has partnered with The Wildlife Trust (Lancashire, Manchester & North Merseyside) at Lunt Meadows. Members participate in skills-based workshops to help with the development of educational opportunities, which enables members to offer assistance as sessions are opened up to the general public.

Barry Taylor (University of Chester, Archaeology), led a session on netting skills, an essential part of life at Lunt Meadows when fish formed a large part of people's diet. Using modern cord materials for expediency, the group learned about netting using a 'needle'. This proved a challenging skill to learn in a group and highlighted which elements of the practical work will be useful in workshops with the general public.



SI Crosby – Supporting Local Projects in Sefton



Crosby Soroptimists enjoyed a presentation by Gill Ruane from Sefton Baby Baskets, a local organisation set up two years ago by volunteers and dedicated to providing women who are finding it difficult to provide for a new baby. Moses' baskets containing all the essentials for the first three months including clothes, nappies, sleep bags, toiletries, muslins, toys and also pyjamas, slippers and toiletries for the new mothers are prepared by volunteers.

Health visitors, social workers and welfare staff in organisations such as housing associations and the Red Cross identify need and make referrals to Sefton Baby Baskets. They then collect the baskets and give them to the mothers.

Approximately 80% of the goods in the baskets are second-hand, from generous donors and freshly laundered. Other items, including a new mattress for each basket are bought. The overall cost of a basket is around £19, but represents a value of approximately £350 if the items were all to be purchased at full price.

Gill showed members an example of a basket, beautifully packed and gift wrapped by volunteers. In the first six months of 2022, over 160 mothers received baskets. Gill was delighted with a cheque donation from Crosby Soroptimists and several bags of baby goods.

Crosby Soroptimists are encouraged to cut down their use of plastics, one step at a time. Vesna Levi, who co-ordinated Crosby club members' initiatives asked members to collect their soft plastics, including grocery packs and pouches, wrappings, fruit nets and bags. Members then take their 'softies' to a recycling point at local supermarkets. Some members weighed their bags and logged 2.7kg.

The initiative started ahead of SIGBI's Day of Action which focuses on Climate Change and the use of soft plastics and Crosby Soroptimists will endeavour to continue with their efforts to reduce the use of plastics.



Each year Crosby Soroptimists help with the refreshment marquee at St. Joseph's Hospice Summer Fair. The event was busy with members serving drinks and cakes. The traditional Teddy Bears' Parade was judged by David Bricknell (Chair of Trustees), Clare Waller (Clinical Director) and President Margaret Davidson, with difficult heart-searching to choose the 'Best Dressed' and 'Most Unusual' categories.

Contributed by Jill Boggan

SI SOUTHPORT



To celebrate the platinum jubilee of our wonderful Queen, SI Southport held an afternoon tea at the start of June. Members and friends decorated our club room in Baverstock House with bunting and flags and all enjoyed a delicious tea of homemade sandwiches, scones and cakes, complete with a glass of



fizz to toast the occasion. Apart from the enjoyment of the afternoon, the event raised over £300 in proceeds, which will be added to our PA funds.



One of our newest members, Bernie Reynolds, needs your 'support'! The charity *Against Breast Cancer's* bra recycling scheme takes unwanted or unloved bras and through their network of bra banks, raising vital funds for pioneering breast cancer research.

The same bras also help to support small businesses in developing countries in Africa and around the world. Together with the charity's recycling partners, the textile recovery project prevents these bras going into landfill by giving them a new lease of life in countries such as Togo, Ghana and Kenya, where bras remain expensive to produce locally. Successful ventures like this provide an income for families in developing countries whilst providing employment for people living in the UK. Any bras that are genuinely beyond redemption are dismantled and disposed of properly.



Against Breast Cancer funds research into secondary spread, the main cause of breast cancer related deaths. The generous support we receive from our supporters has enabled us to fund lifesaving research projects at some of the UK's most respected academic establishments. For every tonne of bras collected, *Against Breast Cancer* receives £700 to fund their research. There are over 30 million women in the UK so **together** we could really help make a difference.

There is already a Bra Bank in the foyer of the Atkinson in the centre of the town, which Bernie arranged with Jo Chamberlain, the Heritage and Participation Manager at the Atkinson. We have been collecting bras at the Atkinson and at our meetings for just a few months and in early August, Bernie with SI President Carol Cookson, boxed up 3 large boxes – around 21kg.

Bernie has now received news of some more Bra Banks and these will appear around Southport in the autumn. We are looking for more locations in which to place Bra Banks, so please let us know if you know anyone who would 'host' one. And, of course, we would love the support of every club in the region - **it's time to bin your bra!**

Contributed by Ghislaine Fletcher

THE REGION GOES TO COURT

by Sriya Kulupana

A few years ago, Dame Vera Baird, Police & Crime commissioner in the Northeast and a member of Sunderland club at the time, organised a project named *Special Domestic Violence Courts - How special are they?* This was carried out by members of Sunderland club under her guidance and she produced a document analysing the results & highlighting areas of need leading to some improvement of the services in the area. She presented her findings to various regions including ours and we felt it was a worthy project to replicate in our region too, but did not have sufficient information and confidence to follow it through at that time.

Later on, UKPAC also felt it was worthwhile pursuing this in other regions and so our region also signed up for the project. We found about thirty enthusiastic members and our president Dorcas was very supportive and encouraging. Although we were a little apprehensive at first as to how we were going to practically manage it, as usual, the region rose to the occasion. Some of us attended training which was cascaded to those who couldn't attend. We had a lot of support from a support group led by Chris Corless from UKPAC which met regularly to update on progress and learn from each other. We had several Zoom meetings ourselves, for training & sharing each other's experience.

We were also fortunate to have Heswall club joining us from North Wales Chester & Wirral region and subsequently, Buxton club from East midlands also joined. We drew a rota for the two main courts which we attended; Liverpool and Manchester magistrate courts. Usually, it was done in pairs but occasionally members went alone once they were confident. As we had prepared well, there were no insurmountable problems and from what I gathered from the participating members, court staff including judges, were very helpful. It was a great learning experience. The observations were followed by completing a questionnaire on line which was sent to a PhD student at Bristol University (negotiated by Liz Dominey, Chairman UKPAC).

We completed our rota from mid-May to mid-July covering eight weeks. We are not yet sure of the exact numbers but from information given by members, it appears to be over 80.

Congratulations SI South Lancashire! It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of those who took part and made it a success. Thank you all for participating, supporting and encouraging the project.

We are awaiting the final analysis of the results and hope that the outcome will help us to urge the relevant organisations to take our findings seriously and improve the services where shortcomings are found, making a difference to the lives of Domestic Violence/abuse victims – the majority of whom are women.

Sriya Kulupana