



President Pat's Patter



I am thrilled to be President at the launch of our new seasonal 'Signal'. Our theme this year is to concentrate on our beautiful town, Cirencester, and its Roman origins. To *'Enable, Educate and Empower women, and children'*, and to follow our mission, at the same time raising the profile of Soroptimist International.

We have had a very busy year so far; a Friendship weekend was highlighted with a visit to the Roman Villa at Chedworth, where we were greeted by some of the Ermin Street Guard, a re-enactment Roman Society, who travel worldwide. A Toga party was held in the evening at the Corinium Museum. Our 68th Charter lunch, attended by Regional President Diane Steele, included friends, relatives and Soroptimist sisters from our Friendship links in Latvia, Bury in Lancashire. Soroptimists from Plymouth, Bath, Bristol, Cheltenham, and Swindon also supported the day. Mark Harris, Mayor of Cirencester, was a wonderful supporter as usual.

Elsewhere in 'Signal' you will read more about Cirencester Soroptimists being involved in the Gloucestershire Nature Quiz, the Literacy Competition, which is up and running with a new team, development of the Club's Project, our support of local and national

projects and the Federation's three year *Meru Garden Project*. As well as supporting SI/Europe OGRE-Kegums's first ever Friendship weekend, there are planned visits to the Soroptimist Clubs in Itzehoe, Germany and SI Bury in Lancashire. We are also very pleased to have started attending meetings of the Cirencester Chamber of Commerce where we have been made very welcome.

We had a pitch at the Patron's lunch at the Royal Agricultural University on 12th June, where we celebrated the Queen's 90th birthday, sold tea and cakes and networked. It was such fun, with torrential rain in the morning, but sun in the afternoon! That was an awareness raising event as well as fun.

I have not ceased to be amazed at the strong sense of "Team" that we have in the Club. This has been made so obvious to me whilst organising events for the year. I just mention something and the whole club "Run" with it in such a joyful and efficient way. A big "Thank you" to the 'Team' for all that you do in the name of Soroptimism.

WATCH THIS SPACE!!
Yours in Friendship

Pat



Projects

The words *'Programme Action'* have been and still are being used across Soroptimist International but as a Club we now refer to this core focus of 'what we are about' as *'Projects'*. We are keen that everyone feels able to contribute, have their say on present projects, or suggest new projects for members to consider.

This month our Project Co-ordinator and leads have reported on:

Literacy Awards

Research Project

Nature Quiz

Purple Tear Drop Campaign

GRASAC

See the next page for more details.

Research Project

Local people; local action

At the beginning of our year our Project Co-ordinator put to the club that she would be interested in leading a project to identify where the need was greatest for women and young girls in the Cirencester District. This research would then help inform future plans for how the Club can facilitate support and/or take action.

Initial research has been done, mapping national statistics against local reports and reading research commissioned by the council to identify problem areas.

Did you know?

- 15,000 children in Gloucestershire are living in poverty?
- We have a higher than average problem with self-harm and suicide in young girls?
- There is an ageing population bringing issues such as isolation and loneliness?
- The most vulnerable areas within our geographical locations are Fairford and the west of Cirencester?

In talking to community leaders, it has also been discovered that often services exist to deal with crises but not the prevention. For example, female role models can empower young girls to make positive choices on their use of social media content to avoid exploitation, abuse, and potential self-harm.

The project now needs help to move on to the next stage in the following ways:

- 1) We need to use our connections to confirm what services exist to support the needs above.
- 2) Use our presence at the Phoenix Festival (August 27/28) to conduct a survey to gauge awareness of the services.
- 3) Once (1) and (2) have been completed to identify where the gaps are to help the Club, and others, understand where best to put their energy.

SIGBI (Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland) have confirmed that this type of project has not been done before, and would be interested in progress. Our Mayor would also like to collaborate on this. If you would be willing to talk to your colleagues and/or be part of a Working Group, please get in touch with our Project Co-ordinator:

Nikki Pawsey (Email: nicolatequila@aol.com)



Literacy Awards

The Literacy Awards for Primary Schools continues to develop. This year 12 Schools have been invited to participate and have received the details of the Competition.

Entries were collected in July, ready to be marked and moderated.

The guest author, John Dougherty,
<http://www.visitingauthor.com>
will present the awards to all the winners
on
Friday 18th November
at
the Royal Agriculture University



SI Cirencester achieved a major triumph when the Literacy Competition was named the overall winner of the Learning Opportunities award, at the Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland Annual Federation Conference, held in Glasgow 2015.

<http://sigbi.org/sigbi-programme-awards-2015/>

Nature Quiz

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT)

Primary Schools Nature and Wildlife Quiz 2016

The South Cotswolds' Primary Schools' Nature and Wildlife Quiz has completed its matches for this year having run from January until July. Its been a long but exciting and fun year with 18 out of 22 schools entering the competition, with 10 matches over three Stages played and kindly hosted by various schools to which our Soroptimist nature leads have travelled!

The South Cotswold Area Finalist after surviving three stages of this knockout competition was Powells School closely followed by Meysey Hampton and St Lawrence School Lechlade. The winner, Powells School should have then taken part in the County semi-finals bur were unable to do so, due to school commitments. However, Meysey Hampton stepped into the breech and represented the South Cotswolds. They performed very creditably but were beaten by the eventual overall winners of the competition, Chalford Hill of the Stroud area, who became the GWT County Nature and Wildlife Quiz champions 2016.



The standard has been very high and most Primary Schools have developed wildlife areas some sponsored by our Club [Minnis Trust](#) – and from which Nature clubs have developed. The knowledge of these children is extraordinary, even in the smallest village schools. The Quiz is supported by the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) <https://www.rau.ac.uk>, and we thank them for sponsoring the County Final this year, held at the RAU's Innovations Centre at Harnhill.

It has been a fun and hopefully educational year with most schools already entering the Quiz again for next year – our 18th year!!

Many thanks must go to our supportive SI Cirencester Club Members, and Rotarians, who have enabled the Quiz to run smoothly this year and to the schools who are so welcoming. We really appreciate the tea and cakes!!

Annie and Muriel.

Purple Tear Drop Campaign

<http://www.purpleteardrop.org.uk/>



Words taken from the Purple Teardrop website:

'Stop the Trafficking, Stop the Tears, Free Them from their Tormented Years' are the poignant words written by a member of Soroptimist International at the outset of our campaign against human trafficking in 2008, and which are repeated in part alongside the purple teardrop icon now. The teardrop represents the suffering of those women and children who are trafficked, exploited and abused throughout the world, including in our local communities.'

Four letters have been sent from our club to the CEO's of the largest mobile providers: EE, 3G, Vodafone and O2. The intention is awareness raising, informing them that human traffickers are using their networks and asking them to put in measures against this. To date two responses have been received. Telefonica and Vodafone replied saying they are aware and welcome the transparency that the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#) brings. They both state that they are not able, nor want, to perform surveillance on customers unless asked to for legal reasons.

Gloucestershire Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre GRASAC



Last year Past President Kathy Kerr-Rettie chose GRASAC as her local charity and the Club, as part of its Fund Raising efforts, raised £1000.

GRASAC is an independent charity which provides free, confidential and non-judgmental support and information services to women and girls affected by any form of sexual violence at any time in their lives.

It is a well-used charity with the following specific Purposes

1. To relieve the emotional, psychological, and/or physiological distress to people who have experienced sexual violence, especially women and girls.
2. To educate the public in the nature of sexual violence and its impact, especially women and girls.

The £1000 donated by SI Cirencester will be used to further the work of developing Gloucestershire teachers' skills in delivering the Appropriate Relationships Course to pupils and in providing more hours for the Centre's Development worker to deliver sessions in the classroom.

The sessions are delivered to mixed gender group classes and, after the initial knowledge and information giving, there is a need to split into smaller interactive discussion groups which is where Soroptimists may be able to provide support. Past President Kathy and her daughter Laura will be meeting with the Director and Magda the Development Worker to discuss dates and to trial this initiative.

Kathy

Friendship Links



SI Bury, England

Advance notice of programme for Bury dinner weekend 6th – 8th October 2016.

Members from SI Cirencester are invited to arrive on Thursday 6th October and to meet at the home of the Membership Chairman Elva Greenhalgh from there they will be taken to the home of their hostesses. A reception will be held that evening at the home of President Joan Rees.

Friday, 7th, October, 2016 there will be a visit in the morning to the Lancashire Fusiliers museum

<http://www.fusiliermuseum.com> followed by a light lunch in the museum cafe.

The afternoon will be free to visit other places of interest. The Annual Dinner will take place at the Red Hall Hotel, Bury at 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.



SI/Europe Ogre-Kegums, Latvia

Four members from SI Cirencester and District enjoyed a great weekend in Latvia supporting SI/Europe Ogre-Kegums, Latvia as they held their first ever friendship weekend. Soroptimists from Lithuania and Finland also attended. This was Cirencester's experience:

On our first day, we visited Rundale Palace, now a museum, built in the Baroque style and given as a present by Catherine the Great to her young lover's nephew. After enjoying the wonderful displays of china and paintings and visiting the beautiful rose gardens we made our way to a farm where the owners live and work using old fashioned methods.

The evening saw us in the garden of one of the Latvian Soroptimists where we were entertained by children singing national Latvian songs. Latvia is known as the singing nation and they certainly live up to this

name. We enjoyed eating and drinking national foods and dancing away the evening.

On Saturday, we visited Cesis the second oldest town after Riga. Cesis castle is of early medieval origin, founded around 1206 by some German Vliverians, a spectacularly interesting site. We had lunch at a communist style restaurant, giving us a good indication of how life might have been under Soviet rule.

For the final evening, we enjoyed a trip on a floating sauna on the River Daugava. Such a laugh with food, drink, and swimming in the river, which has so much iron in it, you looked tanned when swimming! Early on Sunday we were driven up to Old Riga where we met some of the Finnish contingent, took an open top bus city tour before enjoying a hearty lunch. We wended our way back to the airport after lunch. Thus ended a fabulous weekend with fun, laughter, renewing of old friendships and making new.

Thank you SI/Europe Ogre-Kegums, Latvia.

Marietta

Fundraising

Vintage Tea Party



On Saturday July 2nd, Cirencester Soroptimists held a *Vintage Tea-Party* at the home of David and Anne Croft in South Cerney. The weather was kind, and the wind and rain stayed away. Our President Pat selected the Cirencester charity 'Signpost' <http://www.cirencester-signpost.org.uk/> to be the recipient of monies from the event. The tea marquee served wonderful cream teas on our collection of vintage tea sets. Many remarks were made such as

"The best cakes, scones, and sandwiches. /" 'Excellent value for only £8 ".

Stalls sold plants, lavender bags, bric-a-brac, aprons, and there was even an auction of donated handbags. Games were much enjoyed, such as taking pegs off a washing line, and highest score on ring throwing into a ladder. It was an afternoon of wonderful friendship, and members present worked very hard to make the day so successful. When, at the end of the afternoon, we counted all the money we were thrilled to be told that a cheque for £1,500 would be presented to Signpost for their annual summer trip, this year to Weston-Super-Mare.

This is a fantastic achievement by our Club but without donations and help before and on the day, this would not have been possible.

Congratulations to Cirencester Soroptimists.

Anne

[SIGBI Day of Action 20 July 2016](#)



Hundreds of events by Soroptimist Clubs around the globe took place on, or around, the 20th July. Many Clubs were raising money for the SIGBI (Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland) year project, [Meru Women Garden Project](#) (MWGP), collaboration with Child.org that will educate, empower, and enable women and girls in Meru County, Kenya.



Cirencester Soroptimists supported this valuable project by holding a BBQ and garden party, raising a total of £350.

This and That

Appointment to an Independent Monitoring Board

Club Member, Margaret Headen, has been appointed to the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB) for Eastwood Park Women's Prison at Falfield. The Boards <http://www.imb.org.uk> have taken over the role of the old Prison Visitor scheme and usually have around 12 members who are volunteers from all walks of life. Each prison or detention facility has an IMB.

The role is monitoring, *not inspection*, therefore it is ongoing with the Board setting its priorities relative to the establishment it covers. Members have access to all parts of the prison and all data except personal medical files and some relating to intelligence and security issues. All prisoners have access to members who work on rotas; however, any prisoner complaints must still go through the official process.

If anyone would like more information please contact Margaret by e-mail: mbh26@hotmail.com

For hire



Vintage Tea sets

The Club has a wonderful collection of Vintage tea sets, with milk jugs, teapots etc. for hire. Please contact Marietta Crockford for more details on [0709 510826](tel:0709510826). [PHOTO](#)

Birthdays and Dates for Diary

Birthdays

August Birthdays:

1st – AC;

7th – K-KR;

16th – JB.

September Birthdays:

14th – MP

16th – GW

October Birthdays:

17th – JW



Dates for Diary

August 27th /28th – Phoenix Festival, Cirencester

October 7th – SI Bury Annual Dinner

November 18th Literacy Awards at RAU, Cirencester

Website Links

- **SI Cirencester web link:** <http://sigbi.org/cirencester/>
- **Global Voice SIGBI newsletter:** <http://sigbi.org/category/news/>
- **Soroptimist International:** <http://www.soroptimistinternational.org>
- **The Tharu Women's Project:**
<http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/appeal/post/896-news-from-the-tharu-womens-project>
This exciting project, proposed by SI Oita-Midori, Japan Minami Region, and accepted as one of the chosen projects for the 2015-2017 International President's Appeal, will offer computer literacy classes to women and girls in Tharu Village and twenty computers over the course of two years.
- **Soroptimist International Sustainable Development Report to the United Nations**
<http://sigbi.org/2016/hlpf/>

Feedback

We hope that you have enjoyed reading our first edition of SIGNAL, and thank you for all those who have contributed. We would appreciate any feedback and suggestions to improve further editions. Please send to: Publicity Chairman: Barbara Banks – Barbara@banks31.myzen.co.uk