

AUGUST 2018

Soroptimist News

Q: What's
most
important to
girls?
A: Knickers!

SIGBI
Conference
Liverpool 2018
Book now!

Focus
on Food,
Security
and
Healthcare

- **SIGBI Members attend the Royal Garden Party**
- **Environmental Sustainability – under the microscope**
- **SIGBI Charters: SI Asokoro, Nigeria and SI Portadown, Northern Ireland**

Women inspiring action,
transforming lives

www.sigbi.org

Welcome to **Soroptimist News** from the Editor



Soroptimist International Great Britain & Ireland is an organisation in Special Consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) since July 2013. This is in addition to the General Consultative status held by the umbrella organisation Soroptimist International. Soroptimist International is a recognised Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representing women from all over the world.

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Celebrations seem to take centre stage in this issue of Soroptimist News, with many reports of awards, recognition and remembrance of 100 years of the Suffragettes' efforts to win the vote for women.

This all makes for warm and happy summer feelings, but we also have yet more impressive reports of Soroptimists still fighting for a better world for women and girls – we still, after 100 years, have a long way to go to have real equality, education, health and security.

Soroptimists know this of course and that is why so many of you work so hard to build a better world.

No doubt too, these issues will be discussed at the SIGBI Conference in Liverpool, which is now getting very close – I hope you have booked your tickets!

Keep sending us your news and photos and see you in Liverpool!



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NEXT ISSUE: 16th December 2018, deadline for submissions: 8th November 2018
Full report on the SIGBI Conference in Liverpool

Please send your contributions and news to: Soroptimist@written-image.com.

Please ensure that your submissions are similar in length to the items in this issue - that is, concise.

Please ensure that photos are high resolution and sent as JPEG files, in the same email but not embedded in the text file. We are unable to use low resolution or low quality photos.

The Soroptimist News Schedule for 2018 is in the Members' area of the SIGBI website.



Empower Today Enable Tomorrow

President's message

Dear Soroptimist Sisters

Who would believe it? As I write this message I realise that I am over half way through my Presidential term and that the plans for Liverpool are now in their final stages. We visited the auditorium once again in July for a walk through and final check. I hope that as many of you as possible are able to join me down on the docks for what promises to be an exciting Conference.

Since I wrote last I was given the honour to represent Soroptimist International GBI at a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. It was only a couple of days after we had learnt the news that SI Bournemouth had been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2018. I met up with two of the Club's Members at the Garden Party. They still could not quite believe the news. When I told them they were the first Club to win such an award they were even more excited. However I warned them that I sincerely believe that they will not be the last.

Wherever I have visited I have spoken about the need to "empower today, enable tomorrow". I firmly believe that this includes ourselves as members as well as those we help. We are often referred to as "the world's best kept secret" and the general public are amazed when they find out exactly what we do to educate, empower and enable women and girls to reach their potential.

Therefore we need to move ourselves and our Clubs into the spotlight. The public needs to know what relevant and important work we carry out. We must communicate more at every level of the organisation, but communication works two ways – we need to listen as well as speak. Listening is a skill which is sometimes sadly underestimated. As I have travelled meeting members I have spent time listening to their concerns and issues. Every member I have met is proud to be a Soroptimist and it is that pride we must harness as we move forward as an organisation.

Susan

**Susan Biggs, President,
Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland**



**David and Susan Biggs at
Buckingham Palace**



L-R: Julie Blackwell SI Winchester & District, Sue Biggs SIGBI Federation President, Bobbie White and Shirley Thompson, SI Bournemouth



Susan Biggs SIGBI Federation President, with members of SI Northern England



Programme Objective

Environmental Sustainability

Naina Shah,
Assistant Programme Director
Environmental Sustainability, reports

“Adapting to climate change means learning empathy. It also needs institutions, laws, and the basic ability to recognise humanity in others. We’ll need new infrastructure and technology, to be sure, but I doubt we can innovate our way to decency.”

These powerful words of Kate Marvel, a climate scientist, are a telling testimony to the desperate need for humans to wake up. Yes, we do mark days and yes, we do run programmes and events to create awareness or turn the limelight on the environment, yet all this never seems enough.

World Environment Day 2018 becomes not just another day, to focus on what’s not right around us, it’s a culminating day for all the other 364 days of the year – to focus locally, nationally or globally to right that wrong.

This year the focus was on Beat Plastic Pollution. “Our world is swamped by harmful plastic waste,” said UN Secretary General António Guterres. “Microplastics in our seas now outnumber stars in our galaxy.”

UN Environment spokesperson Keith Weller said, about the host country India, “Indian communities large and small will lead a global charge to beat plastic pollution through civic engagement and celebration.”

Soroptimists in action

Mansi Verma is the first Youth Member of Soroptimist Clubs in India. As a high school student and the youngest member of **SI Pune Metro East (picture below)**, Mansi comes across as a committed person with social concerns.



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On World Environment Day she joined the Club’s endeavours to beat plastic pollution attending a busy marketplace, where vendors sell fruits and vegetables in polythene bags.

The Club Members created awareness by urging everyone to stop the use of plastic and carried banners highlighting the problems caused by the use of plastics.

They took away the plastic bags and, in lieu, offered cloth bags. It was a very eventful day and the Members definitely made an impact.



On UN World Environment Day, **SI San Fernando (picture above)** held an awareness session under the patronage of the Mayor of San Fernando.

The Primary school students who performed their Environmental ‘raps’ were awarded prizes. After the educational video, schools were presented with reusable shopping bags and environmental posters.

The Soroptimist reusable shopping bags sold out on World Environment Day because of their good quality and subsidised price.

More bags will be available shortly with their message:

“Beat Plastic Pollution, Reuse Your Shopping Bag!”

Commitment from Soroptimists is ever present – even when we are on holiday.

A member of **SI Cockermouth and District** participated in an effort to clear plastic and other waste on beaches in the beautiful area of Western Crete.

Awareness about amounts of plastic waste had a positive outcome there.

Members of **SI East Grinstead** discussed the issue and increased their own awareness of plastic packaging and signed a petition to put

pressure on manufacturers.

Similarly, members of **SI Bromley** collected signatures for its petition to ban plastic – real advocacy for the global cause.

SI Aberdeen held a discussion on environment and micro plastics at their Club meeting.

Water Aid and Soroptimist Clubs

Water Aid works solely for deprived communities in Africa and other countries.

Their work covers Clean Water and Sanitation – the concern area of UN Sustainable Development Goal 6.

Funding support from Soroptimist Clubs to WaterAid has been ongoing and many of our Clubs have evolved novel ways to do this.

SI Runcorn Frodsham and District, at their monthly meetings, circulated a water jug for Members to donate small silver funds.

SI Kenilworth and District held an event, Walking for Water to raise funds.

SI Bingley, Dewsbury and District, SI Burnley, SI Paisley and SI Crieff have all worked collectively on projects.

The popular idea of Wine to Water events was introduced by Clubs such as **SI Hertford** and **SI Colchester and District**.

SI Sevenoaks (picture below) Club Members joined their lively town fair to network with other local organisations, thus raising the local profile of the Club and awareness of WaterAid.

Fundraising for WaterAid has been ongoing throughout the year. The stall was a great success with the recruitment of one new member.





SI Southport (picture above) Members donned toilet suits in a Tesco supermarket to collect money for WaterAid and local charities, raising £286. A cheque for £500 was sent to WaterAid from this and other fundraising activities and this was doubled by the UK government to £1000. SI Southport has already sent a further £500 to WaterAid in response to their Emergency aid appeal for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.



SI Barnstaple and District (picture above) spent a productive couple of hours on World Water Day collecting donations in their golden loo for WaterAid.

SI Bournemouth's project, 80 Toilets for 80 Years, asked each member to raise sufficient funds to provide three toilets which would be twinned with countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh.

SI Bombay Chembur's project provides toilets to make it easier for tribal girls to go to school.

SI St Albans and District members are also toilet twinning in developing countries to improve health, education and economic sustainability.

SI Calcutta's Project Dignity is working towards providing toilets for schools for underprivileged children.

On World Water Day, **SI Dewsbury** Members brought unwanted scarves and handbags and bottles of wine to turn into water and raised £220.

More fantastic Club Projects

For Soroptimists, no act is small enough if it's towards the environment, replenishing the earth's green cover, through plants or fruit trees or preserving native forests.

Excellent examples are:

- **SI Stratford upon Avon** maintains a community garden at a hospital.
- **SI Pune Metro East** planted fruit trees at a local space on World Environment Day.
- **SI Solihull** maintains the garden beds at Widney Manor station.

- **SI St Albans** planted trees at Heartwood Forest, enhancing the native woodland for future generations.

- **SI Tamworth** members are assisting the maintenance of a Nature Trail and

- **SI Bromley** provides community service by looking after the Beckenham Green Central Park.



Regional Activity

Midland Arden Region held its first Programme Action Award event during their Change of Insignia in April. Clubs submitted a Programme Focus Report Form in the last Presidential year under the categories of Food Security or Environmental Sustainability, water and sanitation.

Six Clubs gave five minute presentations on their work and those attending the event were allowed to vote for their favourite. The competition was won by **SI Kidderminster (picture above)** for its work recycling fabric and knitting for Hoima hospital in Uganda.

The Club won a pear tree presented by SIGBI Federation President Susan Biggs which they have donated to the garden of their local women's refuge.

Soroptimist International Projects

Soroptimist International President, Mariet Verhoef Cohen's Appeal is "Women Water and Leadership".

Launched for 2017-2019 it covers five projects on five continents that educate, empower and enable women and girls to lead in water, embracing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the targets set out in SDG 6: Water and sanitation, SDG 4: Education, and SDG 5: Gender Equality.

The first three projects to be supported are:

The Mwhoko Women Group, in Kenya where 500 women farmers are involved in a transformative programme resulting in economic empowerment;

WeWash (Women Empowerment through Water, Sanitation, and Health), is reshaping the lives of unemployed and low-income women and girls in Bulgaria; and the third where the rural community in **Sarawak, Malaysia** is deprived of clean water.

SIGBI Clubs are supporting the Soroptimist International Appeal, generating donations from **SI Wolverhampton**, who raffled a luxury hamper, **SI Perth**, who raised awareness of the appeal that will afford women the opportunity to be empowered and **SI Dublin**, who organised a raffle to mark Human Rights Day and also raised funds for the International President's Appeal.



SI Grange-over-Sands Sensory Garden

In 1999 SI Grange-over-Sands wanted to celebrate the Millennium by providing something for the benefit of the community. An old rose garden in the local council-owned Park Road Gardens, was ideal to create a sensory garden.

The arrangement was that Club Members would clear the site and the council would create the design and provide suitable plants. The Members' work in the garden went on for a few years and then the Friends of Park Road Gardens took over its maintenance. The Friends group disbanded in 2016 and SI Grange resumed working there.

The site has beautiful trees and shrubs and stunning views across Morecambe Bay, but in 2016 it was overgrown and had to be cleared to create space for plants that are suitable for stimulating the senses.

In Spring 2017 Members could see the results of their work and introduced plants that provide scent, colour and texture. They entered the Britain in Bloom "Its Your Neighbourhood" award scheme achieving a Level 2.

They also worked with local Girl Guides who made wind chimes and planted their gift of a family apple tree. The garden has sustainable plants that are ideal for pollinating insects and the Guides made two bug houses out of logs and moss that now have resident insects. The Guides were working for the Girl Guiding North West England Beatrix Potter 150th Anniversary Challenge.

The garden is beautiful, but it was let down by the paths. One Member raised £10,000 from charitable and statutory organisations for new paving, transforming the garden. Members also created a pebble mosaic. On a beautiful July evening the Club held a reception in the garden to thank everyone who supported their efforts. The project has had excellent feedback and support, and Members are delighted that so many people appreciate the lovely garden they have created.



World Health Organisation at 70 - Working for better health for everyone, everywhere



Each year on 7th April, we recognise World Health Day, this year the World Health Organisation (WHO) also celebrated its 70th anniversary; the year also heralds the 40th anniversary of the Declaration of Alma-Ata, championing primary health care.

The WHO was founded on the principle that health is a fundamental human right. This same principle drives the WHO approach to universal health coverage and has driven much of the progress made to address the reduction in communicable diseases in recent decades.

World Health Day 2018 was dedicated to one of WHO's founding principles: "The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition."

Marking the day, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General said, "Good health is the most precious thing anyone can have. When people are healthy, they can learn, work and support themselves and their families. When they are sick, nothing else matters: families and communities fall behind. That's why WHO is so committed to ensuring good health for all." He added, "Universal health coverage is ultimately a political choice. It is the responsibility of every country and national government to pursue it. I personally commit to spearheading the advocacy required to secure the political support of global, regional, and national leaders. The 2030 target of "ending the epidemics" of HIV, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted infections will not be achieved without striving for universal health coverage, and universal health coverage cannot be achieved without addressing these communicable diseases. Both communicable diseases and universal health coverage targets will not be achieved without a clear focus on health as a human right."

Universal health coverage means that all people should be able to access the health services, medicines and other health commodities needed for good quality provision without experiencing financial hardship whoever they are, wherever they live, and without any form of discrimination. The WHO comments that we are far from achieving this target, at least half the world's population lacks access to the most basic health

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services, and almost 100 million people are plunged into extreme poverty every year because they have to pay for their health care out of their own pockets. Whilst poverty drives much inequity and inequality in access to health services worldwide, challenges extend far beyond financial and economic barriers. People are often denied services as a result of their race, ethnicity, social class, age, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, migrant status, disability or religion. A clear commitment to "leaving no-one behind" must be applied to all communities.

70 years of progress

Globally, life expectancy has increased by 25 years since WHO was established. Some of the biggest health gains are seen among children under 5: in 2016, 6 million fewer children died before they reached their fifth birthday than in 1990. Smallpox has been defeated and polio is on the verge of eradication. Many countries have successfully eliminated measles, malaria and debilitating tropical diseases as well as mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis. Bold new WHO recommendations for earlier, simpler treatment, combined with efforts to facilitate access to cheaper generic medicines, have helped 21 million people receive life-saving treatment for HIV. The plight of more than 300 million people suffering from chronic hepatitis B and C infections is finally gaining global attention. And innovative partnerships have produced effective vaccines against meningitis and Ebola, as well as the world's first ever malaria vaccine.

CHOGM 2018

At the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London in April the final communique included an agreement to tackle a wide range of serious health challenges, the burden of which has a significant socio-economic impact on individuals and families, and to increase national health expenditure throughout the Commonwealth. They noted that these public health challenges include communicable and non-communicable diseases such as HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diabetes, as well as obesity, malnutrition, and mental health conditions. They reiterated their commitment to achieving the health-related goals of the 2030

Programme Objective: Food Security and Healthcare

Rita Beaumont
Assistant Programme Director,
Food Security and Healthcare

Agenda, particularly Goal 3. Heads affirmed the Commonwealth Charter's values and principles of promoting access to affordable health care, removing wide disparities and unequal living standards. The Heads agreed to achieve compliance with International Health Regulations, accelerate Universal Health Coverage, including through sustainable financing, strengthening health systems and integrated services which promote prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care.

Focus on Soroptimist Activity

So how are we as Soroptimists playing our part to help achieve these health goals? I want to concentrate on two important areas Mental Health and Cancer in Women. To achieve positive physical and mental health outcomes good nutrition and food security is a vital component.

Mental Health

In the vital area of supporting those of all ages suffering from a Mental Health problem, many Clubs are making an important contribution. The number of adults and children suffering from complex Mental Health problems is increasing in the United Kingdom. **SI Paisley, SI St Austell, SI Hertford, SI London Central & South West, SI Falkirk, SI Rossendale** have all fundraised to help maintain aspects of vital specialist local service provision during the last year.

SI East Grinstead provides practical support for weekly swimming sessions in a safe environment for people with physical and mental health problems.

SI St Albans met with their local Mental Health Services provider to better understand the complexity of issues faced and enable them to help raise awareness locally and to more successfully campaign in a knowledgeable way for improvements in provision.

Dementia is a global concern but it is most often seen in wealthier countries, where people are likely to live into very old age. The WHO estimate the number of people living with dementia worldwide is currently an estimated 35.6 million. This number will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050. Rates of diagnosis are improving but many people with dementia are thought to still be undiagnosed. Dementia is

a WHO public health priority. To help those who suffer from dementia, a growing number of Clubs are involved in providing practical help or raising money to fund local initiatives supporting both those living with dementia and their carers.

Clubs include **SI Kirkcaldy, SI Denbigh, Ruthin & District, SI Perth, SI Bangor, SI Selby, SI Pendleside, SI Loughborough, and SI Rossendale** who all provide practical help in supporting focused recreational activities in residential care homes and day centre facilities, some helping to jog old memories as part of reminiscence therapy. Many Clubs are involved in the production of Twiddlemuffs, sensory aprons and pillows to provide both sensory stimulation and comfort to agitated sufferers.



SI Grange over Sands (above) continues to provide and manage all aspects of the flourishing Singing for Memory groups locally.

SI Loughborough and SI Leicester in partnership with multiple non Soroptimist groups have joined to raise money to fund the provision of a specialist Dementia UK Admiral Nurse; these nurses provide a unique service providing specialist professional support. They work alongside the entire family, giving one-to-one support, expert guidance and practical solutions. They help families to live more positively with dementia and to face the challenges to come with more confidence and less fear. You can find out more about these nurses from Dementia UK at www.dementiauk.org.

Cancer in Women

During the past year 258 reports by Clubs describing their activities relating to cancer in women have been logged. It is impossible to talk about each one but the four activities below illustrate diverse approaches being used by Clubs to support this important topic.

SI Lichfield held a ball in March 2018 raising an astonishing £5,300. The money was split between Breast Cancer Now and the Teenage Cancer Trust. Their aim was to raise awareness of the important research required and to raise vital funds for both charities with the aim of saving lives, providing equipment and enabling research. Breast Cancer Now has a goal that no woman will die from breast cancer by 2050. The money will help to raise awareness of the research needed and help to purchase equipment for laboratories and enable the production of leaflets to educate women about regular breast self-checking.

The Teenage Cancer Trust advocates the creation of world-class cancer services for young people in UK, providing life changing care and support so they don't face cancer alone.



SI Canterbury (above) also held a ball to raise awareness about Soroptimist International and International Women's Day highlighting the struggle to achieve gender equality as well as supporting Ovarian Cancer Month. Club projects were displayed and £600 was raised for Target Ovarian Cancer. The dinner sold out and attracted a wide range of "Non Soroptimist guests" from all walks of life and ages.

80 guests enjoyed a three course dinner, listened to Canterbury's first female MP Rosie Duffield, participated in the raffle then danced the night away. As one guest said, "What a great night, we'd definitely come again next year!"



SI Bangalore (above) wanted to create awareness that cervical cancer is curable if detected early. It was acknowledged that there was a lack of awareness regarding health issues including cancer in rural areas of India. In February 2018, Club members ran a focused project at a rural Primary Health Centre, Kanakapura taluk, Venkatarayanadoddi, Club member Dr Nalini headed the team.

With the help of two other doctors and pharmacists from other areas, she spearheaded the project to conduct Pap smear tests for detecting Cancer of the Cervix. The team examined 100 women, mostly between the ages of 25 to 40, from the villages nearby. The examinations were followed up: one patient refused to take advice regarding a diagnosis of vaginal cancer, a woman with cervical growth was followed up, while two suspected cases showed negative results.

SI Chennai, India, in collaboration with Udhi Eye Hospital held an eye camp for women and children. Doctors from the hospital screened 122 women and children and 64 of them were identified as needing spectacles. Five older women had cataracts which needed surgery. What was heartening was that the teenage girls of the community pitched in whole heartedly, helping with the patients, serving snacks and tea.

In Phase 2, a week later, the club donated spectacles and eye drops to all the 64 women and children needing glasses. The five women with cataracts were operated on in Udhi Eye Hospital.



SI Pune Metro East (above) in partnership with Tara Mobile Crèches were acutely aware that poverty and restricted access to medical resources results in poor health. This was further complicated by the poor literacy of the migrant workers.

The Club was committed through SDG-3, to address the emerging health issues of these women and to promote their wellbeing. For many of the women gender discrimination undermines their access to health care. Via the project the women were encouraged to take care of their health through proper nutrition, physical activities and a strong mind.

Gynaecologist Dr Bushra was invited to speak to the women on common ailments that could affect them and the types of cancer they are prone to contract.

Suggestions were given on how to eat a balanced diet, recognising the warning signals of an illness and immediately addressing any changes in health pattern. She demonstrated self-examination for breast cancer. Many of the women came forward and discussed their health issues.

They were now open to having a health check programme. Lots of queries on Menopause and about bleeding not related to menstrual periods were asked and were satisfied with the line of treatment suggested by the doctor.

SI Bilston sponsored a second Cardiac Screening event for young people aged 14- 35 at Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club in July. The event was 18 months in the planning, while Members approached local organisations for donations and had fundraising events including collections in local supermarkets - raising £6000, which covers the costs of screening 100 youngsters by ECG technicians and a doctor.

The Soroptimist vision

Our vision as Soroptimists of ways to help promote good health and healthy life styles reflect those of the WHO; an excerpt from the brochure for the World Health Assembly held on 21st to 26th May 2018 states:

"Today, WHO works alongside a host of health and development partners to achieve the health-related targets laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The SDGs underscore the key role health plays in assuring the world's future, with SDG3 calling on all stakeholders to "ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages."

They align totally with WHO's goal of ensuring that everyone, everywhere, can realise their right to a healthy life. They also stress the importance of collaboration, between different actors working in different fields, in all countries of the world."

Liverpool Conference 25-27 October 2018



A Message from Tricia Coll, Conference Chair



By the time you are reading this article we will be in the last few weeks before the Liverpool Conference gets under way.

Three years in the planning for three days of what we hope you will feel is an interesting and stimulating Conference.

To help your visit go more smoothly here are a number of points that may be useful.

Delegate check-in



Check-in opens at 11.00am on Thursday 25th November. To be allowed into the auditorium delegates must have checked in.

For delegates arriving for Friday and Saturday, check-in will be open each morning at 8.30am and will remain open until the start of session.

It will also be open at the coffee breaks and at lunchtime. Remember to bring your Delegate check-in slip with you.

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Extra Assistance

If, after you have registered, your circumstances change through illness and you find that you now need Extra Assistance please let Joanne in the Office know so you can be included.

Please note that Extra Assistance can only be given to people who have registered for it. There will be a designated Extra Assistance check-in desk.

Lanyards



You may be wondering why some are wearing different coloured lanyards.

The colours indicate:

- Blue: Delegates who have been before
- Yellow: First Time Delegates
- Green: Conference Committee
- Red: Federation Management Board

And don't forget to hand in your lanyards at the end of Saturday evening.

Information and First Time Delegates stand

In the foyer of the ACC (Arena & Conference Centre), near the delegates' check-in desks, will be an Information and First Time Delegates stand which will be manned by Liverpool Sorooptimists.

The ACC also have an information kiosk on the left-hand side of the foyer.

Hotels

As usual, Delegates' names and Clubs will appear in the Programme. However, in order to keep within the new Data Protection laws, hotels will not be listed.

Food & Drink



Only food actually purchased in the ACC can be consumed there. Lunch bags can be pre-ordered via Joanne or there is a very small food facility within the ACC.

The closing date for pre-ordered lunch bags is 30th September.

Sessions



Once a session has started, out of courtesy to the speakers, there will be no admittance to the auditorium until a convenient time.

Admittance will then be through the first set of auditorium doors.



Speakers

There will be question and answer sessions for some speakers. Delegates are reminded that personal questions are not allowed.

Handbags etc



The ACC have informed us that it is now their policy to do random bag checks on anyone using the building. This is in line with their safety procedures.

Exhibition

A varied mix of stalls have been booked, some regulars but also new stalls.

Situated on the lower level, the large space will also accommodate the tea and coffee stations. This will give ample browsing time.

Bloggers and Tweeters



If you would like to be part of a team of Bloggers and Tweeters at Conference that would be greatly appreciated.

Getting ourselves known and our work publicised is so important. If you can help please contact Sally:



sally@sigbi.org



0161 480 7686

How to spot a Steward



This year they will be wearing rosettes in the Suffragette colours of green, white and purple, in recognition

of the hundred years since the start of the movement for women's votes in the UK.

The SIGBI logo will be in the centre of each rosette.

Please treat all our stewards kindly; they are all volunteers trying to help things go smoothly, and they do have feelings.

Book signings

Book signings will be taking place on the Auditorium level.

Terry Waite, Professor Helen Pankhurst and Sir Ranulph Fiennes will be available to sign their books.



A Message from Chief Steward, Linda Beddows MBE



ENJOY THE LIVERPOOL EXPERIENCE: VOLUNTEER AS A STEWARD!

The primary role of a steward is to assist with the delivery of an enjoyable and safe experience for Conference delegates. Stewards help the Conference venue staff to maintain a high level of customer care and provide practical assistance throughout the venue.

Thank you to all those who have already sent their details and offered their services - it is very much appreciated.

I would love to have a few more volunteers to ensure the work is not onerous, so I am sending out a further reminder in the hope that those who have recently made plans to attend may consider helping out.



There are many roles to fill – from meeting and greeting, helping at registration, directing delegates to the correct areas, assisting with the exhibition areas, opening and closing

ceremonies, the AGM, ensuring smooth flow of delegate traffic at all times – the list is a long one.

The only criteria is a wealth of patience and a friendly smile. Each steward will be given a guide and briefing pack and will, I am sure, enjoy the experience. So please, if you are willing to help, contact me:

lindabeds@tiscali.co.uk 01253 726576

**We look forward to seeing you in Liverpool.
If you haven't registered yet there is still time and we would love to welcome you to this the 84th SIGBI Federation Conference.**

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Soroptimist International

Monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals

Beverley Bucur, Director of Advocacy, Soroptimist International, reports

The High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the main United Nations platform dealing with sustainable development, was formally established in July 2013. The Forum meets annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment every four years at the General Assembly for two days.

Member states are encouraged to regularly assess progress through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). The VNRs share challenges, successes and lessons learned. They also seek to mobilize stakeholders and develop partnerships with governments, civil society, academic institutions and industry to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. In 2018, 47 countries completed a VNR.

To find out if your country completed a VNR, visit the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform: sustainabledevelopment.un.org

The 2018 High Level Political Forum was held at the United Nations on July 9th 2018 at the United Nations in New York focusing on SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12 and 17. The theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies", reviews where we are in the achievement of the goals and identifying emerging issues that have the potential to affect SDG achievement over the years to come.

SI President, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen and SI Director of Advocacy, Bev Bucur, joined the SI United Nations representatives in New York for the forum. On the first day, governments began an "in-depth review" of selected SDGs, with a session on global progress towards SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation). Delegates heard that "the world is not on track" to meet the SDG 6 targets by 2030, in view of increasing freshwater pollution, water stress, and a declining share of official development assistance for water-related activities.

The review of SDG 6 featured several high-level speakers, including Danilo Türk, Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, the former President of Slovenia, and Léo Heller, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Delegates discussed their national efforts to achieve SDG 6, and highlighted the need for good governance and partnerships.

Several speakers underscored the links between water, peace and security, and Danilo Türk proposed holding an international conference on water management to discuss infrastructure and financing.

Monitoring Progress With High Quality Data

The second session focused on the need for better data as key for achieving the SDGs.

Poor data leads to poor decisions and lost opportunities. We need high quality data and those who collect data must be transparent and trusted. Data must be organized and in a format that is understandable. It is also important to consider qualitative as well as quantitative data and ask questions of what is happening beyond the numbers. Data is more than the numbers and is important to telling the story of those that are left furthest behind.



UN reps Betty Levy, Frances Zainnoedin, Vanessa Treers, President Mariet and SI Director of Advocacy, Bev Bucur.

The 2030 Agenda and Women

Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of UN Women, Åsa Regnér, reported on the progress in achieving the SDGs for women. The 2030 Agenda holds the potential to transform the lives of women and girls all over the world. Highlights of the report "Turning Promises into Action", UN Women's contribution to monitoring progress on the SDGs for women and girls, was shared.

According to this report, gender inequalities can be found in every aspect of sustainability and progress is too slow to meet the SDGs by 2030. Data on extreme poverty, reveals that globally there are 4 more women for every 100 men living on less than \$1.90 a day. Almost 30 per cent of the world's population still lacks access to safe drinking water.

Women and girls are responsible for water collection in 80 per cent of households without access to water on premises. This work will become harder given increasing water scarcity. Violence against women and girls is rampant with 1 in 5 women reporting to have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months. And while women's representation in national parliaments has increased, it stands at 24 per cent globally. Where progress is made, women still lack parity.

Regarding data and women, it is important to look beyond national data and compare women to women to close the gaps. Three elements are important to accelerating progress for women and girls. Transformative policies are needed and governments must look at gender when developing programs. Better indicators and data to monitor what works for women and girls. Finally, accountability for gender equality commitments must be strengthened at all levels.

To learn more visit the UN Women website: www.unwomen.org.

How Does SI participate in HLPF?

Preparations for HLPF 2018 began the day after HLPF 2017 ended. Our Soroptimist UN representatives work with the Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) to engage with intergovernmental processes at the UN under the auspices of UNDESA/Division for Sustainable Development. They monitor the draft documents, assist with drafting statements and interventions and plan side events with partners.

Soroptimist International President Mariet will speak at an event organized by The Permanent Mission of Hungary, and Women for Water Partnership, titled Are Women Meaningfully Involved in Implementing SDG 6 in National Plans. The event will explore women's role in implementing SDG 6 and the interlinkage between SDGs 5 and 6. This session will be recorded and archived. It can be viewed on UN Web TV. Visit webtv.un.org for live and on demand sessions of UN meetings and events.

Want to Know More?

Visit the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform to learn more about the High Level Political Forum, the Sustainable Development Goals, the UN and read the VNR reports submitted: sustainabledevelopment.un.org

Calendar of UN Events

The 67th DPI/NGO Conference:

22 - 23rd August 2018 in New York, USA
Finding Global Solutions to Global Problems

Commission on the Status of Women:

11 - 22nd March 2019, New York, USA
Priority theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development.

For more information about the President's Appeal visit the SI website: www.soroptimistinternational.org.

UKPAC Study Day 7th July 2018 Belfast, Northern Ireland

Ann Reeves, Website and Promotions Officer, reports

The latest UKPAC Study Day in Belfast produced very positive comments on the day – it was “an excellent day”. The word excellent appeared a multitude of times on the evaluation sheets – applied to the speakers, the stewards, the food and the day in general.

One evaluation said they “wanted to listen to the speakers for hours!”

The day was designed to update delegates on the progress of our work around the UK, both on the situation of women in prison and the Prison Reform Trust and on the work we did for them on “Transforming Lives” in particular, and on Modern Slavery and the survey results.

The general feeling is that we were well served with “Informative Keynote speakers and good breakout sessions” “Interesting and Inspiring” “Some extremely knowledgeable women and men and very thought provoking.”

Morning session

The speakers dealt with Women in Prison in the morning session.

Dame Vera Baird DBE QC talked knowledgeably and informatively about women in the Criminal Justice System from her position of Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria. She particularly mentioned our work with the Prison Reform Trust and how powerful and influential that was, especially combined with their follow up report on the effect imprisonment of women has on their children. She also talked about the fact that large numbers of women offenders have suffered domestic abuse and coercion leading to their offending, but this coercion is not recognised as a defence.

“The coercive control held over a victim of modern slavery is comparable to that over a victim of Domestic Abuse who may well commit crimes under this coercion - is there a need for a new defence?”

Dame Vera was followed by **Peter Dawson, Director, Prison Reform Trust**, who emphasised the things she had said about our joint work and looked forward to a continuing partnership. He said that “working with Soroptimists has:

- Helped enable the Prison Reform Trust programme to reduce women’s imprisonment to reach across the UK
- Helped improve understanding and policy responses to the links between domestic abuse, coercive relationships and women’s offending
- Been influential with Ministers in all the nations of the UK”

These keynote speakers were followed by breakout sessions.

Prof. Nancy Loucks OBE spoke about her work supporting children and families affected by imprisonment.

“About half of men and two-thirds of women in prison have children under the age of 18. An estimated 20 – 27,000 children in Scotland have a parent go to prison each year. This means that about twice as many children each year experience a parent’s imprisonment than a parent’s divorce.”

Sofia Buncy, researcher and co-author of the first ever report into Muslim women in British prisons, discussed how the “failure to understand the particular issues and experiences at play for Muslim female prisoners leads to their invisibility on multiple levels: in policy, research, family and communities.”

Restorative justice was considered in an interactive and lively session with **David Merrington**. The group used the YouTube video “The Woolf Within” as a catalyst for part of their discussions. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1s6wKeGLQk>)

Afternoon session

After lunch the topic for discussion was Modern Slavery and Trafficking, starting with **Justice Teresa Doherty CBE** talking about the moves on legislation surrounding the exploitation of children, in peacetime and war. She spoke of some of the difficulties surrounding the cases of children being trafficked in cases of fraudulent adoption, with pressure being applied to try to have children sent for adoption from Africa to the USA under the pretence that they were orphans, when the truth was that they had families but were being “traded” for the money American adopters were willing to pay.

The UKPAC Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Survey was presented, along with analysis of the results, accompanied by a new handbook for use by Clubs to help address some of the issues highlighted by the results of the survey. Both of these documents are available on the UKPAC website, <https://sigbi.org/ukpac/our-work/trafficking/modern-slavery-and-human-trafficking-report/>

In the following breakout sessions there was continued discussion on the report and handbook by KimAnn Williamson MBE. At the end of her session she asked “What three things will you now do differently?”, an important consideration once knowledge has been obtained.

Unfortunately Allyson Davies from Barnardos was unable to attend the study day, but instead we heard from **Richard James** whose

presentation related to the trafficking of children, the specific rules relating to them and the nature of the ICTA service provided to them in the three early adopter sites of Greater Manchester, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and Wales.

The ICTA service generally provides advice and guidance to professionals and support to each young person identified as a potential victim of trafficking in a broad range of ways. “The government’s commitment to a national roll out of the scheme in the future will be a big step in the right direction for both battling modern slavery/trafficking and providing appropriate support for its victims.”

Justine Currell from Unseen informed us about the work done by Unseen on the UK-wide Modern Slavery Helpline (08000 121 700).

In their first year they took almost 4000 calls and over 700 online reports.

These numbers are growing. As a result they make referrals to police and safeguarding, covering all police forces in the UK. It has to be remembered that “The physical shackles and chains may have gone, but the psychological ones that have replaced them are much stronger.”

A great day!

There were many compliments on the Northern Ireland stewards, they were “Particularly friendly and helpful” “Such friendly delightful people in Northern Ireland!”

To summarise from the evaluation sheets... Excellent venue... Good Food... Good food for thought”... “Long may they continue!”





Meru Women's Garden

Singing and dancing!



Patricia Gatherum
Federation Project Liaison reports

Kenyan singing and dancing was a key feature of an inspiring study tour to Meru attended by five members of SI Canterbury in early April. The Canterbury members were part of a group of 24 who took part in a five day visit to see the impact of the Meru Women's Garden Project supported by Soroptimists across the Federation.

The project was originally developed by Seeds for Africa, a charity which was developed after the 2008 Lambeth Conference in Canterbury. SI Canterbury has supported it since 2014 and members were delighted when it was selected as the Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland Federation Project in 2015. Since that time £110,000 has been raised to empower, educate and enable women in one of the poorest regions of rural Kenya to establish their own sustainable food garden, achieve food security and rise out of poverty.

The women are trained in sustainable farming practices and agricultural techniques which maximise crop growth on small plots of land with unreliable rainfalls. They work in groups and are provided with plants, seeds, tools, equipment and a mentor for two years.

The Soroptimists were met on arrival in Meru by a large number of the women singing dancing and bearing gifts for their visitors. This was a feature throughout the visit and the women's warm and happy welcome, positive attitude and hope for a better future provided inspiration to all.

During the visit members were hosted by Margaret Ikiara, founder and leader of CIFORD (Community Initiatives for Rural Development) who developed and runs the project on the ground. They learnt more about the organisation's aims and vision and the work done by this amazing woman and her team of staff and volunteers.

A highlight of the trip was undoubtedly visiting the women's groups, seeing their gardens and talking with them about their crops. The women proudly told how they no longer need to walk to market to buy vegetables but can now feed their families from their own produce. Many have excess crops which they sell to raise a small income and most groups have established 'Table Banking' to support each other in times of greater need. They also discussed future needs and their hope that more women be given the opportunities that they have had.

During the week, the group also met with young girls who told how they have benefited from seminars educating them about the dangers of Female Genital Mutilation. These are also funded by the Soroptimist project and aim to dispel myths about this procedure, arm the girls with the confidence to stand up and say no and provide opportunities to discuss sexual health issues. The motto of these sessions is 'Girls Need Education not Circumcision'.

Soroptimists from SI Meru, the youngest Club in Kenya founded in 2013, joined the group for several of the days. This provided a wonderful opportunity to discuss common aims and projects and share ideas for supporting women and girls locally and worldwide.

On the final day of this inspiring visit, 194 women graduated from the project with a ceremony and party like no other. The site was decorated in celebration and dancing, singing, speeches and friendships were not marred by rain. In the words of Margaret Ikiara, standing in the muddy field as the rain poured down on us all, "We are blessed with rain. This project and these graduates are blessed".

The Soroptimists continue to fundraise to support four new groups of women who are now beginning training on the same project. Additional seminars on FGM are also planned for this year alongside seminars for boys and parents. If you would like to donate to the worthy project please contact Carol Reed at: secretarysicanterbury@gmail.com.



SI Woking and SI Weybridge

The ABC of fundraising for Meru Women's Garden Project: Awesome cakes, Beautiful outfits and Co-operation between SI Woking and SI Weybridge.

The result: their 'Tea & Temptations!' fashion show with afternoon tea made £1,760 for the women gardeners of Meru.

The clothes, modelled by Soroptimists, were provided by local retailers. A variety of items, including WOW bags, jewellery, accessories and clothes were on sale during the event. Members were also delighted to welcome representatives of the Liaise Women's Centre. This small local charity is supported by SI Woking and helps vulnerable women and women new to the community. Seeing the Liaise ladies display and model clothes they had made themselves in their art therapy classes was a real highlight.



An African evening at the Hub for Meru SI Harrogate raised £421.25 at their latest Meru fundraising evening.

Club Members and guests, with Regional President, Chris Clark and Regional President Elect, Pat Kilbane enjoyed a wonderful summers evening at the Hub in Knaresborough.

Belebele, an African Drumming and Singing group really set the mood before an excellent African supper after which Di Flemming and Jen Berry had everyone on their feet singing a couple of Kenyan songs, ably translated by Eunice Kwallah a guest from Kenya .

SIGBI Friendship Links

Project reports



Zarreen Babu
Friendship Link Co-ordinator, reports

This is my last post for Friendship Links, I have handed the baton over to Bhaswati Biswas of SI South Kolkata, India.

You have been so good to have responded to my requests for sharing your joint projects. Thank you for your patience in dealing with my repeated queries and thank you for sending your reports on time and with proper pictures.

I know you will continue to do so for Bhaswati. SIGBI really needs to hear about all your new joint projects with updates on their progress. Always, please, pay attention to photographs – clear and of high resolution! Cheers to you all. Catch you here every issue! In friendship, Zarreen

Joint Project: SI Hamilton – Bethany Home For Children, Morag Rennie reports

The Bethany Home is for children aged from birth to six years. It is regularly visited by Members of SI King Sabata Dalindyebo (KSD), with donations for the children.

We receive regular updates, the last on 15th January 2018, describing their Christmas visit to the Home. They had received a donation from SI Hamilton, that had been brought in person by Past President Ann Hodgson. They used this to supply nappies for the infants and party packs for the children. The email from President of SI KSD, Irene Kolosa said "We cannot express how grateful we are as SI KSD club for your continued support. We are happy to report that our Bethany Home Project is up and running. This is undoubtedly because of your support."

Joint Project Of SI Barnstaple - Knickers For Knowledge, main picture

SI Barnstaple raises funds for SI Bulawayo Members to operate K4K there by providing knickers for girls from the age of three, and sanitary towels throughout puberty, at two schools 80 kilometres from Bulawayo.

114 girls at Chithekani Primary School receive knickers, the younger 78 have two pairs a year and the older 36 three pairs, with two packs of sanitary towels a month.

In Sigonde Secondary School, 126 girls benefit through the year with one particular delivery in October, so the girls do not miss their final exams – without this protection, menstruation would be a barrier. This project is successful because of the friendship of our two Clubs, the Link having been formed in 1982.

A 'Once in a Lifetime' visit to Sierra Leone Dishi Attwood, SI Lichfield, reports

On a fact finding visit to the on going 'Kori Project' in Taiama, Dishi Attwood of SI Lichfield was able to go along with Rose Maribo Simbo and Gill Curry, the founding directors and Sister Soroptimists of SI Thames Valley and SI Stratford upon Avon, to come up with these findings:

- The impact of the successive stages of the project has been overwhelmingly positive.
- The women and wider community are very clear that the key is self-help and a commitment to building a better life for themselves.
- The women of Taiama recognise the generosity of women elsewhere in the world - most of whom they have never met - who respect the challenges they have overcome to get this far.
- The three main businesses which have been embedded into the community should make it completely self-sufficient within the next 2-3 years.

They are all now committed to helping fund the final two projects - a lavatory block behind the Library and a building where local women can develop businesses such as crafts and soap making.

SI Pretoria-Tshwane Friendship Links provide valuable support for Mapula Embroideries through their Programme Action. Ina Roos reports



The Mapula Embroidery Project (now Mapula Embroideries) was founded in 1991 by Members of SI Pretoria (now SI Pretoria-Tshwane).

27 years later, there are more than 140 women in Mapula Embroideries, making it a well known and one of the important community art projects in South Africa.

Registered as a Trust at the end of 2016, Mapula Embroideries continues to be supported by its Club and Friendship Links. SI Oslo has helped with promotions and sales.

SI Taunus Germany, SI Westminster, USA and SI Mariager Fjord, Denmark, help with funds for uniforms for children of the workers and in developing new products.

SI Taunus has donated funds in the current year to transport women involved in the project who are suffering from HIV/AIDS to a clinic.

Visiting Intern Programme

VIP is a sponsored volunteering placement by SI Southern England (SISE) and SI Pretoria-Tshwane for a young woman (18 - 25) to work in three SI led projects in and around Pretoria. It is educative, empowering and will enable the volunteer to use and improve her skills and gain experience of other cultures.

They will collaborate again in 2018/19 and select either one or two interns for work/cultural experience in South Africa.

Clothes for patients at Weskoppies Psychiatric Hospital

Learning that there was an urgent need for clothes for patients in the Hospital, SI Pretoria-Tshwane delivered 58 winter tops and 40 skirts to one of the closed wards in winter.

The Club received a very welcome donation from SI Taunus to continue the clothes project as well as the tea and Christmas party and are looking forward to carrying on with this worthy project.

In other projects, SI Harrogate and District (UK) supported the St Francis Drop-in Centre library in Mamelodi, Pretoria for two years. Support for the education of children in House No. 1, SOS Children's Village in Mamelodi has been received for many years from their Friendship Links – those of SI Southern England in particular.

A donation of £700 was recently received from SI Southern England – SI Woking & District's Region. The donation includes £240 which is a specific bequest from Joyce Mounsey, a late member of SI Surrey Hills, which is to be used for books for the children.

They have also received financial assistance over three years from Soroptimist friends in the Netherlands with the training of a small group of Embroiderers in southern Rwanda.



Our new Club! SIGBI welcomes SI Asokoro, Nigeria

Chartered on 23rd June 2018

Victoria Pillah, Club President and Victoria Nlemigbo, Club Secretary, report

What began with the gathering of a few friends on the 24th of September 2017, which marked the beginning of SI Asokoro, culminated in an outstanding and outlandish charter ceremony and events that gave birth to SI Asokoro as a Soroptimist International Club through the efforts of our mentors, the commitment and hard work of our members.

Finally the long awaited day of charter arrived, 23 June, 2018. Nine months after the journey began, SI Asokoro was ready to join the long list of other Soroptimist International Clubs. The day began with the arrival of Members of SI Asokoro who prepared the venue for our guests, who began to arrive at 4:45pm and were received by the Members.

The event commenced at 5.00 pm with the introduction of guests followed by the piping in of the National President, SI Abuja President and other officials of Soroptimist International Nigeria and the incoming SI Asokoro President, Victoria Pillah.

This was one of the most exciting and enthralling parts of the event, and the regality and style will not be forgotten in a hurry. With this, the 32 Asokoro members began to realise that they have been admitted into this exalted group of great women.

SI Nigeria President, Nneka Chris-Asoluka presented the Charter Certificate which was

signed by the SI Asokoro Charter President and Secretary. SI Nigeria President Nneka then inducted the new members of SI Asokoro. Our joy was inestimable and the gratitude we felt can only be imagined.

Our Project, to build a Drug Abuse Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre, was then unveiled.

This was one of the most important parts of this event. This project will enable us to support existing efforts towards curbing the menace that drug excesses are causing in our society. Recently, the BBC brought this home with the documentary on how far ravaged our society has been by this. We are also aware that if we can make a major impact in this direction, which we know we can, we can provide the privacy and security that women and girls need to be able to get the attention and support they require.

We exhibited a model of the rehabilitation centre so that our guests and audience were made aware of our plans and commitments. Pledges and commitments were collected from the distinguished guests and audience.

We must add that, this is a very huge project and is very capital intensive. The cost of the project is an estimated N300,000,000.00 (Nigerian Naira) - approximately £630,000.

We use this medium to appeal for support from SIGBI to enable us execute this project.



The Presidents of SI Asokoro and SI Nigeria and other officials cut the charter cake, and popped the champagne corks.

It is a delight to have been chartered, and we promise to uplift, promote and uphold the great and historic tradition of Soroptimist International through effortless service to the course of Soroptimist international.



SIGBI welcomes back

SI Portadown, Northern Ireland

It was with great sadness eight years ago that Portadown Soroptimist International Members agreed to close the Club. However some Members were hopeful that the Club could be re-established and that has recently happened!

About 18 months ago, former Member Maureen Maguire started to realise her dream to get the club up and running again. Since then she has recruited a vibrant and enthusiastic group who have achieved the dream goal of chartering a new Portadown Club.

As Maureen, the Founding President said in her opening address, "Like the phoenix rising from the ashes, Portadown Soroptimists will be a strong club once again".

Portadown Soroptimist's have a full and varied programme of activities that fall into the Soroptimist (SIGBI) Programme Action categories to educate, empower and enable women and girls locally and internationally.

Members have already been involved in fund raising for the 'White Ribbon Campaign' and the SIGBI 'Meru' project and have hosted a very successful 'Meet your Councillor' event to mark International Women's Day.

The Club meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm.

If you would like to find out more or come along to a meeting, email the Club at newclubportadown@gmail.com



Kori Women's Development Project

Dishi Attwood, SI Lichfield and District reports on her visit to Kori, in Sierra Leone

I always wanted to go on the school educational cruise but we didn't have the money. I always wanted Oxfam to send me on a trip to visit one of their projects but they only chose celebrities. By saying yes to Rose Simbo and Gill Curry to go to Sierra Leone, I was taking an opportunity that came because I am a Soroptimist.

It wasn't a 'brave' decision as people thought. It came out of ignorance of the location, the climate or the journey, but I didn't have to be brave. Rose had thought of every eventuality to keep us safe and comfortable as we visited the project with the eyes of outsiders for the first time. Sierra Leone is a beautiful country with wonderful people.

The Kori Women's Development Project was always one with an end date, an exit plan.

A project that will continue to be sustainable without further outside intervention and support. A project that would educate, empower and enable. It would not allow a dependency culture. It could be celebrated – and for two weeks we celebrated. I do have to declare that in the second week I was a little unwell (everyone else was fine) and celebrated wearing XXXL incontinence pants that Gill had thoughtfully taken with her!

The women of Kori now have materials to make clothes, sanitary wear and soap. They have a tutor to teach them handicrafts. They have pigs for breeding and sale. And that is enough.

This intervention over 10 years has not overhauled their lifestyle but valued it. It is now an easier life not a new one, it is dependent on them working together so no woman is ranked higher than another. During our visit, they agreed a board of trustees to work with the trustees in England.

The last phase of the project is to build a workshop at a cost of £10,000 for the women to produce items for sale. With these sales, the women of Kori Chiefdom become self-sufficient and can help themselves to continuing wellbeing.

Goods will be for sale at the Kori table at Conference, all proceeds will go towards funding this room. Please bring any reels of thread that you may have finished with and are happy to donate to the project.

Come and talk to us about our visit and perhaps see something to buy too!



Penwortham Girls High School The School Club's first year

Karen Rainford, SI Preston, reports

Firstly, we would like to say we have thoroughly enjoyed our first year as a school group of Soroptimisses and we can only hope for such success for the years to come!

We have accomplished many things this year, one being sending a young girl named Zodwa to secondary school in Swaziland. We did this by raising money on sports day at school selling cakes and drinks raising over £250!

We have also kept in contact with Zodwa and are happy to say she is doing great!

We have also looked at other charities to fund have chosen Toilet Topping.

Our school has held a Tenner Challenge where each form group had to come up with new and exciting ideas to make as much profit from the original £10 we were given. Thanks to the hard work of our Soroptimisses group

and the help of the rest of the school, we managed to raise £700 which has been donated to fund the building of toilet blocks.

After such a successful first year, we have now begun to look to the future and think about what we would like to do next year. We plan to utilise our upcoming sports day to plan a fundraiser to raise money for new charities that need support.

We are planning to donate to charities that help to improve education for girls and young children – one of these plans to donate laptops to schools in more deprived areas allowing them to access a higher standard of education.

Overall, we feel we have had a brilliant start this year and can't wait for the next one!

The PGHS Soroptimisses

Communications

Gail Teague, Director of Communications, reports

This is my first contribution to the magazine since becoming Director of Communications. This year we have seen a change in the way companies can use our Personal information. SIGBI had to conform to these rules and this has brought what many of you see as unnecessary bureaucracy.

Please read the FAQs as these have been well written and will answer many of your questions. Remember we are all trying to find our way through changes.

The Communication Committee was recently asked for your opinions on information received from SI and SIGBI. The result of this was, as usual with communication, good and bad. Not enough and too much.

The Federation Board is trying to communicate with you through various channels and is keen to improve. A synopsis is sent after every board meeting to your Councillor for dissemination to you all. We hope you find this of interest.

The magazine is sent to you all and is used by many of you as a marketing tool. Does this work? The Club news at the back is always

fascinating as this shows how the individual Clubs work to reach our goals.

The Facebook page is a useful way of getting short snappy messages across and can be used as a marketing tool. I am often promoting my Club page and am amazed by how many people it reaches in just a short time. Although it does not seem to attract members it does however raise our profile and interest in the Organisation.

SIGBI is using Stats available from Facebook and other digital media to target areas and follow up on leads from any Facebook advertising we have done. Although this is still in its infancy some interesting information is being gained enabling us to target our market more effectively.

We need to move from old-fashioned communications to modern communications to remain alive to members and attract new Members, so please work with us as we try all the methods of communication available to us to promote our fabulous organisation across the globe. I am always happy to hear how we can improve communication with existing and prospective members – my email is: communicationsdirector@sigbi.org.



**Soroptimist
International
Great Britain & Ireland
SIGBI
News**



Membership Month Award winners!

Judith Grocott,
Director of Membership, reports

The 2018 Video Competition

This was a very hard decision as we had 2 entries that were particularly good, but we eventually decided on SI San Fernando, as the use of the #WHYSOROPTIMIST speech bubble allowed members to express their reasons for being a Soroptimist in both a simple and easily understood manner.

Well done to all who entered this competition I know from experience that these videos are not as easy to make as they seem.

The video can be viewed at
<https://youtu.be/l-EVXTHmQ64>

The winners of the Recruitment Award are SI East London and SI San Fernando who have tied in first place with 11 new members each during the year 2017-2018.

Well done and congratulations to you both. Each Club will receive £75 for the Club Members to use in whatever way they wish. We again have a tie for the Retention Award.

SI Barbados and SI Durban each have retained seven Members who joined in 2015-2016.

Well done to both these Clubs, who again will receive £75 to spend as the Club Members

wish. It is important to recruit members, but it is also very important that we look after them and retain them.

The 2018 Photo Competition

This year the photo competition has been won by SI Plymouth and District. Both for its content 'Taking every opportunity to attract new members' and high definition, because as good as a picture may be, if the quality is poor it won't reproduce properly.

So well done, I look forward to seeing more of your pictures in the future.



SI Leeds Literary Prize Readers' Choice

Val Saunders, Chair,
SI Leeds Literary Prize Advisory Panel reports

Photo: 2016 prize award event. L-R: Head Judge Kadija George, 1st prize winner Amita Murray and SIGBI President Margaret Emsley. Photo: Max Farrar

We are looking for readers! Join us in judging the 2018 SI Leeds Literary Prize

What is the SI Leeds Literary Prize?

SI Leeds has been running its national biennial Literary Prize for unpublished fiction by UK-based Black and Asian women aged 18 and above since 2012. Now in its fourth edition, we will be awarding the 2018 prize in October.

The purpose of the prize is to act as a loudspeaker for fresh and original literary voices from an under-represented group, and to help them reach new audiences in mainstream culture.

We are delighted that many of our entrants have gone on to land publishing deals, agents, and critical acclaim for their writing. We received 44 entries for the 2018 prize, these will be whittled down to a final shortlist of six by late August by our professional judging panel.

The final result will be announced at our award event on 3 October, at the Ilkley Literature Festival, when we will be welcoming our SIGBI President. To read about the prize, visit our website: www.sileedsliteraryprize.com

So why do we need readers?

First, second and third prizes are awarded by the judges. Importantly, in addition, we award a special prize, the Soroptimist Readers' Choice, to the writer who, in the opinion of participating SI members, has submitted the best entry.

This may or may not be one of the three winners placed by the judges. We are looking for additional readers for the 2018 prize.

SI Members who have entered before have found it a stimulating and rewarding experience. This additional award is seen by the industry as a valuable indication of the views of readers, rather than professional judges.

Kit de Waal, who won the SI Readers' Choice award in 2014, has gone on to develop a really strong writing career and her latest novel was longlisted for this year's Women's Fiction prize.

What is involved?

SI members who wish to join us will have access to electronic copies of the six shortlisted

manuscripts for the four weeks between 28th August–26th September and will vote for their preferred choice.

This means a lot of reading but you don't need to read each manuscript from start to finish. The first 40 pages should give you a feel of whether the author has engaged your interest, so a manuscript that leaves you cold can be abandoned without guilt.

The Soroptimist Readers' Choice is there to reward the entry which most engaged your imagination and interest or spoke to you most entertainingly or profoundly and which enriched your life in some way.

How to sign up

If you would like to join us, please email us at:
secretary.sileeds@outlook.com
and we will be in touch with you.

Happy Reading!

SIGBI Shopping



Soroptimist booklet
3 booklets per pack
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TO ORDER

The full list of retail items is available from Joanne or via the Members' area of www.sigbi.org/Members under "SIGBI Shop". There is an order form for items from SIGBI and from Corporate Insignia on the website. All items exclusive of postage and packing. Do not send money with your order.

SIGBI Ltd sends all orders by the most economical postage, cost is dependent on the weight and size of the goods. An invoice plus post and packing will be sent with your order. Contact: Joanne Voller, Sales Officer, Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Ltd., 2nd Floor, Beckwith House, Wellington Road North, Stockport, SK4 1AF. T: 0161 480 7686 F: 0161 477 6152 E: hq@sigbi.org. To pay by credit card, provide Card Number, Expiry Date and Security Code (3 digit number on reverse of card) with your order. Please allow 7-10 days for your order to be processed. **All item costs are + P&P.**

In the mail

20th April 2018 – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Membership Month is nearly here
2. Thermal Mug now in stock
3. Jute Shopping Bag
4. Membership Awards 2018
5. New Club in Northern Ireland
6. Email addresses
7. Federation Vacancies – 2nd Call for nominations
8. SI Board Meeting Feb 2018 Summary

4th May 2018 - Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. How to – Create a Facebook Advert
2. SIGBI GM 2018 – Resolutions
3. Club Photo of the Month April 2018
4. SIGBI's ECOSOC Status
5. Actions for Membership Month 2018
6. Friendship Link Newsletter May 2018
7. Queen's Garden Party 5 June 2018
8. Two New Clubs for SIGBI June 2018
9. Database Downtime 9 May 2018

18th May 2018 - Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Club Privacy Notice
2. Letter from President Sue Biggs re fee increases
3. Amendments to Resolution Letter – amended
4. Early Bird Registration ends 30 June
5. Liverpool 2018 – call for Stewards
6. Fed. Management Board Emails
7. Elder Awards – NAWO
8. UKPAC Study Day – 7 July 2018

1st June 2018 - Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Club Ballots 2-8 Reminder
2. General Data Protection Regulations
3. Liverpool 2018 Conference
4. SIGBI Privacy Notice
5. Number 63 Statement
6. Benevolent Fund – Vacancies
7. Meru Women's Garden Leaflets
8. UKPAC Study Day – 7 July 2018
9. SI Tunis Ariana 10th Anniversary

15th June 2018 - Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Club Ballot 9 – Amendment to SIGBI Articles – CD 5 July 2018
2. Survey to Clubs re "The Way Forward for Regions"
3. SIGBI Trading Ltd. Update from Chair
4. Club Photo of the Month – May
5. Ways to find Regional Websites
6. Membership Matters – June 2018
7. SIGBI HQ Closed Friday 22 June 2018 pm
8. Liverpool Conference 2018
9. Benevolent Fund – Vacancies
10. UKPAC Study Day – 7 July 2018
11. Video update from SI President Mariet on her President's Appeal

6th July 2018 - Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. FPAC Meeting 2018 Silent Observers Form
2. Announcements from SIGBI HQ
3. Liverpool 2018 Conference
4. Club Photo of the Month – June 2018
5. SI Board and Charter Celebration September 2018
6. "Growing our Brand in the local community" Workshops – prizes.



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2000 Club



Members from these Clubs were the lucky winners:

May 2018

SI Stockton on Tees £100
SI Wakefield £100
SI Taunton £50
SI Weston-super-Mare £50
SI Bristol £25
SI Wallasey £25

June 2018

Non Soroptimist Scotland £1000
SI Kings Lynn £500
SI Guernsey £500
SI Bristol £250
SI Weston-super-Mare £250

About the 2000 Club

The 2000 Club was set up in 2000 to raise funds for the upkeep of Number 63, our Club in London. Anyone can join, the cost is £1 per week. Six winners are chosen each month by SI Plymouth. The first two win £100, the next two win £50 and the remaining two win £25. Twice a year in the big draw, the first prize is £1,000, the two second prizes are £500 and the last two win £250. There is a membership application form on the Number 63 website: <http://www.number63.co.uk/>

Club News



SI Barnstaple called their tombola stall Hunky Panky and attracted much attention at a local festival. Money raised will help with the purchase of anti-trafficking toilet stickers.



SI Belfast enjoyed a beauty evening at the Fountain of Beauty in Belfast on 14th March 2018 – and raised £240 for Action Cancer.



Ten young women from **SI Brixham** took part in Women -v- Cancer Ride The Night- all finishing the 100km course cycling around central London in an horrendous thunderstorm. Brixham Soroptimists sponsored them for £200 which went towards their outfits. They raised £7000 for women's cancer charities.



SI Buxton enjoyed an "awayday" to relax and unwind, amidst their relentless work for charities and local organisations. They followed last year's Charter talk about hats by visiting the Hat Museum in Stockport, enjoying Afternoon Tea at the Ritz. Many hats which were sold as "Made in London" for fashion weeks were in fact made in Stockport. The huge demonstration hat was worn by Chris Campbell and Elaine McDonald, both Past Presidents.

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SI Cannock is aware of a growing problem in the UK – families who cannot afford to buy sanitary wear. A survey found that 137,700 girls missed school last year because they couldn't afford sanitary products. 6 per cent of parents admit they have been so desperate to equip their daughters with sanitary protection they have resorted to stealing them. Women's Aid is aware of the issue and many food banks now distribute sanitary products. SI Cannock made an initial collection of products to give to Staffordshire Women's Aid and aim to set up a regular collection and distribution. Obviously this needs a broader reach so SI Cannock has set up a petition on the Government Petitions page. 10,000 signatures will elicit a response from Government, 100,000 will bring a debate in Parliament.



SI Dewsbury Members are pictured on their float at the Gawthorpe Maypole parade, raising awareness of Water Aid having made clouds, raindrops, a well from plastic milk bottles and dressed as taps and toilets.



SI East London Members have been helping women learn to bake at a fun baking class at the Luminary Bakery – a social enterprise which uses baking to help vulnerable women into employability and entrepreneurship, equipping them with transferable skills. Club President, Nimrat Bains, said, "We have close ties with the Luminary Bakery. We're proud to partner with them and support the women – including mentoring women attending training courses. A baking class was a brilliant way to have fun and learn a new skill."



SI Fylde has launched a Soroptimist Challenge Badge in collaboration with a local guiding group, Amounderness FY Rangers. These unofficial guiding badges are created on a regular basis with guiding groups and partner organisations. The Soroptimist Challenge Badge is the culmination of two years' hard work by both partners, creating a series of challenges - 33 in all - for all age groups to include Rainbows through to Senior Rangers. The badge, which was designed by one of the young Rangers, will promote Soroptimism to youth groups at a wider level and Youth leaders are invited to send for the challenge pack for their particular unit. Please contact Linda for further information on fyldesorops@gmail.com or Natalie on afyrangersbadges@gmail.com



SI Harare's Friendship Link Club is SI Kansas City, SI Americas which takes part in the Federation wide Ruby Award scheme, which honours ordinary women who have done extraordinary things to help women and girls. SI Kansas chose Shirley Suter as their winner this year, honouring her untiring support for Harare's projects, undertaken over many years in very difficult economic circumstances. Shirley is donating her \$300 dollar prize to three Club projects. The first provides material and financial support to traditional birth attendants who help women in a poor Harare suburb. The second, SODA, is a centre where the destitute and aged can find food and shelter. The last is Chikupo School, in a poor rural area and very short of resources. Margaret Oldroyd, who visited these projects when she was Federation President, says, "Shirley is a wonderful Soroptimist who serves her Club and her community with persistence and commitment. "I am so excited and delighted that she has been honoured in this unique way."



SI Kidderminster focused on FUN with a Games Evening with family and friends which proved to be one of the Club's highlights of the year. Great fun was had with a number of board games such as Ludo, Snakes & Ladders, Connect, Labyrinth, as well as Yhatzee and dominoes etc. refreshments provided suitable sustenance. The money raised from the token admission charge paid for the replacement of the Club's pop-up banner.



SI King's Lynn's work to attract new members took a slower than usual turn at the World Snail Racing Championship – part of a Fete held at Congham. SI King's Lynn entered Susan, a fine locally-reared snail. Susan performed well in very hot conditions, coming first in her heat, and second in the final. The stand was busy all afternoon, with lots of people dropping by to find out more about Soroptimist International.



SI Loughborough and SI Leicester report that since its launch in July 2017 the local Dementia UK/ Admiral Nurses fundraising group, comprising representatives from many walks of life and organisations, has worked to raise the profile of Admiral Nurses and the £50,000 a year needed to employ a local Admiral

Nurse. Admiral Nurses work with families to provide support, expert guidance and practical solutions to help them live more positively with dementia – a unique lifeline. Both SI Loughborough and SI Leicester fully support the initiative, running a fundraising stall on Loughborough market, raising awareness and £555.



SI Llandudno helped local police with a new initiative to combat the recent upsurge in 'pop up brothels' in local hotels. Seven members joined officers and visited 60 hotels to raise awareness and advise hoteliers how to act if suspicious.



SI Nnewi, Nigeria celebrated International Women's Day with 800 girls at the Anglican Girls Secondary School, giving a talk on general body hygiene and cleanliness during their menstrual period. They also donated bags of pads and cartons of shaving sticks to the students. They were very interested by the talk and the items donated to them.



SI Perth Member Jean Campbell delivered SI Perth's latest donation - 105 pairs of pants and 266 lightly used bras - to Smalls for All 'Pantagon Pants HQ' in Livingston.



SI Preston Members met up with their Friendship Link Club, SI Dewsbury for their annual summer afternoon tea. Members brought a 'Jacob's Join' – SI Dewsbury brought the savouries and Preston the desserts. The group dined on prawns, salmon, pork pie, profiteroles, tiramisu, Eton Mess and toffee apple crunch – plus a quiz and of course, a good chat!



SI Ramsbottom saw a plea on Facebook from Ramsbottom United Football Club for a sponsor to buy kit and training jackets for a new team of Under 7 girls. SI Ramsbottom decided to step in and the girls are pictured wearing their kit at a training session with Club Members Sue Cuthbertson, Ann Bennett, Judy Phillips, Barbara Lord and Maureen Sampson along with the team's coach Alan Keane.



SI Selby reports that The Stroke Unit at York District Hospital and other Soroptimist charities will be the beneficiaries of a successful Quiz evening at Eggborough Village Hall. 100 people pitted their wits and raised over £800. Quizmaster, Bob Hutchinson, put everyone through their paces with 100 questions, picture clues while supper was provided by SI Selby. President Rita Pearson said "This was an excellent evening and Members are thrilled to raise a significant sum for their charities."



SI Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead John and Margaret Lenton (Mayor and Mayoress) and Mark Blackshaw (The Mayor's Officer) attended the Club's May Meeting. Margaret is a Member and she, John and Mark told members about the role of the Mayor in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and their experiences.



SI Southport asks... Have you tried the ancient art of sabrage? Neither had most of a group of 15 Southport Soroptimists on a trip



On 13th June, Members of SI Sunderland enjoyed a very interesting talk from Nigel Barlow and Debbie Patten from Northumbria Bloodbikes, the chosen charity of Club President Megan Blacklock. Run entirely by volunteers, the charity acts as a courier service for the NHS during evenings and weekends, saving the health service around a quarter of a million pounds a year. After their presentation, a couple of brave members were invited to try one of the motorbikes our for size!

to Reims. Sabrage is the ancient art of decapitation of a bottle of champagne with a sabre. 25 bottles were 'sabraged' and, in true Soroptimist style, not a lot wasted! Three champagne houses were visited as part of the four day tour and there was also time to visit the main sites in the town.



SI Sunderland's new Member, Karen Alexander, has had a whirlwind introduction to

Soroptimist's Programme Action activities, by flying off to Kenya to see at first hand the results of the Club's donations to the Meru Women's Garden Project. Karen became a member in September 2017 and expressed an immediate interest in Programme Action activities, particularly the Meru project. A space became available when another member dropped out and Karen flew to Nairobi with 25 other SIGBI members. Karen said, "Memories of the seven days in Kenya will remain with me for the rest of my life. I was so lucky to be able to join my friends on this visit and proud to be a member of one of the organisations supporting this amazing project."

REGIONAL NEWS

SI Cheshire, North Wales & Wirral Region's Llangollen International Eisteddfod Committee, recently held a Charity Fashion Show and Afternoon Tea at the Duke of Westminster's Eaton Park, Cheshire.

The event was attended by the Lord Mayor of Chester Cllr Razia and her Consort and SIGBI Regional President Hilary Laidler.

The event raised a magnificent £1921. Each year the Eisteddfod Committee sponsor a girls/women group and this July the choir is from South Africa.

Proceeds of this event will also go to the International President's charity: Women, Water and Leadership Appeal.

A big THANK YOU to all who supported this event.

Photo L-R: Jean Schroeder SI Heswall, Helen Storr SI Heswall, Regional President Hilary Laidler, Consort Stephen Daniels, Guest Dianne Simpson, Lord Mayor Cllr. Razia Daniels, Guest Philip Cowan, SI Heswall President Maureen Sayer and Chairman LIME Committee Jenny Wilson.



SIGBI Celebrations!



SI Calcutta celebrated its 38th anniversary with Members from sister Clubs SI South Kolkata, SI Burdwan and SI Pune Metro East and other guests. The programme focused on environmental sustainability, with a film about the effect of climate change on Kolkata and a talk by the noted Environmentalist Bonani Kakkar. This was followed by camaraderie and fellowship over high tea. However, the evening was tinged with sadness due to the recent passing of senior member Ratna Dutt, whose smiling and graceful presence was sorely missed.



SI Cape Of Good Hope recently held its AGM at the Dukes Officers Mess at the Castle of Good Hope's Bastion Fort, built between 1666 and 1679 and considered the best preserved example of a Dutch East India Fort. The AGM was held in the beautiful Dukes Officers Mess where we have been privileged to hold our AGMs during the past 4 years. Merlyn Segall and Sue Pritt were presented with their 30 year Service Awards and Trunell Morom received a special award for Outstanding Service.



SI Crosby came to choose their President for their 80th anniversary year and there was only one candidate. As a longstanding member, Sheila Chatterton was also celebrating her 80th birthday... the choice had to be her. "Age is a euphemism for experience," said Sheila, who has been recently saddened to learn that one of the youngest carers in her local area is a five year old child. She has pledged to make extra support for Young Sefton Carers – a key aim of her year of office. "We are aware of what they are doing and want to find more ways of supporting them." Photo: President Sheila and President, Debbie Oulton, from Formby.

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SI Cardiff's Honorary Member, Pat Kernick received her 60 year Long Service award from Club President Jen at her home as she was unable to attend the AGM due to illness. Pat is a former Club and Regional President and was on the Federation Board. President Jen was accompanied by Anthea Thomas who received her 45 year long Service award at the AGM.



At **SI Dewsbury's** 76th Charter Lunch, 245 years worth of Long Service Awards were presented by Chris Clark, SI Yorkshire President, on the 24th June.



SI Drogheda President, Carmel Schmidt, hosted a lunch party to celebrate the Club's Diamond Anniversary. Drogheda Members, the current National President, Teresa Irwin, Past Presidents of the Drogheda Club and their guests, together with Soroptimists from across Ireland celebrated in the hotel where the inaugural meeting and Charter Dinner took place in 1958. Three Past National Presidents who are members of the Drogheda Club were present: Margaret Geraghty, Carmel Schmidt and Rona Connolly.



SI Dungannon The Chair of Mid Ulster Council, Kim Ashton, held a reception for members of SI Dungannon to recognise their service to volunteering in the local community. Northern Ireland's Regional President Joanne presented long service certificates to nine members on behalf of SIGBI who together have given over 500 years of service to Soroptimism and many other community groups. Certificates varied from 25, 30, 40 and 50 years service. The Club currently has 25 members. Front row : Kim Ashton Chair Mid Ulster Council, Regional President Joanne, President Marie SI Dungannon and Isobel Holmes Honorary Life Member of Region.



SI Durban President Saijal Bandul presented Hannah Lurie with her Golden Membership Award, as she moves towards 50 years of service as a Soroptimist. Hannah, an Artist and Sculptor trained in Johannesburg, Durban and London, has undertaken numerous exhibitions in South Africa. Her work tells many stories and has been a reflection of her passion for the history and cultural mosaic in South Africa. She has served as President of SI Durban and has also served on the National SISA body.



SI East Grinstead Soroptimists – Brenda and Sue – and a dog – travelled into London to join Procession 2018 - a living art event to celebrate 100 years of votes for women. As far as the eye could see there were women processing through the capital culminating in a stirring walk down Whitehall to Parliament. Keeping in colour blocks of purple, green and white (the colours of the suffragette movement) they sang, cheered, danced and celebrated the success of women who fought to get women the vote.



SI Fylde celebrated 80 years and 100 twinned toilets at a wonderful dinner at the Glendower Hotel, St Annes. Chartered on St George's Day in 2017, their service work includes educating and empowering women and girls worldwide. Members from Friendship Links in Skipton and Tynedale and 14 former Club Presidents. Town Crier, Colin Ballard, greeted guests, a toast to Fylde Soroptimists was made by Federation President, Susan Biggs, and the beautiful cake, made by Catherine Greathead of Lytham Cakes, daughter of a Soroptimist, was officially cut by Fylde Honorary Member, Phyllis Sanderson, Susan Biggs and Regional President, Maureen Howarth.



On May 13th SI Halifax celebrated its 90th Anniversary with a celebration lunch. They welcomed two Members from their Friendship Link in Deventer, Holland and six Members from their Friendship Link, SI Staffordshire Moorlands. The Mayor and Mayoress of Halifax, Councillor Ferman Ali and his wife Mrs Shaheen Ali, SIGBI President Sue Biggs, Yorkshire President Chris Clark, Deputy Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Christine Harris and Geraldine Carter all spoke, celebrating the Club's many achievements.



SI Harrogate celebrated the Long Service of Members totalling 150 years at their AGM and welcomed SI Yorkshire President Chris Clark who presented certificates to Mary Broussine (50 years), Denyse Hyatt (40 years), Rachel Richardson and Pam Johnson (30 years) service. Mary spoke of the sisterhood of Soroptimism and how we look after each other as well as making a difference to the lives of others.



SI Kettering Doris Barker received her 40 years certificate from acting President Eileen Smith.



SI King's Lynn welcomed Sarah Beale, CEO of CITB as guest speaker at their annual Charter Dinner. Sarah shared her experiences as a woman at a senior level in the construction industry and the importance of a diverse workforce and how construction presents many exciting careers options. SI King's Lynn President Kim Bramham said "We were delighted that Sarah was able to attend our lunch. Not only was Sarah's own experience very interesting, but also the message from Sarah that the construction industry has opened its doors and that there really is a variety of exciting careers available to women and girls."



SI Leigh and District Soroptimists held their Annual General Meeting when outgoing President Pat Woodward handed the chain of office over to new President Wendy Harding at the Club's new meeting venue, Holiday Inn, Leigh Sports Village. To add to the evening Alice Judge and Marion Smith celebrated 50 years as Soroptimists by recounting the value and pleasure of being part of the world largest women's service organisation. Club President Pat presented Alice and Marion with long service certificates and bouquets of flowers as a gesture of thanks for all the voluntary work they have undertaken locally, nationally and internationally.



SI Limerick recently celebrated with their long-time member, Anna Casey, who was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award for Service to her community. In her work life, Anna distinguished herself as Matron of Barrington's Hospital and was very involved with both the Caring for Carers and the Limerick Alzheimer's Society.



SI Middlesbrough celebrated the centenary of women's suffrage with a wonderful speaker, Vyvienne Mack (SI Durham) who delivered an interesting presentation on VOTE 100. 2018 marks 100 years since Parliament passed a law which allowed the first women, and all men, to vote for the first time. Gift bags were on sale in support of Indian school children's education, the Vidya Jyothi Scheme and the St Vincent de Paul Society.



SI Rishton and Great Harwood's recent meeting was an evening of celebration. Three members were presented with certificates to recognise their Long Service and commitment to the Soroptimist organisation. Club President for 2018-2019, Lesley Duckworth had the enjoyable duty of presenting the certificates. Isobel Duckworth received her certificate to celebrate that she had been an active member of Soroptimist International for 55 years. Certificates were also presented to Dorothy Casey and Joyce Hargreaves who had both served as Soroptimists for 25 years. Dorothy and Joyce continue to carry out very important roles within the Club as Programme Action Officer and Club Secretary.



SI St Austell Member, Mary Weston is pictured receiving her 50 year of Membership certificate from Immediate Past SIGBI President Ann Hodgson at the South West and Channel Island Regional Conference and Friendship weekend held in Tiverton Devon.



SI Southend Members Cathy Cottridge & Sharon Spivey from SI Southend at the 'Voice & Vote: Women's Place in Parliament' exhibition in Westminster Hall, London.

SIGBI Celebrations!



No 63 celebrates 70th year Debbie Proops, Manager, No. 63, reports

Ann Garvie, Chairman of No 63 welcomed everyone to The Cholmondely Room by the River Thames in the historic and beautiful House of Lords at The Palace Of Westminster, the perfect venue for Number 63's 70th Anniversary Celebrations on Wednesday 2nd May 2018.

This was a tremendous success with a full house - showing how so many Soroptimists want to support No.63's continuation. We are so fortunate to have our iconic "welcoming home" in London! The history of our Club goes back to those forward thinking ladies who bought the building back in 1948 - incredibly, these amazing ladies had to raise £17,000 to buy the house - some even mortgaging their homes!

Soroptimist International was the first to occupy the building, before they moved to Cambridge, followed later by SIGBI. When SIGBI moved to its new offices in Stockport, 63 became a Residential Club, as it is today. The Conference Room is still regularly used by SIGBI Federation and other organisations.

After an excellent Lunch, Chairman Ann Garvie introduced the speakers, first of all our



Sponsor, Baroness Blood MBE (centre, above), who spoke about The Integrated Education Fund of Northern Ireland. The Baroness was followed by Hilary Arden, Service Delivery Manager, The National Osteoporosis Society.

The Vote Of Thanks was given by Former Chairman, 63, Theresa Nixon, who thanked Baroness Blood. Soroptimists and their friends enjoyed a superb luncheon and, happily, the sun came out briefly so that guests could enjoy the experience of being on the terrace overlooking the River Thames; a unique and wonderful day.



Photo: Debbie Proops with Deborah Thomas, Global Exec Secretary, Soroptimist International.



SI Bournemouth wins Queens Award for Voluntary Service

SI Bournemouth was awarded The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2018 on 2nd June 2018. This award was created by HM The Queen in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of her Coronation, recognising excellence in voluntary activities carried out by groups in the community - the MBE for volunteer groups.

The notification stated: "The work your group does for the community was very much admired by the independent Assessment Committee, chaired by Sir Martyn Lewis CBE. I am delighted to inform you that your group has been selected as a recipient for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) 2018.

"The award of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2018 represents a tremendous achievement for your organisation. We hope that everyone involved, and particularly your volunteers, feel immensely proud of the recognition that this Award represents."

The award was announced in The London Gazette on 2nd June and the Club was invited to a Royal Garden Party and was represented by Shirley Thompson, President at the time of the nomination and Bobbie White, then Immediate Past-President and stalwart leader of the STEM Challenge from the beginning.



The Club will also receive:

- A signed certificate from Her Majesty The Queen, to be presented locally by the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset;
- An English Crystal trophy with the QAVS logo insignia;
- Permission to use the official QAVS Logo on the Club's stationery, publications and website.

SI Bournemouth is most grateful to The Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, Angus Campbell, to Ian Jones, Head of Regional Community Partnerships, Office of the Vice-Chancellor at Bournemouth University for the nomination for this award and to Andrew Tate, Head of In-Service Support, RNLI and Angharad Holloway, Head at Talbot Heath School for their support of the nomination for this award.

It is a fitting recognition of our STEM Challenge and the culmination of 80 years of voluntary service by SI Bournemouth and the first QAVS to be presented to a Soroptimist Club.



NAWO Elder Awards for deserving Soroptimists - Liz Batten reports

On a very hot July day, two longstanding Soroptimists were honoured by the National Alliance of Women's Organisations (NAWO) at a gathering in London. Zarin Hainsworth OBE, Chair of NAWO, introduced the Elder Awards, set up to celebrate the work of feminists who are over 80, still heavily involved in the women's movement, and have inspired others.

Kath Bill, Chairman of Lancashire North West County Trefoil Guild, introduced Audrey Forster, of SI Preston and a driving force in the Girl Guiding movement. Kath said "Audrey has packed so much into her life, a Girl Guider for 22 years, District Commissioner, Camp Advisor, County Secretary, County President, County Vice President, what hasn't she done in Guiding?" She started four Trefoil Guilds and acquired a campsite for Girl Guides."

Audrey said, 'It takes 40 or 50 years of nurturing of people to see the results come through.' She talked about new initiatives to equip Girl Guides for their roles in the modern world and mentioned Soroptimisses - the school Club established by SI Preston which holds cake sales to raise funds to support girls' education.

Jenny Vince, Past Federation President, introduced Hilary Page and spoke of her many years of service to SIGBI at every level, serving as International President from 1997-9, "People who meet Hilary now don't realise the valuable contribution she made to our organisation. She has mentored their careers, given such wise advice and accomplished such great things."

Zarin Hainsworth spoke of Hilary's involvement in the founding of Gender Action for Peace and Security. Annette Lawson former Women's National Commission Chair, a huge admirer of Hilary, said, "She was somebody who did speak, when she spoke you listened, because it was always something that was really important to hear." Annette closed by saying: "I am hugely grateful to you personally, Hilary for the huge support I always felt you gave me and also for NAWO as an organisation. You are a very valuable person."

Receiving the award, Hilary said, "I see many faces I've known for many years, I think NAWO is a wonderful organisation. I'm amazed that GAPS is still going, it's marvellous that CSW has grown so that so many people now attend.

"I'm greatly honoured to be here and to see so many people I've worked with over so many years. So glad that I was able to make it and to meet you all face to face."

Annette Lawson, former Chair of NAWO and of the WNC was honoured with the third Elder Award to be presented at the ceremony.



SI Stockton-on-Tees is celebrating winning the Mayor of Stockton's Award for Community Service 2018 for 60 years of service to the community of Stockton-on-Tees. It was presented to President Caroline Allred and Treasurer Mauveen Brown at a ceremony at the Forum Theatre.



SI St Albans won the SME Hertfordshire Business Award in the "Not for Profit Business of the Year" category. The Club's Membership Officer and local business woman Amanda Brown (pictured) proudly represented the Club at the Awards dinner.



Si Tunbridge Wells and TW Women 100 celebrated 100 years of women over 30 obtaining the Vote. They were delighted to welcome Dr Helen Pankhurst to Manna Cafe in Tunbridge Wells to hear a talk about women's rights and the Suffragette Legacy. Great granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst and granddaughter of Sylvia Pankhurst, Dr Helen spoke of differences within the family in attitudes to campaigning. Discussing issues around agency, sense of self, Dr Pankhurst moved onto a very interesting discussion in relation to the media and its trivialisation and sexualisation of women.

Send us your News!

Send it to Soroptimist@written-image.com, putting either **Club News** or **Celebrations** in the subject box. Keep your report concise – follow the way these reports have been written and look at the typical words published around 80-100 in each story. If you have several reports, please send them in separate emails.

Photos

Your photos are very important but we can only use high resolution, good quality photos – small photos taken on a standard mobiles will be too small – iPhone and Samsung phones are usually fine if they are set to a high quality photo. There is no fee.

soroptimist@written-image.com

SIGBI Memorial Fund

The Memorial Fund was set up to facilitate new Soroptimists attending their first SIGBI Conference outside their country of residence and increase their knowledge of Soroptimism, which they can then share with others.

We would like to thank the following Clubs for their donations to the fund in memory of their late Members, over the last 18 months:

SI Dundee SI Wolverhampton SI Widnes

If you would like to make a donation please contact

SIGBI HQ at hq@sigbi.co.org

Patricia Baldwin Si Hallamshire (Sheffield)

sadly died in January 2018 at the age of 90.

Having run a successful hairdressing business with her two sisters, on retirement Pat devoted herself to caring for these sisters, both of whom had MS. A longstanding and Honorary Member of Hallamshire, Pat is sadly missed.

Dorothea Eugenia Lewis (Thea), SI

Pontypridd & District, died on 12th February 2018 aged 86. She was a Member for 40 years before moving to a nursing home in Ammanford to be near her family. Thea was an enthusiastic Member, a Past President, Treasurer and Programme Action Representative.

Andrea Ryan, SI Bristol, died on 13th March 2018 aged 79. She was a committed Member for 37 years. Andrea served as Club President in 1997-1998 and was also active in other Club roles including Treasurer.

Elizabeth Blyth Mckerrow (Betty), SI Fylde, died on 7th April 2018, in her 90th year. Betty was a loyal and committed Soroptimist for many years and was formerly of SI Preston, but had moved to the Fylde coast with her friend, Olga, and they joined the Fylde Club together. Betty was renowned for her friendship and support for Programme Action and had made Soroptimist friends worldwide. She had held a number of offices throughout her membership.

Pauline Tilley, SI Swindon & District, died on 14th April 2018 aged 68 after a long period of ill-health. Pauline was a member for eight years from 1993, she served on the Executive and was Secretary and Membership Secretary during that time. She had many great ideas for events to raise our profile and funds for our charities.

Patricia Barnes-Harman, MA, MCILIP, SI

Kingston Upon Thames & District, died on 19th April 2018, aged 89. She was a devoted Soroptimist of 22 years. President 2004-2006 and served the Club for many years as Club Secretary, a role she relished. A much loved and valued Member of SI KUT, her humour, debating skills and common sense will be much missed.

Marjory Campbell, SI Fylde, died on 19th April at Brooklands in Lytham. Marjory had recently celebrated her 92nd birthday and despite suffering from dementia, she remained unfailingly cheerful and dignified. Marjory was always supportive of everything the Fylde club did and was a very gentle and friendly soul with many stories to tell.

TO SUBMIT AN OBITUARY

Please send obituaries to Soroptimist@written-image.com, putting OBITUARY in the subject box. It should be written following the above format, including ONLY the Member's name, Club(s), age, time as a Soroptimist and offices held. Please do not send full descriptive obituaries. There is no fee. Longer obituaries may be submitted for the website. Please send to hq@sigbi.org

Obituaries

Diana Randall SI Lincoln, died unexpectedly on 24th April 2018 aged 70. Diana had been a Soroptimist since 1985. A past Regional President and Club President in 1992-3 and 2004-5, past Secretary of the Diamond Education Committee and Regional Representative for many years.

A loyal and committed Soroptimist, Diana was also Club Secretary, who brought great support, guidance, and enthusiasm to all our members.

Sheila Wathan, SI Anglesey died suddenly on 14th May 2018 aged 88. Sheila was a loyal and active member of SI Anglesey for 23 years. As Membership Officer over the years Sheila brought many new members to Club with her enthusiasm, keeping in touch with older Members who had retired from Club.

Patricia (Pat) Mary Evans, SI Haverfordwest, died on Sunday 3rd June, aged 80. Pat became a member in 1980 and was President in 1990-91 and Joint President in 2008-9. Pat took an active role in the Club until her health failed.

Ruth Spencer, SI Skipton on Craven, died on 5th June 2018 aged 83. A Soroptimist for 33 years, she was Club President 1997-1998, as well as holding various other offices. She was to be awarded Club Honorary Life Membership.

Dr. Barbara (Billie) Thirlaway, SI Newbury & District, died on 12th June, 2018 at the magnificent age of 100 years and 9 months. Billie became a Soroptimist in 1967, was Treasurer in 1983 and previously on the Membership and Executive Committees. She was an inspirational person with an active and stimulating personality until the end, rarely missing our bi-monthly meetings. She was truly "the best of sisters."

Dr Jan Harding, SI Winchester, died on 10th July 2018 aged 93, a committed member for more than 20 years. She served as Club President twice (1997-8 and 2001-2) and represented the Club on the Domestic Violence Forum. Professionally, as an Equal Opportunities Consultant, Women's Rights, STEM and the wider Women's Movement were her passions.

Shirley Hope, SI Buxton & District, recently died, aged 92. Shirley was founder President of Buxton & District Club. She supported the Club, by serving in several roles and was made an Honorary Member on her 90th birthday.

Future Africa Federation (SIFAF) Conference

Marrakesh April 2018

Lisette Genseberger, Vice President, Southern African Region and Member, SI Cape of Good Hope, South Africa, reports

I was privileged to spend a week travelling in Morocco before the conference, immersing myself in the culture and beauty of this magnificent country. We visited mosques, palaces, old medinas, a tannery, a herbalist, a carpet co-operative, silver and copper businesses and pottery and mosaic factories. I learnt how to barter but also realised that one needs to pay a fair price as many of the trades practised in Morocco are labour intensive and deserve a living wage.

Morocco is a green and fertile country with oranges, olives and plenty of other delicious food. It is also encouraging to note how much the King, Mohammed VI, is investing in his country with roads and housing. Our tour guide told us that he is trying to create work for all in Morocco so that the need to move to Europe is less crucial.

I arrived in Marrakesh refreshed and ready to meet my African sisters and to support each other on the last leg of this journey towards the charter of the 5th Federation. As SI President Mariet said,



South African delegates with Ann Hogson, Isobel Smith and Bozena Benton from SIGBI

"This is long overdue" and we have 20 months to ensure that all Timelines are met, for the final decision which will rest with the SI Board.

At present we have 104 Clubs in Africa and 1788 members. To charter comfortably we need at least 2200 members. I am encouraged to see that since our meeting a new Club has been chartered in Benin with 22 new Members and many more members are being inducted within the next few months.

The bank account in Lagos (ECOBANK) Nigeria is functioning and is a dollar friendly account. Many countries in Africa have problems with international bank transfers and at conference payment of capitation fees was accepted by the past Taskforce Treasurer Sophie Aketch.

Conference highlights

For me the highlights were the Regional presentations of Programme Action work and the Workshops, one of which I facilitated. I was of course very happy that two of the Southern African Region received Best Practice Awards.

- **Education SI Grahamstown, South Africa**



Hobbiton, an outdoor education project.

- **Health SI Bulawayo, Zimbabwe**, for their Mobile Dental Clinic.

Our Ugandan sisters also received two awards:

- **Economic Empowerment SI Lira**, Reusable Sanitary Pads project in a women's prison.

- **Environmental Sustainability SI Masaka**, Making recycled paper bags.

Both Lucy Ginameri and Josephine Alobo from SI Lira were first time conference attendees and it was an absolute pleasure to meet them after two years of communicating via email, what's app and skype. At present, Uganda is also a member of the Southern African Network, which is part of SIGBI and a Member of the SIFAF Eastern Region.

The Workshops on Extension, Membership and Leadership were open and lively discussions. It was at first a challenge for me as I had at least four French speaking Soroptimists in my group, who were keen to participate as well. Thankfully one of the conference translators was available which made for a happy group of Soroptimists. This is a challenge that all of us in Africa will need to embrace as we try to speak English and French!

The Workshops on Achieving the SIFAF 2020 Criteria and Timeline Goals were at times heated and confrontational but this was necessary to reassure members that the following criteria would be met:

- That the proposed future Federation would have experienced members available to serve on the SI Board and committees.
- That the proposed future Federation must have at least 100 Clubs, 90 of which shall have been in existence for more than three years, and that we have at least 2000 Members.
- That the proposed future Federation be capable of providing comparable service to clubs and members which they have received as part of an existing Federation.
- That the proposed future Federation give evidence that it will be self-supporting, both financially and administratively.
- That the proposed future Federation adopt Laws which are approved by the Board and do not conflict with the International Constitutions.

The results of the Elections were:

- **Taskforce 4 President:** Mary Muia, Kenya
- **Vice President Northern African Region:** Fatima El Baz, Morocco
- **Vice President West & Central African Region:** Oludewa Thorpe, Nigeria
- **Vice President Eastern African Region:** Judith Apondo, Kenya

- **Vice President Southern African Region:** Lisette Genseberger, South Africa
- **Finance Director:** Olufumulayo Sehelo, Nigeria
- **Programme Action Director:** Vivian Namayi Namwalo, Kenya

The positions of Communications Director and Membership and Extension Director were not filled due to various reasons and new Nominations forms have been circulated.

One of the main challenges which became very apparent at this conference was the poor communication and feedback between members.

Members do not respond to emails and many email addresses are incorrect. Internet connectivity in Africa is not always optimal but many Clubs are now using what's app and creating groups to communicate with their members.

The Southern African Network has been using GoToMeeting, Skype and What's App groups for various portfolio holders during the past two years with great success.

There was much discussion at conference about the need to create a working virtual communication system with members as distances are huge in Africa.

Another area of concern was the need for each country to have a SIFAF Ambassador. They are the link between Regional Vice Presidents and their members and it is an absolute priority to canvass for willing candidates.

A monthly Communication Newsletter was also suggested as many members still do not feel connected to what is happening with the rest of our clubs in Africa.

For me the highlight was to reconnect and interact with fellow African Soroptimists. We all share a passion and drive for the projects we support, sometimes under very difficult circumstances.

Despite our low membership numbers, I am amazed at how much we have achieved with so few members. We have much to be proud of!

Thank you SI Marrakesh

Finally, I would like to thank SI Marrakesh for an excellent conference. Your warmth and hospitality was heart warming! We were treated to a night at Chez Ali, an Arabian Nights palace outside Marrakesh with a stunning firework display at the end of the evening, a Berber Wedding and Fashion Show at our Gala dinner and a visit to your very own Soroptimist Boarding School for girls from rural areas which touched the lives of every Soroptimist present.

I am confident that the present Taskforce team, under the leadership of Mary Muia will continue to grow from the roots that were planted by our previous and very able Taskforce teams.