

# SIGBI President's August 2017 Blog

Thanks to all those who voted in the Federation Elections and thanks also to those who stood for office. Congratulations to Barbara Dixon re-elected as Federation Programme Director, Isobel Smith re-elected as Director of Organisational Development and Rita Beaumont as Assistant Programme Director for Food Security & Healthcare.

A warm welcome to Cathy Cotteridge who joins the Federation Management Board as a Director without Portfolio.

The ballots for the Vice President, Director of Membership and the DEG Secretary and Committee Member are with Clubs now, and I look forward to announcing the results at the end of September.

July started with a Federation Management Board meeting in Birmingham. The weekend started with an exciting presentation from a group of students from Ravensbourne Design College in London. At the end of last year, we gave them a Terms of Reference for a project about how to attract younger women to Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland. The result was an amazing presentation and design booklet which gave us a real insight into how we might recruit 18 to 25-year-old women going forward. As with everything there is a cost involved so now we need to explore how we might do it. Saturday morning was set aside for a workshop on Board structure when we become a charity. Our discussions were facilitated by the current interim Company Secretary for Parkinsons UK who is a governance expert. The session was interactive and it was great to realise that all four breakout groups were not too far apart in their thoughts. We will be considering next steps over the next few months to be clear on what actions we need to take to implement the decision at last year's General Meeting.



A week later, I was off to Florence for the Soroptimist International of Europe annual Governors meeting followed by Congress, which only happens every 4 years. I attended with Susan Biggs, Federation President Elect and there were approximately a dozen SIGBI members present. It was hot!!! The Congress theme was "Own the Future. Education, your Passport to a better Life", and its focus was encouraging women into STEM careers. I gave a warm welcome from the members of Soroptimist International of Great Britain at the Opening Ceremony and talked a little about our work on STEM. The speakers and their topics were interesting to all.

There was a gala dinner on the Saturday night, and we finished on the Sunday

with the Good practice awards and the change of regalia ceremony welcoming in Renate Trottman as President, although she does not officially take over until October 2017.



On my return from Florence, I attended two Club events. The 70th anniversary of SI Stourbridge which was a delightful evening despite the weather. They marked their celebration with the lighting of candles for every country in Soroptimist International and designing a stamp approved by the Royal Mai, which was given to everyone present.



The next day, I travelled to the North Yorkshire Moors for the 75th anniversary of SI Dewsbury held on North Yorkshire Moor train between Grosmont and Pickering. Another lovely day and the weather was kind for the duration of the lunch allowing us all to enjoy the views.

I returned home only to pack again, and go off to the Soroptimist International Board Meeting in Rotterdam where we joined Directors from the other three Federations and the Officers for 3 days of Board meetings. The days were long, but I am pleased to say that the meetings were a success and some real decisions were made

which you will see in several announcements over the coming days. On Saturday, we congratulated Yvonne Simpson on her term as our International President and welcomed Mariet Verhoef Cohen as the next International President. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Pat Black International Director of Advocacy and Bozena Benton, HR Liaison for their work at Soroptimist International.

In Rotterdam, we also heard about the next International President's appeal which is about water – something else that you will hear much more about in the coming months.

Now a little downtime before I go off to visit the Clubs in South Africa towards the end of August and the beginning of September.

Yours in friendship

Ann Hodgson