



President: **Rose Marginson**

Dear Club Members,

This time last year I was packing for a very different Christmas in India. We met some wonderful people and of course I talked about Sorooptimism....the photo shows the 'Happy Sisters', as they had translated 'Sorooptimists', on the chilly roof terrace of the 'Real Exotic Marigold Hotel' in Jaipur, as visited by various pensioner celeb's in the TV series. We'd enjoyed several Real Indian G&T's and delicious pakora..... this year I'm at home for a Zoom Christmas with friends on screen, suitable food & drink to hand, and again most probably to excess! I hope you enjoy your Newsletter and your Christmas!

Sue Underwood



President's Message – President Rose Marginson



It has definitely been a different and difficult year for everyone. In spite of that I'm so pleased we've been able to keep in touch with each other, and continue meetings on zoom thanks to Sue.

We had our AGM on zoom, delayed for 6 months because of COVID in the hope we could meet in person. Immediate Past President Rosemary removed the Presidential chain and it was couriered across the road to my house by her husband!

We have welcomed 4 new members in this time , Lori, Yemi, Sarah and Carina . We have managed some fundraising, the handbag evening , raffle, and distributed items and funds to some of the organisations in need who we support including Women's Aid.

Like everybody I can't wait till we can all meet properly again .

I wish all of you a very Happy Christmas and New Year .

President Rose

& When Zoom just won't do.....Masks On!



President Rose and Barbara delivered the 30 pyjama sets donated by Members to **Emmeline's Pantry**.

They will be given at Christmas to some of the women who get support, food and other help from there .



*Perhaps following our lead,
Royalty visited Emmeline's Pantry a few days later!*



My First Federation Conference

I attended my first SIGBI conference last weekend. As outgoing Federation President Isobel noted, the virtual nature of the conference meant that more people could attend, as it meant reduced expense and travelling time.

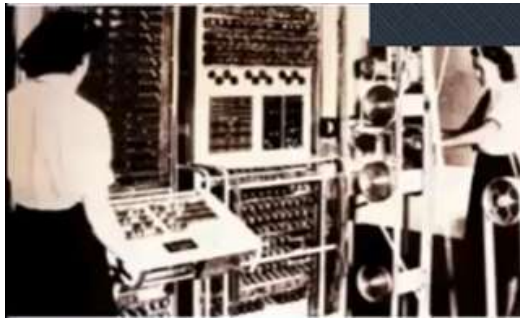
It was certainly a deciding factor for me and was great that I could catch up later, when life got in the way and I had to go into work instead. I must confess that whilst listening, I was also able to cook and knit. But not all at the same time. I'm good at multi-tasking - but not that good!

The stand-out for me was Professor Sue Black with her presentation - **'If I can do it, so can you'**.



She described her journey from leaving school at 16 and becoming a young mother to her current position as Professor of Computer Science at Durham University. On the way she had escaped domestic violence by entering a refuge, studied maths at night-school, then a University Degree and PhD, set up a networking group for women in tech, saved Bletchley Park from closure and received an OBE for services to tech., and lots more.

When most people think of Bletchley Park we think of the work of a handful of men. But over 50% of the workforce were women. There were about 8,000 women using their skills and the tech of the time, to shorten the war.



I was particularly impressed with her #techmums project to help young mum's with IT skills, as she realised that children's educational attainment correlates to their mother's. It gave the women so much more confidence in their skills and prospects too.



The other speakers were excellent too, and Jane Garvey said she'd try to put a word in for us about getting on Women's Hour, before she leaves.

Another highlight was an excellent presentation on the work of S I South Lancashire Region - with a picture of our very own Barbara at TDAS.

Would I attend another Soroptimist conference? Virtually? Definitely.

But with my love of Ireland (especially the whiskey), the Soroptimist International Conference Dublin 2023 is very, very tempting.

Elaine Loader



I am a little fairy
On tap o' the Christmas Tree
It's no' a job I fancy
Well how would you like tae be me?

A' tarted up wi' tinsel
It's enough to mak ye boak
An a couple o' jaggy branches
Rammed up the back o' your frock!

An' these wee lights a'roon me
I canna get my sleep
An' there's the yearly visit
Fae Santa - Big fat creep!

On Christmas Day I'm stuck up here
While you're a' wirin' in
An' naebody says, "Hey you up there
Could you go a slug o' gin?"

It's nae joke bein' a fairy
The job's beyond belief.
You've got to go roon' the
wean's beds
An' lift their rotten teeth.

But o' a' the joabs a fairy gets
An' I've mentioned only some;
The very worst is sitting up a tree
Wi' pine needles up yir bum.

When a' the fairies meet again
By the light o' the silvery moon,
Ye can tell the Christmas fairies
They're the wans that canna sit doon

The Christmas tree's a bonny sight
As the firelight softly flickers
But think o' me I'm stuck up here
Wi' needles in my knickers

So soon as Christmas time's right by
An' I stop bein' sae full o' cheer,
I'll get awa back tae Fairyland
An' I'll see yous a' next year.

A Scottish Fairy

Thanks to Shena Cuttle

Leeds Literary Prize 2020

I was delighted to be a guest reader for this year's Soroptimist International Leeds Literary prize – a biennial prize for unpublished fiction for UK Black and Asian women. There are two awards – a "Reader's Choice" and an overall award. I first got involved in 2018 when I spotted an article in the Soroptimist News asking for volunteer readers for the Reader's Choice. As an avid bookworm and a former member of SI Leeds, it was an opportunity I couldn't miss!

So, this year once again, at the end of August, I duly received my 6 manuscripts and started to read. The settings ranged from the UK to China, via Africa and India and included a crime novel and short stories. As a Reader's Choice judge, you are not required to read every page of every book but they were all written with such care and passion, I thought the least I could do was invest some time and read from beginning to end! The judging process for this category is very straight forward – you just rank the books in from 1 to 6 with 1 being your favourite.

The Awards ceremony took place on October 16th, as a virtual event on You Tube. It was a real treat to "meet" the shortlisted writers and hear them read extracts from their entries.

The following manuscripts were shortlisted for the 2020 SI Leeds Literary Prize - clicking the link will take you to a short excerpt from each. Which ones do YOU think won the two Awards?

[A boy called Silence](#) – Nana Afua A Pierre

[The Good Twin](#) – Sumana Khan

[Things We Do Not Tell The People We Love](#) – Huma Qureshi

[Bat Monkey and Other Stories](#) – Aisha Phoenix

[The Sun Sets in the East](#) – L M Dillsworth

[The Funeral Cryer](#) – Wenyan Lu

You can find out the answers at <https://www.sileedsliteraryprize.com/>

Barbara Blaber

We've had some new experiences too....

'Cook Along With Ali'

Ali Hanbury, one of our Linked Members, suggested and offered to present a 'Cook Along'.

Ali selected the recipe and the evening was chosen.

The recipe for **Coconut & Cardamom Dahl** was circulated with the invitation to participate or observe the event in return for a suitable donation to our Charities.

Elaine offered to send out Spice packs for those not used to cooking Indian food

Then the cooking was done and the meal ready to serve....



Ali's verdict...."it was lots of fun to cook together, to chat and to hear people's recipe tips and tales of travelling. I really enjoyed meeting some new folk too. Thank you to everyone for joining in and to those who came simply to chat."

& from the cooks & observers...

..."Fantastic recipe, thanks Ali. It was good listening to clear instructions instead of getting curry stains on the cook book!" *Jeff*& I did what I usually do when Jeff is cooking, drink G&T and watch! *Sue*

..."If life hands you lemons, make lemonade. If life hands you lentils, make delicious coconut dhal with good friends on zoom!" *Elaine*

..."A fun evening cooking . Thanks Ali I really enjoyed it." *President Rose*

..."I really enjoyed this evening. Thank you so much - the food tasted delicious." *Carina*

..."Very entertaining and a well presented way of making this aromatic Dahl. I only missed the smell of spices, otherwise a brilliant and entertaining evening. I learned so much" *Malgorzata*

..."A very good evening! In fact it exceeded my expectations for an enjoyable evening, not being able to take part. Nice to do something different. Ali was an excellent tutor & host" *Rosemary*

Fun, food, friendship and fund raising, as they say, what's not to like? – when is the next one, please?

Sue Underwood et al

Coconut and Cardamom Dahl (ve)

A recipe by Sabrina Ghayour

Makes approximately 6 servings

Ingredients

2 x tsp Cumin Seeds
2 x tsp Coriander Seeds
Seeds from 6 Cardamom pods
2 x tsp Fennel Seeds
2 x tbsp Sunflower Oil
2 x medium Brown Onions, Finely Chopped
6 x Large Garlic Cloves, Crushed
3 x heaped tsp Ground Turmeric
500g Red Lentils
1 Can Full Fat Coconut Milk 400ml
Sea Salt & Black Pepper
Nigella Seeds for Garnish
1 tbsp Vegan Butter *optional

Rice to serve. Approx 90/100g per serving. Basmati or long grain – whatever you have in!



Fresh Tomato, Coriander and Red Onion Relish

2 x Tomatoes, diced
½ Red Onion, finely diced
15g (a small handful) of Fresh Coriander Leaves- roughly chopped
2 tsp Nigella Seeds (optional)

Equipment you'll need - Safe space to position your laptop or iPad etc (plugged in for battery)!

A sharp knife
Chopping board
Tin opener
Pestle and Mortar (or a mixer)
Garlic crusher
Large pan and a medium pan
Medium mixing bowl
Wooden spoon
Sieve
Tea spoon and table spoon
Apron (optional)
Bowls/plates to serve

Method

Toast the cumin, coriander, cardamom and fennel seeds over a medium heat until they become fragrant and brown a little (don't allow them to catch or they'll burn).

Crush the toasted spices in a pestle and mortar.

Return the ground spice mixture to the pan over medium heat, add the sunflower oil and onion.

Fry for approximately 5 minutes then add the garlic and fry for a further 1-2 minutes.

Add the Turmeric and fry until the onions soften.

Add the Lentils, Coconut Milk and top up with enough water to cover everything.

Season well with salt and pepper

Bring to a boil then cover with a lid and simmer over a low heat for 30-45 minutes. Check the liquid level and stir from time to time to ensure it doesn't catch at the bottom. Add a little water and stir if the liquid is being absorbed too quickly.

Meanwhile, turn your attention to the Tomato, Coriander and Red Onion Relish by mixing all the ingredients together.

Add the butter to the dahl and mix well just before serving.

Serve piping hot with rice, sprinkle the dahl with a pinch of nigella seeds.

Ali Hanbury

Handbags on Zoom - Retail Therapy & Fund Raising!

In November, thinking about Christmas presents, President Rose remembered previous Handbag Parties she had hosted....not possible this year, but could we do it on Zoom? We asked Karen Makin of 'Antonia's Handbags' if she was able and willing to 'give it a go'..... Karen agreed, turned her home into a studio & after a short rehearsal session, presented her handbags and accessories to us for about 90 minutes!



Note the concentration!

Decisions, decisions!

It was difficult enough with the Handbags & Purses.....

But then came the Umbrellas.....the 'Upside Down' design fascinated us!

& then the Scarves, Hats & Gloves.....



Never have Soroptimists and friends worked so hard at Retail Therapy or Fund Raising..... well not for a while anyway!

Finally, Karen begged for mercy!

(Well, not really, she was actually asking us if we'd seen enough!)

Then came the ordering process.....

We attempted to take it in turns to ask for what we'd spotted... we'd said we would make notes as we went along, good idea for the handbags but the vast array of umbrellas and scarves inevitably 'crashed the system!'

Karen had enlisted the help of her husband to 'put away & label' our purchases as Karen showed us more & more of her wonderful wares in an attempt to satisfy all of our requirements!

(How many umbrellas did you buy Rosemary?)



When orders had been checked, varied and payment received, Karen delivered everything to President Rose who then delivered our purchases to our doorsteps – strange that we couldn't have more than a chat at the car or door, but I know it took a lot longer than expected as it was!

Reesult! Many Christmas gifts now ready for wrapping!

Karen did a marvellous job for her first Zoom sale – not only did she bring 'Antonia's Handbags' to our screens, but also pledged to donate a very generous 10% of our spend back to our Charities!

Many, many thanks to you Karen. You are a



& should definitely be a Soroptimist!

Sue Underwood

Antonia's Handbags – Karen Makin

karenmakin0051@gmail.com



Antonias Handbags

So What Did You Know About These Inspirational Women?....Quiz Answers as promised!



1	Who said – “Stand for something or you will fall for anything.”	Rosa Parks (1913-2005) 92
2	Who, moments before her wedding ceremony, gave her future husband a letter politely outlining the conditions of their marriage..... she wished to continue to lead her own life & the petty confinements of a ‘medieval code of faithfulness’ were not the means to such freedom. If in a year they had not found happiness as a couple, she further stipulated, they should go their separate ways.	Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) 40
3	Who coordinated the use of diagnostic X-rays during the First World War?	Marie Curie (1867-1934) 67
4	Who am I describing? Her stark, almost savage beauty, accented by thick, wing-like eyebrows and the suggestion of a moustache, is instantly compelling!	Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) 47
5	In the American Civil War, who worked for the Union Army, first as a cook and nurse, and then as an armed scout and spy..... The first woman to lead an armed expedition in the war, she guided the raid at Combahee Ferry, which liberated more than 700 enslaved people. Later she was active in the women’s suffrage movement.	Harriet Tubman (1822-1913) 90-91
6	Who is the incumbent United States Poet Laureate?	Joy Harjo (1951-) 69
7	Whose strategic advocacy extended to word choice, favouring the use of "gender" instead of "sex," after her secretary suggested the word "sex" would serve as a distraction to judges?	Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-2020) 87
8 & 9	Who wrote several semi-autobiographical novels, including one made into a film in 1990 starring Meryl Streep, Shirley Maclaine and Dennis Quaid? What was the title of this book & film? Postcard From The Edge	Carrie Fisher (1956-2016) 60
10	Now for a question on the only ‘Inspirational Woman’ not yet covered.... On 12 July 2013, her 16th birthday, Malala spoke at the UN to call for worldwide access to education. The UN dubbed the event "Malala Day".. It was her first public speech since the attack, leading the first ever Youth Takeover of the UN, with an audience of over 500 young education advocates from around the world. Who’s shawl was Malala wearing?	Malala Yousafzai (1997-) 23 Benazir Bhutto’s shawl
11	Who was born first?	Harriet Tubman 1822 (Marie Curie 1867)
12	Who was, or is now the oldest? (Harriet Tubman 90-91 & Ruth Bader Ginsburg 87)	Rosa Parks 92



Greetings from the Mother Club! I have now been a member of S I Greater London for three years, and it has been such a joy to get to know a new group of like-minded women. It has also made me realise how lucky we were in Manchester for our relatively close proximity to each other! It was a bit of a shock when I realised the average commute ANYWHERE in London was "about an hour" and it has definitely made socialising a challenge. But we have managed!

We are very fortunate to have 'Number 63' as a base – it has come in handy several times when Soroptimists from abroad have contacted us to meet. And it doesn't hurt that it's on Hyde Park! Having somewhere central to meet in London is no small feat, and we have made good use of it. If you've never been, make sure you visit when we're able to travel again – I will be happy to meet you and give you a tour!

Like all of you, I'm sure, we have been missing seeing each other regularly, but are eternally grateful for zoom. We have managed to keep up with each other as well as other London clubs. I have even been able to get involved with the **Centenary Action Group**, which is a group established by Helen Pankhurst in 2018, made up of several organisations including Care International and the Millicent Fawcett Society, to take action over the next ten years to ensure equal representation by 2028, the centenary when all women in the UK won the right to vote. That has been the one upside of the pandemic – I have met so many other Soroptimists from around the region! As I said before, that was near impossible when we had to meet in person!

We have been a bit quiet on the programme action front this year, so not much to report there. However, Dame Vera Baird, the Victims Commissioner for England and Wales has recently joined the club, and has already suggested several projects for 2021. We are looking forward to a busy year, once we are able to meet again – and hopefully that includes a dinner or two!

I miss you all dearly and hope to be back in Manchester as soon as it is safe. I have a feeling it is going to be a national mass holiday when we can see each other again. In the meantime, take care, stay healthy and stay home!

Molly Robinson

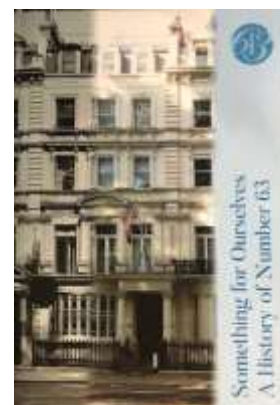
For our newer Members:

- Molly was President of S I Manchester (2016-2017) until husband Andrew's career took them to London.
- Soroptimist International of Greater London (SIGL) was the first Club to be Chartered outside of the Americas (Chartered 14th February 1924) SIGL then helped Manchester towards our Charter in 1926. (Similarly, we now have several Daughter Clubs, Stockport, Bolton and Bury for instance)
- 'Number 63' was acquired over 70 years ago as the 'Soroptimist Residential Club' and is now run as a 'bed and breakfast hotel in the heart of London' The full address is '63 Bayswater Road & it is across the road from Hyde Park!

www.number63.co.uk will tell you all about it.

I have a copy of the history '**Something For Ourselves**' written to mark the first 70 years, with contributions from our Honorary Member Kathleen Beavis, which makes fascinating reading! (Let me know if you'd like to borrow it)

& **Number 63's bespoke Gin** is now available...incredible as it may seem I still haven't tasted it!



Sue Underwood



The last nine months have been very strange for everybody and have affected all of us in different ways. Here are a few of my experiences.

I work for the Healthcare & Lifesciences Team in the Department for International Trade and so the first lockdown was extremely busy. We acted as the frontline triage between the Department of Health and Social Care and all the requests out and offers in for PPE etc. The Civil Servants, between them, were covering shifts from 8am – 12am, very different from their usual 9-5 office hours.

One of the strangest requests I had was to organise a gift of flowers from the Kenyan President to the NHS as a show of solidarity and goodwill gesture. The flowers came in a regular patriation flight consignment already heading to the

UK. This act not only helped the flower growers in Kenya and the UK distribution depot in Bedfordshire, it gave cheer to the NHS staff who received the flowers. To be honest I was sceptical at first wondering whether this was something we should be doing at a time like this until I saw the appreciation and received the notes of gratitude afterwards. It was hugely appreciated. The community staff at Salford were especially pleased as they said that people rarely think of them. 200 bunches were allocated across: -

- **GOSH** - for staff who were having to stay away from their families, in hotels, during Covid,
- **Manchester** - for the staff working with Covid patients; and to the
- **Northern Care Alliance Group (Salford Royal)** - for staff working out in the community.



Closer to home, my husband Kev closed his garage and was off work for the first 6 weeks. Even though garages could remain open, a combination of the MOT extension and the reduction in customers meant it wasn't worth it. He kept his phone on but there were no calls. We were lucky that my brother (Joe), who does general property maintenance & refurbishment and has been staying with us since the beginning of the year, was also off and this meant they had each other to keep themselves entertained and allow me to work in peace!

(Neither of them can sit around and do nothing 😊)

Since Joe has been with us and thanks to the extra time during lockdown we have had a new bathroom, a new patio, the kitchen painted and the garage rendered and painted so it matches the house!! Our three cats also loved us being home all the time, I am still working from home, not sure what they will do if ever I end up going back out to work.



One of the many things I enjoyed through lockdown was the quiet walks. I live in Stretford and have walked all over Stretford, Urmston and Chorlton. My favourite is walking along the canal. One day during the summer I counted 31 Canada Geese on the canal and then when they all had babies as well as the Swans it was a joy to watch them grow. I now have more time to enjoy these walks as I have recently reduced my days to 3 days per week which will allow me to concentrate on building a new venture with my brother buying property and refurbishing it and also take some more time to give service.

Jigsaws were another thing I got into during lockdown, I love the way that whilst doing a jigsaw one's mind focuses on nothing else. A great way to relax.

And lastly, probably my biggest achievement over the last few months has been teaching my Nephew to drive. I have never had any prior experience, but I think lockdown definitely made me calmer and have more patience, there were fewer cars on the road and he obviously has an aptitude for it. So, he is now able to drive but needs a couple of official lessons to assess him and then be put in for his test. The only trouble is getting him an official lesson. We had one booked in and just before it my Nephew had a COVID scare (thankfully negative) but had to cancel until he had the results, then the instructor had a scare and then we went into the second lockdown. I am sure we will get him one eventually!!

Although lockdown has been scary and frustrating at times I feel it has helped my life to be less frantic. I've certainly been doing less running around and I enjoy working from home. Hopefully the vaccine will allow us to see family who have been shielding, it's hard not having hugs! But at the same time hopefully we will continue with some of the more work life balance practices.

Sophie Kennedy (SIM President 2010-2011)

Rebekah & Family Move to Spain – Part 1

Imagine....you have been planning, for several years, to move your family to live in Spain. You have taken into account a suitable time for your 8 year old to move into a regular Spanish School, so he becomes familiar with working in either language and a suitable time in the business year, having established that you can conduct it working from home as long as you return to the U.K. for a group meeting once a month.

So all is fine. All is in order with house completion in both Wilmslow and Murcia, the cars are sold, ready to buy left hand drive ones in Spain. The Removal Van and Ferry are booked for the end of February.

Come days before...."BAM"...Complete Lockdown in Spain as cases of COVID19 escalate out of proportion.

Rapid re - plan has to be achieved.

Removal Company are fine, no problem.

Ferry Company are not sympathetic....not our problem....cancellations involve losing your money....too close to travel etc, etc. Eventually, they come around 'in these unusual circumstances' to holding their money for a later Ferry. No chance of refund!

Very fortunately, they negotiate to stay in their house until they can make the move, but have the pleasure of paying for the privilege and paying to retain the house in Murcia too!

Before a further date can be set, Lockdown happens in the U.K. too, adding to the complications.

Living out of boxes can be very tiresome at any time, but their philosophical acceptance and outlook are impressive.

Living without cars is also not good, so bicycles are re - erected and left-hand drive cars swiftly sourced. Now 'the plan' could become more flexible because of quarantine requirements, i.e. book a van Peter's brother can drive, as he has an HGV licence and need not isolate for 2 weeks on return, booking that and 2 cars on the Ferry could work nicely as less unsettling for the 2 cats, who now, passports in paws, can travel in the car with 'Mummy'.

Now all that is to be done, is wait.....and wait.

Schools close, so Hugo doesn't get to say goodbye to everyone at the school where he has been very happy and successful. Football, Tennis and Muai Tai are also off, so the same applies. Work goes on pretty much uninterrupted. Then.....in July..... a window of opportunity arises, dependent on satisfactory COVID tests, borders opening and re-start of ferry crossings for the general public.

School had re-opened for some, but not Hugo's year group, so he still could not say goodbye in person. His lovely class teacher somehow managed to get each child in his class to write him a letter and send him a picture or photo of a memory they shared and she compiled a 'leaving book' which she delivered to him along with the books and belongings he was not allowed into school to collect himself. What a star!

So.....early one morning in late July, they finally set off from Wilmslow in convoy. First the van with Peter's brother, then Peter and Neil in one new car and, finally, Rebekah in the other new car with Hugo, Ziggy and Lilly, lots of 'nibbles', water, litter trays etc, etc.

The journey is quite another story....which I may relate to you in another newsletter, but, miraculously, they did arrive safely at their new home three days later.....the first thing Hugo did was dive in the pool!

Susan Hollick



'Keep Shining We Need Your Light' by Malgorzata Kmita

During the last few months I have been painting, taking photos and writing articles, I also wrote a few book reviews for some International organisations and writers. I have been very busy in a different way.

I would like to dedicate **'Keep Shining We Need Your Light'** to our International Links
(as we all share the same sky)

and wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and New Year.

Hopefully we may start a new and better stage in our wellbeing in the New Year.

Making Friends with the Sky

I remember many years ago how I used to enjoy reading books and watching the sky whilst hiding in my Grandparents' garden den in the Eastern part of Poland.

I used to enjoy hiding in my Grandparents' orchard with a good book, a blanket and a big cushion amid raspberries, currant plants and a big walnut tree which stood tall on the left of my den. In between reading chapters of my books, I always took a break to watch the sky, the clouds and the rainbows, different colours and hues. The sky was so fascinating, full of wonder and motion, I often felt a great joy watching it to the extent that it was hard to break my special orchard time even if my Grandparents called me for dinner or tea.

I imagined this vast land of the sky as a friendly quilt embracing the earth and the whole world. I felt that the sky had no borders, was welcoming to everyone who wanted to see, observe, and admire its amazing vast surface full of surprises which changed so frequently. Sometimes there was rain, so I had to go indoors and hide, at other times there was sunshine, and the sky was clearly blue. There were times when the Sun shone and times when the clouds of all sizes and density covered the whole sky... and what was beyond that sky gave me a sense of invitation to explore ideas which often awoke my imagination and dreams; winds, snow, rains, sunshine, the Moon and the stars.

As a child I was not allowed to stay outside and admire the sky at night, but I still looked at the sky from the bedroom window. I was so curious of the stars and the moon that as a child I developed a story that the stars represented people who had passed away. I remember being told about the uncles who passed away during the wars, about my great grandmother who used to sing on the veranda and then suddenly passed away. I therefore imagined that those who passed away were represented by the shining stars. Some stars shone with great intensity while others were barely visible. My simple explanation was that if you were a good person you earned yourself a bright shining star but if you were not such great person, for example you did not pray or did not do your homework or stole things from your friend at school, then your star would not shine so brightly. I therefore felt that the sky gave me an incentive to be good and try to be better as I grew older.

I now live in Whalley Range, Manchester, and I am now a Grandmother myself. I often revisit those memories from my Grandparents' garden in Poland and I feel they helped me shape my garden in Whalley Range many years later. The garden is full of raspberries and currants bushes, two walnut trees brought from Poland and planted in the garden by my son, Peter. I feel that now I can explore the same sky but have the freedom to examine and explore the sky at night and see the Moon and the stars and also follow the sky during the day. I still find it so fascinating, it's richness, vastness, hospitality and welcome. The sky belongs to all of us who want to explore it, to dream and imagine stories behind the clouds, rain and snow flakes, the joy of seeing clear blue or grey colours filled with rain or sunshine, shining stars of different intensity which contribute to the real experience of awe and wonder.

As an adult I discovered that Vincent van Gogh also had the same idea about the stars representing those who passed away, never mind, we can all think alike, but as a child I felt it was my own story. I now wonder if the sky ever grows older or is this sky an eternal living phenomenon, which is a great gift for us all and for all generations to enjoy and explore? The sky is also such a witness to the past, present and the future. The sky remains so welcoming; day and night and even in the worst of weathers we know that the Sun will return and will shine for us all. This is such eternal gift, such a treasure, can bring so many connections and joy.

I invite you now to explore my latest painting about the Sky at Night, which is presented above, and is titled: "Keep Shining – We need your Light" and we do.... especially in these challenging times.

Malgorzata Kmita



#OrangeTheWorld 2020

How SI Manchester marked the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence

Nov 25th International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

We started the campaign with an Orange themed Zoom social event, with special guest Ted. During the afternoon, several members had attended the online UN official commemoration of the day, a very inspirational event with speakers from around the world including Nicole Kidman



Nov 26th/ 27th Our social media focus was on highlighting the injustices suffered by rape victims

Meanwhile, Altrincham Town Hall was beautifully lit up in orange thanks to the efforts of our friend Rob, the former Mayor of Trafford. Next year, we need to target Trafford and Salford and perhaps Manchester Cathedral? The photos (taken by my other half) were also used by Trafford Council in their social media, with credits to S I Manchester 😊



Nov 28th/ 29th We sent a selection of gift cards to Manchester Women's Aid's Christmas appeal and our social media posts tackled FGM and honoured human rights defenders past and present

Nov 30th The focus for today was Human Trafficking. We are proud to be members of the Greater Manchester Modern Slavery network and try to do our bit to raise awareness of this important issue

Dec 1st World Aids Day Today we celebrated the work being done by Act4Africa who have provided HIV/AIDs and sexual health training to over 2 million people since the charity's inception 20 years ago. Donations to Act4Africa and to Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) were also made via the Big Give Christmas Challenge (donations are doubled)



Dec 2nd We returned to the subject of modern slavery. Greater Manchester is piloting a "Victim Navigator" role to support identified victims of modern slavery and so far, eight potential victims have been helped

Dec 3rd President Rose and Elaine delivered food tins and clothes to MASH and gift vouchers to WomenMATTa for their Christmas Gift packs



Dec 4th The theme today was child marriage. UNICEF have declared child marriage as a form of violence against a child and we endorsed this with posts from Karma Nirvana. [Child Marriage Report & Stories – Karma Nirvana](#)

Dec 5th / 6th We celebrated volunteers and their development work in communities, and renewed our commitment to equality and opportunity for women

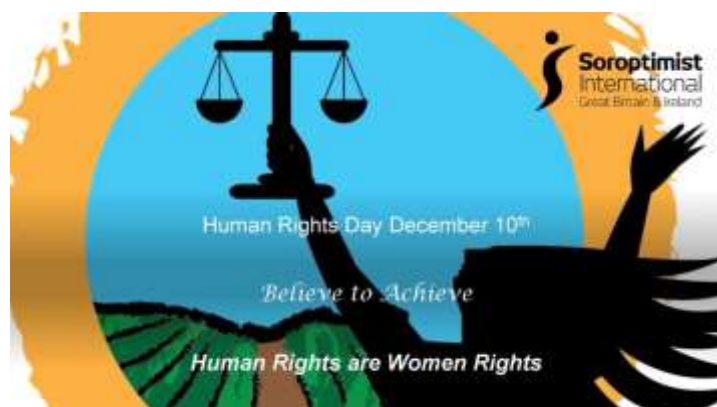
Dec 7th focused on rural women who face gender-based discrimination and unequal access to education, healthcare, property, and financial and other services. Through our work with Act4Africa's adolescent mothers, we support our rural sisters

Dec 8th / 9th The themes for these two days were sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation

Throughout the campaign, individual members were in action – making masks and “Walking against domestic violence and abuse” in conjunction with Manchester Women’s Aid

GM4Women2028 announced that they will be revealing how Manchester is doing in its progress towards gender equality at an online event on February 6th 2021. *Please contact me if you would like details on how to register*

And finally, **Dec 10th Human Rights Day.** The end of the 16 Days but not the end of our action. Women are entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of all their human rights and to be free from all forms of discrimination




Barbara Blaber


Federation Programme Action Committee October 29, 2020

This year's strange circumstances gave rise to a rare opportunity for more members to attend the Federation Programme Action Committee (FPAC) virtual meeting that preceded the main Federation Conference.


As our Federation, SIGBI, includes clubs from around the world, Programme action is primarily organised on a national basis, recognising the differing priorities in different continents and countries. The role of the FPAC is to provide an overall direction of programme action work but not in a prescriptive way (unlike the European Federation – but that's another story!)

We heard from speakers outlining club activities in Asia (5 countries), the Caribbean (7 countries) and Ireland, Malta and the UK (6 countries). Two key themes dominated - providing Covid 19 relief and the environment. The following slide snapshots give just a flavour of the session.





- ❖ SI Barbados donated to 50 women in need food hampers and personal care items worth US\$2,500 equivalent.
- ❖ SI Jamestown also donated to families in need.
- ❖ Soroptimists of SI Barbados presented the Frances Chandler Memorial Award to the 2020 recipient, Ms. Christina Pooler. Ms. Pooler is the first recipient of the Frances Chandler Memorial Award, a BDS\$2,500 grant open to Barbadian women engaged in agriculture.
- ❖ In July, Soroptimists participated in the SIGBI's day of action by planting 'Bajan Cherry Trees'.



Women inspiring action, transforming lives

#SoroptimistVirtual2020



Children Against Climate Change

- Look to changing to a green energy provider
- Avoid buying products with black food trays
- Have a meat or fish free day each week
- Generate less food waste
- Avoid buying single use plastic bottles
- Re-cycle my unwanted clothes
- Walk more & use my car less
- Go on a litter pick in my local area
- Buy reusable Vegetable bags
- Always take a reusable coffee cup





Women inspiring action, transforming lives

#SoroptimistVirtual2020

Call to action

"The UN insists on the importance of economic, social, and environmental sustainability and the need to bring people and planet together and invest in both".

Get engaged in projects, petitions and policy discussions about care, health, housing and jobs to make a change for the future.

Protect a better future, invest your time and energy now.

Change the Status quo.



#SoroptimistVirtual2020

Thank you

**Women inspiring action,
transforming lives**

Barbara Blaber

October 13th A Zooming Brilliant Breakfast!



Members took part in **The Brilliant Breakfast** as part of our regular Tuesday Zoom Social. We enjoyed coffee, cakes, fruit, bacon sandwiches, and a good chat, all whilst raising funds for **The Prince's Trust's Women Supporting Women** campaign, for young women in the UK who have been hardest hit by Covid-19.

It's not too late to grab a coffee and leave a small donation here!

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/simanchester>



Act4Africa- Flooding in Western Uganda

Twenty years ago, my late wife Kathy returned from a visit to Uganda. She told me about the devastating effect that the HIV virus was having on communities there, and together we formed Act4Africa to help.



Now, twenty years on, the world faces a new deadly viral infection, COVID-19.

Whilst all of our attention has rightly been focused on the fight against COVID, it has distracted us from other life-threatening events, affecting those women around the world, who live in poverty.



Kasese District in Western Uganda

was recently hit by devastating floods, which resulted from heavy rains that caused most of the major rivers in the district to burst their banks, destroying lives and properties, including a hospital, several schools and many homes.

The flood waters also swept away crops, leaving many people not only homeless, but with little or no food and clean water. Most of the victims found themselves

living in makeshift camps, and entirely dependent on charitable food relief.

Our local manager, Moris Kabusawgere visited one camp, and told us of the plight of approximately 250 people with young families, living in inadequate makeshift tents and sharing three toilets, with only a single tap for clean water.

This is his report ...



"The local council chairperson told us about his frustrations and great concern about the situation. He was particularly concerned about the plight of pregnant mothers giving birth in the camp without adequate access to postnatal care. He said that so far 18 mothers had given birth with many more births expected. He also talked about the challenge for those with mental health issues and the increased rates of teenage pregnancy. It was against this background that Act4Africa was asked for help and support, particularly the immediate need for food and sanitation items. These were essential for personal/family hygiene to minimize the risk of disease in these crowded camps. Women with children, pregnant mothers and those with disabilities were prioritised as being the most vulnerable. We gave out relief items like maize, cassava, flour, cooking oil, rice and soap for hand washing. This was to improve nutrition and fight diseases like Cholera and the Corona virus. Teenage mothers were also given extra help with provision of mattresses and warm blankets.

One of the young mothers in the camp expressed her gratitude to Act4Africa for this food relief "which was timely because we were having no food". The women do not know when they will be able to go back to their homes, or if they will remain homeless."



Act4Africa has enjoyed a close relationship with Soroptimist International of Manchester for several years now, and we hope, for many more to come. We are a small charity with a big voice, and with your help and generous support, we will continue to improve the lives of disadvantaged women and girls.

Thank you, Manchester Soroptimists ...

Martin Smedley – Chair trustees.



If wealth was the inevitable result of hard work and enterprise, every woman in Africa would be a millionaire"

~ George Monbiot

George Joshua Richard Monbiot (born 27 January 1963) is a British writer known for his environmental and political activism. He writes a weekly column for *The Guardian*, and is the author of a number of books, including *Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain* (2000) *Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding* (2013) and *Out of the Wreckage: A New Politics in the Age of Crisis* (2017).

He is the founder of [The Land is Ours](#), a campaign for the [right of access](#) to the countryside and its resources in the United Kingdom.



A Pocket History of Our Regalia

The Chain

The Presidential chain was commissioned in 1936 - a gift of the Past Presidents. It was designed and executed by the Red Rose Guild of Designer Craftsmen, which had been started by Miss Margaret Pilkington, sister of the Founder President, Dorothy Pilkington.

It is worked in silver and enamels to typify the many different aspects of the City of Manchester. The Chain is made up of cotton bobbins interspersed with small blue wheels of industry. Two Red Roses for Lancashire lead to the jewel itself which shows the Cathedral, the blue ripples of the Ship Canal and at the base, three diagonal stripes symbolising the three rivers which run through the centre of Manchester: the Irwell, the Irk and the Medlock; the whole "shouldered" by the chimneys of the factories and mills.



I always thought that the 'three diagonal stripes represented 'the steps of learning' but I see now that these 'Steps' are actually at the bottom of the jewel.... I knew that those early Soroptimists could not miss 'education' from their regalia!

Sue Underwood

From the Manchester Coat of Arms: "The three bands on the shield, which originally featured on the coat of arms of former Lords of the Manor, the Gresleys, have, over time, come to represent the three rivers in the city centre."

New Hope Rural Community Trust



Registered Charity 1062694

www.newhopeuk.org

This charity is based in Orissa, India.
Eliazar Tumati Rose is the Founder and Director.

Initially we sent clean, used tights which were used for leprosy patients to secure dressings. When leprosy became less prevalent we continued to support the charity by funding a hospice for HIV/AIDS children and cataract operations for the elderly. We have sponsored a schoolgirl and continue to send used greetings cards which they upcycle.

I still have 2 x 2 kg of cards from last year. Maureen has been in touch with the secretary, Jill - she has asked that we don't send them until January as postal staff numbers in India are reduced due to the pandemic and then immediately after Christmas there is an Indian festival which will take longer to celebrate and travel back from due to COVID restrictions. They feel this year there is greater likelihood of post being either very delayed or even lost if parcels are sent in the lead up to Christmas.

Please save your Christmas cards (fronts only) for me to send later next year - Easter and birthday cards are also welcome.

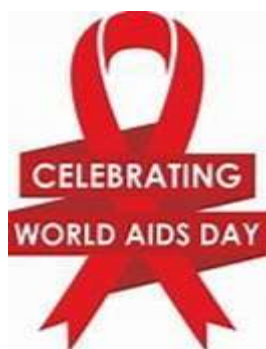
Last year's newsletter (circulated by email on 2nd December) includes, of special interest, a piece on our honorary member Kathleen's gift of a windmill.

(This article was reprinted in our 'Spring 2020' Newsletter. Sue)

Pat Usher

Eliazar's FaceBook Post on 1st December World Aids Day

Yes it is Worlds AIDS Day and AWARENESS is still a priority in our Health education.



At the same time - on this day every year I sadly remember the first 'railway station platform' young person who appeared in front of me. I did not recognize the thin sick young person. Took him to Muniguda and so started our HIV Centre there. I care for him one meal a day myself until he passed.

HIV>AIDS has given us many challenges and great sadness - we are just so thankful to the sponsors who support these children and young people from care to education.

Without Ruth's support for the Rainbow girls we could not manage. So many staff have shown great humanitarian work in this project. It like Leprosy must be eliminated by awareness – Eliazar



Spicy Curry Carrot Chutney

This recipe is based on a former BBC Food recipe (now deleted from the website) by Jo Wesley and Avril Rogers From The Big Allotment Challenge.

Preparation time: about 30 mins

Cooking time: about 15 hours

Serves: makes 2-3 jars

Ingredients

500g carrots, diced

1 large onion, diced

1 red romano pepper, chopped (or any pepper you have)

1 red chilli, seeds removed and chopped (or any chill / chilli flakes, but reduce amount of chilli if using dried flakes)

2.5cm piece root ginger, chopped

250g brown sugar (or any sugar you have)

350ml apple cider vinegar (cider vinegar works best, but you can use white wine vinegar instead)

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp ground coriander

½ tsp ground turmeric

pinch salt and pepper

1 handful chopped coriander (omit if you do not have this)



Method

Put the carrots, onion, pepper, chilli and ginger in a pan and stir.

Add the sugar and vinegar.

Stir and heat (medium heat) for five minutes.

Add the spices and a pinch of salt and pepper.

Increase heat and bring to the boil.

As soon as the mixture starts to boil, reduce the heat to a simmer.

Simmer for about 1 hour and 20 minutes.

If using, add the fresh coriander to the pan and stir it in.

Drag a wooden spoon through the pan. If no liquid fills the channel, then the chutney is ready to spoon into sterilised jars. If the chutney is a little wet, cook for another few minutes and test again.

Keep the chutney in sterilised jars in a cool, dark, dry place for up to a year. As with most chutneys, the taste improves if left for a few months.

Once opened, store in the fridge and use within four weeks.

Carina Badger

(Many thanks Carina – several of us sampled and enjoyed this when Sally brought it to our Christmas Party a couple of years ago. Sue U)



ZOOMING Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 16 th December	7pm	Christmas Party & £20£20 Raffle Draw
Tuesday 5 th January 2021	6.30 for 7pm	Club Meeting – Programme Action Review
Tuesday 19 th January	6.30 for 7pm	Executive Meeting
Tuesday 2 nd February	6.30 for 7pm	Club Meeting
Tuesday 16 th February	6.30 for 7pm	Executive Meeting
Tuesday 2 nd March	6.30 for 7pm	Club Meeting
Tuesday 16 th March	6.30 for 7pm	Executive Meeting

.....& every week

Tuesday morning	11 to 1pm	Social Coffee & Chat
Thursday Afternoon	2 to 3.30pm	Social Tea & Chat



Christmas Greetings:

We are grateful to all who, in lieu of cards, have sent their Christmas greetings on the following pages.

The donations will go to our General Charities Account.



Copy for the next edition of the Newsletter by **Sunday 7th March**, please.

Personal anecdotes always welcome

Tell your 'Stay At Home' Christmas story! ... What have you learned about yourself & others?

Tell us about your 'Journey to Manchester'? ... Newer Members please introduce yourselves!

Anything else you would like to share?

Sue Underwood sueuhome@sky.com

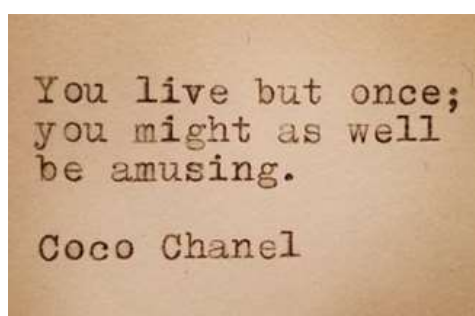
Last Words from Women, dogs and a bear, who could/should have been Soroptimists! & Welcome Poppy!



Poppy Usher

"The beauty of a woman is not in the clothes she wears, the figure that she carries, or the way she combs her hair. The beauty of a woman is seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides. True beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul.

— Audrey Hepburn





Wishing all my friends at
Soroptimist Manchester a
Happy Christmas and a
Very Peaceful New Year .
I can't wait till we can all
get back to socialising and
meeting up again.
President Rose & John



To all my new friends and
acquaintances, I hope you
all have a happy, healthy
Christmas and a wonderful
New Year.

Let's hope 2021 brings us
lots of renewed energy,
successful outcomes and
fun times together!

Lori

Wishing you Joy & Peace
at this special time of year
& a Happy & Healthy
New Year
Rosemary & Gus



I wish all our members
a very
Happy Christmas
and
Healthy New Year
Stella



Merry Christmas
to you all
with a fervent wish
for a
brighter 2021.
Maureen x



Barry and I hope
you will all have a
Happy Christmas
and hope 2021
will be a
healthy year.
Barry and Shena



Merry Christmas to All
and here's to a
Happy & Healthy
New Year
Sophie



Merry Christmas!
Vaccinations for all,
Health and Happiness
to you and yours
in 2021
Sue X



I wish all my fellow
Soroptimists
Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year
and hopefully we can all
be together soon
Love Sue {Harris}



Happy Christmas to all
members and families
Good wishes for 2021
Look forward to seeing
you all next year!
Ann

Wishing you all a peaceful
and happy Christmas time
and that the New Year
brings you love and
friendship and support
With love Fiona (and of
course Paul, Alex and
Ciara) xxxxx



Thank you all for being
your amazing welcoming
selves, joining the club
has really made my year
and I can't wait for the
next one!

All the festive best!
Sarah



Hope & Happiness
for Christmas to all
Olive



Love and best wishes
to you all
this Christmas.
Susan and David



Peace and Goodwill to
all
Stay positive and Safe
Love to all
Kathleen Beavis



Wishing you
peace and joy
in this festive season.
Elaine

Season's Greetings
to all our
Sorooptimist friends
from
Barbara & Steve Blaber



Merry Christmas to you all.
Have fun and stay safe
In friendship
Cath (Green)

