



**Soroptimist
International
Edinburgh
news
notes
anecdotes**

SIEnna 197 March 2021

Here we are, one year on. Remembering all those who have lost their lives to the pandemic and the people for whom it has been a time of loneliness or chronic illness. They must not be forgotten. And so communities come together on March 23rd in an act of commemoration.

So also, groups gather to call for safety for women following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard. An issue that, like modern slavery and trafficking, we too should give attention to – hence our participation in the Cross Party meeting at Holyrood.

But this is a time of year when we can begin to look forward to signs of new life. Spring is becoming more and more evident, bringing with it the possibility of gradual return to a more normal way of life.

Within the next few weeks there are various religious festivals to note or celebrate - Pesach, (Passover), Holi, the spring equinox, Palm Sunday, and Ramadan will commence, so we greet our sisters throughout the world. Familiar rituals bring a touch of certainty and sense of normality even if actual events have to be modified. The end of the month means 'springing forward' to BST on March 28th, which could easily be forgotten in the midst of current restrictions.

Most of us have been vaccinated and some have actually set eyes on one

another. This is going to take some getting used to again! For now, obviously, meetings will have to remain virtual, which has been an unexpected bonus during recent miserable weather. But hopefully in the not too distant future, wee gatherings will be possible – so start getting the house ready.....

Our minds have been on trees – here in Edinburgh in relation to Castleview, and further afield at Benmore. And it won't be long until there are signs of new life within them. Which means action on our part as we keep abreast of developments – see below.

Unexpected occurrences and challenges appear too. A clump of frogspawn has appeared in a plant saucer, inundated by the recent rain, and consequently in need of nurture. Relocation accomplished and maybe there will be a photo of froglets at some future date????????? We are told that engaging with nature is good for us, so they will be carefully monitored.

Roll your Easter eggs, or just sit back and enjoy a chocolate one and look ahead to the changes we can make in the year to come.

Don't Forget !

24th March - Slightly different format for club meeting

7th April - Friendship evening with Easter theme

See below for more details

SIE Business Meeting held on 10th March 2021 on Zoom

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

Soroptimist Vision & Mission – read by Christine

Apologies for absence were received from 7 members: Winifred, Trish, Irene, Carolyn, Morag, Mary, Hilary

News of members:

Anna reported that she had received an email from Carolyn – sending best wishes to everyone and commenting that she had been inspired by the memories of Isabel in the last edition of SIEnna. She has decided to continue her Soroptimist membership and is looking to join Kirkintilloch Club. Hilary -Kay had also been in touch to share her views on a recent suggestion from SIGBI re term of office for Presidents. Christine has spoken to Irene who is well. Dorothy has been in touch with Sally who is currently stuck in Cyprus following an eye operation. Operation was successful and she is able to work from Cyprus but is looking forward to getting back to Romania as soon as she can.

Minutes of the last Meeting – Accepted. (proposed by Pat Black and seconded by Myint Su) No amendments. No matters arising.

Correspondence: Christine – Members of Scotland South Region are doing the Virtual Kilt Walk in aid of the SIGBI Diamond Education Fund. Reminders re: invite to Quiz night 26/3/21 being run by SI Falkirk plus the Cookbook developed by Falkirk Club is available (see recent

emails to all members from Christine) Christine has received emails from National Library of Scotland – they are marking Women’s History Month with various on-line events- worth looking at the website. Christine has sent an article about Soroptimism to People’s Friend – no reply to date so will chase.

Friendship Links: Christine – Christine has been speaking with Irene re her Friendship Link responsibilities as Co-ordinator and specifically as correspondent with Sioux Falls. (Irene is restricted due to no technology connectivity and is currently reliant on friends and neighbours for arranging mailings). Christine has offered to support with the co-ordinator role and Clephane offered to take over the Sioux Falls correspondent’s role. Irene will continue with the Caldwell friendship link as contact is less frequent and manageable.

Treasurer’s Report: Myint Su – All issued cheques have been cleared and Myint Su is preparing accounts for the AGM. Myint Su will calculate the subscription for the next membership year (recognising reductions in costs and reduction in contributions to eg SISS Region) She will notify all members by 24/3/21 of a reduced subscription and a continuing subscription. Suggestion was made that we retain existing subscription levels but Myint Su suggested we look at a reduced figure and people will have the option to donate the difference back to the club if they wish.

Programme Action: Lindsey – The trees for the school have arrived! Lindsey will contact the headmistress to discuss if/how/when we might be able to be involved in the planting. Lindsey has also created an A4 four sided leaflet (folded in half) and has obtained a quote for Printing. £69 for 150 copies* (updated

post meeting - £69/100: £87/150: £102/200) Further suggestions were made re the leaflet: possibly consider the font, add a 'child friendly' cartoon, add the school logo to reflect a partnership with the school. Clephane has offered to road-test the leaflet with some of her young neighbours. Liz was very supportive of the leaflet and flagged it was very hard to cater for all age groups – the hope is that the older children will find it informative and the teachers will use it as a resource to help the younger children understand. Anna asked about on-going care for the trees- we believe once we have donated the trees the school, with the support of the City of Edinburgh will take responsibility for maintenance. Christine had made a suggestion re a plinth for the orchard to reflect the donation from the club. She was aware of a Social Enterprise that made the plinths from reclaimed Pews and provided skills/experience through Grassmarket Community Project. The cost is circa £240. Agreed that it sounded like a good idea – Lindsey would check the practicalities with the headmistress (eg so it didn't hamper grass cutting)

Programme: Nikki & Alison – Subject for **March** Speaker meeting is 'Modern Slavery'. In searching for a suitable speaker Nikki established that UN House Scotland were supporting the Cross-Party Group on Human Trafficking speaker meeting being held on 24th March (same date as our speaker meeting) on the topic of Children Surviving Trafficking. It was suggested that we could join that meeting and 1) hear about the issue 2) understand the impact locally/in Scotland and 3) experience a parliamentary cross party group session. It will also show support for the Cross-Party Group and UN House Scotland. The speaker session starts at 6pm and normally finishes about 7.30 (with some of the attendees going

on to discuss various parliamentary business) We could then join our own Zoom meeting for say 30 minutes to discuss what we have heard, our observations and consider how we might be able to support/take action. There was general agreement to this approach. **ACTION:** Nikki will liaise with UN House Scotland re meeting/joining details and share in due course and will confirm details of the SIE meeting immediately post the session. (via email and SIEnna) Pat will share the SI statement on Human Trafficking so we have that context prior to the meeting. Nikki will also share the details with Scotland South Region in case any other members are interested. **Easter Parade:** it was suggested that we might have a club wide Friendship Group meeting on the theme of Easter on **Wednesday 7th April**. Attendees to create Easter headwear and/or Easter baking and we will just generally have a relaxed 'virtual' social evening. **ACTION :** Nikki to arrange and share details in due course.

Membership: Anna – Region Membership Return now completed. 2 people have shown an interest in the club through the website and Anna has contacted them via email – is awaiting responses.

Regional Rep: Myint Su – Possible Regional project - Region organized a presentation about the **Benmore Sequoia Project**. This was attended by 6-7 of our own members. Very informative and interesting about the work they are doing to secure the future of the Redwoods. Nikki suggested it would be useful to find out more about what the options were for an organization to support the project (rather than individuals making donations), what it would cost and what Region were thinking about doing. **ACTION:** Myint Su will contact Marian at Region to find out what the plan is and update the club in

time for us to discuss at the AGM. (Liz also mentioned that she had had a detailed response from Scottish Redwood Trust who are looking at planting Redwoods. She had advised Ruth from the Benmore project of the Scottish Redwood Trust in the hope that they may connect and work together). Highlights from last Regional meeting: suggested reduction in fees was voted in. We have been asked to advise region of any relevant projects that could be included in the SI update to the COP26 conference in Glasgow this year. The Region now has 10 clubs, 274 members and the size of each club varies between 12-50 members. Full meeting minutes are available on the regional website.

SI Centenary Celebrations

Region Playing Card Project: Myint Su.

Project launched via Zoom presentation on 8th March – International Women’s Day. Attended by a number of our club members. Very good presentation including Anna providing a synopsis of Isabel’s life and work (one of the SIE nominations for the project) Manual and electronic order forms are available on the regional website – order soon, they are selling fast

[HTTPS://Sigbi.org/Scotland-south](https://sigbi.org/Scotland-south)

ACTION people should order their own packs (numbers taken by Anna were to get an indication of demand – SIE showed an interest in 90 packs! Well done SIE!)

Anna also thanked members who had helped by providing the biographical information and photographs of Isabel at short notice.

SIGBI Website: Pat – slowly updating the club Centenary pages. Will be adding an obituary for Isabel. **Social Media** - posted a number of pieces for

International Women’s Day including a piece to celebrate Isabel’s life. We have collected a number of ‘likes’.FaceBook is attracting a lot of attention and linking to a number of US and European clubs. Pat became aware of a posting on International Women’s Day about a Soroptimist from SI Harare, in Africa who is working with Edinburgh University. ACTION: Anna to make contact with her to see if she is based in Edinburgh and if she would like to connect with the club.

SIEnna – next edition due circa 21/3/21.Items for inclusion to Gari and Nikki by 18/3/21. Request from Carolyn to remain on the mailing list for SIEnna once she has transferred clubs.

AGM April 2021: Alison - 1st Official notice has been sent out along with a note of the club positions that are vacant. It is critical that we fill the position of Minute Secretary (as Nikki moves on to new role as President) ACTION Please complete and return any nominations (form included in mailing) to Alison by Saturday 24th April. POST MEETING NOTE – Nomination Form erroneously includes the Correspondence Secretary Post which is **not** vacant as Christine was voted in last year to serve 3 years until 2023. The Treasurer’s post however should have been included (Myint Su was voted in 3 years ago making the post vacant this year. Myint Su has confirmed she is prepared to stand for re-election for a further 3 years)

AOCB: None

Date of next Business Meeting: 14th April 2021 Zoom meeting at 7.30. Attendees to join at 7.20pm.

SIE Speaker Meeting: 24th March 2021
Join the Cross Party Group meeting
on Human Trafficking at 6pm THEN
join SIE discussion meeting at 7.45pm
– all details below. Meeting invites will
also be sent to your email in box

We have agreed to participate in the Cross-Party Group meeting on Human Trafficking (a subject linked to our SI Goals and a number of UN SDG's)

This session will include a presentation on Sexual Exploitation of Children Involved in the Children's Hearings System by Daljeet Dagon, Barnardo's Scotland, and Gillian Henderson, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration.

It will be followed by a presentation by Moira McKinnon and Sheila Miller, Glasgow City Health and Social Care

Partnership, who will provide an overview of the work of the national CSE group as well as work that is specific to Glasgow. As usual, the presentations will be followed by Q&A/open discussion.

To join the **Cross-Party** meeting, please click the link below:

Time: Mar 24, 2021 06:00 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/92023960768>

Meeting ID: 920 2396 0768

To join the **SIE** follow-on meeting please click (or copy & paste) the link below.

Time: Mar 24, 2021 07.45pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87461984891?pwd=MGhMa1h3aXB1d21QNVFtY2pvZl0xZz09>

Friendship Links - History and Importance – from Bashwati Biswas, SIGBI Friendship Link Co-ordinator

Friendship Links are the 'Soroptimists' way of linking with other clubs worldwide for furthering the objectives of Soroptimist International. The Millennium Development Goal 8 is to develop a global partnership for meeting the needs of development. Soroptimist International translates this into Friendship Links. Friendship Links are vital to all Soroptimist Clubs; they are mostly non-physical space that brings together amity, virtues and social justice. Friendship Links are a way of clubs getting involved and supporting each other.

Friendship Links can be made across different countries, federations or within the same country.

Why Have Friendship Links?

- To share Joint Programme Action Projects
- To get to know other Clubs
- To support new developing Clubs

- To enable cross - culture exchanges
- To promote visits, programme exchanges
- To enjoy holiday contacts
- To offer hospitality, house exchange etc.
- To join special events
- To establish warm friendship
- To share good practice

Friendship Links are not merely to exchange greetings and information or share a project but to celebrate in a meaningful way.

We can always hope that the Links are enriched by synergy, such that the sphere of what one club thinks of as their own is expanded to include everything that their friend is and does.

Together, Soroptimist Clubs can achieve great things. Hence at Soroptimist International, we always encourage the clubs and club members to take initiatives to cherish the Links.

AndUpdates from our own Friendship Links

SI Madurai, South India – Myint Su

In Sept 2017, Latha Abiruben, a past-President of SI Madurai visited Edinburgh with her daughter who was going to be a PG student at Edinburgh University (see SIEnna Issue 165 of Sept 2017).



Gari may remember that Navia subsequently became a UN House intern. Latha wanted a friendship link with SIE and one was established on 13th March 2018. I'm afraid no further progress was made either from the Madurai end or ours as it was a time when I was often absent in Myanmar. Pat had been welcomed in Madurai in her year as SIGBI President

and Edith, Anna and I met their president at the SIGBI Conference in October 2019 at Bournemouth.

Si Madurai seems a very active club (see their web site: <http://www.simadurai.in>), involved in many eco-friendly projects, some of which are joint ventures with many of their other Friendship Link clubs. The video of their latest Zoom meeting was on climate change, and clubs from overseas as well as India itself tuned in. SIE members might wish to see a re-run on U-Tube ([SI International Meet on Climate Change - YouTube](#)).



SI Riverside, California - Trish

This link was established many years ago by members of SI Leith and moved across to SI Edinburgh when the clubs merged. Trish took on the role of correspondent as a relatively new member in the late 1990's. Trish's update: I am still corresponding with SI Riverside and receive a monthly newsletter. The newsletter is very informative and as such is quite lengthy so is difficult to share on a regular basis. However, a few highlights - the Club has a very varied programme and recently celebrated Valentine's day with lavish

entertainment and a baking competition. They also play a lot of golf as they enjoy a much warmer climate. S I Riverside are keeping Covid-free which is always good news. I did meet one of the members for afternoon tea a few years ago. She was touring Scotland and spending a few days in Edinburgh.

If you want to see what goes on across the SI Americas Federation then click on the link below [Sorooptimist International of the Americas | Empowering Women & Girls | Sorooptimist International of the Americas, Inc.](#)

With all our Friendship Links, please get curious, ask questions and make suggestions as to how we might work together in the future.

A BIG Thank you. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Irene for her significant involvement and co-ordination of our club Friendship links – acting as our Co-ordinator for many years and maintaining excellent links with both SI Sioux Falls and SI Caldwell clubs over the years. Irene is expert at writing lovely, descriptive, handwritten letters which we are sure would have been a regular pleasure for our Friendship Link Clubs to receive.

The SIE bush at Saughton is thriving !



A quick update from Christine

We visit Saughton at least twice a week, latterly with a flask of coffee. This is our shrub which is quite big. The odd picture is because there are two air vents just above the shrub which is blowing out steam!

SI Centenary Celebrations – Scotland South Region Playing Card project.

Zoom launch on International Women’s Day 8th March 2021. SIE is very proud to have a number of past and present

members included within this Playing Card celebratory project. Click on the link below to enjoy the recording of the launch on Zoom

[Playing cards launch - Zoom](#)

Easter Friendship evening – 7th April 2021 @7.30pm on Zoom – come along for a relaxed, remote, social evening with a bit of competition, a bit of fun and hopefully a lot of laughter and chat. As we have not been able to fundraise much this year we are asking members to donate** £5 for the evening’s enjoyment. Zoom meeting invite will follow – see below what we have in store.



Easter Bake-Off -an invitation from our very own Prue Leith! (Lindsey)

Cake or large biscuit allowed.

The joy of a bake-off when you don't actually have to bake! Now what could be easier than that ladies? But if you want to make the cake or biscuit just go ahead 'cause we won't know if it's edible or not! Just show us your decorating skills with a themed cake top over a plain Victoria sponge with icing and chocolate eggs, bunnies and chicks or a traditional Simnel Cake – that's a fruit cake and ready-made marzipan and remember the eleven marzipan balls to represent – well not saying as it might be a quiz question!

Large double biscuits are sometimes available from artisan bakers, like Gregg's (really) but two jammed tea biscuits work well and all you have to do is ice one smooth side and decorate – maybe even a Soroptimist/tree/Easter theme!



Plus an Easter themed quiz, some more poems/prose from our own talented members and a possible sing-a-long.

Please join, along with your own coffee and cake (or something stronger if you prefer) and if possible, some Easter Headgear! It can be something you already have or something you can just knock together with whatever you happen to have available in lockdown!

**Donations can be made to our SI Edinburgh Account/sent to Myint Su – please note 'Easter' and your surname, on your donation. Many thanks in advance.



Programme of SIE Club meetings 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.

24 March Speaker - Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery: Attendance at Cross-Party Group on HT 6.00-7.30pm (times approx) then SIE zoom meeting to follow at 7.45pm

7 April - Easter Friendship meeting

14 April - Business Meeting

28 April – SI Edinburgh AGM