



**Soroptimist  
International  
Edinburgh  
news  
notes  
anecdotes**

**SIEnna 228 September 2024  
President's Message**

I am sorry not to be able to meet with you in person for our first business meeting of the Autumn. I am in Ribagnac, Dordogne on a long awaited family holiday, where I hope it will at least be warm and without wind!

I did want however to say welcome back and that I hope all of you have had some down time over the last couple of months and are ready for action in the Autumn. In particular around the 16 days of activism!

There are clear signs that the new government at Westminster intend to take the issue of violence against women and girls seriously so let's think about what we might do to maintain the pressure on them (and the Scottish government) to properly resource support for survivors of abuse and be bold in taking steps towards eradicating it altogether.

Let us hope – and perhaps remind the Scottish government – that they have made a commitment to enact the Misogyny legislation and that we see it right at the top of the priority list in their legislative programme for 2024 – 2025.

We have forged great partnerships already (Edinburgh College of Art, LinkNet, Edinburgh City Council VAWG, contact

with St. Brides/Edinburgh Community services/The Welcoming) I look forward to developing these together and creating new opportunities for activity and advocacy that enables, empowers and educates women and girls. A project with the Edinburgh Futures Institute....?!

Let's see what our considerable collective talents come up with.

Have an excellent meeting and I look forward to seeing everyone in person soon,

Best wishes In friendship Liz

**SAVE THE DATE**

**REGION MEETING AND AGM**

Saturday 28th September 2024

Carnegie Conference Centre,  
Halbeath Road, Dunfermline KY11  
8DY

Starting at 10.30am Cost £15 to  
include coffee on arrival and lunch

**Congratulations to Kathleen for her presentation of a Quaich from the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scot club for her service to the club  
Best wishes from the Club, Kathleen!**

**Congratulations to President Liz on climbing Ben Nevis with her family this summer"**

**From Liz: "Although I did not set out to raise money, on the day I decided some extrinsic motivation was needed so committed to giving Women's Aid £10 for every 100 metres of elevation I climbed. As I made it to the top, 1345 metres, I donated £130.00 to them!"  
Well done Liz!!!**

**Afghan Medical Students arrive in Scotland**

Nineteen female medical students banned from attending university in Afghanistan are to complete their studies in Scotland. They arrived in Edinburgh in early September.

They were forced to give up medicine after the [Taliban retook control of Afghanistan three years ago](#) and clamped down on women's rights.

The Linda Norgrove Foundation, a Lewis-based charity (one we supported financially last year) worked with UK and Scottish governments to arrange visas and places at medical schools.

The Foundation highlighted the student's plight [last year](#). But it said efforts to bring the women to the UK were delayed by bureaucracy and regulations.

Conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East complicated matters further due to the pressures they placed on government, the charity added.

The Foundation has thanked the Scottish government and UK government's Scotland Office for finding ways to overcome some of the major challenges involved.

The foundation was set up in memory of aid worker Linda Norgrove, from Uig in Lewis, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2010.

It has raised £60,000 so far to cover the cost of getting the 19 women to the UK and accommodating them in Scotland.

The women said there were times they feared for their lives. One of the students, Omulbanin Sultani, said: "We endured one thousand days of suffering to reach this point. One thousand days of being confined to our homes, of having our voices silenced with nothing but tears and sorrow, our lives wasting away. But throughout these harsh and unbearable days, the only motivation of light in our dark world was the presence of the Linda Norgrove Foundation, who

stood beside us and never let us feel alone."



### Visitors to Edinburgh

On Saturday 3rd August SI Edinburgh members met Dr Alice Kersken from SI Duesseldorf-Kaiserworth. It is one of 7 clubs in Duesseldorf.

Alice was visiting her niece Anne who is studying for a PhD at St Andrews University. Anne is also working and using her Art talents at St Andrews Botanical Garden

Thanks to Gari for organising a light supper in the spacious dining room of the Royal Scot's Club where we had convivial conversations and excellent food and service Anna



### Lamont Centre Sports Club, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Sally Wood-Lamont, a librarian at the University of Edinburgh, was involved in sending books to Romania. After a sabbatical there, she decided to move permanently in 1994. She became involved helping young people with disabilities as she felt that there were almost no facilities for them and there were few opportunities for them to leave their homes and mix socially.

She started the Lamont Sports Centre in December 1999 with a view to providing support and training, not only in independent living skills but also paralympic sport. Over the years the emphasis has moved to Paralympic sports and Sally has been the President of the Romanian National Paralympic Committee since 2009.

At the Paralympic Games 2024 in Paris, Romania had six athletes – two were from the Lamont Centre Sports Club in Cluj-Napoca:

1. Alex Bologa won the gold medal in para-judo. Alex had won bronze in Rio, bronze in Tokyo and now GOLD this year.

Camelia Ciripan won a bronze medal in para table tennis – the first ever medal in the Olympics or Paralympics in

2. the individual event in table tennis.

SI Edinburgh club members congratulate Sally and the individual athletes on these results.

Dorothy Reilly  
Edith Elliot



Camelia Ciripan after winning the bronze medal in para table tennis

### Interesting Exhibitions in Edinburgh

Modern Two

Women in Revolt! Art and Activism in the UK 1970-1990

Until 26 January 2025, £4.00 - £14.00.

Includes info on Greenham Common, which President Liz attended.

National Museum of Scotland

Cold War Scotland, Exhibition Gallery 2

Until 26<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Free.

Topics include nuclear power, nuclear weapons, CND, hidden bunkers.

I found this a fascinating exhibition as I was too young and unaware to worry about the Cold War.

[Discover](#)

### The Cold War and Scottish society

History and cultures, Science and technology, Scotland

Dovecot Studios

Stitched: Scotland's Embroidered Art

From 25 October until 18 January 2025, cost £12.00, reduction for NTS members.

Features over 80 pieces covering a 200 year period, from National Trust for Scotland properties.

Chris

### Kids Love Clothes



This (below) is a photo of our 'sorters' out at Kids Love Clothes, a charity we have supported for nearly fifteen years. If we get to go even once a year to sort the donations, it's worth remembering that the need for children's clothing in the Edinburgh area is still very relevant in these difficult times. Usual faces came to help and much appreciated by the club I'm sure.  
Lindsey



### **Scottish Love in Action**

Scottish Love in Action Charity (SLA) are having a Book Cafe on Saturday 28th September at George Watson's College at 10.30-12.30.

Please bring 5 books in good condition and take 5 books home cost Adults £7.50, children £5, under 5's free  
Buy your tickets from [www.SLA-India.org](http://www.SLA-India.org)

The SLA is an Edinburgh based Charity that supports children in India

SLA Fireworks Extravaganza at Myreside Stadium

Sunday 3rd November. There are two displays one at 4 pm and one at 6.30

Volunteers needed

Tickets from [www.SLA-India.org](http://www.SLA-India.org)

Anna

### **Minutes of SI Edinburgh Business Meeting on Wednesday 11th September**

Apologies: Liz, Clephane, Dorothy, Elaine, Gari, Irene, Judith, Pat, Kathleen

Welcome message from President Liz which will be in SIEnna

Matters arising from minute of Business Meeting of 12th June 2024

List provided by VisitScotland of eating places has been sent to organisers of SIGBI Conference.

Summer outing on 26th June 2024 was most enjoyable.

Victoria was to be contacted re publicity for 16 days of activism against gender based violence - ACTION - carry forward to next business meeting.

Winifred has not received minutes and other correspondence - ACTION - Nikki to ask Gari to check mailing details.

Minutes approved by Alison and seconded by Anna.

SIGBI Conference Edinburgh November 2024 - pre and post plans

Assembly Rooms are not available pre-conference for a potential SI Edinburgh led 'Orange Café' for the conference delegates.

SIGBI have now organised for coffee to be served at the Kimpston Hotel, Charlotte Square, on the Friday morning, pre-conference - SIE members have been asked to help meet and greet attendees.

ACTION: volunteers to let Nikki/Liz know by 30/9/24

SIE members at conference - Liz, Anna, Chris, Edith, Elaine, Gari, Judith, Lindsey, Nikki.

Suggestions of wearing orange garment re 'Orange Cafes'.

There is also interest in a get together for all Scottish delegates, after the conference, perhaps in the back room at the Portrait Gallery cafe.

'Smalls for all' will collect new underwear, (male and female) and bras at the conference. Anna asked if there was a publicity pamphlet that we could use to share with friends ACTION – Nikki to ask Marian (SI Dunfermline) for any collateral. In the meantime you can google 'smalls for all' and find a lot of information on their website plus their facebook page.

### **SIGBI Conference - resolutions**

Approval needed for SIGBI rules for conduct at a General Meeting - approved.

Approval needed for SIGBI AGM minutes of 2023 - approved.

SIGBI vacancies - 10 candidates were all approved as each vacancy had a single candidate.

More details in papers sent out with meeting information.

**Scotland South Region AGM on 28th September 2024** at Carnegie Conference Centre Dunfermline from 10 00 to 15 00.

Morning - Speakers, including pupils from Balwearie High School Kirkcaldy on peer mentoring regarding prevention of violence.

Nikki to talk about future management of the Region.

AGM followed by Lunch

Afternoon - Ruth Healey, SIGBI president to speak on the Strategic Plan and Modernisation. She will also respond to questions to be submitted in advance - no questions from the floor.

Fun Quiz/activity in table teams to end the day.

ACTION : Inform Nikki by 19th September if attending - lunch etc is £15.00, payable on the day.

Current attendees -Liz, Chris, Edith, Elaine, Nikki , Lindsey

### **SIGBI Modernisation Proposals**

ACTION: To discuss Ruth Healey's response to members' comments/SI Edinburgh questions to the SIGBI Board, at next business meeting on 9th October.

To agree our position re vote on final version of resolution at SIGBI Conference.

Liz had indicated in her letter to SIGBI Board, that if there was no satisfactory answer to our proposals we would vote no, as unclear re SIGBI's intentions.

Regional Benevolent Fund Rep role is dependent on SIGBI modernisation proposals to centralise the role, which would lose personal local knowledge that enable recipients to be signposted appropriately.

### **Questions to Ruth (SIGBI President) at the Scotland South Region Meeting:-**

1)Why are clubs to be allowed to opt in/out of Regions if Regions are so valuable?

2)Communication - how do we monitor if the proposed changes achieve the desired outcomes/improvements?

3)FCC role is being removed – why?

4) Is there an Organisational Structure available so we can see how the new model will work?

5) Can they explain how this will retain members and attract new members/

6) Why is the Associate Members status being changed ?

### **Scotland South Region new structure**

Last year we introduced a new way of working in self managed teams operating across the Region. Programme Action, Admin/Communication, Membership, Money

PAMM Co ordinating team in situ to ensure new model worked and was sustained. Intention for PAMM co-ordination team to then dissolve.

Recommendations for evolving the new model to cover issues/concerns highlighted during the past 12 months are incorporated in a paper to all clubs (sent to SI Edinburgh members under separate cover 18/9/24)

To establish a Regional Management Team with reps from the 4 self managed teams, the FCC plus a new coordinating role to oversee that everything that needs doing gets done - eg Annual Report ,ensuring Region meetings happen, requests submitted by the Clubs are actioned/responded to.

Regional Reps to make up Regional Council and work with Management Team.

Hopefully this arrangement will move Region forward without too much red tape.

ACTION - Nikki to send out paper for review

ACTION - Paper to be discussed at Club on 9/10 and Region 28/9 for sign off 30/11.

Mentoring - Dorothy, Liz, Nikki - to update at next business meeting on 9th October.

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) group - Liz and Judith attended meetings. Theme/focus – Womens safety on the Streets. Not all organisations represented at the two meetings, however there still seems to be much enthusiasm and intention to take actions during 16 days of activism. Judith offered the support of SI Edinburgh in any way that we could practically assist.

Actions /tasks still to be allocated.

Judith also mentioned our plans to work with the Bruntsfield Retail Association to raise awareness.

It was felt it would be interesting to invite the chair of the group to come and talk to SI Edinburgh

ACTION – Judith had previously agreed to approach Angela from CEC VAWG to speak to club, and will follow up.

### **16 Days of Activism**

Lindsey has identified various orange items online.

Liz and Nikki working on a leaflet to give out when they speak to Bruntsfield traders.

SIGBI also can provide materials.

Winifred asked for clarity on what we are asking of shopkeepers and should there be a common objective and a consistency of symbolism in the windows to demonstrate cohesion/collective activity/support - to use orange in their windows, give out info re safety for women, and raise awareness.

ACTION - To update at 9th October business meeting.

### **SI Kirkintilloch 50th anniversary**

Christine to attend with her sister, and present a card with a donation. Agree to make donation of £50 to recognise their

special anniversary and also our connection with member Carolyn (past member of SI Edinburgh) We are requesting the donation go towards specific community work /charity they are supporting.

ACTION - Christine to contact re desired charity recipient.

### Recipients of AGM proposed donations

Judith has previously researched possible recipients especially smaller organisations- see minutes of AGM on 8th May2024.

ACTION – Donation to be made to:

SAHELYIA (organisation to support mental health in Black and minority ethnic women and refugees)

Members also suggested a donation to the Lamont Centre in Cluj, Romania, which was established by a member of SIE

Scottish Love in Action (SLA) - founded by an Edinburgh woman focusing on Education in India. Soroptimists have volunteered at their fundraisers.

ACTION - DISCUSS AT 2025 AGM

ACTION - Alison to contact Scottish Love in Action re possible speaker

### Membership

Anna had been asked to speak at a meeting at Girl Guides Alison Cargill House. This was cancelled but Anna hopes the opportunity will come along again.

A number of members met Alison G, a friend of Gari's at the Youth Hostel - Anna is still in contact

Anna is in contact with Anne, the niece of the German Soroptimist who met members in the summer.

**Website** - Liz is now working with Pat on updating Facebook and the Club website.

**SIEnna** deadline is Friday 20th September for sending items to Gari and Clephane.

### Orange café



Speaker meeting on 25th September – members to wear orange for the meeting instead of having an orange cafe.

Members are invited to meet up from 6pm in the Hostel cafe for a coffee/glass of wine before the meeting.

Friday 25th October - at Futures Institute - could promote 16 days of activism. PS Bring your own cup for water/ coffee if possible!

Remember to take photos for publicity.

**Kids Love Clothes** - Lindsey said that the most recent day was of great benefit to the charity. She will send photos to Slenna.

Date of next meetings: Speaker meeting 25th September; Business meeting 9th October

## Edinburgh SIGBI Conference 2024

Join us for our Edinburgh Conference 2024 at the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms. The Conference will take place over three days 1-3 November 2024.

Visit the Conference website for full details: [www.sigbi.org/edinburgh2024/](http://www.sigbi.org/edinburgh2024/)  
We look forward to seeing you there!

## **NEW BOOK by author Kathleen**

Kathleen's new novella, set in a world where women are in benign control and men the willing childbearers, is now available on kindle entitled

RANNA AND THE CRESCENDO KILT

## **BOOK REVIEW from Christine**

Ladies who punch by Yasmin Alibhai Brown

This book is about 'Fifty trailblazing women whose stories you should know'  
This is not a list of self aware, inspirational role models.

There are diverse characters, remarkable women of substance, where the price of success is often scorn from press and social media.

When Theresa May and Nicola Sturgeon met officially, there were remarks about their legs and shoes.

Yasmin's book is in three sections, pioneers who have passed away, those who have broken barriers by changing the world in small and big ways and finally young feminists pushing for a better future.

What an exhilarating read!

Each article is short and precise with most useful footnotes and references to sources.

**Remembrance Day 2024:** 10 November in Glasgow George Square 10.30 for parade at 11 and Civic reception. Please email [hello@unhscotland.org.uk](mailto:hello@unhscotland.org.uk) for details



## **ORANGE THE WORLD!**

*On Sunday 25th August 2024 we gathered in the new Edinburgh Futures Institute cafe for our Orange cafe.*

*This was the second anniversary of our setting up of the initiative to raise awareness of the UNiTe campaign "Orange the World".*

*We chose the venue to celebrate the fact that our first cafe was also held at the International Book Festival cafe.*

*Our profile is increasing as we build our materials to share and publicise the campaign and become increasingly "orange" ourselves!*

