



NewsLetter

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President Susan Kelly 1st Year Year 2013-2014 (April to May)



PROGRAMME

2013

May 7th	Business meeting
May 21st	Speaker meeting - Sue Perry – "63"
June 4th	Business meeting.
June 18th	Speaker meeting - Carole Hamblin- "Lavender, the forgotten herb"***
July 2nd	Business meeting.
July 16th	Barbecue at Liz and Mike's with guests
August 20th	Visit to the National Welsh Museum
September 3rd	Business meeting.
September 17th	Dinner meeting – Old & new job talks
October 1st	Business meeting.
October 15th	Speaker meeting – Pat Hase – "A holiday diary of 1836"
November 5th	Business meeting.
November 19th	Speaker meeting – Barbara Wood – "Caring for your skin in the winter months".
December 3rd	Business meeting.
December 17th	Christmas Soiree at Melanie's with guests

2014

January 21st	Business meeting
February 4th	Business meeting
February 18th	Speaker meeting – Alison Tucker – "Somerset Governor for the Ambulance service"
March 4th	Business meeting - Reports from outside organisations
March 18th	Speaker meeting – Nigel Dando – "How to promote Soroptimists in the media".
April 1st	Business meeting – Convenor's reports
April 15th	Dinner & AGM

JUNE 20TH 2013 SKIRTING SCIENCE

Business and Speaker Meetings
 are held
 at Weston Golf Club



Soroptimist International
 Weston-super-Mare

Is involved with the following
 Local organisations

Cancer Research UK
 Domestic Abused Agencies
 Talking News for the Blind
 Contact the Elderly
 Hospital Shop
 Recycling
 RNLI
 Windwhistle School
 Weston Hospital League of Friends
 Food Bank

Get together in Malvern

June 2013

'Apple orchards blossom there and the air is like wine'
By Linda Williams

The poet, John Masefield, wrote this about the West Country a hundred years ago and it could have been written specifically about Great Malvern and its surroundings on the last day of May and the first day of June 2013.

'If you had come last weekend', the receptionist said to us when we booked in, 'it was awful!', so thank goodness we went this weekend. The weather was perfect for the 28 of us who arrived at the Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern. It should have been 30 but sadly because of Liz's illness Mike and Liz Bell were unable to join us but we were all very pleased and relieved to hear on Saturday evening that she was out of hospital and at home and we all wish her better health.

The party consisted of Soroptimists; President Sue, Sue Long, Sue Ruse, Shelagh, Mandy, Adrienne, Carole, Fran, Ann (Woolley) Melanie, Emily, Janet T and me and a number of husbands and friends. We walked and talked, ate and bet on the Derby, smiled and were beguiled by the attractions of the Three Counties and laughed.

The hotel was large and rambling and required a route map to find the bedrooms. To get from Reception to our bedroom I counted 5 lots of steps, 6 corridors, 4 doorways and 7 changes of direction!

Having said that the bed was large enough to get lost in, there were ample comfy armchairs and squashy sofas in several locations throughout the hotel to sink into, the food was substantial and good, the staff friendly and obliging and the hotel had the air of a relaxing country house retreat.

We managed to eat our way through two three course dinners, two more than adequate breakfasts, two lots of packed lunches supplied to the walkers and a two course lunch supplied to the cider samplers. Some of the party even managed to find their way to Melanie's brothers hotel in Kington to top up with a splendid Sunday lunch!

On Saturday our President had arranged a tour round Weston's Cider Farm for those who wished followed by a sampling of the products and lunch, some of us being quite surprised to receive a plate full of ham and eggs in gravy! Surprised we may have been but there were some amongst us who thought they might try ham in cider jus topped with a crispy bottomed fried egg themselves in the privacy of their own home.

The more energetic of our party took their packed lunches and took to the hills and walked and walked and walked. Others spent the day enjoying what the town and its surrounding countryside had to offer at a more leisurely pace making the most of the fine weather and the love and interest in the town provided by an 89 year old guide; that's a person not a map.

In the evening we enjoyed hospitality in the Corridor Party kindly hosted by the occupiers of the rooms at the end of the first floor and after dinner moved into the Bar in case we had forgotten what alcohol tasted like.

The Abbey Hotel in Great Malvern sits just below the main Worcester to Ledbury Road. The Malvern Hills rise up in front of it and the town slopes steeply away behind it. Great Malvern seems forgotten by the 21st century, its steep roads winding up through the town and its flights of steps scrambling down are lined with little independent shops: second hand bookshops, teasops, delis, stationers, shoeshops and clothes shops. The road above the town skirts the side of the hills giving glimpses through the trees of the most breathtaking views across the valley and passing the British Camp the site of an ancient hill fort and a starting point it for walks over the Malvern Hills

We were so fortunate to spend this weekend there in the company of friends in near perfect weather and our special thanks should go to our President Sue and her husband Wayne for all their efforts in arranging this weekend and ensuring that it all went so smoothly and offered such enjoyment to everyone who went.

Skirting Science

June 2013

Webb address: // SkirtingScience.wordpress.com



▲ Soroptimists president Sue Kelly with pupils.

Skirting Science has been held this year at Broadoak Mathematics and Computing College. More than 160 year-nine girls from all over the county took part in three of 14 available science and technology workshops.

Skirting Science has been extremely successful and the feedback from the girls and their teachers very positive.



Scientific careers to attract girls

Hannah, Polly and Ella.

AN EVENT to encourage girls to take up careers in science was held in Weston. Skirting Science was organised at Wyvern Community School and saw hundreds of youngsters attending workshops. Each girl chose three sessions to attend from the 20 on offer, which included building turbines with the Royal Navy, exploring space in a planetarium in the sports hall, designing body armour and solving a crime with forensic scientists.

The event was jointly organised by Soroptimists International Weston branch, Wyvern's science department and Weston College. Girls from years nine and 10 came from schools across North Somerset.

For more pictures visit www.westonmercury.co.uk

**Remembrance
Day
in Grove Park
November 2013**



**New members
December 2013**

Sue Osman read the vision Statement and President Sue read the Membership Statement. President Sue inducted Maureen Bezzant, Ollie Parsons and Ann Robbins into Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland.

Each Convener and Acting Chair of the committees were asked to give a brief description of their role within the club.



Gemini Services

21st January 2014

President Sue welcomed guests Clare James, Debbie Clark and Vanessa Hoare
From the charity *Chapter One* to the meeting,

As part of the club's local Programme Action we try to support Gemini Services (formerly Gemini Project) This is now under the auspices of Chapter One, Debbie Clark explained that Domestic Abuse Services has undergone a government review and are working towards a more integrated structure.

In Weston super Mare victims are taken into refuge, then, when appropriate they move on to Settlement and finally to Outreach and have the same contact person throughout to gain continuity of care.

The contract with the County Council is renewed every five years and Chapter One have again won the recent renewal. Chapter One works in partnership with the Local Authority, Alliance Homes, welfare organisations and other charities to offer training and domestic abuse awareness. Three phone lines are manned in addition to the national domestic abuse helpline. This is a free-phone number and is available 24 hours.

Chapter One run courses on topics such as parenting, self esteem, confidence and assertiveness. All levels of risk are dealt with, and referrals are taken from all over the country as may be appropriate for the victims' safety.

Vanessa spoke about the valuable work done by volunteers in safe houses. A lovely card was given to the club, made by Emily aged 10 who had been in the refuge over Christmas. Volunteers are needed for other things, often transport is required to move furniture which has been donated, they are always in need of household goods and appliances, kitchenware, cutlery, bedding and towels - everything needed to re-home a family. They work with local charities including Foodbank. Some victims who have been given refuge have survived and volunteer their time to give something back after having been helped.

Vanessa gave out leaflets explaining their work and the support network. Government cuts have hit the service hard, they have lost three full time staff in the last six years and yet are working with more people in need of care. There is only one Children's Worker in North Somerset, this post is partially funded by the 'Children in Need' charity and this financial assistance may not continue.

Vanessa and Debbie were thanked for giving up their evening, and for all the valuable work they do in the field of domestic violence.

Blankets for neonatal baby unit

Members of the club got together and knitted much wanted blankets. Over 70 blankets have been knitted and they have been taken to St Michael's Hospital in Bristol by President sue, Linda Williams and Ann Kesteven.



Mary's Meals Talk In February 2014

President Sue welcomed members and guest Peter Searle.

Mr Searle volunteers for Mary's Meals raising awareness of the work the charity does. Peter gave a few facts about poverty: hunger kills more people worldwide than any other cause, 16 million children of school age receive no education, Mary's Meals feed 650,000 children every day in Malawi alone. It costs the charity an average of £7 to feed one child for a year.

93pence in every £1 donated is spent on food.

There are 65,000 volunteers in Malawi and many more throughout the world. The food is grown by local farmers and is cooked by volunteers. This keeps cost low and involves the community. Mary's Meals do not deal with governments or the EU as this would add a burden of bureaucracy and red tape. The charity funds the building and equipment for kitchens, each on average costs £7,500.

Money is not spent on advertising. The charity works with the belief that every child has the basic right to food and education.



In order to encourage families to send their children to school MM supplies a mid-day meal, thereby relieving the family of this cost. Backpacks were later introduced to give basic educational supplies, these and their contents are all donated.

Peter showed two films, one outlining the purpose and ethos of Mary's Meals and the other following a backpack from being packed in a school in Lanarkshire via transportation and delivery to a child in a rural African primary school. MM only help children under 12 years, if they attain scholarship standard they qualify for help from authorities. Children are only fed during term time, traditionally schools close during harvest as everyone is needed on the land. Pre-school children are fed at feeding centres in many countries. The charity also funds homes for orphaned and abandoned children in Romania.

Peter said the charity produce a magazine every year and more information is on their website: www.marysmeals.org

We sent completed ruck-sacks in Feb, July & Nov, making 105 in all during 2013.



Somerset County Gazette

Thursday, March 13, 2014

somersetcountygazette.co.uk

Est 1836 - £1.20

Dozens mark International Women's Day



It was certainly a case of girl power in Taunton town centre at the weekend. Dozens of members from Soroptimist International groups across the South-West turned out in force to mark International Women's Day on Saturday. They gathered outside the Market House and were joined by Taunton Deane Mayor Libby Lisgo. Buy this photo at somersetcountygazette.co.uk/photosales or call 01823-365058. Photo Order Keywords: Soroptimists Market House

Barbara

**A dedicated volunteer,
collecting foods and
raising funds for the
Food Bank**



Charity group hits £1m in fundraising



Melanie,
on the left, second row

Melanie has been supporting Cancer research for many years.

MORE than £1million has been raised by the Weston branch of Cancer Research UK (CRUK).

The milestone comes off the back of 60 years of fundraising and was celebrated on Thursday night as Weston Football Club hosted the charity's annual knit-a-thon.

Weston Area Health NHS Trust board member

Nick Gallegos was invited along to learn some knitting techniques as dozens did their bit for CRUK.

Pictured: Di Meredith, Melanie David, Charmaine Johnson, Pat Poulson and chairman, Pat Watkins with the certificate of appreciation.

Fashion Show 2014



President Sue Kelly and the Soroptimist team with their raffle prizes.

■ GENEROUS women turned clothes into cash at a charity fashion show. The town's branch of Soroptimist International held the event at Weston Football Club in Winterstoke Road. The catwalk show was followed by a sale and a raffle, with proceeds going to help vulnerable women and girls.

Annual Lunch

At Batch Farm
March 2014



■ **WESTON SOROPTIMISTS:** Last Sunday Weston Soroptimists celebrated their club's 75th year. Held at Batch Farm members were entertained by Sidcot School choir.

Those who attended included the regional president Sue Perry, members of other clubs in this region and members of Woodspring Inner Wheel amongst others.



Programme Action Committee 2013-2014

By Melanie David

I have divided our Programme Action activity into 3 sections again this year - AWARENESS, ADVOCACY and ACTION, but one topic seemed to cover all those areas:

Reducing women's imprisonment - this project was set up by the UKPAC in collaboration with the Prison Reform Trust with the aim of gathering information relevant to their goal of reducing the time women spend in prison and making more use of Women's Centres. **Awareness** happened at the conference set up by the Bristol SI Club on Sept 9th last year where 5 club members heard several excellent speakers and found out more about Eden House, the Women's Centre in Bristol. **Action** consisted of getting questionnaires completed by the Police, the Probation service and the Health and Social Services and I thank Ann Kesteven, Shelagh Jeacocke and Susan Bredin for doing this. These documents have been forwarded to UKPAC HQ to be used to provide **Advocacy** by the Prison Reform Trust.

AWARENESS

July 8th - Ruth Thomas and I attended SI Bristol's meeting and heard more about the Big Project and the FGM song sung by a group of Somali teenage girls.

At Conference in October we heard updates on the motions passed previously on Ovarian Cancer and relationship teaching in schools.

December 2nd - President Sue and I heard Shaheen Chaudry, High Sheriff of Bristol, speak on a number of relevant topics - FGM, forced marriage, domestic violence etc.

December 3rd Business meeting - club members did a quiz on Modern Day Slavery and scored on average 34 out of 40.

January 21st - Ness Hoare and Debby Clarke from Chapter 1 updated us about changes to the Gemini project and Domestic Abuse services in this area.

February 4th - Peter Searle updated us on the Mary's Meals charity and backpacks (more later).

ADVOCACY

Anne Graham wrote to John Penrose about having a Women's Centre in Weston, but to date has not had a satisfactory reply.

Early in 2014 members signed a petition against Modern Day Slavery which was circulated by SI Stafford.

March 8th - International Women's Day - several members of the club joined other members of the Region in marching through Taunton to present a book (I am Malala) to the (female) Mayor of Taunton. Our IWD banner showed up well in the photos!

ACTION

Skirting Science - our 5th event took place on June 20th. This year we had to leave Hans Price and Broadoak Academy welcomed us with open arms and did a very good job of hosting it. We had 16 workshops and about 200 girls attending.

SI Solihull held their 3rd Skirting Science this year and Taunton held their first. Ruth Thomas, Frances Warrell and President Sue Kelly attended in Taunton and were impressed. We have picked up some workshop providers and good ideas from them. Mark Nelson sadly left the committee this year, though he is on hand for advice. Allocating the girls to workshop is going to be a challenge without him. Susan Yorkas has taken charge of the SS website and is doing a great job. Sue Ponting is in charge of publicity for the event. We are gradually making our way into social media but some of us find it very difficult. This year's event is on June 19th at Broadoak again. This should be in your diaries already!

Backpacks for Mary's Meals - Ronnie Murdin has done a great job of continuing this project. She has written a detailed report of where funds donated have come from and how they have been spent. She starts by saying: "From the launch of this project WSM Soroptimists have been very generous in supplies passed onto me for storage until packing and dispatch takes place." Ronnie has kept detailed records of monies received and spent. 13 members have donated £200 in all, of which £20 remains to be spent. Ronnie has raised nearly £200 in various ways, including raffling an England cricket shirt for £103. There remains about £57 from this, so, together with actual items there is a good foundation for continuing to make up backpacks.

94 Backpacks have been sent to Mary's Meals this year which makes a total of 131 altogether. Ronnie deserves to be congratulated on her wonderful achievement with this project.

Knitting for premature babies - President Sue set this project going with her Friday coffee mornings and a number of club members set to with a will - including novice knitter Susan L. Nearly 100 blankets have been knitted and will soon be handed over to the Maternity Hospital Matron.

See solar, Cook solar - we donated £94 to IP Ann Garvie's December 10th appeal about solar energy for Africa.

Garden of Fragrance - this continues to be tended by Janet Jones and her team of gardeners, Adrienne Parrott, Moira Garland, Shelagh Jeacocke, Janet Tancock and Danielle Helliker. They upgrade the garden all the time. There is an item now on the club website about the garden. Once again the garden won a Gold Award in South West in bloom. Congratulations to Janet and her team!(see Janet Jones' separate report)

Foodbank - Barbara Wood has become even more involved with the Foodbank (in fact I think she is running it now) and a number of club members volunteer outside different supermarkets to encourage people to donate food items. 38 tons of food were distributed to deserving people in Weston last year.

Windwhistle School - several members continue to volunteer on a Friday morning to give children one-to-one contact, help with reading etc. but more volunteers would be welcome. as a club we have decided to donate books as prizes for the most improved readers in each class at the school. This year the remainder of Rosemary Sanders bequest will be used to fund this.

Help for flooded families - in February President Sue donated £500 from fundraised money to the Somerset Community Foundation Charity. More recently we have been filling bags with toys, books and Easter eggs as gifts for affected children.

Anne Woolley organised a very successful concert in Ston Easton. At the last count about £2000 has been raised, Anne was interviewed about the concert on the Somerset Sound Radio Station.

CURRENT TOPICS

Forced Marriage/HBV - as Susan Long reported at the last meeting we are hoping to get a project going on this topic with Maliha Berridge who works with the Avon and Somerset police helping girls affected by forced marriage and HBV. We want to spread the word about dealing sensitively with this issue.

Books for Kori project - Hans Price Academy is throwing out all it's textbooks and we are hoping to catch them and deliver them to Rose Moriba to send off for her Kori project in Sierra Leone. Broadoak Academy is also going to contribute some books. President Sue has said that we can use one of Wayne's vans to collect and transport them.

In addition to the above, members continue to provide items for Gempacs, to hold tea parties for Contact the Elderly, to man the hospital shop in it's newly refurbished small-but-beautiful state and to man the RNLI shop; Love me, Love me not posters continue to trickle out.



End of Susan's 1st year
Thank you for a wonderful year