



**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

Issue 182

September 2019

We embark on a new year

When we closed our June Business meeting and held the Summer Social at Gladhouse, I had no idea that I would be welcoming everyone to the new session from Mumbai. But here I am, and thank you so much to Clephane for taking the chair during September's meetings.

Earlier in the summer I received an invitation to the wedding of Navya Abiruben, daughter of Soroptimist Latha Abiruben from SI Madurai. You may recall that one of our friendship links has become SI Madurai and that Navya was a volunteer/intern at UN House Scotland, so I was delighted to hear that Navya was about to get married. Had I known that I would be in India (Mumbai is not THAT distant to Madurai) I might not have sent apologies.

The importance of friendship links and the network made possible through Soroptimist International was also evident when, at the beginning of September, a number of us met Soroptimists from Winterthur. It was exciting to hear of their activities and to

share information about what we have been doing and the activities we hope to continue. Over afternoon tea we spoke about one important event, the Mental Health Conference which SI Scotland South Region is co-hosting with UN House Scotland. This will draw attention to the wide-ranging issues addressed under 'Women's Mental Health Awareness'. Although this is happening during the afternoon on Wednesday 9 October, just before our Business Meeting, we hope that a number of Edinburgh Soroptimists will feel able to attend.

With these connections in mind - with Madurai, Winterthur and UN House Scotland - it is important for us, for our Club, to maintain the momentum and build more bridges to other civil society organisations. Over the coming year, we will hear from students about Global Partnerships and from speakers on women in business, women's menstrual health and blindness. I sincerely hope these meetings will produce avenues for further important communications and collaborations. I feel sure that they will!

With very best wishes for our year ahead.
President Gari

Latest up-date: Raj is recovering from dengue fever and Isobel is feeling less stressed, with help from Gari. 20/9/19. We send our good wishes to the family. *Ed.*

**SISSR and UN House Scotland
Mental Health Awareness:**

Conference for Women,
9th October, 1.00 pm - 4.30 pm.
Albany Conference Centre,
44 Ashley St. Glasgow G3 6DS

The Value of Friendships

A walk in the park

This photo (right) is of Cynthia from the Alhambra club, not far from Los Angeles. She writes:

“My husband picked a random bench in the park we were walking through to stop and take off his jacket.

“Look who donated the bench. Kismet!
Cynthia”

No guesses as to where this park is.

Ed.

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Programme Action Reports

Beach Clean at Cramond 2019

Anna, Winifred and Lindsey hit the beach again this year armed with gloves, pickers and our mark-off sheet to see what Cramond, on a glorious September morning, could produce for the bin bags. The beach looked lovely and very clean until you raked a wee bit deeper – and yes, there they were, bits of **WET WIPES!** We struggled to find much more than about half a dozen, but the Scouts were doing sterling work – they had well over twenty pieces of the horrible stuff! Bits of plastic, rubber and the odd Q-tip stick, not to mention pottery and glass, all added to the rubbish washed-up by the river. But the message surely is getting through to the general public and the **Marine Conservation Society** will continue the good work until the public understand – even if the Wet Wipes pack says **FLUSHABLE** – they may flush down your loo, round the S bend, out into the main sewer where they meet up with fat and cause **FAT BERGS** –yuk yuk!!

The Society has now notched up 25 years of beach cleaning and not so many years ago the pressure they brought to Governments resulted in a plastic bag charge and next on the list is a bottle return scheme and a ban on plastic straws!

In July I signed up to the Plastic Challenge - to cut down on single-use plastic during the month, which I found extremely difficult. So, let's have some input from members on what you have done and what you have found worked. Hopefully the club would have a nice wee list by next year!

Thank you to all the members who took part in all of our September outings.

Lindsey, Programme Action, SI Edinburgh
Cont. on page 6

SIE Business Meeting held on 11th September 2019 at Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel

Present: Clephane (in the Chair) + 13 members. Clephane welcomed everyone to the meeting including visitor Kirsty, a 3S applicant.

Apologies for absence were received from 5 members: Christine, Gari, Trish, Carolyn, Morag.

SI Vision and Mission statement: was read by Dorothy.

3S: presentation from potential applicant:

Kirsty (pupil at James Gillespie High) has been invited to go to Chile for 1 year to teach English in San Diego (August 2020/2021). She also wishes to teach the girls football and act as a female role model to encourage their independence (Domestic violence is a significant issue in the area she will be visiting).

Kirsty is currently studying French and Maths and undertaking a crash course in Spanish. After school she wishes to do Languages and History at university. Kirsty coaches both trampolining and ice skating, plays the guitar with Edinburgh Guitar Ensemble, enjoys acting, has two jobs (to help fund her trip) and is a member of girlguiding (she was recently selected to represent them, working in Mexico for 10 days)

AGREED Club members recommended submission of application to the 3S fund.

News of members:

Gari: has travelled to India to support her pregnant daughter as her son-in-law has been diagnosed with Dengue Fever.

Morag: Clephane is planning to visit Morag.

Carolyn: reports are that she is feeling better but still not totally strong.

Margaret Thomson (died 23rd August 2019): Marjory reported on Margaret's recent funeral attended by a number of SIE members. It was recognised that SI Edinburgh had lost one of its most distinguished members and members stood for a minute's silence in Margaret's memory. (full report to be published in SIEnna). Obituary to appear in 'The Scotsman'. (post meeting note: Obituary to appear in October 2019 SIEnna)

ACTION: An item is to be sent to Soroptimist International.

Minutes of last business meeting held on 12th June 2019: These were unanimously accepted as an accurate record with the following amendments,

- 1) Donation to Meru project was £60 and not £52 as reported.
- 2) Clarification was provided that meetings in November and January will not be able to take place at the Youth Hostel (due to building work being undertaken)

Matters arising:

- Consideration needs to be given to an alternative venue for our November and January meetings. Approach to Croquet Club has been unsuccessful. Costs and availability are to be established for the following locations: Edinburgh University (Gari); Choir Vestry (Alison); St John's Church (Clephane); The Well, Nicholson Street (Clephane) **ACTION:** information to be obtained and discussed at next meeting.

Cont. over

- Clephane updated us re the opportunity for the club to sponsor a Christmas tree (at St Andrew's and St George's West church). We need to apply – Clephane will follow this up and report back.
- Great news re planting a tree at Saughton Gardens! The gardener wanted a tree for a certain spot in the gardens and thought of us. The tree has been ordered (Eriobotrya Japonica) at bargain price of £133. It is to be planted next to the Conservatory. Suggestion that we arranged to have tea/cakes there one afternoon/evening to mark the planting. It was agreed that a plaque near the tree would be appropriate. ACTION: discuss date of visit and wording on plaque at next business meeting.

Treasurer's report

Expenses when entertaining visitors: suggestion made by the Treasurer that the Club be responsible for any costs associated with entertaining visiting Soroptimists. (recently the cost was split between those SIE members who were able to attend the event and that felt unfair) AGREED.

Going forward any such expenses can be claimed from Myint Su (form available)

SYH meeting venue: we have agreed an adjustment from £75 per meeting to £65 due to renovations. Recommendation from Treasurer that we make an up-front payment for the year £700 (rather than pay each meeting) AGREED.

On-line banking: to set this up we required all signatories on the account to agree. This has been achieved however it has highlighted that the bank mandate is out of date with previous signatories not removed. Recommendation from Treasurer to update the mandate to reflect 4 signatories. AGREED. ACTION: Myint Su to arrange update of mandate and then apply for On-Line Banking.

Nationwide Account: Recommendation from Treasurer to move the funds from Nationwide (circa £6k) to RBS (similar interest rates received) to retain all monies in one financial organisation, easing access to funds and reducing multiplication of administration (eg mandates) ACTION : Myint Su to confirm interest rates being paid by RBS and Nationwide, and signatories required to facilitate transfer of fund. To be discussed at next business meeting.

SIGBI Conference

Voting for Secretary for Diamond Education Grant: Margaret Emsley is the only nomination. No objections from members in attendance. AGREED to support.

Decision on Club voting delegate: AGREED Anna Gordon. (Thanks Anna!)

Constitutional Resolutions:

Pat led us very ably through a discussion on the resolutions for conference, providing very useful and key information to aid understanding and ultimately a decision. Pat emphasised that there are significant changes being recommended which will alter the way SIGBI and associated Clubs will be managed/led/governed. It is critical that we all read as much as we can and understand the implications before guiding our voting delegate. ACTION: all to read

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the Resolutions (and any additional information provided) and be ready to discuss our view at the next meeting on 25th September (it was agreed to dedicate some time at the start of the Speaker meeting for this important topic)

The resolutions can be found on the SIGBI website: Members (at top of page): Federation: SIGBI General Meeting (on right of page): GM 2019 Agenda.

Link: <https://sigbi.org/members/federation/sigbi-general-meeting/>

Specific Resolutions discussed

Resolution 6 – Capitation Fees: proposal to introduce an automatic increase in capitation each year linked to UK Consumer Price Index (capped at 4%) – ACTION : Pat to clarify if this increase relates to all clubs in Federation (Update 13/9/19 : it is to apply to ALL clubs not just UK based clubs) Concerns raised re 1) an automatic increase and thereby removing the opportunity for members to determine increase each year and 2) the financial impact on members of non UK clubs.

Resolution 1 – proposal to reduce the size of SIGBI Board from 13 Board Members to 6 Directors. (see Resolution for member make-up) Subsequent amendments received to 1) add ‘no more than 9 Directors’ and 2) recommend 7 Directors instead of 6 and splitting out Director of Finance & Governance into 2 roles Director of Finance and Director of Governance.

Pat flagged this as an example of the significance of the changes.

– Board members would become Directors of the Ltd Company – with significantly different (increased) responsibilities and accountabilities.

Directors would be supported by Standing Committees and Working Groups – made up of members with relevant expertise and experience to effectively advise the Directors. This could create more opportunity for grass roots members to get involved and influence top level decisions.

Resolution 5 – specifically impacts on the running of our Clubs.

There is a webinar for any member to attend and ask questions/ seek clarification. 26th September @ 7pm – to participate email hq@sigbi.org and they will provide details by Tuesday 24th.

Programme

Leaflet containing details of the Clubs Programme of activities for 2019/20 has been printed and is available for distribution. Further electronic/ hard copies are available from Myint Su. ACTION : Isabel to provide each member with a copy.

Scotland South Region

Myint Su confirmed that the Annual Report is now available on the website.

Membership: Region provided some hints and tips on membership, specifically it has proved most successful to induct new members within 1 or 2 meetings (no longer); members usually exit in the first 4 years, so try and keep them beyond that point; key message from potential members are to emphasise the opportunity to get involved in projects and the fun & friendship aspect.

Cont. over/

Programme Action

Report previously circulated by email from Lindsey.

Club Raffle won by Lindsey.

Wednesday 9th October: Scotland South Region in conjunction with UN House running conference on Mental Health issues in Glasgow.

Twiddlemuffs: great collection on display at meeting. Keep knitting! Final collection will be over the next two meetings. Pattern is available through 'knitting for peace'.

Membership

SIE Posters and Leaflets: further to the club's request to have a poster promoting SIE (to be left in Libraries, Community Halls etc) Nikki has built on ideas from Isabel and produced a draft version. Nikki has also worked on creating an information leaflet (based on the SSR leaflet but personalised to SIE). Suggestion is that we use the leaflet and the SIE Programme as collateral when talking to prospective members. Draft version produced.

ACTION: feedback and suggested improvements to be shared with Nikki at next meeting.

Date of next Business Meeting: 9th October 7.30pm at Edinburgh Central Youth Hostel.

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Programme Action Reports continued from page 2

Breast Cancer Prevention Scotland Celebrating 25 years

Thursday 19th September 2019

At Crowne Plaza, Royal Terrace, Edinburgh

Soroptimist International of Edinburgh members were invited to this fundraising event.

Five members were able to attend.

We were given a very warm welcome and invited to purchase raffle tickets and bid for some generous prizes. We were served with a glass of wine and juice with canopies.

The Charity has been renamed to emphasize its aims of 'prevention'. There is very little focus on prevention from other cancer charities.

After an introduction from Gail, one of the four trustees, who became involved after her Aunt was diagnosed and successfully treated with Breast Cancer. Her Aunt is also a trustee.

There were two speakers Helen Lynn and Professor Annie Anderson who was from Dundee University specializing in what influences behavioural changes. Why is the diagnosis of Breast Cancer still rising?

Admittedly more people are surviving after breast cancer treatment. The causes of breast cancer are complicated. Only 5-10 per cent of breast cancers are due to genetics. 30 percent due to Lifestyle. The recent advertising from Cancer UK on obesity being a cause of cancer has caused some upset from the public. The speaker did mention that the increase in fat storage in the body and the increase in alcohol use were notable risks. Shift work is also a risk factor which may be due to light or at least the lack of light with nurses in particular, who do night shifts.

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The number of children a woman delivers has a preventative factor especially if the mother breast feeds the baby. But having children does not entirely prevent breast cancer - the speaker had many references to recent research.

The second speaker Helen Lynn was a freelance environmental spokesperson on the environmental factors in cancer. There are possibly 60 per cent of breast cancers due to environmental factors. Why is more research not being done in this area? She stressed that at the present time no professional asks about the persons occupation, and any work-place hazards. She particularly mentioned the first three months of pregnancy where women do not disclose that they are pregnant to their employers or to their friends. In some occupations, women could be transferred to a less risky work environment. She presented a huge overhead on the possible environmental risks of breast cancer which was rather alarming. There were no research references for this. She mentioned a World Health Organisation reference to research.

Breast Cancer Prevention Scotland is hoping to make this an annual fundraiser.

In the raffle I won a year's supply of S. Luca Dairy Ice Cream! *(not bad, Anna. Ed.)*

Anna, SI Edinburgh Membership Convener

www.breastcancerpreventionscotland.org

An Impression of our evening at this event

Three of the four Board Members of Breast Cancer Prevention Scotland have suffered breast cancer. Their underlying message is 'if women were better informed, they could then make better judgements of their lifestyle'.

Breast Cancer Prevention Scotland is asking the Scottish Government

- To make the Primary Prevention of cancer a key target of the next Scottish Cancer plan.
- To initiate and encourage research into the environmental and occupational causes of breast cancer in Scotland.
- To facilitate and fund research into the primary prevention of breast cancer.

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION would mean for me that we keep stressing the importance of mammograms but look more at the causes.

Lindsey, SI Edinburgh Programme Action

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Programme Action Report from SS Region Meeting

The Scotland South Region Meeting and AGM was held on Saturday 7th September in Kirkintilloch followed by breakout meetings for Membership and Programme Action. The Programme Action group, chaired by Brenda, discussed forthcoming action we could all be taking in our clubs, for the coming few months. *Cont. over/*

Most importantly, a new Programme Focus database will be launched after the SIGBI AGM in October. This should make, not just reporting, but the ability to find and read reports from other clubs, a good bit easier. In truth, I am just beginning to find my way around the present PFR site, so may wait now till the new site is launched!!

The ‘buzz’ word is **FOCUS** – what SIGBI would like us to do is to focus more on the national charities or actions for the improvement of women and girls, for example Women in the Criminal Justice System, Violence Against Women etc. Brenda stressed that we should not stop supporting our club’s local charities but try to make our choices more relevant to the SDGs that SIGBI support. I think we, at SI Edinburgh, do try to support charities that will give support/benefit to women and girls.

There is, hopefully, to be a working party for the ‘16 Days of Activism’ running through late November into December - turning the country **ORANGE**, to raise awareness of Soroptimists’ stand on **Violence Against Women** – the colour proving somewhat problematic in certain areas of Scotland. Some PA officers trying to arrange orange lighting around their towns/cities, have found that they can get the colour purple used instead of orange and have accepted that. What can we do in SI Edinburgh – another photo opportunity, making full use of our Facebook contacts – I hope for some ideas in the next few weeks.

Just a little reminder that the items Region collects for our good causes, count as Programme Action – such as books for Better World Books, bras and new pants for Smalls for All. I will start keeping a record of these donations from SI Edinburgh in the future though still not sure how I report them on the PFRFs!

Finally, for the last Region year there were:

163 Projects £34,433.31 raised 2,598 Women and girls supported

Lindsey – Programme Action, SI Edinburgh

Note: I may have some photos next month. *Ed.*

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News of members: Morag

Our Honorary Member, Morag, moved into a care home, Northcare Manor, in March 2019 and she is very settled there. This was in time for a celebration of her 95th birthday. A special lunch was provided by the care home for up to 10 people and her family came from London – see photo. Marjory and Edith were very privileged to be invited.

Susan, a member of Morag’s family, and her husband Bahman, who took the photographs and who live in Edinburgh were also present. As part of the lunch the care home hospitality provided a birthday cake – see photo. Morag has told me how she feels – and that this was a very special birthday.



Morag, eager to taste the cake.



Jane, daughter, Andrew, son with Morag

SI Winterthur, SI Edinburgh and SI Dunfermline

Members and friends from these three clubs met at the Balmoral Hotel in early September. We enjoyed a special afternoon tea and, of course, we really enjoyed the opportunity to chat, hear what each other was doing and learn about Soroptimism in each other’s clubs. A short report will appear next month. If you have any photos you would like to share, please send them to me. *Ed.*

Thinking of our sisters in Turku

Irmeli Torssonen, SI Turku died recently. SI Turku was a Friendship Link with SI Leith, whose members went to Turku to celebrate their 40th anniversary. The Leith members remember the very generous hospitality they received. Some members were able to pay another visit later on - and were equally well received. Pat has sent our condolences.

Contents

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| President's message | page 1 |
| Friendships | 2 |
| PA Reports | 2, 6, 7, 8 |
| Business Meeting Minutes | 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| News of Members | 9 |

Items for SIEnna 183 should be sent, to the editor by 17th October 2019

Dates for Your Diary

2019

- Oct. 9 SISSR + UN House Scotland, Conference on mental health (see page 1)
9 Business Meeting + AGM issues
23 Friendship Group Meeting
24-26 SIGBI Fed. Conference, Bournemouth
- Nov. 2 SISSR Meeting at Polmont
13 Business Meeting
27 Speaker Meeting
- Dec. 11 Social Function

Note: Nov. meetings – remember to check the venue

SI Edinburgh web address:
www.sigbi.org/edinburgh