

Soroptimist International of Great Britain & Ireland

SOUTH LANCASHIRE

LEADER

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President's Message



IMAGINE the Impossible – Create the Reality – Together we are Strong – Be Bold, Think Big – these are all words from past Federation Presidents and now, “Horizons Sing” from Carwen Wynne-Howells our new Federation President who was installed at the 74th S.I.G.B.I. Federation Conference in Barbados on the 1st November this year.

The setting was just perfect, glorious blue skies, aquamarine sea and white sands, waving palms and rum punch. All this plus a conference with excellent content and inspiring speakers whose words will invigorate all who attended to perhaps extend their horizons and may be sing as they do so.

I am looking forward to the year ahead as your Regional President. Since I became a member of Soroptimist International, my horizons have extended and this is something I would wish for every woman and girl to be able to achieve.

Through education, encouragement and empowerment, we are helping women and girls throughout the world, to have things that we take for granted, such as clean water and sanitation, 2008 being the UN designated year for this – food on their table – a fair wage – a place in which to sleep safely – health care, – to be free from violence and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and independence.

Soroptimist International has given us the chance to become who we are to-day and to have experiences that we may not have been able to make alone.

Being bold, thinking big and being together to makes us strong, we are all capable of imagining the impossible and creating the reality and maybe singing about it all as we extend our horizons.

Bernadette Platt

The Ripple Effect Gala Concert

FRIDAY 28th November, was the date of our Ripple Effect Gala Concert which, took place at the Theatre Royal, in St Helens

The concept for the concert was brought about as a result of a remark made by Immediate Past International President, Lynn Dunning talking during her closing speech at the International Convention in Glasgow, 2007, in which she spoke about making a difference to a Third World community which would cause “A Ripple Effect.” Past Regional President Eileen, Immediate Past President Val and President Bernadette picked up on this idea. It was fitting therefore that all proceeds raised from the concert, should go to Water Aid, especially as 2008 is the UN designated year of sanitation.

Wigan Youth Jazz Orchestra entertained us for the first half of the evening, with a medley of traditional and modern music, expertly played some very talented young people, under the direction of Ian Darrington MBE.

Following the interval 52 members of The Haydock Male Voice Choir, conducted by Alan Herbert, and accompanied by Jenny Durbin, sang a variety of songs, some of a religious theme, some popular and some from Africa, sung in Zulu.



Maureen Walsh from Radio Merseyside and a member of SI Liverpool, was the compère for the evening, and we were pleased to welcome Lynn and Brian Dunning along with Mayor of St. Helens, who was accompanied by a young girl from the St. Helens Youth Project. We were also pleased to welcome Simon Knight, Chief Executive of Water Aid North West together with Diana Bailey.

Generous donations of raffle prizes were received, namely a gold bracelet from Beaverbrooks the Jewellers, toileteries from Tyrers of St. Helens, a vase from SI Manchester, a knitted doll from SI Bootle, and vouchers from SI Ramsbottom, SI Southport and SI Oldham. The total sum raised from the concert was £2,500 and the organisers would like to thank all members of the region who supported this event.

OUT AND ABOUT IN THE REGION . . .

RAMSBOTTOM

Members of SI Ramsbottom attended the launch of the North West Air Ambulance Calendar at Cloud 23, Hilton Hotel, Manchester.

The photograph shows members selling the Calendar accompanied by Paul Crone and Air Ambulance volunteers. Ramsbottom Club has sold over £1200 worth of Calendars.



One of the Programme Action Projects this year, is to work with a local Primary School supporting the school and at the same time promoting Soroptimism in the Community. President Barbara Hallam attended a band rehearsal taken by the Headmaster, Mr Mark Golding, & presented new music stands funded by SI Ramsbottom. The photograph shows President Barbara, the Headmaster and 3 band members (aged 8 and 9 years) with some of the music stands.



Bury Soroptimists have been busy with many social and fund raising events. As this is our 65th. Anniversary year President Joan has gone all out to make it a special year with extra events to raise as much as we can for an array of local and international charities.

The Annual Dinner of our club was held on Friday 10th. October at the Last Drop Hotel, Bromley Cross and we were pleased to welcome members from our friendship club Cirencester. Musical entertainment

WIGAN

There was an oriental flavour in Wigan on 13th September when the club celebrated an Evening of Indian culture, food and dance.



A fashion show and Indian Bollywood style dances were presented by the pupils of Broomfield Academy. It was truly an East meets West style with authentic Indian food, which enhanced the atmosphere of Friendship and mix of Cultures

The club raised almost £1500, for Local, National and International charities. More is still expected as donations are still being received and a final calculation will be available possibly after Christmas.

From the Editor:

Thank you to all the clubs who have sent articles for the newsletter - so much information it made an extra sheet!

To all Soroptimists who did not attend the Ripple Concert - there are still some souvenir programmes available which cost £1 each. *Please buy one and help us with this Water Aid project.*

MANCHESTER

SI Manchester bestowed a prize for the voice at the Junior School of the Royal Northern College of Music some years ago in memory of a Past President, Helen Latto.

On July 5th, President Elect Sue Underwood and Yvonne Mullen accepted the invitation to present the prize. The School had had two half-day concerts in May and June when all disciplines and ages had performed, so they did not have the opportunity to hear the prize-winners that day but, even better, they had tea with them and in chatting learned of their backgrounds and plans for the future.



This year our prize was awarded to Sean Boyce, a tenor who will be going up into the College in September. He has already sung in the chorus for one of the operas and will be at Gawsworth for Yeomen of the Guard. The Principal says he has a superb voice. Sadly on 5th July, he had a very sore throat! This is the first time the prize has been awarded to a young man, one with a charming personality and his feet firmly on the ground.

We shall be looking for his name in future RNCM Opera programmes.

BURY

was provided by Affetside Choir and a birthday cake was cut to mark the occasion.

A Flower Demonstration with a Potato Pie Supper, Parkin and Treacle Toffee was held to celebrate Bonfire Night with a bang! The first flower arrangement was made to resemble the flames and colours of a bonfire, many more followed which were raffled off in aid of President Joan's charity - osteoporosis. A representative of the North West Osteoporosis Group

being present. The event raised £260 and a happy and enjoyable time was had by all.

On the 12th November a 'Shoe and Things' Party was held at president Joans home to raise funds for the 'smile train' an organisation which operates on badly deformed cleft palates and lips of children in the developing world. All budding Shoe, Bag and Jewellery Collectors were in their element and sufficient was raised to pay for the operation and after care for such a child.

... WITH NEWS FROM THE CLUBS

SOUTHPORT

On October 6th we held our annual Friendship Night. We began by lighting candles to our friendship link clubs around the world and several members read out news and greetings from them. This was followed by a buffet supper, wine and



plenty of chatting! After the meal we were entertained by singer Nula, on the guitar, with a medley of songs from around the world.

Several of our members were also busily preparing to go to the International Conference in Barbados. So on Friday October 24th the group of delegates held a 'Bon Voyage' cheese and wine evening. This also doubled as a fund raiser for the 'Talents' competition President Margaret Davies has set up. For this we have all been given £5 and asked to make it grow.



October 25th saw us celebrating the 50th Anniversary of SSHA (Southport Soroptimist Housing Association) at Baverstock House. The SSHA Committee provided an excellent lunch and this was followed by cutting the celebratory cake, which was delicious. The Association was initially founded with the aim of providing secure accommodation for 'elderly ladies of reduced means' and many Soroptimists worked very hard to purchase two houses to be converted into flats. Today, of course, because of current legislation we cannot just rent to the latter but both houses continue to provide safe havens in pleasant surroundings.

CROSBY

SI Crosby members were delighted to welcome Myra Woodcock to talk about "Project Sierra: a Family and a Future" – our focus for the quadrennial 2007-2011, and a partnership with the charity Hope and Homes for Children.

Myra is our region's 'ambassador' for the project, and has first-hand experience of life in Sierra Leone. She spoke about the conditions in which many people live, about their struggle to bring up their families, and about the long-term effects of the conflict on individuals and their communities. Basic equipment in schools – paper and pencils, for example – is in short supply, if available at all. Myra never dreamed that plastic tubs (in which she packed fragile items in her suitcase) would be admired as a potential resource by one headteacher. What else could she do, but hand them over?



In turn, SI Crosby members showed Myra the club's Baggatelles bag-making project. Income from the sale of bags this year is, at the request of President Pat Williams, bringing in money for "Project Sierra". Thanks to Myra's presentation, members are now reassured that their efforts really will 'make a difference', far away in Sierra Leone.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE

7 September 2008. A group from the Club braved the wet evening and enjoyed a "Ghost Walk" around Gorse Hall, Stalybridge.

Afterwards they enjoyed an out-door buffet of cheese and wine and all proceeds from the evening will go to President's Charities.



BOOTLE

As we are a women's organisation, Soroptimist International of Bootle have collected luxury items such as moisturiser and sachets of drinking chocolate for the female army personnel. We are working in partnership with Halewood British Legion to collect and send the gifts in shoeboxes which have been donated by TJ Hughes and will be dispatched free of charge via RAF Lyneham.

We have been assured that this is the first time women army personnel will receive items that are specifically for them and although we are not a political organisation Bootle are happy to help raise the morale of Britain's brave ladies.



A MESSAGE FROM IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT VAL



I would like to say thank you for all the warm welcomes and hospitality given to me when visiting club events in South Lancashire in the past year. I am really glad that I took office as Regional President

and cannot count the new friendships that have arisen from it.

My biggest disappointment was missing SI Oldham's Charter Dinner due to a tummy bug, especially as my club is their mother club. There were many, many special occasions and new experiences. I couldn't list them all here or choose between them, but I will cherish all those memories.

Now it's over to you, Bernadette. I wish you a happy and fruitful year and I'm sure you'll get as much out of it as I did.

Change of Insignia Lunch

On Sunday 30th November, which was a bitterly cold day in Cheshire, approximately 70 members of our region were transported to the warm climate of Barbados which many had left only a few weeks earlier.

We had all gathered together at the Statham Lodge Hotel for a lunch organised by Past President Eileen, to celebrate President Bernadette's year of office.



Federation President Carwen Wynne-Howells was present to once again put the chain of office around Bernadette's shoulders and also to present a Past President's badge to Immediate Past

President, Val Moss. President Carwen also presented our Regional President Elect, Sryia Kulupana with her chain of office.

We were delightfully entertained by St. Ambrose Barlow School Steel Band who offered a warm taste of the Caribbean, whilst looking out on to a frozen lawn. Their music was excellent, although none of our members were inclined to take up limbo, especially not after having enjoyed a lunch of Barbadian Roast Pork.

It was altogether a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and many thanks go to Eileen and her team for the organisation and smooth running of the event.



Sunshine Sorooptimists



'Ode to a Road' aka Sorooptimist in Barbados

The following poem is an account of the travels of Anne Macdonald and Barbara Hulmes along with SI Bolton members Jennifer Hindshaw, Margaret Baker and President Elect Alwyn Heaton, round the Island of Barbados in a hire car, prior to the start of the Conference.

*The road, in Barbados, was bumpy and narrow
No kerbs and no lines to guide cars.
The road signs were sparse, most times none at all,
But we found our way home by the stars.*

*We set off on Monday for Harrison's Cave
And found a big lock on the gate.
We came back on Wednesday to try once again
But got there a little too late!*

*Not to be daunted, we went on a bit
To the Flower Garden, where most tourists goes (!)
But would you believe it, it happened again
The notice said, "Sorry, we're closed."*

*Jennifer drove us to east and to west
To the south and to northern coasts too.
Whilst trying to photograph waves in a cave
The sea soaked poor Alwyn right through.*

*Well dinner on Wednesday was drawing quite close.
The Almond Tree seemed to be right.
But Barbara discovered when trying to book
That the cook had the day off that night!*

*On Tuesday we'd met with a similar fate,
Our dinners seemed destined not to be.
We'd chosen and searched, then chosen again
But ended up at KFC!*

*We went for a beach walk on glistening white sands
Across coral banks, some not too wide.
But no-one had told us that this bit of beach
Could only be walked at low tide!*

*So we sat down for lunch in a rather posh place.
Tried to look 'cool' behind quiet snickers.
For nobody knew that 4 of our 5
Were sitting in rather wet knickers!*

*So conference started on Thursday, at night.
With posh frocks – and dry underwear.
We mingled and networked and behaved at our best
'Cos Barbados's PM was there.*

*On Friday we started our conference proper
And welcomed our flags, twenty eight.
Alwyn made a great start by shopping at break
And returned to the conference hall – late.*

*It was AGM time, the constitutional kind.
Jen and Barbara went off to vote.
We debated the motions, some serious stuff
So no laughs in this verse you'll note.*

*Then back to the hotel to put on our frocks
A Caribbean bash was put on for us.
We calypso'ed and limbo'ed and drank lots of rum
And conga'ed our way back to the bus.*

*On Saturday one of our notable group
Was up on the stage, Anne by name,
With PMs and Lords and Ladies of note
But soon back to earth, just the same.*

*'Tween meetings our Alwyn went shopping again,
Returned late again, oh my dear.
Took two of us with her, led us both astray (!)
And she'll be our leader next year!*

*Our glorious banquet looked really quite swell
But the insignia change ran late again.
We had all the toasts first then the first course arrived
But by then it was twenty past ten.*

*So at midnight no tea or coffee'd been served
No puddings made some of us dour.
For Barbadians measure their time by the day
And not like we do, by the hour.*

*On our last full day we boarded a yacht
And snorkelled with turtles, no sinking.
A couple of old wrecks in the water as well;
The metal kind, not what you're thinking!*

*And so it all ended, our Caribbean trip
Of sun, fun and friendship no lack.
If Harrison's Cave will stay open for us
We promise we'll all venture back.*

Margaret Baker
November 2008

SOUTH LANCASHIRE LEADER SUPPLEMENT

ROCHDALE

A TWIN TOWN CELEBRATION IN BIELEFELD

On October 11th, 2008, Soroptimist International of Bielefeld celebrated their 50th Anniversary.

S.I. Bielefeld and S.I. Rochdale have been Friendship Clubs since 1959 when Mrs Sybil England, still a member of the Rochdale Club, first set up the link as a result of the Town Twinning of Rochdale with Bielefeld in 1954. Twenty six years later, in 1985, Mrs England visited Bielefeld and since then one of their members, Friede Poenighausen, visited Rochdale several times.



Now, twenty three years later, S.I. Rochdale received an invitation to share in the celebration of S.I. Bielefeld's Golden Anniversary. As a result, accompanied by her husband Canon Alan Shackleton, Glenys Shackleton, secretary of the Rochdale Club, had the privilege of representing S.I. Rochdale.

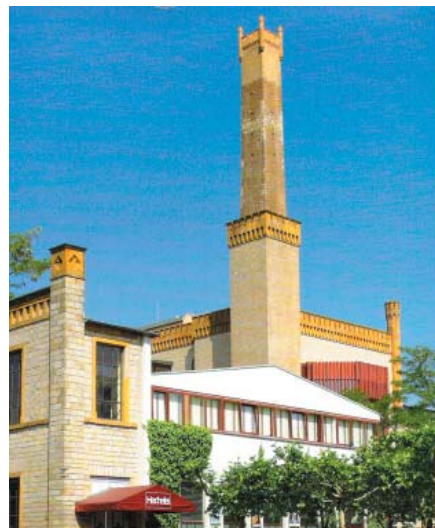
Four other Friendship Clubs were represented: another from S.I.G.B.I

– S.I. Enniskillen, Northern Ireland; S.I. South Pacific – Kapiti Coast in New Zealand; S.I. Europe – Graz in Austria and Emmen in Holland. Also present were Dr. Hanne von Schaumann-Werder President of S.I. Germany, and the Federation President of Soroptimist International of Europe, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen with her husband.

Together with the members of S.I. Bielefeld, and representatives of all the Clubs in that area of Germany, the people attending numbered approximately a hundred.

The programme commenced on the Friday evening with a 'get together' at the Bielefeld President's home with plenty of time for conversation and an enjoyable meal at which Glenys presented the club with a message from the Mayor of Rochdale, Councillor Robin Parker.

On the Saturday morning a walk had been arranged around the beautiful old part of the city in glorious



autumnal colour and weather. This was followed in the afternoon by the official welcomes and congratulations and then there was a lengthy discussion by four community and academic representatives on the subject of life in 2058 particularly as it would apply to women.

All this was held in the Ravensberger Spinnerei, an old renovated textile factory, now used for educational and cultural purposes, but which underlines the original spur for Bielefeld's twinning with Rochdale. In fact, in 1978, a part of the surrounds was designated Rochdale Park to mark 25 years of Twinning.

The celebrations culminated in a Dinner, for a hundred members of Soroptimists and friends, in a local restaurant, during which there were speeches and presentations of gifts from the Friendship Clubs.

It is sixty years since WWII ended, and thoughts were given to building links with what had been, hostile nations. The various twinning links extended this concept in order to facilitate encounters across different parts of the world, and this continuing contact has been a vital element in maintaining world understanding. Groups, like Soroptimist International have a significant role to play.

The birthday celebrations in Bielefeld cemented old friendships, and created new ones. Such developments are essential for securing that mutual understanding which makes conflict unacceptable.

MORE NEWS FROM CLUBLAND

ST HELENS

Inventive members of Soroptimist International St Helens have recently enjoyed a very uplifting experience as a result of wanting to celebrate BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH.

An appeal to all their bosom pals to donate their unwanted bras proved a huge success.



Badly fitting bras, ones they didn't like anymore, bras which are either too small or too big but especially grey ones were

collected to help draw attention to the Cancer Awareness Month.

How uplifting it is to boast that we collected 1162 BRAS, weighing in at 80 kg. Some huge, some tiny, some sexy but all valuable to our collection, which raised £160.

Pictured is our President Alison Tickle at the base of our Bra Pyramid with many hundreds besides which will all be recycled. The good bras will go to Africa and the others for recycling. The money raised goes into the Breast Cancer Awareness fund. Many thanks to all who donated their much loved precious hoisting equipment.

Proud members of Soroptimist International St Helens celebrated their 65th Birthday with a splendid dinner at Houghwood Golf Club at the beginning of November.

President Alison Tickle gave a warm welcome to her guests pictured here.

Guest speakers Jane Dearden and Alan Ashton spoke of their work with Carers UK and Crossroads caring for Carers joined with the Princess Royal Trust and of the huge progress the organisations have made since they began.



Crossroads UK was started by St Helens Soroptimist Joan Hesketh, assisted by June Wilson and Edith Else in 1986 and is a thriving business now.

WIDNES

ATTRIBUTE TO DOREEN CLARE 29.08.1934 - 25.09.2008

A Soroptimist for 24 years and Club President in 1989-90, we will miss Doreen greatly. She spread love and friendship wherever she went,

During her lifetime she attended infant school at Chestnut Lodge, moving to Simms Cross in her Junior years. She then moved on to Wade Deacon Grammar School and from there on to college. In her college years she studied Home Economics and became a "Domestic Goddess" at Fairfield and St. John Fisher.

She then moved on to motherhood raising Susan and Joanne and later became grandmother to Zoe and Tom. She was extremely proud of her family and delighted that Zoe won a place at Chethams School of Music in Manchester, where she is now studying. In her lifetime she was a Girl Guide, a Ranger and a Guide Captain in Hough Green.

Doreen was a member of Widnes Flower Club and the Widnes Historical Society, and she helped at Abbeyfield every Monday afternoon. She was also a Justice

of the Peace for many years. More recently she was a founder member of the Bridge Quilters.

In her Soroptimist life, she was an enthusiastic member of the Social Committee many times, and a member of the Caring Committee, an aspect which carried over to her personal life. In fact she had been a member of most of the committees at some time or another and she took a great interest in the "Sunnybank" project.

Doreen was also a great lifelong friend of mine. We had known each other for 70 years and I cannot remember falling out with her at all. To end this tribute to Doreen, the following quotation sums up her whole attitude to life.

*"Good friends are hard to find,
difficult to leave
and impossible to forget."*

The final tribute to Doreen was in St. Luke's Church on Friday 3rd October, when people from all spheres of the community filled the church to pay their respects to this remarkable woman.

Audrey Hunt

OLDHAM

On 1st December our Speaker at the Club meeting was Jenny Taylor who is in charge of the Oldham Family Crisis Centre.

Jenny gave an horrendous account of some of the circumstances in which women come to the refuge in Oldham and we were all shocked to hear that only one quarter of the applicants can be accepted due to lack of space and resources.

It was however heartening to hear that a large number of women had eventually regained their independence, been rehoused and were once again living normal lives after receiving help from Jenny and her colleagues.

We have been collecting items for the Centre all year and have been joined in this project by many of the libraries in the area. The interest came when we took our "Roadshow" round the borough earlier in the year. Some of our new found friends joined us last Monday and after Jenny's talk we all enjoyed coffee, and mince pies and of course the proverbial chit chat.

Our club is very committed to this project and we are looking at ways to be of further assistance in 2009.