

## Reducing Food Waste



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My name is Veronica Storey and I am one of the Programme Action Officers at SI Epsom and District. Our programme action was about reducing food waste.



## **SIGBI Day of Action – Climate Change**

- ❖ As part of SIGBI Day of Action on Climate Change in July 2021, we listened to a [BBC Sounds Podcast](#) about food
- ❖ This included where our food comes from and how we can reduce food waste
- ❖ This was followed by Club members going into breakout rooms on Zoom to discuss these themes




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SIGBI Action Day on climate change in 2021 was an opportunity to discuss the food we eat. One of our Soroptimists found a short BBC Sounds Podcast which the Club could listen to and have a discussion. In breakout rooms we discussed where we bought our food, from places such as local green grocers, butchers, supermarkets and farmers markets or if we received deliveries of food. We asked members if they knew which countries the food came from. Buying food grown or manufactured in this country and seasonal produce were also discussed, alongside how we can reduce food waste through eating less, reducing the amount of meat we eat, batch cooking, freezing and so on.

## Discussing Ben Johnson Day

- ❖ In one of the breakout rooms, Ben Johnson Day was mentioned by one member, Norma



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One of our members, Norma, was from Jamaica and she described a special tradition held at home known as Ben Johnson Day.



In the breakout room discussion, Norma talked about her upbringing. She came from a family of 10 children and her mother had to cook with whatever she could find in the cupboard.

## Research into Ben Johnson Day

- ❖ As a result of the discussion, one of our Soroptimists decided to research Ben Johnson Day
- ❖ Ben Johnson was an overseer for a plantation in Jamaica
- ❖ Ben Johnson paid them on Thursday nights and they went to market on Saturdays to buy food
- ❖ By Thursday, families had very little food and cooked with whatever food they had left



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As Norma was unaware of the tradition, one of our Soroptimists decided to do some research into Ben Johnson Day. She found some information on one or two sites. Ben Johnson was an overseer of workers on a plantation. Workers would be paid on Thursday evening. On Saturdays, the workers' families would go to market to buy the food. By Thursday night there would be very little food left so they would cook with whatever they had available.

## **Ben Johnson Day at Norma's house**

- ❖ This took place in October 2021 as an opportunity to celebrate Black History Month
- ❖ Everyone brought along one ingredient for a dish
- ❖ Discussion took place as to what we could cook
- ❖ A three course meal was planned and the cooking was shared



We decided to hold our own Ben Johnson Day which Norma offered to host. This was also Black History Month so we were highlighting and celebrating a historical tradition. We invited members and prospective members and each had to bring along an ingredient. Norma had some of her own staple ingredients we could use. A three-course meal was planned and the cooking was shared amongst some of the members.



In this slide, Norma and other Soroptimists are cooking.



## **Menu**

### **Starter**

Tasty lentil and vegetable soup

### **Main Course**

Spicy fried chicken with wild rice mixed with vegetables, accompanied by caper sauce with a very generous helping of white wine!

### **Dessert**

Homemade apple crumble with creamy custard



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Here is a menu of the food we prepared.



## The results!

- ❖ All enjoyed the meal
- ❖ There was plenty of food and none was wasted!
- ❖ £200 was raised for Epsom Refugee Network



On the day, we raised £200 for one of the local charities we support- Epsom Refugee Network

## What was learned and how did we benefit ?

- ❖ We learned through discussion more about where our food comes from and how to reduce food waste
- ❖ We learned about the tradition of Ben Johnson Day
- ❖ We celebrated Black History Month through holding our own Ben Johnson Day
- ❖ We socialised and strengthened bonds outside of Club meetings



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Through discussion we learned about our food, where we buy it from, where it originated from and how we can reduce food waste. We learned about the tradition of Ben Johnson Day which was in keeping with reducing food waste. This evolved in us taking action and celebrating our own Ben Johnson Day as part of Black History Month. We benefitted as a group in coming together and socialising outside of our Club meetings.



## Information about SI Epsom and District

<https://sigbi.org/epsom-and-district/>

<https://www.facebook.com/EpsomSorops>

<https://twitter.com/EpsomSorops>

[https://www.instagram.com/epsom\\_sorops/](https://www.instagram.com/epsom_sorops/)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/soroptimist-international-epsom-and-district/>



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If you would like to find out more about the Club and its work, you can visit our website and social media pages.