



**Soroptimist  
International  
Edinburgh  
news  
notes  
anecdotes**

**SIEnna 193 November 2020**

Another huge HELLO from editors Nikki and Gari as we continue our new session!!

Welcome to November's SIEnna which, once again, focuses on the Business Meeting. As noted in our previous SIEnna, this means of record will become even more important as there are some Members who are not able to attend our virtual meetings.

**But first, a welcome message from our President Team:**

Looking back to Sienna 192, when we were wondering how life would be in the months ahead, it's to our credit (I think) that we have now embraced technology and the concept of virtual meetings.

The availability of zoom, courtesy of Region, and the presence of a host – thank you Patricia! – means that we are establishing a routine that we would never have contemplated six months ago. Some of us took part in Conference, others are joining meetings with other clubs and we have regular contact with members who don't have access to the internet.

So we are alive and well!

And Active. Please search out your orange badge from last year and wear it

for the meeting on 25th. Or find something else that is orange.

In addition, we are hearing a lot about loneliness, so make an effort to phone someone who you know would appreciate a call. Life is still uncertain, so this would be a welcome distraction.

**SIE Business Meeting held on 28th October 2020 on Zoom.**

Present: Lindsey (in the Chair) + Pat, Patricia, Nikki, Gari, Edith, Anna, Kathleen, Clephane, Winifred, Liz, Myint Su, Dorothy, Marjory and Alison.

Apologies: were received from eight members.

Welcome: Lindsey welcomed members to the meeting.

Vision & Mission: was read by Dorothy.

News of Members: Kathleen was on Radio Scotland on Friday 23rd October talking about her book about 'a lady who did not have her sorrows to seek'. Here is the link should any member wish to hear it. Kathleen is on about 1hr 40 mins into the programme.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000nm2j>

Pleased to confirm that Carolyn is now home from hospital and staying with her daughter. Hilary-Kay is well but spending more of her time in the Cotswolds.

Minutes of meeting of 9th September 2020: Myint Su stated that she had not attended the Region meeting on 5th September (see SIEnna 192, page 3).

With this amendment the minutes were agreed by those present.

**Matters Arising:** Toilet Twinning (see page 2). It was reported that the certificate received by SI Edinburgh was currently with Gari. It was suggested that the certificate would be given to other members from time to time.

**Correspondence Secretary:** Christine (not in attendance) submitted an update including - a letter would be in the "People's Friend" on 7th November, about member Carolyn's contribution to the local hospital baby care unit for whom she has knitted many many tiny hats for the premature babies, and an update on the SIE Bench in Princes Street ( see below)

**Membership:** Anna's report had been circulated. Lucia, a potential new member who is volunteering with the homeless in Edinburgh has asked if she could get involved in some of the projects our club support. Patricia wondered if Lucia would speak to the club to explain the work she is doing plus tell us a bit about herself. Patricia also offered to liaise with Anna and Lucia on a Zoom meeting to make introductions and see if she can support Lucia. Anna asked if we could finance Lucia's associate membership from club funds – it was agreed that Anna would check Lucia's intentions when they meet and then bring a proposal back to the club.

Region offered to sponsor a potential member to attend the SIGBI 2020 Virtual Conference. Pat facilitated Grace, a UN

House Scotland internee to attend the Conference and then to speak at the Region meeting on 7th November.

**Treasurer's Report:** Myint Su's report had been circulated. She asked if any of us were going to the Conference in Belfast. We indicated by showing our hands.(circa 10 members)

Numbers of shares held in 'Number 63' has now been clarified and officially registered as 77.

**Programme Action Officer's Report:**

Lindsey's report had been circulated.

- Lindsey reported that she had not yet heard from Richard Darke about the possibility of tree planting to mark the centenary of Soroptimism.

- 16 Days of Activism - A letter had been sent to the Scottish Office enquiring if St Andrew's House in Waterloo Place could be lit up to recognise the event. This could then be publicised with a press release (SIGBI would fund the cost). Members are asked to wear orange and the orange badge 'Soroptimists say NO to Violence Against Women' at the club meeting on 25th November.

- Scotland South Region project to commemorate 100 years of SI – the playing card project - will be reported on at the Region meeting on 7th November. We have nominated 6 current/past members of our club and local clubs that no longer exist.

**SI Centenary:**

The bench in Princes Street Gardens(donated to the city by SIE on its 25th anniversary) is in need of some attention. Christine has offered to investigate the cost. Club members considering whether we should attend to the Bench as part of the SI Centenary Celebrations

**Programme for Autumn/Winter:** Nikki and Alison have been working on the possibilities as it is now not possible to meet together as pre Covid 19.

11th November: Business Meeting.

25th November: Georgia, from Shelter, Scotland could give a presentation about the housing emergency caused by the impact of the current pandemic, its effect on the homeless and the work Shelter have been doing to support.

Members wondered if Lucia (see Membership report above) could be invited to speak at the same meeting.

9th December: Speaker meeting. Invite Louise Gray, Silver Sentiments– a designer of hand-made jewellery to talk about her jewellery, how she set up her company and how her travels have influenced her designs

13th January 2021: Business meeting. It was suggested that members look at other clubs' syllabuses to see how they were progressing.

27<sup>th</sup> January 2021: Friendship groups

**Friendship Groups:** It was suggested that some groups might wish to meet on skype or zoom.

**Web Manager:** Pat said there were two web training sessions available – one

from SIGBI and one from SISSR. Patricia has volunteered to work with Pat to manage the club's website

**Region Representative:** Myint Su next meeting 7th November at 2.00 pm on Zoom.

**Newsletter Editors:** Gari and Nikki were thanked for the newsletter. Next edition out circa 11/11/20. Lindsey asked if Editors/ members found it useful to have reports pre-circulated before business meetings. – agreed it was helpful to have the information and context to support effective discussion and questions at the business meeting.

**President Elect:** Nothing to report.

**AOCB:** there was no further business.

**Date of Next Meeting:** 11th November – Business Meeting - please log-in at 7.20 pm.

The meeting closed with thanks to those who had enabled the virtual meeting to take place.

### **Behind the scenes of our Correspondence Secretary, Christine.**

I thoroughly enjoy my role a secretary of SI Edinburgh.

I receive lots of emails and try to read them all, which means I keep myself informed about Soroptimist matters from SI down to Club level.

From SIGBI via SIGBI website I receive:-  
Requests for funding  
Requests to meet visitors to Edinburgh

Requests from prospective members, which I pass to Anna

From SIGBI I receive:-  
Fortnightly Club Mailings and News Briefings  
Info on e.g. data protection  
Election info for Federation posts - I then return our voting results  
When possible, I summarise SIGBI emails so that members are not flooded by emails.

From Region I receive:-  
Info to send to club members about Region meetings, lunches, other club events

At Club level:-  
I send info to members e.g. about Scottish Superwomen of Science  
I send info to region e.g. about our 90th.

Press & Publicity  
I email the Edinburgh Evening News with photographs of e.g. charity collecting

Many thanks Christine for all the work you put in behind the scenes!

### **Our SIE Bench in Princes Street Gardens is in need of a little TLC !**

On a recent visit to Princes Street Gardens Edinburgh, Christine spotted the SIE bench and took this photo.



The bench was donated to the city of Edinburgh back in 1962 and a further commemorative plaque added to recognise 85 years of SIE in 2012.

Christine has agreed to make enquiries re how we can improve the look and condition of the bench and we are hoping to do this as part of our celebrations of 100 years of Soroptimism next year.

Watch this space: We may need a few paint brushes!!

### **The SIGBI 2020 Virtual Conference**

by Grace (UNHS intern and Under 25 invitational delegate)

This year's annual Soroptimist International (or, 'SIGBI' – Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland) conference was held online for the very first time. What was hoped to be presented in Belfast – before Covid-19 was upon us – was now able to reach a huge online audience of over 900 delegates. The conference took place over two half days last weekend, on Friday 30th and Saturday 31st October 2020.

To commence the two days of conferencing, Soroptimist International Federation President, Isobel Smith, reflected on the last year and the pandemic. She acknowledged and gave thanks to those attending; having

noted this year's audience was potentially the most global-reaching, ever. This will have been the first Soroptimist International conference for a number of delegates – myself included. The conference then dived into the discussions of incredible keynote speakers; each followed by a Q&A session.

Friday's first keynote speaker was Lady Hale – arguably, one of Britain's most influential legal minds and famous brooch-lover. Lady Hale's talk was entitled, Celebrating Women in the Law and she discussed exactly that. Reflecting on the last forty years for women in law, Lady Hale was incredibly positive about women entering the legal practice in 2020 and potentially following in her footsteps. Although female lawyers still form less than half of practice partners and judges; women are making great progress in breaking through the glass (legal) ceiling. Having been President of the UK Supreme Court (2017-2020), Lady Hale was the most Senior Judge in the UK before her retirement.

The second keynote speaker on Friday was Sue Black (OBE) – Professor of Computer Science and Technology at the University of Durham and founder of Tech Mums, the award-winning organisation that holds computing workshops for women. Sue Black's discussion, If I Can Do it, So Can You, was extremely motivational, where delegates learnt not only of her working achievements but personal struggles, too. Having already achieved her PhD, launched the British Computing Sciences Women Network for women and worked as a Professor in Computing Sciences; Sue also led the renowned campaign that ultimately saved Bletchley Park (the home of code-breaking during WWII). After such a significant achievement, Sue found herself in search of another project that could benefit society. From this, came Tech Mums. Since Tech Mums began running its workshops, it has won several awards, including the BIMA Award for Diversity and Inclusion. Sue Black remains teaching, researching and incredibly humble.

Dr. Alison Gardner – leader of the Communities and Society Research Programme at the University of Nottingham –

led the first keynote speech on Saturday. Her talk, Building Slavery-Free Communities, discussed the modern slavery and human trafficking that occurs each day in the UK and what we can do to tackle this problem. Dr. Gardner provided clarity over what the definition of modern slavery is and debunked any myths that state it doesn't affect British society. "Human trafficking is definitely a global problem," she stated, "but most people believe it is not an issue that impacts them directly." Dr. Gardner answered many questions usually left unanswered, including how we can work towards preventing this exploitation. Building community resilience is essential and this resilience is split into four key areas: Prevention, Discovery, Respite and Recovery and Sustainable resilience. Although there are no definitive signs of modern slavery, Dr. Gardner emphasised how crucial it is to shop local and look after our environment. There is a key link between exploitation and the two.

The second – and final – keynote speaker was radio and documentary presenter, Jane Garvey. Her talk, titled Speaking Up, saw Jane delve into her early career and the world of media. Having begun presentational work in her local radio, Jane slowly worked her way to the top of BBC radio – which was arguably even more difficult than it is now. She currently works as the Presenter of BBC Four's much-loved Women's Hour, where "no subject is too trivial or too serious" to be discussed. Jane has been an influential figure for many women, as Women's Hour provides a safe and empowering space to discuss all things affecting women. Although Women's Hour was created "as a companion" for women, 57% of the show's audience are female; meaning both men and women appreciate tuning in. Jane will be leaving Women's Hour in December this year, but paves the way for new and equally driven talent. She remains passionate about gender equality and women's rights.

The weekend of SIGBI conferencing ended with a traditional closing ceremony. Next year's conference will mark a huge celebration for Soroptimist International, where they will mark their 100th year.

## Scotland South Region Commemorative Playing Cards ?

Scotland South Region wanted to commemorate 100 years of Soroptimism by acknowledging successful and influential Soroptimists, from our very own Region, in a different and original way! Forget tea towels and coasters – we are going for 52 Soroptimists on the back of a deck of playing cards! A useful gift for speakers, a memento to send to a Friendship Link or an entertaining companion for a long journey!

We are so pleased to confirm that the following past/present members of SI

Edinburgh and clubs associated with us (through merger or closure) are to be considered - Dr Jean Wishart (Note SI Dunblane), Mrs Margaret MacAlpine (SI Leith) and from SI Edinburgh – Ethel d la Cour, Miss Frances Lee, Priscilla Turnbull and Pat Black. What a fabulous contribution from us- fingers crossed they all make the final 'deck'.



## NOTES FROM THE ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH WEBINAR

On Wednesday 14th October SISSR and UNHouse Scotland organized an on-line conference on Adolescent Mental Health. A number of Soroptimists attended and now provide notes they derived from the event. As this was a very successful conference, there is a possibility of a repeat performance!

Suicide is the largest cause of death for under 35s.

62% of young people are moderately, or extremely concerned about the impact of COVID 19 on their future.

Poverty rates continue to rise in Scotland. The strategy for good mental health is underpinned by tackling poverty, disadvantage and inequalities.

## SI Edinburgh makes the People's Friend Magazine

In common with many people during lockdown, Carolyn a member of Soroptimist International of Edinburgh put her knitting skills to good use. She has knitted 150 little hats, some of which are pictured, for premature babies which she has kindly donated

There was discussion about lack of help and early intervention for a young person if the family resided in a rural area. One good adult to listen and help a young person can make a huge difference. Sadly a lack of support for the 10-14 year old.

Jess, a young woman who had experienced mental health issues from an early age was very enlightening – her audience was impressed by her honesty in explaining the difficulties she had had in getting understanding and support. There is no health without mental health.

Thanks must go to UNHS, SSSRegion and Margaret Mowat, and Youth Link Scotland for running the webinar.

to a Glasgow hospital which she is currently attending.



Carolyn has also knitted face mask extenders to help workers to be comfortable when they have to wear a mask all day.

Club members have fun and work on projects that help improve the lives of

women and girls locally, nationally and internationally.

In common with many clubs, we can't at present have face to face meetings, but we are meeting online, and welcome enquiries about membership at [www.sigbi.org](http://www.sigbi.org) Our members have embraced Skype and Zoom and Isabel, one of our oldest members has purchased an iPad and is hoping to start attending the virtual meetings; a great show of flexibility and determination to adapt.

Congratulations to Carolyn for her sterling work and thanks to Christine for facilitating SIE making the press !

#### **Programme of SIE Club meetings 2020-2021**

All meetings commence at 7.30 and are currently being held on Zoom.

A Zoom meeting invitation will be sent circa 2 days before the meeting to enable you to join from 7.20pm.

11 November Business Meeting

25 November Speaker : Shelter Scotland : the housing emergency. (how Shelter Scotland are reacting to the impact of the COVID pandemic on homelessness)

9 December Speaker : Silver Sentiments : Louise Grey (how Louise established her jewellery business and how her travels have influenced the designs of her handmade jewellery)

13 January Business Meeting

27 January Friendship Groups meeting locally or remotely (dependent on restrictions) : to be organised by Friendship Group leaders

10 February Business Meeting

24 February Speaker – tbc

10 March Business Meeting

24 March Speaker - tbc

14 April Business Meeting

28 April – SI Edinburgh AGM