

Newsletter

December 2023



Welcome to the 2023 Christmas Newsletter that captures some of what has been happening over the past year.

At our AGM dinner in April, we were joined by Regional President Lynne Chiswick celebrating the long service given by members for 20, 25, 30 and 40 years. We also presented our newest member, Angela Christie with her name badge.

In May there was the Big Help Out event to mark the King's Coronation and members took part with other volunteers in a litter pick on the Esplanade.

The SI Convention was in Dublin in July and 5 members attended plus enjoyed some sightseeing. We had a great time....

September was Dementia Awareness month, and we had a Memory Walk. 5 members plus two of our dogs did a 6km sponsored walk along the North Downs and then had a picnic.

In November, 7 members went to the London Conference and heard some excellent speakers and Annette met a Soroptimist from Trinidad looking to have a friendship link..

In December, Nellie, Wanda and Carol McKeough represented Amnesty International at Aylesford and promoted the Write for Rights project and 63 cards were signed.

Read on to see more of what we have been doing in a very full year of activity.....



Christmas Messages

Wishing all my Soroptimist Sister's a very merry Christmas and a New Year full of good health, wealth and happiness. Sue H



All best wishes to my fellow Soroptimists for the festive period and the hope for a more peaceful 2024.
Regards

Barbara

"Wishing you all a Happy Christmas."

Pat

Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and hope that 2024 gives you and those you hold dear all you wish for.

**Much love
Sharon xx**

As another enjoyable year of Soroptimism draws to a close, I would like to thank you again for your friendship. I wish you all a happy and healthy New Year and, for those who celebrate Christmas, I hope you have a great day.

Warmest wishes

Teresa

I hope all of you have a happy and healthy Christmas and that 2024 is a good year for you.

***Much love
Sue D xx***

Wishing all my Soroptimist sisters and your families a happy Christmas and peaceful New Year.

Love, Liz x

Happy Christmas to everyone, and here's hoping for a peaceful 2024 - Jenny

Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and Peaceful New Year, In Friendship Janet H and Brian

Angela and Bob wish you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year xx

Carol McK sends Best Wishes for a Happy Christmas and a joyous New Year

*Best wishes to soroptimists
and their family and friends
for the Christmas season and
2024. Julia*

**Wishing my fellow Soroptimist
friends and their families a lovely
Christmas and health and
happiness for 2024. Stella x**

*Wishing all our Soroptimist friends and their families a great
Christmas and/or wonderful winter holiday and may the new year
bring hope and peace to all. Annette*

Wishing everyone
Merry Christmas
and happy new
year.
Maya

Wishing Soroptimists friends and partners
a Happy Christmas and welcome working
together in 2024 to improve the lives of
Women and Girls. Jane

Wishing all of our
friends in SI Medway
and Maidstone, Joy
this Christmas and
peace and
prosperity in 2024.
With love from
Janet and Chris

Wishing everyone in the Club and their
families, a lovely Christmas together and
a Happy and Health 2024. Jill

**'I send greetings and good wishes for
Christmas to all members and their
families, and all the very best in the New
Year to come" Mary**

"Wishing you a happy
Christmas and healthy new
year. I look forward to another
successful year working
together as Soroptimist
Sisters. Carol I"

Merry Christmas and
Happy holidays to all
members of SIMM and
your families. May 2024 be
a good year for you all. In
friendship, Lesley

*Happy Christmas from a very hot Accra to all
you dear sisters in Medway and Maidstone.
Lots of love Nellie and xxx from SI Accra*



Christmas Messages



Soroptimist International Foundation



Human Rights Day is 10th December, when our club traditionally focuses on the International President's Appeal. We heard in Dublin about the new Soroptimist International (SI) Foundation. By establishing this Charitable Trust, SI have expanded their ability to fund projects and initiatives which align with our SI Mission. With a focus on education, poverty prevention and human rights, we strive to foster positive change and create a more inclusive world.

With the establishment of the Soroptimist International Foundation, SI will no longer have an International President's Appeal. The SI President will lead the Foundation, raising awareness of projects and promoting fundraising through grants, member giving, and legacies. Being awarded charitable status confirms the integrity and intentions of Soroptimist International Foundation, increasing SI's public profile and reinforces the organisation's reputation as a force for good in the world.

We are having two initiatives, the Soup Kitchen and Christmas Newsletter with all proceeds going to the SI Foundation

Carol's Christmas Soup Kitchen

Carol McKeough hosted her annual Christmas Soup Kitchen on 16 December. Members enjoyed home-made soup and bread followed by naughty desserts. Proceeds raised of **£157** will go to the SI Foundation.

Afterwards we put together Christmas hampers for three local Women's Refuges that included gifts for the women and children.

£200 monies was donated by Medway Towns Charitable Trust for items to be purchased for the hampers.



Christmas Newsletter as fundraiser

The second fundraiser is this Christmas Newsletter. Through members pledges with their Christmas messages we have raised **£208** towards the Soroptimist International Foundation

Friendship Links

During 2023, Julia has hosted 2 Friendship Link Get Togethers via Zoom.

In June, Jane and Julia travelled to the Netherlands to attend SI Voorburg's 65th anniversary weekend and enjoyed their friendship and hospitality.

In July Kristin from SI Osnabruck was in Kent for a few days enroute to Dublin for the SI Convention. Members joined her and her husband for a meal one evening.

In Dublin later that month then our members were able to meet up with our Friendship link clubs, SI Accra, Heswall and Osnabruck. It was great to meet in person as our friendships have grown reliant on Zoom over recent years.

At the November club meeting, Nellie showed us 3 Kente banners that had been made by local weavers in Accra for Byron School with their motto 'Excellence Together' to display. One of these was donated by SI Accra and Jane presented them to the school on 7 December.

Ilse from SI Osnabruck has been in touch to say they have found a school who may be able to link with the pupils at Byron School. Watch this space in 2024.....



SI Medway and Maidstone members wish our Friendship Link clubs a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy 2024 x



Looking back on the past year.....

Byron School - We have had another great year working in partnership with Byron Primary School in Gillingham. The partnership agreement was reviewed and signed between us. The Easter raffle held enabled the school to fund 10 x Toilet Twinning and with our combined efforts Medway achieved Toilet Twinning Town Status. Mary's Meals in their main charity and a Coin Challenge Mapping event was held in June and a Toy/Book Sale in November. Both raising monies to feed children. Rocky the Turtle became the mascot for Rights Respecting work and we sewed on the multi-coloured shells for 25 of them.



Dandelion Time – members helped at the May Fair and we had a speaker in November to tell us about their work with young people and their families. A donation of **£500** from the MT Charitable Trust benefited them through the Big Give and gift aid to the value of **£1125**. **30 trauma teddies** were also donated to give to the children after completing their 10-week programme.





Raises £250 for Railway Children Charity



£288.35 raised for Lend with Care and MacMillan

Soroptimist BBQ Fundraiser in support of SATEDA's School Project



£287 raised for SATEDA Schools Programme

12 August 2023



£185 + Gift Aid to Alzheimer's



£250 to Hygiene Banks

Club members at SIGBI London Conference 3-4 November



Blythswood Shoebox Appeal.

Did you know we delivered **92** filled Shoeboxes to the Collection Point at end of October. Since then, **6** club members have volunteered for a total of **155** hours checking more than 12500 shoeboxes and these are then packed into cartons to be transported.

The first delivery of 6000 shoeboxes left on 29 November and has arrived in Ukraine in time for Christmas. All checking and cartoning for the 2023 Appeal is now complete and the final delivery with 800 cartons containing nearly 7000 shoeboxes left on 15 December and the Collection Point is now closed for this year.



Congratulations to Angela

In April Angela Howe was appointed as a Life Member of U3A Medway. This was in recognition of her years of service above and beyond as Chair, Membership Secretary and Committee Member.

Well done Angela...



Christmas Message from Lillian Gould



“Happy Christmas and all good wishes for 2024.

I would like just to thank everyone for their support and visits during June and July -- it really gave me a boost and lots of encouragement. Progress is a bit slower than I would like but hopefully, I'll see you in person next year.” **Lillian**