



*Celebrating 100 Years (1921-2021)*

# SI MIDLAND EAST REGION NEWSLETTER

Issue 01 / December 2020

## Welcome

to Soroptimist International  
Midland East Region (SIMER)

**President Kam's Newsletter.**



Dear SIMER members,

I am pleased to pen my 1st newsletter to wish you and your family a Safe and Happy Christmas. I hope we could get back to some normality in 2021.

In these difficult times, I take up my presidency with relish at the challenges during this global pandemic. That we face these challenges together, seeking to assist and to make the world a better place speaks volumes about our membership.

As SIMER President, I am proud to represent the diversity of our organisation. Soroptimism has been part of my life for the last 17 years, during which time I have served as club presidents on two occasions and committed to programme action throughout.

Building Back Better for the future maintaining our core values is therefore, in my opinion important to remind ourselves of those principles in this our centenary year. My theme will reflect this ***'Celebrating our work and valuing our environment'***.

In doing that, we as Soroptimists should engage in a ***friendly, co-operative and transparent way to have fun whilst fulfilling our objectives.***



## What happened during the last few months?



### ❄️ We embraced technology:

Many clubs gathered in front of their screens learning, gathering and exchanging information via Zoom, Facetime and Whatsapp.

We also contacted each other by letters, emails and phone calls. On reflection, it is rather poignant at our Belfast virtual conference listening to one of the inspiring speakers Professor Susan Black about her experiences in technology (if I can do it, so can you!) as women and girls we need to be fearless to take on technology particularly more so now. Embracing new technology empowers us to stay in touch in various ways.

❄️ We produced a centennial calendar and worked collaboratively to achieve an outcome that is professional and memorable. In doing so we have raised some funds for our SIGBI Projects. We did all that online and managed to distribute the orders in strange locations i.e. service station car parks, hotel lobby and pub car parks. We sold all of them in a Covid safe manner. Personally, I have gained support and knowledge from the 12 regional clubs, worked with some wonderful members in our region whereby ordinarily I would not have the opportunity to be able to engage in this way.



❄️ I represented SIMER on Sun 8th Nov at the National Arboretum to remember the fallen and to lay a wreath on behalf of our region. Social distanced as we met up with President Elaine Clarke for SI Midland Arden and President Margaret Clarke of SI Midland Chase, IPP Isobel Smith was present but unfortunately SIGBI Pres Johanna Raffan was unable to attend due to the distance. We were able to sit in the front row during the moving ceremony which we couldn't have done in previous years. Thanks to Edna Schafer-Hughes who co-ordinated the initiative.

## Regional Meeting

Our Inaugural Presidential regional meeting held on 14th November 2020 was extremely well attended with over 70 members and guests. We have positive feedback regarding the overall running and content of the meeting and especially our two inspiring speakers, talks were very well received and informative. Our thanks to SIGBI President Johanna Raffan (MBE) and Jane Walker (MBE) CEO of Purple Community Fund.

Surveys have been sent to gauge how the members evaluate the meeting to seek best practice for future meetings. (Results will be out in January).



Above: Distributing our new 2021 Calendar to celebrate 100 years of The Soroptimists organisation.





## Our Proposal

❄️ **Empowering girls in Nepal Project** – sadly the partnership between SIGBI and Chora Chori has been dissolved and so we propose to donate the fund raised to the Diamond Education Grant (DEG). **Our Region will pay £1,200.00 to DEG which equates to £100 per club.** I will make up the £10.00 for the balance of £490.00 to £500, so in essence this will be equally divided between the benevolent fund and another worthwhile project.

1. £250.00 to Benevolent fund

2. £250 to Rosie May Foundation. They were the runners up in the vote that Chori chori won at the Liverpool conference. Perhaps SIGBI could take them on as an alternative?

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## Diamond Education Grant | SIGBI

**What is the Diamond Education Grant?** This grant awarding body was set up by our Federation (SIGBI) in 1975. Its purpose is to provide grants to assist women to update their skills after employment breaks or to acquire new skills to improve their opportunities for employment and promotion. <https://sigbi.org/what-we-do/our-charities/deg/>

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❄️ **I would also like to propose to allocate the March Region Meeting to feature an activity for International Women's Day (IWD).** You could read a poem or short piece about IWD or an amazing woman in the 21st century who you admire and why. It will be good to break into two sets of threes during the course of the meeting and in between speakers.

**Then another 6 clubs to do the same in June at the AGM.** This will be focused on the centennial celebration or on Tree planting initiatives.

1. **March - Amber Valley, Buxton, Chesterfield, Derby, Dukeries & Kettering.**

2. **June – Leicester, Lincoln, Loughborough, Mansfield, Nottingham & Peterborough.**

I am happy to discuss and work with you all on these.  
Thank-you.



❄️ **During 16 days of activism – From 24 November to 10 December**

We wore orange to highlight violence against women and girls. The Soroptimists “Believe to Achieve” by a collective global effort on the International Day to eliminate violence against girls and women. Jill Anderson our safeguarding officer had been relentlessly highlighting the issues on social media which enabled us to relate and pro-actively publicise the importance of some of the issues. My own club in SI Mansfield & District (Rita Hallsworth - joint P.A. officer) was being interviewed by the award winning reporter/managing director of the local radio station Mansfield 103.2 as she put her points across succinctly. We managed to plug Soroptimist International in the Nottinghamshire area.

## Dates to Remember

**6th March 2021 – Regional Meeting celebrating International Women's Day (IWD)** will be conducted virtually on zoom – a possible joint event with the 3 regions for an IWD extravaganza. So watch the space.

**26th June 2021 – Regional Meeting AGM** may be face to face at The Link Hotel if it works out well with the vaccines by then. This will enable us to support the hospitality sector and be able to meet for the 1st time since the pandemic.

## Other Initiatives

Keep up the Tree planting initiatives and I await more recipes for our centenary cook book. At present there are about 25 recipes, so keep them coming please! I will then be able to make a realistic quote together for the printing and designing of this.

A great team behind says it all, with our individual knowledge and skills. I will be delighted to join you at any of your meetings – the first I have received is at SI Derby in February 2021, and I look forward to more invites.

## In Memoriam

In recognition of those members we have lost in the last twelve months (that I am aware of) ...

**Anne Driver - SI Lincoln**

**June Ridgway - SI Peterborough**

**Barbara Dixon - SI Anglesey**

**Kathryn Burgess - SI Leicester**

They will all be sadly missed for their individual contributions to our cause and fondly remembered as time passes.

## New Team

Our new regional team consists of the following members:

President - Kam Britland

Immediate Past President - Jasmit Phull

President Elect - Jo Holdway

Secretary - Elaine McDonald

Treasurer - Steph McHugh

Membership - Sue Warriner

Programme Action - Helen Everett

Safeguarding - Jill Anderson

Benevolent Fund - Annette Porter

Project Ambassador - Jacqui Purnell

Communications - Anne Needham

Minute Secretary - Eileen Smith



## My Final Observation

It has been a bitter sweet year. Bitter, because of the virus, but sweet because of the community spirit that has grown. Long may it continue....

*Seasons Greetings and In Sisterhood*

Kam Britland

SIMER President 2020/21

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## Spot the Difference

Just a bit more festive fun ... there are 5 differences in the pictures below, can you find them all?



## Christmas Crackers!

Why don't you ever see Santa in hospital? Because he has private elf care!

Why is it getting harder to buy Advent calendars? Their days are numbered!

What do angry mice send to each other at Christmas? Cross-mouse cards!

What's green, covered in tinsel and goes ribbet ribbet? A mistle-toad!

What is Dominic Cummings' favourite Christmas song? Driving Home for Christmas.

Why didn't Mary and Joseph make it to Bethlehem? All Virgin flights were cancelled.

Why can't Boris Johnson make his Christmas cake until the last minute? He doesn't know how many tiers it should have.

