



SIEnna 196 February 2021

Celebrating Isabel's life

We would like this edition of SIEnna to share our memories of Isabel and celebrate her life.

Clephane: One of my memories is of her conscientiously stitching the Soroptimist tartan for the Great tapestry. And when that was on show she went off to steward at Parliament. A real stalwart, with amazing networks, game for volunteering for pretty well anything. One of which being the Guides, she got us involved in joint ventures. (eg 90th anniversary)

Edith: I first joined Soroptimist International of Nottingham in 1979. On retiring from the NHS and moving back to Edinburgh I transferred to SI Edinburgh. At the end of my first meeting the lady sitting next to me said "were you one of my Guides at Mayfield South Church?" I looked at her, unfortunately did not recognise her and she introduced herself. This was Isabel. Having not seen each other since the late 1950s until that day in November 1979 I was amazed that she recognised me. And working with Isabel in our club since then I have always been amazed at how much she knew and remembered. She was always positive, accurate and of course helpful when writing our History, to give just one example.

Winifred: What I shall always remember about Isabel was how she found the best interpretation in any situation even when someone was being very stupid!

Pat Black: I only got to know Isabel well in recent times - probably since the club's 90th when we were part of the same group helping to plan our events.

After that we worked on several things together but probably the relationship developed over challenging changes to SIGBI constitutions and bye laws! SIGBI has made several proposals over the last few years which Isabel followed carefully, asking me for copies of everything that came from Sigbi, then making suggestions or asking questions which I would pass on to SIGBI. She had a razor sharp mind and would forensically consider everything that was proposed. I enjoyed our interactions on this very much.

Recently she and I worked on the biographies for women to propose from the club to mark the SI Centenary. She was just as assiduous in tracking down information on them even though she did not have computer and internet access. If it hadn't been for the delays by BT in getting her connected to the world wide web I am sure she would have found another avenue for her curiosity

Christine: I remember Isabel's involvement in Scottish Superwoman of Science, particularly

with performances for people with visual or hearing impairment. She was enthusiastic in leafleting potential audiences, probably a first for her as it was for Anna and me.

Anna: In the last year I remember Isabel selecting and collating all the information about notable past Edinburgh Soroptimists for the Centenary playing card project. Right up to going into hospital she was active. Her ideas for inspiring living women who made a difference in Scotland she sent to Lindsey; a cheque was sent to Myint Su for SI Edinburgh charities and a carrier bag for Cranston Street was sent to me. Her life was a Life Well Lived. She will be sadly missed.

Anna : I first met Isabel when I was member of SI Leith. I gave her a lift to a region meeting. When I transferred to SI Edinburgh I was allocated to be in the same friendship group. Isabel hosted many friendship group meetings in her home.

There was one evening when we were leaving a members house when she fell on the pavement before getting in my car. But up she got and had no broken bones. She declined a visit to a doctor to get checked out.

Isabel participated in many programme action activities sight village and volunteering at a special fringe show for the visually impaired.

During the year of the club's 90th celebrations Isabel gave me wise council of which club member to ask in the club for various roles. She organized the competition for the girl guides of a poster competition "Our world 2027". She co-ordinated with girl guiding and appointed judges for the competition. Even organised that I as President should be driven that evening to give the prizes first to the Rainbows in there place of meeting, and then on to the girlguiding hall where the Brownies and Guides were presented with certificates and prizes.

She also organised a piper for the 90th Anniversary Charter Luncheon.

I will particularly miss Isabel's wise council. And a few necessary reminders of things that I should be doing!

Alison :I write as someone who has had the privilege of knowing Isabel for over 25 years as a member of the Edinburgh Soroptimists.

Shortly after I joined, I remember her telling us all that she had been to a talk at her Church Guild, where she learnt that Bethany Charity shops would accept old and unwanted electrical equipment. Immediately I realised that she was an academic, who was also deeply practical and interested in the practical realities of life. Again, I was reminded of this in my last telephone conversation with her just after Christmas, when we were discussing my Christmas arrangements, with which she was very understanding and familiar. She wore her learning lightly and, in this, reminded me of one of my tutors at Durham University.

A few years ago, I remember her telling me that day she had attended a session of the General Assembly that morning, had a formal lunch and then went on to visit someone, who was a patient at Ellen's Glen House. She came back home from that, had her evening meal and then came out to a Soroptimist meeting afterwards. I am sure that she did one or two other things as well that day, which I have since forgotten. A woman well on into her eighties! She seemed to me to be indestructible.

She was a woman of many activities and interests, Virology, the Church, Soroptimism, Brownies and Guides, Art & Craft and I am sure that there are some, which I have missed out. Her knowledge of Soroptimism was encyclopaedic and she was to whom we Club members turned for advice, and her loss will be keenly felt.

What was entertaining during last spring's lockdown was her telling Clephane Hume, who was considerably younger than she was, not to go out!

Nikki:I have many memories of Isabel not least her passion and determination for whatever it was she was focusing on, and her great sense of 'getting it right'! But when I think of Isabel I picture her beautiful lounge in her top floor flat. Gari and I had been invited to Isabel's as we had agreed to work on the Club Programme 2019/2020. I turned up and proceeded to climb the multiple level grand

staircase to her flat. Standing at the front door gasping for breath and wondering if Isabel had a ready supply of oxygen, I was greeted by Isabel. When I asked how she managed to negotiate those stairs each day and no doubt with her weekly shopping her response was 'cause and effect Nikki - cause and effect' as she promptly turned and (kindly) dismissed my crumpling body. My lesson from that was -if you regularly exercise the right muscles you get the energy to do what you need! I will always remember Isabel as a strong, yet gentle, woman both physically and mentally with amazing energy and determination to keep going and keep giving. Gari and I were then treated to a lovely afternoon of traditional tea and cake. Happy days!

From Marie, a former student and later a colleague at the University of Edinburgh on Isabel Smith PhD

Following a post-doctoral spell at Torry Research Station in Aberdeen, Isabel was appointed to a lecturer post in the Department of Bacteriology (later Medical Microbiology) in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Edinburgh. Her teaching, to medical and science students, was initially

Minutes from 10 February Business Meeting

SIE Business Meeting held on 10th February 2021 on Zoom

Present: Clephane (in the Chair) + Patricia, Edith, Nikki, Pat, Myint Su, Anna, Gari, Marjory, Christine, Lindsey, Kathleen, Alison, Winifred, Liz. Clephane welcomed everyone and observed that had we been meeting face to face this meeting may have been cancelled due to the snow but thanks to us embracing Zoom we were able to go ahead.

Soroptimist Vision & Mission – read by Liz
Apologies for absence were received from 7 members: Dorothy, Trish, Irene, Carolyn, Morag, Mary, Hilary

News of Members: Isabel: "We have all been shocked and saddened to hear of the death of Isabel. It will take time to assemble a fitting tribute to her so only a few words this evening. Her life was so full of activity, not just as a member of SI since 1973. In our context, her knowledge was encyclopaedic

mostly on bacterial physiology, but very soon Isabel specialised in the developing field of medical virology, under Dr RHA Swain. Over the 30+ years, to her retirement in 1994, Isabel was promoted to Senior Lecturer, and played an important role for the health service in the work of the University Virus Diagnostic Laboratory.

Countless students at all levels benefitted from the meticulous practical demonstrations and supervision that characterised the laboratory work of that era, but Isabel was always more than a teacher. She cared about people and kept in touch with many long after they moved on. Her collaborations with clinical colleagues in specialties such as reproductive medicine, ophthalmology, and dermatology especially were greatly appreciated.

Others will testify to Isabel's skills as a needlewoman, her interest in many aspects of art and culture, her remarkably active mind and energetic spirit right up to the end of her days. Her continuing support of Girlguiding, the Soroptimists, Church of Scotland Guild, World Day of Prayer, gives an idea of but a few areas in which Isabel was still active, even joining in a zoom AGM by telephone.

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and wisely applied, our go to person for many things and working on club biographical projects, and trees, right up to the time she went into hospital. Her scientific mind lent itself to such investigations. And she was up for getting involved in almost everything, including the tapestry of Scotland with our tartan carefully stitched. None of us have known the club without Isabel, we thought she was indestructible, so it will take time to adjust, but remember that although she would expect that we would think of her, she would absolutely not want us to be maudlin. One form of tribute is to carry on"

Clephane invited members to send their memories to her to enable us to compile a fitting tribute. We will plan to do something in her honour once we are able to meet again face to face.

A minute's silence was observed in Isabel's memory.

Morag: is now out of 'quarantine' in her room and is now able to move around more freely.

Trish: thrilled to announce that her and her husband are to become grandparents in

August. Irene: has received her jag, is managing OK and was in good spirit. Hilary: Anna bumped into her recently and she is doing OK.

Olivia (daughter of Strasbourg Soroptimist and currently studying in Edinburgh) is now out of self-isolation and has been able to complete some sightseeing in the city. She will be here until June and we hope to be able to meet up with her face to face before she heads home.

Minutes of the last Meeting – Accepted. (proposed by Patricia and seconded by Gari) No amendments. Matters arising: Fionn's 3S application has been accepted and she will be awarded £500 towards her project. This will be sent once the trip is confirmed. No other matters arising

Correspondence: Christine – Reminders re: invite to Quiz night 26/3/21 being run by SI Falkirk plus invite from SI Kirkcaldy to a talk from Philip Holmes, previously part of the Federation 'Empowering Girls in Nepal' project, 22/2/21 @7pm (see email from Christine dated 12/2/21). Christine also advised us that she had purchased a SI Facemask – good quality and fit well (available through the SIGBI website)

Treasurer's Report: Myint Su – Donations have been received from members (as highlighted in last minutes/SIEnna) and 3S fund now stands at £547, International Presidents Appeal donations received £170. Further donations have been received and placed in the general fundraising fund so we will have some funds to distribute at AGM in April. Expenses: anyone with Expenses outstanding should claim them asap (standard form has been previously circulated and is available from Myint Su) Subscriptions: Myint Su will consider discounts we have received in view of COVID plus the reduced costs for meetings in the past 12 months and will recommend an appropriate fee for 2021/2022. Membership: (to facilitate the assessment of next years subscriptions) any resignations should be advised to Myint Su before end of March.

Regional Rep: Myint Su – Documentation received and distributed re the future of Scotland South Region. ACTION – please let Myint Su have your thoughts/ideas as to how we can help the Region move forward by 18/2/21 for Region meeting on 20/2/21. Next Regional meeting is on 20/2/21

No. 63 AGM: Nikki- Myint Su, Nikki and Edith attended the AGM on 23/1/21 (up-date provided in last SIEnna). All votes cast as requested by Club. Accounts accepted: Auditors re-appointed: all nominees for Director role voted in so we now have a Board of 9 Directors- 5 new directors, 2 re-elected and 2 staying in position. The trading position last year showed a £170k loss versus £44k loss the year before and a T/O of £204k v £415k. But this showed how well the Directors and staff had managed the business during COVID taking advantage of all grants and furlough payments (plus significant Soroptimist Gin sales!). There is also an insurance claim for loss of business being submitted which could deliver £250k. Share capital is up £3k showing an increased interest from members becoming shareholders. A legacy of circa £150k has been received which will probably go towards the refurbishment but it will be on a specific aspect of the refurbishment and a room/area will be dedicated to the benefactor. We can help maintain No 63 by joining the 500 Club and by booking to stay at the hotel when visiting London.

Programme Action: Lindsey – The invoice for the Tree Planting at the School has been received and paid. In view of current restrictions it is unlikely we will be planting in March but possibly later in the year. We need to start developing a leaflet we can give out to the children to explain us and our interest in the tree planting. Region PA meeting: (9/2/21) Clubs discussed '16 Days of Activism' activity, tree planting plans and considered the theme for International Womens Day (8/3/21) 'choose to challenge' Our work on Notable Women in Scotland was shared (Glasgow and Kirkintilloch reported they were doing similar projects). Benmore Sequoia Project: Region have engaged with Benmore and plan to arrange a presentation. Some clubs have already committed to other planting projects so we may not get the level of support we would like. Liz mentioned the Scottish Redwood Trust and asked if we felt there was any mileage in us connecting with them also? She has emailed them and advised them of our interest and is awaiting a reply. We agreed we would discuss once Liz had had a response and we knew the appetite across Region for the Benmore

Project. SI's Tree Planting will be mentioned at the COP26 summit this year.

Recycling: used medication Blister Packs can be handed in to Superdrug for recycling.

Programme: Nikki & Alison – Speaker confirmed for February – Climate Change 'what must we do?'. Investigating possibility of speaker on Modern Slavery for March. Region will be organising a presentation on the Benmore Sequoia Project – this will be one afternoon in March and will be recorded so it can be watched at any time.

Clephane thanked Dorothy and the organisers of the Quiz evening for a very pleasant evening.

Membership: Anna – followed up again with a potential member and awaiting a response.

SI Centenary Celebrations

Region Playing Card Project: Anna – can members let Anna know (by 14/2/21) how many packs they would like to order? £8 per pack inc P&P. Club agreed to purchase 6 packs to send to our Friendship Links and 6 packs to have in stock to be used as gifts to eg visiting Soroptimists.

SIGBI Website: Pat – Quiz Night pictures now up on SIE website along with the readings members shared. Facebook: Patricia has been doing a great job 'boosting' our posts and we now have over 3k engaging with our site. Please share with your FB network to further promote our work.

SIEnna – next edition due circa 24/2/21.

President Elect: Nikki- reminder to members of theme for 2021/2022 'Be the change we want to see' and that homework is due in! Each Club member to identify 2 changes she would like to see in 2021/2022. This can be large or small, personal or organisational, local or global, easy or hard – for the benefit

Be the change we want to see'

A well demonstrated and tested Soroptimist ethos but can we put real energy into identifying and signposting the changes we would truly like to see and then as a club, or as individuals, focus on influencing and/or making those changes happen across our Soroptimist centenary year?

of you, the club, the community, the world! A change you are passionate about and would really like to see happen. The suggestions will be collated and the Club will look to influence and/or help make the changes throughout 2021/2022. It would be great if we could record 100 changes we have influenced in our 100th year. Nikki will send out a pro-forma as a prompt but please feel free to just send an email with your suggestions if you prefer.

AGM April 2021: Alison- preparation has started and official notices will be sent out next month. We have been working on the list of officers and their tenure to help collate a list of vacancies and this will be circulated as soon as practical.

AOCB:

Pat-11/2/21 is International Day of Women and Girls in Science. Please share information on our FB site. Particularly pertinent in view of Isabel's STEM connections

Clephane- will send on an email received from an ex-student of hers who has shared her very personal experiences of supporting parents with dementia. In it she appeals for people to support the campaign for improving the care available for dementia patients. Very easy to support and could go towards our SIE target of '100 changes in our 100th year' !

Anna-raised the question of when we might be able to meet face to face. General consensus was that we needed to await Scottish Government guidance/ lifting of restrictions but hopefully by September. It was also hoped that members could meet socially before then.

Date of next Business Meeting: 10th March 2021 Zoom meeting at 7.30. Attendees to join at 7.20pm.

My email of 10/2/21 reminds you of the details – deadline 28/2/21:

I would like to nominate the following change(s) for the Club to consider as part of its focus on 'being the change we want to see' in 2021/2022.

AND/OR

I am highlighting the following change(s) that I will personally support/influence to 'be the change I want to see' in 2021/2022

Please keep the suggestions coming in! I have been inspired by the ones received so far – from supporting Dementia research to focusing on multiple ways of accepting and understanding 'difference' to using our own

Behind the scenes of Minute Secretary (Nikki)

Routine, discipline and good (sometimes selective!) listening skills is all you need to do this job! It is not a difficult or time consuming but very critical to the official running of the Club. It is a constitutional requirement to capture the detail and discussion of the Club Business Meetings and especially any decisions made or actions agreed. For SIE the minutes are officially captured in our monthly newsletter SIEnna.

Before the meeting: I check the agenda and any emails from club officers who have emailed their report prior to the meeting – great for cutting and pasting and saves some note taking during the meeting.

Start of the meeting: I note who is in attendance (just habit! but this is officially and efficiently captured by Marjory and then emailed to me after the meeting) When I first started it was a great way to get to know who everybody was.

During the meeting: I capture pertinent (and interesting) information, comments, decisions and actions. During lockdown the meeting minutes have served to keep those, not able to attend the 'remote' meetings, engaged with what has been happening and the members discussions -so in the last 12 months the minutes may have been more detailed and chatty than they officially need to be-but hey!

After the meeting: in line with the Agenda, (and the standard Minute template) I type up the notes ready for overview by the President(s) for a quick check of facts/accurate representation and then send to the SIEnna editors publication in the next edition of SIEnna.

I always aim to have typed up the minutes no later than 7 days after the meeting so that I

professional skills for the greater good and learning new languages!
Wow!

It's going to be a busy but exciting year..... and the target of '100 changes in our 100th year' doesn't feel quite so daunting now.

President Elect Nikki

can support the timely publication of SIEnna (usually 10 days after the Business Meeting). I would say that having a knowledge of SI language and acronyms is quite important as sometimes you have to act as an 'interpreter'. But as with any language 'using it in anger' does help with the learning process. And there are plenty of fluent SI speakers in the Club to help! It is possible to share this role (as Isabel and I demonstrated prior to lockdown) and it is a great way for an experienced and a less experienced member to work together, share the load and learn. As I move on to my role as President we will have a vacancy for a Minute Secretary – please all consider if you would be prepared to take on this critical role and throw your hat in the ring.

SIE Snippets

Lindsey: recycling suggestion - Medication Blister Packs can be handed in to Superdrug

Christine :Michael Ball says we should list 3 things each day that made us smile and share them with family and friends. Before I go to sleep I try to list 3 things eg seeing a robin or a snowdrop or children playing in snow

Can't find the ZOOM meeting invite?

A number of members have reported the 'disappearance' of the meeting invite sent out by Patricia each month. Look out for the sender being 'Home'- it doesn't always say Patricia C! Plus if you have been copied into an exchange of emails following the meeting invite- if you delete one of the emails it may delete the original invite!

Friendship Link with SI Kiev – Winifred

Our friendship Link was formed after we met a few of the members of the Kiev Club in Munich more than 25 years ago. Since then several members from Kiev have visited Scotland and likewise, we have been there. I have been there many times and seen some of the work they do. One of their projects has been to improve the conditions at a school for partially sighted children. During early years, they met some of the basic needs of the children such as sheets for their beds or potatoes as there was no food. Conditions

have improved. A recent project is concerned with a hospital ward for asthmatic children. On a visit to the project, I was told that they had no drugs to treat the children, a side effect of the war with Russia.



Hot off the Press: Benmore Sequoia Project- find out more.



Following Scotland South Region's interest in embracing the above project as a Region Project, they have arranged a presentation

from Peter Baxter, Curator of Benmore Botanic Gardens on the **afternoon of 4th March 2021** – full zoom meeting information will follow and the presentation will be recorded for those who can't make this day and time. Peter will talk about how we can help safeguard the Giant Redwood Avenue at the Botanic Gardens – following in the footsteps of our Soroptimist forebears 100 years ago.

Preparation for AGM 28th April 2021

Alison as AGM Secretary is underway with preparation for the AGM. Official notifications will be sent out shortly to confirm arrangements. The notifications will include details of any positions that we need to fill to complete our compliment of roles to keep our club thriving. The club continues to succeed through the dedication of our members and the commitment of those taking 'office'. As we are a relatively small club we often hit the challenge of the running of the club frequently falling to a small number of members – we are keen to spread the load and would ask all members to consider taking on one of the vacant roles (even if its for a second time around! You know the ropes 😊) and there is plenty of experience around to support everyone taking on a role for the first time if they need any help/guidance/mentoring. Look out for the opportunities in Alison's AGM notifications!

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.

10 February Business Meeting
24 February Speaker – Climate Crisis: What must we do?
10 March Business Meeting
24 March Speaker - tbc
14 April Business Meeting
28 April – SI Edinburgh AGM