

DECEMBER 2017

Soroptimist News

**SIGBI
Conference
in Cardiff:
full report**

**SIGBI
President
visits
South African
Clubs**

**New SIGBI
Club chartered
in Gwarinpa,
Nigeria**



- **SIGBI Conference 2018: is in Liverpool! Put it in your diary!**
- **Meru Women's Garden Project update – what are you doing for Meru?**
- **Soroptimist International 21st Quadrennial Conference in Kuala Lumpur!**

**Women inspiring action,
transforming lives**

www.sigbi.org

Welcome to **Soroptimist News** from the Editor



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

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I was really looking forward to attending the SIGBI Conference in Cardiff, my 15th year of enjoying and reporting on the major event in the SIGBI year.

Bags were packed, recording technology checked, photographer briefed, all set.

Then a gremlin crept in and instead of meeting 1200 amazing Soroptimists, I was in a hospital bed. I could not believe it, first time I have been in hospital since 2002!

So, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the valiant SIGBI bloggers who provided the reporting on the whole of the Conference - thank you so much, you all did a fantastic job and saved me presenting a rather skimpy issue of Soroptimist News!

My grateful thanks also to the Conference team and to Sally Higgins who have helped me bring this issue together.

There is certainly plenty of reporting in this issue, including President Ann's trip to South Africa, which sounds wonderful.

I've never been there but it looks so exciting and vibrant and it is great to hear about the work that Soroptimists there are doing, massive achievements which must be so appreciated by those that our SIGBI Clubs have helped.

Moving into 2018, another year of action lies ahead, keep sending me your news and I'll do my best to print as much as we can get into the 24 pages!



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NEXT ISSUE: 16th February 2018, deadline for submissions: 8th January 2018

Featured Objective 1: "Education" (APD Education)

Featured Objective 2: "Conflict resolution/peace promotion/elimination of violence." (APD VCR)

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 2018 is in the Members' area of the SIGBI website.



Welcome to our new President!

President's message

Dear Soroptimist Sisters

Congratulations to all those who worked so hard to ensure that the Cardiff Conference was such a successful event. Everyone I have spoken to has said how much they enjoyed the speakers, the music and friendliness of everyone they met in Cardiff.

I would also like to congratulate our Immediate Past President Ann on carrying out such an excellent job, steering the good ship SIGBI over the last 12 months. She will be a tough act to follow.



So now it is my turn to wear the Presidential chain and chair the Federation Management Board for the next 12 months.

I am excited by the prospect, especially as we are in the process of hopefully achieving Charitable Status. It has long been my dream that Soroptimists should be able to spend more time on the valuable service work they carry out and less on fundraising.

Imagine what a difference we could make if all our efforts were focused totally on the Programme Action we perform in our communities.

In my inaugural address I also spoke about the need to empower and enable ourselves to thrive. We have to empower and allow ourselves to think differently about how we operate.

We have to enable ourselves to pass the enjoyment of Soroptimism onto others. We need to reMember why we first became a Soroptimist, what made us decide that this was the organisation for us, what keeps us attending meetings?

At the heart of this desire are the Clubs and the Membership. We must empower and enable ourselves to develop our Clubs, our Membership offers and our meetings.

We need to enable ourselves to be kind to each other. It is never going to be possible for us all to like or get on with absolutely everyone else. We are all different but we must reMember that we are proud of our high ethical standards.

We need to enable ourselves to be tolerant of each other's differences. We can all learn from each other. We are never too old or too stuck in our ways to learn something new.

We all have something to offer however large or small. We must reMember that. We need to focus on new and different ways of carrying out what we do as well as still using the tried and tested methods. We are all able to learn from one another.

In friendship

Susan

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

Step Up, Lead the Way

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff 26th – 28th October 2017

**President Ann's theme Step Up, Lead the Way certainly encouraged you!
1200 Soroptimists from across the Federation, stepped up and led the way to Cardiff,
where a warm Welsh welcome was waiting for them!**

**Reporting by: Margaret Badley, SI Bedford; Jane Slatter, SI St Albans & District;
Margaret Molyneux, SI Leigh & District and President, South Lancashire region; Louise Gillies, Soroptimist Associate Member;
Jacalyn Wood, SI Folkestone; Carol Salter, Associate Member and Founder Member of the soon-to-be-chartered Thanet Club**



With a warm welcome from Wales, the 83rd SIGBI Conference started in rousing fashion with some powerful, mellow and up-tempo singing by Aaron Pryce-Lewis (3), the son and grandson of Soroptimists.

A more serious note was struck by Jane Hutt AM, Leader of the House, Chief Whip, Welsh Government – and a Soroptimist (4) – who illustrated for us the commitment of the Welsh Assembly to such policies as female equality and the eradication of modern slavery.

The tone then changed as the Roll Call was introduced by Helen Murdoch, Conference Chair (2) and Anne MacDonald, Chief Steward (5), as the flags of all SIGBI Federation territories were brought on to the stage and lowered respectfully by the Girl Guides.

Usually this is very moving but this year as the kaleidoscope of flags from Anguilla to Zimbabwe were lowered it seemed more celebratory, serving to remind us of our vibrant and wide ranging sisterhood.

The latter part of the evening held more singing as befits a country which prides itself on its music. President Ann Hodgson (1) introduced The Bristol Military Wives Choir (6), which was set up to forge friendships between women always on the move, who brought their sweet and often tender voices to the stage.

Their repertoire varied from the poignant 'Bring Him Home' to getting us all on our feet and singing lustily as sisters to 'We Are Family'.

As the evening closed 1200 participants left humming and eager for the next session.

Main photo: Left: Pat Black, Past International Director of Advocacy; Centre: Ann Hodgson, President SIGBI; Right: Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, Soroptimist International President, with Members of Girl Guiding Central Glamorgan.





Michael Kaufman Ph.D
Co-founder, the White Ribbon Campaign

The title of Michael Kaufman's passionate speech and presentation was "In Our Lifetimes – Engaging men for gender equality and ending men's violence". Men's silence has been a massive problem in gender equality campaigns, there is progress on women's equality and ending violence against women but with 8000 years of male dominance it takes time to make the transformational changes needed for the future of humankind worldwide.

In 1991, Michael founded the White Ribbon Campaign, when he realised that we are all bombarded from birth with ideas and ideals of what defines manhood and humankind in masculine terms – at the birth of his son the midwife adopted a low tone to her voice and said "what a strong little fellow"... and so begins the behaviour changes towards the gender of everyone – even tiny babies.

His presentation included masses of images of male domination in advertising including the "supersizing masculinity" images where male images have become stronger meaning manhood is harder to live up to without showing weakness or fear.

He said "We must engage men to end gender inequality and violence against women. It is a problem for the whole world's population not just a problem for half of us." Workplaces must be equal, respectful and non-violent (there are programmes for this on his website). Men are encouraged to **#CountMeIn** and follow **men-care.org** to learn how to transform their lives and have the opportunity to develop empathy. Men's violence is often a combination of dominance and the insecurity of not being able to live up to expectations.

He answered some great questions from the floor and ended with a story about why men should speak out against violence to women – "Because it's the right thing to do". He said that "Feminism is the greatest gift men have ever had – it frees them to be the men they want to be – redefining the world of equality and justice".

I was fortunate to hear Michael Kaufman speak in 2015 at the Soroptimist International Convention in Istanbul, where, again, he held the audience in the palm of his hand – if you ever have the opportunity to hear him speak don't miss out – he is truly inspirational – he stepped up and is leading the way to make a world better for everyone – he encourages all the world to stand together not just in the "16 Days to End Gender Violence" but always.

Reporter:
Jane Slatter, SI St. Albans & District



Rebecca Lewin MSci
Director, Plan International

Rebecca Lewin addressed Conference with the Strapline "Girls Can" with startling facts about the status of girls worldwide and the role she undertakes working for Plan International. The organisation is an independent development and humanitarian charity that advances children's rights and equality for girls with the emphasis on tackling the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children worldwide.

Rebecca spoke of her academic background in astrophysics and deciding on a career working with a number of charities. She is Director of Logistics and Procurement with responsibility for 3,500 vehicles; 600 properties and 400 sites in 52 countries – and is responsible for 2,000 staff.

She urged Soroptimists to be proactive on the annual International Day of the Girl on October 11th (**#girlstakeover**) and gave examples of individual girls taking International leads for the day to highlight gender equality issues. In 2017 these included Deputy Secretary General at the UN and with Justin Trudeau PM Canada. Rebecca constantly referred to Sustainable Development Goal 5 – gender equality and how we as an organisation should strive to address these issues in our project work.

A graphic example of her work was arriving in Nepal immediately after the earthquake with huge loss of life and homelessness. Using the humanitarian focus of getting back to 'normal' as quickly as possible, the organisation provided temporary shelters, clothing, cooking facilities and food. Her satisfaction was knowing they had provided shelter for 100,000 people – a logistical nightmare 'starting from scratch' but achievable. Rebecca marvelled at the physical power of the women living near Mount Everest who could carry extremely heavy backpacks containing vital supplies. She showed photos of wrecked buildings where only the door frames were standing after the Earthquake, remarking that it was the safest place to be in an earthquake!

Rebecca left us with these significant International facts:

- 777,000 girls each year give birth aged 10-14
- 15 million primary school age children never enter school annually
- 65 million girls never access school (which is 35 million more than boys)
- If a mother can read and write a child is 50% more likely to survive beyond age five.

I would have liked to have asked Rebecca about her work but left in awe of a person who can definitely 'Step Up, Lead the Way'.

Reporter: *Margaret Molyneux, SI Leigh & District President – South Lancashire Region*



Mandy Hickson
Former Royal Air Force Tornado Pilot

Mandy Hickson's session was entitled "Dream it, believe it, do it" and her enthusiasm and energy shone through as she inspired us with tales from her 17 year career as a fast jet pilot whose office was a Tornado GR4, kindly provided by the Royal Air Force.

Mandy first flew at the age of 13 as an Air Cadet, gaining her flying licence before she was legally able to drive. However, her goal of becoming a fighter pilot was initially hampered by being a woman. Sense eventually prevailed when the RAF needed a 'test-case'.

She took the male-oriented aptitude test twice – the maximum number of lifetime attempts allowed. The computer said 'no'. However, her human assessors said 'above average' and she embarked on a gruelling training programme whilst carrying the burden of being told that she had been set up to fail.

Mandy finally made it to the frontline and made 45 combat missions in Iraq – the only female air crew Member at that time, and one of only three women in the RAF to do so, to date.

Throughout, we were provided with insights in how she attained her goals. Mandy's story was not all happy-ever-afters, but a series of obstacles which needed to be climbed.

Visualising goals and being task-oriented enabled her to achieve those goals. She took chances whilst not being afraid of failure. Failure, says Mandy, can be surmounted through maintaining a positive mindset, thinking creatively and being able to rely on your team (Mandy's colleagues made planes from their bikes to help her overcome a mental block for the 'chop-ride' – a fail-and-you're-out flight).

Mandy littered her talk with humour and funny anecdotes: favourites of which were her receiving the nickname 'Big Bird' (Sesame Street) instead of her favoured 'Ice Maiden', and being caught on camera waving to a Lake District fell walker from her jet.

Mandy's life has come full circle, and now she takes young Air Cadets up on flights, one of whom is Emily. Emily could be the next Mandy, but unlike Mandy her self-belief was low and she was terrified of failure.

Whether our goals are big, like Mandy/Emily's, or small, like the man who wanted to ride a bigger lawnmower at work (said Mandy) we should stop the doubt, grab the goal, and build from any failure with the support of our team.

Now, excuse me, I'm off to plan my expedition to the South Pole...

Reporter: *Louise Gillies, Soroptimist Associate Member*



Mariet Verhoef-Cohen
Soroptimist International President 2017-19

A new Soroptimist International President to the crowd, a new crowd to the President!

Mariet's pleasant task was to make herself known to us as a new leader to the organisation and that is exactly what she did.

She shared who she was, what her thoughts were and her vision for her tenure, already delving into the plans she had set in motion since she took up the International Presidency.

Mariet wants to lead the way to a modern Soroptimist International with some structural changes. It had, she reported, been 21 years since the Membership dues were increased and it was decided that that would happen January 2019, with a £2 GBP increase.

She spoke about global advocacy and communication and strategic leadership where she plans to collaborate with other like-minded organisations to work together as women.

SI will concentrate on the SDGs 4, 5 and 6 as current priorities.

The President's Appeal – water – is to concentrate on how women can play a stronger role in the water sector. Water management, she said, was technology driven and technology is not considered a woman's job. So she wants to change that thinking.

Mariet pointed out that only 17 per cent of jobs in the water sector are filled by women, though women and girls are burdened with the fetching of water, resulting in loss of income for women and schooling for girls.

Her aim is to raise £35,000 GBP with her appeal and bring about changes with five projects in five continents with vocational training for 500 women and 100 leaders so women will be empowered in all phases of water.

She hopes to bring public awareness regarding the importance of women as decision makers regarding water. She also spoke about commercial farming.

Mariet also shared the good news that the United Nations (UN) Secretary General is launching 2019 as the UN year devoted to water and women. She hopes to celebrate this at the SI Convention in 2019.

Her appeal to all SIGBI Clubs was to communicate with Soroptimist International on all such projects where fundraising can start and awareness spread through all possible media working together across the globe.

A joyous end to the conference day was the birth of her second grandson. We wish you well with our full support President Mariet!

Reporter: Zarreen Babu

SIGBI Friendship Link Co-ordinator

6 DECEMBER 2017

Dame Katherine Grainger DBE
Olympian

Dame Katherine Grainger, Britain's most successful female Olympian, has won a silver or gold medal at the last five Olympic Games.

We had listened to inspirational speakers, heard how actively Wales has engaged in the struggle against Modern Day slavery; learnt about the great projects – through which Clubs across the Federation have educated, enabled and empowered women and children.

Follow that! Dame Katherine effortlessly rose to the challenge of commanding the attention of 1200 Soroptimists with her talk "Dreams Do Come True."

Her long journey from her first day out rowing, when her sister was thought to be the naturally talented oarswoman, to her final medal at the Rio Olympics, gripped, entertained and held messages for us all.

Sharing our ambitions – and our vulnerability to failing to achieve them, as the British female rowers did on the eve of that first final in Sydney, unites us as a stronger team.

The women rowers stepped up from their predicted fourth place to a first ever Olympic medal for British oarswomen. We can draw self-belief from the success of others. Four years later, with an Olympic medal-winner already in their midst, every single female oarswoman who rowed in the Athens Olympics went home with a medal.

It is so easy to be deterred from celebrating success. During the twelve minute wait for a photo-finish result in Sydney, Dame Katherine felt herself slip from exuberance at her first Olympic medal, to hope that it would be not bronze but silver, to anxiety that it might not be – it was.



In 2008 the team entered the Beijing Olympics as world champions but were beaten to first place by a fraction of a second. Rather than celebrate their silver medal they were devastated at 'losing', apologising profusely for their failure.

Every small step forward each one of us takes can contribute to a much more larger overall change. Between Beijing and London there was a constant search for every possible marginal improvement and at last, in 2012, that longed for gold medal, roared home by a crowd so noisy that they drowned out the "ping" that signalled their win to the crew.

That seemed to be enough and for two years Dame Katherine turned her attention to other activities before taking up the hardest challenge of all, returning to Olympic fitness and skill, pressing on through the disappointment of not being selected until the very last minute, ranked tenth out of twelve boats. That silver medal was the sweetest of all.

What a closing speaker. We left this session inspired by a supreme sportswoman, carrying her messages of support for each other, the value of small steps as well as big ones and her infectious self-belief into our Soroptimism for the coming year. **Reporter: Susan Butler, SI Ilkley**

Young Voices – Our Future

A panel discussion hosted by Rayner Rees with Victoria Pritchard (SI Chester), Emma Guthrie (WAGGGS) and Jodie Foster who has recently joined Soroptimist International and is a volunteer at Barnardo's where she has worked on many projects to fight child sexual exploitation.

These young women can give us vital clues and tips as to what young women and future Soroptimists need from our organisation.

I was impressed by the confidence of these young women who between them had spoken at the 2015 SI Convention in Istanbul, the UNESCO NGO Forum in Saudi Arabia on Youth and their Social impact, and the UN's 61st Commission on the Status of Women.

Quite an achievement when you consider their average age is 28!

What are the main challenges that young women are facing today? Lots of pressures including social media and expectations from society. Young women want positive role models – it's difficult to be what you can't see... there's a lack of encouragement and empowerment and opportunities.

How can we meet these needs and encourage young people? Through nurturing and encouraging – and listening to what they actually



want rather than what we think they want.

Clubs need to talk about what they do – Programme Action – make it THE agenda not just on the agenda, embrace social media (it's only as dangerous as you make it), keep websites up to date and fresh.

This is how young people view the world, so tap in and encourage their skill sets. Think about those role models that are already in your Clubs and encourage mentoring.

Be flexible with your Club – maybe consider subgroups for example book or craft groups. Find out about their aspirations and look at how they can be met.

Listen to these young voices and don't disregard what they say. Take action, learn from them as they learn from us, they are our future!

Reporter: Jacalyn Wood, SI Folkestone

Modern Slavery and Trafficking A debate for today

It was certainly a full and interesting conference. The speakers had been inspiring and the discussions varied and intriguing, promising further debate in Clubs throughout SIGBI.

This session was no exception.

The four professionals brought together to discuss this issue were knowledgeable specialists in the field of modern slavery and trafficking.

I looked forward to their session with interest having already been involved in an awareness raising event in my local area with Thanet Soroptimists. We had recently put forward an expression of interest to hold a panel discussion session in 2018 for IWD.

Barbara Dixon, Programme Director, opened the session with a brief history on William Wilberforce, the pioneer against slavery in the UK. Not having heard about this before I found it very sad and moving.



Kevin Hyland, OBE, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, who, though not able to attend the conference in person, gave a comprehensive presentation of this high priority issue via a video link.

Kevin identified the initial hurdle of disbelief amongst professionals and public alike, that the crime of slavery actually existed. He talked about turning, "Apathy into Action" highlighting the role Soroptimist International had begun in creating discussions and raising awareness.

He advised that the first priority has been to train the statutory agencies in identification and rapid response, particularly front-line workers such as the NHS, Police and Social services.

Kevin acknowledged the action taken by the Royal College of Nursing and the NHS, the latter producing a complete training package for staff.

Kevin continued his presentation providing figures on Modern Slavery crimes, which totalled 2,255 last year, an increase of 159 per cent, caused by victims coming forward and more action taken to prosecute.

This has been made possible by international officials joining the Border Police. The Co-op was acknowledged by Kevin for providing employment positions for ex-slavery victims.



I thought this was an excellent strategy by the Co-op and I for one believe that this type of employer should receive formal recognition for their compassion and service.

Kevin spoke about creating environments with transparent supply chains and the crucial roles universities and institutions have in providing research in this area. Providing anecdotal evidence, he identified that 40,300,000 individuals are living in slavery worldwide and that, "Too many children are robbed of their innocence."

Kevin finished his talk stating that, "Modern Slavery must be seen as Serious Criminal Abuse."

Stephen Chapman, the first and only officially appointed Anti-Slavery Co-ordinator (Wales) in the UK, and Kim-Ann Williamson, Member of the Wales Anti-slavery Leadership Group (CPS), both spoke about delivering the Anti-slavery agenda in Wales.

Stephen acknowledged the "invisible chains" of slavery with 3,805 cases referred nationally last year. He echoed Kevin Hyland's words regarding disbelief and denial of the issues, but was able to inform the conference that the case rate in 2016 of four children, had now risen to 69 in 2017, with the youngest child rescued being just two years old. I liked his term of using a "Doves and Hawk" approach to discover and support victims whilst prosecuting criminals. In Wales, a Code of Practice on ethical supply chains has been initiated and the public sector signed up.

Barbara asked the question to Stephen, how to beat slavery? His reply concluded that there was "no silver bullet."

Kim-Ann introduced conference Members to the Welsh anti-slavery logo – Dewi, the red Welsh dragon with a blue blindfold around his eyes.

For me, this was a very poignant and reminiscent of Pudsey from Children in Need, which these children are, in every sense.

Kim informed us of the SIGBI survey carried out by Members. They were very pleased with

the response. 3,780 replied online and 3,050 via paper. The result will be known in early 2018 at their Belfast event. She reported on the booklets devised for hotels and universities, plus the role of Ambassadors and Independent Child Trafficking Advocates.

Finally, Kim reminded Members that, "Work on anti-slavery needs to be done every day, not just on anti-slavery day."

Barbara asked Kim the question, how much more can SI help? She replied, to continue with what we are doing and highlight hard-to-reach pockets of the community.

Angelina Rodrigues, presented from BAWSO. Established in 1995, Bawso is an all Wales, Welsh Government Accredited Support Provider, delivering specialist services to people from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) backgrounds who are affected by domestic abuse and other forms of abuse, including Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Human Trafficking & Prostitution.

In addition to providing housing, in partnership with other agencies, they also run separate refuges for women and men. Recently, asylum refugees are coming forward to advise that they have been trafficked and they are currently supporting 50 – 90 individuals with Albania being a high source country.

Barbara posed Angelina the question, what more can we do for BAWSO? She identified that they struggle to keep their 24 help-line open, so volunteers would be great. Also packages of clothes/toiletries and donations are always useful. SI could continue raising awareness and volunteering expertise in certain areas.

At the end of the session, Barbara provided a sobering thought when she pointed out that the clothes we were wearing, the nails we may have done, could have been completed by someone in slavery.

Reporter: Carol Salter, Associate Member (Founder Member of the soon-to-be-chartered Thanet Club)



SIGBI Best Practice Awards 2017

For many Soroptimists, this is their highlight of the SIGBI Conference, the heart of their year's work to improve the lives of women and children. There were three nominations and one winner in each category. Congratulations to all Clubs for their fantastic work.



Violence and Conflict Resolution Winner: SI Nigeria:

Break the Silence – No to Violence

SI Nigeria launched its "Rape and Sexual Violence Campaign" at Ilupeju Junior and Senior Secondary School and two other schools joined the programme, which was delivered to 250 students and 20 teachers.

Students were taught about sexual violence and rape, sex trafficking, sexually transmitted diseases and participated in a self defence demonstration. Because of the incessant occurrences of sexual violence and rape (number one crime in Nigeria) the National Association wanted to give hope to future generations.

The sessions aimed to remove the stigma of being a victim of sexual abuse or rape.

Many students spoke for the first time about sexual abuse that had happened to them. SI Nigeria plans to roll out this project to more schools.

Also nominated: SI Canterbury for Rising Sun One Stop Cafe, and SI Port of Spain for their Poetry Workshop.



Education

Winner: SI Yaounde *Ladybird Girls' Club*

SI Yaounde set out to improve the body confidence and self esteem of girls, with a play on equality to encourage girl child education and fight gender-based violence. Due to customs and traditions in Cameroon, girls are regarded as inferior to boys, so boys also need to be educated to understand that boys and girls have equal rights and have to advocate for these rights, so the project aimed to educate boys as well as girls. The girls are empowered and have self confidence that has enabled them to hold leadership opportunities in school.

Also nominated: SI Bradford for Together Women Knit & Natter, and SI Karachi Central for My Right To Enjoy Education.



Advocacy

Winner: SI Lurgan

Raising Awareness of Human Trafficking

Northern Ireland Soroptimists took part in a survey of the public's understanding of human trafficking and whether they would recognise the signs. Each Club met the public and asked the relevant questions and answers are analysed.

Recently an SI Lurgan Member met the UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner and gave him a copy of the survey report and also met the local MP Mr David Simpson who intends to sit on the All-Party Group on Human Trafficking at Westminster.

Northern Ireland Soroptimists are pleased that UKPAC has now taken this project to roll out across the rest of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Also nominated: SI Bournemouth for their lobbying to keep the ban of Neonicotinoids and SI Hamilton for Reducing Women's Imprisonment.



Economic Empowerment

Winner: SI Yorkshire Region *Together Women Project*

This project came as direct result of work by UKPAC with the Prison Reform Trust; focused on empowering women to promote realistic change in their lives. Members are involved in craft sessions, donating clothes, bedding, welcome packs and funding activities/gifts for women and their children at Christmas and Easter and creating a wonderful Christmas Party.

The project moves women out of crime, away from damaging lifestyles into more positive futures working with them in safe women-only spaces, building their resilience and empowering them to learn new skills.

The majority are newly released from prison or on community orders. Donations of welcome packs, clothes and money have been vital. Our weekly activities are greatly appreciated by the TWP staff and the women appreciate the

opportunity to talk and be listened to as they develop their communication and social skills.

Also nominated: SI Tororo for Skills Training for Income Generation, and SI Whitefield for Empowering Disabled Women and Girls.



Health

Winner: SI Grange-over-Sands *Singing for Memory*

Singing for Memory uses singing to bring people with memory problems together in a friendly, stimulating environment and enables them to participate in the local community.

SI Grange-over-Sands organised sessions for care homes and conducted training sessions for the singers leading sessions on dealing with people with dementia and the beneficial and empowering effects that music has.

The numbers have risen and some of the initial attendees from 2014 are still coming. The local community is very supportive – as seen by the generous donations and the low rental price for the hall where we meet.

Also nominated were SI Kolkata for Alternative Sanitary Napkins and SI Pune Metro East for Sanitary Napkin Advocacy.



Environmental Sustainability

Winner: SI Madurai *Green Umbrella*

Environment Day was celebrated on a grand scale by SI Madurai, as they adopted the Miyawaki Method of planting trees. It's a Japanese method in pursuit of creating a mini Rain Forest. The children also learnt about the importance of Good Environment Practices through miming discussion & song.

250 students were involved in planting 350 saplings of hardy trees like Pungam, Sal Sorgam, Kodambu, Gulmohar, Vengai, Iyalvagai, Karumarudhu Sivakundalam and Naattuvagai.

The provision of environmental education creates greater awareness in individuals and communities ensuring that environmental resources are used whilst at the same time conserving them.

Awareness shapes our values and, at the same time, influences our sense of responsibility for our choices and values. We can help to create this awareness and responsibility among students and staff of the school.

Also nominated were SI Kodaikanal for A Burning Need, and SI Kingston-upon-Thames for Go Solar Empower Women.



Patricia Gatherum
Federation Project Liaison

At the Cardiff Conference I was delighted to inform delegates that the project is now well established and going well.

Agricultural training is in full flow. There are now five groups consisting of 194 women and four men. These groups were selected by Margaret Ikiera of CIFORD (Community Initiative For Rural Development), village chiefs and Elders because they showed commitment to attend and had greatest need. They will graduate next April.

They are being taught to be self reliant in agriculture and to grow in confidence. A financial tool helps Margaret to keep track on spending. She is also able to monitor attendance using an evaluation tool. These will enable future groups to continue this good practice.

As well as kale, onions and spinach, they are now producing seedlings in three nurseries, to sell during the rainy season as an alternative source of income. Some of these seedlings will eventually be planted on their own farms.

They have just received twenty 3,000 litre water tanks – all with Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland logo on them. These will mean that they will no longer have to walk many miles to wells. Another 20 are expected soon.

The women on this programme are very resourceful. When they heard that there were plastic chairs for sale locally, they bought some with their own money and they now use them to sit on at training sessions. They even rented them out for meetings during the election.

CIFORD continue to hold workshops for girls about the facts and dangers of FGM. These workshops teach the girls that FGM is not something you have to endure to become a woman. They have also held one for boys to help them to understand the training the girls are having and why.

We were delighted to be joined in Cardiff by our partners and friends, Amanjit Dhillon and Martina Gant from Child.org. It was a wonderful opportunity for them to get to know Soroptimists and vice versa. They also worked very hard on our stall updating everyone on progress in Meru and selling raffle tickets.

Programme Director Barbara Dixon made a beautiful patchwork quilt to be raffled at conference and this raised an amazing £640. Thank you so much to Barbara and to all those who helped us to sell the tickets.

Two years ago we set out to raise £152,716. To date you have raised £88,430. That leaves £63,286. We have 16 months to achieve our goal. I know we can do it. Last month alone you raised £10,000!

Please continue! ReMember even if you have not raised any money yet it is never too late.



MERU WOMEN'S
GARDEN PROJECT

A partnership between
Soroptimist International
Great Britain & Ireland
CHILD
Charity No: 1118528

To support the Meru Garden Project, Anuradha Pradeep, President, **SI Bangalore** and Members decided to publish a special edition of a book written by its Member Dr. Prathiba Vinay, a renowned research scientist with a doctorate in Palynology. The book titled 'First Aid – by Nature' shows the easiest ways to prevent illness and promote positive well being. This edition is dedicated to the Meru Garden Project.

The sales of the book, some of them at the SIGBI Conference, raised £300 which President Anuradha presented to Patricia Gatherum and unsold books were given to the UK Ambassadors who will sell them in their Regions.

SI Buxton Members met at the Cavendish Golf Club, Buxton to hear the latest information on the Meru Garden Project. Jan Stophor Clark is taking queries from the Buxton Members to her meeting with the Kenyan representatives shortly. Celia Beesley, Ambassador for the North half of the project gave new figures.

SI Bristol (joint Presidents Lucy Swithinbank and Pauline Hurst) held a "Sausage Sizzle" and as part of the event they had a stand highlighting the project and sold produce from their gardens including jam. They have been fundraising throughout the year and will send the total donation next March.

SI East London held a Pan-African buffet lunch to raise funds for the Meru Women's Garden Project. Melanie Leivers, Club Programme Action Officer, opened the doors to her flat by the River Thames and welcomed Members, family and friends. £530 was raised for the project.

SI Hamilton has secured a deal with a Scottish company, JTS to help raise money for the Meru Women's Garden Project. Meru Herbs

is a woman-led co-operative working in the same community in Kenya as our Meru Garden Project. They grow and produce an all-natural organic range of really fresh tasting tomato sauces which have made Meru Herbs a popular Fair Trade favourite in Japan, Italy and the UK. JTS import Meru Herbs products to the UK.

For all orders for JTS Meru Herbs products placed by Soroptimist groups during the three year term of the project they will make a 10p per jar contribution to the project.

To view the range go to www.jts.co.uk. Please say you are a Soroptimist when you send your email order - Info@jts.co.uk. Those who attended Cardiff Conference will have seen the JTS stall next to the Meru stall. Ellie Dawes from Child.org was there too, answering questions regarding the project.

SI Skipton-in-Craven Members were busy throughout the Strawberry season, serving wonderful strawberry and cream teas at the homes of a number of their Members, in aid of the Meru Women's Garden Project. On 30 July Sheila Tattersall ably assisted by fellow Soroptimist Barbara Sanderson and supported by their Soroptimists hosted a delicious Strawberry Tea and Raffle, which raised £206 for the project. In August, at the home of Helen and Peter Johnson, another Strawberry tea was held. Handmade jewellery and crafts were for sale, as well as quiz sheets put together by Helen. Helen and Anne Reeve were assisted by Jill Spensley and Helen's daughter and husband (Alice and Peter).

The event raised £242.50 which, in addition to the money raised at a Gardener's Question Time in May, brings the Skipton total to £1004.50!



Ann Hodgson SIGBI President 2016-2017 Outgoing speech

How fast can a year fly by – it seems like yesterday that I stood on the stage in Malta.

I thank the Federation Management Board, staff, and all other post holders and you for your commitment to improving the lives of women and girls over the past year. A special thank you to my Club, SI Cwmbran for their support particularly Nerys Lines and Anne O'Donoghue – my rocks over the last 12 months, making sure that I was where I needed to be at the right time, or simply checking that I was OK. The friendship, encouragement and support that I have received has been greatly appreciated.

Tonight we celebrate our Soroptimist Membership, our belonging to an international organisation with goals to improve the lives of women and girls. Together we have achieved a lot. It has been a successful year because of your Programme Action work and commitment to growing our organisation. We should all be proud. Thank you for stepping up and leading the way to help women and girls reach their full potential. Thank you for stepping up and leading the way to securing the future of Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland.

All year I have used a quote from the Global Peace Foundation, it expresses why we are Soroptimists: "Girls with dreams become women with vision. Confident women who participate in their communities and countries. Strong women who contribute to their nations' growth and prosperity. Compassionate women who, as mothers or guardians or leaders, nurture and guide the next generation – boys as well as girls – towards greater equality, justice and prosperity." Yet, twice as many girls as boys will never start school and girls are still the first to be denied the right to education. If we are to achieve gender equality by 2030 there is still much work to be completed.

In the October 1939 issue of the British Soroptimist magazine, the editor said, "As a band of women whose aim is the furthering of international understanding we must stick together and keep in active working order our Soroptimist organisation; the value of which is greater than ever before"

This was true then and is equally true today as we live in turbulent times on a global scale. Our fundamental objectives are still current and, regardless of progress, it may always be necessary, in some way, to fight to attain and preserve our rights as women. We must continue to educate, enable and empower women and girls through our project work and we must advocate for this change at all levels of society.

We have heard inspiring sessions about the White Ribbon campaign and the need to include men in the work to end violence against women and ultimately achieve gender equality. We have been praised for our work on ending modern day slavery. We have heard about the work of Plan International which many of us support and celebrated our own projects.

Your project work is what makes us unique as an Organisation because our network of Clubs deliver a diverse range of projects which enables us to work on and influence international policy setting and awareness raising through our Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

But we should reMember that being a Soroptimist is also like being in a very large family. We meet women from across the world, learn about their lives and challenges whilst working together and enjoying friendship and having fun. I have met Soroptimists across our Federations. I have been humbled by your friendship and hospitality and am grateful for your willingness to serve our mission to transform the lives of women and girls.

Finally, a short story. Nine years ago, Mark Zuckerberg invited five people to his Harvard room to discuss a business opportunity. Only two showed up. Today those two people are billionaires through the launch of a new and innovative concept. Facebook.

Nothing is more expensive than a closed mind, and a missed opportunity. We are not a business, but if we are to play our part in achieving the sustainable development goals, and in particular No. 5, gender equality, then we must take action NOW. We must be resilient and work to ensure the continued success of SIGBI by growing our Federation, making a difference through our work. With this success, we can help more women and girls achieve their full potential and ensure women have an equal place in every facet of life and play an active part in shaping the world that we want to see.



Susan Biggs SIGBI President 2017-2018 Incoming speech

Thank you fellow Soroptimists for the honour bestowed on me by installing me as your Federation President. I pay tribute to the hard work and commitment by the IPP Ann Hodgson. Ann has steered the good ship SIGBI and all who sail

in her in an exemplary way. Congratulations on a job well done. I thank all who have worked hard for the organisation over the last 12 months. Your dedication has been first class.

The theme for the year is "Empower today, Enable tomorrow".

As Soroptimists we recognise the dynamic verbs of empower and enable; key words for Programme Action, the life blood of our organisation.

Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland is at an interesting time in its development as a leading women's service organisation. We are in the process of becoming a charity which will aid our project work and thereby empower and enable yet more women and girls to achieve their potential.

Charitable status will allow us to apply for grants for our work. Every penny we use on project work comes from Members, their friends, families and the public. What a difference there might be if Members could concentrate less on fundraising and more on the service element and our project work.

Our Club projects empower and enable many women and girls. We partner with charities and voluntary organisations to deliver projects – in the Gambia our Big Project helped two hospitals to significantly reduce infant mortality.

In rural Kenya we support Meru Women's Garden Project to provide economic empowerment opportunities to women and girls. Our special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council allows us to contribute orally at a high level to change the lives of the most disadvantaged in our society.

Our Diamond Education grants help women and girls to update their skills, empowering and enabling them to move on. We respond to those in need after disasters. Donations from the Emergency Relief Fund have been made to our partners Save the Children, Oxfam and Plan International. We do make a difference to the lives of women and girls in the world.

But what about the difference to our own lives as Soroptimists? Too often we are so tied up in empowering and enabling women and girls, we forget to look after ourselves as well. There is an enjoyment in being a Soroptimist.

This is where the second part of the theme kicks in. We must learn to empower and enable ourselves to thrive, empower and allow ourselves to think differently about how we operate. We have to enable ourselves to pass the enjoyment onto others. We need to reMember why we first became a Soroptimist and reflect because this organisation is too important to sink into the mire of mediocrity.

At the heart of this desire are the Clubs and Membership. We must empower and enable ourselves to develop our Clubs, our Membership offers and our meetings. Our Growing our Brand workshops are doing just that. The resurgence is starting, long may it continue.

We need to enable ourselves to be kind to each other. It is never going to be possible for us all to like or get on with absolutely everyone. We are all different but we must reMember that we are proud of our high ethical standards. We need to enable ourselves to be tolerant of each other's differences. We can all learn from each other. We are never too old to learn something new. We all have something to offer however large or small. We need to focus on new and different ways of carrying out what we do as well as still using the tried and tested methods.

There is a really inspirational song from 2000 the lyrics by Heather Small of M People who asks what have you done today to make you feel proud? To me that is such an easy question to answer: I became a Soroptimist in 2000. It has changed my way of thinking, and for the next year my whole life will be changed. I am so grateful to the people who asked me to join.

We have to seek out that pride in ourselves and empower today, enable tomorrow. Then when we have re-energised ourselves and our Clubs we will need to go somewhere to celebrate all that energy. That place will be the Arena and Convention Centre, King's Dock Liverpool from 25 to 27 October 2018. So get yourself "A Ticket to Ride", You could even be "A Day Tripper". We will be women inspiring action, transforming lives whilst empowering today, enabling tomorrow and more importantly, we will do it together.

SIGBI Conference 2017

The Change of Insignia



***"And now the end is near
and we've reached the final
curtain, I stood tall and did it
my way."***

Immediate Past President Ann, you certainly did stand tall and should be proud of what you have achieved.

Listening to the comments of delegates, it is clear that this year's conference was a great success – from incredible speakers, inspirational women (and a couple of gents as well), with young, spirited voices, effective policies and procedures... wonderful initiatives supporting the most vulnerable in our world – we were immersed in what it means to be a Soroptimist.

The exhibition offered so much information and and so much temptation from items begging to be bought – and I managed to spend loads... but then I always do.

The Wales Millennium Centre was majestic, beautifully lit up in Soroptimist colours. It was jam packed with Soroptimists and friends dressed up to the nines, with so much glitter that I nearly had to put on my sun glasses!

Carwen Wynne Howells, SI Haverfordwest and Iris Hopkins, SI Barry, led us through – and kept us in order – with great aplomb



– they were almost as good as Morecambe and Wise!

President Ann gave us a short, succinct speech saying how much she had enjoyed her year and thanked those who had helped to make it a great success.

She finished by saying that we must take action NOW to ensure the continued success of SIGBI by growing our Federation so that we can help more women and girls achieve their full potential.

Our new President Susan received her chain of office, the new Management Board was introduced and the Regional Presidents received their chains of office. We said goodbye to some of the Board with others staying put.

New President Susan welcomed President Elect Sue (better not get them mixed up!) and set out her hopes for her year as our President.

The evening ended with the fantastic Phil Dando Big Band, my only regret is that there was no room to dance as that is what the music makes you want to do!

The final number was a medley of Welsh songs a fitting end to a conference in Wales.

See you in Liverpool 2018!

**Rayner Rees – Assistant
Programme Director, Economic
Empowerment.**



Federation Management Board

2017-2018



**Immediate Past President
Ann Hodgson**



**President
Susan Biggs**



**President Elect
Sue Williams**



**Director of Communications
Gail Teague**



**Vice President
Isobel Smith**



**Director of Finance
Judith Lewis**



**Director of Membership
Judith Grocott**



**Organisational Development
Isobel Smith**



**Director of Programme
Barbara Dixon**



**Director Without Portfolio
Diane Hill**



**Director Without Portfolio
Johanna Raffan**



**Director Without Portfolio
Catherine Cottridge**



**Procedural Consultant
Maureen Maguire**



**HR Liaison
Claire Bell**

Soroptimist Stars in Conference Cardiff October 2017





New Club is Chartered: SI Gwarinpa, Nigeria

Winning Clubs

Membership Month 2017

At the SIGBI Conference, Sue Williams congratulated the six Clubs with the most increased Membership in 2016-2017. Each Club received a certificate.

They were:

- SI Chaguanas
- SI Kathmandu
- SI Canterbury
- SI Selby
- SI Grand Turk
- SI San Fernando

The overall winner was SI San Fernando who received a glass plaque.

Congratulations to all Clubs who took part in Membership Month, it's been lovely to see all your photos and hear about your Membership Month events.

Photos and Videos

Winners of the 2017 photograph and video competitions were also celebrated. Congratulations to:

Photo competition:

SI Bombay Chembur

Video competition:

SI Newtown.



We are delighted to welcome a new Club in Nigeria, SI Gwarinpa in the district of Abuja. The first meeting of the Club was in March 2017, and two projects have already

been carried out – supplying provisions and household items to an orphanage and renovating a block of toilets for a school.

A friendship evening was held with SI Abuja the evening before the Charter.

SI Gwarinpa was Chartered on 14th October 2017 by SI Nigeria President, Nneka Chris-Asoluka, and the Charter was signed by the founder Club President, Helen Okeleka-Adesanya and Club Secretary Roseline Ekama.

All the founder Members

were inducted and given their badges, and the celebrations went on into the night, with much joyful dancing.

SI Nigeria President Nneka summed up, "My Best Sisters, the planning and organisation of the Friendship Evening, the Council Meeting and the Charter Ceremony were awesome.

"This is the BEST Soroptimist event I have attended so far!

"I am indeed so humbled to have such calibre of women as my Best Sisters."

A date for next year's diaries - 25 - 27 October 2018 at the ACC Liverpool



Band 1

Bangladesh, Cameroon, Gambia, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe

Band 2

Anguilla, India, Jamaica, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

Band 3

Barbados, Grenada, Mauritius, South Africa, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Turks and Caicos

Band 4

Channel Islands, Isle of Man, Malta, Republic of Ireland, Seychelles, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom

BREAKDOWN OF FEES

	CAP FEE	SI DUES	MAGAZINE	DEG/ERF/BEN FUND	TOTAL
BAND 1	4.23	3.00	7.77	0.00	15.00
BAND 2	5.73	3.00	7.77	0.00	16.50
BAND 3	9.23	3.00	7.77	0.00	20.00
BAND 4	29.23	3.00	7.77	3.00	43.00

Capitation Fees 2018

Notes:

1. Only Clubs in UK and RoI pay Donations, so other Clubs in Band 4 will pay £3.00 less than the Band 4 fees shown here.

The £3.00 donations are split as follows: £2.00 Benevolent Fund, 50p Diamond Education Grant and 50p Emergency Relief Fund.

2. Fee bands are based on the 2015 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by country, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Personal Purchasing Power Per Capita (PPP).

3. The GM November 2015 agreed the resolutions to reduce fees in all bands for a trial period of three years, and that there will also be no inflationary increase during this time.

Therefore, the fees shown above have not changed for 2018. The FMB will review capitation fees again in 2018.

Friendship Link Joint Projects

Zarreen Babu, SIGBI Friendship Link Co-Ordinator

I am thankful for all of you who came to the Friendship Link Stand to share your stories.

I look forward to more input from you as you explore new ways of creating Joint Projects and strengthen your existing joint projects. Please keep writing to me about them at: sigbifrlinkz2016@gmail.com



SI Swindon and SI Surulere

Since 2009 we have worked on a joint project with SI Surulere in Nigeria which is our Friendship Link Club.

It started when we met in Harrogate Conference in 2007 and our audiologist Member asked if they could make use of the old analogue hearing aids she was replacing in clients with digital ones.

Chinwe and the Members of SI Surulere jumped at the chance.

After some time, whilst they talked to the authorities and obtained funding for an audiologist etc., we cleaned and sent out our 1st batch of around 450 hearing aids in 2008. This enabled deaf children to get an education they might otherwise not have got as aids are scarce in Nigeria.

We sent further batches in 2010, 2012, 2015 and 2016, but supplies have now run out! We probably supplied about 2500 in all.

We try to meet Surulere at every SIGBI conference and handed over the last batch to them there. In 2014 they were kind enough to give us an award for our part in this project.

Lydia Cardew, PA Officer SI Swindon



SI Chesterfield and SI Darmstadt, Germany

Five Members of SI Chesterfield spent three days as guests of our Sisters in Darmstadt, Germany.

We have strong links with SI Darmstadt and meet every two years either in Chesterfield or Darmstadt which is twinned with Chesterfield. They provided a wonderful itinerary including the planting of a garden with red, blue and white flowers in recognition of our close friendship. Picture shows SI Chesterfield President Jean Spencer and SI Darmstadt President Gisela Scheiber planting some of the flowers. **Jean Spencer SI Chesterfield**



SI Madurai and SI Aalst of Belgium

SI Madurai has just completed a joint project with our Friendship Link Club, SI Aalst of Belgium.

Last year we had our Belgium sisters, Machtelt and Katrein visiting Madurai and they attended the Inauguration of the first smart class being set up in a corporation school in Madurai by SI Madurai.

Smart class is a system wherein we provide hardware consisting of a computer system, overhead projector and a smart board. The software is prepared according to the Tamil Nadu Samacheer syllabus and includes all subjects from history, geography to science subjects. The software has to be renewed every year as there are always changes in the syllabus.

The children get to learn all their subjects through a visual medium which makes it more interesting and higher concentration level is achieved.

The total cost of this package with the hardware and 1 year's software is around 2.25 lakhs and if it is taken for a period of three years, it is 3.5 lakhs.

Our Belgian sisters were very impressed with this project as it is in line with our Soroptimist theme, "Educate the girl child" and agreed to sponsor a smart classroom for a period of three years. After many discussions and deliberations over the past few months with me over Skype and WhatsApp we zeroed in on "Masathiyar" corporation school. It is an all girls' school with a strength of 700 children and the principal was very happy and enthusiastic to have the smart class in her school.

17th July 2017, the Madurai Corporation Commissioner, Mr. Aneesh Shekhar inaugurated the smart class along with the Chief Education Officer of the corporation. It was a grand function with ribbon cutting and the traditional lighting of the lamp, kuthuvilakku. The Commissioner gave a very inspiring talk to the children on the importance of education and how this visual medium was going to help them immensely. It was also attended by several of our SI Madurai Members. We took a video recording of the children thanking our Belgian sisters for their generous contribution.

We express our sincere thanks to Machtelt and Katrein and all the Members of SI Aalst for their generous contribution and we are very pleased that this joint project with our friendship link has happened so successfully. We hope to do more joint projects with you in the future.

Anitha Rajarajan, SI Madurai Founder President and FL Coordinator



SI Port Talbot and SI Cannock and District

Members from SI Port Talbot met up with their new Friendship Link Club, SI Cannock and District in August.

Both Clubs travelled approximately half way between their Club's home. We then shared a warm and friendly lunch at a restaurant in Ross on Wye.

Everyone was very pleased they had made the effort to meet up and were looking forward to seeing each other at the SIGBI Conference in Cardiff.

Gwyneth Morgan, SI Port Talbot



Communications

Club website addresses

Are you using your full website address eg: <https://sigbi.org/Clubname> on your publicity material?

Whilst this is accurate, these days it is better to either put sigbi.org/ Clubname or [www.sigbi.org/Clubname](https://sigbi.org/Clubname).

It is more aesthetically pleasing to see the web address written like this (without <https://>), and looks much better when printed.

Create quick and easy video content!

I've recently come across Adobe Spark, with their basic free package you can use your images/video content and add text to create a video. It is really easy to use, so why not have a go and create one for your Club?

Let me know if you have any problems. I used images and extended the time each slide is displayed from the default of two seconds to four seconds (otherwise it moves too quickly to read the text), the final slide with the website address I extended to ten seconds.

With the free version you can't have your logo on the bottom of the slides but you can add your logo as an image to one of the slides so this is a great way around it.

I hope you find it useful - it literally took a few minutes to create. It is worth having a think about what you would like to say first and digging out some good images to use.

Don't forget there are loads of images on our Flickr page which you can download www.flickr.com/photos/sigbi and there are also the free image websites such as www.pixabay.com. Have a go at creating your video on Adobe Spark: spark.adobe.com.

Lisa Roscoe, Communications Officer



Soroptimist International

New Year, New Structure

As 2018 is ushered in there will be a new SI Board structure.

Starting on 1st January, the SI Board will comprise: two representatives from each Federation, the Soroptimist International President, Treasurer and Soroptimist International Director of Advocacy, creating a voting Board of eleven. The new structure will streamline operations to save money.

In addition, the Board has approved the Soroptimist Strategic Plan. The Board has affirmed our theme, Educate to Lead, until 2021 and determined that the five strategic priorities of work for SI are recognised as: International Advocacy, International Communications, International Convention, SI President's Appeal, SI Strategic Leadership.

The International Advocacy Strategic Plan was approved at the 3rd November 2017 Board Meeting.

The International Advocacy Plan has four goals. The first three are the internal goals of coordinating our work at the Commission on the Status of Women, increasing the capacity of our UN Representatives to advance the 2030 agenda, to achieve the sustainable development goals and to increase Soroptimist International's ability to plan strategically for the future.

The 4th goal of the Soroptimist International Strategic Plan is to increase the Human Rights of Women and Girls through Empowerment and Education. Our work at UN Centres throughout the world will focus on Our Advocacy. Work at the United Nations Centres will focus on 3 of the SDGs, #4 Education, #5 Gender Equality and #6 Water.

With the help of our expert UN representatives, we will build



21st Quadrennial Convention

The 21st Quadrennial Convention hosted by SI South West Pacific (SISWP) will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 19th – 21st July 2019, making it a historic first time in Asia.

The three day Convention will have global keynote speakers and panellists on topics that focus on key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that empower and advance the rights and status of women and girls.

We fervently hope that many Members from SIGBI will save the date and keep yourself updated, as new developments are being unveiled on our website www.siconventionkl2019.org.

The SI Convention Committee looks forward to welcoming our Soroptimist delegates from SIGBI as well as the other 3 Federations to a fun filled, memorable and uniquely "Malaysia, All of Asia" experience in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

partnerships with like-minded organisations, submit statements and work together with the Federations and countries to raise our voice for women and girls.

Be sure to visit www.soroptimistinternational.org for the latest news from Soroptimist International. Be sure to visit the new Members section where you can find the latest information on the President's Appeal, download a powerpoint presentation and logos.

The Leadership Development Committee under the direction of Immediate Past President, Yvonne Simpson has a variety of webinars planned to increase your Soroptimist knowledge.

Sign-up for a webinar or two and if you haven't already signed up for the Global Voice, it's your guide to the latest Soroptimist International Information.

Watch for the Soroptimist Lab which is in the works. The lab will be a space similar to LinkedIn where Members can add their resumes and areas of expertise. When expert speakers are needed we will be able search this database. Members will also be able to connect with each other for networking.

Details will be available soon on the Soroptimist International website.

SIGBI Shopping



NEW:

Soroptimist booklet 2017

3 booklets per pack
@ £1.00 a pack plus P&P.



NEW: What sort of woman is a Soroptimist?

Pack of 50 @
£6.00 per pack
plus P&P.

Programme Action Leaflets

Pack of 50 @ £6.00
per pack plus P&P.



SIGBI Foldable Shopping Bag

Folded size: 17cm x 9cm x 2cm
Unfolded size:
44cm (width) x 35cm (height) x 11cm (depth)
Price £2.50 plus P&P

NEW:



Dynamic 'S' Badge

Height 25mm with
butterfly fastening
£1.00 plus P&P.



SIGBI Dynamic 'S' Badge

size 36mm x
23.5mm with
butterfly fastening
£2.00 plus P&P.



Past President's Badge

£2.50 plus P&P.



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.**



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2000 Club

Winners September 2017

Penny Veness	£100	SI Croydon
I. Farthing	£100	SI Mansfield
Janet Bettison	£50	SI Plymouth
Madeline Todd	£50	SI Jersey
J. Howie	£25	SI Coventry
SI Jersey – free	£25	SI Jersey

Winners October 2017

P. Drake	£100	SI Bradford
Elisa Gazzi	£100	SI Kensington
E. Smith	£50	SI Neath
Yinka Soetan	£50	SI Greater London
Margaret Poston	£25	SI Port Talbot
Molira Watson	£25	SI Oxford & District

Winners November 2017

P. Drake	£100	SI Bradford
Jane Barrie	£100	SI Taunton
Plymouth & District	£50	SI Plymouth & District
Yvonne Fairchild	£50	SI Bournemouth
Jean Monro	£25	SI Selby
Jackie Culpin	£25	SI Wallasey

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/>

In the mail

18th August 2017 –

Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. SIGBI Club Websites
2. International President's Appeal 2017-2019
3. SIGBI Club Leadership and Development Day 2017 Presentations and Videos
4. Sierra Leone and Nepal Floods

1st September 2017 –

Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. General Meeting 2017 – Voting Accreditation Letter and Form
2. SI International Convention 2023
3. SIGBI Cardiff Conference 2017 and SIGBI General Meeting 2017
4. Friendship Link Newsletter Sept. 2017
5. Donations for the Sierra Leone and Nepal Floods
6. Grant of Friendship April-May 2018 – Australia
7. UKPAC Newsletter

8th September 2017 –

Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. General Meeting 2017 – Documentation

15th September 2017 –

Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

2. NEW SIGBI Booklet 2017– Complimentary Copies for each SIGBI Club
3. Club Photo of the Month – August 2017
4. Federation Election Results
5. CSW 62
6. Publicising your SIGBI Club Website
7. Cardiff Bloggers

6th October 2017 –

Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. No.63 – Important Information for Shareholders
2. Cardiff 2017 Conference Last Reminders
3. Facebook Advertising
4. New Club in Nigeria to be Chartered
5. Notices from UK Programme Action Committee (UKPAC)

20th October 2017 –

Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Cardiff Conference 2017: Information for Clubs
2. Number 63
3. Membership Matters – October 2017
4. New Club SI Gwarinpa
5. SI Future Africa Federation Conference 2018
6. Club Name Change
7. Grant of Friendship

3rd November 2017 –

Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Cardiff 2017 Conference – blogs and photographs
2. Save the Date
3. Club Photo of the Month: October 2017
4. UK Programme Action Committee (UKPAC) Treasurer

Educate, Empower, Enable

SIGBI President's travels

**Ann Hodgson, SIGBI President 2016-17
reports on her recent visit to SIGBI
Clubs in South Africa**



10. Meeting our wonderful Members and hosts in South Africa

South Africa is called the 'Rainbow Nation' because of its multicultural diversity, after different groups settled there in previous centuries. The country's more recent history of apartheid is well known, but now people can live anywhere if they have the right opportunities, such as a good education.

It has a population of 50.5 million people (UN estimate 2011) covers 1,219,089 sq.km, 470,693 sq. miles and has 11 official languages.

Much has been said about South Africa, but it is only when you go there and travel around that you are overwhelmed by its beauty as well as begin to understand its challenges. Over 13 days I had a memorable experience that will remain in my heart forever and I look forward to returning to increase my understanding and love of this complex country.

I travelled to South Africa with Nerys Lines, my friend and a SI Cwmbran Member. We arrived late in Cape Town on a Friday night and just had time to catch our breath before getting up early the next morning to start our whistle stop tour of many Soroptimist Clubs and their wonderful projects.

Imagine our delight the next morning when we realised that the view from our room was Table Mountain! **(Picture 1)**

Members of SI Cape of Good Hope took us to visit the Saartjie Baartman Home for Abused Women – a long standing project involving the creation of a Garden of Serenity. **(Picture 2)** Club Members maintain the garden using succulent plants due to the water shortage.

The garden was a lovely haven and had weaver birds nesting in the trees. The building was formerly a clinic and is used by women and children who can only stay for up to three months. There are also cottages in the

grounds, for families to live together.

One of the ways for the women to earn a living is by selling the soap that they have been taught how to make.

In the afternoon we visited House Morea, Lotus River. The 57 elderly residents, men and women, are placed there by the council. Club Members reported that the roof was leaking and the community area needed repair – the council arranged for the roof to be mended and walls painted. Soroptimists acquired new chairs for the community room by a donation. The next job for the Soroptimists is to get the kitchen cupboards repaired and make the cooker work for the head woman to make soup for the residents in winter.

Club Members had arranged an afternoon tea and the residents enjoyed a concert from four young children who were learning to play the violin tutored by a Club Member.

Sight-seeing!

The next day was a day of sight-seeing with Club Members. Great fun and a real chance to see the beautiful landscape surrounding Cape Town. We left Cape Town on the Monday to travel to Port Elizabeth by car through the Garden Route. Another chance to appreciate the vastness and beauty of South Africa.

We were met on the outskirts of Port Elizabeth and taken to our first project visit - the Van Stadens Flower Reserve Farm School. **(Picture 3)**

We were introduced to the Head Teacher who told us about the school and took us to visit a teacher and her primary class. Children from lower grades played outside whilst the higher grade took their lesson. It was also common for the teacher to teach two grades at the same time. A gardener maintains the

vegetable garden which is used by the school.

We then travelled to the Thuthuzela Care Centre **(Picture 4)** based inside a hospital. The Centre is a one-stop shop for survivors of rape which aims to reduce secondary victimisation, improve conviction rates and reduce the time taken to finalise court cases.

Club Members had arranged for the building to be decorated to make it more welcoming. The Centre is self-sufficient with a Reception, Counsellors, Care Givers, a Detective as well as access to a doctor and medical assistance.

That evening, we met Members of the Club for dinner and I had the pleasure of inducting a new Member and handing another Member her long service certificate.

On to Grahamstown

For our next trip, we were taken to Grahamstown; 126 km away, quite a distance, to meet Members of SI Grahamstown, who took us to Hobbiton – an Outward Bound Centre for children, high on a mountainside established for many years.

We were introduced to the Instructor whilst his team briefed the children on the tasks they would be carrying out. They came from different schools around the area to take part in team building and leadership exercises.

We then went to a Crisis Rape Centre, which was based in a police station. A Club Member is on the committee and the Club supports the Centre in its work. We met the Head Care-person, Counsellors and Safe House Keeper and they went through the process which people followed when taken to the Centre.

On our return to Port Elizabeth, we visited the Rainbow crèche in an informal settlement. We met the Teacher, her helpers and the children who sang some songs.



1. Table Mountain - as seen from our room!
18 DECEMBER 2017



2. Cape of Good Hope: Garden of Serenity



3. SI Cape of Good Hope school project



4. SI Cape of Good Hope's Thuthuzela project



5. SI Durban's Cornerstone project



6. SI Durban's project at Duffs Road Primary

Thence to Durban!

Early the next day, we flew to Durban and were met by Members to visit to their projects. First stop was Lake Haven Secondary School where Club Members had created a school library. They received book donations and also found a bookshop which was closing which gave them books. A teacher took on the role of librarian to record the books.

We travelled on to Cornerstone (**Picture 5**), a School for children with special needs. The Soroptimists had built a Sensory Garden, a beautiful haven for the children to enjoy when they needed quiet time. The children told us about what the garden meant to them. One said that when he became angry or low he could go to the garden.

We then visited the ABH- Aryan Benevolent Home. We were told about their work and how it was established, specifically about their Victim Empowerment programme and went to see the women and children who stayed in a separate building – a safe room for them.

The children had a nice area to play outside, and the women could attend empowering courses in the Safe House. The home has plans to build a Skills Centre for the women, which the Club will support.

In the evening, we travelled to Duffs Road Primary (**Picture 6**) for the opening of their new library. We met family Members and school representatives including school governors. Soroptimists decided to support the school in obtaining books for the library by phoning around for books (discounted) and obtained 685 brand new books. They also used social media to advertise for books. Club Members prepared the area and obtained sponsorship from companies for the shelves, tables, chairs, carpets. It was great to see that

this project had been supported by SI Sutton Coldfield who sent a donation of £1,000 in the name of Rita Caswell. A young girl spoke confidently about being a learner and what the library meant to her and fellow pupils.

Wild day at the Game Reserve!

The following day we travelled to the Tala Game Reserve for the 52nd SI Annual Conference and AGM organised by SI Durban. In an interesting start to the weekend we all enjoyed a Game Drive and saw Rhinos, Hippos, Antelope, Wildebeest, Zebra, Ostrich, Warthog, and Giraffes. (**Picture 7**)

Immediately on our return to the Lodge, it was time to deliver my workshop 'Looking to the Future' where I discussed the Federation's Vision for 2021 and told them about the Growth Plan workshops. I have delivered many presentations, but never in such surroundings or after an afternoon driving around a game reserve! Thankfully, I kept them all awake.

That evening we enjoyed a Boma Braai Dinner in the open air. It was a good job that we had brought warm clothes – and SI Durban provided us all with blankets as a gift – it was a little chilly. We finally ventured inside and enjoyed a fun game of Bingo – much hilarity – a great way to get the conversation going!

The next morning, we were up at 7am for breakfast and then entered the conference and the AGM. On the last night, there was a Gala Dinner and we all danced the night away.

On to Pretoria and Johannesburg

Our last two days in South Africa were spent in Pretoria and Johannesburg. SI Pretoria Members took us to see the Mapula Embroidery Project in the Wintervelt (**Picture 8**) where women learn to embroider, which

enables them to earn money to feed, clothe and educate their children. This long-standing project has been fantastically sustained by SI Pretoria Members, and it continues to grow as they find outlets to sell to customers.

In the afternoon, we travelled to the St Francis Drop in Centre at Mamelodi to see the Library and the children. Again, the library was created by donations and donated books. After seeing the library – the children came out to see us and to sing.

SI Johannesburg Club Members took us to see the Sithabele Children and Youth Care Centre (**Picture 9**). There are about 50 children under their care mainly of primary school age and younger who all attend local schools. It also has an outreach programme for women to teach them skills so they can earn some money.

Farewell and thanks

Such a beautiful and diverse country. The projects we saw were fantastic and it was clear to see how hard the Soroptimists worked to ensure that they made a difference to the lives of women and girls (and boys) who they engaged in their projects.

I felt so proud of them and they should feel so proud too! However, I came back with one question: "Why do we not have thousands of Members in South Africa when our work is so powerful and life changing to the lives of women and girls?"

This question is not restricted to Soroptimists in South Africa alone – it is true of all Clubs in the Federation. Our projects sell what we do and should be proactively used to recruit and retain Members.

Thank you to all the Members in South Africa who made my trip so memorable.

I hope to return soon.



7. At the Tala Game Reserve with SI Durban



8. SI Pretoria's Embroidery Project



9. SI Johannesburg at Sithabele Care centre

Club News



SI Barbados and Hyundai held the second successful Annual Charity Golf Tournament at the beautiful Apes Hill Club to fundraise for their outreach programmes. 68 golfers gathered at the newly renovated Club to Take a Swing for Charity. They raised USD\$35,000 to assist with their Club projects.



SI Buxton's Joint President Linda Fayers-Hallin laid their wreath at the Remembrance Day Service in Chapel en le Frith. It is a tradition that the President lays the wreath in their home town or village. Sue Barber was the first laying the wreath in Tideswell when she was President many years ago.



SI Crieff Members enjoyed a talk by Judy Greig, a Member, with her Italian Spinone, Lucca, a Therapet who looked lovely sporting her bright yellow Therapet kerchief. Lucca greeted Members with a kiss and a hug, then settled down while Judy talked about the process she and Lucca went through to become a Therapet. They now regularly visit a care home where most residents love to spend time with Lucca.



SI Dundee has welcomed Oor Wullie to the Club as the first male Member and Club mascot. He was introduced by his artist friend Suzanne Scott, art-co-ordinator of the Bucket Trail who told Members about the amazing success of the Bucket trail in monies raised for 'Archie' but more importantly as a means of bringing the people of Dundee out and about meeting strangers and exploring the City.



SI Barry President, Jackie Memory, was honoured to be asked to lay a wreath at the Town Memorial on Remembrance Sunday. This is a first for the Club though Members have been selling Poppies on behalf of the Royal British Legion for a number of years.



SI Calcutta's workshop on Digital Literacy celebrated International Literacy Day, facilitated by the State Bank of India for girls aged 17-25. The focus was on creating awareness about online banking methods and security. SI Members also learnt the importance of this!



SI Belfast sent 700 bras to the Purple Teardrop Campaign for the 'Free The Girls' Project in the USA, with projects in Kenya, El Salvador and Mozambique which set up businesses for seven girls, rescued from human trafficking by providing each with 100 bras to sell. The profits enable them to restock their business.



SI Canterbury Members and guests visited the House of Commons in August for a very successful and informative social trip – followed by tea at No 63!



SI Chennai's Inter-School Talent Contest for under-privileged girls, with a Tamil oratorical contest and an art competition, with gave them a platform to shrug off fear and gain confidence to speak on stage.



SI Blackpool Members are shown recording the Talking News, now in its 40th year. The service is for those with reduced vision in the Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde area.



SI Cirencester celebrates Abbey 900 to mark the 900th anniversary of the founding of the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary in Cirencester by King Henry I in 1117. Cirencester Club has been very involved in the recreation of the Abbey in Lego which has thus given the Soroptimists a good local profile.



SI Brixham sold their homemade cakes at the local Steam Fair. The money goes to the President's charities, Devon Air Ambulance and Devon Freewheelers - a volunteer group acting as an out of hours courier service for the NHS.



SI Cwmbran is raising interest in STEM subjects and found a book, Women in Science: 50 Fearless Pioneers Who Changed the World including figures like Marie Curie and Katherine Johnson, the mathematician who calculated the trajectory of the Apollo 11 mission to the moon. To celebrate World Literacy Day they bought copies of this book for each primary school in Torfaen.



SI Dewsbury held another successful annual collaboration between the residents of Tentercroft Court and SI Dewsbury. Stalls of cakes, bric-a-brac, a raffle, name the dog and a tombola raised £617.50 for Macmillan.



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



SI Eastbourne helped Eastbourne Foodbank, the President's charity for the current year fundraise and collect items at a supermarket. The two day event was a great success and generous shoppers donated 1.5 tonnes of food.



SI Dhaka donated BD Taka 2.5 lakh (GBP 2400) for flood affected people in Bangladesh. The money was contributed by SI Dhaka Members and their families. SI Dhaka President Dr Dilara Chowdhury is pictured presenting a cheque for £2400 to SI Gulshan.



SI South East England welcomed, Jennifer Gayland, Soroptimist Vice President, Cobram Barooga, on the border of Victoria and Melbourne, with a Grant of Friendship. After a few days with SI Tunbridge Wells, Jenny joined East Grinstead Members, visiting National Trust properties Standen and Wakehurst Place, with lunch at Chequer Mead Theatre and a tour of the area. In her application, Jenny said, "I love to immerse myself in another culture and meet the people of that place; travel can truly enrich a person's life." SE England Region hopefully fulfilled her wish!



SI Edinburgh Members assisted with a touch tour for visually impaired people (VIPs) attending a Fringe show, Scottish Superwomen of Science, with stories of women scientists, told through the music of Scottish women composers. They met Frances the performer, who explained how much sound is pre-recorded and what is live.



SI Enniskillen joined Fermanagh Arts Festival's Dawn to Dusk Poetry Reading event, with poetry readings every hour 8am-8pm at locations around Enniskillen. Members started it at 8am on the Boatel, a floating restaurant, with poems reflecting the ideals of Soroptimism.



SI Harrogate raised £600 for charity on a busy refreshment day at St Peter's Church, Harrogate. The lovely September day brought people for tea, coffee, cakes and light lunches. President Nicola said, "The fantastic result will help our funds for the Alzheimer's Society and the Renal Unit in Harrogate."



SI Jamaica, Kingston Member Ellen Campbell Grizzle was invested with the Order of Distinction, Commander Class by the Government of Jamaica on National Heroes Day, 16th October. The honour was conferred for her contribution to the Profession of Pharmacy in Jamaica and the Caribbean. She is the first Jamaican pharmacist to receive this honour. Dr. Campbell Grizzle was Club President in 2015-2017 and has been a Member of SIJK since 2011.



SI Lancaster reports that a Member's grandson went to Nepal and visited the Club's Friendship Link, SI Kathmandu. Thomas Wilkinson says, "As I was in Kathmandu, I decided to visit the Club and bring greetings from Lancaster (in Hindi). I found the SI Kathmandu office. I was greeted by the President, Former President and a local NGO leader. They kindly presented me with a SI notebook and a rucksack to show you. They told me about their work in setting up an English school. "Much of their efforts focused on the longterm effects of the 2015 earthquake. Although, whilst I was in Nepal there was terrible flooding. SI Kathmandu quickly focused on the floods with fundraising and distributing relief packages."



SI Leigh supports Joining Jack, a charity that funds research into an effective treatment or cure for Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. The Event coincided with the Wigan Bike Ride. An organiser of the Charity, Andrea Kent visited the Club to explain the focus, providing Members with the impetus to ride 50 miles! SI Leigh meets at the Greyhound Sporting Lodge, whose staff offered to support the event with raffle prizes, sponsorship and use of the exercise bikes. Many Soroptimists took part, £826 was raised.



SI Lewisham and SE London raised £500 for Member Rita Buhandu to organise the purchase of eight goats donated to the Mwheki Womens Group in Uganda. The women were trained to look after the goats and the resultant surplus kids would be distributed to other women in the group. The women were thus enabled to feed their own families and by selling the surplus milk and meat, were able to become financially independent.



SI Loughborough heard a moving account of the challenges faced by families of loved ones with dementia and Members voted to support the Dementia UK Admiral Nurse project aiming to secure a local Admiral Nurse. They have joined other groups, including SI Leicester, to raise awareness of Admiral Nurses and the £50,000 annual cost to provide one.



SI Medway Towns held a fun day out for 17 young carers at Diggerland, where children can dig holes with excavators, ride in dumper trucks and other big machines. There are 180 young carers in Medway, aged 5-18 years old, who care for a family Member. Days out are very rare for them so this was a good opportunity to have fun and to just be kids.



SI Pune Metro East's new Member, Sushmita Mitra took part in crocheting a 15km scarf, which is acknowledged by the Guinness World Record. Sushmita received her Certificate at a ceremony in New Delhi.



SI Preston has linked up with Penwortham Girls' High School and started a School Club – The 'Soroptimisses'. Some students joined one of Preston Club's projects last year so it was a natural progression to ask how they felt about starting a School Club.

Karen Pomeroy, Head Teacher was very keen. So far, there are about 20 Members from years 8-11. They meet on Monday lunchtime under the guidance of Miss McDermott, Head of Religious Studies and Citizenship, Community Studies and PSHE.

SI Preston has a small School Club committee and keep in very close contact with the girls and teacher, a committee Member goes to the meetings about every two weeks.

So far, the girls have collected items for Mary's Meals, run a cake stall on Sports Day, raising £250, which they hope will go toward sponsoring a youngster through education with the PIES charity and are working on a book of inspirational quotes from women which they hope to sell. All girls have been asked to submit a quote for the book and those chosen will be published. They will then receive a copy of the book free of charge. The girls simply need to choose a woman who inspires them, explain why and pick an inspirational quote from her.

The Club has offered prizes for the girls to enter their 'Inspirational Woman' competition and has invited them to their Regional meetings.

They are very eager to do various projects from toilet twinning to learning about human trafficking. In February, they will hold a week of events to celebrate the centenary of women getting the vote. SI Preston can hardly keep up with them!

Nicola McDermott said, "The girls at Penwortham Girls' High School have found their projects with the Soroptimists highly rewarding. They are passionate about ensuring all girls have a quality education and the best possible start in life. Creating the Soroptimisses has allowed them to feel a sense of achievement and a moral satisfaction in what they are doing for other girls their age all over the world."

Karen Rainford from SI Preston said: "We are very proud and excited to have these students as part of our organisation. They are fantastic girls, enthusiastic and keen to support as many causes as they can. We hope that this is the start of many School Clubs across the area."

Celebrations



SI South Caernarfonshire held a big coffee morning in Abersoch for The Teenage Cancer Trust, raising £1000 and a Big Macmillan Coffee Morning also raised £1000. It's been a busy year, singing in two care homes, doing a plant survey, working with Amythyst, supporting our local RNLI and raising funds for the local Clwb Ni and Young Carers.



SI South Shields supports Emmaus North East and has donated items to their residence in South Shields. They are pictured enjoying lunch with Terry Waite CBE, President of Emmaus, at the project opening.



SI St Austell held a Black & White Ball, fundraising for The Invictus Trust, a young people's mental health charity.



SI Wakefield SoroptMISTERS are pictured supporting the White Ribbon Campaign, "Men stand up to stop violence against women."



SI Windermere President Pat Sanderson and Members spent an afternoon at Holmscales Riding School the home of Westmorland Riding for the Disabled, presenting the Group with a cheque for £1112, the proceeds of their very successful Edwardian Equestrian Event in costume and riding side saddle, held at the home of Member Jane Peat.

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SI Lichfield reports that on 9th June everyone was 'in the mood' to celebrate the 19th Anniversary of the Charter of SI Lichfield and District. President Elizabeth Leaver welcomed honoured guests including Deputy Mayor Cllr. David Leytham and Chairman of Lichfield District Council, Cllr. Mark Warfield and their consorts to an evening of "fun, food and fellowship". Regional Presidents, Pat Cross and Cherril Pritchard; Club Presidents and Members from every Club in the Midland Chase Region travelled across the counties to Whittington Golf Club to share in the festivities. The Bluebird Belles, 'a vintage vocal harmony trio bringing you all the charm of a bygone age in a new old-fashioned way', set everyone's feet tapping as they danced in the aisles to the 50's style acapella medley. Pardon me ladies, but could anything be finer?



SI Crosby President Annette was delighted to present Hilda Garner with her 25 year long service award at West Lancashire Golf Club on 13th September. Hilda was instrumental in producing a booklet for the Club's 60th anniversary and has always been an active Member.



SI Mansfield and guests gathered for a Black Tie and Gorgeous Gowns event which opened with a Candle Lighting ceremony, after a welcome from President Diane Milner. at the Hostess Restaurant. To celebrate 60 years, the Candle Lighting Ceremony was led by the Club President, who lit the first candle for Soroptimist International. Caroline Mason, Joint President of our daughter Club, SI Dukeries, lit the 6th and final Candle, for Peace. The ceremony preceded a glittering evening of dining and dancing, enjoyed by all and everyone had a smile on their face.



SI Lurgan celebrated its 70th anniversary by holding a 40s style afternoon tea party in Brownlow House Lurgan. Many Club Members and friends got into the spirit of the day by dressing in 1940s style costumes and our friends and visitors from other Clubs enjoyed a wonderful array of sandwiches and cakes. Three Club Members were presented with long service certificates and the afternoon was rounded off with a great sing-a-long of all the old favourites from the 40s ending with We'll meet again!



SI Dundee Member, Evelyn Allan, a Soroptimist for 42 years, joined Club Members and friends at an afternoon tea to celebrate her 90th birthday. The photo shows Evelyn with (left) Club President Elaine and (right) Past President Margot.



SI Dewsbury continued its 75th Anniversary celebrations, with a walk around Dewsbury District Hospital, clocking up, cumulatively, 75 miles and raised £200 for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance.



SI Rishton and Great Harwood Soroptimists celebrated the long service achievements of three of their Members. Brenda Worden and Agnes Tomlinson have both completed 30 years' service with the Club and Joan Slynn has been a Soroptimist Member for 50 years. All three Members have dedicated a large part of their lives to the Soroptimist organisation working tirelessly to improve the lives of women and girls. Regional President Angie Christopher and Club President Lindsay Rutter were on hand to present them with their long service certificates. The photo shows Agnes Tomlinson (30 years), Joan Slynn (50 years) and Brenda Worden (30 years)



SI Mansfield President, Diane Milner, and hostess, Anne Bull, entertained Club Members to a Champagne and Canape evening to celebrate the Diamond anniversary of the Club, chartered in 1957. President Diane chose the Diamond Education Fund as one of her charities, helping students to complete advanced education along with Fountaineale School, a Specialist Education Centre, on the outskirts of Mansfield.

Obituaries

Yvonne Burdock, SI

Peterborough died on 27th July 2017 aged 74. Yvonne was a Member for over 20 years, Club President 2008-9, also Programme Action Officer for some years.

Kathleen Dunham (Kate), SI Birkenhead, died on 8th September 2017 aged 76. Kate joined in 1999 and was Club President in 2004 - 2005.

Congreve (Connie) Filce, SI Croydon and District, died on 29th August 2017, aged 104. A Soroptimist for 59 years, Connie was President in 1963 and 1964.

Mary Beeley, SI Mansfield & District, died on 27th July 2017, aged 83. Mary was the Club's longest serving Member and was President in 1973-74 and 1999-2000. Mary served as Representing Member on the Board of a local Refuge, now known as N.I.D.A.S. **Anthea Naylor, SI Reigate and District**, died suddenly in August 2017 aged 70. Anthea was a committed Soroptimist joining the Club in 1984 and becoming President in 1989.

Jean Renton, SI Lewisham and South East London, died on 7th September 2017, aged 92. Jean was a committed and active Member since 1985 holding most officer roles including President in 1986 and 1994.

June Muir, SI King's Lynn died on 7th August 2017. A committed Soroptimist since 1994, President of SI Stourbridge 2002 and Regional President for Midland Arden 2009, transferring to SI King's Lynn in 2010. Lately she was UKPAC

representative to UNICEF UK and had just been appointed UKPAC Treasurer. She was the inspiration and organiser of the Club's annual Literary Lunch.

Flora Brill, SI Easter Ross died on 23rd August 2017 aged 101. An Honorary Member, she joined in 1975 and was Club President in 1979-81 and Scotland North Divisional Union President 1982-83.

Dorothy Williamson, SI Falkirk, died on 8th July, 2017 aged 85. A loyal Member for 42 years, Dorothy served as Club President in 1981-1982 and was instrumental in creating the Club's Friendship links with SI Nice Azur in France and SI Bastia in Corsica.

Win Barnett, SI Penrith & District, died on 20th July 2017 aged 92. A loyal Member for 43 years. She was Club President in 1992 and also served as Membership Officer.

Peggy Snowden, SI Leicester, died on 20th July 2017 aged 92. Peggy joined in 1972 and was Club President 1978-1979 and Midland East Region President 1983-1984. She was an active and committed Member for 45 years.

Constance Eileen Coulson, SI Leicester, died on 31st July. She joined the Club on 1st October 1971 and resigned in 2014 aged 91 years when she was too ill to continue.

Violet Berry, SI Anguilla, died on 23rd June 2017, aged 80. Violet served as Member for 25 years and held positions of President, Secretary and served on various Club committees.

Lieske Bester, SI Cape of Good Hope

died on 16th July 2017, aged 84. An active and committed Member for 40 years, Past President, Secretary and National Association (SISA) secretary. Lieske introduced her daughter, Lisette Genseberger, to Soroptimism 32 years ago and she is still a Member of SI Cape of Good Hope.

Wilma Craigmile MBE, SI Aberdeen, died on 11th May, 2017 aged 86. A committed Soroptimist for 40 years, Wilma was President 1976-1977, then moved to Dundee where she was President SI Dundee 1987-1988. In retirement Wilma returned to Aberdeen rejoining SI Aberdeen and serving as Regional Representative for the Benevolent Fund for a number of years.

Carol Bayley, SI Coventry, died on 5th July 2017. A Member for 18 years, Carol was the Club's Liaison Officer with the Coventry Haven.

Janet Sykes, SI Wakefield, died on 19th September 2017 aged 84. Janet was a staunch Soroptimist, having been a Member since 1965, President in 1969 and an Honorary Member of the Club.

Leila Robinson, SI Grand Turk, Turks and Caicos Islands, died 17th October 2017 aged 79. An active and committed Soroptimist for 38 years, she was in a group of 15 women chartered as SI Grand Turk in 1979. She held various Officers and was Chairperson of All

Standing Committees. She was the President in 1980/81 and in 1994-95 and 1995-96. She later became an Honorary Member and in 2012 founded SI Providenciales. She was a Federation Councillor and a Past President of SI Caribbean Network. **Nan Grant, SI Dunfermline**, died on 28th October. She was a Member for 25 years. Nan served as Club Secretary and was actively involved in Club events.

Vera Goodwin, SI Bangor and District, North Wales, died on 29th October 2017 aged 99. Vera was the Club's longest serving Member having joined in 1962. She was a very proud and committed Soroptimist who served on all Committees in turn, as well as being Treasurer for 15 years.

Pamela Paddock, SI Walsall, died on 17th September 2017 aged 91. Pamela was a valued Member for 47 years, joining West Bromwich Club in 1970. She transferred to SI Walsall in 2012 and formed part of a joint presidency in 2006-7.

Glenys Davies, SI Lewisham and South East London, died on 5th November 2017 aged 89. She joined the Club in 1976 and during her 41 years as Member, took the role of President in 1980 and 2005.

Elsie Jones, SI Stafford, died on 6th October 2017, aged 93. Elsie was a committed and active Member of the Stafford Club for 53 years.

TO SUBMIT AN OBITUARY

Please send obituaries to Soroptimist@written-image.com, putting OBITUARY in the subject box.

It should be written following the above format, including ONLY the Member's name, Club(s), age, time as a Soroptimist and offices held.

Please do not send full descriptive obituaries. There is no fee.

Longer obituaries may be submitted for the website. Please send to hq@sigbi.org

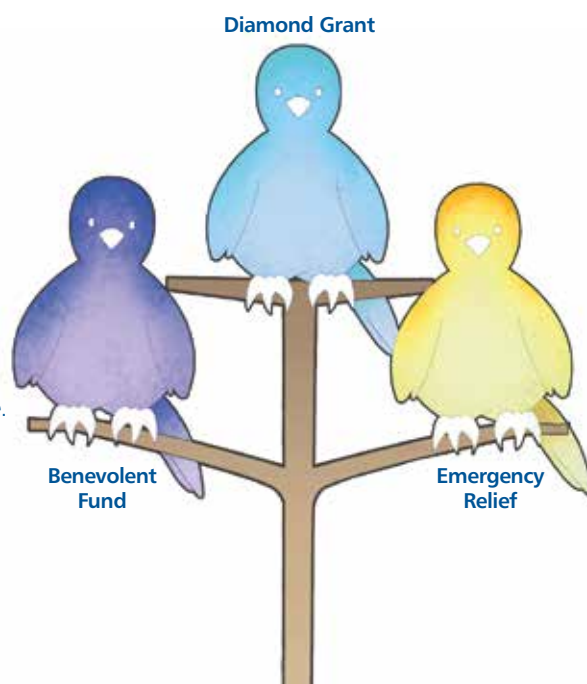
If Clubs would like to make a donation to the Memorial Fund in memory of their Members who have passed away, please send it to SIGBI HQ, cheques made payable to SIGBI Ltd.

The Memorial Fund enables Members to attend Conference who would otherwise be unable to experience this event.

Whilst sitting safely on your perch,
Design a Will, do some research,
The SIGBI causes are all so good,
Remember them please, if you could.

Be-ne-vo-lent, the fund for all,
Emergen-cy Relief could call,
The Diamond Grant is on its knees,
Please leave some cash to each of these.

When all this work is safely done,
Go back to perching in the sun,
Be satisfied you've done your bit,
And SIGBI feels the greatest hit.



For more information about your will and legacy, please visit the website:
www.sigbi.org/yourlegacy



Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

What sort of
woman is a
Soroptimist?

Me!

Me!

Me!

Us!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!

Me!