



President's Message



I AM SURE the same observation has been made by every Regional President of South Lancashire, but I cannot believe how quickly time has passed. It is eleven months since I took office in Barbados and I now enter the 'home straight' with only one month left until the Cardiff Conference.

I have had a wonderful year and this next conference, which will celebrate 75 years since S.I.G.B.I. was established in July 1934 at the International Convention in Paris, will be the perfect ending to twelve exciting and interesting months and not an extra ounce gained in weight after all the Charter Dinners eaten and enjoyed. I have been welcomed with much warmth and friendship by every one on all occasions.

In July this year together with six other members of the region, I visited Amsterdam for the European Congress. It was a superb three day event, the theme of which was 'Soroptimists Go for Water'. The speakers were excellent,

covering the topics of clean drinking water and sanitation, a human right for all. The weather could have been kinder but we did not let it get in the way of our enjoying the lovely city of Amsterdam. We met old friends and made many new ones as you always do on such occasions and left with many happy memories of our visit.

The next time I meet my European sisters will be at the International Convention in Montreal July 2011. It is a good feeling to know that you have friends in so many countries of the world and it is belonging to an international organisation like ours that allows this. It is with this in mind that I would add to the mantra, 75 years of service, 75 years of campaigning, 75 years of making a difference, an extra one, 75 years of friendship.

As I have just stated, only one month left to enjoy with visits to five more clubs in October. I would like to thank the officers of the regional executive committee for all their help and support during my year as your president and I wish President Elect, Syria Kulupana, a happy and successful year of office as President of South Lancashire.

Bernadette Platt

Ladies' Day

ON A GLORIOUS SUMMER DAY . . . one of the few that there have been this year, members of South Lancashire Region met at Formby Hall Golf Club for lunch and a spot of retail therapy.



With stalls ranging from cosmetic, and skin care products to jewellery and pashminas, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

After a very enjoyable

lunch several of our ladies modelled the fantastic choice of headgear as supplied by "Get Ahead Hats", as the photographs show.

President Bernadette had asked that the proceeds raised at this event were to be given to The Donkey Sanctuary in Droylsden, where Immediate Past President Val Moss is a volunteer with Riding for the Disabled. Val brought along a presentation showing the very worthwhile work that is done by this organisation, and the enjoyment it gave the children when riding the animals.

The sum of £800 was raised from the day and this will go towards buying new saddles for the donkeys. President Bernadette urged all clubs to spend £15 per year to sponsor a donkey.



OUT AND ABOUT IN THE REGION . . .

OLDHAM

On Friday 7th August, the Friendship Link between Oldham and Calgary was further cemented by the invitation to our President, Eunice Garside to the home of Catherine Low one of the members of the Calgary Club.

It was a very enjoyable evening shared with two husbands as well. Eunice took with her, an Oldham banner as well as a book about the town. She also presented a lovely water carafe and glass which may be used at meetings, to the most senior member of the club, Margaret Baxter, who joined the Calgary Chapter in 1952.

Roberta Theaker, who arranged the get together, presented Eunice with a calendar of Calgary, with photos of their beautiful city.



BURY

We held an American night on July 1st to tie in with Independence Day and because of President Sue's connections with America.

It was a night of good fun, good company including guests of two of our club members who came from America and Australia. Thirty seven people attended and several wore U.S.A. T-Shirts, cowboy hats and denim skirts.

We held an American style raffle, completed a number of themed quizzes and indulged in our favourite pastime which of course, is eating. Short work was made of chilli and rice followed by New York Cheesecake, and £350 was raised for our President's charities and for our local Hospice.

Two of our members have recently had the great honour of attending a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.

Margaret Robinson attended on the fourteenth of July for services to the community she was followed the next week on the twenty first of July by Kath Ellis who was chosen to represent South Lancashire Magistrates Association. We are very proud of them both.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE

Club members of Soroptimist International of Ashton-under-Lyne, along with their mothers, daughters and granddaughters filled 31 Comfort boxes for service personnel based in Afghanistan.

Karen Webster, founder of the Charity Support our Soldiers, (SOS) travelled from their Headquarters in Bingley, Yorkshire, on Tuesday 1st Sept to collect the boxes before forwarding them to Service Personnel who have requested a box.

Karen explained to the Club how the Charity evolved and how vital it to keep morale high. "Just the idea that a stranger has gone to all the trouble to choose a box full of interesting and welcome luxuries gives a Service woman or man such a boost."



Members of SI A-u-L with their boxes

MANCHESTER

We cannot imagine what it must be like to be so hungry that you cannot sleep for the gnawing pain, but this is a very real problem in poor countries.

This dilemma is being addressed in several countries by Scottish International Relief via a campaign to set up school feeding projects in communities where hunger and poverty prevent children from gaining an education. The campaign is known as "Mary's Meals" and it began in 2002 in Malawi by feeding 200 orphaned children. Today 330,000 children receive Mary's Meals, mostly in Malawi but there are projects in 13 other countries in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe.

When Mary's Meals set up the BACK PACK PROJECT we, at S.I. Manchester, decided to join in and see what we could do to help. It was quite simple really. All we had to do was find back packs or school bags, one per child, and fill them with items such as exercise books, pencils,

rulers etc and T-shirts, shorts and sandals. We had endless fun looking for bargains, though, as the charity said, "second hand is good".

Competition flourished. Some of us scoured the shops for notebooks, pens, erasers etc, whilst others found T-shirts,



shorts and shoes in a variety of sizes. Other items needed were hand towels, soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste. Providing a spoon for each child will enable them to eat the meal provided by the school each day.

The goodies came in thick and fast, and eventually a team was selected to fill the bags. They set about the job with great enthusiasm and after a phone call to the charity, they collected the bags for transport to Africa. For us it was simple, fun and not even very expensive, but it might already be making a difference to some child who doesn't have to go to bed hungry any more.

SOUTHPORT

The August break was highlighted by two events. The first was a well supported 'Strawberry Tea' and the second was an outing to Cartmel Races. The latter was organised by President Gill Ribis and was greatly enjoyed by all who attended despite the poor weather. At our first meeting after the summer break we welcomed Gay Rhodes, a renowned Speaker and Communications' Tutor. Her amusing talk was entitled 'A Certain Age' and most of us could easily identify with her wry observations on growing older. More news from Southport in the next issue!!

... WITH NEWS FROM THE CLUBS

LEIGH

S.I. Leigh & District raised over £800 at their Spring Fair and will be sending £600 of this to Project Sierra a family and a future. In the picture Wendy Harding and Pat Quigley with a Waterfields Chocolate Bunny. Other stalls included, jewellery, toiletries, chocolate, plants, this was a great team effort.



WIGAN

Save Our Skeletons

Osteoporosis of the bones and the treatment of resulting complications produces over 200,000 fractures both in males and females at the cost at least £940m every year

As there were no services for osteoporosis in Wigan Borough, PAC (SI WIGAN) undertook a project to raise money for this purpose and by the end of 2008 had collected approximately £11,000. Between starting the project and raising some funds, money was made available to the PCT by the Health Authority to buy the DEXA Scanner, which would detect osteoporosis and a basic scanning service could be started, so again we discussed our project with the Community Health Care Trust, part of the PCT, and it was decided to use our funds to employ a nurse to raise awareness in schools, GPs surgeries and old peoples' organisations, and to check on care of patients who had had fragility fractures, especially Colles' fracture of the wrist, and make sure they were being investigated for osteoporosis and appropriately treated. This has been agreed with the club and Community Health Care and we hope will start the service quite soon in 2009.



CROSBY

Poetry, a glass or two of wine, and wide-ranging conversation – SI Crosby once again celebrated United Nations' International Literacy Day.

Members shared their favourite poems. The deceptive simplicity Michael Rosen's "Little Rabbit Foo Foo" for children – about a bully-boy bunny who goes about bopping everyone on the head – served as an introduction to many different elements of language and reading enjoyment. It provoked considerable discussion.

The evening's selection included many old favourites: familiar they might be but there is always something new to discover when they are read out loud. Less well-known poems included Judith Beveridge's "The Saffron Picker" and Adrian Mitchell's "The Oxford Hysteria of English Poetry". Items by Brian Patten, Alan Bennett, Leo Marks, William Wordsworth and Joyce Grenfell were also given an airing.

SI Crosby's celebration raised £93 for Book Aid International, the charity that promotes literacy, primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, in order to help people realise their potential. Its watchword is "Books Change Lives". Generous support from the UK book trade enables it to supply over half a million high quality new books every year to libraries, schools and other institutions in the region. A quiz on Book Aid International's work enabled Crosby's members to think hard about the fundamental part that books and literacy play in people's lives.



STOCKPORT

70th Anniversary Project.

We can all be proud of ourselves! All the effort that was put in last year to be able to present a really big cheque for our special sanctuary room at the Stockport Police Station has proved so worthwhile.

We expect that the room will be ready soon, then we will hope to have media recognition which was sadly lacking when the cheque was presented.



At the Regional Meeting in July presentations were given by four clubs about a specific project. The one given by Liz was really superb and Stockport won by a huge margin. We were surrounded by people giving their congratulations. The rose bowl was presented at the New Members and Awards Lunch on September 20th.

Liz McConnell is pictured accepting the trophy from Sue Challoner at the Awards Lunch.

Congratulations to SI Stockport.



OBITUARY



It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of Lynn Dunning. Despite adversity Lynn achieved the highest accolade any Soroptimist could wish for; by becoming International President in July 2005 and was known throughout the world for her work on clean water and sanitation. She will be sadly missed by everyone who knew her, especially the members of her home club SI Ramsbottom and all of South Lancashire Region.

ST HELENS MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP

On Sunday 20th September, new members of clubs in the Region were welcomed by Regional Officers to The Wrightington Hotel. The guest speaker was Sue Challoner a Federation Programme Director, who presented the awards.

The Regional Rosebowl was won by President Bernadette's home club St. Helens for their presentation on the Can Do Campaign.

The Programme Action Award was presented to SI Stockport for their work on the special sanctuary room at Stockport Police Station and finally the the presentation of the Bowls award which once again went to St. Helens

The final took place a week earlier, on a glorious day, and St. Helens and Liverpool were the last teams standing in a knock out event and the saints won. The Regional President spent the day serving teas and coffee from the club house kitchen - which she informs me is the correct and proper place for a regional president - but emerged in time to don the chain of office and present the bowls trophy to her own club at the end of a wonderful day.



Hazel Landon of Widnes won the individual trophy and is seen here with her son - who appears to be quite overawed by the occasion.

CONGRATULATIONS to all the winners, President Bernadette must be feeling extremely proud of her own club who have supported her valiantly during her year of office.

ST HELENS

Lord Leutenant Speaks at Charity Lunch

President Barbara Thompson and members of Soroptimist International St Helens welcomed Dame Lorna Muirhead DBE as their guest speaker at their annual charity lunch last Sunday. Dame Lorna is Lord Lieutenant of Merseyside.

Dame Lorna also serves on the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

The event held at Houghwood Golf Club, Crank - St Helens raised approximately £1600 in aid of local charities in and around St Helens. Dame Lorna gave an hilarious account of her career as a midwife at the Liverpool Maternity Hospital, Oxford Road, and as a special thank-you was presented with a cheque for £500 for the Midwives Benevolent fund.



Pictured are: Barbara Thompson President SI St. Helens, Dame Lorna Muirhead and Bernadette Platt President South Lancashire Region.

EUROPEAN FEDERATION CONGRESS

Five members of SI Widnes, together with Regional President Bernadette and Past Regional President Eileen Griffiths, were amongst the SIGBI delegates attending the SI Europe Congress entitled "Soroptimists Go For Water", which was held in Amsterdam during the second week in July.

800 Soroptimists converged on The Muzeiktheater in Amsterdam to listen to keynote speakers and focus on the vital subject of Water. There were also several presentations showing the impressive work that

clubs in the European Federation are doing in connection with Water.



For the Widnes members, the highlight of the congress, was the opportunity to spend some time with their friends from SI Bourgas, in Bulgaria with whom the Widnes club have a friendship link. At the first meeting the Widnes members were able to hand over a cheque for £400 to SI Bourgas, which Widnes had

collected to provide a new tumble drier for the Children's home in Sredets.

It was a time to renew old friendships, make new ones and enjoy meeting Soroptimists from all over Europe, whilst focusing on the serious issues of the Conference. An enjoyable feature was the inclusion of musical interludes, where delegates were encouraged to take part in the audience participation which was enjoyed by all who entered into the spirit of the occasion.

