

REPORT FROM THE SIGBI ARCHIVIST, MARGARET PARSONS

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council report called 'Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future'¹ explores the importance of archives for understanding who we are, what shaped our present and what our future might look like. The title of the report echoes the words which celebrate 100 years of Soroptimist International: Bright Past and Brilliant Future. For me, the centenary is about remembering and making visible the achievements of Soroptimist International and our Soroptimist sisters in the past, and about looking to the future and all that we hope to achieve as we move forward.

Locating and caring for Soroptimist archives is an important part of celebrating our Bright Past and Brilliant Future. One of the things the Centenary Committee is encouraging us to do is to have a history page on our websites, so now feels like a good time to make sure we know where our records are and who is looking after them. They contain the stories and achievements of our Bright Past and we need to unlock these records and bring to life the women, their decisions and the events that made our movement what it is today. The records generated by our current work tell our stories as we create our Brilliant Future and will in turn become the record of the next 100 years. Looking after the current records is therefore as important as caring for those from the past.

In order to help us take care of our records, I have written a set of guidelines for Clubs, Regions, National Associations and Networks, which build on the advice provided by my predecessors in the role. The guidelines provide information on caring for and managing records, including digital records, advice on how long to retain records for financial and legal purposes and what should be kept on a permanent basis. The guidelines are on the SIGBI website – <https://sigbi.org/members/files/Records-and-Archives-for-Clubs-Regions-NAs-Networks-Final-Version-12-December-2019.pdf> - and I hope that you will find them useful. I am also very happy to answer any questions you might have about looking after and using your records and I can be contacted at SIGBIarchives@gmail.com.

I would also love to hear your stories about your archives and records. Do let me know about interesting material that comes to light or unexpected treasures found as I would like to build up a picture of Soroptimist archives held by clubs across the Federation. You might also find things in national collections. I'd like to thank Carol Reed, secretary of SI South East England (and her contacts in SI Thanet and SI Dundee) who alerted me to a film of the Federation of Soroptimist Clubs of Great Britain and Ireland Tenth Annual Conference at Buxton in 1939. The film is held in the British Film Institute's archive and can be viewed on the Free Film section of their website: <https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-the-federation-of-soroptimist-clubs-of-great-britain-and-ireland-tenth-annual>. I hope you enjoy it.

¹ Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. (2004) *Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future*. Museums, Libraries and Archives Council: London.
<http://www.ceice.gva.es/documents/163449496/163453359/ArchivesTaskForce.pdf/58e8d636-af87-4588-ae48-e7f2f4ce6f66>: accessed 08 January 2020.