



President of SI Stockport, Sue, congratulates Doreen Parker on an amazing 35 years of service.



Long Service awards to SI Crosby members (L-R) Cynthia Ashworth (30 years) Sheila Chatterton (25 years) and Jane Daly (50 years)



SI Crosby say goodbye to a much-loved best sister, Doreen Sedat, who sadly passed away on 20TH MARCH 2024



We are Soroptimists

Rise up and roar!

A poem by Louise Fazackerley

We are Soroptimists

not chiropractors or ophthalmologists,

it could however be argued,

we are a sorority of optimists.

We are world-wide alchemists of social change!

We are Soroptimists

a society who assist women and girls of all ages

to justifiable rage, to rise up and roar!

We are Soroptimists!

We talk, connect, plan and achieve.

We break barriers and we believe!

We open doors, make jaws drop on floors

and for those bores who think the world will just stay the same

just look at the work of our 72,000 members in 121 countries.

We are Soroptimists.

Rise up and roar!

Tell one, tell all

About the lives we transform.

Club News from around the Region

SI ST HELENS

Our President Linda and Immediate Past President Diane were delighted to be invited to attend the presentation of the King's Award for Voluntary Service to St. Helens Rotary Club by the Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside. This is a prestigious award, in recognition of the wonderful work done by our local Rotary Club and is very well deserved.

Diane, during her President's year in 2022, was asked by the Rotary President to submit a letter to accompany their bid for what was then named the Queen's Award. It was important to highlight what made St. Helens Rotary special and describe how they stand out from other clubs both locally, nationally and globally. As long-standing partners, we were thrilled to have the opportunity to support them and even more so, when we heard that their bid had been successful.



The ceremony in the Town Hall proved to be a wonderful occasion and we were so pleased to have been able to play a part in the recognition of their work and we look forward to continuing the positive and mutually supportive relationship which we have enjoyed over many years, in the future.

Contributed by Diane Charnock

St Helens Club recently contacted a local midwife, Wendy Warrington from Bolton, who has made 17 journeys to Ukraine supporting women and their children. Wendy was appealing for formula milk, baby food and nappies. It is almost impossible for mothers to access these essential items in the east of the country which is under regular shelling. Women often also arrive without even the most basic items for themselves and their children.

Our Club purchased and packed 10 large boxes of baby food and formula milk which was delivered to Ukraine within days by a local man named Eddie Tunstall.

Contributed by Anne Jones



OH, WHAT A NIGHT!

Frankie Valli & the Four Seasons’ hit “Oh What a Night” just about summed up the happenings at the St Helens Police Club in April where SI St Helens held its Quiz Night.

Under the expert supervision of quiz master, Bill Buckley and his wife Sue, teams of six battled to outscore their opponents over seven rounds of general knowledge questions. A capacity audience attended and a hotpot supper was served. Each round was sponsored by a local business or members of SI St Helens, along with a raffle, (prizes donated by friends and relatives) £1,460 was raised for local charities.



The winning smile



Sincere thanks go to SI Wigan, SI Widnes, SI Liverpool, SI Warrington for supporting the event and also to our members, families and friends. **BOOK EARLY FOR NEXT YEAR TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!**

Contributed by Sandra Lane



SI St Helens celebrated International Women’s Day this year with a friendship walk in our local Taylor Park. We have tried for many years to establish a friendship link with Soroptimists in Stuttgart and were finally successful in February of this year. To mark the occasion, we chose the appropriately named Stuttgart Walk for our friendship walk. Over 40 people joined us including one of our local girl guide groups, who we are helping to sponsor their visit to guide headquarters in Switzerland. Sponsorship aids equality in that any girl can attend irrespective of finance and we chose the occasion to present a cheque to them. After the walk we enjoyed chatting over coffee to some of the walkers.

We will continue our friendship link with SI Stuttgart Zwei in July, when 11 members will travel to Stuttgart to officially sign our friendship certificate at a reception in their town hall and spend time getting to know each other.

Contributed by Anne Jones

SI Bolton

The Programme Action team have decided to focus on the environment as a theme for this year. The first meeting of the year focussed on fashion waste and recycling. We were asked to bring in a maximum of three fashion accessories that we no longer use but are still fit for purpose. At the end of the meeting, we were able to choose items to take home and any items remaining were donated to charity.

Chris Dixon, our Programme Action Officer, provided an interesting and thought-provoking quiz on fashion waste. This defeated most members, who resorted to guessing. One example of a question is; 'What percentage of textile waste (mainly clothing) goes into landfill in the UK every year?' Answer: 30%. 300,000 tonnes of clothing are thrown away with household rubbish each year.



One of our members, Ann Craven, volunteers at the Salvation Army Donation Centre in Bolton and she gave a very interesting and informative talk about recycling of textile donations. They look to reuse, repurpose or recycle items. Certain items cannot be sold for hygiene reasons, but one volunteer repurposes duvets and fleece dressing gowns to make pet beds. Any items damaged or unsuitable for resale are collected by a rag man and the charity receives a small amount of money in return. Nothing is wasted.



SI Bolton are delighted to officially welcome new member Michelle Williamson to the club. Michelle joined last year but the official enrolment has only just taken place.

The photograph shows chair of the meeting, Jennifer Hindshaw presenting Michelle with her badge. Michelle currently works for the NHS in a managerial role having spent 25 years working as a nurse in A & E. She joins her mother as a member of SI Bolton, being the second mother and daughter team in the club.

Contributed by Jane Hemingway

SI Manchester's 'Climate Fresk' Workshop

SI Manchester were delighted to welcome members from SI Bolton, SI Liverpool and SI Southport to our Climate Fresk on 1st June at Stretford Public Hall. This was an interactive and cooperative workshop where we explored climate change issues together.



The content of the workshop is drawn from the reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC), made much more accessible by the card based 'game' format.

This made it easier to see the interesting and often complex interactions between human activity and climate change.

We were encouraged to reflect on actions to solve the problems together and for us to spread the word.



These workshops are delivered world-wide often by volunteer facilitators. Our session was ably delivered by Ethar Alali and Kennedy Mumba from Really Recycle.



If any club would like further information about Climate Fresks and how they can arrange one for their members, please contact Elaine via sigbi.manchester@gmail.com

Contributed by Elaine Loader

SI Manchester Supports 'Early Essentials'

Early Essentials provide starter packs for some of the most vulnerable pregnant women in our communities who have been identified by their health and social care professional as being in great need.



Carole and Fiona presented Early Essentials with beautiful baby clothes and quilts made by our partners **Sara and Jane from Ashton Village Saver, Anne & others from the Heald Green Village Stitches and Nancy from Project Linus***

**Project Linus Quilts: many quilting groups contribute to Project Linus Quilts. The local coordinator can give them to different charities and hospitals. So, Nancy, our Heald Green local coordinator, chooses now to give the small ones to Early Essentials. In March we had a day as a group sewing them, it was our second set and we are collecting more.*

These talented knitters and stitchers are amazing and the items they make are very much appreciated by Early Essentials and the women they help.



The 'Ripple Effect' of talking about Soroptimism.....

One Soroptimist (Fiona) goes to a stitching group

- Talks about Soroptimism – SI Manchester's project 'Early Essentials'
- Stitches introduce 'Early Essentials' as a possible 'Linus Project' beneficiary.....see above!
-& Stitches , plus family & friends, also begin knitting for 'Early Essentials'!

Another Soroptimist (Liz) goes to the Ashton Village Saver shop

- Talks about Soroptimism – SI Manchester's projects including 'New Hope, Orissa' & 'Early Essentials'
- Shop owners Mum & her sister get busy knitting.....

Thank You to all our silent supporters -

Contributed by Members of SI Manchester

SI Wigan

Tea and Pampering



SI Wigan continue to support Wigan Domestic Violence service (DIAS) with monthly refreshments. Having previously donated tea, biscuits etc , with the assumption that this was what was needed, closer collaboration ensures we now provide identified needs, resulting in less wastage. As a

result, the charity do not end up with a surfeit of one thing but lack another. We have also delivered some pamper packs that are very much appreciated by the service users.



A scarf for Lewy

The year is flying by and members and friends of SI Wigan Development Officer , Jacqui Cannon, (who is also the CEO of the Lewy Body Society) are all furiously knitting as fast as they can to produce scarves that will be used to wrap around Central Hall in Manchester. Our President Angela



even attended a special knitting event in order to improve her knitting speed – sadly there are no pictures but word has gone around that it was a sight to behold! We do, however, have a picture of a scarf in progress which is being produced by a local group who some of our members belong to. If anyone would like to contribute a scarf then please contact us. All scarves need to be completed by 26th September in order for them to be joined together, ready for the event on the 17th October.

Read Easy - Teaching adults to read in Wigan.

At the club meeting in March, members brought books along to exchange and donate money to Read Easy. This is a National Charity with a local group in Wigan, ably supported by two of our Members – Anne Clarke and Marianne Hare. Read Easy were very grateful to receive the donation which was used to provide reading resources.



Can YOU Knit a Scarf?

Knitters across the South Lancashire Region are supporting this project. A speaker from the Lewy Body Society (a Wigan Soroptimist) will explain more about the Society at the South Lancashire Region Programme Action Meeting on Saturday June 8th #AScarfForLewy

SI Wigan

Travels and Treats



Several members continued to travel around the region to various events. Angela and Jennifer (pictured left) had a very enjoyable time at the Liverpool Charter Lunch where they were made very welcome. Another group of ladies went along to the quiz night at St Helens where it was good to see members from other clubs supporting each other. Sadly, our team did not win, but there is always next year!



Angela and Anne, Regional Membership Secretaries, have had an interesting time visiting clubs who have invited them to speak about Membership. (pictured right at SI Crosby)

Rise up and Roar!



And finally, it would be remiss of me, after speaking about our Members' travels, not to mention the fact that Members from around the region travelled to Wigan to attend the Regional Conference at Wrightington in May. It was a very successful event (they even had a Wigan Poet) and I am sure that it will be reported about more fully at the Regional Meeting. The Organising Committee should be applauded for a very successful event. Thank you for choosing Wigan and hope that members who enjoyed refreshments at the venue will return...

Wigan Charter Afternoon Tea – Sunday 30th June 2024



Wrightington Hotel and Spa (as per conference)

2.00pm £25 per tea. All welcome. An informal event – Angela promises no speeches!!

Smart casual dress.

Contributed by Anne Clarke

SI Leigh & District

The 8th of March saw us celebrating and raising awareness of International Women’s Day. We embraced the purple and raised funds for our charities with a delicious afternoon tea at Tea Junction, where we had a pop-up shop selling scarves and jewellery along with a tombola and a raffle.



The 25th of March was a busy day with our Orange Café followed by a speaker at the club meeting. Kerry and Collette from A.I.M. Northwest (All Individuals Matter) came to speak about their wonderful project, which supports both victims and perpetrators of abuse, across Greater Manchester, in an endeavour to change behaviours and keep families together if that is what they want. Their new project The Uniformity Project, which was piloted locally last year and now will have permanent premises in Leigh Spinners Mill, is set up to provide pre-loved school uniforms free of charge in a shop like environment. We were happy to support this project with a donation which was match funded by AVIVA. In the end the target of £2500 was blown away and they achieved £9040!!



23rd April was our A.G.M. In the absence of President Gail, IPP Dorothy handed the chain of office to Vice President Josie, the Leadership Team was appointed and plans set out for the year ahead. At the next meeting Josie presented Gail with the IPP badge and a gift from members to mark her term as club president.



At the May meeting we welcomed Jen Kent from The Christie Charity. Jen spoke about the very BIG plans they have to raise £75,000,000 (that’s seventy-five million pounds) for a state-of-the-art 4D scanner facility to be built and fitted out on the Christie site in Manchester. There will be new consulting rooms and waiting rooms and the scanner will be more efficient and more detailed than the present 3D scanner, facilitating earlier detection and quicker diagnosis of all types of cancers which should lead to earlier treatment and better outcomes. This fundraising appeal will be one that the club will be raising funds for throughout the coming year.

Contributed by Lynda Lilley

SI LIVERPOOL – Charter Lunch & Change of Insignia

Soroptimists from across the region gathered to celebrate SI Liverpool’s 97th Charter Lunch and to welcome Rosemary McNamara as our new President. We were delighted to be joined by Lord Mayor Cllr Mary Rasmussen and her escort Sue Gibbon, Prof. Maggie O’Caroll CEO of The Women’s Organisation and Sandy Taylor MBE, President-Elect of SI South Lancashire. Outgoing President Ann Mercer presented a cheque to the Women’s Organisation as her chosen charity for the year. The club thanked Ann for leading us through a very successful year. We wish Rosemary every success as she takes up her office!



The First Step Project, Huyton



During President Ann's year, SI Liverpool started a partnership with The First Step Project, based on supporting women and children to come through domestic abuse crises and to give women support as they take other first steps of independence.

At Christmas, the club provided toys for the children and eggs for Easter. The next step for us is collecting wool to support a Knit and Natter group, teaching skills as well as sharing conversations. We look forward to continuing developing our partnership in other ways too.



Contributed by Anne Grimes

SI CROSBY

Obituary Doreen Sedat

Doreen was a Crosby Soroptimist for 17 years. She was a quiet, self-effacing, artistically talented lady, who was our go-to for all things creative, especially the decorations for our Christmas tree.

Several years ago, she developed breast cancer and was in the process of recovery after aggressive chemotherapy, when she was suddenly struck down by leukaemia.

She fought hard to overcome this cruel setback, but lost her fight on March 20th. She will be greatly missed.



SI CROSBY NEWS



Our March 21st Fashion Show was a great success, raising lots of funds for charity. The venue was LACE near Sefton Park, perfect for the event which we shared with SI Liverpool. We look forwards to more shared initiatives in the future.

We held our 85th Charter Lunch in the Barn at Little Crosby Hall (CHET). The theme was “Down the Rabbit Hole” and guests sat at themed tables with flowers springing from teapots.

Guests of honour were representatives from Sefton Baby Baskets and our South Lancashire Regional President, Pam Wright. Other guests included Soroptimists from Liverpool, Southport, Keighley, Manchester and Grange-over-Sands clubs.





Long Service Certificates were presented to:

Cynthia Ashworth (30 years) pictured left, Sheila Chatterton (25years) pictured right and Jane Daly (50 years) pictured below.



Jane was also presented with a cake to mark her half century of dedication to Soroptimism.



Sharon Ryan was installed as our new President at our April AGM. Sharon has been our very efficient Secretary for the past few years and her promotion to President is well deserved. We are also immensely grateful to Immediate Past President Jill Boggan for all she has achieved in the past year, especially in support of Sefton Baby Baskets and for the siting of Bleed Control Kits in public areas.

Meanwhile, we have continued to hold our Orange Café each month and to maintain our links with Lunt Meadows, Re-engage (Lunch Club) and the Plaza (Flicks and Friends), as well SWACA, CHET and Jospice.



In May several SI Crosby members attended the South Lancashire Regional Conference. Later in the month we enjoyed a “Jolly Girls’ Outing” in an old-fashioned charabanc. “Didn’t we have a lovely day the day we went to Lytham?”- indeed we did, despite the weather!

Contributed by Margaret Davidson

SI STOCKPORT & DISTRICT – ARC CENTRE



The ARC Centre in Stockport is SI Stockport's chosen charity for the second year. Last year we supported a monthly Mum's Meet and Craft group, available to mothers seeking help with mental health issues. Mums come once a month with their children and take part in whatever craft session is being run that particular month. The sessions aid well-being and give mums a focus for a few hours, which in turn, helps with their mental health.

The following testimonials from service users speak for themselves;-

I love coming to Mums Meet and Craft group because it's for me as a Mum. Sometimes I come with the children and sometimes I come on my own. Everyone is so friendly and accepting. You can be yourself. I've made friends here and love coming. (Kat)

A veteran at Mums Meet and Craft. I've been coming since the first virtual zoom session during the pandemic. I love coming to these sessions each month and look forward to it. This place is a godsend and has been invaluable to me, I cannot tell you enough. I feel at ease to talk more with other like-minded mums, get advice, have a giggle and it takes my mind off things. I have made friends, gained confidence and am able to relax more. It's my sanctuary. Thank you x (Nichola)

I love coming to help at these sessions. It feels so worthwhile for all involved. I always feel inspired by the Artist's enthusiasm and motivation to help the mums. I really feel that the mums get a lot from coming to the sessions. It's a space where they can talk to each other and to us, while doing fun, creative activities. Long may it last. Katie (volunteer)



Contributed by Sue Stringer (President SI Stockport & District)

President Pamela's Rise up and Roar Conference

I know it's there clear as day in the job description, but who even thinks to look at that when taking up such a prestigious position as South Lancashire Regional President? Two years ago, I was presented with the Vice President's chain which was quickly followed by the shock question 'What is the theme for your conference?' Conference? - Yes we have one every two years and the next is in 2024. How had I missed that?

First things first- I must look at the regional role job description to ensure I don't make any more blunders. Yes, there it is: *"In addition plan and manage the biannual Regional Conference. Liaise with the Chair and Conference Committee in keeping the conference within budget and publicise the event to all members of the region."*



Next I needed to check that the 2022 Conference Chair Sandy Taylor MBE was prepared to take it on again and the new Regional Treasurer Rhona would also be involved. Then other experienced members to be co-opted as soon as possible to form a 2024 conference committee. A truly excellent group of talented, experienced and creative individuals agreed to join. Pat Williams, Debra Curtis and Angela Holmes brought unbelievable expertise to the planning, booking and organisation of the event. We set up meetings that we could access easily to start the planning process.

Back to the theme; well, we had so many - 'Step Up, Lead the Way'; 'Women Inspiring Women'; 'Women in Focus - Be in the Frame'. Lots of debate and discussion followed, when suddenly, at one meeting '**Rise Up and Roar**' made its way to the surface. We were all agreed it had a certain roar to it!

Together we had already decided the conference themes should focus on issues impacting on women and be varied with a range of speakers. It then really started to come together-especially when a venue at Wrightington Hotel & Spa in the centre of the Region was secured. It seemed auspicious that this hotel shared my surname plus my desire to have a luxury venue not only in the heart of the Region but also within budget.

Talking of budget - there isn't one. The conference must be self-funded. Therefore, the quality of the conference depends entirely upon the Speakers secured and the number of delegates attracted in addition to the negotiation skills of the president initially then the whole committee going forward. *Continued...*

We decided to move our planning meetings to Wrightington Hotel in order to really familiarise ourselves with the facilities plus liaise regularly with the Hotel Conference manager. Everything was in place, posted on the website and looking really great. Then as the early bird deadline approached only 37 delegates had signed up and Pat with her experience informed me that most delegates pay the early bird rate. Oh, my goodness we needed 75 to 80 to put on a good conference and cover our costs. If we don't get more delegates then we will start to incur costs from the hotel who had not taken wedding bookings in order that the 2024 Soroptimist Conference could go ahead. An urgent call for support was sent to all Clubs across the Region to please book the conference. To which we received an amazing response - over 100 delegates. Wow! The conference was now a certainty, the venue and all the speakers could be confirmed. In addition, we could now have professional lanyards, a folder and cotton conference bag for each delegate plus an enhanced food offer.

As the day of the conference fast approached the committee worked incredibly hard to ensure everything was in place. The only task left to the last minute was writing the thank you cards to each speaker to include a cheque donation to their chosen charity plus a personal book token for giving their time freely. What a wonderful day we had. The weather was perfect and the hotel gleamed in the sunshine.

We attracted so many inspirational speakers on such a wide range of topics- starting with Chief Superintendent Ngaire Waine from Merseyside Police who gave us many facts and figures about policing across Merseyside. Some of the statistics were stark but it was reassuring to see the shift in emphasis from focusing on the background of the victim to now investigating the perpetrator more thoroughly. The figures Ngaire presented were each just a snapshot in time but her inability to recruit to key roles was an area of some concern for the future and safety of women.

Dr Paula Briggs is always fantastic to listen to and she outlined many medical advancements concerning women's health. She also dispelled the modern trend of celebrities with no medical qualifications advocating and advising on HRT. She gave us genuine websites to use. Absolutely fascinating to hear Paula cover so much in a short time.

Professor Melissa Gladstone outlined what it's like to be a disabled child in a challenging country like Malawi or Nigeria. She explained how she leads on ways to identify the disability in order to direct children to the appropriate Pathway. She also gave us detailed information on the work she does in Liverpool and across the world.

After a delicious hot and cold two course buffet lunch we were inspired by Stephanie Stephenson, a fellow Soroptimist (SI Crosby), working to improve women's experiences in engineering. She used lots of photographs and case studies to show some of the issues facing women and the challenges in surmounting them. Stephanie inspired many questions and much discussion.

For a complete change in tempo our poet in residence Louise Fazackerley brought us thought provoking stories through her poems. Louise ended with the wonderful poem about Soroptimism written specifically for our **2024 Rise Up and Roar** Conference. *Continued...*

It was humbling for me to sit at the front and see the wonderful conference unfold with every speaker hitting just the right note, topic or emotion. What a fantastic group of speakers we managed to attract. We enjoyed hearing from a wide range of exceptional women speakers plus one male speaker, Malcolm Ross from Lend with Care. He explained how investing relatively small amounts of money in entrepreneur’s projects in some of the poorest parts of the world can be transformational. Many Clubs either support Lend with Care currently or have plans to do so.

Listening to Dr Emma Thornton talk about how they created Shoe Box Fairies to sprinkle happiness to those who need it most, made me think of how this busy young Mother and GP finds the time to look after the most vulnerable in her local area. Emma and her team are totally awesome.

We as Soroptimists are determined to change the world and to **Rise Up and Roar** about the important impact of the work we do to improve the lives of women and girls at home and abroad and this was the theme that ran right through our conference. I believe it worked.

Thank you to my wonderful conference committee for their connections, hard work, commitment and inspiration. Also most importantly thank you for supporting the conference which I hope you enjoyed.

There is a quote that springs to mind when thinking about our conference and Soroptimist generally; ***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*** Margaret Mead.

Rise Up and Roar!!

