

FEBRUARY 2019

Soroptimist News

Violence
and Conflict
Resolution:
Justice and
Feminism

Think on it:
What can YOU
do for mental
health?

Welcome
our two new
Clubs in
San Fernando,
Trinidad &
Tobago

- **SIGBI Conference 2019: Join us in Bournemouth!**
- **Celebrating the centenary of the Suffragette movement**
- **Education, Enablement, Empowerment**

**Women inspiring action,
transforming lives**

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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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Time to say goodbye!

This is my last issue of Soroptimist News after 15 years as Editor, so I do hope that you enjoy it. There is certainly plenty to read!

The role of Editor – on any magazine – is to gather together, edit and then present the news, views and information that is relevant and interesting to the readers.

That may sound simple enough, but every magazine has a different readership and some groups are more diverse than others.

SIGBI Members may certainly be regarded as a diverse group – with readers across the UK, The Channel Islands, The Republic of Ireland, India, The Caribbean, Malta, Nigeria, The Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa.

When you bring them all together at a 1000-strong Conference that's a fascinating gathering – and I have been extremely lucky to attend all but one over the 15 years, across the UK and in Barbados and Malta.

I have met so many wonderful women and learnt so much about your work, it has certainly opened my eyes to issues that many people do not even know about.

So thank you for the opportunities, thank you for your support and... keep up the good work!



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NEXT ISSUE: 16th May 2019, deadline for submissions: 8th April 2019

Please send your contributions and news to: Sally@sigbi.org



Think on it

President's message

Dear Soroptimist Sisters,

Welcoming a New Year is an opportunity to look back on what has been achieved and also provides an occasion to look forward.

I have held the position of SIGBI President for about 100 days. It's a privilege I don't take lightly, I count myself lucky to be in this post thanks to your confidence in me. I have visited Clubs and listened to members speak about what makes our organisation special and what they would like us to achieve in the future. I have spoken to Soroptimists across the UK and most recently in Trinidad, where I was very fortunate to Charter a new Club, SI Anaparima.

As a charity we must demonstrate our impact even more clearly on the lives of women and girls. This is why we have reviewed our goal and decided that we will aim to support a million women and girls by 2021. It's an ambitious goal but not unachievable. As we look to simplify the programme database, focusing on the 5 Ps of Peace, People, Planet, Partnerships and Prosperity, and as we all continue to work effectively in the interests of women and girls we can, and will, achieve our goal.

We can only achieve all our plans if we have a strong financial position. However, we are living in turbulent monetary times, so it is imperative that we review all of our spending to ensure that we provide our Members with the best value for money that we can. That is why we have carefully considered what we can commit to achieving this year. We are trying, through our Trading company, to raise funds through sources other than Members' fees, which is why I am grateful to the 50 Clubs who have signed up to Easy Fundraising and all the Members who have signed up to Gift Aid. I encourage more Clubs and Members to consider using Easy Fundraising when you shop online and, if you are a UK tax payer, complete a Gift Aid form.

Arguably, our biggest piece of work this year is developing a communications strategy. We have a number of working parties beavering away to make sure that our communications are as effective as possible. We are reviewing our website and hope to launch something adventurous this year, which demonstrates more clearly the impact of our vision, changing the lives of others.

In the same vein, we are looking at restyling our Annual Report so that we can use it for a promotional tool, as well as satisfying the needs of the Charity Commission, by showing how we influence the lives of women and girls. We are also reviewing the way we work with our partners to become more effective. Finally, we have a working party looking at the best way to celebrate the centenary of Soroptimist International in 2021. Please do contact the office if you have any ideas.

I am pleased to inform you about our planned evolution of Soroptimist News. Our magazine is moving with the times and going digital in line with many other newspapers, magazines and publications that you might already read. I am grateful to the working party, led by Ann Hodgson, for the significant work that has been done to get us to this exciting stage in our history.

The first digital issue of Soroptimist News will be May 2019. I recognise that this may be a transition for you and that some Members do not use computers. We are looking at ways to alleviate this transitional period, but I do hope that you read and enjoy the new format of the magazine.

I am extremely grateful to Sheila Manchester who has produced our magazine for 15 years. When she started with us, Sheila refreshed our magazine giving it its modern feel. She has always ensured we have had a publication which tells the story of what we do to support women and girls. I wish Sheila well for the future.

In May, we will see Membership Month morph into "Celebrating Soroptimism", a year-long opportunity to promote what we do well and raise our profile at the same time. I feel a wave of optimism throughout our Federation. I think we have turned a corner as a result of all that we have done in the past to promote our organisation and I see Clubs actively recruiting new Members, opening School Clubs, considering Campus Clubs and working differently to encourage other women to join us in making the world a better place for everyone. In doing so, Clubs are becoming re-energised and revitalised.

I am really grateful to the Members and Clubs who have responded so positively to the theme for this year, THINK ON IT. There is an article for you to read in this edition which I hope you will enjoy but also inspire you to raise the profile of Members' wellbeing and the mental health of the women and children we support who have been subjected to very adverse life experiences through domestic violence, bullying at school and in the workplace, post-natal depression and imprisonment. Wouldn't it be an achievement if every Club and every Member wore something green in May to highlight Mental Health Awareness Week? Start your planning now and let's see if social media can be awash with Clubs Going Green. For more details and for tools to support you please look at the website - <https://sigbi.org/members/clubs/think-on-it/>. Let's keep the wave of Soroptimist optimism flying high throughout this year and beyond.

Finally, registration for our next annual conference in Bournemouth is nearly upon us. This annual event promises to be entertaining and enlivening. Have you booked your accommodation yet and planned how you will meet friends old and new? The Conference Committee are doing all that they can to ensure that you have a great conference and they too look forward to seeing you on England's south coast, for what promises to be an eventful and informative conference. See you there!

Sue

**Sue Williams, President,
Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland**



SIGBI President makes a whistle stop tour of Trinidad to Charter SI Anaparima

President Sue Williams reports

Arriving in Trinidad to a beautiful blue sky and azure sea we were welcomed by Sandra Dieffenthaler, a Member of SI San Fernando and our hostess for the week. SI San Fernando is the mother Club of SI Anaparima and have taken their duties very seriously, ensuring that the new Club got off the ground within a year of the first proposal to extend the number of Clubs in this small Caribbean country from six to seven.

Once settled in our luxurious accommodation in Port of Spain, as guests of Mike and Sandra, we took a tour of Port of Spain, this allowed us to get our bearings and fully appreciate the beauty of the country, its strengths and also its challenges.

Our first encounter with the Clubs in Trinidad was very inspiring. Members from SI Newtown and SI Chaguanas, both chartered within the last ten years, impressed us with the depth and number of projects they are undertaking to support and encourage women and girls to be the best that they can be.

SI Chaguanas provided us with their thoughts about their most ambitious project, 'Waking Up to A Better Tomorrow', reaching around 4000 school children.

The project focuses on raising awareness of the effects of deforestation in Trinidad. Primary and secondary children learn about the impact on the planet of removing trees, they are provided with an information pack and, more importantly, a tree sapling to plant and tend.

The Club has developed an excellent environmental video to support their work – visit https://youtube/76JKcd_y7zM to view it. Whilst, this is a longterm project for the Club, they also respond to short term need. Most recently, as a result of significant flooding in Trinidad, Club Members distributed hampers to those in need in Couva, Tabaquite, and Talpara Regional Corporation.

SI Newtown provided an extensive review of a number of projects they

have supported. They used Prezi rather than PowerPoint to demonstrate their projects (www.prezi.com). I was given an impromptu refresher course on its use! Firstly, they described a project started in 2005 – a series of workshops targeted at local schools and for girls receiving custodial sentences. These workshops covered a wide range of topics, such as personal care, financial literacy and human trafficking.

The Club also began a project to 'adopt a school' seeking out government run schools to provide resources and refurbishment programmes. Most recently, members picked up their paint brushes to renovate a school library and to provide new books for children to access literature and information to support learning.

The Club has a bursary programme so that girls can attend the West Indies University.

A more seasonal, but much needed project, is the Club's Christmas Caravan. The Club targets single mothers and families in need, providing useful food and resources at Christmas time.

As well as long term projects SI Newtown do short programmes, supporting the 16 days of activism and 'Oranging the world'. They support World Book Day by providing books to local schools.

You can check out both Clubs' extensive social media activity for more details of their projects.

Time at the beach on our second day provided us with time to meet two Members of SI Anaparima informally, before heading to San Fernando to our home from home, again hosted by Sandra Dieffenthaler.

We had the opportunity to meet in a Member's home and take part in a national pastime known as 'liming'. 'Liming', or 'to lime' is not a fruit but an opportunity to 'hang out' together and have fun.

We did so in SI San Fernando Member Terry Amirali-Rambharat's home, a beautiful restored cocoa house. Terry

treated Members of both SI San Fernando, SI Anaparima and a visitor from SI Perth, Pat Carruthers, to traditional food from Trinidad. We all told stories of how it was to be a Soroptimist, shared memories of conferences long gone but not forgotten, true sisterly sharing at its best.

On Thursday, President of San Fernando, Bebe Ajodha, Sandra and I (and Jason) visited the Mayor of the town, Junia Regreloo, in his chambers.

We were warmly welcomed and given tickets to a musical performance of steel pan – another national pastime. We followed this with a visit to Shangri La, a longterm project of SI San Fernando's.

Shangri La is a residential care home run for 50 years by the Club with up to 21 residents. We were introduced to the residents, shared an enjoyable quiz about Trinidad with them and were all told a funny story about marriage which had us laughing until lunch time.

Sharing lunch with the residents was a real joy.

Later, we experienced another 'lime' in the home of SI Anaparima President Susan Roopnarinesingh. What enthusiastic women, all looking forward to being Soroptimists, multi-talented and ready for action! They can even sing! We tried great food and local drinks but more importantly wonderful friendship. The anticipation of chartering as a Club filled the atmosphere, charging it with excitement. We practised the Charter ceremony to take place in the town hall in San Fernando and tried to recruit the baby as a young member of the future too!

One Member of SI San Fernando owns an estate, which was originally used for sugar growing but is now a fabulous ecological gem in the heart of Trinidad, La Vega. Here, we celebrated the anniversary of the Chartering of SI San Fernando over a wonderful lunch provided by the care home staff from Shangri La.

This was followed by a meeting with the National President of Trinidad, Chevonne



The Charter ceremony of SI Esperance, Trinidad

Agana, President Bebe Ajodha, SI San Fernando, and the future President of the proposed Club Esperance, Cheryl Boodoosingh, which will be the eighth Club in Trinidad & Tobago.

On our penultimate day we visited SI San Fernando's children's home, 'Haven of Hope'.

Here a Club Member read a story about a turtle faced with plastic pollution.

A local ecologist gave a presentation about pollution and introduced the children to some real turtles being rescued from the effects of pollution. At the end of the session, I thoroughly enjoyed reading a story, "The Gruffalo" to the children before presenting them with some Julia Donaldson books for their library.

Finally, the chartering ceremony was upon us on our return from the children's home. A great opportunity to dress up but more importantly to welcome 21 new Soroptimists to our Federation.

Although I have attended chartering ceremonies before – and they come in all guises – this was the first one in which I officiated. It will help me to make new memories and I hope it will be the same way for our new Members.

They are all enthusiastic women at the start of their careers and family life but they have dedicated themselves to our vision and values, pledging to improve the lives of other women and girls.

In doing so, I know it will also enrich their lives and contribute to them becoming even more rounded people, adding something special to our organisation and to the world around them. Welcome to every one of them.

I am sure they would like to hear from Members, especially any Club wanting to support them through a friendship link or in their project work. Please contact Sally Higgins at SIGBI HQ – sally@sigbi.org – if you would like to get in touch with them.

It was a long way to travel to charter a new Club but an experience not to be missed for us all!

Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) announces the Charter of two new Clubs in San Fernando, Trinidad & Tobago.

SI Anaparima

SI Anaparima was Chartered on 24th November 2018 by SIGBI President, Sue Williams.

There was a gala ceremony at City Hall, San Fernando, in the presence of the Mayor of San Fernando, Alderman Junior Regello, the President of Soroptimist International Caribbean Network, Sisoranza Stanford from Barbados, President of Soroptimist International Trinidad & Tobago, Chevonne Agana and the sponsoring Club, SI San Fernando President, Bebe Ajodha.

Also present was the person without all this could not have been possible, Sandra Dieffenthaler.

The 21 founder Members are already doing great work in the field of education. Congratulations to all new Members, and the founder President, Susan Umraw-Roopnarinesingh.



SI Esperance

SI Esperance was Chartered on 9th December 2018 by the President, Soroptimist International Trinidad & Tobago, Chevonne Agana.

The Members of the new Club were also delighted to welcome the Mayor of San Fernando, Alderman Junior Regello, along with several Soroptimists from other Caribbean islands.

Again, there are 21 Founder Members for the new Club, but this time they are all existing Members of Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland, who have decided to form a new Club, so between them have many years' experience.

We send our heartfelt congratulations to both Clubs and wish them many happy years improving the lives of women and girls in their local communities.

Welcome!





Think on it: What can you do for mental health?

President Sue Williams reports

My theme throughout my 2018/2019 presidency is "Think on it" which provides a focus on mental health for women and girls.

Mental Health Awareness Week

Mental Health Awareness week is Monday 13th to Sunday 19th May 2019.

The theme for the week is "Body Image – how we see ourselves and how that makes us feel".

The colour of the week is GREEN and I want to encourage all Members to wear green throughout the week to show their support. What a splash we could make!

Please be creative too and think about green things in the environment, at home and in the community that Members could photograph and promote via social media to support this important week in the mental health calendar.

The Mental Health Foundation has Green Pin Badges for sale, which you can order at: www.mentalhealth.org.uk/green-ribbon-pin-badges.

This will give Clubs a great opportunity to take direct action or raise public awareness of mental health issues, particularly those that are faced by women and girls.

Why not choose a mental health cause as your Club President's chosen

charity for the year, and launch the project during Mental Health Awareness week?

A useful document on stress, which was produced for Mental Health Week 2018 is available at: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/stress-are-we-coping>.

Action Plan

A suggested course of action is: **February/March 2019** – research statistics and forms of mental health. Find out what facilities there are in your local area and what support they might need, whether fundraising or practical help.

See the activities that Clubs are already doing for inspiration!

If you find any new information or infographics please send them to sally@sigbi.org for inclusion on the website.

April 2019 – decide on a project to support – it could be a local centre that helps people with dementia or other mental issues, or a national charity. The type of project you select may depend on whether your Members want to raise funds, provide hands-on-service or raise awareness of mental health issues in your area.

May 2019 – launch your project – use Mental Health Awareness week to get started. Let the public know what you are doing.

Use social media and your website, put flyers in libraries, citizen's advice bureaux, doctors' waiting rooms.

Use the Think on It toolkit for Social Media Headers and other tools (<https://sigbi.org/members/clubs/think-on-it/>).

Wear green, and your green pin if you have one. Use the hashtag #SoptimistsThinkonIt.

June-November 2019 – monitor the outcomes of your project and report on it. Quantify the effect it has had (it could be funds raised, items made or hours spent visiting).

Raise a report on the Programme Database and let SIGBI HQ have a story and a picture for the magazine and website.

This can also form part of Showcasing Soroptimism, which is explained elsewhere in this magazine. Shout about the work that you are doing.

What SIGBI will be doing

SIGBI will be running a Social Media Campaign throughout Mental Health Awareness week 2019. Look out for these posts and re-post or retweet.

Please use the hashtag #SoptimistsThinkonIt throughout Mental Health Awareness week, we will re-tweet your posts and run a report on the hashtag to assess the impact of all our messages.



Soroptimist Clubs in action!



SI Chennai Downtown supported the residents of a local Rehabilitation Centre, Aashraya, by financing art therapy conducted by Roshina Brigit of Roshni's Art and Mental Health.

Encouraging creativity is a great way to improve mental health and it can help to resolve internal conflicts that may be causing mental issues. It enables emotions to be expressed in a non-verbal way, as sufferers cannot always talk about their problems.



SI Bilston and District Members were inspired by a talk by Karen Perry about her Fiddle Quilts and decided to make some for children who have severe disabilities at Green Park School in Bilston. As a trial, Member Julie made a quilt for an elderly person with dementia and the quilt was given to Pat on Christmas Day. The photo shows Pat admiring her gift.

SI Grange over Sands has supported people with dementia since 2014. There are over 44 million people in the world living with dementia, and two thirds of these are women. Dementia is a complex syndrome that adversely affects the function of the brain and people's mental health. Over the last two decades many studies have shown that engagement with music can alleviate symptoms, which is why SI Grange over Sands has been running weekly Singing for Memory sessions, a structured music therapy programme that brings people living with memory loss together in a fun, friendly and stimulating environment. An average of 28 people attend each week.



SI Ellesmere Port and District has been fundraising for two years for MQ, a mental research charity. MQ is the first charity dedicated to funding scientific research to provide the longterm solutions needed to tackle the impact of mental illness. Existing treatments are only effective for 50% of people.

To date, SI Ellesmere Port and District has raised £3,746.00 by Craft Sales, BBQS, Christmas Coffee mornings, Christmas Fair, Film Afternoons, Flower Demo Evening, Card sales, Raffles, Boot Sales at Wirral Autistic Society and lots more. An additional £900 for Hinderton School, a local school for children on the Autistic Spectrum, was raised.



SI Garforth Elmet gathered together for a craft evening, sewing up and decorating twiddlemuffs for dementia patients. It was the initiative of Club Member Janet Bowden, who has a small army of Soroptimists and non-Soroptimists knitting the twiddlemuffs.

They are then decorated with ribbon, buttons, lace - in fact anything tactile for patients to touch. Some twiddlemuffs even have keys and nuts and bolts attached to them.

Members were privileged to have Dawn Hines, a support worker on the Dementia Ward at Pinderfields Hospital, Wakefield with them. She gave an insight into the importance of the twiddlemuffs to the well-being of the patients on the ward.



SI St Albans and District hosted a brilliant evening - "Mental Health Challenges For Women" to mark #WorldMentalHealthDay 2018. The Club President-Elect Katherine Clark (pictured right), who is a Mental Healthcare Professional, organised the event.

Katherine delivered an illuminating presentation herself before handing over to the amazing Louise Bates (pictured left) from Dementia Friends and the Alzheimer's Society. All who attended now understand so much more about the mental health challenges facing women.

The Club looked into the many aspects of mental health including depression, anxiety and dementia and received management and support advice for how to live a better life.

SI Central Birmingham have developed an Assembly targeting Secondary School pupils, entitled "Loves Me - Loves Me Not". It demonstrates what a healthy relationship can be and in contrast what an abusive one is and the dangers therein. It also covers grooming, trafficking and sexting, stating the consequences for now and in the future. Delivery of the Assembly has taken place to 4,000 young people in nine schools, receiving excellent feedback from staff and pupils. The project received a "Big Lottery Community Grant", allowing it to be extended across the Midland Arden Region, and it is hoped to reach 44,000 young people by the end of 2019.

SI Loughborough has endeavoured to respond to the mental health needs of their local community, working with Dementia UK to fundraise for an Admiral Nurse; they also support carers by hosting an annual afternoon tea; a group meet regularly to record local Talking News.

They also support their local Women's Refuge, and actively campaigned against proposed changes to the payment of housing benefit, which would have had a very negative impact on funding. They also attended a conference on Modern Slavery and Trafficking. A number of schools have invited them to speak to students about emotional, psychological and physical health, as part of the Loves Me/Loves Me Not campaign.

Educate, Empower, Enable



Programme Objective

Violence and Conflict Resolution

Nisha Ghosh,
Assistant Programme Director,
reports

For **justice** and **feminism**

The Merriam Webster Dictionary announced that 'Justice' was the most researched word in 2018, while in 2017 it was 'Feminism'. This says a great deal about the levels of awareness and concern about the state of human beings which have dramatically risen across the world. The increasing fight for justice, the constant struggle of women for gender sensitivity and the evolution of feminism have contributed to such spikes.

Strong words like justice and feminism are central to conversations on social change, focal to the SDGs and pivotal for our women-centric organisation, Soroptimist International. Soroptimist projects are the stories of survivors of human trafficking, of marches for 16 days of Activism, of creating advocates of gender sensitisation, of supporting the victims of violence and abuse or even of migrants' need to be integrated. 16 days of Activism from November 22nd to December 10th has steadily grown as a major event. Soroptimists are taking each of the 16 days and giving them a focus.



SI Canterbury (above) organised a display on violence and domestic abuse that stayed outside the Gulbenkian Cinema for 16 days, with partners Gulbenkian at the University of Kent and Rising Sun Domestic Abuse Services.

SI Aberdeen celebrated the Orange Day by supporting vulnerable women of a group.



NASI of India (above) had a presentation delivered by the national PAC Nisha Ghosh. In support, all the Members arrived at the regional meeting in orange with orange balloons.



30 Soroptimists representing all six Clubs in the **North of Scotland** gathered in Dingwall for their Region Meeting and Members wore orange which glowed in the glorious highland sunshine.



SI Glamorgan (above) said it in a novel way by putting orange sashes on several statues around their area.



Our newest Club **SI Esperance (above)** joined in spirited action as did our new Club, **SI Anaparama (below)** with orange badges.



SI Barnstaple Members have, for some years, organised an event within the 16 Days of Activism for The Elimination of Violence Against Women, to which the Police, Councillors and local groups are invited. Poems were read and petals were scattered in the river, in recognition of those men, women and children who had survived domestic abuse and in memory of those who did not.

SI Yorkshire and **SI Middlesbrough** Members all marched to make a point.

The Human Trafficking Survey that UK Soroptimist Clubs undertook came up with startling results. **SI Kenilworth** went on to the next step for training members to recognise signs of Human Trafficking around them.

SI Eastbourne had an article in the local newspaper on Modern Day Slavery. **SI Pune Metro East** (12) collaborated with the all women Rotary Club and delivered a presentation to 80 people.

Amnesty International's (AI) Write for Rights - lobbying campaigns is hugely supported by Soroptimists to seek justice and freedom.

SI Bromley wrote petitions to draw attention to a wide range of instances where women suffer violence, imprisonment unjustly.

SI East Grinstead signed the petition of Global Citizen to Human Rights Commission to end FGM and child marriage.

Hate crime is on the increase. Soroptimists have found ways to address this as well as support migrant communities to settle in.

SI Tenby & District mounted an exhibition on hate crime to create awareness, while **SI Kettering**



Rita, a Member of **SI Lewisham and South East London**, returned to Uganda to supervise the distribution of four more goats to the Mweheki Women's Group. All the women have escaped from domestic violence and support each other to gain economic independence. The Club had previously given them six goats which help them to provide food for their families and, by selling the milk and meat locally, provide a small income.

invited a police officer to do a presentation on such matters.



SI Swindon President Valerie Nuttall and Member Lydia Cardew, were among forty Soroptimists from South West Region at the annual 'Railing Against Abuse' event arranged by Weston-super-Mare Club to highlight the UN Day.



SI Newcastle upon Tyne Members Christine Lowthian and Jill Smith and the Police and Crime Commissioner/SI Newcastle upon Tyne President Vera Baird met with Newcastle Falcons players and the Chief Constable of Northumbria Police, Winton Keenan, to raise awareness.



SI Winchester keeps hopes afloat at the Women's Refuge as does **SI Leicester, SI Darlington, SI Tunbridge Wells, SI Cwmbran and District, SI Lichfield, SI Bangor, SI East Grinstead, SI Blackpool, SI Swansea and SI Lewisham**.



SI Widnes has an excellent support programme Night Stop where the homeless and violated can spend a night in a safe place.

Sometimes it is just the information imparted through a project that can change the story of a victim's life. Safe Ireland, an NGO that responds to GBV was delighted to have SI Ireland working with them on dealing with domestic violence.

At **SI Asokora**, after a session about violence and how to deal with it, a young attendee said, "Thank you very much, I have been looking for where to report the case of a young girl living in my street, who is constantly abused by the family she is living with. I now know what to do."

Domestic violence focused projects have been done by **St Albans, SI Colombo, SI Ipswich, SI Colchester, SI Lichfield, SI Clonmel and District** and others. **SI Rugby** is in a multicultural area and members have raised awareness as well as offered their services to the local NGOs that tackle hate crime.

Getting men and boys to share responsibility of creating awareness is what **SI Yaounde** did effectively, as a beneficiary said, "As teenage boys, we are going to make a change by encouraging gender equality". That's a hopeful statement as the White Ribbon Campaign gains momentum and Clubs – **SI Lancaster, SI Downpatrick, SI Belfast, SI Southend on Sea and SI Wexford** – relay the message.

Activists are the frontline warriors, who march to raise awareness while others quietly support the victims through helping with life's essentials, or support grass root workers with loans.

Clubs have stepped in with funds raised to alleviate the tough times that the voluntary sector is facing.

2018 was a particularly volatile year for women's rights movements – from new threats as escalating violence by fundamentalists, rise of nationalism and violence against human rights defenders.

More than ever, Soroptimists need to continue their work for justice and document their evolution as feminists.



Throughout the summer of 2017, 12 volunteer Observers, Soroptimists from SI Northern England, observed 223 Domestic Abuse Court hearings in Northumbria. Trained by the CPS, and working largely in pairs, these observers undertook over 300 observations using a semi-structured questionnaire to ensure consistency in the information gathered.

Of these cases, 46% were heard by District Judges and 54% were heard by benches of Lay Magistrates across two Courts, one in Bedlington and one in Gateshead.

The findings were analysed and published by the office of the Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner, Dame Vera Baird QC, in early August 2018.

"Specialist Domestic Violence Courts - How special are they?" reported a number of findings and 13 Recommendations that cover all aspects of the Justice system.

Specialist Domestic Violence Courts were set up to understand that it is hard to give evidence against your partner and that the complainant may be the subject of coercive control by the defendant.

In 13 cases out of 32 observed in Northumbria, the complainant didn't turn up and the case was dismissed. More cases showed how coercive control was tried by the defendant as 12 out of 21 'not guilty' pleas were changed to 'guilty' as soon as the victim entered the Court building. This is known as 'gaming the system'. It was also noted that sentencing guidelines were not always adhered to and the use of unfounded mitigating circumstances were often presented unchallenged by the Bench. Being drunk does not excuse you assaulting your partner and the public's perception of being of 'good character' fails to recognise hidden coercive behaviour.

The scarcity of Independent Domestic Violence Advisers who support and represent the complainants was worrying. It must be of concern to think about those victims who continue to live in abusive relationships due to a lack of support and understanding of their situation.

Northern England Soroptimists willingly undertook this project to expose the shortcomings of the Justice system for abused women. They learnt much and hope that the report and its recommendations will improve the lives of those affected by domestic violence.



Programme Objective Education

Yvonne Gibson,
Assistant Programme Director,
reports

Education, Enablement and Empowerment

Education, Enablement and Empowerment are the ways in which we seek to help women and girls be the best they can be.

Education projects are those that Enable them to gain new knowledge and skills so that they can be Empowered, help them move towards independence/self-sufficiency and gain gender equality.

Our current Federation project, Meru Women's Garden Project and the one that Members elected to follow it, Empowering Girls in Nepal, aim to achieve this.

Our fundraising efforts help to enable others to provide educational opportunities so that women and girls can achieve empowerment.

Detailed information about these and other projects is collected and collated in our reports to the UN in order to maintain our consultative status and will, in future, facilitate our reports to the Charity Commission.

radically improve the health of mums and babies;

- Bi-annual one week's training 'Alternative Rite of Passage' challenges dangerous cultural traditions that contribute to oppression, poverty and ill-health and to decrease the use of FGM;
- Day long boys' workshop to encourage boys to support local girls, strengthen relationships and avoid substance misuse.

The results, so far, have been phenomenal, with initial targets of numbers engaging with the programmes being dramatically surpassed. In year 1 the target for all programmes was 200 people whereas 439 people engaged with one programme or another.

Expectations are high that the target for the second year of 429 people engaging will be surpassed and Child.org (our partners) are ambitious that the year 3 target of 600 people engaging will be achieved before the end of the project.



The programme explored mindfulness, self-visualisation, personal journeys of success and a talk/workshop on teenage pressures. Students and teachers were delighted with the outcome of the event, which inspired, motivated and empowered these young women.

SIGBI project 2019-2022: Empowering Girls in Nepal

The SIGBI project 2019-2022 will be Empowering Girls in Nepal, which will be launched at the Bournemouth Conference in October 2019.

It is a partnership between SIGBI and Chorachori, a UK registered charity, which works with its local NGO, Chorachori-Nepal, to rescue children who have been abused, raped, abducted or trafficked in Nepal or to India.

The Empowering Girls in Nepal project seeks to make 'a real and sustainable difference to the lives of vulnerable and trafficked girls and young women through education and training, to enable them to continue their education safely, enhance their employability and become role models and leaders of the future.'

The project has two main aims:

1. To educate and train girls, providing them with life and language skills and tailoring training that can lead to gainful employment and enable them to return to society;

2. To create a sustainable 30 bed facility, which will act as a safe and secure half way house and stepping stone for the girls.

Empowering Girls in Nepal aligns with:

a) **SIGBI 3Es** - Educate, Empower and Enable;

b) **UN SDGs** 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well Being), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)

c) Three of the **UN's 5 Ps**: People, Partnership and Prosperity.



CSW63

CSW63 - the sixty third session of the 'Commission on the Status of Women' will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 11th to 22nd March 2019.

This year's themes are:

- **Priority theme:** Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

- **Review theme:** Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development (agreed conclusions of the sixtieth session).

Soroptimist International will be running a parallel session 'Lifting women from poverty through lifelong education' and all four Federations will be invited to contribute to the session. This promises to be exciting and varied.

Meru Women's Garden Project

The Meru Women's Garden Project continues to engage community members in its varied educational programmes:

- 'Agricultural Training' programme over one year, providing women with vital gardening tools and skills as well as leadership skills;
- Six months' 'Mothers' Nutritional Training' to

Other educational projects are run by Clubs and Regions. Some examples of these are:

- **Educate** – SI York Ebor was asked to prepare and deliver a tutorial about period poverty, period positivity and the need to reduce the embarrassment around periods for a group of students at York College.

The tutorial was well received by both students and tutors and the college is now planning to deliver more of the tutorials using the prepared materials.

- **Enable** – SI Hertford and District provides small loans via 'Lend with Care' to women, enabling them to support their families and empowering them to grow their businesses, thereby securing food for their families and enabling their children to attend school.

- **Empower** – SI Durban (Main photo) undertook to provide 130 grade 11 learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to a day of inspiration to empower and prepare them for their final year at school. A lack of proper guidance, knowledge and most importantly resources leave these learners at a great disadvantage as they prepare for life outside school.

Recent SIGBI Club initiatives in Education:



SI Poona held a workshop for tribal girls in Maharashtra with the objectives of protecting girls from all kinds of violence and involving all stakeholders in the empowerment and protection of girls, through appropriate and time bound training. The purpose was to help girls understand safety and empowerment issues, to involve them in their own protection, and devise strategies for ending violence against them, which involves self defence, cyber safety, awareness building and advocacy.



SI Ikoyi partnered with Learn Africa to donate different textbooks to students of Rio International School, Lagos Island to commemorate World Literacy Day on 8th September. The school expressed their gratitude for the kindness shown to them.

Learn Africa is a premier publisher of quality educational textbooks and stationery.



SI Lagos Mainland undertook a major project at the beginning of the new school year in September 2018. New school furniture was purchased for the Soroptimist International Lagos Mainland Nursery and Primary School.

This project cost over N1,000,000 which is equivalent to £2,000. Pictures show the inauguration of the new furniture with the President of the Club Laide Smith and some members of the Club.

SI Newcastle Members celebrated their new Friendship Link with SI Freetown, Sierra Leone with a Chinese Banquet. The money raised will support SI Freetown's education and mentoring projects and a cheque for £700 was given to SI Freetown Members at the Liverpool Conference.

SI Chester Members spent a weekend at Waterstones bookshop, Chester, wrapping purchases in exchange for a donation to Classrooms in the Clouds (@CitC Nepal), a Nepal-based education charity that they have supported for several years, raising funds for a



SI Harrogate's project is to work in partnership with other organisations to provide craft materials and educational toys for staff and volunteers to use during children's activity sessions. By encouraging young children to use libraries, they become more confident in using books and this gives them a head start in learning to read and provides a massive boost to their educational achievements. Libraries have been through a very difficult time recently and suffered major budget cuts and sadly even asking for a voluntary donation to cover the cost of crayons and glue can be enough to put off some of our most vulnerable families attending.

Knaresborough Lions were encouraged to join the Soroptimist Campaign to support Knaresborough Library by providing toys, dressing up clothes for storytime and quantities of craft materials to use during children's activity sessions. It has made a huge difference to their current resources and Jaime Berry, aged 8, could not wait to open the new toys and crafts. Jaime is the granddaughter of Soroptimists Pat Shore and Lesley Berry.

The photograph also shows SI Harrogate's Presidents Hilary Waddington and Elsie Johnston, members Sue Williams, Pat Shore & Sandra Jowett. Together with Knaresborough Lions President Bob Godsell and his wife Pamela and library staff member Maria Burley and volunteers Ged Williams and Keith Harmer.



teacher exchange project to support longterm leadership in rural schools in Nepal.

SI Preston's School Club, Penwortham Girls' High School, celebrated their first anniversary by holding a Charter event.

Members joined parents and Mrs Pomeroy, the Head Teacher as the girls gave touching speeches. They spoke of how proud they are to be part of the organisation, how they want to help women and girls and recalled some of the work they have accomplished so far this year.

Karen Rainford, President, SI Preston gave out the badges and certificates to the new Club Members and Miss Brookes, head of the school Club presented certificates to members who had done well within the school Club.

The girls have managed to raise more than £600 since September to sponsor two girls' education with the charity Partners in Education Swaziland (PIES).

They have corresponded with the girls and are inspired to help them achieve their potential. They are now looking forward to more exciting and worthwhile projects in 2019. Members of SI Preston are very proud of the girls and how hard they are working. Club President Karen said, "The girls are an inspiration and the future of our organisation".



SI Lichfield organised this year's Skirting Science event at Rodbaston College – part of South Staffordshire College, sponsored by Perkins. The students were welcomed by Andy Cartwright, Director of Faculty Rodbaston and Nancy Archer, Senior Associate Engineer – Perkins), who gave the girls a journey through her career development as a female engineer. 15 Volunteers from Soroptimist Clubs organised and ran the event.

The girls all engaged very well, working collaboratively to succeed in the tasks set during these workshops. At the end of the day students, presenters, teachers and Soroptimists were invited to complete questionnaires giving feedback on the day. Many students commented that they wished they had more opportunity to do these types of workshop activities during normal school lessons.

"I would have liked to do more workshops, even if we would have been back to school late!" suggested one student.

Feedback from the teachers who accompanied the students was extremely positive, too.

"All the girls joined in and contributed to the activities. They really enjoyed it: the day went so quickly", noted Miss Croft, Science teacher from Hart School.

'Think on it'

SIGBI's 85th Federation Conference

Bournemouth International Centre

24th – 26th October 2019



A warm welcome will await you at the 85th Soroptimist International Great Britain & Ireland Conference in Bournemouth.

The SIGBI Conference is a time to meet friends, old and new and listen to inspiring speakers, so come along and join us in Bournemouth.

Venue

The Bournemouth International Centre (BIC) is an award winning premier conference, events and entertainment venue, situated at the town's centre whilst boasting panoramic views of its internationally acclaimed coastline.

The last time the Federation Conference was in Bournemouth was in 2004 and since then the BIC has been refurbished to enhance the visitor experience.

The auditorium and exhibition hall are adjacent to one another, with both located on the ground floor. A café offering tea/ coffee and snacks is also available on the ground floor. Please note that only food and drinks purchased within the BIC can be consumed on the premises.

Conference Theme

The theme of President Sue's year is 'Think on it', a focus on mental health for women and girls. Every Soroptimist Club in SIGBI has been challenged to take

action by holding an event to promote the wellbeing of every Club Member and to raise awareness of the mental health issues faced by women and girls.

President Sue's theme will be reflected in the content of the Conference.

Keynote Speakers

We have an exciting line-up of keynote speakers and once all contracts are signed details will be shared with Members.

Conference Programme

All SIGBI Clubs will vote in 2020 for the applicant to take up the role as Soroptimist International President 2021-23, therefore part of the conference programme will include Hustings. The number of applicants who will take part in the Hustings will be confirmed in April, which will then permit the Conference Committee to allocate the required time slot within the conference programme.

The General Meeting will be on Friday afternoon, and a call for resolutions was included in the SIGBI News Briefing dated 7th December 2018. Resolutions can be Financial, General or Procedural and must be submitted by 31st March 2019.

It is intended to have Friday evening free for Members to meet, greet and enjoy the friendship of Soroptimists from across

our Federation. Why not get in contact with your Friendship Link Clubs before the summer to arrange to meet up while in Bournemouth?

For the first time, the Chair and Directors of SIGBI Trading Limited are working with the Conference Committee to deliver the 85th SIGBI Conference in Bournemouth. SIGBI Trading Limited will work with all conference committees in planning future SIGBI conferences.

Exhibition

The exhibition will be held in the Solent Hall where delegates will also be served their tea and coffee. This is a lovely large hall with views out to the sea and will also have some informal seating for delegates to use. We hope to provide an exciting mix of up to 40 commercial and charity stalls with plenty of opportunity to shop and also support your favourite charities.

Stalls will also be available for Clubs to hire at a cost of £70 + VAT. Forms are available on the website and we would like to encourage Clubs to get their applications in early as stalls will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Please email the exhibition co-ordinator Marian at mariansapcote@virginmedia.com for more details and to submit your application to have a stall.

Think on it: Join the campaign



Sue Williams, President, SIGBI



Bournemouth International Centre



Eileen Hunter Conference Chair

If Clubs know of any local businesses or charities who they think might be interested in having a stall, please email Marian at the address above. It is hoped to showcase as many local businesses and charities as possible and we will also have some of our regular exhibitors there too.

Would you like to be involved in ensuring all delegates enjoy the Conference?

If you answer yes, we are now seeking volunteer Stewards to help with the smooth running of the Conference.

Each Steward works within a team led by a Lead Steward in areas such as delegate registration and information, supporting delegates who require special assistance, the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as guiding delegates to the locations within the BIC and supporting the administration of the General Meeting – the list of duties is a long one.

The more members who volunteer to help, the less time each individual needs to contribute. The only criteria for stewards are a wealth of patience and, of course, a friendly smile.

Further information is available on the Conference website or email Chief Steward Liz Jamieson at stewardatbournemouth@gmail.com

Identifying suitable accommodation

We are working with Business Events Bournemouth – www.bebres.org.uk/sigbi19 - to manage accommodation bookings. A number of hotels have already been fully reserved by delegates, so do look at the website and if you have any queries or are seeking advice please contact Business Events Bournemouth by telephone on 01202 816147 or by Email at info@bebres.org.uk

Some hotels have limited car parking which is allocated on a first come first served basis.

How can I travel to Bournemouth?

Bournemouth is easily accessible by air, train or road travel. London is approximately two hours away by train and there are daily flights into Bournemouth and Southampton airports. For those delegates considering car travel, please be aware that there is a large privately operated car park next to the BIC, however parking charges for a day can be in excess of £15. If you wish to pay by phone you need to download the app from <https://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/Parking/Parking.aspx>.

Bournemouth's public transport links are easy to locate and there is also an abundance of local taxis available at both the rail and bus stations.

Explore the area

Bournemouth has a fantastic, dynamic vibe, with a bustling and growing centre of business innovation, creativity and investment. Come and visit the award-winning green spaces, a seven-mile long sandy beach and a flat promenade.

On the Pier you can admire the Theatre which was designed by a local Soroptimist, the architect, Elisabeth Scott. There are numerous cosmopolitan cafes, restaurants, lively bars and shopping for you all to enjoy before, during and after Conference.

Just a few miles west of Bournemouth is the famous World Heritage Site, the Jurassic Coast, covering 95 miles of coastline charting 185 million years of Earth's history. To the east of Bournemouth is the New Forest National Park, known for its heathland, forest trails and native ponies.

For more ideas of what to see and do in the region – www.bournemouth.co.uk

And finally

As the plans for the conference are finalised the details will be added to the Conference website:

www.sigbi.org/bournemouth2019

The Registration Form is available from March 2019, with the Early Bird cut-off is 30 June 2019 and Registration closes on 30 September 2019.

Friendship Links

Partnering projects

Bhaswati Biswas,
Friendship Link Coordinator, reports



SI Madurai cheque presentation

Greetings! All over the world, Soroptimists make efforts to keep the spirit of Friendship alive by meeting, making new friends, initiating and discussing projects, identifying opportunities to collaborate. May this spirit unite us and help us to transform other lives with hopes and beginnings.

The 'Meru Women's Garden Project' and 'Women, Water & Leadership' (WWL) SI President's Appeal 2017-19 are supported by Soroptimists across the Federation. Through their sincere dedication, the women at the Meru Garden can now feed their families from their own produce.

They sell their excess crops to earn a small income and support each other in times of greater need through 'Table Banking'.

Likewise rural communities in Sarawak and Sabah, Malaysia, tsunami and earthquake affected areas of Sulawesi and Lombok, Indonesia and sustainable sanitation in rural communities in Bulgaria will benefit from the funds raised under WWL. Working in partnership gives you the much needed strength, trust and belief in yourselves.

We all know Partnership Projects are essential to the combined efforts of our Clubs to create an impact. Many of you are already involved in 'partnership projects'. You too could plan a project with your Friendship Link or join hands with any charity organisation or can do similar projects. Please share and REPORT.

SI South Kolkata and SI Dundee have been maintaining their Friendship Links for 10 years. They did a Joint Project on Women's Empowerment through a Skill Training Programme on 'Early Childhood Care & Education' – ECCE.

The Institute of Psychological & Educational Research (IPER), a partner organisation of SI South Kolkata, is running a Teachers' Training programme under The West Bengal University of Teachers' Training, Education Planning & Administration.

The Certificate Course, ECCE, with a duration of six months, trains teachers for pre-primary schools for children aged 2 to 6.

The Clubs jointly sponsored two trainees, Labony Kumar and Protima Biswas for this course. Labony had passed her Higher Secondary Examination and was eager to start a career for herself. The ECCE Course gave her the opportunity to achieve her goal. Protima had also passed her Higher Secondary Certificate and was already working in the Free Primary School, but wanted to better equip herself with a Certificate in the ECCE Course.

SI Madurai donated funds worth 30,000 INR, raised by their Friendship Link **SI Coventry**, to the 'Safe Pad' unit in Dindigul run by a Para Olympian, Ms. Neelavathy. This unit makes re-usable Safe Pads. As menstrual hygiene is critical, SI Madurai conducted a training session for 100 girls and gave them the pads on behalf of SI Coventry.

Oxfam from Bangladesh visited this unit to replicate it there. Safe Pad is accepted by the following organisations: Terres de homes, Iraq; Solidarities International, Myanmar, LHI, Kenya; PLAN International, Kenya and Denmark and Oxfam, Bangladesh (piloting in refugee camps).

A successful curry evening helped **SI Sheffield** to raise over £700 for their Friendship Link, **SI Karachi** and their project 'Learn to Earn' helping women to learn new skills.

SI Ellesmere Port presented their annual donation for Community Projects to their Friendship Link **SI Colombo**.

SI Lancaster continues to support education of Pari Lama, a beneficiary of **SI Kathmandu**.

SI Pune Metro East's Sanitary Napkins Advocacy project had a boost with sponsorships from a multinational company, Gallagher & Co. This would allow larger output and low-cost napkins would reach a larger number of girls at no cost. As the company had offices in Bangalore, **SI Pune Metro East** jointly distribute the sponsored napkins in Pune and at Bangalore. **SI Bangalore** - as the Friendship Link extended a helping hand by distributing 600 packets at schools for the underprivileged girls.

SI Selby Members visited their Friendship Link **SI Dnipro, Ukraine** and the capital, Kiev, where a report was given on the visit at the Club's Business Meeting in November, with pictures, a display of the items they brought back, including gifts and a commentary by Lindsay Green and Hilary Putman, supported by Olwen Fisher and Irene Brereton.

Time spent at the orphanage in Dnipro was of particular interest. The 65 children in the orphanage all have physical and / or mental disabilities. It is supported by the Soroptimist Club there. After liaison with SI Dnipro, members of

SI Selby and friends purchased didactic toys and games, educational items, specialist cups and toothbrushes for the children.

At the orphanage, a concert was given by some of the residents and was watched by them all. Irene commented on how well the children sang and danced and how happy they looked. The toothbrushes were given to each child after the concert and went down surprisingly well. Hilary said, "It was good that every child received a toothbrush, as so much is shared. The staff was also pleased as often the children just receive sweets and chocolate! The toys were also very well received. Olwen mentioned how they shared them and helped others to play with them."

Lindsay has since received thank you emails from the staff in the orphanage. One wrote, "Thank you so much. You have made a very important gift for the children of the orphanage. Games and items will help the children".

The report included the programme for each day of the visit. It was "full on" all day and into the evening. Going to lovely sights, seeing beautiful restored buildings, getting involved in some traditional activities. A surprise one evening was going to see The Marriage of Figaro, performed as a ballet by the Ukrainian National Ballet in the Kiev Opera House – and there was a farewell dinner on the last night for everyone on the visit.

Hilary summed the visit up, "The visit was so worthwhile - we were able to help the children in the orphanage, support our sisters in Dnipro and enjoy the fun and friendship of Soroptimism."

Keep writing to me on your new 'partnership projects'. Please send your reports by 1st April. Kindly mail high resolution photographs separately to sigbifriendship@bhaswati@gmail.com



SIGBI Memorial Grant 2018

Recipients report



Candice Shortte, SI Newtown Memorial Grant recipient 2018

I was extremely privileged to receive the Award to attend Conference in Liverpool. I am most grateful to SIGBI for the awesome experience to meet so many Soroptimist Sisters. I was "wowed" by the entire conference which was aptly themed "Empower today, enable tomorrow".

As a first-time attendee I wore a yellow lanyard, an immediate conversation opener.

I would sometimes wonder how they knew, until I met the lovely Kate outside the ECHO Arena who said, "So now you know that will cost you a hug each time we see each other".

True to her word we hugged each time.

I was invited to the Federal Programme Action Committee Forum as a silent observer, where I gained a wealth of knowledge on the various projects conducted globally by Soroptimists, making a difference in the lives of each person touched while attaining the various Sustainable Development Goals.

Then Programme Action Director, Barbara Dixon, shared her various challenges, which helped me understand that, despite our various circumstances, we, as Soroptimists, have the power to make a difference in the lives of everyone we assist.

I met some lovely ladies, Judith Grocott and Janice Carrick and fellow Memorial Grant recipient, KumKum Bhattacharya for tea at the Pullman Hotel. Despite their many commitments, they made time to meet us in true sisterhood. It was the start of a "WOW" experience.

That evening began with each country being introduced and represented by a fellow Soroptimist Sister who accompanied the flag bearers to stage to be greeted by President Susan, who then gave an opening address. One could tell that this was a piece of herself that she shared with us.

Greetings were extended from the Prime Minister among other dignitaries, which shows how powerful and influential we are as a global organisation.

Then the Brothers of Swing, Daniel Murphy and Joseph Appleton, moved over 1100 ladies to dance to many wonderful Beatles hits, so appropriate and wonderful in their hometown, Liverpool.

This led to making every moment at conference a memorable and unforgettable one as a Conference virgin.

The next two days consisted of motivational speakers and presentation of projects by various



Clubs. Speakers included Emily Yates, Dr. Ann-Marie Wilson, Ellie Bird Lenawarungu, Sally Kettle and Sir Ranulph Fiennes, who shared a thought - "it is through much difficulty we can empower not only ourselves but also others".

Sir Ranulph Fiennes, aged 65, reached the summit of Mount Everest, proving that it's never too late to plan, act and do the thing that can change your life forever, regardless of the various naysayers, hindrances and challenges we face.

It was amazing to hear that near death did not stop him and it made me think - mere bravery was not the only motivation for Sir Fiennes but loyalty to his country, to his family and to himself. It is with the passion that he shared, I now wonder how much more I can be doing despite life challenges.

The enthusiasm of Sally Kettle was absolutely beautiful. While she failed in the contest to sail the seas, she won in life, knowing that she and her mother were the first females to have sailed the seas without proper experience and training compared to the other competitors.

What I learned from her experience is that we may be slower in a field that is male dominated, but we complete the task to the end no matter what. Bringing life to one of our local sayings "the journey is not for the swiftest but those who endure to the end".

Emily Rose Yates - even without the use of her legs - is unstoppable in achieving her goals. She is innovative and daring, one who does not let her disabilities be clouds of limitations. She has ensured that considerations are made for wheelchair users in countries beyond her own. From crossing the desert to cage-diving with sharks and legs dangling out of her cage unknown to her. She depicts the spirit of valour with which we, with all our working parts, should be thankful.

I was surprised and impressed that our sister Club SI San Fernando won an award for Overall Best Practice 2018 with #Beatplasticpollution in Trinidad and Tobago. The content of the various projects of other Clubs were deserving winners just for simply doing solid charitable work in their various communities and countries as a whole. Making them and the recipients of their efforts all winners.

I returned to my Club having formed friendship links with various Clubs, which can lead to endless possibilities. I have returned full of vigour and the desire to not only impact communities but to change the world as we know it.

By empowering today, we enable tomorrow.



KumKum Bhattacharya, SI Pune Metro East

This was a great opportunity and experience to visit Liverpool for the 84th Federation Conference of Soroptimist International of Great Britain & Ireland as one of the Memorial Grant awardees.

On arrival, I was moved by the warmth with which everyone greeted me and was amazed at the strength of the Friendship Link amongst Soroptimist sisters.

I was invited to coffee with Judith, Director of Membership and Janice, Federation Councillor for North West England & Isle of Man. This meeting was a privilege reserved only for the Memorial Grant awardees, I felt great to be one of the awardees of this prestigious Grant.

They were interested to know about my Club's - SI Pune Metro East, India - projects and we discussed these in detail. I shared as much information as possible to highlight our Club's contribution towards empowering women and girls. Our initiatives were highly appreciated.

On the same morning, I had the opportunity to attend the FPAC meeting as a silent observer. The speakers discussed various aspects of women empowerment with special emphasis on the 5 Ps - People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace & Partnership. As a Memorial Fund awardee, I felt honoured to witness this meeting, at such a high level of the Organisation.

The Conference was an experience in itself, especially for me attending a world meeting of this magnitude as a first-timer. I was awestruck and I am short of words to praise the organisational skills of the organising committee.

Well selected projects were presented from different parts of the world and it was an absolutely great learning experience for me.

The opening and closing ceremonies were thoughtfully planned and executed with a wonderful "parade of flags" from the various member countries.

It was truly a great opportunity to meet Soroptimist sisters from all over the world and make friends including Federation President Susan Biggs and Conference Chairman Tricia Coll.

My report would be incomplete, if I do not mention the excellent hospitality extended by the organising committee starting from the application stage to the culmination of the conference in Liverpool. I was all along guided by our Soroptimist sisters in making this dream of mine come true - both in India and abroad. I would like to specially mention Sally and Gina whose assistance had been immense.

The experience and opportunity to exchange information has been wonderful, it will help me with ideas in future projects. I have already shared my experience with Club Members at SI Pune Metro East, India.

Lastly, a message to all my Soroptimist sisters world over - please do attend Federation conferences to gain invaluable experiences of learning, sharing, knowing people and making new friends.



Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 70th Anniversary

Beverley Bucur
Director of Advocacy,
Soroptimist International, reports

December 2018 marked the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Soroptimist International co-sponsored an event at the UN in Vienna to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A panel was moderated by Vienna UN Representative, Martina Gredler, on the topic of 70th Anniversary Celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Universal in the 21st Century?" The panel discussed that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is one of humanities greatest achievements, but rights are not universal to all.

The panel reported that the world is now facing many serious Human Rights violations worldwide and democracies are under threat. Societies are in a "crisis of identity" because of profound changes in nearly all areas of our life: climate change, digitalisation, extremism, migration, social tensions, and economisation of everyday life and loss of perspectives in politics.

Humanity is in a tremendous phase of transformation and the Declaration of Human Rights is more important than ever.

United Nations Representatives from Vienna, Christine Peer-Valenta and Marion Precl were also present. Vienna Soroptimist, Ulrike Anton presented a musical tribute.

History

In 1945, while emerging from World War Two, delegates from around the world gathered in San Francisco to found the United Nations. Three years later, in 1948, the newly formed U.N. would provide the platform for the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Many consider the declaration to be the foundation of international human rights law. It is a milestone document that declares that fundamental human rights must be universally protected. It has inspired more than 80 international conventions and treaties, as well as numerous regional conventions and domestic laws and it has been the catalyst for improving human rights protections for groups such as disabled people, indigenous peoples and women.

What can Soroptimists Do?

Learn More: <http://www.un.org/en/events/humanrightsday/>

Soroptimists can join the campaign and take the pledge to Stand up for Human Rights. <http://www.standup4humanrights.org/en/index.html>

SI President's Appeal: Women, Water and Leadership

On 10th December of each year, Soroptimists join together to learn about and make a donation to the SI Presidents Appeal. Donations collected through Federations from December 2017 through to October 2018 amount to £138,856. Thank you, Members of Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland!

The total amount raised by SIGBI for Women Water and Leadership from December 2017 – October 2018 is £19,685 – of which £4,500 was donated by Hilary Laidler from her pin sales. Donations for 2018-2019 may be made throughout the year through SIGBI. To learn about the 5 Women, Water and Leadership Projects visit the SI Website: <https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/action/international-presidents-appeals/>

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

On 10th December 2018, The Global Compact for Migration was adopted in Marrakech, Morocco at the Intergovernmental Conference convened for that purpose. 163 UN Member States adopted the Compact and to speak in its favour. On December 19th, at the UN in New York, the General Assembly formally endorsed the adoption.

The vision and guiding principles of the Compact promote gender empowerment and equality of all women and girls. There are 23 Objectives in the Compact, three objectives relate to gender. Objective 6 deals most directly with gender in the context of decent work. Objectives 9 and 10 talk to protection of women migrants who have been smuggled, trafficked, or are vulnerable to being trafficked.

Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work. This objective deals with the enactment of laws to deal with forced and child labour, equal pay for equal work, protections for migrants and domestic workers in low paying jobs, ending exploitation, and ending abuse including sexual and gender based violence.

Objective 9: Strengthen the Transnational Response to Smuggling of Migrants. States are asked to develop gender sensitive protocols to identify and assist migrants who have been victims of trafficking along migration routes, especially focusing on women and children.

Objective 10: Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration. This objective focuses on strengthening international capacities to investigate, prosecute and penalise traffickers

and to assist victims of trafficking focusing on women and children.

New York UN Representative, Barbara Rochman, has been following the Compact in New York. Barbara points out that the Global Compact for Migration is a nonbinding agreement. Barbara also offers suggestions for Soroptimists who want to work on issues relating to the compact. Soroptimists can create awareness of the Compact in their communities, advocate within their countries to accept and follow the Compact and work on projects in their communities to assist migrants. Contact Barbara: hq@soroptimistinternational.org. To read more: <https://refugeemigrants.un.org/migration-compact>. To read statements by member states: <http://www.un.org/en/conf/migration/statements.shtml>

UN Meetings in New York 2019

11th - 22nd March 2019: Commission on the Status of Women 63, UN New York. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Priority theme 2019: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;

Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development Agreed Conclusions of the 60th session.

9th -18th July 2019: High Level Political Forum, UN New York. Member States decided that the HLPF shall carry out regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda which will include developed and developing countries as well as relevant entities and other stakeholders.

Priority Theme for 2019: Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. The set of goals to be reviewed in depth is:

- **Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

- **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

- **Goal 10:** Reduce inequality within and among countries

- **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

- **Goal 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

- **Goal 17:** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Womens Vote: Centenary Celebrations 1918-2018

Isobel Smith
Director of Organisational
Development, SIGBI, reports

SI The Wrekin organised a conference to celebrate the centenary of Suffrage and women getting the vote, attended by over 50 delegates of all ages and backgrounds from the local area.

It was held at the Museum of Iron in Coalbrookdale, on the backdrop of symbolic silhouette statues within the gardens representing the 37 women workers who were first granted the vote on the 14th December 1918 from the local area.

The conference involved talks from speakers including Dr Alexandra Hughes-Johnson discussing the history of suffrage, locally and nationally. Councillor Nicola Lowery spoke about work as a borough councillor and the journey still left to see more women in local and national politics.

Further talks included Simon McCloy from the local Telford charity Axis about the vital work it



does counselling victims of childhood sex abuse.

Detective Sergeant Mark Wilding, a specialist in modern slavery investigation spoke on the exploitation of trafficked workers, happening in our own county of Shropshire.

The final talk was given by Emeritus Professor Lalage Bown, a former Trustee of Womenkind Worldwide, advocating women's education and looking back over her 90+ years of life, driving towards female equality and lifting women all over the world out of poverty.

The conference was a huge success with positive feedback from delegates and it certainly raised the profile of SI The Wrekin within our local community and of the whole Soroptimist organisation. Member Helen Harvey was responsible for organising the event, helped by other members, and gained funding for the conference through a grant supporting

local causes which can demonstrate they have benefitted the full spectrum of local society with accessibility for all.

In addition to the conference Helen Harvey and Linda Devey reached out to other areas of the community to discuss suffrage and female equality, which included a local book group, a talking book project, visiting local schools and speaking with pupils doing workshops with classes, as well as continuing with their other existing campaigns such as the International Orange the World Day.

The Club organised a walk which met on the historic Ironbridge World Heritage Site, with SI The Wrekin Members proudly wearing their orange colours as they walked together to support the global campaign to unite to end violence against women, led by the UN Women organisation #HearMeToo.

SIGBI Clubs celebrate the Suffragette movement

Members of SI Solihull & District were very enthusiastic about ensuring that the centenary of legislation being passed leading to women being given the vote, was celebrated in their town. A great opportunity was identified when the Equalities Commission publicised that they were willing to support local organisations in doing so, by awarding grants of up to £2000 for this purpose.

The Club Members were delighted when their request for a grant was approved in May 2018. It was agreed that there were several ways in which we could raise awareness and educate our local communities about this important historic milestone whilst at the same time promoting the importance of engagement in democracy today.

At the heart of our programme of events was a display, which highlighted information about the suffrage movement and especially the involvement of local women, and members dressed as suffragettes took this out to various locations. These included the two major shopping centres in the town as well as the main library and local college. Whilst there, a survey of women was conducted to seek information on how they were able to engage with democracy today.

One of the Club's ongoing programme activities is to maintain the planters at a local railway station and permission was obtained from the local rail network to plant these in suffragette colours and to mount a display of information for commuters for one month in August on the Suffragette movement.

This attracted media interest and we were

delighted to be interviewed and have publicity about our campaign.

In June and November the Club used the opportunity to organise two local workshop events to link to national programmes. The first was an Equalitea event when our local MP, who has encouraged us to take a lead in the celebrations, joined us and the Mayor of Solihull, in a celebration tea and debate involving local voluntary organisations and council officers about democracy in action and what it means today.

During Parliament week, a second event was held involving students and youth parliament representatives as well as local councillors, council officers and again our local MP and Mayor to encourage local engagement and networking around a theme of social isolation and to show how by working together we can make a greater impact.

Each year SI Solihull organises a community event, Fun in the Park, which attracts a few thousand local residents of all ages. This year we added to the normal range of activities and included a stall highlighting the suffrage movement. We also organised a poster competition for young people about what they would do if they were elected to their school council, in order to demonstrate that by getting involved they can be empowered to influence change. This was supported by West Midland trains, which provided a prize for the winner.

Finally the Club was delighted when we were invited by the main library heritage department to build upon our display of



suffrage to include information about the changing role of women during and after the first world war as part of the memorial celebrations of the ending of the great war. This is now on public display in the main library until January 2019.

All the Members thoroughly enjoyed the celebration programme, which has involved so many of our members and has attracted interest from the public, council officers and voluntary organisations. It has provided the building blocks for greater support from the Council and local organisations as well as involvement with young people and we believe we have educated, empowered and will have enabled or enthused women and girls to become more involved in local and national democratic affairs.

Club News



SI Bangor & District: 70th Anniversary Congratulations!

In November 1947, Members of the Chester Club met the 'Ladies of Bangor' and signed and approved a petition to establish SI Bangor and District. In March 1948 the Club received its Charter at the Castle Hotel, Bangor. Members were immediately in action obtaining signatures for a petition to allow women to sit in the House of Lords.

This year, the 70th anniversary of the NHS, the Club's charity work focuses on supporting the Dementia Care Team in Ysbyty Gwynedd Hospital and raising money for the Umeed Partnership which helps victims of domestic violence and disease, and runs primary schools in Pakistan.

The 70th celebrations included a lunch in June; a fundraising Glam and Glitz Platinum party and knitting 500 poppies for Bangor Cathedral's display to mark the Centenary of the end of World War 1. The celebrations finish in March with an Anniversary Afternoon Tea for Members!



SI Barnstaple packed 30 bags of toiletries for women entering the local Refuge and then wrapped Christmas presents for the residents and women and children victims of domestic abuse receiving support in the community. In addition, 20 bags of food and warm clothing were packed for the homeless at Christmas, with all the contents having been donated by Members and friends.

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SI Canterbury focused their fun evening on raising £430 for Meru Women's Garden. Delicious food and fun dancing hit the spot. The Club Members were delighted by the Roystercatchers and a great evening was had by all!



SI Chennai worked with the SIGBI theme Think On It, holding a workshop with Sneha India Suicide Prevention centre, for the students of Madras Seva Sadan, Chetputi, started by Dr. Lakshmi, an eminent Psychiatrist. The organisation's trained volunteers offer counselling and support. Dr. Roja spoke about the causes that led to suicide and recognising the behavioural symptoms.



SI Chesterfield decorated a tree for the Christmas Tree Festival in their Church, attracting many visitors and raising the profile of Soroptimism in a festive way. The tree was decorated with figures of women in different roles and from international cultures.



SI Dewsbury held a tombola in Batley, raising funds for The Mayor of Kirklees Charities of the year - Kirkwood Hospice and the RSPCA. £550 was raised, £260 from our tombola, the rest from a raffle of a giant dog supplied by Tesco.

SI Club Dhaka held a Breast Cancer Awareness programme with pink ribbon on everyone's sleeves as a reminder of one of the health hazards that stalk women throughout the world, under the theme "Early Detection Saves Lives".



SI Dunfermline's Estelle Holligan (left) and Christine Craig (SI Edinburgh) completed the Edinburgh Maggie's Culture Crawl, raising funds for Maggie's Centres, warm and welcoming places alongside NHS hospitals to provide support for people with cancer, their family and friends.

The 10 mile walk visited venues including St Mary's Cathedral, the Scottish Poetry Library and Dynamic Earth. Christine worked at the Western General Hospital when the first Maggie's Centre was built. Estelle, a GP of 28 years in Dunfermline and has seen the difference that Maggie's makes.



SI Falkirk held a Discussion Evening in November, supporting the UN initiative, "Orange the World #Hear Me Too". President Aileen asked Members to wear orange. She welcomed President Margaret Mowat of SI Scotland South Region, and Members of SI West Lothian to the meeting.

SI Glasgow City raised £2,000 by hosting a Matinee Cabaret in Glasgow's historic Merchants' House. President Myrtle welcomed 100 guests saying that the monies raised were for Mary's Meals, which continues to provide a daily meal, in schools, to 1.3 million children in 17 of the world's poorest countries.

SI Grange-over-Sands asked the community for bedding for the Barrow Women's Centre and received, sorted and repacked items. Ten car loads of bedding were delivered to the Women's Centre and distributed by Christmas ensuring a cosier time for women and their children.



SI Kidderminster Members enjoyed a visit to the Worcester Porcelain Museum after a personal invitation by Henry Sandon – an antiques expert known from the TV series 'Antiques Roadshow' and the world authority on Worcester Porcelain.



SI King's Lynn held its annual Literary Lunch in November, attended by 60 people and raising £850 for the Club's chosen charity for 2018-19, Home-Start Norfolk.

Critically acclaimed author Chris Collett, the creator of the DI Tom Mariner series, was the speaker, telling the audience about her journey to becoming an author – working with children with autism spectrum disorder, which led to a series of detective novels.



SI Lancaster Members Deirdre Jacks and Janie Kirkman were joined in the town by the Mayor of Lancaster, Councillor Andrew Kay on 24th November, White Ribbon Day, to distribute white ribbon stickers to shoppers. The Mayor was knowledgeable about the problems of domestic abuse and as a Social Worker was able to speak to members of the public with conviction.



SI Leamington and Warwick reported on 2018's highlights including 500 knitted poppies for the display of 62,000 decorating St. Mary's Church, Warwick, to commemorate the centenary of the end of the First World War.

At their International Night they lit an arc of candles to remember Soroptimists worldwide and after dinner Members spoke of what the Club had meant to them.



SI Medway Towns started a new project – S.O.S. Soroptimists on Sustainability – with a talk from local Environmental Services on the intricacies of recycling. Members, like the general public, were confused about plastic recycling and the implications of putting unrecyclable or dirty items into the white bags. It's a complicated business!



SI Plymouth had a busy Autumn selling non-alcoholic mulled wine at a Dickensian evening, packing goody bags for residents in sheltered housing and Christmas boxes for orphans in Moldova and Ukraine. Members enjoyed being involved in these festive activities, seeing fundraising efforts translated into Christmas gifts for young and old.



SI Sheffield hosted the 'Big Pink' party, an evening of fun, food, friendship and a wee bit of fundraising too. Special guests, Amy from Breast Cancer Care and Julia from Tesco, encouraged everyone to take a chance on the competitions, whilst the pink tombola was very popular, and the auction created a great buzz of excitement as the bids rose. £725 was raised for Breast Cancer Care.



SI St. Albans gave commuters a bit of Christmas cheer carol singing at St Albans City Station - collecting £380 for the St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge and the Welwyn Hatfield Women's Refuge. They were joined again this year by a very festive Jules the dog who encouraged donations by making sure he got lots of strokes as people went by!

SI Solent attended a Christmas Advent Fair, put on by a local church group, with a stall of fun items alongside information about WaterAid, the Club's charity.

The Club was selling Christmas-designed toilet rolls and fun books on toilets around the world. There were three stalls run by women who have their own businesses and Members talked to them and gave information about Soroptimist International – and we have potential speakers to talk to us about how they started up and what support they had to get off the ground in business.



SI Tunbridge Wells sponsored Emma Acton, a Leader of 2nd Southborough Brownies, to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in aid of the Meningitis Research Foundation. Emma raised £3394.49.

As part of her fundraising she created the Kilimanjaro Challenge badge and an activity pack for Brownies, Guides and Rangers to follow to understand more about Trekking, African Culture and Meningitis and Septicaemia.

Emma is currently at University and has just returned to finish her degree. She sent the Club a report, along with photographs, including one of our postcards she had taken with her.

"I would like to say a huge thank you for the donation I received from the Soroptimists for purchasing kit ahead of my climb up Mount Kilimanjaro. I raised a grand total of £3,394.49 for Meningitis Research - well above the target! Climbing the mountain itself was tough but an experience that I will never forget and made all the more worthwhile knowing that I was helping a fantastic cause."

SI Tunbridge Wells Members are very proud of Emma and pleased that they have helped her reach the top and wish her all the best concluding her degree. They also thanked her for promoting the Club as one of her sponsors as this has been picked up by other groups on Social Media and expanded our reach!

SI Warrington and Soroptimist International were showcased on local radio in November 2018. President Elect Jackie Alexander and Programme Action Officer Rhona Bowler were interviewed on the weekly "Culture Show", a programme whose mission is to publicise local groups and charities in the area. Jackie and Rhona talked about Soroptimism in general as well as past and current club projects and highlighted the breadth of activities which the Soroptimist organisation gets involved in, and its international dimension. One of the main aims of the show was to reach out to women in the Warrington area who would like to make a difference to the lives of women and girls, in both the local community and further afield. It is hoped this will kick-start a new initiative to increase Club membership!



SI Weston-super-Mare recently celebrated the packing of our 600th backpack for Mary's Meals. A significant achievement for a relatively small Club!



SI Winchester recently heard from a speaker, Judith Charmer, fundraiser for the proposed Winchester Hospice, supported by the Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. They plan to convert Burrell House at the Royal County Hospital, formerly home to nurses and a medical training facility during the Second World War, into a 10 bed hospice supporting patients and their families, home care, day services and a Community Palliative Team.

In partnership with Winchester Rotary, a Masquerade Ball took place on 14th December at the Guildhall. Thanks to meeting Judith at an earlier event and having got to know her, she asked if Members would be able to help at the ball. Help was needed to set up in the afternoon and to (wo)man the cloakroom.

Members provided a team of four to help with the setting up of the raffle table, decorations in the hall and on the tables. In the evening a team of three helped with the cloakroom.

The event raised over £20,000 towards the hospice. SI Winchester will continue to support the fundraising for the hospice which is due to open in Spring 2019.



SI Enniskillen

We are delighted to announce that Patricia Donald has been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List. Patricia is now a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) She received her award, for services to older people in Northern Ireland. Very well deserved. Congratulations!



SI West Lothian held its annual Christmas evening at the Hillcroft Hotel on 12th December. They enjoyed a lovely turkey dinner and played some interesting games. They also had a surprise visit from Santa Claus and his helper who gave out presents to all the members.

The group also made up Christmas gift bags for two local charities (Open Door and Bedrock). The charities provide accommodation for homeless young adults.



SI Wakefield Members held an Information Day at The Ridings Centre in Wakefield. They displayed examples of what Soroptimists do and celebrated the 100th Anniversary of Women getting the Vote!



Members Rewards Portal

Over the last six months the main objective of the SIGBI Trading Board has been to identify and set up a number of different revenue generating projects to support our SIGBI growth plans and to start to diversify our income streams to move away from relying solely on membership fees to fund our work.

Easyfundraising was introduced to Clubs at our Annual Conference in Liverpool and over 50 Clubs are now participating in the scheme, earning commission for their Clubs and for SIGBI as a whole.

If your Club is yet to sign up then please consider this as a New Year project - www.sigbi.org/members/clubs/easyfundraising/ will give you all the help and advice you need to register your Club and getting started. Just before Christmas we also

announced the launch of our Rewards Portal, a Members only scheme set up to provide savings and exclusive offers on goods and services for SIGBI members.

We have been working with an agency, Thoughtmix, to sign up a large number of retailers offering a wide variety of products and services e.g. fashion, healthcare offerings, environmentally conscious household products, travel offers, jewellery, unique products from small British manufacturers and many well-known high street brands and services.

The exclusive Member offers will change regularly and will often be time limited available for 1-2 weeks only.

A regular selection of offers can now be accessed via the members' Rewards Portal and will be refreshed regularly approximately every 2 – 3 weeks.

You will also start to see advertising

from companies interested in reaching out to our membership.

Access will be via the SIGBI member login page:

<https://sigbi.org/members/>

Once logged into the member area click on the Rewards Portal button which is situated below the blue menu bar on the righthand side of the page.

The rewards portal is now live and the first exciting offers are available.

Please make this site a regular destination!

By visiting the portal frequently and by participating in the scheme you will not only be benefiting from the offers and services, but your activity will also generate commission and advertising revenue for SIGBI.

More news soon!!!

Showcasing Soroptimism

our new initiative for 2019!

Judith Grocott, Director of Membership reports

Over the past three years we have all worked hard in Membership Month and on the Growth Plan to encourage increased membership and to update our Clubs. Updated and refreshed it is now time to look forward to something a little different.

Showcasing Soroptimism will be a mainly outward facing Social Media initiative aimed at advertising the excellent work that we do. SIGBI will take the lead by tweeting and posting some of the best examples of Club and Region work.

The SIGBI Twitter and Facebook accounts are followed by just under six and a half thousand organisations and individuals. This compares well with other organisations we work with, for example, Toilet Twinning is followed by 4,243 and Karma Nirvana by 6,192, but working with these can also increase the reach of our message. We are also planning to get the Assistant Programme Directors and the UN Representatives involved in these posts, by asking them for interesting posts in each of their fields.

Most importantly we aim to advertise a balance of both service and fundraising projects

Get involved

Each Club, I am sure, will have done something over the last few months that it is proud of. So, I would like you to write a tweet for Twitter or a post for Facebook and send it, preferably with a good picture, to sally@sigbi.org by 8th April 2019 and we will organise them for rolling out during May.

Or you could send us a picture and a brief note about what you have been doing and we will compose the tweet or post for you.

Once we have posted an item, it will then be down to individual Clubs and Regions to repost to their followers, thereby spreading and advertising our work. Engage with any feedback you receive from followers and try to do this within 24 hours.

Not on Facebook or Twitter? Never written a post or a tweet before? Never fear, in the Communications section of the website - <https://sigbi.org/members/communications-2/> - you will find helpful information and advice on both how to set up Facebook and Twitter for you and your Club, plus useful advice on how to use these mediums.

Over the next few weeks we will also be



producing new Social Media Headers and post templates which will cover what should be included in the ideal post to encourage optimum reach. Information and links to these will be circulated via the Mailings.

Other Social Media Channels

There are many other Social Media channels, LinkedIn, Instagram or Tumblr but Facebook and Twitter are the ones we will concentrate on for this campaign as these are the ones most Soroptimists are used to.

June onwards

Once May is over we intend to continue with this type of publicity and hopefully this campaign will get us in to the habit of showcasing our wonderful work all year round, as well as encouraging potential new members to make contact.



Soroptimist International of Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead, Thames Valley High Wycombe & District Clubs

International Women's Day Sunday 17th March 2019

2 pm to 5.30 pm
Desborough Suite
Maidenhead Town Hall,
St Ives Road, Maidenhead,
SL6 1RF

Theme: "Opportunities for Women and Girls"

Speakers include:

- Gerry Lejeune OBE, CEO,
Berkshire Community Foundation
- Hannah Little, Fundraising Officer,
Womankind Worldwide –
A global women's rights organisation
working to improve lives of women
- Alaa Fawaz, Chairman, and
Raakhi Sharma,
Representative – Slough Youth Parliament
- Christina Berenger,
Detective Chief Inspector,
Thames Valley Police
on crime issues affecting women
in the Thames Valley

Adults £5, Students £2
(includes light refreshments)
To book your place, email:
maidenheadiwd2019@gmail.com
or call 01753 840666
or text 07427298200
Soroptimist International
of Great Britain and Ireland
www.sigbi.org or
www.soroptimistinternational.org

**Inspiring Women,
Transforming Lives
See you there!**



Your Soroptimist group needs you!

Help to support your Soroptimist Club with its fundraising efforts by registering as a supporter with easyfundraising! It's easy, every time you use the site to shop online – you'll help to raise FREE funds for your group.

The more members that sign-up to shop in support, the more YOUR Club will raise in FREE funds. With the help of 18 active Club members shopping in support, SI Grange-over-Sands have already raised over £600 in free donations with easyfundraising!

Every little helps and so does every supporter!

How does easyfundraising work?

Easyfundraising turns your everyday online shopping into free donations. As a supporter, simply shop online with over 3,500 big-brand retailers such as Amazon, eBay, John Lewis, M&S & Trainline, for everything from hairdryers to holidays & help your Club raise FREE funds! It won't cost you anything extra to use easyfundraising, it's a free fundraising stream for life!

I want to sign-up as a supporter – what do I do next?

1. Go to <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/> & search for your Soroptimist Club
2. Next, click the pink 'support this cause' button to register as a supporter
3. You'll be asked to fill-in a few personal details, don't worry it's quick!
4. Once you've registered - you can start raising FREE funds for your group every time you shop online with easyfundraising!

My Club isn't registered with easyfundraising

If your Club hasn't heard about the amazing way to raise for FREE with easyfundraising – this is a great chance for YOU to tell them all about it. It's so simple to register your group & it's completely free. Just go to the SIGBI cause page to get started:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/sigbi>



Correction

In the December issue of Soroptimist News, we made an error on page 15, in the Friendship Links: Partnering projects feature. The photograph titled "SI Pune Metro East and SI Bangalore" should have been titled: "Members of SI Newcastle & District and SI Freetown"

ENGLAND MEETS SIERRA LEONE!

The members of SI Newcastle & District extended their hands of friendship to SI Freetown, Sierra Leone by organising a Chinese banquet and raised funds to the tune of £700 for education and mentoring programmes of women and girls in Sierra Leone.

At the Conference in Liverpool, Members of both Clubs were excited to meet their friends at the Friendship Link Stand and the cheque was presented to SI Freetown. SI Newcastle & District now looks forward to their new partnership and working with them in the future.

Obituaries

Kathleen Patricia Kernick, SI Cardiff & District, died on 13th June 2018, aged 97. Pat was a longstanding and active member of SI Cardiff & District. She was recently presented with her 60 year long service certificate, having been President of the Club and President of the South Wales Region; she also was on the board of SIGBI and attended many annual conferences, both in the UK and abroad.

Barbara Hope Millward, SI Buxton, died on 19th December 2018 after a long illness. Barbara was a Member for 30 years, retiring only when her health failed. She attended Regional and SIGBI Conferences and was a stalwart supporter.

Margaret Kennedy, SI Central Birmingham and formerly SI North Birmingham, died on 20th March 2018, aged 87. Margaret became a Soroptimist in 1961 as a member of SI North Birmingham. She was very actively involved in all aspects of the Club and was Club President 2009-2010. Margaret became the first President of SI Midland Arden Region and a short time later became the Midland Arden representative on the Federation Executive Council.

Bernadette Ndalaku Orefo, SI Central & South West London died on the 12th September 2018, after a period of ill health, aged 81. Bernadette was the Charter President for SI Onitsha club in Nigeria. When she moved to London in 2004 she joined SI Central and SW London, where she was an active member. She will be remembered for her kindness, her friendship and her support for the Club.

Oyindamola Anjorin, SI Ikeja, died on 17th March 2018, aged 74. She was a proud, active and committed member for over 25 years, Club President in 2003-2005 and served on most Club committees.

Joan Gregory, SI Leicester, died on 5th November 2018. She joined Soroptimist International in 1961 in the south of England. She transferred to SI Loughborough in 1977, becoming Club President in 1979-80 and 1983-84 and Joint President in 1997-98. Joan transferred to SI Leicester in 2005 and was Club President in 2009-10. She also served as President, East Midland Divisional Union, in 1984-85.

Iris Shaw, SI Windermere and District sadly died in November 2018 at the age of 85. She was an active member for 22 years until shortly before her death. Iris was a past President of the Club and could always be relied upon to cheerfully volunteer for various roles at our Club's fundraising events. Iris was an enthusiastic Soroptimist and a successful business woman.

Maggie Mansell, a Member of SI Croydon and District from 2012-2016, died on 6th January 2019.

Anne Davis MBE, SI Great Yarmouth died on 24th August aged 86. Anne joined the Club shortly after it was founded in 1977. A committed Soroptimist Anne was three times Club President and was Club Secretary, Divisional Union President, London Anglia Region Benevolent Officer and a valued member of the 1993-94 Federation Conference Committee.

Arlene Fisher, SI Winchester, died on her 79th birthday, 12th December, after 3 years of poor health. Arlene joined in 1971 as a Podiatrist. She was Club President 1993-5 and 1995-6. Southern England Regional President 1999-

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2000. Chair of Club PAC 2000-5. Club Secretary 2006-8. Passionate about Programme Action, - a reliable, dedicated, active member, famous for her sociability and culinary skills.

Judith Ironside, SI Ennis, a woman whose volunteerism permeated through local and national organisations, died peacefully at her home in County Clare, Ireland, on 31st January. Judith was National Association President (1989-1990) and a long-serving and active Member of Ennis & District Soroptimists (Club President 1979-1980 and 1999-2000). She threw herself head-long into any project she became involved in. As a founding member of the "Caring for Carers" project, Through this work SI Ennis was awarded 'The Laureate of Women of Europe Award' by the Irish Council for the European Movement in recognition of the voluntary efforts at Irish and European level. Judith travelled to Brussels to collect the award for the Ennis Club. The basis of the support for the causes Judith supported was the incredible gift of friendship we all enjoyed with her. She inspired and bound us and was one of our most valuable members.

Joyce Ogden, SI Burnley, died on 3rd January 2019 aged 81. Joyce had been an active Member since 1988.

Muriel Pritchard, MBE, SI Bangor and District, died, after a short illness, on 12th November 2018, aged 99. Muriel was a committed and passionate Soroptimist. She was Club President from 1976-78, Club Secretary for many years and when she was no longer able to attend meetings, she continued to follow and support Soroptimist activities closely. She was awarded the MBE in 2001 in recognition of her tireless 'services to the community in Bangor' and was very proud to be awarded Honorary Membership of SI Bangor and District in 1994. The Club tribute to Muriel on her 90th birthday was titled 'A Soroptimist Timepiece' and ended with these words, 'Some people are like a good watch, open faced, pure gold, quietly busy and full of good works'. Muriel will be greatly missed.

Veronica Frances Anderson MBE SI Runcorn, Frodsham and District, died on 3rd December 2018. Veronica was a Soroptimist for over 14 years and during that time served the Club as Treasurer, Programme Action Officer and President. She also served as Regional Treasurer of Cheshire North Wales and Wirral for six years. She will be remembered as a generous, hardworking and dedicated Member.

Val Brandt, SI Reigate, died aged 68, on 1st January 2019 of ovarian cancer following a remarkable and courageous two year battle with the illness. She was a passionate advocate for Soroptimism and was very active in PAC and fundraising. Having joined the Club in March 2007, Val became Regional Representative 2008-10 and then President for two terms of office 2016/17 and 2017/18. Her drive and enthusiasm ensured the success of the many projects she led and helped the Club survive in difficult times.

Joan Holden SI Windermere, sadly died on 15th January, 2019 aged 87. Joan was a member from 1990 until moving into a nursing home due to poor health. Joan was a Trefoil Guild Guide, a former President of the Club and a committed Soroptimist.

Nesta Elizabeth Williams, SI Tenby, died on the 1st Nov 2018. She had been an active and dedicated Soroptimist for 50 years and one of SI Tenby's longest serving members. She served in many roles, including President and Treasurer and attended many conferences.



Gloria Proops, SI Bournemouth, died on 22nd December 2018 at Bournemouth General Hospital. Gloria was coy about her age, but had enjoyed at least 80 years.

An active Member of SI Bournemouth since 2013, Gloria joined SIGBI in 1977. Previously she was a Member of SI SW London which merged with SI Central London in 1991 to become SI Central and SW London. It was during this period she held office.

Gloria embraced her new Club with enthusiasm and participated in Programme Action and social activities. She generously shared her vast experience of Soroptimism and life with fun and friendship and was a valued Club Member who will be greatly missed.

Past International and SIGBI President, Ann Garvie writes: "I vividly recall an encounter with Gloria at Number 63 in the mid 1990s at a Federation Management Board Meeting, when, as Councillors, we were packed in like sardines. Gloria lived close to No. 63 but as usual, she 'flew in' late to the meeting, bringing the proceedings to a halt whilst she announced "It is obvious what this organisation must introduce – colour coding (*for reports*) instead of this bundle of white stuff!"

The Federation did introduce colour coding which, pre the electronic era, worked very well.

Not long after, in 1997, Gloria became the Manager of No 63 until 2008. She never did anything by halves, rather, she did it with drama and enthusiasm. During her tenure as Manager she was in her element when the second and third floors were upgraded, transformed into single and twin bedrooms en-suite. Gone were the days of a communal bathroom.

There were many funny moments at No. 63 when as Federation President occupying room 102, I went on to the roof to be photographed next to the flag pole. The outdoor closed with me left on the roof three quarters of an hour before my train left from Euston!! I shall never forget Gloria's rescue, she was absolutely livid with me.

The photo did get No 63 good publicity as did the House of Lords Lunches, which she lovingly organised. In May 2018, attending a lunch hosted by Baroness Blood, much of the organising was undertaken by her daughter-in-law and Manager of No. 63, Debbie.

Gloria was a complex lady and a force to be reckoned with. In 1995 she set up the Agunot Campaign with Sandra Blackman, another Jewish wife who had been unable to obtain a Jewish divorce from her husband – known as a 'get'. They campaigned with other Jewish women for a change in UK law to help their case, taking action including chaining themselves to the railings, saying, "Jewish women denied a religious divorce cannot remarry in a synagogue and any descendants from a second marriage are considered illegitimate for ten generations."

At her funeral, her son Rick recalled her success in achieving a change in the law. Yes, indeed, Gloria was an outstanding Soroptimist.

SIGBI Shopping

Soroptimist booklet

3 booklets per pack
@ 0.60 a pack plus P&P.



What sort of woman is a Soroptimist?

Pack of 50 @ £6.00 per pack plus P&P.



NEW!!!

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SIGBI Dynamic 'S' Badge

size 36mm x
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Past President's Badge

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NEW!!! Thermal mug

Made of BPA-free plastic and holding 30cl, this reusable coffee mug keeps your coffee warm for longer and the mug (not the lid) is dishwasher safe. Many coffee outlets now offer a discount for using your own mug!
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TO ORDER

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

SIGBI Ltd sends all orders by the most economical postage, cost is dependent on the weight and size of the goods. An invoice plus post and packing will be sent with your order. Contact: Joanne Voller, Sales Officer, Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Ltd., 2nd Floor, Beckwith House, Wellington Road

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2000 Club

Members from these Clubs were the winners:

DECEMBER 2018

SI Oxford	£1000
SI Burnley	£500
SI Bath	£500
SI Colchester	£250
SI Cardiff	£250

JANUARY 2019

SI Jersey	£100
SI Ramsbottom	£100
SI Brixham	£50
SI Derby	£50
SI Northwich	£25
SI Bridgend	£25

About the 2000 Club

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

In the mail

16.11.2018 – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Easyfundraising.org.uk – Register Your Club Now
2. Region/NA Project Ambassadors
3. Region/NA Membership Officer Questionnaire
4. Call for nominations for SI President 2021-2023
5. Memorial Fund Applications 2019
6. New Club Charters 2018
7. SIGBI Safeguarding Policy – November 2018
8. October 2018 Photo of the Month
9. UKPAC Accounts 2017-2018
10. SIGBI Project Liaison and Ambassadors 2019-22
11. Presentations from FPAC Meeting

7.12. 2018: Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Letter to Clubs re Charitable Status
2. Easyfundraising.org.uk – Register Your Club Now
3. Region/NA Membership Officer Questionnaire
4. Friendship Link Joint Projects
5. Sourcing Photographs for use on your Website/Social Media
6. Number 63 AGM/SGMs January 2019
7. Club Activity during 16 Days of Activism
8. Federation Vacancies & GM Resolutions 2019
9. SI Board Director 2019-2020
10. General Meeting and FPAC Minutes 2018
11. Member Rewards Portal
12. SIGBI Development Day 2019
13. Membership Matters Dec 2018
14. Hotel for Bournemouth Conference 2019
15. Capitation Fees 2019
16. Soroptimist News December 2018
17. UKPAC Minutes 6 July 2018
18. SIGBI Office Christmas Lunch

21st 12. 2018 – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Easyfundraising.org.uk – Register Your Club
2. Soroptimist International's 100 year anniversary 2021
3. SIGBI Patron Working Party
4. Club Photo of the Month – November 2018
5. New SIGBI Trading Ltd Order Form
6. SIGBI Growth Plan – Phase 3
7. SI Board Director 2020-2021
8. New Herb Products available to support Meru
9. New SI Treasurer 2020-2021
10. Number 63 launch Platinum Appeal

4th 12. 2019 – Clubs/Regions/NA/Networks

1. Easyfundraising.org.uk – Register Your Club
2. Friendship Link Register 2019
3. Happy New Year to all our Members
4. Gift Aid on Membership Fees (UK Members only)
5. Friendship Link Newsletter January 2019
6. Club Photo of the Month – December 2018
7. No Programme Action Magazine in January 2019
8. Number 63: AGM/SGMs



Meru Women's Garden

Double your impact in Meru between February and April 2019!



Amanjit Dhillon at Child.org and Patricia Gatherum, Federation Project Liaison, report

Child.org is excited to share news about Meru! If Soroptimists fundraise for the Meru Women's Garden Project during the Team Mum appeal (1st February - 30th April), all donations will be matched by the UK government, giving your donations double the impact!

All the money you raise will go to the Meru Women's Garden Project (as normal). However much you raise, the UK Government will match and give the same amount to Child.org to spend on new pregnancy support groups in Meru.

A successful application to UK Aid Match, supported by SIGBI, Child.org secured funding to launch Pregnancy Support Groups in Meru. These groups will run separately from the SIGBI funded Meru Women's Garden Project training, but in the same area - complementing the work of SIGBI's Mother's Nutritional Training programme.

The Pregnancy Support Groups will focus on encouraging mothers to attend antenatal and postnatal care sessions, provide them with a safe environment to meet and discuss issues they face and to understand important health issues and prepare them for motherhood.

Child.org's UK Aid Match appeal, Team Mum, aims to raise £150,000 for the pregnancy support groups. Child.org has partnered with over 120 brands, businesses, organisations and bloggers who will spread the word about the campaign.

SIGBI will be one of these communications partners, on the condition that the money raised by Members is donated to the Meru Women's Garden Project – a move approved by the Department for International Development.

This is a fantastic opportunity for SIGBI Members to support multiple projects in Meru. We're so close to reaching the MWGP target and it would be great to have one last fundraising boost - especially because it's doubled.

So, how do you get involved?

All you have to do is fundraise for Meru Women's Garden Project (mentioning Team Mum matching to your donors) between 1st February and 30th April. All the resources are at meruwomen.org under the 'Team Mum' tab. Read here about how the campaign will work, and how to communicate clearly to your donors

how both their own donation and the matched money will be spent.

To show the importance of supporting initiatives around maternal health we're sharing Winfred's story. Winfred is attending the SIGBI funded Mother's Nutritional Training, highlighting the importance and need for Pregnancy Support Groups within her community.

Winfred has two children with different fathers. When Winfred fell pregnant for the first time she was at school. She wanted to continue with her studies, but her parents refused and told her she needed to earn money. Winfred says she was afraid to tell her parents about her pregnancy and when she did, "They changed, and there was no more love again."

Now, Winfred lives with her grandmother and is training to be a hairdresser, and told us she uses family planning too. She struggles with the stigma she faces as a young mum in her community. She says "I am unhappy when I meet a group of people laughing, I think they are laughing at me." Feeling rejected from their local community can make young mums isolated and vulnerable, because they have no one to ask for help and support.

Happily, Winfred has recently begun the Mother's Nutritional Training, funded by SIGBI, run by Child.org, where she has met other young mums. Learning with other local mums has given Winfred a new perspective. She said "I feel free, like I'm my own person. I am happy. I feel like I'm going somewhere with my life, I feel like I can be something in life."

By providing support networks to new mums in Winfred's community, Team Mum's pregnancy support groups will offer additional peer support to mums who feel judged and isolated.

We thank SIGBI for enabling us to create the Meru Women's Garden Project. If it was not for this project and the way Child.org has been able to expand our local partner's capabilities and capacity, we may not have been able to apply for UK government funding and secure more positive impact for Meru. SIGBI's support goes beyond that of just fundraising. Your support has helped to build Child.org's reputation and visibility, enabling us to reach and support even

more women in Meru.

To find out more about Team Mum and how to get involved, contact Amanjit on amanjit@child.org or visit meruwomen.org.

The next annual report for the Meru Women's Garden Project will be sent out and added to the Meru website in March.

All the women featured here are enrolled in the Meru Women's Garden Project mothers' nutritional training. These photos have been approved by the Department of International Development to support the Team Mum campaign.

Patricia Gatherum writes: 2019 is the final year of the Meru Women's Garden Project. We have already raised £132,936.71 towards our target of £152,761.

To those who have held innovative fundraisers, I say a big thank you. To those who are still planning events, I wish you every success.

The women and girls of Meru County are very grateful for the training and support they have received, your hard work is really appreciated.

If you need more information about the project and the financial statements to date, visit meruwomen.org via the homepage, click "view our most recent project update". Amanjit is also very willing to help via her email at amanjit@child.org.

I hope you have all seen the latest update magazine which Amanjit prepared for the Liverpool Conference in October 2018. If not ask your ambassador or me and we'll send you one.

One headline in it states "Your fundraising has allowed child.org and CIFORD to develop an outstanding and comprehensive nutritional programme to radically improve the health of mums, babies and children in Meru". We must keep up the momentum over the next nine months to achieve our target.

Thank you all again for your efforts so far and good luck to those planning events. I am happy to help and support you in any way I can.

