



**Soroptimist  
International  
Edinburgh  
news  
notes  
anecdotes**

Issue 189

May 2020

Welcome to the beginning of a new season for SIEdinburgh, one which starts with virtual meetings and no summer social in June. Nevertheless, we all hope that by September, we may be able to meet again and take forward our programmes and activities.

In the meantime, as I pass (virtually!) the Chain of Office of President to Anna, Clephane and Lindsey, and thank them most sincerely for stepping into this role, I send a special word of thanks to Edith, our 'retiring' Editor of SIEnna. As you may recall from our AGM, successfully held by

Skype on 22 April, we gave heartfelt appreciation for the many years Edith has produced SIEnna. It has become the visible link for our affiliation to membership of this global women's organisation. Now Nikki and I will attempt to maintain Edith's high editorial standards of structure, presentation, design and content: we will do our best, Edith!

Our grateful thanks go to everyone working so hard for SIEdinburgh, for SIE in Scotland South Region, for SIGBI and beyond! In particular, we thank Pat Black for her contribution to our Club which benefits greatly from her focus, commitment, depth of understanding and drive to achieve positive results. A copy of a letter sent to Pat is included below.

Now that we have just a few virtual meetings before a refreshing start in September, I hope, meanwhile, we can continue our various forms and means of communications with ease and friendship.

With best wishes,

*Gari, IPP*

**Our Club Letter to Pat Black on 11 May 2020**

Dear Pat,

We were all disappointed when we heard and read that you had not been elected as SI President Elect. As a Club, SIEdinburgh has been engaged with all you have been doing not only for us, but for SIGBI and for SI more generally. Your previous high-profile roles - Club President, Region President, SIGBI President, Director of Advocacy for SI - gave credence and support to your nomination for the leadership role and we are so pleased you went for it. It was totally the right thing to do.

Your contribution to SIE, ever since your transfer in 2009, has been immense. Our SIE Club 90th celebrations would have been a tea party and a glass of fizz, if it had  
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not been for you revving us up. Your energy, commitment and enthusiasm were infectious and resulted in a super collaborative event with such a wonderful turnout, even to a cold windswept Edinburgh in December!

We thank you also for setting up and maintaining our SIE Club website. It is an important first point of contact for those wishing more information about meetings and membership. And at Region level, you worked with others to introduce the consent agenda, which has made a huge difference to Region meetings - some of which (the bra episode!) are even remembered as fun activities!!

Now that we are in different times to those - just last year - when your name was put forward, you may be relieved that you do not have a huge amount of international travel to encounter. Nevertheless, we are certain that you will be almost as busy on the Scotland and home front because, dear Pat, you are indefatigable! Through your quiet, self-effacing encouragement, you are an inspiration to us all and we are so very pleased and proud that you are a member of OUR Club, SI Edinburgh!

Thank you most sincerely for all you do, are doing and hopefully will continue to do for us all.

With sincere best wishes and in friendship

Anna, Clephane, Lindsey and Gari (current Presidents and IPP)  
and the whole membership of SI Edinburgh

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### **SIE Business Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020 on Skype**

**Present:** Gari (in the Chair) + Anna Gordon, Pat Black, Christine Craig, Patricia Cacho, Nikki Culpin, Clephane Hume, Edith Elliot. Gari welcomed everyone to this 'virtual' meeting and thanked everyone for trying the new approach.

Edith was able to clarify that there was no stipulation within our protocols re a quorum. We were therefore able to proceed with the meeting.

**Apologies** for absence were received from 8 members: Trish Morrison, Winifred Keeves, Alison Stevenson, Kathleen Hardie, Carolyn McVey, Marjory Roy, Lindsey Fyfe (available on the phone if needed), Isabel Smith.

**Minutes of the last Meeting** were agreed as accurate and no matters arising.

#### **News of members:**

Irene and Dorothy have completed 40 years of Service and Christine had forwarded on to them their long service certificates. CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS TO DOROTHY AND IRENE FOR THEIR UNSTINTING SERVICE

Clephane had reached out to Aurora and Nassim. Both are doing OK albeit Nassim is in isolation at the moment.

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Clephane had also spoken with Isabel and she is OK

Christine had been in touch with Morag (sent on the Magazine) and she seems to be fine

**Treasurer's Report** – no report submitted for this meeting. Myint Su has confirmed the up to date annual report will be submitted for the AGM. She has been in contact with Taru Vaatainen, the independent examiner.

**Programme Action** – Lindsey had provided an up to date report in readiness for the AGM. ACTION: she will be asked to email any immediate/urgent information (Nikki)

**Membership** – Anna confirmed that she had not heard from the potential member who was moving to North Berwick in March. (Her move may have been delayed in view of the current COVID19 situation). Anna has followed up with an email.

Laura Rutherford (member who has moved to London) has been invited by Pat to attend the AGM (as it is a virtual meeting) plus we are checking if she will continue her membership in SIE, locally in London or become an Associate member. We await a reply.

Clarification was provided that Dorothea Christiana is now an associate member.

**Correspondence** – Christine confirmed

- Irene checking for updates from our Friendship Links so we can then update SIGBI.
- We have not had any further correspondence re the Dunfermline Anniversary Dinner and whether it is going ahead. We have assumed not but ACTION Christine will follow up and confirm.

## **AOB**

**Subscriptions** - Pat led a discussion on any impact on this year's subscriptions of the reduced cost of our meeting venue (we haven't used the venue in view of the renovations and now the COVID 19 lockdown) DECISION : that a recommendation is made to the Treasurer that this year's subs are maintained at their existing level and any resultant surplus to be used to build up a small reserve in the club funds for future use/years. (Raised by Pat/ seconded by Nikki and attendees in agreement) ACTION – update Myint Su and request update at AGM (Gari)

**Date of next Meeting:** **AGM** 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 at 7.30pm on Skype.

## **Preparation for AGM**

- All documents have been sent out (3 emailings from Edith)
- Treasurer's Report to be circulated prior to AGM
- Confirmation that all positions other than President / Vice President have been filled. Agreement has been reached between a number of members to cover the President duties between them for the year.

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- Clarification provided by Edith that Myint Su was elected for 3 years and has served 2 so no need for re-election.
- A final version of the officers and representatives list will be circulated prior to the AGM
- Pat raised the question of whether we are in a position to make any donations this year (decision can be made at the AGM) Pat specifically mentioned SIGBI Benevolent Fund which is likely to be utilised more to support members in the current COVID 19 situation. ACTION – ask Myint Su what we have available for donations and then email members to consider any potential recipients in readiness for discussion at AGM. (Gari)

**Post Meeting Note:** Date of next Business Meeting: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 7.30pm on Skype.

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**Please note the following plan: It is anticipated that SIEnna June 2020 will be the last edition till September. However, circumstances could easily change. Members will be kept in touch by email/telephone/contact from another club member as and when there is anything to report.**

**Items for SIEnna 190 should be sent to the editor by 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

SI Edinburgh web address:  
[www.sigbi.org/edinburgh](http://www.sigbi.org/edinburgh)

**Lucy received support from the 3S Fund  
 She tells of her experience in Chile**

Due to Covid-19 I have unfortunately had to return from my gap year in Chile however I have spent the last seven months there, in this time I have learnt a lot about the people, language and culture. Whilst in Chile I spent four months as an assistant English teacher at colegio Juan Luis Undurraga in Quilicura an outlying district in the north west of Santiago, Chile’s capital. In the school I worked with children aged 4 – 12 years old.

My role as an assistant English teacher involved; helping plan lessons, leading activities, behaviour management and testing students one on one. I worked averagely 23 hours a week with many different classes. The topics taught to the younger years include, colours, numbers, telling the time, jobs, places, food and basic grammar. I most enjoyed teaching the pre-kinder and kinder students (age 4-6). As well as teaching lessons, I helped run a spelling bee club on Wednesdays for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. This included teaching correct pronunciation of English letters and words and how to spell words in English. This club was preparation for a spelling bee contest, for which I was asked to help judge, however, was cancelled due to protests in Santiago.

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Learning to speak Spanish was one of the biggest challenges of my time away as I knew very little before going to Chile. Living with a host family in Quilicura meant that I had to constantly speak Spanish; this was difficult but meant that my Spanish improved quickly. Being far away from my friends and family was also challenging especially during the first month. Although my Project Trust partner was great support and working at the school and exploring Santiago helped me settle into my life in Chile.

Throughout the year I experienced Chilean culture; my school hosted a Cueca (the national dance of Chile) competition and had celebrations for Chilean Independence Day - Fiestas Patrias. Chileans eat a large lunch and have a smaller meal called “once” later in the evening, for this meal people eat bread with eggs, cheese, manjar, tomatoes or avocados and drink tea. Beans, rice or bread are the staple of most meals and almost everything is seasoned with lemon and salt, Asados (barbeques) are popular when celebrating. Another difference between the UK and Chile is the climate, the seasons are switched so when I arrived in August it was winter. The temperature in summer is much warmer than in the UK, 30 – 35 °C and there was no rainfall in Santiago while I was living there.

During October 2019 protests against an increase in metro prices escalated and many buildings and metro stations were vandalised, this led to a state of emergency declared by Chilean president, Pinera, and deployment of the Chilean Army. Due to this the school was closed for two weeks and the school day finished early until the end of term to ensure the safety of pupils and teachers when leaving school. The protests in Quilicura were less extreme than those in the centre of Santiago, the large chain supermarkets were looted and vandalised and the local mall was set on fire. A curfew was imposed from 22.00 to 07.00 which lasted about a week. It wasn't safe for me to go into the centre of Santiago for October and most of November due to continuing protests and excessive force used by police against protesters e.g. tear gas. The metro system was heavily damaged and many stations were still shut due to damage in March 2020 when I left Chile, protests have also continued into 2020. These protests are considered the “worst civil unrest” to occur in Chile since the end of Pinochet's military dictatorship in 1990.

The summer holidays were from December to March (schools finished a month early due to the protests). During this time, I got to travel around South America, with other volunteers from project trust visiting Peru and Argentina. After the holidays I had three weeks of working at the school before having to return home due to Covid-19. I have learnt much about Chile and have experienced the culture and politics. I have overcome challenges and experienced situations that I never would have imagined. I hope that I have been successful as an English teacher and made a small difference. Thank you for supporting me as I would not have been able to go to Chile without your help. I am extremely grateful for this experience and believe it should be available to as many people as possible.

Yours sincerely

*Lucy*

*Photographs see page 6*



The Cueca dance



Teaching a pre-kinder