

AUGUST 2017

Soroptimist News

Featured
Objective: Food
Security and
Healthcare

Featured
Objective:
Environmental
Sustainability

SIGBI
Conference
in Cardiff
Book now!



- **Membership Month reports!**
- **SIGBI Board 2017-19: More Directors' applications**
- **SIGBI Conference: last chance to book!**

**Women inspiring action,
transforming lives**

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Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Ltd.
Company Number: 07058666

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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Welcome to **Soroptimist** News from the Editor



The big news for this issue has to be the SIGBI Conference, which is hurtling towards us in a rapidly disappearing year!

Your Conference team is doing an amazing job, creating a fascinating programme of speakers and entertainment that will set Cardiff City alight, it really does look like a great event, just read through our feature on Page 8.

There's still time to book if you haven't already done so, and I daresay that many of the regular conference-going members will have already done so. They book early to give themselves time to sort out the details like accommodation – always very important.

If you haven't already attended a SIGBI Conference, I can truly recommend that you do so this year, it will be my 15th year – and I hope to see you there.

Our focus is also on two SIGBI Programme Objectives, the bedrock of Soroptimism – Food Security and Healthcare and Environmental Sustainability.

These Objectives are both critical in the battle to improve the lives of women across the world. We all know what they are but are we all playing our part in that battle?

We also bring you news of membership Month, which inspired many of you to make a real push for members – it's not easy to explain what Soroptimists do, but clearly, many of you are having a real go at it!

Keep up the hard work!



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NEXT ISSUE: 16th December 2017, deadline for submissions: 8th November 2017.

There are no featured Objectives in this issue as it focuses on The SIGBI Conference.

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, not embedded in the text file. We are unable to use low resolution or low quality photos. The Soroptimist News Schedule for 2017-18 is in the Members' area of the SIGBI website.



Step Up, Lead the Way

President's message

Dear Soroptimist Sisters

Since my last letter, the UK has witnessed terrible events in the form of two terrorist attacks and the Grenfell Tower fire. My heart goes out to everyone involved or affected by these tragic events.

The four terror attacks in the UK this year are intended to drive divisions amongst us, so more than ever we must stand together against these atrocities and collectively take action to bring about world peace. With that in mind, I hope that you will all consider some activity to mark International Day of Peace on the 21st September 2017.

May and June have been very busy months for me with visits to several Clubs and Regions. I have loved meeting so many of you and hearing about your project work. There are too many to highlight, but one that I must mention is SI Taunton's Swimathon which is in its 29th year. This year's event raised £16,663.68, which was split between four local organisations. The total raised over 29 years is £611,095.02, which has all gone to local charities. What an amazing achievement!

I did manage a short break away in Malta, it was lovely to have the warm sun on my back and enjoy a swim in the sea. It also gave me an opportunity to catch up with fellow Soroptimists from SI Malta – a couple of hours soon disappeared as did all the Welsh cakes – friendship is one of the best things about being a Soroptimist!

I would like to thank all of you for embracing Membership Month, the Leadership and Club Development Day and the Growing our Brand in the local community workshops. I acknowledge that these are a big commitment of time and effort but so necessary if we are to step up and lead the way to being a thriving organisation that can help more women and girls.



The Leadership and Club Development Day was excellent and we all enjoyed the experience of learning about speaking to the media, how we connect with the United Nations and Making your Club a Success. The keynote speaker, Jasvinder Sanghera CBE, is an outspoken campaigner and advocate for the rights of those experiencing forced marriages and honour based abuse. Jasvinder told us how she got her voice heard and how she works in partnership with other organisations to achieve the change she wants to see.



For the second year running, I attended Skirting Science organised by SI Weston-super-Mare. What a great day, it is immediately obvious that the workshops have a positive impact on the girls that attend.

I know that other Clubs have created their own projects around promoting STEM. Why not search on the Programme database and see if your Club could do something to promote STEM to girls. It fits so well with our long term theme of "Educate to Lead".

In July I went to Florence for the Soroptimist Europe Congress and then to Rotterdam for the Soroptimist International Board Meeting.

Finally, preparations for the Federation Conference in Cardiff continue, due to the hard work of my conference committee chaired by Helen Murdoch. Everything is now in place and it is now a matter of ensuring that everything will work seamlessly on the day so that you find it inspiring, informative and of course fun! It's not too late to book – go on, do it – you will not regret it.

I look forward to seeing you in Cardiff where you will receive a warm welcome, be inspired by the speakers and enjoy the fun and friendship that is always present at a Federation conference.

In friendship

Ann

**Ann Hodgson, President,
Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland**



Programme

Objective:

Food Security and Healthcare

Rita Beaumont
Assistant Programme Director
Food Security and Healthcare
reports

Food Security and Healthcare

"We cannot achieve the ambitious health and development targets in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) unless we improve the health, dignity and rights of women, children and adolescents. In too many places, gender gaps, harmful cultural and social practices and gender-based violence are negatively impacting women, children and adolescents.

They are unable to reach their full potential due to: lack of access to maternal health; sexual and reproductive health and family planning services; adolescent mental health; early education and responsive parenting; malnutrition; sanitation issues, including menstrual hygiene management and harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation."

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus: Director General WHO: July 2017

On 1st January 2016 the world officially began to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the transformative plan of action based on 17 Sustainable Development Goals, to address a range of interrelated global challenges. The agenda seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and integrate and balance economic, social and environmental factors

So what has been achieved in the first year in the areas of Food Security (SDG 2) and Healthcare (SDG 3)? The 2016 review is provided in The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016 published by the United Nations unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/

Goal 2 seeks to end hunger and all forms of malnutrition and to achieve sustainable food production by 2030. It is premised on the idea that everyone should have access to sufficient nutritious food, which will require widespread promotion of sustainable agriculture, a doubling of agricultural productivity, increased investments and properly functioning food markets

Despite progress the report identifies; the proportion of the population suffering from hunger declined globally from 15% in 2000-2002 to 11% in 2014-2016. However, nearly 800 million people worldwide still lack access to adequate food.

More than half of the adult population in sub-Saharan Africa faced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2015; the level was severe for one-quarter of adults in the region.

Goal 3 aims to ensure health and well-being for all ages by improving reproductive, maternal and child health; ending the

epidemics of major communicable diseases; reducing non-communicable and environmental diseases; achieving universal health coverage; and ensuring access to safe, affordable and effective medicines and vaccines for all.

The following is reported:

Between 1990 and 2015, the global maternal mortality ratio declined by 44 per cent, and the mortality rate of children under age 5 fell by more than half. Still, an estimated 5.9 million children under 5 died in 2015, mostly from preventable causes.

Worldwide approximately three in four women of reproductive age (15 to 49 years) were able to access modern contraceptive methods.

Almost two-thirds of deaths from non-communicable diseases in people under age 70 were attributed to cardiovascular diseases and cancer.

Goal 3 encompasses all aspects of healthy wellbeing including mental health; during the year a key focus area has been on promoting the mental health needs of individuals of all ages. The WHO year-long campaign 'Depression: let's talk about It' aimed to reduce the stigma of depression by encouraging sufferers to talk openly and seek help.

In May 2017 delegates at the World Health Assembly endorsed a global action plan on managing dementia between 2017 and 2025. Areas for action include: reducing the risk of dementia; diagnosis, treatment and care; research and innovative technologies; and development of



supportive environments for carers.

Soroptimists across the Federation are already helping this process including having a representative on the UK Prime Ministers Dementia Champions Group Working with the Alzheimer's Association

At the other end of the age spectrum **SI Bristol** has worked with local partner Off the Record to increase awareness of mental health issues suffered by children and young people plus raising money to support the ongoing work of the organisation with programmes to enable more young people to access free confidential and independent support in time of crisis which is free; £10 buys an emergency session for a young person in crisis. £50 buys 6 sessions of counselling for a young person struggling with self-harm. £100 buys 3 stress management workshops for 30 young people.

A quote from a young beneficiary says it all, "This is the perfect place to go to if you're having struggles with life. I did have to wait a few months to start my therapy as there was a long waiting list for the specific type I wanted to do but when I finished after 12 weeks I felt great."

SI Pune Metro East combined two focus areas in one event; the Club marked the World Health Day and Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month by organising an interactive session on Depression and Ovarian Cancer for the women of Kilkari.

Ovarian Cancer remains a very common cancer affecting women. Soroptimist Clubs in Edinburgh, Bedford, Lancaster, Bath,



SI Pune Metro East marked World Health Day and Ovarian Cancer month with an interactive session on depression and ovarian cancer.

Swindon, Canterbury and Falkirk have all held events to raise awareness about Ovarian Cancer and to raise money in aid of Target Ovarian Cancer.

Supporting projects which focus on cancers affecting women is high on many Club agendas.

SI Ikeja in Nigeria carried out an awareness campaign on cancer at Ogbegonogo Market Asaba. The aim was to educate and create public awareness about the effects of different types of cancer and preventative measures that can be taken. A large number of women and girls were attracted. A question and answer session was the highlight of the event with an indication that further sessions should be arranged.

Each year **SI Newbury & District** organises the town's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Race and lunch. This year the event raised £1000 for The Rosemary Appeal a new initiative which will enable women to access advanced cancer care in a purpose built unit at the local community hospital rather than travel long distances to access vital treatment.

Clubs continue to be involved in services supporting women suffering from Breast Cancer. During the past year 23 Clubs have reported activity raising £8,673.00.

The 'Pink by the Pool' event held at the 2016 Malta conference enabled delegates to demonstrate support for women living in countries where breast screening and treatment for Breast Cancer does not have a high profile. Donations collected enabled **SI Malta** presented the money the President of the Republic, to be distributed to the appropriate university research departments; the sharing of research findings benefits women world wide.

An adequate nutritious diet is required for healthy outcomes to be achieved. In the UK the number of Clubs involved with local Foodbanks has doubled in the past year. The Trussell Trust's reports that via its 400 foodbanks they have provided 1,182,954 three day emergency food supplies to people in crisis.

The trust also provide a range of new



SI Malta collected money from delegates at last year's SIGBI Conference to support university research into women's health issues, such as breast cancer.

services including money advice, helping to break the cycle of poverty.

"A Fistful of Grain" project supported by Clubs across India continues to expand and have a lasting impact. School children from economically advantaged backgrounds are given small eco-friendly bags and encouraged to collect grain from their homes each day for distribution.

Awareness is created amongst the children regarding poverty and the lack of food faced by millions of people in India. The project is easy to implement and requires minimal fund raising.

SI Chennai held the 11th installation of its student wing called the Juvenoptimist Club on the 14th of July. The Juvenoptimists are students of Lady Andal Venkatasubba Rao School and Sir Mutha School.

They conducted the 'Fistful of Grains' project in which they collected different pulses and lentils and distributed them to the students of The Madras Seva Sadan (a school for underprivileged girls). The students distributed a total of 1131 bags, each bag containing two kilogrammes.

The Juvenoptimist Club held fundraisers for Little Drops (the home for the Aged and Destitute in Chennai), and The Dean Foundation (a Hospice and Palliative Care Centre for the underprivileged in Chennai).

The Juvenoptimists also helped raise funds for CAN-STOP (a community based voluntary organization dedicated to conducting cancer awareness programs) and NAB (National Association for the Blind).

SI Calcutta started the Fistful of Grains Project in schools of Kolkata as part of an initiative of National Association of Soroptimists (NASI).

The focus and objectives of the project are twofold:

1) To inculcate the spirit of sharing food with the poor and needy amongst middle school students of well established educational institutions

2) To provide foodgrains for welfare organisations running meals programmes for the underprivileged.

In this project, schoolchildren aged 10



SI Calcutta took the Fistful of Grain project to six schools where they asked the girls to put aside a fistful of rice to help to feed children in orphanages.

-14 years are asked to put aside a fistful of grain during mealtimes for a period of about two weeks.

SI Widnes held a PAC showcase evening, inviting Members from the South Lancashire Region and other guests. On show were twiddle muffs made by Members to be given to care homes in Widnes for residents with dementia, food contributed for distribution to needy families and bags of toiletries and other essential items.

The bags of toiletries were given to Terri Kearney of Nightstop, Widnes, which works with young people in need of emergency support and fostering.

The Club also reported that its toilet twinning project which started last February is coming to an end, having raised enough money to sponsor three school toilet blocks.

SI Bristol has supported the Bristol based Sexual Assault Referral Centre since its inception in 2009. It is part funded by NHS England, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and charitable donations.

Their annual Duplicate Bridge Day and Concert "Voices Together" where girls were given the opportunity to sing with an established men's choir, raised £5,000.

The Centre's manager said that as a result of this funding The Bridge was able to open a new and innovative service offering counselling to parents and partners of victims of rape and sexual assault. The service is not funded by NHS England or the PCC and still relies on charitable donations to provide the service.

SI Torquay and District held 'A Break for Our Torbay Young Carers' at Rosegarth House. The ten children, aged six to thirteen, all help to care for someone at home – ten amongst 600 young carers in Torquay! The impact of these responsibilities may cause education to be disrupted, there can be bullying and social issues and even emotional and mental health problems.

So, just a snapshot of the dedication of Soroptimists across the Federation, in a huge range of activities, all designed to improve lives of women and children.



Programme

Objective:

Environmental Sustainability

Naina Shah, Assistant Programme Director,
Environmental Sustainability, reports

Living with climate change

The constantly changing environment poses problems such as natural disasters, warming and cooling periods, different types of weather patterns and much more.

People need to be aware of what types of environmental problems the planet is facing as we are definitely part of the problem. With climate change, individual behaviour does matter and individual concern and action are priceless.

Taking a cue from the guidelines that are universally accepted – the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Soroptimist Clubs have evolved their projects.

Addressing Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss. At the grass root level Clubs have spread the afforestation word in their communities.

SI Madurai adopted Miyawaki method of afforestation / planting trees, that involved planting a number of different types of trees close together in a small pit. 250 students planted 350 saplings in their school.

SI Ikeja planted over 100 trees/flowers within Asaba and held a sensitisation session at Asabga Mixed Secondly School Asaba.

Bees are wonderfully industrious pollinators because they have co-evolved with flowering plants over millions of years. The bees need help, and for so long humans have relied on them – it's now time to help

them. **SI Rhyl and District** is giving a helping hand with their project 'Bringing Back Bees Into The Community. (Main photo)

SI Tynemouth, Whitley Bay & District is lobbying the Members of Parliament in the UK to look at details of new scientific research and ban pesticides that are killing the bees and the understanding that bees benefit all living things by acting as Environmental Indicators.

Advocacy by **SI Beckenham and District** to lobby large garden centre businesses including the nationwide B&Q, to stop selling plants and flowers treated with toxic pesticides, resulted in B&Q announcing that they would no longer sell such plants – the Club plans to encourage others to cease the practice.

SI Bournemouth lobbied MEPS to prevent EU's Current Neonicotinoid Ban from being lifted and the ban remained in place.

Soroptimists understand the mantra 'Sustainable Energy for All' that sustainable energy is an opportunity – it transforms lives, economies and the planet, while addressing Goal 7 of SDG. Harnessing the abundant energy from the Sun can meet the escalating energy needs of humans.

SI Kingston-upon-Thames and District raised money to fund 200 lamps, which helps to avert 212.2 tonnes CO2 emissions and leads to better health for 427 people. The

families that received the lamps save £2902, while children gain an extra 201,177 study hours – everyone benefits, but women and children most of all. With light, women are safer at night, childbirth is safer.

SI Abuja collaborated with the Australian High Commission, Nigeria to provide clean water with solar powered borehole.

Various Clubs have rendered service to the cause of environment sustainability. They keep in mind that careful management of this essential global resources is a key feature of a sustainable future.

SI Eastbourne and District successfully persuaded Eastbourne Borough Council to ban the release of balloons and Chinese lanterns at local events by making them aware that balloons kill marine life.

Disposal of Sanitary waste is an environmental hazard and a health risk for the workers at the garbage site. **SI Pune Metro East** Members kicked off a campaign "Dispose your sanitary waste with a RED DOT" advocating and creating awareness, educating residents of housing societies how to dispose of their sanitary waste which includes sanitary napkins, diapers (nappies) adult diapers and condoms.

SI South Kolkata raised awareness amongst the women and children in a slum area of the benefits of keeping the neighbourhood clean. They encouraged



SI Kodaikanal's Smokeless Stoves
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SI Stafford's Flush Away Poverty project



SI Madurai's Forestation project

them to use safe and clean water and made them aware of the health hazards posed by unhygienic and dirty surroundings.

SI Tororo mobilised its local community to purchase equipment such as gloves, brooms, polythene bags, rakes and wheelbarrows for collecting rubbish by contacting area Local Councils

SI Folkestone collected litter from the beach and analysed the resulting data.

SI Blackburn acknowledged Fair Trade Fortnight by holding a big breakfast at a Member's home. Members bought Fair Trade goods during the event, supporting products from local farmers and raising £230 for Fair Trade.

In another notable project, 'A Burning Need', **SI Kodaikanal** installed 362 locally produced smokeless stoves to combat indoor air pollution (carbon monoxide) caused by burning wood for cooking.

SI Calcutta's Green Umbrella project over nine months up to April 2017, was a unique initiative for residents of the Alipore Women's Correctional Home in Kolkata with the objective of improving the quality of their life, together with focus on environmental sustainability.

Under the programme, seasonal vegetables are grown within the Home premises with training in gardening for the women, who are thus introduced to an income generating activity which may be useful after their release. They also enjoy the therapeutic effects of nurturing plants which is so necessary in their present circumstances. Further, environmental sustainability is achieved by the addition of greenery to the surroundings.

In these past months, with the help of a dedicated gardener, and the enthusiastic involvement of the inmates themselves, there has been a good crop of beetroot, ladies finger, cauliflower and seasonal greens, adding colour and taste to their lives!

SI Calcutta has also planted 56 Deodhar saplings in the Correctional Home compound which, when fully grown, will add beauty and shade to the surroundings.

The Club believes that the project is unique as it focuses on more than one Soroptimist focus area, namely Environmental Sustainability, Economic Empowerment as well improvement of mental health of women prisoners.



SI Widnes: Toilet Twinning project



SI Madurai's Forestation project

SI Grange-over-Sands continue their commitment to their Sensory garden, with new planting of insect friendly plants. The recent addition of a large bug house will encourage more insects. "Buggingham Palace" complete with dynamic 5 decoration was designed and built by Club Member Alison Hinds. It provides shelter for beneficial garden insects and pollinators, having a variety of shapes, sizes and depths of holes and spaces. There is also an area for moths and butterflies to pupate and as it is sited facing south but sheltered under trees and out of strong sunlight it will suit most needs.



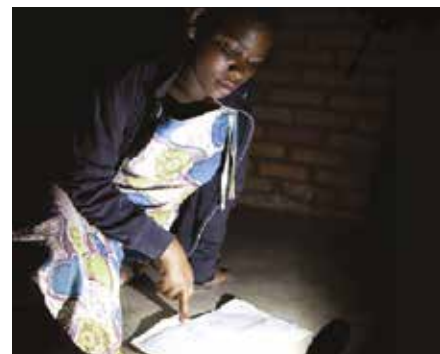
SI Grange-over-Sands: Buggingham Palace

Members of **SI Stafford** have raised enough money to provide four toilets for villages in Malawi and Uganda, which are now helping to Flush Away Poverty.

SI Widnes has raised money through smartie tubes for toilet twinning. Members asked family friends to fill empty tubes with 20 pence pieces. In a year, the Club has been able to twin with three school toilet blocks.

Joy Bramley, **SI Buxton** was presented with an award at Huddersfield University, for her work for the Bluebell Wood Children's Hospice. Joy began the work as part of her service through the Soroptimists, and has worked tirelessly for two decades. She certainly lives up to her name! Where Joy goes... there goes JOY. She finds a caring, thing to say at the darkest time, and an amusing thing to say at the right time.

Soroptimist Clubs' Programme Action on the Environment comes from thinking about it – it comes from real conversations about the future of the planet. Let us make SI Clubs places where such conversations happen and be a vital part of the change we need to see.



SI Kingston upon Thames: Solar Lamps

Step Up, Lead the Way

SIGBI's 83rd Federation Conference

#SoroptimistCardiff2017

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

26th – 28th October 2017

President Ann's theme Step Up, Lead the Way
is chosen to encourage all of us to Lead the Way – Grow our Organisation – Secure its Future



Conference Chairman
Helen Murdoch, writes:

In less than 100 days, you're going to be truly inspired as a Soroptimist to be more active, more connected and make more of a difference.

President Ann challenged us to "shake it up". So, if you've been to a SIGBI conference before, you are going to notice some changes. If this is your first conference, you're in for a treat.

Be wowed by world-class speakers, drawn in by thought-provoking projects and energised by stimulating conversations. You've told us what you like and what could be better... and we have listened.

There's a mix of session styles, bouncier presentations and space and time to circulate, plus a bigger exhibition (more shopping time!), on-the-spot eateries and rapid coffee service! Oh, and did I mention that the Wales Millennium Centre has won "Loo of the Year" and associated "Attendant of the Year" Awards for the cleanliness and quality of its away-from-home facilities!

Members of SI Wales South and the North Wales Clubs are getting ready to give you a warm Welsh welcome and SI Cardiff have put together a list of cafés and restaurants offering a discount to conference delegates.

Keep an eye on the conference website www.sigbi.org/cardiff2017 and on our social media for ongoing updates and information like this to help you make the most of Cardiff.

I'm excited! Hope you are too! See you there.

Book now at
sigbi.org/cardiff2017



SIGBI President
Ann Hodgson writes:

Wow! Can it really be August already and conference only two and a half months away? I am now beginning to get so excited about what the conference will bring to you.

- Excellent and varied speakers
- Great programme action sessions
- A chance to hear from young women about the issues that concern them and how they would like to be involved in addressing them.

All of this will be coupled with a Welsh flavour for the opening ceremony on Thursday supported by the Bristol Military Wives Choir – a young organisation that has so much synergy with our own values and goals.

We follow that with a Big Band for Saturday night that will play music that we all know and can listen to, although I suspect that after a while some of us will want to boogie.

And finally, it's all taking place in an iconic building and in a beautiful setting in Cardiff Bay. I cannot wait to see you all there!

Registration - Have you registered yet?
Don't leave it until the last minute –
final chance to book is 30th Sept
Guest Registration is now open
on the website.

As well as Soroptimists, we are always
pleased to welcome guests
to conference.

In Cardiff for the first time, we are
actively inviting guests to join
us at conference.

Do you know anyone who would like
to hear one or more of our keynote
speakers, or who would like to find
out more about our projects and the
difference we are making?
Invite them to register at
www.sigbi.org/cardiff2017



Conference Chief Steward
Anne MacDonald writes:

Volunteer Stewards are an essential part of Conference and help things to run smoothly throughout the weekend.

Duties of our Conference Stewards are varied and include:

- Helping to meet and greet guests
- Assisting on the Registration desk
- Checking lanyards as Members enter the auditorium
- Ensuring that Members with special needs are able to find their seats

There are many other ways in which Volunteer Stewards can assist, but unfortunately we cannot offer to reduce your own registration fee! We can, however, confirm that you should not miss any of the actual speaker sessions by helping with the organisation of the event.

Already several Members have offered their services and we thank them for this – the more Members able to help means fewer duties for all Stewards.

If you have never been a Volunteer Steward before and have registered for Conference why not give it a try?

All Stewards will be under the direction of a Lead Steward and will have the opportunity to attend an orientation meeting on the Thursday afternoon before Conference officially opens. Are you interested?

Please contact Anne MacDonald, Chief Steward at: chiefsteward.cardiff@gmail.com

Book now at
sigbi.org/cardiff2017



**Federation Programme Director,
Barbara Dixon, writes:**

Conference for me is a time to showcase the incredible work that goes on throughout our Federation; it gives an opportunity to acknowledge some of the Clubs for their excellence in devising and delivering projects that make a difference to women and girls.

Conference allows renewal of friendships and an exchange of ideas that can then be used for other projects - it refreshes the soul and the spirit as we learn that Clubs around the Federation have the same frustrations and successes as our own Club's experience.

Over the years from being an ordinary Member, through Club and Regional Presidencies and then on to APD Health and Food security to my current role as Programme Director I have looked forward to each Conference knowing I will experience joy, anger, sadness and humility in response to what I hear from the illustrious speakers and from Club work, but overall there is an immense pride.

I am proud to be a Soroptimist but not as proud as I am of the Organisation itself and the work of its Members. To me, being a Soroptimist is about Programme Action and Conference is the icing on the cake.

Programme Action at Conference

**Pre Conference Meeting
Thursday 26th October 9am – 3.30pm
St David's Hotel, Cardiff Bay**

At this event, there will be a Federation Programme Action Forum and Consultation Session for Representatives and Silent Observers, with interesting Soroptimist speakers, a series of presentations, interactive sessions and group work, and time for consultation about the future of the Forum and its content.

Conference Programme Action Sessions
The Federation Programme Team is planning a varied and interesting Programme to enthuse and support our work.

On Friday following Michael Kaufman there will be presentations on Club projects around Domestic Violence issues.

The Programme Team has chosen speakers to reflect and inform our work as Soroptimists and Rebecca Lewin (nee Vince) Head of Logistics & Procurement at Plan International will also be speaking.



Kevin Hyland OBE

On Saturday Kevin Hyland OBE, UK's first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, pictured above, will be speaking.

Joining him will be Steve Chapman, Wales Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator, Kim Ann Williamson, Wales Anti-Slavery Operational Delivery Group Chair and Angelina Rodriguez, Deputy Chief Executive of Bawso.

Bawso, established in 1995, is an all Wales, Welsh Government Accredited Support Provider, delivering services to victims and people affected or at risk of Domestic Abuse and all forms of violence; including Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence and Human Trafficking

There will be Presentations and updates on the Meru Women's Garden partnership Project.

The culmination of the Programme Action sessions will be Best Practice Awards for club projects.

The Programme Team will have had a really difficult time selecting winners from so many wonderful projects.

For facebook or twitter please use
#SoroptimistCardiff2017



Keep up to date with Conference news
Visit www.sigbi.org/cardiff2017

Social Media – Using your devices at Conference

Many of you will have your phones and tablets with you, and this year in Cardiff you will be actively encouraged to use your devices to tweet and post your experiences of Conference.

By using live feed you can engage Members who are not able to be there and encourage them to get involved.

We must be considerate of those around us, so a few guidelines will help us all:

- Ensure your phone is on silent
 - Ensure the screen display is on the lowest possible light level
 - Obviously - Do not answer your phone!
 - Don't obscure others view of the stage
- Always tweet using the conference hash tag #SoroptimistCardiff2017 this will be used to compile an archive of the conference tweets. If the speaker is on Twitter, please use their Twitter handle when live tweeting.
Please – post positively and tweet tastefully!
Live tweeting and posting should be fun, informative and inspiring. Enjoy it.

SIGBI retail therapy!

A new layout has been designed for stands within the Weston Suite at this year's conference so do make sure that you visit the hall on the first floor.

For that much needed retail therapy exhibits will range from fine Italian leather handbags, shoes for business, designer accessories and jewellery made in Wales to fine silk scarves and glass designer gifts... and there will be more.

As in previous conferences Charities will also be exhibiting including Child.org in conjunction with the Meru Women's Garden Project providing the latest news on the wonderful progress achieved to date.

Also information will be provided by Noah's Ark, Toilet Twinning, Literacy in a Box Trust, Ovarian Cancer Action, Soroptimist Members' Education Trust and several others who will be keen to promote and discuss their valuable work with delegates.

A number of Soroptimist Clubs will, as in the past, be exhibiting and selling



their bespoke gifts in support of their individual charities, always good to see what other Clubs are doing.

UKPAC will have a prominent stand highlighting Soroptimist projects and focusing on their support for the Anti-Slavery campaign as well as other SIGBI exhibitors. The exhibition will be open during conference from Thursday afternoon onwards plus 'late night shopping' on Friday.

Don't delay: book today!



SIGBI Conference

Welcome to Wales!

The Opening Ceremony on the evening of 26th October at 8pm is going to be a lively, captivating and exciting mix of song, voice, visuals, flags and a few little surprises – just right to Step Up and Lead You into two great days in conference.

The Change of Insignia on Saturday evening is going to be a fantastic finale to the conference and an opportunity to recognise those who have stepped up and those who are leading the way to the future. Participants in the Change of Insignia will be receiving full information about their involvement in the evening over the summer – please do respond as quickly as possible.

Special Guests

Congratulations to the new Presidents from around the world – Soroptimist International President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen (SI), Federation President of the Americas, Dawn Marie Lemonds (SIA) and Federation President of Europe Renata Trottmann Probst (SIE) who will be attending Conference. Unfortunately Federation President of South West Pacific Theresa Lyford (SISWP) is unable to attend on this occasion.



Incoming Soroptimist International Federation President of Europe, Renata Trottmann, (SIE) writes:

I am very honoured and excited to attend the SIGBI Cardiff Conference 2017.

The conference theme is perfectly timed for me because in fact, it is my turn to 'Step Up and Lead the Way' of Soroptimist International of Europe! I am equally committed to growing our organisation and securing the future as a worldwide network of and for women.

In the face of growing pressure on our lifestyle and challenges to our values, I have chosen to focus on protecting and advancing women's rights in my biennium. Trafficking, FGM, domestic violence, stalking, child and forced marriages are all very real threats which need to be addressed. We have to be vigilant about injustices and infringements of women's rights. For all the importance of cultural tolerance and respect for other beliefs, we must and will defend our freedoms. This is why my slogan is 'We Stand Up for Women'!

When I say that Soroptimists will stand up for women, I mean we will work to defend all violations, not only violations in the physical sense, but also the violations of basic human rights for women, such as the right to education, the right to equal pay, the right to equal access to justice, or simply the right to express ourselves! This theme is also perfectly in line with SI's 'Where We Stand Statement' on 'gender-based violence'.

I am passionate about women's rights and hope to motivate Soroptimists in our European Federation to be a powerful force for these causes. As we look to the future of our organisation, I am convinced that we can reach a younger demographic with these initiatives.

Thank you for the invitation to your Conference and for the opportunity to be inspired by the excellent work of your Federation. I look forward very much to meeting 'old' and new friends in the beautiful city of Cardiff!



**Dawn Marie Lemonds (SIA)
President Elect,
Soroptimist International of the Americas**

Dear SIGBI Sisters of the heart, friends past and future.

I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be invited to be a part of your Conference in Wales this year.

Some of my greatest memories have been sharing time with you at SIGBI events - whether they have been small and large and I know that I am ready to STEP UP and get yet another opportunity for that treasured experience!

When I think of SIGBI events, I hold in equal measure the opportunity to LEARN about cutting edge information and wonderful programmes that your Clubs undertake, to watch amazing LEADERSHIP in action as you demonstrate that Soroptimists in SIGBI lead every aspect of their activities, and PLAY enthusiastically and freely with people who know how to celebrate!

I look forward to every minute with you as you show, once again, how SIGBI Soroptimists Step Up and Lead the Way.

I can't wait to meet and share with you.



**President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen
International President
Soroptimist International**

As one of my first events after assuming the office of SI President, it will be a pleasure and an honour to attend SIGBI's 83rd Annual Federation Conference in Cardiff and to meet as many Members of your Federation as possible!

The Conference theme, "Step Up, Lead the Way", is highly appropriate as both an appeal and an inspiration – also for Soroptimist International, as we explore paths to secure the future of our organisation.

After all, we have important challenges in our role as a "global voice for women"!

Working together, Soroptimists throughout the world can lead the way to achieving gender equality. As women in business and professions we know that empowering women and girls with more choices and greater freedom is crucial to ensuring a better future.

Let us use our influence to lead the way to a world free from poverty and with human rights for all, with no abuse and where women are treated with respect and dignity. In this spirit I look forward to seeing you in Cardiff!



Keynote: Michael Kaufman

Michael Kaufman is a speaker, writer and social animator, whose innovative approaches to engaging men and boys in promoting gender equality, ending violence against women and transforming men's lives has taken him around the world over the past three decades.

Michael is the co-founder of the White Ribbon Campaign, the largest effort in the world of men working to end violence against women.

He has worked extensively with the United Nations and with governments, non-governmental organisations, corporations, trade unions and universities.

Michael is known for his powerful and entertaining talks. Drawing on his roots in both storytelling and research, he weaves together humour, stories and clear analysis for a presentation that is educational, positive and inspiring.



Mandy Hickson

Mandy Hickson was one of the first female pilots on her frontline Tornado GR4 squadron, flying multi-million-pound fast jets for the Royal Air Force.

Working in a constantly challenging, yet exhilarating environment, Mandy offers a unique insight into this elite world through anecdotes about her time on the front line.

She demonstrates the importance of remaining calm under pressure and leading from the front to get the best from herself and her team. With frankness and humour, she talks about the strategies she employed to succeed in her high-flying, high-risk role.

Mandy has boundless energy and an overriding passion for the end goal and truly believes that, with hard work and self-belief, anyone can achieve their ambitions. Join us as Mandy draws on her experiences and inspires us to Dream It, Believe It, Do It.



Dame Katherine Grainger

Dame Katherine Grainger is the UK's most decorated female Olympian; most successful female rower and the only female athlete to gain medals in four consecutive Olympic Games.

In 2012 Katherine's dreams were realised when she won the elusive Olympic Gold medal with Anna Watkins in the double sculls.

Appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) for services to rowing in the 2013 New Year Honours, she was made a Dame in the New Year Honours List 2016 for her services to rowing and to charity.

During a two-year break from the GB Rowing Squad, when she completed her PhD and wrote her autobiography *Dreams Do Come True*, Katherine was a BBC presenter and pundit in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

With a natural talent as a speaker, Katherine shares her stimulating and compelling tale of the journey to success.

Wear a white ribbon

Please remember to wear a white ribbon on Friday morning in recognition of the White Ribbon Campaign. It may be an "official" white ribbon pin or you could get creative and design your own ribbon or scarf – whatever you decide, let's show our support!



SIGBI Conference **Splendid speakers and** **fabulous entertainers!**

An enjoyable part of Conference is the entertainment! This year we have a fantastic programme for you beginning on Thursday evening with a real treat.

Aaron Pryce-Lewis, a young baritone from Pembrokeshire is currently studying at the Royal Colleges of Music in Manchester and London.

Aaron is remembered for being the last soloist to perform in a massed Male Voice Choir concert in the Royal Albert Hall.



Aaron Pryce-Lewis

This will be followed by the Bristol Military Wives Choir, which is one of a network of over 75 choirs in the UK, Germany, Cyprus and further afield.

Just like Soroptimists, Members of the Military Wives Choirs build unbreakable bonds and also break down barriers. By coming together to sing, each choir creates a valuable support network for women in the military community.



Bristol Military Wives Choir

They say, "Choir Members help one another through the tough times, celebrate the good times and sing through it all together."

On Saturday night, following the Change of Insignia it is time to relax, let your hair down!

This year we'll enjoy the sound of Phil Dando's Big Band which will be playing a range of great music from swing to classic pop – Glen Miller to Tom Jones. What a fabulous finale to our Conference!



Phil Dando's Big Band

SIGBI

Directors' Applications

Nominations for Federation posts have been received as follows.
Please note the full nomination forms may be found on the Members' Only
Section of the SIGBI website under Nomination Forms for Federation Posts.



**SIGBI Vice President
2017-2018**
Name: Bozena Benton
Club: SI Sutton Coldfield
Joined in: 1991

Statement:

I recently celebrated 25 years of Membership by visiting all 4 Federations and CSW61 giving me a deeper and holistic understanding of our organisation. It reiterated its strength and uniqueness, the ability of Members at all levels to continuously introduce new and sustained projects working in partnership.

As we struggle with reducing Membership and income, new technology and changing cultures it is important that we engage with Members and ensure transparent and supportive leadership to Clubs. We also need to ensure that our decisions are sound and identify consequences taking our organisation forward building on our successes and prepare for our 100th birthday.

For seven years I have been involved in Soroptimism at Club, Federation and International levels working closely with three International Presidents to develop roles and responsibilities of both staff and officers. As SIGBI's representative on Expert Group 1 post Montreal, I had an opportunity to work with Members of the other Federations to ensure our organisation was not only financially sound but maintained our strong status with the UN.

I then led the change recommended by the group with regard to staffing.

I believe that my knowledge, experience and leadership abilities match the organisation's needs enabling us to build on our successes ensuring our future direction suits current and new Members and our great organisation.



**SIGBI Vice President
2017-2018**
Name: Johanna Raffan
Club: SI Thames Valley
Joined in: 1987

Statement:

As a Federation Councillor I was a Silent Observer at most Federation Management Board meetings and this year I joined the board as a Director Without Portfolio.

Having taken a large organisation through charitable status and the rewriting of constitutions / roles and responsibilities I feel that at this time I have more to offer Soroptimism.

I have been a Silent Observer at three SI Board meetings and this international perspective together with my work experience internationally will prove useful in this role.

I have been a Member of two Clubs and am a committed Soroptimist. I value the matrix of support that is offered through Soroptimism to all women.

I believe the opportunity to help women and girls develop is core to our work.

I think the organisation can go from strength to strength.

Having NGO status effectively means that we have a voice where it counts.

I would wish to see a higher profile in order to further share the good work we do. Thus we need a PR strategy that will enable us to do more, for more, with more.

In all my leadership roles, I have been proactive and the "coach" for others to succeed.

SIGBI is going through a time of great change but I believe that, if we all work together, we will flourish ... as our Members are our most valuable asset.

I would consider it a privilege to be the Vice President of SIGBI. and would commit myself to its continuing future successful place in society.



**SIGBI Vice President
2017-2018**
Name: Isobel Smith
Club: SI Solihull and District
Joined in: 1989

Statement:

I am applying for the role of Vice President for, as far back as 65, BC Horace called on people to seize the day - "carpe diem."

I believe in the work that we do and the service we give and want to see SIGBI continue and strengthen.

A Vice President needs to "walk the talk" with respect to SIGBI's mission and culture statements.

I believe that inherent in this is a high degree of personal ethics, trust and relationship building, in addition to a total commitment to teamwork across the Federation.

I bring a high degree of personal maturity and professional well roundedness in addition to the basic functional knowledge inherent in my background in HR.

I believe that a Presidential role must justify its existence with metric evidence of return on investment; increasing membership and breaking the silence, so we are no longer accused of being the best-kept secret!

I have a current leadership role in a major global company, Walgreens Alliance Boots.

I have a track record of achievement at strategic and operational level within Learning & Development and Change Management.

My job is to increase the success of the organisation through change initiatives that result in new behaviour at all levels of the organisation.

I am a Couple and Family Psychotherapist for Relate, the UK's largest provider of relationship support, and every year we help over a million people of all ages, backgrounds and sexual orientations to strengthen their relationships.



**SIGBI Director of Membership
2017-2019**
Name: Judith Grocott
Club: SI Garstang
Joined in: 2004

Statement:

I have been a Federation Councillor for four years, which has allowed me to observe and be involved in the work of the Federation Management Board (FMB). My regular attendance at FMB meetings has given me a detailed understanding of the work and importance of the FMB and the part individual Directors play in its success. I now feel ready to take my involvement a stage further.

Since becoming a Soroptimist I have been conscious of the Programme work our Members do and the importance of that work to women and girls around the world, but without those Members our work would be severely curtailed to the detriment of all. Therefore, growing and sustaining our membership must be our number one priority and to those ends I bring fresh ideas.

I see this role first and foremost as a Member of a team (the FMB) to promote the vision and mission of Soroptimist International and to lead, direct and motivate not only her committee but also the wider membership, particularly with the roll out of 'Growing our Brand'. I am firmly committed to promoting this initiative, I would build on its inevitable success by annual training sessions for all Regional Membership Officers to continue development and prevent stagnation of ideas within Clubs in the future.

My work within Organisation Development for the past four years has involved me in the set up and roll out of several exciting initiatives, Associate Membership, Youth Membership and the Development Days all of which I look forward to continuing to promote within the sphere of Membership.



**SIGBI Diamond Education Grant
Secretary 2017-2019**
Name: Pat Jefferson
Club: SI Tynemouth, Whitley Bay
Joined in: 1986
Statement:

The Diamond Education Grant remains significant testimony to the commitment of our organisation to enhancing the life chances of women and girls. It is valuable not just because a modest grant can provide financial support for education but because it can be a significant boost to the aspirations, hope and self-confidence of the recipient. We have had unforgettable evidence of that in presentations at SIGBI conferences.

I have lifelong interest in education and would bring proven skills and knowledge of the challenges experienced by disadvantaged groups, with a strong commitment to our organisation and an appreciation of how much can be done to address the issues that suppress personal ambition and prevent women's progress.

I have experience in working to exacting standards in the stewardship of large sums of money whilst taking forward agreed aims and plans for development. The challenge to attract and maintain funds to invest remains a priority, but we also need powerful ways to communicate the stories of those who seek and receive our grants. The profile of the Diamond Education Grant needs to remain truly compelling to attract further investors and donors.

In addition to the specified responsibilities, I would like to gather the ideas of young women seeking their next steps in education, to secure the "voice" of those seeking a grant by establishing a Diamond Education 'touchstone' group secure the expertise of a group of knowledgeable Soroptimist Members with relevant networks in the education, training and employment sectors to advise on strengthening our reach and impact.

The Diamond Education Grant can make a difference.



**SIGBI Diamond Education Grant
Committee Member 2017-2019**
Name: Ann Dawson
Club: SI Stafford
Joined in: 1983
Statement:

I firmly believe in the power of education to enable people to rise out of poverty, oppression and servitude; the old adage that if you educate a woman you educate a family. With education and training a woman/girl can work towards achieving her full potential.

My professional knowledge and skills enable me to assess applications objectively and provide informed opinions in respect of the hundreds of applications that are received every year. In addition my extensive experience of the Soroptimist world and global Membership enables me to understand opportunities and lack of opportunities in the countries of our Federation.

In my opinion it is time for the Diamond Education Grant to move forward to a position of long-term sustainability, ideally able to make higher/more significant grants particularly to more mature women wishing to retrain or re-enter the work place. These women are often unable to access the 'student loans' available to younger people (this varies from country to country) and/or their family responsibilities and economic situation preclude them from obtaining loans.

By increasing the reach of this SIGBI Charity there is the potential to attract outside funding and significantly raise the profile of our Organisation. I would like to see Clubs within the Federation undertaking the nomination process, supporting the applicants, nurturing them and providing reliable reports on their progress with a view, in the longer term, to bringing them into future Membership. There is much to do but together we can succeed in helping others to fulfil their dreams.

Soroptimist International

Pat Black reports

Soroptimist International, through the network of representatives at the each of the major UN Centres, provides a strong global voice for women and girls, working in partnership with other like-minded organisations.

Much is heard about the work at the UN in New York and Geneva but not so much about activities at the other UN Centres. There has been recent activity which you may have read about on social media or seen in the news, including the recent international agreement on nuclear weapons.

Climate change and the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement by US President Trump has figured highly. However, in Nairobi meetings of the UN Environmental Programme countries have been considering how they can meet their obligations from the Paris Agreement. International President Yvonne and incoming International Director of Advocacy, Bev Bucur, attended, with International President Yvonne giving the only NGO contribution at the Assembly meeting. <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/closer-look-leadership-part-three-si-un-reps-nairobi/>

In New York the very important meeting of the High Level Political Forum has taken place, holding Governments to account for the implementation of all the SDGs. This year efforts have been concentrated on SDGs 1,2,3,5,9,14 and 17 with 44 Governments providing a voluntary review of how they are achieving the targets for these SDGs.

SI has submitted a shadow report on how the Soroptimist projects around the world are contributing to the achievement of the SDGs under review: "Global Perspectives on Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World: Making the SDGs work for women and girls". Read more at: <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/hlpf-making-sdgs-work-women-girls-2017/>

Soroptimist and UN NGO Intern at the UN in New York, Ilana Gelb made an intervention on gender on behalf of the NGO Major Group; Soroptimist and member of the SI Advocacy team, Linda Witong, gave a presentation on child and forced marriage at a side event sponsored in partnership with Zonta International, supported by UNFPA, UNICEF USA, the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the UN, Girls not Brides among others. Linda also spoke on behalf of the NGO Major Group on interlinkages. It is excellent to see that Soroptimist International representatives have such high profile recognition, and that the evidence they are able to present is well regarded.

International President Yvonne and SI Board member Ulla Madsen attended sessions in Vienna of the Commission on Crime prevention and Criminal Justice. SIE Immediate Past President Ulla Madsen was a panellist for the side event organised jointly by Soroptimist International and Zonta International "The Lost Children- Safeguarding unaccompanied migrant minors from going missing". Attended by representatives of other NGOs and Governments the session addressed a very topical issue especially for European countries. Further information on the SI website at <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/the-lost-children/>

In Rome at a meeting of the partners and stakeholders of the Global Framework for Action to Cope with Water Scarcity in Agriculture in a Changing Climate (the Global Framework) International President Elect Mariet was able to press the case for ensuring that the role of women and girls was not brushed aside or forgotten. An interim steering committee was chosen – the private sector was missing, although work will go on attracting them in the future. The interim Steering Committee was chosen with Professor Torkil Clausen (Water Policy Adviser to DHI, Denmark) as the Chair of the Framework and SIPE Mariet chosen as Vice-Chair of this committee. The whole meeting agreed that Gender and Water should be high on the list of priorities and SI and Women for Water Partnerships were the organisations to see to that. Liliana Mosca, SI UN representative in Rome, will support this important work.

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5604e.pdf>

It would not be possible for Soroptimist International representatives to speak with such authority at these events without the foundation of the high quality work undertaken at Club level by individual members. The ability to demonstrate to all Governments the significance of the accumulation of small actions at community level means that Soroptimist International representatives can demonstrate at a high political level the practicality of achieving the targets set for the Sustainable Development Goals, especially if everyone works together.

So my inevitable last words as I finish my term as Soroptimist International Director of Advocacy are a huge Thank You for all you do, but please remember to fill in the Programme Focus Report Forms!



Membership Month!



Sue Williams, Director of Membership, reports

2017 Photo Competition

We love this photograph from **SI Bombay Chembur**, which has won the Membership Month photo competition 2017.

We were fascinated to learn how the Soroptimist Emblem was created for this picture, and it turns out to be have been made using "rangoli" powder (fine sand). Rangoli is a traditional design drawn at the door step or entrance of every Indian house on festivals and happy occasions. The artwork is created by dropping the sand through the fingers to make an outline and colours and shades added to complete the design. This rangoli was drawn by SI Bombay Chembur.

What an amazing result!

2017 Video Competition

We chose **SI Newtown's** video as the winner because they have based it on asking their Members the question "Why am I a Soroptimist?". There are some strong messages from the Members saying what their Membership means to them. Congratulations SI Newtown.

Either enter the full link www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBNtTLIGiGw or go to www.youtube.com and search for Soroptimist Newtown to watch the video.

14 AUGUST 2017



2016 Membership Month Most Increased Membership Competition

Many congratulations to six Clubs who significantly increased their Membership in the Club year 2016-2017. They have all won a free Cardiff Conference place for their Club, which they can use as they wish, but we encourage the Clubs to use them to enable one of their new Members to experience Conference. Results: San Fernando: 13, Chaguanas: 8, Grand Turk: 8, Canterbury: 7, Kathmandu: 7 and Selby: 7.



SI Barry marked Membership month at Barry Hospital. The display of Club activities was combined with the launch of the President's charity for the year - patient welfare on the Sam Davies Ward. Many people showed interest in Soroptimism and donated £104 to purchase a record player/CD Player and radio for the Ward.



SI Cardiff President Sandra Ajax is pictured by the Club's display and information stand in the foyer of the busy Holiday Inn in Cardiff where Club meetings are held. The hotel, situated just off the M4, is always full of commuters - including a ladies football team recently - and provides an ideal venue to get noticed!



SI Buxton welcomed a prospective member, Helen (in red), to a business meeting. Helen came to the Buxton Soroptimist stall at the Buxton May Day fair, and was impressed with their display.



SI Downpatrick organised a coffee morning in aid of Queens University Foundation for Cancer Research in the Downe Hospital in Downpatrick. The event was a huge success raising £940 for charity and raising the profile. They also welcomed the support from local Clubs - Lisburn, Belfast and Lurgan.



SI Cannock welcomed two new members at their last Business meeting. President Val Jones inducted Jackie Prince and Marion Taylor as members, saying that she hoped that in joining us, as we work towards our objectives, Jackie and Marion will find a sense of purpose and achievement, as well as the friendship and support of fellow members.



SI Dunfermline celebrated Membership Month with their business partner Better World Books at their Open Day, creating a lot of interest with about 310 visitors. New business cards and SIGBI leaflets were distributed and a display of our activities were met with enthusiasm. Over 3,000 second hand books were donated for resale, the profits of which go to literacy projects.



SI Gosport, Fareham and District staffed a stall at a local craft fair to promote awareness of Soroptimism as part of Membership month. Kathleen Durning is pictured with Audrey Welsh showing off her Soroptimist T shirt.



SI Lancaster marked Membership Month by inviting prospective members to their May social evening. Following an opportunity for everyone to mingle over coffee and cake, there was a very interesting presentation from two members of the Blood Bikes charity. Members also had a stand for two Wednesdays in the Lancaster library to highlight the Club's Programme Action

SI India's Ranjana Banerjee, reports that Lisa Roscoe, Communications Officer, SIGBI helped them to run a Face Book Page advertisement to give a boost to Membership in India. Thanks to her innovative idea of a Facebook connectivity, SI Calcutta and SI South Kolkata held a joint programme where they were introduced to 10 prospective members who contacted them having seen the facebook advert.



SI Plymouth hit the city centre for Lord Mayor's Day in May and hundreds stopped at their stand, attracted by free bookmarks and a free prize draw. Members talked to many women who were interested in the Club's work and they hope the interest will translate into new members.



SI Weston-super-Mare had a stand at the Sidcot School Peace festival with a board illustrating Club projects and a number of leaflets about SI and their Club. They spoke to a number of people on the day and since then have made contact with one potential member!

The Soroptimist Gift of Friendship

Hilary Rowberry, SI South East England, reports

New Zealand is an exceptional country with beautiful scenery, hospitable people and extra special Soroptimists! All the families we met went that extra mile to make us welcome and to share their pride in their nation.

At the start of our visit we were hosted in North Canterbury close to the "Garden City" of Christchurch. The Club organised a BBQ, a visit to the amazing Antarctic Experience (patting husky dogs, watching penguins and a storm room with temperatures at -30°). Then on to a re-wilding project at a new environmental reserve and a visit to an estuary to see the birds (Spoonbills, Ibis, cormorants and many others). It quickly became apparent that environmental matters are New Zealand passions and the Soroptimists said they have the earliest international equality legislation recognising Maori food and land rights.

We flew to Invercargill, at the other end of South Island, flying over the highest summit of Mount Cook, surrounded by other snow covered rugged peaks. We visited Bluff - the most southerly point of South Island, travelled through green farmland, past clear blue lakes with a background of high cloud topped mountains. Staying in Gore, SI members took us to see a jurassic fossil tree fern forest uncovered by the sea.

Onwards to Queenstown, on the shores of Lake Wakatipu and Arrowtown, an historic gold mining settlement, then to the rain forests; climbing up the Haast Pass with precipitous drops to the ravine floor as it twisted through magnificent scenery. Finally to Hokitika, famous for greenstone jewellery - known as Jade, a gift which Maoris believe cements friendship and should never be given away.

After another delightful Club pot-luck meal we continued along the rest of the spectacular coast towards Nelson. One fascinating stop took us to the pancake rocks - limestone layers formed exactly like pancakes millions of years ago and now washed by another sea into blow holes and gulleys. The drive is a world class excursion, with breaking waves of the Southern Ocean, blue skies, and forest covered mountains pushing the road to the sea's edge

In Nelson we were met by SI Waimea and then driven around the hills on a narrow track scarcely wider than our four wheel drive truck, with precipitous slopes on either side, our host is a New Zealand champion 4X4 driver and a champion triathlete!

The all New Zealand SI conference began that evening with registration and a friendly get together. It was a lovely occasion to catch up with our wonderful hosts and the SI friends we had met on our "Gift of Friendship" odyssey round South Island. Next day I was privileged to carry the Union Jack in the opening flag



ceremony - each Club had their own banners too, impressing me with the connectedness of all the Clubs at the conference. The speakers were inspiring, especially the International President Yvonne Simpson and SW Pacific President, Theresa Lyford.

The conference also covered issues including the adoption of Maori names for their regions, while the last speaker represented the White Ribbon motorcyclists who campaign against domestic violence - the major cause of murders in New Zealand.

Then time for last farewells. On the road to the airport we passed through more spectacular mountainous scenery and gorges, pausing only to marvel at a new waterfall created by the earthquake.

Our memories of New Zealand are of great friendship and kindness. Our SI hosts and guides made this "Gift of Friendship" so special, we will keep in touch!

I presented the East Grinstead UK Club background and Programme Action to each of our hosting Clubs. The discussions were useful as ways forward in raising flexible arrangements of running Clubs to attract new, younger members plus the concept of campus Clubs and partnerships with schools and Girl Guide groups.

I learned new ideas, especially how to make one of the "Million Stars". The One Million Stars to End Violence project was started in 2012 as a response to the rape and murder of a young woman in an indigenous community. It is now part of the vision of the Commonwealth Games Federation, to build peaceful and sustainable communities globally, providing opportunities for communities to participate in the Games even if they can't make it to the event. One Million Stars is the perfect way to be part of this event by weaving and submitting stars to be featured in the installation - it will be amazing.

There were many other exciting projects making up Programme Action in the SW Pacific Federation. Another one which stood out was support of the "White Ribbon" campaign for Bikers. The White Ribbon Ride is one of the most exciting initiatives tackling this country's crippling domestic record on violence, which affects one in three women. This week-long motorcycle tour happens every November - White Ribbon Month - and is a powerful and inspirational voyage for all involved.

We also witnessed the threats to braided rivers and indigenous habitats and most importantly how to really gift friendship.

Our new friends asked us to return - we most certainly shall.

All Soroptimists reading this must make sure to use these wonderful Grants of Friendship!



Communications

Facebook for Soroptimists

Lisa Roscoe, SIGBI Communications Officer

Club Facebook Page Management

Who manages your Club Facebook page? Does only one person have access?

We strongly advise that you have at least two Members acting as Admin to any Facebook page, so that even if that Member leaves the Club without handing over admin rights, the page will still be accessible to the Club.

Here is how to add an Admin to your Facebook page:

- 1) Once logged in and on your Facebook Club page, click "Settings" in the top right
- 2) From the list on the left click "Page roles"
- 3) Then you can type in email addresses or names of who you'd like to add, clicking what type of role you'd like them to have.
Admin is advisable for all Members.
- 4) Then click "add"
- 5) You'll be asked to confirm your password

Being an 'Admin' on a Facebook page allows you to control all aspects of the page. This includes creating and deleting posts, creating ads, assigning page roles and viewing insights.



Welcome SI Amounderness

Congratulations and a very warm welcome to our new Club SI Amounderness, North West England and Isle of Man, which was Chartered on 4th July 2017 by SIGBI President Elect Sue Biggs.

Rachel Mallett, Andrea Wallace, (Joint Presidents) and Anya Sarah Rigby (Club Secretary), first came together in May 2016 to see if starting a new Soroptimist International Club was something they could achieve.

After a year of hard work they have successfully gathered a group of likeminded and focused women who have come together to create this new Club.

SI Amounderness has members joining together from a wider range of towns, covering the areas within the old hundred of Lancashire, 'Amounderness'.

Sue Biggs came to Charter the new Club at its Cheese and Wine Evening held at Cancer Help Preston, Vine House in Preston.

SI Amounderness has formed a strong

partnership with Cancer Help, which will become one of their main charities.

The Club also has a strong Friendship Link with SI Bombay Chembur, as Member Andrea Sinnott visited the Indian Club in March of this year. From this trip, SI Amounderness have decided that the 'Save the Girl Child' campaign will be a large focus in their Programme Action work this year.

They also have further plans including the creation of a new school club in Bamber Bridge within the next 12 months.

It was fantastic to see the support from others Soroptimists at the Charter event, with members from many local Clubs coming to celebrate on the night, being at a new Club's Charter was definitely a first for most!

Keeping these close friendships with other local Clubs is key to SI Amounderness' plans as they hope to be extra support for the current and future local Programme Action within their Region.



SIGBI Leadership Conference

10th JUNE 2017

Now in our third year, the soon-to-be bi-annual Leadership conferences have established themselves as key events for all those interested in seeing leadership in SIGBI enhanced.

The Leadership Event 2017 held at Conference Aston on the 10th June examined how you can enhance your skills to become the leader you aspire to be.

We welcomed Jasvinder Sanghera, CEO of Karma Nirvana as the main speaker. She modelled her leadership approach, giving us an insight into her journey, both personal and professional.

Members took part in workshops on 'How to speak to the Media' led by Margaret Hyde, SI Cambridge and Sandra Sandercock SI Southend-on-Sea and District.

Another workshop was on 'Successful Clubs', led by Dishi Attwood, SI Lichfield and another was on 'Our relationship with the UN', led by Pat Black, SI Director of Advocacy.

This year's conference drew on feedback from last year, which asked for the event to be made available to the whole of the Federation.

To facilitate this, the speaker session and two of the workshops were filmed and are now on the SIGBI website – do have a look at them.

The event was very well received.

We heard from inspirational women, within and outside of our Federation. We discussed together how we could manage the challenges of modern leadership and help ensure Soroptimism doesn't lose momentum in the future.

I welcome your ideas on what you want the workshops to be about in 2019 and hope to see you there in person.

Isobel Smith
Director of Organisational Development

SIGBI Shopping

Leaflets



Programme Action Leaflets
Pack of 50 @ £6.00
per pack plus P&P.



What's a Soroptimist?
Pack of 50 @ £3.00
per pack plus P&P.

NEW: What sort of woman is a Soroptimist?
Pack of 50 @ £6.00
per pack plus P&P.



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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

21 April – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Club Ballots 1-3 – Federation Positions
2. Membership Month 2017
3. Facebook & Twitter Headers
4. T-Shirts and Foldable Shopping Bags
5. SIGBI Development Day 2017
6. SIGBI Cardiff Conference Speakers
7. Have Your Say

5 May – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. EXCITING NEWS
2. Club Photo of the Month April 2017
3. Last Chance to sign up to Thunderclap
4. Friendship Link Newsletter May 2017
5. Letter from Disasters Emergency Com.
6. Greggs Foundation Grants
7. Two new Petitions on SIGBI Website

19 May – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Leadership and Club Development Day
2. Advocacy
3. Growing our Brand in the Community
4. Membership Matters May 2017
5. SI Board Meeting – Rotterdam July 2017
6. No 63 (Soroptimist) Ltd Shareholders

2 June – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Reminder – Early Bird closing date 30 June 2017 for Cardiff Conference
2. Club Photo of the Month – May 2017
3. Federation Vacancies 2017-2019
4. UNESCO Competition
5. Women of the World (WOW)
6. SI Board Meeting – July 2017

16 June – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. FPAC Meeting 26 October 2017 Cardiff Silent Observers Letter
2. Reminder – Early Bird closing date 30 June 2017 for Cardiff Conference
3. Membership Matters – June 2017
4. Federation Vacancies 2017-2019
5. Public Liability Insurance
6. Communications & Membership Facebook Group
7. Grenfell Tower Inferno
8. SI Board – Silent Observers

7 July – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. 2018 Queens Award for Voluntary Service
2. SIGBI General Meeting 2017 and Cardiff Conference Update
3. Third call for nominations
4. Federation Election Results
5. New nominations for Federation Posts
6. Meru Women's Garden: Study Tour
7. June 2017 Club Photo of the Month

21 July – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Examples of Publications using Membership Month Toolkit
2. Membership Month Winners
3. SIGBI General Meeting 2017 and Cardiff Conference Update
4. Writing in Plain English
5. Beware of Holiday Scams
6. SPAM email

4 Aug – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. New SI President 2017-2019
2. Cardiff Conference Bloggers and Social Media Champions required
3. SI Board and SI Dues Increase
4. Letter re Charitable Status
5. Conference Order Form
6. Attention Club Website Editors
7. July Club Photo Winner



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2000 Club

Winners June 2017

Anne Woolley	£1000	SI Weston Super-Mare
Doreen Robertson	£500	SI Newport-on-Tay
Celia Jeune	£250	SI Jersey
Ruth Demensis	£250	SI Taunton

Winners July 2017

Melanie Livers	£100	SI London East
Bozena Benton	£100	SI Sutton Coldfield
Jane Bridges	£50	SI St. Austell
Margaret Headon	£50	SI Cirencester
Kathy Bobs	£25	SI Cheltenham
Audrey Bond	£25	SI Birmingham Central

Winners August 2017

Jackie Gloyne	£100	SI Cirencester
SI Taw & Torridge	£100	SI Taw & Torridge
SI Wigan	£50	SI Wigan
Janet Bettison	£50	SI Plymouth
Sandra Squires	£25	SI Birmingham Central
Margaret Robinson	£25	SI Bangor NI

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. On the Number 63 website there is an application form to join the 2000 Club - <http://www.number63.co.uk/>



SI Barry Member Mary Thomas, recently received an Award from Councillor Nic Hughes, the Town Mayor of Barry, for her outstanding commitment to the local community. Mary worked in education for 30 years and was a founder member and, in its 50th year, Chair of Barry Tenovus (a cancer support charity). She has served on her local community hall committee for 30 years, has been actively involved with sport all her life, is an honorary member of Barry Amateur Swimming Club, and an active member of a local bowls club. Club President Jackie Memory said, "Her energy and commitment are an inspiration. Her work ethos, positive attitude and selflessness make her a role model. She thoroughly deserves to be recognised with this Award."



SI Blackburn made a double presentation to Dorothy Bury, who celebrated her 90th birthday and her 45th year as a Soroptimist. A special birthday cake was presented, which she shared with Club members. Dorothy was the first female solicitor in Blackburn. The Club is very proud to have her as a member. The photo shows Dorothy receiving her bouquet and certificate from newly installed President Viv Wojciechowski and outgoing President Cat.



SI Buxton celebrated its 45th Charter with an Afternoon Tea. To add to the frocks & hats, blazers & boaters theme they invited Lorna Young a local Milliner as their speaker. Lorna works at the Hat Works Museum in Stockport and teaches in Leeds. She gave us a wonderful history of the hat through the different eras and how important the hat industry was to Stockport and the surrounding areas.

Founder members Shirley Hope and Thelma Fraser were presented with flowers to thank them for all their contributions they have made to SI Buxton. Four fellow Soroptimists attended from Staffordshire Moorlands.



SI Calcutta recently celebrated its 38th Charter Day. The programme including a talk by Dr. Shnaz, Head of the Department of Urdu, University of Calcutta, on the plight of Muslim women in India. This was followed by the release of the Annual Newsletter, a cultural performances by members of SI Calcutta and the children of its 'Hold My Hand' project and fellowship.



SI Canterbury celebrated President Yvonne's successful year with a dinner at Howfield Manor Hotel. Members and partners enjoyed good food and great conversation and friendship. Yvonne thanked members for celebrating with her at her President's Dinner and for their support over the last year.

We all thank Yvonne for her leadership, support, encouragement and hard work.



SI Central & South West London has just celebrated its 90th Anniversary! The Guest of Honour was International President Yvonne Simpson, SIGBI President Elect Sue Biggs was representing SIGBI Resident, Ann Hodgson.

The Celebration Party was held at St. John's Museum in the City of London and Members were also joined by their Friendship Link Clubs, fellow Soroptimists, friends and family from far and wide.

The weekend had started with an evening reception at Number 63. On the Saturday morning, a fascinating tour of Suffragette London by Hilary Radcliffe was very well received.

Club President Victoria's charity, WISH, benefited from the Raffle which raised over £1000. The weekend closed with Tea at the Organgery in Kensington Gardens.

A fond farewell was said to all the guests and Members basked in the warmth of the many congratulations and greetings received.



SI Crosby President, Annette Hughes was delighted to host the 79th Charter Dinner at West Lincs Golf Club in May, 2017. This photograph shows Annette with Presidents of SI Crosby's Mother and Sister Clubs. A wonderful evening was had by all and Annette was grateful to all guests and Members who attended.



SI of the Dukeries celebrated its 45th Charter on Saturday 6th May at Ye Olde Bell Hotel, where, after a superb lunch, various toasts were proposed, including one by Regional President Sandra Angood, together with speeches from our joint Club Presidents Caroline, Ginny, and Hilary.

Founder member Mrs June Watkins was presented with her 45 years Long Service Award, by Regional President Mrs Sandra Angood. This was followed by an interesting talk by Kate Firth, General Manager of Ye Olde Bell, who took her audience on a journey through time, from the hotel's inception in the 1600s to the present day, and on future projects in the pipeline.



SI Fylde Members and friends celebrated the start of their 80th year by launching the "80 for 80" Toilet Twinning project. The event took place in the new Pavilion Café at AKS School, where Head of School Catering, Steve Shepherd, gave a masterclass in making canapés. Attendees enjoyed the delicious results with prosecco and elderflower cocktails.

The group raised £200 from the raffle – all prizes, including a microwave oven, a magnum of Bordeaux wine, an afternoon tea for two, hampers and bottles of fizz - were donated by friends.



SI Glasgow City recently held its AGM and President Gwen presented four Members with long service certificates. Ella Caldwell, Beth Diamond and Sheila McMorris had each given over 40 years of service, while Elizabeth McClure had 45 years of service. All four have held many different positions on the Club Executive during their years of service.



SI Kenilworth & District Members were delighted to welcome Federation President Ann Hodgson to the Club's 48th annual dinner. President Ann began her Soroptimist life at the Kenilworth Club 25 years ago.

The Club was commended for its work – this year members have raised £6,045 for 12 charities. The main beneficiaries were Friends of Sick Children in Malawi, Ovarian Cancer, Look Good Feel Better, Water Aid, Meru Project, SI Nepal Aid and the Women's Refuge.



SI Kettering congratulated two Club Members who have 90 years service between them. Myra Sherwood (left) has served 40 years and Wendy Beaton (right) has served 50 years.

SI Mansfield's President, Diane Milner, and hostess, Anne Bull, were pleased to entertain the Members of SI Mansfield & District to a Champagne and Canape evening on 2nd May. The event was to celebrate the 'Diamond' anniversary of the Club, Chartered in 1957, which has focused its work on Local, National and International concerns for 60 years.

President Diane has chosen The Diamond Education Fund, helping students to complete advanced education, and Fountaindale School, our local Specialist Education Centre, on the outskirts of Mansfield as her charity.



SI Newbury & District are delighted and very proud to announce that Sue Kitchener, our Club Secretary, recently received an MBE for voluntary service. She has been a Soroptimist for 15 years fully participating in Club and worldwide activities. She has been a member of the Girl Guides for 40 years and has held many local and County roles in that time. Sue also volunteers for local charities and at local events in the community.



SI Pontypridd went along to Ammanford where President Lynne presented past Member Thea Lewis with a Long Service certificate. Thea was a member of Pontypridd Club for 40 years before she went to live in a care home.

SI Poona celebrated its 26th annual Charter Night on the evening of Sunday, 9th April 2017, at the PYC Gymkhana. Lata Krishnan, President of SI India's National Association was the special guest for the occasion. She commended SI Poona for the good work they were doing, and all Members participated in a wonderful interaction with her, sharing their ideas and views. This was followed by an enjoyable dinner with family and friends of Members joining in.

SI Stockport says that a Soroptimist getting married is a cause for celebration in her Club; but when it is the Immediate Past President, it's something else again! Eleanor Reakes, President of SI Stockport and District decided to organise a 'surprise' bridal shower for IPP Ingrid Whiteman to celebrate her forthcoming wedding and Regional President Margaret was invited as the Club's special guest.

To say that Ingrid was speechless to be faced by a group of Members wearing 'wedding hats' is an understatement when she thought she was going for coffee with a friend! It was a wonderful evening enjoyed by all.

SIGBI Celebrations!



SI St Vincent & the Grenadines hosted a Recognition Tea at Beachcombers to celebrate the people and organisations, as well our Sisters, who have helped them to reach their goals every day, as a part of our 30th anniversary celebration.

Some of the awards were presented by Honourable Frederick Stephenson, Minister of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, Persons with Disabilities and Youth.



SI Tamworth Members celebrated the 90th birthday of their Honorary Member, Gwen Hutchinson at a recent Club meeting.

Gwen shared the wine and Birthday cake with all the members and was presented with a Soroptimist brooch and flowers by President Margaret Clarke.

Celebrate with us! Send us your news!

Club News



SI Beckenham held a lunch at West Kent Golf Club, addressed by Tricia Stewart, Miss October in the original Calendar Girls, who endeared herself to guests with her personal recollections of the sad events which brought the Calendar Girls together and the energy with which they made their idea real. The lunch raised £800 for RUSH, a community project in Kenya.



SI Brixham ladies gave out free bags on the old Fish Quay on 30th May for Conservation Day.



SI Canterbury's Immediate Past President, Yvonne Freeman presented the Jacque Emery School Writing Prize to Maisie Bradley, from Year 6, St Faith's, at Ash Primary School.



SI Castleford, Normanton and District members presented a cheque to Snydale Riding For the Disabled. In a large indoor arena the riders negotiate various items around a course. The money will be used to purchase equipment and more objects to make it more interesting for the riders.

SI Dunfermline saw their home town in a new light as a guide, Eddie Taylor, made them look up at the historic buildings. Eddie shared historical stories and explained what the plaques and sculptures signified. An enlightening outing was concluded with a meal and the first draw of their 200 Club, proceeds of which will go towards literacy projects.



SI Chelmsford had a stand in Chelmsford and collected 525 bras for the Purple Teardrop Campaign. Working with **SI Southend** they will be delivered to Purple Teardrop in Poole along with their collection. President Barbara Bramley said "It been great fun for the club collecting the bras and has really caught the attention of everyone involved."



SI Chesterfield held a fundraising evening at the Kathmandu Nepalese restaurant as a follow up to their International evening when a local teacher, Steve Kenyon, spoke of his work with students at a school in Kathmandu. Steve came to report on how money they raised has provided toilets for girls who are menstruating helping them to attend school every day.



SI Cirencester held a "Wine Women and Song" event in the town. It generated a great deal of interest in membership. The Club also held a Quiz Evening for WaterAid, raising £1660.

SI Crieff After the death of the Club's long time member, Phyllis Lawson, a collection was made at her funeral and £500 was collected. Phyllis was a dancer as a young woman and she had a tremendous interest in the performing arts; remembering that Denis Lawson is her son, and Ewan McGregor is her grandson. As a result, Club members decided that the money should benefit girls or young women in the performing arts. The money was given to Horsecross Arts, where it will be used to help fund three young women studying singing, dancing and theatre. The Club was delighted that Phyllis's daughter, Carol McGregor was able to come along on the evening and make the presentation.



SI Crosby President Annette helped to judge the best dressed teddy bear at Jospice Teddy Bear's Picnic on 9th July, together with members serving afternoon tea and raising £500. The weather was perfect, 50 teddy bears took part!



SI Croydon listened as 10 year old Lottie Hobbs read out her winning essay: "Women are stronger than men think they are". Lottie, a pupil at The Woodside Academy, Croydon, was chosen by the judges as the Croydon winner to go forward to the regional finals. Lottie was presented with her certificate by Club President Grace Onions. Judge Linda Jordan told Lottie: "Your essay stood out as your arguments were more pertinent than the others. You did an excellent job."



SI Dewsbury had a tombola stall at Ossett Gala, the weather was fantastic and people turned out in their droves. Even though there was an abundance of tombola stalls, they made a healthy £165.50 for Yorkshire Air Ambulance, President Julie's charity.



SI Edinburgh members helped at a Sight Village – an expo of services and products for blind and visually impaired people, by enabling visitors to access displays including phones with helpful features such as big buttons and quick dial contacts, audio description services, and accessible computer software. As the guiding was one to one they escorted a small number of people but they did make a difference!



SI Glasgow City President Gwen chose Glasgow Women's Aid as the focus for fundraising activities for 2016/17. The Glasgow Singers Company along with guest artiste Beth Robb Adams presented a fabulous concert of classical pieces, songs from musicals and some fun items to a packed audience in Sherbrooke and St.Gilberts Church. A representative from Glasgow Women's Aid accepted a cheque for £2500, thanking the Glasgow Soroptimists for their support in its 40th year of working with victims of domestic violence – experienced by 1 in 10 women in Scotland.



SI Great Yarmouth held its Annual Quiz Evening once again and raised £400 for the HOMESTART charity. The buffet, supplied by Members, was, as usual, really super, as was the raffle. Quiz Mistress was Past President Yvonne Ward and President Pat Hollis presided.



SI Harrogate enjoyed an excellent day in Wetherby when the Tour de Yorkshire road cycling race whizzed through the town. (Nearly a quarter of the Club members are from the Wetherby Area.) In partnership with Welcome to Wetherby, the Soroptimists provided light refreshments in the Town Hall all day, raising £440, to be split between Welcome to Wetherby and the Club and Tour Charity – The Alzheimer's Society.



SI Haverfordwest was proud to be presented with an award by the High Sheriff of Dyfed Professor Medwin Hughes DL in recognition of the Club as a worthy organisation within the Shrievalty in the community. The High Sheriff described their work as outstanding and providing a valuable service, making a significant contribution in the community.



SI Ilkley organised a Community Day for the public to find out about local organisations, including arts/theatre groups, civic groups, health related groups and voluntary groups. The day cemented the President Rita's theme of interlinking circles of friendship.



SI Kettering Members and sisters Janet and Anne Spence are Joint Presidents for 2017/18. Janet and Anne have both served individually as Presidents three times before. This time they are pooling their skills and have a full programme planned for the year.



SI Leigh joined Wigan Council's Child Sexual Exploitation Team and Greater Manchester Police to highlight the increasing incidence of abuse on vulnerable child victims. The focus is on awareness raising with parents of at risk children. The initiative targets 'Hot Spots' where parents of Year 5/6 children will be given details of Sexting, Cyber-safety and Parent Grooming with prevention strategies to use.



SI High Wycombe held a hygge evening at member Jane Herrick's home – a very sociable event where they enjoyed friendship, laughter, and vast amounts of chocolate-based products and pancakes, with the gin and tonic cake making a real impact. Regional President Jen Simpson was caught making the most of it!



SI Lichfield found that many hands made light work at the Lichfield 'Bower Counting House' on Bank Holiday Monday as Members counted the generous donations from the public enjoying the glorious Lichfield Bower Procession. Chests full of 'bronze, silver and gold' were delivered by members of the Rotary club for the counters to carefully sort and bag.



SI King's Lynn welcomed local primary Schools at King Edward VII Academy to battle it out in the SI King's Lynn Annual Public Speaking Competition. Year 6 pupils presented their arguments, wowing the judges with their eloquent presentations. North Wootton Community School triumphed this year. A cheque for £100 and the Benita Haynes Shield, in memory of a former Member was presented by Catherine Booth and Tim Haynes, Benita Haynes' daughter and son.

SI Pendleside heard a talk about FairTrade presented by Kathryn Corkish from The Mustard Seed of Garstang on their trip to Ghana and the significance of Fair Trade to the economy of the country. She spoke of three products women were involved in: palm oil, cocoa beans/chocolate and bananas, and that they were given equal share in all decision making. A donation went to Traidcraft Exchange.



SI Lewes Members and guests were treated to a magical evening of beautiful arias during 'A Night at the Opera'. Rosalind Lloyd-Bostock, Olivia Sjöberg, Fabian Langguth and Mirjam Mesak, all graduates of the Guildhall School of Music, offered their wonderful voices free to help raise money for Bloom School in Nepal and local projects supported by the Soroptimists. An auction held in the interval, which included tickets kindly donated by Glyndebourne for the final rehearsal of La Traviata, brought the overall total raised to a magnificent £1,400. Vera Gajic, the Soroptimist's Immediate Past President, said "The money raised will make a big difference to the charities that the Soroptimists support."



SI Medway Towns joined an International Women's Day event in Chatham Dockyard to publicise Soroptimists and to further raise awareness of Modern Slavery or Human Trafficking locally. People are more aware of Human Trafficking generally, but are still surprised that it goes on right under our noses.



SI Newcastle upon Tyne's new Member, who works at a huge shopping malls, approached their Chaplain Rev. Lyn Jamison to seek support for the collection of "New Start Bags" for the victims of human trafficking and modern day slavery. Chaplain Lyn made it her monthly appeal to MetroCentre staff in Gateshead and members of the Club went along to collect the donations on 14th July.



SI Northallerton Members took part in The Race For Life at York Race Course on 9th July, raising £300 for Cancer Research UK.



SI Plymouth and SI Poole Members with Soroptimisters, met in Sidmouth in May to enjoy a sunny lunch with sea views, and to develop their Friendship Link relationship. The Clubs have met and worked before, especially on human trafficking issues as part of the Purple Teardrop Campaign.



SI Pune Metro East Members attended the National Meeting in Kodikanal. Here they greet the NASI President Lata Krishnan.



SI Rhyl held a Cake & Coffee Morning at the North Wales Women's Centre. Members made wonderful cakes and £90 as well as having a great deal of fun. They met many interesting women, many with a story they were eager to tell and took the opportunity to promote our Club and Soroptimist International and Esther will be in touch with four ladies who wish to come and visit their Club.



SI Selby has been raising money for local charities including Selby Carers Count and Selby Young Carers. Among their activities was a Quiz evening held at Eggborough Village Hall. With 90 people in 14 teams pitting their wits against each other in this annual event, the evening raised £1000. President Hilary Putman said, "This was an excellent evening and members of Soroptimist International are thrilled that they have been able to raise so much money for the charities that we are supporting this year."

SI Southampton members were delighted to welcome Emma Stevens, Learning and Enterprise Co-ordinator of Two Saints Charity and Susan, a client, to our meeting to hear about their work with homeless women. They are supporting Two Saints with donations of essential goods for 'starter packs' and a number of fundraising activities.



SI Stockton on Tees, helped by members of a local fitness class, handed over twelve New Start bags to provide early assistance for people who have been rescued from trafficking. President Caroline Allred and Julie Everson met Cleveland Police's VEMPT (vulnerable, exploited, missing and trafficked) team where the bags were gratefully accepted. They will work in partnership to provide valuable support where it is urgently needed.



SI Tamworth has launched its campaign to increase the awareness of cervical screening as in many local areas there is a poor take up. An open evening for professionals and the public has been arranged.



SI South West and Channel Islands recently held its Annual General Meeting and Conference. SI Taunton were delighted to receive the Ellen Brawn Award for Good Practice in recognition of the Swimathon they have been organising for the last 29 years and the large amount they have raised through this for local charities. This year the final amount raised was £16,663.68 and this was divided equally between four charities, each receiving £4,165.92: Taunton Association for the Homeless, Stand Against Violence, Apple FM (Musgrove Park Hospital and Community radio) and the Taunton Mother and Baby Home. This brings the total over 29 years to £611,095.02 for charities.



SI Tiverton's Di Hill, Daphne Dowsing and Jenny Evans are with the cast of the Murder Mystery Dinner event that raised over £1200 for Club charities.

Club News



SI Wolverhampton members raised a total of £2,624.50 for the Midland Freewheeler Bloodbikes during their 80th year. The money was raised through various events including coffee mornings, sale of items made by their craft club members and raffles. The charity, which provides a 24-hour service delivering emergency supplies to hospitals including blood, breast milk and x-rays, is entirely funded by voluntary donations.



SI South East England Region: The Jacque Emery Award

SI South East Region has ran the first Jacque Emery writing competition, in honour of Past Regional President Jacque Emery. Jacque sadly died of cancer in 2015 at the aged 65. Jacque was a Senior Examiner at LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) and was passionate about effective communication. The writing competition was open to Year 6 girls and boys. They were asked to answer the question 'Are men and women equal?'

Carol Infanti, President of the South East Region and one of the judges said "I have enjoyed reading the essays. It has been a pleasure and privilege running this competition."

This competition will be run every two years to encourage and inspire young people to take an interest in writing and communication. Clubs ran their own heats, followed by a Winner of Winners event, which was Agnes from SI Sevenoaks. Runner up went to Loui from SI Lewes. The judging panel also wanted to recognise and commend two other essays by Maisie from SI Canterbury and to Jake from SI Folkestone.

The Winner of Winners, Agnes (pictured) was invited to the Regional meeting on 10th June when the prize was presented.

Photo: Regional judges L-R Regional President Carol Infanti, Lily Faulkner (6th form student from Oakwood Park Grammar school), Jane Webb (President Elect), Olivia Roe (new member), Jan Doyle (SI member and Chair of Governors).



Wilfrida Hendricks and Sabine Kinzer, SI Representatives to the UN at Geneva, were guest speakers at the South West & Channel Islands March Regional Meeting. Wilfrida is French and lives in Annecy near the Swiss border; Sabine is Austrian and now lives in Switzerland. They gave a fact-packed presentation about the work of SI representatives at the eight UN centres throughout the world.

They work in Geneva alongside 4,000 organisations which have consultative status with the UN. SI has an equal voice at ECOSOC though it has no voting rights. However, the ladies stressed that what NGOs had to say was recognised and valued.

SI UN representatives receive instructions from the SI board. At ECOSOC the work is mainly concerned with human rights' issues. They can go direct to UN ambassadors, disseminate information and raise awareness providing opportunities to network and lobby.

There were four SI Representatives in New York, one in Rome, two in Paris and, until recently, two in Geneva although three new, younger, members have been appointed in the past two weeks.

Their mission is to follow up UN activities on everything pertaining to women, particularly education and gender equality, and feedback to SI. They have also been working on the NGO convention on ageing. Achievements have included the outlawing of FGM in countries, especially in Africa, and on tobacco issues.

Members of SI Weston-super-Mare kindly hosted the ladies over the weekend.

Friendship Links



South West and Channel Islands Friendship Weekend 2017

The weekend started with supper on Friday 16th June at Tiverton Golf Club where guests were entertained by the Wyndham Singers and Somerset Hills Ladies Chorus. On Saturday Regional President Daphne Dowsing and the members of SI Tiverton and District

welcomed Soroptimist Sisters to the 77th Regional AGM and Conference. In the evening partners and friends join Soroptimists for a Gala Dinner at the Tiverton Hotel. To end a wonderful weekend, Sunday morning offered the choice of Walking the Tiverton Trail and/or a free private visit to the Tiverton museum. A buffet lunch, presented by SI Tiverton and District members, was held in the Mayor's Parlour at Tiverton Town Hall.

SI Barry and SI Cirencester's vintage tea party

SI Bury and SI Cirencester are 150 miles apart but constantly in touch. In July 2016 SI Cirencester & District held a Vintage Tea Party and asked if SI Bury could donate any handbags to auction at the Tea Party, to raise funds for a local charity for the homeless – and they did. On the day there were stalls selling lavender bags, bric a brac and of course afternoon teas, along with the auction of the wonderful handbags, raising £1500. The two Clubs' ongoing project for 2016 - 17 is the collection of toiletries.



SI Falkenberg member visits Torquay

Last year in November Margareth Johannsson of SI Falkenberg, Sweden, was planning a short holiday to the UK and contacted SI Torquay and District asking them if they would have time to meet me. They decided to meet at a café close to where Margareth was staying. Quite a

few SI Torquay Members met her and spent several hours having interesting discussions and sharing ideas about Club work. Before saying goodbye two members took me to their Club's own house, Rosegarth, in Tor Church Road and showed me around. Margareth said, "This meeting was the highlight of my trip to the UK and I do hope to be able to come back to Torquay and meet sisters of SI Torquay and District again soon. We do keep in contact quite often which is nice."



to be 'President for a month', and in the photo: Sandy Baxter, Ann Potts, Margaret Clayson, Sue Fenwick, Shirley Thubron, Sheila Harrison, Angela Edwards, Ann Morton.

SI Richmond & Dales is celebrating its 60th Jubilee year in 2017-18. Many events are underway, and Friendship Link groups in Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Scotland and Durham, have been invited to Richmond. Ten Presidents were introduced for the year! The Jubilee committee invited long standing members each was presented with a white

Obituaries

Margaret Heaven, SI Cheltenham died on 19th May 2017 aged 91. A committed Soroptimist for 60 years, a Founder Member and Honorary Member, she had twice been President.

Barbara (Binnie) Brown, SI Glasgow City died on 21st March 2017 aged 91. Binnie was a committed Member for 41 years.

Muriel Whyte, SI Glasgow City, died on 4th May 2017 aged 87. Muriel was a Member for 42 years and was Club President of SI Glasgow West in 1982.

Audrey Told, SI Norwich, died on 10th June 2017 aged 95. An Honorary Member and a dedicated Soroptimist since 1959 in the London Anglia Region and since 1988 in SI Norwich.

Sylvia Maria Anica des Fours Walderode, SI Epsom, died on 18th May aged 95. A committed Member for 41 years, Sylvia served as Club President in 1982-1983 and was active in other Club roles.

Wilma M M Craigmile MBE, SI Aberdeen, died on 11th May 2017, aged 86. Club President 1976-7; Secretary 1990-94; Archivist 1996-2011, Friendship Link correspondent with SI Fishguard and District 1997-2017. Also a former Member and President (1987-88) of SI Dundee; Scotland North Divisional Union and Region Secretary, 1988-90 and Benevolent Fund representative 1990-96. Committee Member and Chair (2009-10) of the Aberdeen Soroptimist Housing Society Ltd.

Iris Holmes, SI Blackburn, died on 9th May 2017, aged 89. A Soroptimist for 47 years, a founder Member of SI Leyland, before moving to SI Oxford, back to SI Leyland where she was the final President when the Club closed.

Nora Harvey, SI Bridgwater, died on 19th April 2017 aged 98. She joined in 1973 and was Club President in 1978/79.

Dawn Noott, SI Stockport and District died on 27th April 2017 aged 76. A loyal Member since 1995 she was Membership Officer and was Club President in 1999.

Francis Rigby-McKenzie, SI Providenciales Member, died

suddenly on 15th May 2017. She was the Club's 'comedian'.

Doris Milthorp, SI Bradford died on 31st March after a short period of ill health. A valued Member since 1972 and President in 1979.

Lena Crockett, SI Coventry, died on 22nd May 2017. A Member for 52 years, Lena was Club President in 1975/76 and served on the Executive and various other committees. She was very involved in the chartering of Kenilworth and Rugby daughter Clubs, and representative for the Federation Benevolent Club.

Margaret Holden, SI Castleford, Normanton and District died on 26th April 2017. An active Member since 1984, President 1987-1988 and held the post of Secretary for a number of years.

Carole Morrison, SI Weston-super-Mare died on 27th April 2017 aged 73. A loyal Member for 27 years and President in 2003/4.

Margaret Bates, SI Weybridge & District, died in December 2016 aged 85. A Founder Member, 40 years ago of the then SI Elmbridge. Margaret served on many Club committees and was President.

Christine Paice, SI Woking and District, died on 6th May 2017 aged 71. A Soroptimist for 17 years, Chris was President in 2005/6 – the Club's Pearl Anniversary year. A valued Member of the Programme Action Committee.

Carol Jennings, SI St Austell & District died suddenly on 30th April 2017 aged 72. A Member for 21 years, Carol was Club President 2003-2004 and Minutes Secretary. **Glenda Franklin, SI Dunfermline** died on 10th July 2017 aged 78. An active Soroptimist for 29 years and Club President 1989 - 1999.

Mary Daggett, SI Yeovil, Sherborne & Districts, died in June 2017, having joined in 1957. Mary held the posts of Club & Divisional Secretary and President and was a member of the Federation Civic Action Committee. She was made an Honorary Member in 1993.

Prema Kumar, SI Chennai, died on 19th May 2017, aged 67. Premia joined SI Chennai in 2004 and Club President 2006-2007.

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@sigi.org

If Clubs would like to make a donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of their Members who have passed away, please send it to SIGBI HQ, cheques made payable to SIGBI Ltd. The Memorial Fund enables Members to attend Conference who would otherwise be unable to experience this event.

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Tell us about your Friendship Links!



Meru marches forward!

Update from Patricia Gatherum,
Federation Project Liaison



We are now more than half way through the Meru Women's Garden Project and we have raised £56,841.18p. Our target is £152,716 so we have some way to go.

I feel that I must emphasise that this is a SIGBI wide project voted for by members at the Glasgow Conference in 2015. If your Region or National Association has not yet raised any money to date there are still 18 months of fundraising time to go so why not give it a go – now?

There are many interesting ways to raise money that involve gardens, why not take a look at the Meru website or contact Amanjit Dhillon our liaison person at Child.org, our partners. Her address is amanjit@child.org

A huge Thank You to everyone who has participated in the many innovative ways to enable us to see 198 women entering onto the training programmes which are teaching them to grow their own food, to use less wood for cooking, use minimal water and learn about climate change. In the past many trees were cut down for wood for cooking but now they have new stoves which use less firewood. It is hoped that more trees will also be planted. They are also learning leadership skills and about group dynamics.

The curriculum is likely to be altered in the future due to changes in circumstances such as drought. The present curriculum is on the Meru website at the bottom of the agricultural training page. You will be updated when these changes take place.

There are also plans to include water catchment training and to allocate more water tanks before the October rains. Water is very scarce at the moment.

The Meru website/<http://meruwomen.org> has been recently updated and there are three new pages, so please take a look at it.

If anyone would like posters and leaflets please email amanjit@child.org and she will produce them for you at a cost of around £30.

Please continue to keep me and Amanjit informed of your events and activities. We really are interested and will help in any way we can. The women of Meru really appreciate what you are doing for them

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SI Canterbury reports that visitors to Canterbury Cathedral's Open Garden weekend helped raised nearly £13,000 for charitable causes. Two cheques, each for £4,500, were presented (main photo) to Carol Townsend and Carol Reed from SI Canterbury on behalf of the Meru Women's Garden Project in Kenya (a collaboration between child.org, Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland and the women of Meru) and to Jessica Maddocks from the Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN) by Events Manager Emma Clarke and Senior Gardener Luke Matlock.

The remainder of the money raised during the May weekend has been given to the National Garden Scheme (NGS) to be distributed between their chosen charities.

SI Barnstaple members asked local festival-goers 'Fancy some Hanky Panky?' and drew them to their tombola stall to raise funds for Meru.



SI Barry had a tombola and book stall at Rotary's duck race and raised £85 for the Meru Garden Women's Project.



SI Bristol held a 'Sausage Sizzle' which included a stall highlighting the Meru Women's Garden Project where they sold all manner of garden produce, including jam.



SI Neath was invited to the Senedd by Jeremy Miles, Assembly Member (AM) for Neath to give a presentation to local AMs about the Meru Women's Garden Project. SI Neath's Olive Newton (Past Federation President) Christine Thomas and Cathryn Richards gave presentations.

SI Cirencester held a fundraising event at the Radjoot restaurant, raising £410 for the Meru Women's Garden Project.



SI Harrogate had a stall at Ripon Market on 20th July to raise awareness of the Meru Garden Project and sell the Meru Jams.



SI Maidstone hosted a coffee morning to raise awareness of and funds for the Meru Women's Garden Project. With generous support from friends and neighbours, £523 was raised.