



## President's Message



IT WAS a joyous occasion that Saturday night in Cardiff when I received the chain of office as your new Regional President – not because I was 'elevated' in my status but because of the atmosphere of great camaraderie and sisterhood.

In the coming year I hope to work more closely with clubs and try to improve the connections between individual members, clubs and the

Region. I hope I will be able to visit every club and meet the members, especially those who do not regularly attend the Regional Meetings. I am very interested in learning more about our clubs and their local history, as so many of them have been serving their local communities for sixty or seventy years or more.

Be alert to the events in your locality as well as in the world at large. Landmark events such as the Copenhagen Conference on climate change are of interest to us in many ways. Studies have shown that climate disasters adversely affect women more than men and that what is good for the climate is good for the health too. Even small committed and consistent positive change could affect global health. For example, in India, by replacing 150 million inefficient solid fuel stoves would affect the air quality by cleaner combustion that it is estimated that in a 5 year period it would reduce deaths of children under 5 years from acute lower respiratory infection by 240,000 – a massive impact.

Continue the wonderful work you do in this great region, come to the Joint Regional conference in May to hear about Victory from Adversity and enjoy some flavour of Sri Lankan culture and sing together for Soroptimism.

*Sriya*

## STOCKPORT SOROPTIMISTS FULFIL A DREAM

Last week saw the end of all the Soroptimists hard work and the beginning of a new phase when the Sanctuary Room at Stockport Police Station was opened by the Head of Greater Manchester Police Peter Fahy.

Members of S.I. Stockport wanted a really special project for their 70th Year in the Borough last year. They have long worked with Stockport's Refuge for women victims of domestic abuse, but they were aware of the need for somewhere



really comfortable at the Police Station for any one suffering the immediate trauma of abuse. Over the year the club raised £5,000 and in May this year a cheque for this amount was handed over and the work could begin to prepare the room that

the Stockport Police had dedicated. Now the room is ready, complete with comfortable furniture, a box stool which contains children's toys, tea and coffee making facilities, and attractive pictures on the wall.

The Chief Constable congratulated Liz McConnell (President during the 70th year) and all the Stockport Soroptimists for

their forward thinking and the amount of work that must have gone into raising enough money for this room. He said every member of his staff appreciated what has been done and it will make their task a lot easier to be able to talk to victims in such comfortable surroundings. Victims of any sort of abuse will be more assured that they are in a safe place and that the police are there to help them. Peter Fahy also said that he hoped this would be the first of many such rooms in our own area and all over the country.

Liz McConnell said that we would be planting the seed in the minds of members of Soroptimist International and she felt sure that other such rooms would follow.



The pictures show Members of Soroptimist International of Stockport with The Chief Constable Peter Fahy and Detective Sergeant Julia Bowden in the new Sanctuary Room. Julia Bowden worked with Liz McConnell in choosing the decor and furniture; and President Jane Doyle, The Chief Constable Peter Fahy along with Past President Liz McConnell opening the new Sanctuary Room.

# OUT AND ABOUT IN THE REGION . . .

## CROSBY

Members of SI Crosby have taken part in a massive local project to send a container full of goods to Honduras. They sorted, listed, packed and labelled a consignment of over 300 separate items. The biggest challenge was to bubble-wrap a life size statue of St Joseph, destined for the hospice's chapel.



St Joseph's Hospice Association (Jospice) is based in Thornton, near Crosby, but also supports hospices in Central and South America. Soroptimist Pat Murphy, Director of Fundraising for Jospice, visited Honduras earlier this year and was stunned by the community's deprivation and the Spartan conditions under which the hospice staff work. "I realised that lots of things that are discarded here would be really valuable there", she said. Thus was born the dream of attempting to re-equip the hospice and provide extra resources for the neighbourhood.

Cath O'Leary, the nurse-manager in Honduras, provided a wish list of medical, educational, household and other items. Pat appealed in Merseyside for the goods, plus the cash to fund a 40 foot container and its shipping costs. The response from the community was overwhelmingly speedy and generous. From hospital beds to toys, via commodes and saucepans, donations poured in. Cath had spoken to the Crosby club during her recent furlough, so members were acutely aware of the plight of the patients many of whom have developed AIDS and the work of the staff. It was no surprise, therefore, that members supported the project wholeheartedly. With Jospice staff and Soroptimists, Crosby's members eventually transported



the goods to the container; and Pat Murphy had the final and pleasurable task of locking the container doors. The containers landfall in Honduras is due before Christmas.

## OLDHAM

In October two of our long standing members Kath Walpole and Kath Barnes celebrated their Diamond Weddings, and it just so happened that it was also Kath Walpole's birthday. Kath B brought the cake and Kath W the wine and club presented both of them with a lovely planter.



In November we started on another round of Library Roadshows. Once again we are working the the local refuge and this year we are collecting basic kitchen utensils,



such as washing up bowls, dustpans, brushes, tea towels and dishcloths together with other essentials which can be given to the residents when they begin to set up a new home.

President Eunice, is pictured with Jenny Taylor from the Refuge accepting a donation from Uppermill Library.

Also in November we held our annual shoebox evening, where members join together to fill the boxes for children in Belarus. The club was delighted to welcome Carol Hartley on this occasion, a volunteer from Operation Christmas Child who spoke to us about the recipients of the boxes and made everything seem much more personal. Carol has visited Belarus on many occasions and is the patron of an orphanage over there.



## WIGAN

Three members of SI Wigan are trustees of Dias (Drop In and Share centre) which is a very active organisation in the town, dealing with domestic violence and the issues surrounding this.



The photograph shows Mrs Maureen Burgess (Director of Services- DIAS) receiving a cheque of £800 which was raised by SI Wigan for this Charity

Below are the photos of the presentation of the 7 remaining sleeping bags to Trish Green of the Bricklayers Wigan. SI Wigan and Rotary Club of Wigan together with personal donations from two members of SI Wigan (Carol Britner and Indu Gupta) have again totalled £400 and have we have been able to purchase 22 outdoor sleeping bags for the homeless in our borough. The other sleeping bags have been dispersed on a needs basis to individuals throughout the borough. We intend to widen the project in the coming year and invite other organisations to donate a sum which collectively will help to supply sleeping bags on a regular basis.

From the left the photograph shows Indu Gupta SI Wigan; President Ted Walmsley Rotary Club of Wigan; Jane Fennell SI Wigan; Joint President Eva Novak S I Wigan; Trish Green Bricklayers Wigan; Helen Ayles SI Wigan; and



Carol Britner also of SI Wigan.

The other photograph shows our Immediate Past

President Bridget Collier handing over a cheque for £800 to Dr Ann Parr representing Marie Curie Cancer Care. The monies were raised via various events by members of SI Wigan



# ... WITH NEWS FROM THE CLUBS

## MANCHESTER

Last June friends of President Sue cycled from John O'Groats to Land's End, some 911 miles, in 7 days.

Inspired by the aims of Project Sierra, Pete and Chris offered to use their challenge as a fundraiser for the project and Tee Shirts were created for publicity on their journey.

To date they have raised £524, with a further £138 due from 'Gift Aid'.  
([www.justgiving.com/peteandchriscycle](http://www.justgiving.com/peteandchriscycle))

Pete and Chris were guests of honour at President Sue's barbeque when they were presented with the SI globe letter openers to remind them of us after the blisters healed!



To mark the International Day of Peace on 21st September, Soroptimist International of Manchester had arranged with Platt Field Park to provide a space for us on Saturday, 19th September to display our "Pinwheels for Peace". Platt Fields did us proud by giving us a superb site in the children's park, which is fenced off but beside the lake.

From 10am until 3pm Soroptimist Members instructed young visitors and their parents in the art of pinwheel making, colouring their card, with the older ones adding their messages of peace. Our Field of Peace rapidly became more colourful as the children planted their creations.

The occasion was also used to promote Soroptimism by talking to parents and handing out information.

## SOUTHPORT

Southport Club has held several events over the last couple of months. A promotional 'New Members Evening' held in September was very successful and has seen our numbers increase by seven. In October we also held our annual 'Friendship Night'. After an excellent meal we lit candles to remember our link clubs and heard news about them from link members. The Federation Conference in Cardiff was also attended by several members who all reported that the Speakers were excellent.

Club member Doreen Roberts also helped us prepare for a major fund raising extravaganza held at CHET on November 14th by holding millinery classes. The event entitled 'Old Time Music Hall Miscellany' saw members and guests dressed in period costume and many ladies wearing the fabulous hats they had created. The evening was a resounding success and all monies raised are to go to President Gill's charity which this year is Breast Cancer Care.

Our inspiring speaker at the beginning of November was Rachel Smith. She rowed the Atlantic to raise money for Breast Cancer Care and she gave a graphic talk and power point presentation about her memorable journey. Membership Chair, Margaret Davies has also formed a 'Thursday Afternoon Club' which organises various social events and outings. The next one is to the Boundary Mill Store at Colne. We are also preparing for our Christmas Coffee Morning, a PAC Action meal and an International Night celebration. Our Christmas Meal is to be held at Hesketh Golf Club in December.



## RAMSBOTTOM

Members of SI Ramsbottom held an Afternoon Tea at Ramsbottom Cricket Club on 11th November for older residents. The tea was served by club members who also gave a demonstration of basic Line Dancing and organised the Bingo. Entertainment throughout the afternoon was provided by a three piece band and soloist.

Long Service Awards were presented to Jenni Willett-Whittaker (45 years) and Irene Brieley (40 years) by President Lesley Pritchard. The afternoon proved to be a happy and successful occasion and will be repeated in the future.

## BOLTON

As part of Bolton Literacy Trust's Family Literacy week, members of SI Bolton donated 3 story sacks to the Hope Centre, Johnson Fold, Bolton. These exciting literacy resources for small children were put together by members of SI Bolton who enjoyed the experience so much that they are planning to produce some more!

Each sack contains a children's story book and all the soft animal toys and assorted items to make the book come alive when it is read to the children. There was an excited audience of children at the Hope Centre who, along with their parents, enjoyed Frankie Hahlo reading and acting out the story entitled "The Train Ride".



## BURY

We are having a busy year in the life of programme action. During September we helped to sponsor a student from Bury to teach English in China. In October school shields and a gift voucher were presented in seven secondary schools in the borough to the girl showing the most community spirit. We also helped to maintain the tree for life site by planting new bulbs and caring for the commemorative bench where necessary. November has been our busiest month so far with a large donation of toiletries for both boys and girls to Rachel House which is a hostel for homeless teenagers. This was well received. We are also supporting Bury Domestic Violence Forum. This is where the single mothers and children are kept in their own home and violent partners have to leave. We donated over 65 gifts to be given at Christmas to brighten their lives a little. These were also very well received. December brings our new annual festival of Christmas trees raising awareness of S.I. Bury with decorations made by us showing various events through the club year. More events to come which we will report on using this forum.

## ROCHDALE

On Saturday 7th November members of SI Rochdale hosted an Open Day to highlight the very sensitive but relevant issue of Dementia. Health care professionals from a wide range of services available, gave up their time to be there and the event was supported by the Mayor and Mayoress of Rochdale, Cllrs Ken Swift and Sue Etchells, along with our Regional President Sriya Kulupana on the first official engagement in her year of office.



Representatives from the Memory Clinic and Hazel Ward at Birch Hill Hospital, together with Alzheimers Support Group,

Age Concern, MIND, POPPS, The Borough Wide User Forum and the Resource Centre at Springhill Hospice all attended with literature and displays of the help available for anyone suffering mental health problems.

Dr Dhatta of the Psychiatric Mental Health Care and Mr John Schofield Chairman of the NHS Pennine Acute Trust, together with staff from Hazel Ward at Birch Hill Hospital were just some of the health care professionals who had given their time to attend the open day and were readily giving advice to the general public.



## ST HELENS

SI St Helens are thrilled to have three new members since April, which now gives us a membership of 43.

St Helens club members have raised £277 by knitting poppies from a pattern from SI Ashton. Members knitted with enthusiasm and we could have sold hundreds more. The British Legion were thrilled to receive the £277.

SOS—SAVE OUR SOLDIERS APPEAL sent 34 St Helens members out shopping for treats and nice fun things with which to fill a shoe box each. They were sent to a collection point in Crosby, checked and then will be flown out to Afghanistan.

St Helens have sent £450 to SI Cockermouth for their Disaster Fund to help them help the Townsfolk of Cockermouth so badly affected by the dreadful flooding.

## WIDNES & ST. HELENS

The Mansion House, St Helens was the venue for an evening of fact finding, fun, food and fund raising jointly organised by SI Widnes and SI St Helens. The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly and the food was delicious.

The DVD "The Miracle of Deep Griha" showed what a difference the organisation is making by its work with people in the slums and rural areas of Pune, India. Wendy Ross-Barker told of a new educational project which is being developed in one rural area which she saw in its early stages on a visit last year.

It was a pleasure to welcome Mrs Mary Toll, who enabled Deep Griha to set up an eye clinic. She organised a silent auction after which there was a quiz about India.

Indian members from both clubs, together with their friends and our Regional President Sriya (who was then still President Elect), dressed everyone up in a sari which were kindly provided by Radha and Wendy.



The total raised for the Deep Griha Society was £322 and we are grateful to those who attended, those who gave donations and to all those who had a hand in organising

the event. Thanks must also go to Sandra, who is a member of St. Helens, and her staff at the Mansion House for their hospitality.

*Deep Griha meaning "Light House" is an independent charitable organisation working to better the lives of people in the slums of Pune. Through a range of family welfare programmes encompassing education, health, awareness building, women's empowerment and self help projects DGS helps thousands of beneficiaries within Pune and several nearby villages.*



## LEIGH & DISTRICT

At the start of her year as President, Marlene Downey posed a CHALLENGE to every member of the club to raise £15 in any way they could. The object of this challenge was to purchase a sports strip for a GIRLS football or rugby team. In true Leigh and District style this challenge was so successful that we provided **Three full kits** and two runners up prizes to teams across our area from Golborne, Lowton, Leigh, Astley and Tyldesley. A competition was held in local press and a presentation evening at Leigh Sports Village, attended by the winners and their parents and supported by our local M.P. Andy Burnham the Health Minister, who was on hand with his daughter to congratulate the winners.

