



**LEADING LADIES OF  
SI WARRINGTON**

In October, SI Warrington had the pleasure of presenting no less than four long service awards; three members for 25 years and one member for 35 years.



**From Left to Right: Betty Irving (25 yrs), Margaret Emsley (35 yrs), Muriel Darbyshire (25 yrs), Susan Katz (25 yrs)**

**SI SOUTHPORT PAY TRIBUTE TO A MUCH-LOVED SISTER page 6**



**SI CROSBY RISE TO THE CHALLENGE**

SI Crosby won this year’s coveted South Lancashire Rose Bowl with “One Stitch at a Time” which fitted nicely with this year’s challenge: “Little things.”

Since the beginning of lockdown members have knitted, crocheted and sewn dozens of blankets and other items for Knit for Peace, the Royal Liverpool University Hospital, Trust Swan project and Crosby Baby Baskets.

This was truly a team effort. Some knitted or crotched the squares, others assembled the blankets, whilst yet others were involved in their distribution. These items were much appreciated by the recipients and their families. We are proud to have merited The Rose Bowl this year.

President of SI Crosby, Jill Boggan received the award, which was independently judged by Patricia Mercer of SI Runcorn, from Region President Denise Parker at the New Member’s Lunch.



## Club News from around the Region

### SI Wigan

The term started (apologies retired teacher – still in old money) with another successful Tea at the Farm, which is turning out to be our biggest yearly fundraiser.

The sun shone, or so I was told as I was in the kitchen! A very pleasant time was had by all resulting in a healthy profit of over **£2,000.00** towards our charities; Wigan and Leigh Hospice; DIAS (Wigan's Domestic Violence Service; Shoebox Fairies and Beauty for Ashes. This event gets bigger and better every year. Thank you to our PAC lead, Kathleen Moran, for allowing us to use her farm.



### And They're Off!

What an evening – Shoebox Fairies race night!

'I don't gamble' said Jayne, who was first in the queue every time. Apparently, she didn't like to queue either. My money's on Jayne!

Here are the members in the winner's enclosure.

### Bringing Charities Together

Our October club meeting was an opportunity to present cheques to our charities, Shoebox Fairies and Beauty for Ashes, who realised how they could benefit each other - almost a 'speed dating moment with a very good outcome!

It was better than 'Deal or No Deal' when Kelly from Shoebox Fairies started to open the box.

SI Wigan were so pleased to be able to facilitate new networking relationships across our charities.

**\*\* Come to Conference – Rise Up and Roar 11<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at Wrightington Hotel and Spa, Wigan and meet Shoebox Fairies in person. You won't be disappointed. \*\***



*Contributed by Angela Holmes*

## SI Wigan

### Dementia with Lewy Body in Belfast

Our members continued their individual work including Jacqui who, as CEO of the Lewy Body Society, travelled to Belfast to wrap a scarf around the Waterfront as a follow up to last year when scarves were wrapped around the Royal Albert Hall. The scarves were knitted by volunteers to raise awareness about the condition. She enjoyed the company of Christopher Biggins, actor, who gives his support to this cause. \*\* Watch out for Jacqui at our regional PAC in June 2024, when she will give her presentation about 'Dementia with Lewy Body' and the impact on carers.



### The Future is Orange (Café)

The month continued with our members supporting our now monthly Orange Café. We have moved from The Bag and Bean at Morpheus Glass to The Wild Mint Café, Golden Days Garden Centre. Lovely to see Penny – ever the raconteur and, as you can see our President Angela takes it very seriously having now bought herself a new orange cap!



### Knitting in Your Nineties

It would be very remiss of me not to mention our Treasurer's Mum, Doreen Manning, a very young 94-year-old, who is currently knitting a bonnet a day in November for our Shoebox Fairies. Not only is she knitting, but has also managed to get herself sponsored for £600.00 for our charities. Many thanks Doreen, it is very much appreciated. Doreen always supports our events, enjoying meals with us and attending our Charter Lunch.

Thank you to Wigan Soroptimists and Doreen's family and friends for sponsoring.



Of course, November is a time of Remembrance and members attended the local Remembrance Service at the local Cenotaph. Thank you to Sharon, for laying the wreath on the club's behalf of Club and members who joined with The Rotary Club of Wigan in the parade to the Cenotaph. Well done to Ann, our treasurer who knitted over 20 poppies to be sold in aid of our armed forces community – see photo. 'We shall remember them.'

*Contributed by Angela Holmes*

## S.I. Leigh & District

In September we were asked for help with a fund-raising effort by Beauty For Ashes Refuges. They had been given a Leigh Leopards 'fan favourite' Edwin Ipape rugby shirt, signed by the whole squad at the beginning of the season. Their plan had been to auction it at their launch event however, this event was held in WIGAN, therein lies a problem, I think the members of Leigh Soroptimists who were present might have been the only bidders!



They kept hold of it and decided to hold a prize draw. Leigh Soroptimists were mainly the promoters of the draw, we didn't have an event to promote it, so it had to be done on social media. We produced leaflets, got a photo of the player with his shirt, and posted the draw all over Facebook, went into pubs where Leigh fans are and generally made sure that people knew about it over a period of one month. The draw was made at the beginning of our club meeting in October and shared live on Facebook, we raised a total of £605 for the Refuge and the lucky winner was Ellie Noble, who was very pleased with it!

Our speaker meeting in September brought together representatives from two of the women's refuges that we support; Cherry and Sylvia from Holly House and Becky and Tracey from Beauty for Ashes. They spoke very passionately about their work and some of the harrowing stories behind it and the reasons why they need support from outside organisation,, not just financial but clothing, toiletries and household goods to provide dignity for the women and children they are supporting. Leigh Soroptimists will continue to look for ways in which we can help and this was a fitting subject to highlight on the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.



To conclude a busy month, on a cold day at the end of September, we held an Orange Café at the new Hide Coffee House at Pennington Flash. Dressed in orange and armed with leaflets we engaged with their customers to raise awareness of gender-based violence and what we as Soroptimist do.

*Contributed by Lynda Lilley*

## S.I. Leigh & District



October was a social event turned fundraising which attracted a variety of women (some potential members?). The very talented Sam Rigby produced some amazing flower arrangements which made fabulous raffle prizes, this added funds to our charity account.



You may have noticed that we have been obsessed with ORANGE FLOWERS!

Through wonderful community support, from young and old – Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Pensioners Link, our friendship club S.I. Haverfordwest, our mother club S.I. Wigan, W.I., Church groups, craft and knitting groups other organisations and individuals they kept coming, not forgetting our own club members. This raised awareness across a wide spectrum, and we reached our target of 2495 to create a display in Leigh Parish Church. (We did pinch the idea from another club).



This was the result ... On 25<sup>th</sup> November we held a moving and thought-provoking event surrounded by 2495 orange flowers, lighting candles, poignant readings and music. Over 40 people joined us, with representatives from domestic abuse support organisations DIAS, AIM Northwest, Beauty for Ashes and survivors of domestic abuse. The display will remain in the church throughout the 16 days of activism against gender-based abuse.



Contributed by Lynda Lilley

**SI SOUTHPORT – DECEMBER 2023****TRIBUTE TO MARGARET DAVIES**

Once again, SI Southport is sad to report a great loss, with the devastating news of the untimely passing of our dear friend and dedicated member, Margaret Davies.

Many of us have wonderful memories of Margaret. She had been a member of SI Southport for many years, working tirelessly on the Executive, leading the club in 2008/9 and rising to the lofty heights of Regional President just a few years ago. With her organisational skills, combined with her caring, patient and compassionate nature (amongst other qualities), she was not only an outstanding Soroptimist but also a truly special person and friend.

Barbara Welby presented this tribute to Margaret at our meeting at the start of November:

“I first met Margaret when we worked at college on a joint cooking project with children from Merefield Special School. She was lively, friendly and caring. She knew of Soroptimists as some of the children lived in a house next door to our meeting room. I invited her to join in 1993 and what an excellent

member she turned out to be! She had the knack of making people go out of their comfort zone to fund raise – who could forget those fairies that nobody loved because they were 40, including our 90-year-old member Diana in fishnet tights!

Along with member Jean Tweddell, Margaret raised hundreds of pounds with their Celebrity Auctions – both Margaret and Jean dressing up as celebrity auctioneers, amongst them Hinge & Bracket, the 2 Fat Ladies and Laurel & Hardy.

Margaret became Club President in 2008 and Regional President in 2017. We supported her at her conference in Southport and joined her at the SIGBI Conference in Cardiff (the latter along with 80,000 boxing fans!) Reflecting her caring nature, one of her charities in her Regional Presidency was the Alzheimer’s Society. Sadly, this became appropriate as she was to be affected by this dreadful disease.

In recent months, one of our long-standing members, Ann Bryan, brought Margaret to meetings and club functions, but we could all see the deterioration in her condition and it became increasingly obvious that she needed extra care. We last saw her at our annual Past Presidents’ lunch in September this year and, while she did not know who all the ladies were, she seemed to enjoy herself.

I know Margaret’s cheerful presence is missed by those who knew her. I am proud to have brought her into our movement. She was a brilliant member and a fine example of our name’s meaning - Margaret was truly the ‘best of sisters’.”

Several of our club members attended Margaret’s funeral, along with Soroptimists from Crosby and Leigh. Member and friend Carol Hill told us that the service was taken by John Milton, a neighbour of Chris and Margaret’s.

We all send our sincerest condolences to Margaret’s husband, Chris, son Philip, daughter Cathy and all the family. Margaret will be truly missed.

*Contributed by Ghislaine Fletcher*

## SI SOUTHPORT – DECEMBER 2023

SI Southport has been working closely with the charity Against Breast Cancer and, as October was breast cancer awareness month, we decided to 'go pink.'

Bernie's pink Bra Banks have been well known in Southport for well over a year and established some new venues for October. All our amazing and supportive embraced Breast Cancer Awareness Month and held special events to support the campaign including the following:

- The Imperial Hotel hold a monthly Car Boot sale and the proceeds from their last event were donated to the ABC charity
- The Bijou cinema screened 'Grease', with the proceeds donated to the ABC Charity
- The Richmond took a Bra Bank during October and collected 3 bags full of bras at their Pensioners' Lunch
- The Grand hosted a bra bank and coloured their lights pink.



Additionally, the Atkinson, our wonderful arts centre on Lord Street, was swathed in pink on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October to alert the town to breast cancer awareness.

The awareness month culminated in a fund-raising Charity Concert. Our own 'Pink Lady', Bernie Reynolds, with a small team, arranged a brilliant evening, showcasing an eclectic mix of amazing local talent to entertain us. Thanks to President Agnes and her team, we were

treated to a delicious supper during the interval.

The concert was expertly managed by our Master of Ceremonies, Jonathan, who introduced our wonderful performers.



Over 60 guests attended and amongst the guests, we were delighted to welcome the Mayor of Sefton, Cllr June Burns, suitably dress in pink!

We are so grateful to everyone who generously supported us - both by attending the event and by donating a tremendous array of raffle prizes.

*Contributed by Ghislaine Fletcher*

## SI ST HELENS

This year Soroptimists in St Helens have taken part in two Christmas Gift appeals. The first was after one of our members spotted tags in the local Dunelm Mill Store asking for specific gifts for adults and children in the town. The requests came from schools, hostels and nursing homes who identified those in need and their wishes. Store staff write out requests on tags, place them by the Christmas tree at the front of the store for the public to take and return with the gift in a bag.

Some requests were so simple; frilly socks, a mug to call my own, a fluffy blanket. One young carer asked for a mop because theirs had broken and they couldn't afford to replace it. Members were able to acquire tags and two trolley loads of tag requests were returned. All the gifts will be delivered to the relevant organisations in time for Christmas.

The second was a request from St Helens Council Social Services who support local families in need at Christmas. We have supported this appeal for almost 15 years since its beginning. This year we were able to purchase around 100 toys, gifts and books using our charities funds, which were gratefully received. Key workers who work with the families identify needs and wishes and gifts are given to the parent to wrap for their children at Christmas.



*Contributed by Anne Jones*

During the Autumn and Winter months St. Helens Club supply eating and cooking apples to Teardrops Centre, a charity helping the homeless, people living in hostels and temporary accommodation and schools in underprivileged areas in the borough.



The apples are grown in a member's orchard and very gratefully received as little fresh food is donated. During the week cooking apples are used when providing hot meals. The eating apples are distributed with sandwiches at weekends, to those living on the streets. Recently the club also provided items of warm clothing for those in need.

*Contributed by Edwina Abbott*



## SI ST HELENS

St Helens Soroptimists and friends have been busy knitting and crocheting over the last few months to dress 13 baby dolls for patients living with dementia at Whiston Hospital. This was in response to an appeal from the hospital for baby dolls. The Club purchased 8 dolls from their charity funds and 5 more were donated by supporters. As well as working on outfits and blankets themselves, members visited a number of local 'knit and natter' groups talking about Soroptimism and our project. A large quantity of garments were returned over the weeks enabling all dolls to be beautifully dressed and wrapped with a bag of spare items to allow for washing.



Our orange cafe in October fell in Alzheimer's awareness week so our babies went to the cafe and caused great interest. We had an interesting talk and discussion led by our Regional President Denise and were joined by some cafe customers.

We recently delivered the dolls to the hospital where they were gratefully received. They are not only using the dolls with patients on the wards but are finding them very useful with patients in the A&E department. Often when elderly people living with dementia arrive at A&E, they are very disorientated and distressed and staff are finding the dolls extremely useful in helping to settle them. Some longer-term patients become very attached to the dolls and in those cases they are allowed to take them on discharge which means that this project may be ongoing. It was also a good opportunity to talk to the nurses about Soroptimism and we left information leaflets with them.

*Contributed by Anne Jones*

## SI CROSBY

Hello everyone. We have been busy over the past few months with more fun and friendship, together with lots of service and fundraising.



At the end of August, several SI Crosby members paid a friendship visit to SI Sigdal in Norway and were joined by members from SI Kalundborg and SI Falkenberg. There was much catching up to do as it is a few years since we last met .

Some of the more adventurous souls hiked up a steep hill to see The Madonna, a small local shrine. Others spent a more leisurely time chatting to friends old and new. Thank you to SI Sigdal for their bounteous hospitality.

## SI CROSBY

In early September, Jospice were finally able to hold their twice deferred Summer Fair. It was a glorious warm, sunny day. A team of Crosby Soroptimists, together with one young 'Soroptimister', ran the catering stall. It was a busy afternoon. As President Jill was away in Sigdal, President Elect Sharon helped to judge the annual Teddy Bears' Picnic parade.



Members brought baby items to our September meeting to fill new baby baskets for needy young women in the area. That evening we also had a talk by Professor Alex Balch from Liverpool University, about how he and his team are involved in the fight against modern slavery. It is sad to note that slavery is still thriving worldwide in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, including in the UK, though often hidden.



This year SI Crosby won the coveted South Lancashire Rose Bowl with "One Stitch at a Time" which fitted nicely with this year's challenge: "Little things." Since the beginning of lockdown members have knitted, crocheted and sewn dozens of blankets and other items for Knit for Peace, the Royal Liverpool University Hospital Trust Swan project and Crosby Baby Baskets. This was truly a team effort. Some knitted or crocheted the squares, others assembled the blankets, whilst yet others were involved in their distribution. These items were much appreciated by the recipients and their families. We are proud to have merited The Rose Bowl this year.



In October we held an autumn fair which was well supported and raised £1200 for local charities. Members turned out in force to set up stalls the night before the fair and then again on the day itself. Abby Younis and Sandy Taylor masterminded the day which was a very productive day. President Jill's Halloween Stall proved extremely popular.



Several of us attended this year's SIGBI Conference in London, the majority just for the Saturday. Because of the current unreliability of trains, they travelled door-to-door in the comfort of a chauffeur-driven minibus. This meant an early start, but allowed for a picnic with a bottle of 'bubbly' on the way home. The day – long as it was – went well. Everyone enjoyed the conference with its inspirational speakers. Abby Younis wrote the blog on Hasina Safi's talk. This can be found on the SIGBI Conference website.



## SI CROSBY



President Jill laid the wreath during the annual Remembrance Service at the Waterloo War Memorial. It was a very wet Sunday. In spite of this the service was well attended.

Fundraising Bingo in November was popular. What a great way to spend a cold, dark November evening. Few of us will forget Terry's rendition of "Chick, Chick, Chick, Chicken" – her forfeit for an incorrect call of "House." What's more, lots of funds for local charities were raised.



The following two days we were out again in strength serving at the annual CHET Art Fair. As well as all this over the last few months we continued to give service at Lunt Meadows Wildlife Trust, Re-engage lunches, supporting The Plaza Community Cinema and the Trussell Trust Food Bank.

In September, Crosby Soroptimist, Abby Younis, a trustee of Widows' Rights International, attended the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the UN Committee on the Status of Women and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights in Geneva. Several other Soroptimists including International President Maureen Maguire were present.

So all-in-all it's been another hectic few months for us - and next stop Christmas!

*'Compliments of the Season' to you all, from SI Crosby.*



*Contributed by Margaret Davidson*

## SI WIDNES - Don't Burn that Bra

In June 2023, SI Widnes commenced a project to collect new or unwanted bras in order to support the charity 'Against Breast Cancer' (ABC). For every tonne of bras collected, the Charity receives £700 enabling funding of life saving research projects at some of the UK's most respected academic establishments, leading to improved outcomes for women throughout the world. Every £1 raised enables the charity to continue their work in finding a vaccine against breast cancer and to look at ways to increase the survival of women and men who have the disease.

The bras are prevented from going to landfill and sent to small businesses in developing countries in Africa and around the world, given a new lease of life in countries such as Ghana and Kenya where bras are expensive to produce locally, and this provides an income for struggling families.

Being able to access reasonably priced bras, boosts the self-esteem of women and girls in developing countries but more importantly, it can give status. Furthermore, a girl who is wearing a bra is less likely to be raped or sexually assaulted.

With support from local businesses and churches, SI Widnes has placed bra recycling bins in sports and community centres, churches, the local Masonic Hall, Tesco and Halton Haven Hospice. Bra donations are collected from the recycling bins, collated and despatched to the charity 'Against Breast Cancer' by SI Widnes. In October this year, SI Widnes sent the first shipment of 611 bras to the Charity.

SI Widnes are continuing to raise awareness locally of such a worthy cause and bra collection is ongoing.

*Contributed by Yvonne Gibbon*



## SI WARRINGTON

### CHILD LABOUR IN 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WARRINGTON

The speaker for our October Business Meeting was Anna Alexander who presented a fascinating overview of this local subject. The period of 1810-1845 was a time of huge change in England amidst the upheavals caused by the Industrial Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Widespread clamour for better working conditions led to visits by Parliamentary Commissioners during the 1830-40s, with a focus on child workers in the town. This included documenting the terrible life of chimney sweeps and of children employed in the pin-making industry. The resulting records are a treasure trove for historians about our town – negotiations are underway to bring Anna back to delve deeper into the era!



Anna Alexander with member Karin Spiers

### CRAFTING COLLABORATION!



Ever had the challenge of finishing off those lovingly knitted/crocheted Twiddle Muffs but can't face the final job of adding the buttons, tassels and other bits and pieces? Well, we've cracked it – one of our members, Helen Crombie, is a whizz at the fiddly job but not so good on the knitting side. This perfect blend of skills led to delivery of a further 14 muffs to Warrington Hospital for dementia patients.

Kaleidoscope of Twiddle Muffs (Photo: Helen Crombie)

### CAKE AND CERTIFICATES!

In October, the members of SI Warrington had more than usual to celebrate. At a sumptuous Afternoon Tea at Oliver's in Penketh, we gathered to wish one of our longest serving members (a mere 34 years) a very happy 93<sup>rd</sup> birthday. We also had the pleasure of presenting no less than four long service certificates; three members for 25 years and one for 35 years.



Birthday girl Doreen Worsley with special cake and candles! (Photo J Alexander)



From Left to Right:

Betty Irving (25 yrs), Margaret Emsley (35 yrs), Muriel Darbyshire (25 yrs), Susan Katz (25 yrs)

(Photo J. Alexander)

## SI Bolton 85<sup>th</sup> Charter Lunch

Our 85<sup>th</sup> Charter Lunch was celebrated at the end of October at Bolton Golf Club, our new meeting venue. SI Bolton are operating without a President and the lunch was less formal than usual with speeches reduced to a minimum. Programme Action Officer, Chris Dixon welcomed members and guests from clubs in South Lancs Region and also a member of SI Nantwich. We were delighted to have so much support from other clubs. Vision and Mission Statements were followed by Grace and then a well-received meal.



The comfort break was usefully filled by the raffle, with a range of prizes including vouchers donated by local businesses for which we were very grateful. £187 was raised for the International President's Appeal – *Opening Doors to a Bright Future*. We were delighted to welcome Margaret

Baker who gave us a splendid illustrated talk about her trip to Uganda with International President Maureen Maguire to visit projects supported by the appeal, giving girls two years education. There is concern about what happens to the girls when the two-year period is over. The Rose Academy, who run the project, intend to remain in touch with the families, and encourage the girls into secondary education where possible.

The less formal and more relaxed atmosphere of this event was welcomed by members and guests, with very positive comments.

## Fortalice Art Materials

Fortalice is a women's refuge based in Bolton. They celebrated their 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary earlier this year. The event was attended by two members of SI Bolton.

We asked what items would be useful to them. We have previously provided toiletries and financial donations over many years. It was agreed that art materials would be useful as the children in the unit find it therapeutic to draw and paint. A good selection of materials was collected over a couple of months

(only about half of it appears in the photo) and was presented to Fortalice in September.



Contributed by Jane Hemingway & Maureen Barber

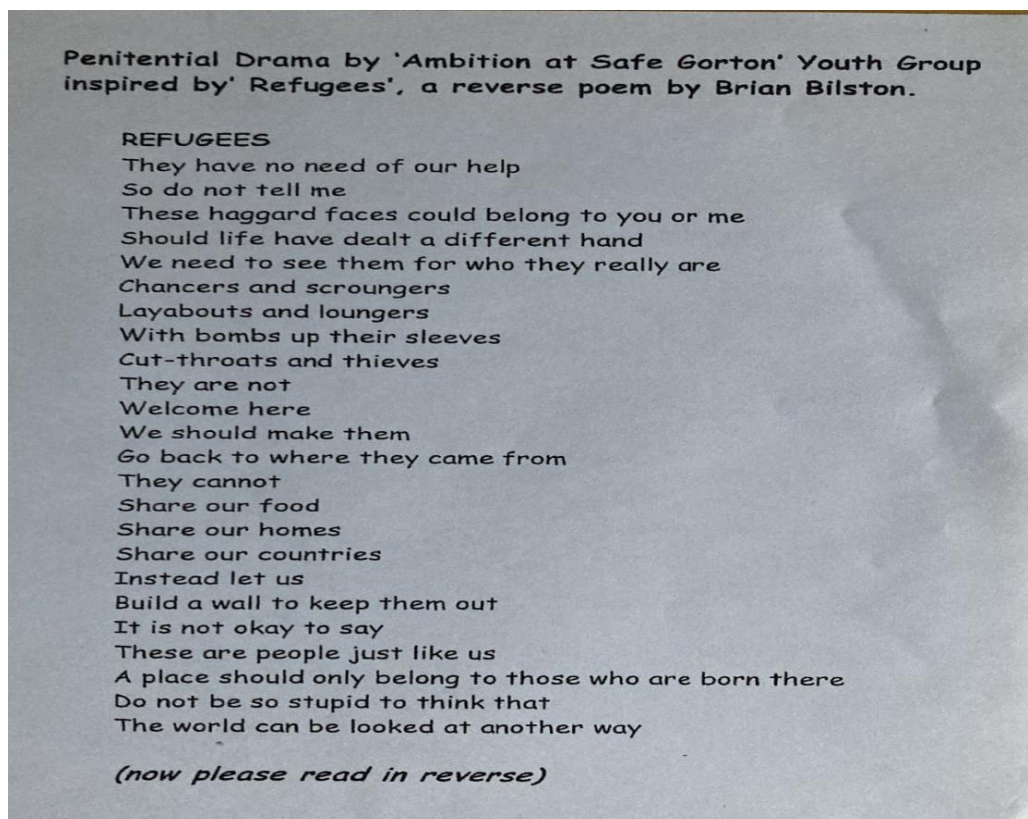
## SI Bolton The Destitution Project (DP)

In September, SI Bolton welcomed three volunteers from DP to speak at our meeting. DP aims to provide a safe environment in Bolton for asylum seekers and refugees where they will be treated with dignity and can find friendship, food and practical help. The project has operated in the heart of Bolton for over 20 years and, since 2015, as an independent UK-registered charity and has been supported by SI Bolton for many of those years.

Nearly everyone who works there is a volunteer: the only paid workers are part time; the Senior Case Worker, Caseworker Admin Assistant and the Drop-In Centre Co-Ordinator. The weekly sessions offer table football and other activities to 60-140 refugee and asylum seekers.

Our speakers were three ladies who have volunteered at DP for many years. Each focussing on different strands of support; friendship, food and practical help including English lessons. They brought in a sample of the food which is distributed weekly, but sadly this has reduced in recent months due to the downturn in donations. In addition to the food parcels, they also provide clothes, towels and bedding. The Casework Team have a good relationship with a wide range of other organisations to whom they can signpost Service Users as necessary.

An interesting poem was read out by one of the speakers. It makes unpleasant reading but read it again starting on the bottom line and work up.



## SI Manchester & Lendwithcare ( <https://lendwithcare.org/> )

Following a very interesting and enthusiastic presentation by a member from the Northern Region members from SI Manchester decided to support the women entrepreneurs promoted by the Lendwithcare charity. £240 was allocated from club reserve funds towards this project. It was agreed that loans of £15 would be made to chosen entrepreneurs who would all be women.

Lendwithcare manages financial loans made to female (and male) entrepreneurs worldwide who request small amounts of money to improve their businesses and household incomes. They live in less wealthy countries and are assessed in country by CARE charity. This means that we can have trust in the women having money lent to them. The arrangement is formal and the women have to agree to and abide by the conditions of the loan.

A club member was delegated to administer the fund through the club treasurer. In conjunction with 2 other members a list of criteria was created to identify the entrepreneurs whom we wanted to support.

- We wanted to spread the loans round the world and for a variety of businesses.
- We wanted to know how many people would benefit from the loan
- and whether any previous loans had been repaid as agreed.

It is important to regularly visit the Lendwithcare website as the entrepreneurs quickly receive the total loan they have asked for. Our contributions of £15 are added to by hundreds of supporters worldwide, including from other Soroptimist clubs.

To date we have loaned the full £240 allocation from the club and have supported 29 entrepreneurs, helped 238 people and created 3 jobs. We are now receiving loan repayments and have received enough to support another entrepreneur with £15.

Some women we have supported:



Luz America from Ecuador for her arts and handicrafts business



Nid from Thailand for her cattle farming



Chimphondwe 0206 Group for farming of groundnuts (Groups are jointly responsible for repayments)

Next time I plan to choose an entrepreneur and tell more of her story.

*Contributed by Sue Underwood*



## SI LIVERPOOL

*Some photos from our Friendship Link meet up at the Albert Dock in Liverpool*



## A Message from the Incoming Region President



It is a privilege and a great pleasure to serve as South Lancashire Regional President 2023-24

I start by congratulating President Denise for a successful year with her theme 'Little things make a big difference.' After the pandemic it has been so fulfilling to meet each other regularly and get back to working in our communities doing just that – making a difference! Thank you Denise.

My theme for this coming year and also for our 2024 conference is 'Rise up and Roar'. We are an international organisation with 66,000 members in 120 countries circulating the globe with a voice at the United Nations. This gives us a sense of **belonging**. It also gives us a purpose that we share together. When we are working on projects that support people, planet, partnership, peace or prosperity it is our common purpose as Soroptimists that galvanises and unites us.

There's so much we can and should ROAR about – just one example is the number of girls not in education. In this country serious numbers have not returned to school after the pandemic. There are multiple reasons for this from children not feeling safe to mental health issues.

In Afghanistan girls can no longer access secondary education or university. Many girls across the world are not receiving a basic education which prevents them fulfilling their potential and raising themselves, their family and community out of poverty.

Let us also rise up and roar about the excellent work we do, encourage others to join and really make a difference to the lives of women and girls at home and abroad.

In friendship

*Pamela Wright OBE*

## A Message from the Outgoing Region President

It was a privilege to have been the SI South Lancashire Region President for 2022 – 2023. I have greatly enjoyed the year, and will see it as one of the things in my life that I can be proud of. I was heartened by the number of members of our region who came to Belfast to the SIGBI conference last year, where I became Region President. I am also very grateful for the support of my club, SI Widnes, Region Executive Officers, clubs, and members of our region. My husband Derek and I enjoyed attending club lunches and dinners to which we were invited. It really was an honour to attend them, and a great opportunity to get to know more about clubs, and their work. It was lovely to see members in their home areas.

The organising of the New Members' Lunch in September 2023 was a main task of my year. Fortunately, I had fabulous help from Region Membership officers Anne and Angela, and treasurer Rhona. The event was a success, with a good number of members attending, including encouraging numbers of new members. The theme for my year was 'Little things make a big difference'. This was also the theme for this year's Rose Bowl Challenge. The winning club was SI Crosby. Ten clubs entered overall, and it was heartening to see the projects and range of work done by our clubs. Little things certainly made a big difference.

I attended the Past Presidents' Lunch with Past President Dorcas. She kindly included me in the planning of it (as it will be my turn next year)! I attended the SI Convention in Dublin in July this year, and I also attended the SIGBI Conference in early November in London.

During the past year, I have met with Region President Susan and members of Cheshire, Wirral and North Wales Region. We have a lot in common, and there is scope to share information on events and projects. The past year has certainly been a very memorable, busy and enjoyable one. As Past President, it will be a pleasure to support Region President Pamela, and remain a member of the Region Executive Team. I am looking forward to the Region Conference in Pamela's Year.

In friendship,

Denise Parker – Past Region President.

