

### **81<sup>st</sup> Federation Conference Glasgow 2015**

What a time we had!

#### **Best Conference ever!!**

With over a **1,000 Soroptimists** from **29 countries** the opening ceremony of the parade of flags, made a colourful and moving start. As we listened to the roll call – Bangladesh, Caribbean, Malawi, Malta, Mauritius, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe, all interspersed alphabetically with the United Kingdom's regions – it was quite a spectacle!

#### **Royal Visitor**

There was a buzz in the hall on our first morning as we awaited the arrival of **Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal**, who spoke to us on her work for Save the Children, a cheque was then presented to her, for their work with refugee children in Syria, by Federation President Jenny Vince.

#### **Jo Fairley**

Our speakers for the day were equally exciting as we listened to **Jo Fairley**, co-founder of internationally successful **Green and Black** organic chocolate, relate how she looked for ways to support cocoa farmers very early in the Fairtrade movement.

**Dame Stella Rimington** DCB MA formerly **Director General of MI5**. Appointed as DG in 1992, she was the first woman to take the post, and spoke of her remarkable life leading up to this appointment. Dame Stella is known to millions as the role model for the character "M" played by Dame Judi Dench in the James Bond films.

We listened and were entertained by **Sarah Montague**, one of the main anchors on **Radio 4's Today Programme**, with a keen interest in Education Sarah was responsible for two new BBC Radio 4 series The Educators and My Teacher is an App. Her advice to women was "don't always try to be nice! "

The following day we listened to **The Hon. Justice Rowan Downing QC**, he has worked internationally for 23yrs dealing with law reform, human rights law and many other aspects of law – it is hard for us to appreciate living in a country where there is little or no law to support us.

#### **A very brave and inspiring speaker**

**Olivia Giles** was our next speaker, whilst working as a lawyer in 2002, she caught meningococcal septicaemia and had to have her hands and feet amputated to save her life.

This remarkable young lady walked to the podium, and told her story of fight-back and recovery in a most engaging way.

In 2007 she founded the charity 500 miles which supplies prosthetic limbs to developing countries, Olivia showed a short film on the success of this life changing work.

During the conference time we heard reports of how our many overseas projects are progressing, one in particular was the work of Soroptimists in **Nepal** in the aftermath of the earthquake.

We were thrilled to welcome a member of **Soroptimist International Katmandu** and see, through her presentation, the devastation and the work that has been done in providing tented schools in order for the children's education to continue, along with many other support systems.

#### **Victorian Evening!! 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December**

Your **Garstang Soroptimist** members have been allocated their bags of peas – and will be on the High Street cooking up **Parched Peas** again!! Please come early to avoid disappointment!

Our charity this year is Water Aid, thank you for your support.

All the Garstang members would like to send you their Good Wishes for a Healthy and Happy Christmas and thank you for your support of our projects during 2015, we could not make a difference without you.