

Autumn 2013

Article published in *Somerset Life* in February 2013, referring to the Love-Love Me Not Campaign posters promoted by our club.

Realising what domestic abuse is

Many victims of domestic abuse do not realise their relationship is abusive until they get out of it.

A new campaign has now launched to show people what makes a relationship abusive, rather than just unhappy.

A poster is being distributed throughout North Somerset by Soroptimist International, a group which works to transform the lives of women and girls worldwide.

Louise Branch, North Somerset Council's domestic abuse officer, said: "Many people in abusive relationships don't realise they are being abused until after they have left, or at a point of crisis. This is especially true if they have not been hit."



rather than recognising that they are being abused and seeking help to leave, or at least keep themselves safe."

Cathy (not her real name) knows firsthand how this feels. She said: "I never knew anything different, I thought my relationship was normal."

"When someone said to me 'you are in an abusive relationship' I laughed and said 'I'm not, he doesn't hit me.'"

"Abusers will also find fault with their partner and tell them that they are the cause of all the unhappiness in the relationship."

"This encourages those living with abuse to blame themselves and to consistently try to repair the relationship,

As time went on, Cathy realised something was wrong but didn't know what.

"It was like walking on egg shells and I tried so hard to please him but he found fault with everything I did."

"I couldn't tell my family or friends. I was too embarrassed and wondered whether they would believe me. He never liked me seeing anyone outside our relationship."

"I was reading an article one day when suddenly the light went on and I thought that it was my story. I got in touch with a domestic abuse worker and she explained everything to me."

"You just don't see it when you are in it - you are just trying to survive for yourself and children."

**Letter to Weston-super-Mare Mercury
Newspaper**

SKIRTING SCIENCE

In an article on page 19 of the Weston Mercury of July 18th Weston College refers to its participation in Skirting Science at Broadoak Mathematics and Computing College. Readers of the Mercury may be interested in more information about this event.

Skirting Science is the brainchild of the women's service club Soroptimist International of Weston-super-Mare and has taken place annually since 2009. Its aim is to interest girls in science and expand their ideas about what science can do and how relevant it is to everybody; also to demonstrate what exciting careers there are in science. On one day people from academia and industry present interactive workshops to year 9 schoolgirls from all over North Somerset and beyond. For 4 years Skirting Science took place at Hans Price Academy then this year it moved to Broadoak College. Some of the topics covered this year were Build your own Robot, Body Armour, the Chemistry of Perfume, Plane Cabin Design and Nanomaterials.

Feedback from girls, teachers and workshops is always positive and now Soroptimist clubs in other parts of the country are also putting on Skirting Science days. It has attracted the interest of eminent physicist Heather Williams who also works towards getting more girls into science with her Sciencegrlluk website.

In 2011 Skirting Science achieved recognition at the International Convention of Soroptimist International - it was named Best Project in the world – and there are 90,000 members in 3,000 clubs worldwide. So Soroptimists in Weston started something of which the town should be proud and indeed the Town Council and North Somerset Council have supported us over the 5 years. Thank you, Weston College, for drawing attention to Skirting Science!

*Melanie David
Skirting Science committee, Soroptimist
International of Weston-super-Mare*

**November 2012 in Grove Park
Remembrance Day**



Melanie presenting a petition to our local MP,
John Penrose



A day at the National Memorial Arboritum Near Burton

Members of SI Weston-super-Mare attended the bulb planting. 160 Soroptimists, friends and family turned out to plant 5,0000 bulbs in the War Widow's Wood.



In Sylvia's memory

Vera Stephens was a member and President of SI Weston-super-Mare, who moved to Chesterfield a few years ago. Vera visited the National Memorial arboritum and put a cross in the Soroptimist Garden, in memory of Sylvia who died in 2012.



Vera's words:

There are many gardens in memory of lost service personnel and civilians so I took the opportunity of putting a cross in the Sorops garden in memory of Sylvia. It was nice to sit in a peaceful place and remember happy days with her.



Friendship weekend with SI Abenraa of Denmark



**Visit of a cider
brewery in Somerset**

Annual lunch

Regional President Caroline Chugg with
President Ann of Weston-super-Mare
with our Guest speaker, Michelle Terry.



Annual lunch

Our Danish guests singing
some Danish songs.

At Ronnie's
President Ann presenting our gift to
Herdis





Michelle Terry

Michelle is the daughter of Mandy and Terry and was our Guest Speaker at our Annual Lunch.

Michelle moved to Weston with her family in 1984 and joined Mendip Green School before going on to St. Martins, Priory and then Broadoak Sixth Form where she was Head Girl.

She joined Small Fry Junior Theatre Group at the age of seven and was involved in a host of productions with the group until she went to Cardiff University where she gained an Honours Degree in English.

Whilst with Small Fry she followed a wide range of LAMDA courses and took part in many drama festivals. It was during this time that she developed her passion for acting and she owes a great debt of gratitude to the Sherwood family who organized the group. Her ability was evident throughout this period and she achieved many successes at a host of events including “Best Actress” regionally. She was also the youngest ever person, at the time, to win a place with the National Youth Theatre only two weeks after her fourteenth birthday.

From Cardiff University Michelle went to RADA spending three years honing her craft and achieving another BA into the bargain. This led to her first role as Edith, the maid, in “Blithe Spirit” with the Peter Hall Company. A wonderful start to a glittering career in the theatre in roles for the Royal Shakespeare Company, The National Theatre, The London Globe, the Donmar Warehouse and The Royal Court Theatre where she was nominated for and won an Olivier Award for Best Supporting Actress in “Tribes”.

As far as Weston is concerned Michelle, in collusion with Ralph Little, truly put Weston-super-Mare on the map and on the screen with “The Café”. The show really made Weston look good as testified by the hoards of visitors that came to the town during the filming of the second series to enjoy the sea air and the film set.

Fashion show 2012



Report of PROGRAMME ACTION COMMITTEE 2012/13

By Melanie David

Once again the three PA activities – Awareness, Advocacy and Action

AWARENESS

We had a number of speakers this year on Programme Action topics:

June 19 – 2 representatives of *Crossroads young carers* group

July 3 – Rose Moriba telling us in intimate detail about *Female Genital Mutilation*

Oct 16 – Amy Cartledge from Target *Ovarian Cancer* – depressing but positive

Jan 22 – a few members heard Ian Fraser talk about the *WsM Foodbank*

March 19th – David Dales talking about *Trafficking*

In addition:-

June 20 – Mandy & Ronnie attended a meeting about the merging of health and care services in North Somerset

March 8 – Ronnie & I attended a meeting in Bristol about Mary's Meals, heard its founder, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow speak most impressively and watched a new film – Child31.

There is no doubt that sometimes the awareness raised is that problems are too big or complex or ethnically based for us to do much about, but this is what we have done:

ADVOCACY

Trafficking – early in the year correspondence continued with John Penrose and Damian Green about this topic. In October at the SIGBI conference in Belfast there was a demonstration outside the conference hall when the traffic was stopped as Soroptimists stood in silence on a busy highway carrying Stop The Traffik banners. Ann K, Sue K and I were present.

Malala – the schoolgirl who was shot in Pakistan – in November we presented a letter to John Penrose asking him to keep up pressure on the Pakistani govt to educate all girls. We also signed up to the petition that Gordon Brown was presenting to the Pakistan President.

Join me on the Bridge – On March 8th 8 members met again on the bridge at Winscombe and, over tea and coffee, lobbied passersby about Violence against Women, International Women's Day and the origins of Join me on the Bridge. We also provided some succour to a homeless man.

ACTION

Skirting Science – July 13 – our 4th successful event. This year there was the added excitement of a first – microneedles being manufactured for the first time outside of a research laboratory.

Mark Nelson set up the Skirting Science website www.skirtingscience.wordpress.com

This year Solihull held their second Skirting Science event. While other clubs have shown an interest, none have yet taken the plunge.

This year at our Christmas dinner we entertained Diana Redding, who had set up Skirting Science Ltd for us in order to trademark the name, and were able to thank her for her efforts. Shelagh has now taken over responsibility for sorting the accounts and communicating with Companies House when necessary.

International Literacy Day/ Kori Project – in August we started delivering books to Rose Moriba to send to her village in Sierra Leone. These were rejected science textbooks from Hans Price initially but this is ongoing with other books being added. Rose is having a library built there to be called after Sandy Raffan, Johanna's late husband. Anne Graham has been doing a sterling job delivering books in the school minibus.

The **Fundraising Committee**, under Joan's leadership organised two events aimed at children. A group of Windwhistle pupils were taken to Puxton Park on October 5th and some of the young carers looked after by Crossroads were given a Christmas party in December.

Mary's meals rucksacks project – Ronnie has taken this on and thrown herself into it. In January this year 32 rucksacks were filled and dispatched to Scotland, whence Ronnie received a certificate of thanks for 37! This is very much an ongoing project. Congratulations, Ronnie!

Maternal and Childhealth Advocacy International – on October 22nd a clothes swap was held at Ronnie's house to raise funds for this SIGBI project. £144 has been sent off.

Domestic Violence – on August 2nd £841, raised at the Ann Widdecombe evening, was handed over to the women's refuge. We continue to supply items for the Gempacs.

Love me, Love me not posters – Sue Ponting made contact with Louise Branch, Domestic Abuse Coordinator for North Somerset Council. Louise was very keen to make use of them – she has dispersed nearly 200 of them to date and also set up an article which appeared in North Somerset Life.

Foodbank – contact was made with Ian Fraser last summer and members started helping at their supermarket collections. I am delighted that Barbara has got closely involved with the foodbank now.

Knit-in – 2 members knitted at the Cancer Research Knit-in on March 14th – Ann K & Sue Bredin. The Club donated sponsorship of £20 to them.

Contact the Elderly – Mandy hosted a tea last May, as did Joan. With Soroptimist help I hosted my second tea party on March 17th, with 9 older guests. They are a delightful group.

WaterAid – Wine into Water campaign - once again members pledged to give 50p or £1 for every glass of wine imbibed between March 15th and 22nd – World Water Day. So far I have received £50

Ongoing club action –

Hospital shop, Lifeboat shop, Windwhistle school, Talking news, Cancer research UK committee, recycling – now taken over by Fran, Salvation Army – Mandy & Joan help to cook and serve food once a month.



Our two Presidents, Past and Present
On the right, Ann Kesteven
On the left, Susan Kelly