



Farewell to Margaret Tye



Margaret, a Warrington Soroptimist for more than 50 years, passed away in November after a long battle with cancer. Alongside her career as a Tutor-Librarian specialising in children's literature, she was an award-winning crafter, quilter, and amateur painter.

An acknowledged expert on Alice in Wonderland, Margaret was Secretary of the Daresbury Lewis Carroll Society and loaned items from her impressive collection of Alice memorabilia to the Society's Museum.

Margaret presided as Chair of the Warrington Arts Council for 50 years, since its creation. This volunteer-run organisation was set up to promote the cultural life of the town.

Margaret will be much missed for her indomitable spirit and continuous contribution to the Club, of which she was President four times, and was made an Honorary Member in recognition of her long service.

(Margaret is pictured above centre with one of her beautiful quilts)

A Message from Our Incoming President

It is a privilege to be appointed as Region President for 2022 – 2023.

Thank you to Past President Dorcas Akeju, OBE for leading our Region back to face-to-face meetings following the Covid-19 Pandemic. Past President Dorcas' theme for her year was to look after ourselves. She hoped for a year of celebrations, valuing one another, and creating time to care for one another at club and region level. The Region Conference that she led in May, 'Women Supporting Women - Together We Stand' reflected this theme. I congratulate Dorcas on a successful year as Region President and thank her for her support.

As Region President, my theme for the year is 'Little things make a big difference'. This is also the theme for this year's Rose Bowl Challenge. I look forward to working with you all.



Denise Parker – Region President

Club News from around the Region

SI Stockport & District



Contributed by Joyce Garside

Club member Ruth Wood hosted a relaxed and enjoyable social lunch which meant that those members who can't make it in the evenings could attend.

£150.00 was raised and will go towards purchasing Christmas presents for the children at Independent Options, which is President Sue's charity.

SI St Helens



Our President's charity for the year is the Alzheimer's Society and on October 2nd we celebrated a fund-raising lunch at Grange Park Golf Club where we dined on some delicious food in a lovely environment.

We were delighted to welcome our Mayor and her Consort, our Regional President Dorcas and Presidents and members of several

South Lancashire Region Clubs as well as family and friends. Our speaker, Eamonn O'Neal was very well received and the afternoon concluded with an auction and the presentation of raffle prizes. We expect to have raised £1,000 for our charity.



SI St Helens member Shana Begum along with baby Jeremy, met with Queen consort Camilla as part of her role as a pioneer trustee for the charity 'Safer Lives'. The Queen consort is a long-standing patron of the charity.

Full information in the link below <https://www.hellomagazine.com/royalty/20221013154108/queen-consort-camilla-visit-maternity-unit-hospital/>

SI St Helens

In 2021, the club agreed to create 100 mugs for hugs in celebration of 100 years of Soroptimism. The last batch of mugs was finished in November and will be distributed during the 16 Days of Action, via our partnership organisations, to women who have experienced domestic violence.



Soroptimists in St Helens 'Shopped till they dropped' to support the Mayor's Christmas appeal for gifts for children and young people who may not receive a gift at Christmas.

This year we were particularly mindful of older teenagers and babies, often forgotten when people donate to the appeal.

We also bought selection boxes for the children in the refuge and will be shopping nearer Christmas to ensure the residents have a supply of food to cover them over the Christmas period when the regular foodbanks are closed.

Contributed by Anne Jones



SI Liverpool



One of our Programme Action groups delivered the latest donations to support the Women's Hospital.

They included some knitted cardigans for the fundraising shop together with lots of toiletries, pyjamas, leggings for women who arrive in crisis situations or who would benefit from additional support in difficult financial circumstances.

Pictured are club members Debra, Pat and Josie together with fund raiser Katie.

SI Liverpool

IPP Debra laid a wreath on behalf of President Lynne at the Cenotaph in memory of Armistice Day. "Lest we forget" 🌸



The club held a Charity Fundraiser lunch in aid of the Alder Hey neo-natal unit, which is President Lynne's charity this year.

A lovely meal at the Liverpool Aigburth Hotel and a talk from Sarah about the plans for the new neo-natal wing as well as a new centre for children's mental health and well-being, rounded off an enjoyable social afternoon. Thank you, President Lynne!

SI Liverpool - "Feeding bodies, feeding minds!"

One of our programme action groups who focus on education, have been collecting books for children aged 0-11 and distribute these, like a library environment, at The Food Pantry, Tiber Square, Lodge Lane as part of our Education Programme. The project has been running successfully for several months. Pictured is Marie Grey, one of several club members who distribute books on a weekly basis. Opportunities have arisen elsewhere and advice has been offered to organisations wishing to set up in a similar way in nearby areas of Liverpool. This project was also featured in a local newspaper.

Contributed by Annette Maudsley



SI Liverpool and SI Cologne- 35 Years of friendship!



Club members shared a wonderful weekend at the end of September with seven Soroptimists from SI Cologne and their Soroptimisters! Everyone had the opportunity to visit Quarry Bank Mill and enjoy the tour of the Apprentice House, the Mill and the Mill owners house as well as sampling Cheshire cheese on the coach. On Saturday evening there was Dinner at Deli Fonseca and an opportunity to share stories and cement new friendships. On Sunday, the visitors could spend the morning at the Dock or visit Alder Hey hospital to see the Chelsea garden and

hear about President Lynne's charity, the neo-natal unit to be built at Alder Hey. The weekend finished at Strawberry Fields with lunch, before goodbyes and the promise of a return trip to Cologne in 2024!



Contributed by Anne Grimes



SI WARRINGTON - A Tudor Night in Style

Anna Alexander, volunteer guide at Liverpool's Speke Hall, gave us a fascinating talk about the Elizabethan origins of this National Trust property and turned up in full Elizabethan costume!

Speke Hall was built in the middle of the 1500's by the Norris family. While its interior was extensively remodelled in Victorian times, there are parts of the house which still retain original Tudor features. Anna talked us through these and how they reflect the challenges the Norris family faced as Catholics in a Protestant age. One room was thought to have been a Chapel and we learned about the Priest Hole where a visiting cleric could be hidden in the event of priest-hunters visiting! There is also the Eavesdropping space in the roof, where servants could listen to visitors talking below outside the front door and judge whether they were safe to invite in.

Stop the Traffik March – Liverpool, 15 October 2022



President Rhona represented SI Warrington at the annual demonstration against human Trafficking on the Liverpool quayside. Whilst there, she visited the International Slavery Museum to see a moving exhibition of Freedom Quilts, produced by survivors of human trafficking.

They are supported by the Sophie Hayes Foundation, who was herself a victim of modern-day slavery. Each of the 247 squares in the quilts, made with Liberty fabrics, represent the survivor's past and hopes and dreams for the future.

All Contributed by Jackie Alexander



SI SOUTHPORT

SI Southport members have been busy with the usual activities at this time of year. At the start of October, we celebrated Friendship Night with our friendship links across the world; joining on Zoom with our links in Dhanmondi in Bangladesh, Caserta in Italy, Horsens in Denmark and Gdańsk in Poland. We heard from each of the friendship links about their club, activities and projects and it was wonderful to learn about the impact that Soroptimists are making in their local communities. As is our tradition, we lit a candle of friendship for each of our links and this was reciprocated.



President Carol Cookson lit a candle for Soroptimist International. SI Southport have always celebrated Friendship Night with an exchange of greetings with our friendship links. Since lockdown and the advent of improved communications technology, we have been able to share the evening with our friends from far and near, demonstrating the global reach of Soroptimist International.

We have not yet had the opportunity to work on projects with members of our Friendship Links, but President Carol Cookson and Secretary Dorothy Lee met with members from SI Bournemouth, who also link with SI Dhanmondi, to discuss working with them on a joint project in Bangladesh.

Photos: President Carol lighting candles and Organiser Heather Shulver





Our annual Christmas Fair was held on Saturday 19th November in our club room at Baverstock House. There were stalls with bric-a-brac, Christmas gifts and products as well as the ubiquitous cake stall and tombola. A total of £381 was raised towards local charities. A great team effort!



SI SOUTHPORT

Our Bra Bank project is still in full swing! Organiser Bernie Reynolds is delighted to report that the Against Breast Cancer Bra Bank Campaign in October, which was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, has been a great success.

53 kilos of bras have been sent to the Recycling Company. Bra banks were positioned at over 20 sites and many of which are happy to 'host' again for us next year. Some sites are even keeping their 'banks' for the time being.



SI President Carol Cookson met with the four 'Pink Ladies' from Stanley High School along with Cathy Rae, their head of Leadership. There were lots of ideas buzzing around, with the intention of involving the whole school in fund raising activities alongside the collection of bras. The ladies are planning a series of assemblies and awareness raising events in January coinciding with World Cancer Day. Against Breast Cancer will be assisting with assorted publicity materials.

We are hoping that this association with Stanley High School will continue over many years and are proud to be part of the project with them. These young ladies are our future and already embracing the values of Soroptimists.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this campaign – please continue to do so and please continue to spread the word amongst family, friends and networks.

SI Southport members send best wishes to all for a wonderful holiday season and for a very happy and successful 2023.



All Contributed by Ghislaine Fletcher

SI WIDNES - Joining Together in Programme Action



SI Widnes played host to a joint PAC event which included; SI St Helens, SI Warrington and SI Runcorn, held at the home of club member Eleanor King.

The clubs joined forces to support Project PAUSE which works with women whose children have been taken into care, helping them to turn their lives around.

Members were asked to wear orange and to donate two chocolate oranges to be arranged as a pyramid in support of the 'Orange the World' campaign, taking a stand in seeking to end violence against women.





Four members of SI Widnes attended the Federation Conference in Belfast. These pictures are from the change of Insignia, when our member, Denise Parker, became Regional President.

Denise writes...

It was only my second conference, but this time I was privileged to become President of the SI South



Lancashire Region at the Change of Insignia ceremony on the last night of the three-day conference. The entertainment that evening by DIVA Dolls, a soul group, was wonderful. On the first evening, which was a Friendship event, we were entertained by Irish dancers and a choir.

The conference had excellent speakers, including Federation President Maureen Maguire, who herself is from Ireland. The theme was Climate for Change and there were representatives from 29 countries. One of the speakers commented that it will be 132 years before we achieve gender equality. That figure shocked and saddened me. The Belfast Waterfront, where the venue, the ICC is situated, is stunning. We all enjoyed our trip to beautiful, vibrant, friendly Belfast. I certainly will visit the city in the future.

SI WIDNES - Our Charter Dinner



For the first time since before the pandemic, SI Widnes was able to hold a Charter Dinner. Our joint Presidents, Lily Woodstock and Marjorie Blennerhassett hosted the top table, where they were accompanied by the Mayor and Mayoress of Halton and our member, Denise Parker with her husband, Derek.

It was good to welcome presidents and members of other clubs in the Region and we were pleased to see Lisa Sivori, who began her Soroptimist life as a member of SI Widnes and is now President of SI Ellesmere Port. Our young 'Soroptimiss,' Amelia, was also with us.



SI WIDNES - Programme Action

PAUSE is a project to help women whose children have been taken away from them and put into care. This often involves several children. PAUSE advocates taking precautions to avoid pregnancy for a period of 18 months in order to break the cycle. Women are offered opportunities to improve themselves and develop new skills – aimed at preventing further children being taken into care. SI Clubs are encouraged to get involved to offer support to the women to show them that someone cares.

The club donated a number of "hugs in a mug" using China mugs left over from our 75th anniversary, containing a bag filled with chocolates and a logo card with our good wishes for Christmas. The mugs were presented to PAUSE organisers during a joint PAC evening with SI St Helens, SI Warrington and SI Runcorn, hosted by SI Widnes on 22nd November.

KINGS CROSS PROJECT CARE LEAVERS

We were asked for non-essential/luxury items for 30 care leavers. The club had agreed a budget of £150 and 30 reusable Christmas bags were purchased and 30 tubs of chocolates which will be delivered to the Kings Cross Project for them to pass on.

LIVERPOOL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

Over the last 2 years, the Club has supported a project to provide clothing for women who have experienced a miscarriage. In order to avoid women having to leave hospital in soiled clothing, nurses had been providing pyjamas or leggings to the women but this had become onerous. The support for the project was substantial and the project has now evolved into providing dignity bags and baby starter bags for vulnerable women attending hospital with no provisions for their expected babies.

Contributed by Wendy Ross-Barker

SI LEIGH

Members of SI Leigh have been recycling spectacles through a local optician in Atherton, formerly owned by past member Elaine Seddon.



Our October meeting was full of Pink and Bras. For many years we have collected bras for breast cancer charities, and we plan to re-boot this programme action initiative.



President Dorothy had quite a surprise when Leigh Rotary President Andre came into our meeting to present her with yet another award!

This time it was the Paul Harris Fellowship of Rotary International.

Congratulations Dorothy.

Members took part in the annual Remembrance Day parade and a wreath was laid at Leigh Cenotaph by President Elect Gail.



Lancashire Day (night). We always celebrate this day with a hot pot supper. There was a picture quiz and entertainment in the form of a monologue of a miner's wife in the 1930's.

The prize of Uncle Joe's Mint Balls was shared by everyone and Avis read the Lancashire Charter to round it all off.

Contributed by Lynda Lilley

SI LEIGH

To mark the beginning of 16 days of activism to Eliminate Violence Against Women, members held a candlelight vigil in Leigh Parish Church, where we were joined by representatives of charities that support victims, a local councillor and members of the public.

Programme Action Officer Lynn read the Soroptimist Objects and President Dorothy led the candle lighting.

We had asked for the Town Hall to be lit up and the council duly obliged! We will continue the activism on social media for the full 16 days.



Contributed by Lynda Lilley

A Year in the life of SI Wigan

Looking back over the past year, there have been numerous highlights, although perhaps the first has been that we have been able to meet and socialise once more! Zoom has its merits but it was good to get back to seeing real people.



Membership has continued to grow, thanks in part to the very hard work of our Club President, Angela Holmes, who has continued to work tirelessly for all our causes and certainly leads by example!

The year started in Spring with the continuation of our Tree planting project, alongside our daughter club SI Leigh. Club Members Jayne and Helen are pictured enjoying the Spring Sunshine.

SI Wigan also has links to other groups within the area. Past President Sue Doyle has worked with the Ashton, Leigh, and Wigan Osteoporosis Support group of which she is a Founder Member. The group meets during the year offering advice and support for sufferers and their families. For more information: ashtonandwiganvolunteers@theros.org.uk

Early in the year we were contacted by Wigan Youth Zone to develop a working partnership with them. We held our club meeting at the Youth Zone and are looking forward to supporting a group of young girls.



September brought a successful repeat of our 'Tea at The Farm,' hosted by Club member and PAC Chair, Kathleen Moran. Tea, coffee, and cake were enjoyed in vast quantities, the sun shone and the afternoon was enhanced by the presence of a couple of local vocalists who provided a musical interlude. Thanks go to all our members as this was very much a team effort resulting in over £2,400.00 being raised for the charities we support, including Wigan Hospice, DIAS (Wigan's Domestic Abuse Support Service) and The Brick. Members can be seen here preparing for the event.

Contributed by Anne Clarke

SI Wigan

Several Members attended the Belfast Conference, their stay unexpectedly lengthened by the fact that their flight home was cancelled! Members said the trip was a whole new experience for them in so many ways! (They also proved quite adept at problem solving).



We were extremely busy in November with the traditional laying of a wreath at the Cenotaph in Wigan, the presentation to the Winner of our Young Achiever Award and a delivery of Christmas gifts to DIAS, kindly donated by our members and very gratefully received.

We are working in Partnership with DIAS during the sixteen days of activism against Gender Based Violence.

So as the year draws to a close, we can look back at all our 'events' and think about the impact we have had. Hopefully next year we will continue to grow and continue to support our charities, but also continue to enjoy each other's company.

Many thanks to all our members, and indeed their families and friends for supporting us in all that we do.



Contributed by Anne Clarke

SI Manchester – Lunch At The Races!

SI Manchester took 'Fun, Food, Friendship and Fundraising' to a whole new level for its first post-COVID social event.....

Inspired by Alison, a newish member and 'Social Chair,' a Charity Race Lunch was to be our first big fundraising event in far too long. Alison and her team worked very hard for many months beforehand and more members volunteered to help on the day.

Thanks to amazing support from members, friends, family and from other clubs, we raised just short of £3,000! (Many who could not attend sponsored a race or a horse or bought raffle tickets). The Novotel lunch did not disappoint and there was even a 'retail opportunity.'



Some of the ladies wore hats for their 'Day at the Races'!



Happy faces collecting their winnings!

Perhaps my favourite comment on the day came from Lillian:

"What a lovely afternoon it was. All our guests loved every bit of it. The atmosphere of the event and sisterhood was impeccable. It gave me joy and pride to be a Soroptimist but, most of all, the genesis behind the cause to enable, educate and empower women and girls".

All Contributed by Sue Underwood

A Message from the Outgoing Region President



President Denise and Fellow members; Where has the year gone? My year started during Covid and despite the uncertainty, we managed to see the year through. We had Zoom meetings for Executive and general meetings. Thanks Sue for your support to make these possible. It has been an honour and privilege to be your Regional President. The end of Presidential year is a chance to look back to see what one has learned and achieved. My year as the President of your Region was really a year of celebrations and achievements for me according to my “strap-line-CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS, VALUING ONE ANOTHER”.

From the beginning I planned to get to know as many members as possible within the Region. It was difficult to get to know individuals on Zoom but was possible at club events and face to face meetings as Covid tailed off. I had the privilege to join most of these events as mentioned in my AGM report. Thanks for inviting me to celebrate with you and thanks to Club officers making sure members are ok. Please do not forget to keep looking out for one another.

The Regional Conference was the highlight of my year and despite the low turnout, it was quite an achievement during the Covid period when there was still fear of transmission. Although we had technical hitches, it did not dampen the delegate’s spirit. Thanks again to a strong team of 5 chaired by Sandy for all your guidance, advice, planning skills and hard work.

Support Mechanism: Having good Executive members and all of us working together made the year a success. Each member played their part to ensure the smooth running of the Region. Thanks to the Executive team for all your support (I will not mention names as I may miss someone out!) I really appreciate your guidance, advice, encouragements and moral support.

Domestic Violence Court Observation: During my year we were able to implement the Domestic Violence observations under the leadership of our PAC Officer Sriya and in partnership with SI Wirral. The synopsis of the report was mentioned in the PAC report.

New Club Charter by Zoom: I had the privilege to join on Zoom to watch the New Clubs charter in India and Barbados. It was a good opportunity to listen to how clubs are being run at other Continents and see slides of their projects.

To finish up I would like to thank all South Lancashire members for your support, gifts and flowers, especially my club sisters, who from the beginning have kept me going - believing in me that I could represent the Region. They gave me tremendous support, accompanying me to events and even driving me there. My husband sends his gratitude to all clubs for inviting him to celebrate with you at your events. Above all my thanks to God Almighty for giving me strength for each day of the year and giving me the wisdom to say the right thing.

CAN I APPEAL TO YOU ALL TO CONTINUE TO VALUE ONE ANOTHER, LOOK AFTER EACHOTHER AND DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS - IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW LITTLE YOU DO.

May God bless you all.

Dorcas O. Akeju, OBE