

## June Bridgeman CB

June Bridgeman joined SI Tunbridge Wells in 1966 while working at the Prices and Incomes Board. Senior Whitehall appointments later included the Cabinet Office Think Tank and Transport Director for London. She was made a CB (Companion of the Bath) to mark her national and international achievements for road and vehicle safety.

As Deputy Chair of the Equal Opportunities Commission, she built up close working relations with many women's organisations. In 1995 she was the Fawcett Society delegate at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York and the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. She then sat as one of the trio of Commissioners conducting the three-year BSE Public Inquiry. In 2001 she received a Woman of Achievement Award from the European Union of Women in recognition of an outstanding contribution to pan-European understanding and progress.

Until her marriage to Michael Bridgeman, and arrival of the first of their five children, she served as a Territorial Army Signals Officer, driving heavy lorries and acquiring rifle-shooting skills. Her years as a Bishops' Selector for the Advisory Council on the Church's Ministry included selecting the first women to be trained as deacons. Reflecting her interest in girls' education, she was a council member of the Girls' Public Day School Trust, governor at several schools and honorary Fellow of Queen Mary Westfield College.

As SI Tunbridge Wells Club President 1996-1997 and Club Programme Action Officer for many years, she used her experience in public policy-making to further the work of Soroptimist International. In Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society and the Town Forum she promoted women's perspectives. Following a street survey, asking women to identify local problems for themselves and their children, she led the South East Region Rail Project, investigating rail travel and personal safety through women's eyes, resulting in a number of national improvements. Fact-based reports tackled other issues including safety in car parks and taxis, spiked drinks, facilities for teenagers, recycling provision, design of public lavatories, and reducing litter. She was a founder member of the Kent Advisory Committee on Domestic Violence.

Reflecting a lifelong interest in local history, she helped found Edenbridge Historical Society, Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery and Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery to encourage historical, environmental and educational engagement, especially by local school children.

June is a great asset to our club. Her astuteness, drive and focus have taken issues to the top and have indeed done much in raising the profile of our organisation. She is interested in everyone and always asks the most thought-provoking questions of our speakers. She is a great orator herself with a brilliant insightful mind, often anticipating issues which need investigating before they become national issues. She also has a great sense of community spirit and always knows the right person to make connections with, and gently encourages others with those connections.

June is a perfect example of the phrase 'Women hold up half the sky' (Mao Zedong), and encourages others to achieve their potential.

