

President Yvonne's message

Healthy People, Healthy Planet



ON OCTOBER 24, I was proud to wear the Regional President's Chain for the first time at the United Nations Association (UNA) Annual Peace Service in Canterbury Cathedral, attended by Canterbury Club members. Carol Reed, Regional Secretary, and I carried Canterbury Club's banner.

The theme of the service this year was world peace and climate action. Firstly, we heard from Valeria Minisini, Chair of UNA Canterbury, an inspiring young lady who spoke about the vital work being undertaken throughout the world by

the UNA to address the issues surrounding Climate Change. The homily delivered by The Right Reverend the Bishop of Dover, Rose Hudson-Wilkin was extremely thought-provoking, and her message was to encourage us all to do our part in addressing Climate Change, however small that might be. Together we can all make a difference.

I am really looking forward to our Annual Conference and hearing from the various speakers and I hope you are too. Carol Infanti will be presenting the Best Practice Award for Prosperity and I will be presenting the BPA for Partnerships. It is never easy to decide which projects deserve awards as throughout our Federation, there are so many very worthwhile projects being carried out.

I hope members will have signed up for the Federation Programme Action Committee meeting on the Thursday afternoon before Conference. We have some excellent speakers on the theme of climate and there will be break-out rooms for discussions.

I will be travelling to Glasgow on October 31 to attend COP26 as a representative of the Canterbury Climate Action Partnership and I am looking forward to the opportunity to network with a wide range of organisations striving to address Climate Change in various parts of the world. I will, of course, also be taking the opportunity to highlight the excellent work being carried out by Soroptimists in all our Federations and, in particular, by the clubs within SIGBI.

It was interesting to learn that the Queen, during her recent visit to the Welsh Assembly, was overheard to say that she was irritated by those who talk a lot but take little action to address Climate Change. Let us hope that during this COP they not only talk a lot, but also formally agree to take serious action moving forwards.



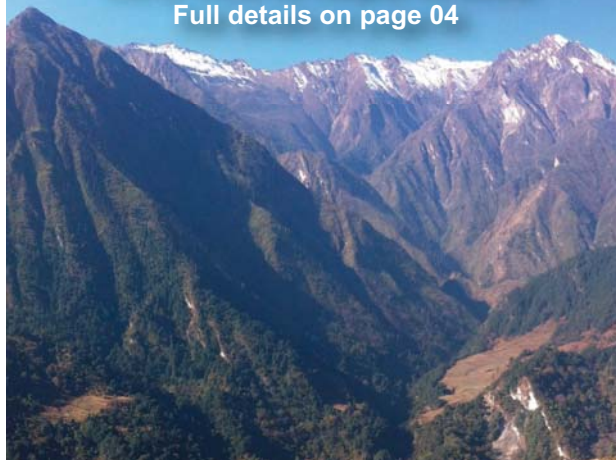
SI Tunbridge Wells' Story Tree



MADE FROM REMNANTS of the fabric used to make masks, each of the 75 leaves represents a year of Soroptimist Tunbridge Wells Club. Each handstitched leaf had been embroidered with words and suitable emblems by current club members. [See pages 02 and 09 for more news of the 75th Anniversary Celebrations.]

Join Canterbury's Joy Stephens on a Trek to Nepal in 2022

Full details on page 04



Closing Date for the

November issue of SEE News

is Monday November 22, 2021

Email your text and photographs to Patricia at
pat.painting@btinternet.com 020 8668 2681

SI Tunbridge Wells Celebrate 75 years of Service



THE EVENT HELD on October 17 at The Spa Hotel, Tunbridge Wells, was attended by the Mayor of Southborough Cllr Dianne Hill, SIGBI Federation President Cathy Cotteridge; former Mayor of Tunbridge Wells Joy Podbury; Cllr Justine Rutland; SEE Regional President Grace Onions; District Commissioner of Girl Guides, Rainbows and Brownies, Mary Saunders; local Coordinator of Tunbridge Wells Friends of the Earth, Marieke de Jonge; Chair of Tunbridge Wells Fairtrade Town Group, Mandy Flashman-Wells; The Pickering Cancer Drop in Centre Trustee, Polly Taylor; Carolyn Gray; Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum Working Group for Culture, Leisure & Tourism; Soroptimist Sisters from East Grinstead, Sevenoaks, and Croydon, together with past and current Tunbridge Wells Soroptimists.

Past Club Presidents who were in attendance were Helen Warriner, Valerie Teal, Margaret Ginman, Janet Crawford, June Bridgeman, Angela Phillip's, Mary Harris, Lorna Blackmore and Ann Greenfield. Fifty guests in total came together to enjoy the afternoon.

President Caroline Aukland outlined the Club's rich history and project work, including the contribution to South East England 'Safe and Sure' Railway project which received a Good Practice Award in 2003. She spoke about the history of the Club Insignia, which was designed and made by Suffragette Arts & Crafts enameller Ernestine Mills.

Caroline was proud to report that the Club's recent mask-making project, led by Louise Taylor, had raised £12,000 in donations, which the club was able to pass on to local, national and international charities.

Vice-President Claire Archbold (pictured above with President Caroline) presented the Story Tree to the guests. Made from remnants of the mask fabric, each of the 75 leaves represents a year of Soroptimist Tunbridge Wells Club. Each handstitched leaf had been embroidered with words and suitable emblems by current club members (see page 01).

Caroline then spent some time talking about the issue of Violence Against Women & Girls, emphasising that issues of violence against women, especially in the night sphere still exists and that we still have work to do to help women of all ages to not feel excluded from society or activities because of the fear of



violence in all of its forms. All those attending were invited to take a postcard created by the Club in collaboration with Rosie's Plaques (pictured above).

On a very positive note, President Caroline was delighted to report that the Club had four new members and Tunbridge Wells Soroptimist Sarah Bartholomew was pinned and welcomed to the Club by Federation President Cathy Cotteridge.



... and former Soroptimist Mary Harris was invited to cut the cake.



Helen Warriner, who has been a member of Tunbridge Wells Club for 55 consecutive years was presented with a Soroptimist rose by Regional President Grace Onions.

Our Youngest Club member, Charlotte Bartholomew, entertained the room with a version of Helen Reddy's 'I am Woman'...



*Here's to strong women!
May we know them,
May we be them,
May we celebrate them!*

We then raised a glass to Soroptimist International.

CAROLINE AUKLAND, PRESIDENT SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

Toast for Soroptimist International Centenary



Breakout Group – 100th Birthday Event – 3 Oct 2021

IT WAS A great two days celebrating 100 years of Soroptimist International with 4000 Soroptimists worldwide.

We saw the faces of the International Presidents who succeeded at the helm of our organization, and the face of our own Maureen Maguire, President-elect, who will take up office in January 2022.

We listened to Sharon Fisher, current President and Director of this extraordinary event, and the good wishes and inspiring speeches of brilliant women who represent us in the United Nations, and women who lead actions and projects in every part of the world, changing the lives of many people, especially women and girls.

Many faces of Soroptimists from every corner of the earth were seen on screen, including members from our own Region and our own Friendship link clubs. We heard a little history of our organization, from its origins to the present day, looking towards the future.

And finally, moments of celebration, with a rendition of an ABBA song and dance by President Sharon and her team with a toast to the next 100 years.

A big 'well done' to President Sharon Fisher and her team for organising this amazing event which showcased the excellent international and local project work that has made such a difference to the lives of women and girls.

I joined the breakout sessions on both days, meeting Soroptimists from across the globe. At the Day 2 Breakout Group we certainly made connections and even shared email addresses to continue some of our conversations. This has led to my proudly sharing copies of our Region's *SEE News* which were well received, and then receiving a request to share tips on how our club have managed to recruit seven new members this year.

We made a pledge to hopefully meet in person at the Soroptimist International Convention in Dublin in 2023.

JANE BARNES, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Croydon Club Celebrate World Food Day



CROYDON CLUB MEMBER Pat Dale organised this year's World Food Day lunch at McDermotts Fish and Chips in Addington. A dozen people attended, including members from Bromley club, and some Soroptimists (who avoided being photographed!).

The event raised £88 which will go towards the Club's Loud and Proud public speaking competition, held each March around International Women's Day.

World Food Day is celebrated each year on October 16 to commemorate the date of the founding of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945. The theme of this year's World Food Day was 'our actions are our future'. It aims to stand as a rallying call to inspire everyone to contribute to the transformation of the agri-food system.

HEATHER BAILEY, SI CROYDON AND DISTRICT



Being Neighbourly East Grinstead

'BEING NEIGHBOURLY' WAS established in East Grinstead in March 2020 as a support group for people in the town and surrounding area who might need assistance during the pandemic and beyond. The priority was to keep residents safe and provide support in which they could feel confident. The initiative forged links with the Town Council, Age UK, local GP surgeries and the Mid Sussex Voluntary Action team.

Support offered includes essential food shopping, picking up and delivering prescriptions, posting mail and regular or one-off phone calls with the isolated and lonely. Since the lockdown restrictions have been lifted, Chatter Chat coffee mornings have been organised on Tuesday mornings every other week, and this is where our Club has become involved.



Members help serve refreshments and sit with the visitors (known as neighbours) to chat and provide much needed company. Volunteer drivers make sure that anyone who wishes to attend the coffee mornings is able to do so.

This initiative, so desperately needed during the height of the pandemic, has identified an ongoing need which is happily being addressed now and into the future.

ROSEMARY STONE, SI EAST GRINSTEAD



Canterbury's Beach Clean Bingo!

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Red Bull can | 7. Face mask |
| 2. Wooden cutlery | 8. Champagne cork |
| 3. Ketchup sachet | 9. Stella Artois can |
| 4. Cotton wool bud stick | 10. For a full house – someone says "WELL DONE!" |
| 5. Fishing twine | |
| 6. Bottle top | |

Invitation to join the Fair-tread Trek to Nepal in 2022



GREETINGS FROM MYSELF and SI Canterbury where we are planning a trek to Hidden Village & Gurja Himal in Nepal in 2022 – Covid-willing – and open the invitation to others. The theme of the trek will be Women's Lives.

My husband and I worked in Nepal for 20 years, and since retirement we have been involved in helping marginalized communities gain some profit from tourism through promoting the concept of fair-tread trekking. Nepal has been hard-hit this past year by the impact of Covid – dependant as it is on tourism income and remittances from migrant labour in the Middle East. The front page of the Kathmandu Times January 2021 read: "A PANDEMIC OF POVERTY". Knowing how they live from hand to mouth (even before Covid), I want to do something to help the people we know. So I am volunteering to organize and lead a one-week trek to Hidden Village & Gurja Himal, Nepal (14 days total trip), in Spring and Autumn 2022. Proposed dates (but same destination for all three):- March 11-24; October 15-28; October 29-November 11.

The treks are open to all genders and ages, so please share with family or friends. The size of each group will be small – minimum of 4 persons and maximum of 8 persons for any of the dates. Nepal is very good value for money. I estimate the minimum in-country cost for the 14 day trip to be £500 per person (exclusive of air fares), of which the trek part is £270.

There is a catch, of course – you have to be reasonably fit! And there are no luxury hotels during the trek – instead nights will be spent in family homestays (super rustic, but they have loos!).

Hidden Village, our destination, lies beyond the reach of roads. (But over 70s can do it!) My rule of thumb is: if you are under 60 you should be of average fitness for your age; if you are over 60 years, you should be above average fitness for your age. The reward is stunning views of the Himalayas. The place is isolated and hardly known to tourists. Overall, I guarantee a totally out-of-this-world experience. Nobody we have taken there has ever been disappointed.

Nepal is not currently on the Red List of countries, but of course that can change.

Please visit our website to find out more about our fair-tread trekking initiative, and contact me for a detailed itinerary of the trek. I am more than happy to answer questions.

JOY STEPHENS, SI CANTERBURY



Federation Programme Action Team News from APD Carol Infanti

YOU MAY BE aware of the work of the UKPAC (UK Programme Action Team), but do you know how FPAT works and fits into the structure?

UKPAC is a meeting of all the Regional Programme Action Officers. For us, in the South East, we have Penny Robins from SI Sevenoaks, prior to that we had Yvonne Freeman and Hilary Rowberry. They attend the meetings on our behalf and showcase the work that is going on in the region. Other regions do the same and the idea is to share best practice. UKPAC is currently chaired by Liz Dominey.

The Federation is governed by a management board (The Board, previously known as FMB). On the Board is Kay Richmond who is the Programme Director. Kay has an overview of all the Programme Action being undertaken within the Federation, not just the UK. Kay has a key role; she is currently preparing a stand for COP26 based on your PA work, she co-ordinates presentations and input for CSW. This is the Commission on the Status of Women conference held every year at the United Nations (UN) in New York. She collates information and provides input to the Position Statements found on the SI website:

<https://www.soroptimistinternational.org/members-area/si-statements/>

which are used to provide policy guidance for governments as part of our Consultative Status at the UN.

Information for all these events is drawn from the Programme Focus Reports which clubs complete. You can see that what you do matters and it is really important how you complete the forms. We need the detail, what, why, when, how, and the results/impact, how you changed the lives of women and girls.

Kay chairs and organises the Federation Programme Action Committee (FPAC) which meets every year before conference. Any member is welcome to attend the FPAC. It is an excellent

opportunity to hear about Programme Action from across our Federation; the Caribbean, India and Malta as well as the UK.

My role as Assistant Programme Director (APD) is to support Kay in the work that she does. Kay chairs a monthly virtual meeting with all 5 APDs and the Chair of UKPAC. There are 5 APDs. Here are two links which may be of interest to you-

<https://sigbi.org/who-we-are/how-it-works/>
<https://sigbi.org/what-we-do/our-projects/>

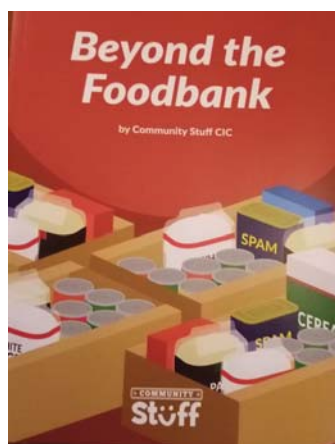
We are each allocated one of the 5Ps; People, Prosperity, Planet, Partnership and Peace. The 5Ps were a system of grouping the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the UN.

FPAT also select the winners for the annual Best Practice Awards. Each APD trawls the database for all projects related to her P. We discuss these with our fellow APDs and agree a winner in each category. We then liaise with the winner to get their presentation ready for conference.

The role of APD is interesting and challenging. We work on all of the things I have mentioned but we also write articles for the magazine and blogs for the website and we run webinars/workshops on issues related to programme action, (there will be one in January and February 2022). We are also allocated a cluster of countries within the Federation to be their link and support. I am currently liaising with clubs in the Caribbean. If only we could travel!

The position of APD is a two-year post, with the option of a further two years. After conference I will be starting my fourth and final year. My post will be advertised next summer. You have to apply and be seconded by another Region. I would encourage you to consider putting yourself forward for this post, or any other that might interest you. If you would like to know more, just email me and I will be happy to answer any questions, as would the other APDs.

The Eastbourne Foodbank



ON MONDAY EVENING, October 11, we welcomed our guest speaker, Howard Wardle from the Eastbourne Foodbank.

The foodbank got a new warehouse in 2018 and also has an advice and debt centre in the town. Last year it fed 16,500 adults and children, equal to 180 tonnes of food. I know you are all thinking how much is that?, well, it's enough to fill two Boeing 757 planes.

You might have thought that Eastbourne was a prosperous town, but 31% of children, that is 7,500, live in poverty. I have to admit that I was surprised.

The food bank has four values: Dignity, Justice, Compassion and Community, and it does not refuse anyone food. After the person has visited the foodbank they are given a cup of tea and offered a chat to find out how the foodbank can help.

Interestingly, the foodbank was originally set up as a temporary measure to help people in the town but it is still going.

Howard's vision is that it will no longer be necessary in 10 years time.

The foodbank does more than provide food, it also helps new mothers with baby baskets as part of the New Start programme. Then there is Home Start that provides kitchen utensils, washing items and bedding. There is also access to help via Advice UK, such as completing forms and Money Life support with debt management.



The idea behind the whole concept is to help people become self-sufficient in order to sort out their problems so that they no longer need the foodbank.

At the end of the talk, we discussed the £20 a week reduction in Universal Credit and the difference this is going to make to so many families.

DENISE STAPLEHURST,
SI EASTBOURNE

Canterbury Breakout Shindig

ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 09, our President Carol Reed generously included Canterbury members, friends and family in her birthday and wedding anniversary celebrations.

Carol and Ken (the lovely Mr Reed) did all the organising and hosted the fundraising evening for the benefit of Save the Children and the local Food-bank.

A simple ploughman's supper was the perfect energy source for dancing and singing along to 60s, 70s and 80s classics with just a brief interlude for the essential raffle.

After so many months of feeling cooped up and restricted, there was plenty of evidence on the dancefloor that I wasn't the only one with a tremendous, liberated feeling. Throwing some shapes and singing together made the chill coming through the open doors well worth it.

On asking Carol how she thought the evening went, I received the following musical reply, "You can dance, you can jive. What a night we had at the Break Out Shindig, dancing the night away. We were Footloose and I had The Time of my Life Dirty Dancing. What a feeling!

"We twisted, we danced Gangnam Style and the Macarena. We even managed to entice some of the men onto the floor, some we'd never seen dancing before!

"It's raining men, I thought!

"The supper was really good. Howfield Manor Hotel did us proud!

Many thanks to those who donated raffle prizes."

We raised over £550 for Save the Children and the Canterbury Foodbank.

On behalf of all attendees and the two charities; many happy returns, congratulations on 50 years married and thank you for an evening of friendship, laughter and some long awaited freedom.

DAWN LILFORD, SI CANTERBURY



**Region Meetings in 2021-2022
are scheduled to take place on:
December 04 (via ZOOM)
March 19
June 25
September 24**

Commendation for exceptional service

DENISE STAPLEHURST A member of SI Eastbourne, recently received a commendation from St John for her work at a local hospital, training St John members and volunteers to administer the Covid vaccine.

St John have now vaccinated 25% of the population. They have given 1.2 million hours of service during Covid, including 15,000 hours at Brighton Hospital (700 hours given by Denise) and have trained 38,000 people all over the country to deliver the vaccine ... An amazing achievement.

Denise is pictured below on duty for St John.



Celebratory drinks and nibbles



AT THE END of August East Grinstead Club celebrated being together again with cocktails, mocktails and nibbles in President Sue's home and garden. The weather was kind and members and guests enjoyed a pleasant evening catching up on the last 18 months whilst raising some money for charity.

We were delighted to welcome Grace, our Region President, who bravely cycled to the event from East Grinstead station. She is seen presenting a bottle of bubbly to a lucky raffle winner before peddling off home!

ROSEMARY STONE, SI EAST GRINSTEAD

Medway and Maidstone fill 75 backpacks for

mary's
meals



AS WE CELEBRATE our 75th anniversary, one of the challenges we have set ourselves during this year is to fill 75 backpacks for the Mary's Meals Backpack project. The backpacks are for both girls and boys aged between four and 12 years.

Many children receiving Mary's Meals do not have basic learning tools, such as pencils and notepads. This project supports them to get the most out of their lessons by donating a backpack full of the things they need. For many children, a Mary's Meals backpack will be the first gift they have ever received. Each backpack must be filled with specific items listed on the website and show in the photo above.

The contents do not need to all be new items; they can be good quality recycled items. We have tried to reuse/recycle where possible. Some of us have been able to use summer clothes that our grandchildren have outgrown. Pat Varty also approached a local tennis club who kindly donated twenty-five used tennis balls.

We are fortunate to have Annette Davies, Kent Ambassador for Mary's Meals, as a new club member to lead on this project. We had delayed starting on the project due to Mary's Meals putting a hold on the project during lockdown. However, having



been given the all-clear after checking with Mary's Meals we decided to get stuck in.

We got off to a good start in September when Wanda Wright kindly hosted a session at her home where nine club members got together on a mammoth filling session (pictured above).

It was agreed we would bring the 50 completed backpacks to our first face to face club meeting since lockdown on October 19. However, in the interim a notice was put on Facebook by Mary's Meals saying due to supply challenges affecting the global shipping industry and higher associated costs, unfortunately Mary's Meals are currently unable to transport donated backpacks to Malawi. Their warehouse is at maximum capacity for storing backpacks and they do not know when shipments will resume, so all collections of backpacks are now on hold for the time being.

This news was obviously disappointing to all our members, but following our October club meeting, members have all agreed to store the backpacks until Mary's Meals can resume collections and transportation to Malawi. This will give us more time to achieve our target of filling 75 backpacks this year.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

...AND get busy knitting scarves for the shoebox appeal



WE HAVE SUPPORTED the Shoebox Appeal for the past 20 years. This year we were invited by Blythwood Care to field a team of knitters to take part. Everyone casts on 30 stitches in double knitting wool on size 6 (5mm) needles. On the word go we all knit for 45 minutes with a break for refreshments, then knit for a further 45 minutes when the work is measured. Knitting is then taken home to be finished off into a scarf for

the shoeboxes. It is a sponsored event and knitters are either sponsored for the whole length or per inch.

On October 4 at a church hall in Gillingham, our small team, made up of two Soroptimists, Sandra Covington, Jane Barnes and a colleague, Jean, joined other knitters from local church and voluntary groups. The photo shows Jean and Sandra at the first break with their knitting and Sandra proved to be the quickest knitter in our team. Unfortunately, Jane had to leave early but finished her scarf that evening. The sponsored knit raised a total of £1049 with a contribution of £180 through our efforts raised with support of club members and family/friends.

These monies will be used to buy additional essential items, such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, underwear, hat, scarves, gloves, small toy, and sweets, which may be missing when checking the donated shoeboxes.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



See page 08 for shoebox update



Centenary Lunch Reception at the House of Lords

SOROPTIMISTS FROM AROUND our Federation came together on October 06 for a celebratory Centenary Lunch Reception at the House of Lords.

The sun came out on the terrace and it was lovely to meet old and new friends from across SIGBI to share in this special celebration. Our Region was well represented and despite many photos being taken, we are unfortunately not allowed by the House of Lords rules to use them on social media or in public communications!

SIGBI President, Cathy Cottridge, warmly welcomed everyone to the reception. It was really good to be able to get together once again after such a difficult period with the pandemic.

SI President Elect, Maureen Maguire, echoed Cathy's sentiments and continued to give an inspiring speech about the future for Soroptimism. She mentioned how the pandemic had impacted on the lives of women and girls in reversing 25 years' worth of global gains in girls' education and exposing girls to a higher chance of under-age marriage, gender-related violence and human trafficking. She stressed the importance of women's voices and leadership to build back better for lives and economies around the world so that no-one is left behind. We need to plan for the future to tackle inequality, the rising climate crisis and to strengthen international cooperation.

Maureen believes that being a Soroptimist allows us to do that through action in our club, nationally and internationally, to make a difference to the lives of women and girls. This also allows us to experience personal growth through rising to the challenges to achieve our goals. Together we can and do make a difference but we must be open to change, to be flexible, to welcome all women and embrace diversity and younger members. In that way we will be a force for women's rights and can continue to change the world for the better through education, empowerment and enabling women and girls.

Maureen thought that the best way we can pay tribute to those women who pioneered Soroptimism is to dream big, take risks, show courage and set our sights high for the next 100 years.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SI EASTBOURNE



IT WAS PERFECT walking weather when three Canterbury club members set off on a 10 mile walk in celebration of our club's 60th anniversary.

Led by Jane Webb, we strode off bearing packed lunches and enthusiasm from our starting point in the village of Harbledown to complete the Canterbury Middle Ring circular trail.

Discovering places we did not know existed, Jane took us through woodland, across apple orchards, past beautiful old churches, along riversides (accompanied by several rats at one stage!), over bridges and under roads. There was such a variety of scenery and rarely were we aware of the hustle and bustle of the City lying at the heart of our circuit.

Energised by Ruth's flapjack and lemon cake we made the final push back to Harbledown where we gleefully took the weight off our feet and refreshed ourselves at the local hostelry in the company of our club President Carol and fellow member Dawn who had both taken time out on a Sunday afternoon to welcome us back.



What a joyful day walking with friends, exploring unknown corners of our city and celebrating the amazing women who contributed so much as Canterbury Soroptimists over the preceding 60 years

JANE WEBB, SI CANTERBURY

Medway and Maidstone complete 66 shoeboxes on October 27



Anniversary bench for Dunorlan Park Tunbridge Wells



ON OCTOBER 26, EXACTLY 75 years to the day from their Charter date in 1946, Tunbridge Wells Club gifted a bench to Dunorlan Park. Dunorlan Park is a Victorian 78 acre landscaped area in Tunbridge Wells with a beautiful boating lake and cedar avenues.

Our bench is in a prime position on one of the slopes with a view of the lake, adjacent to the tea pavilion, it attracts a good footfall of visitors who will walk past or take a moment to sit and contemplate the mature trees and planted shrubs in this wonderful open green space.

The bench carries the inscription 'Soroptimist International of Tunbridge Wells & District Empowering Women Since 1946'.

We were delighted to be joined by local Councillor Jane March, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure. Cllr March

expressed her delight at this donation of a bench 'especially coming after the pandemic when so many people have enjoyed outdoor green spaces and relied on them for support for their general health and well-being.'

Also joining us, Peter Russell the Chair of The Friends of Dunorlan Park whose aunt had been a Soroptimist in Luton, and Joan Hamilton-Smith, Tunbridge Wells Area Ambassador.

After Programme Action Officer Angela McPherson had read The Bench, a poem by Jeanne Claire Probst, Cllr March cut the ribbon and we all enjoyed Soroptimist themed cakes (above). President Caroline presented Cllr March with a yellow chrysanthemum plant (chosen for its colour and symbolism of longevity and being the essence of the sun) and a Soroptimist pen.

CAROLINE AUKLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

SI Medway and Maidstone Welcome Centenary Soroptimists

OCTOBER WAS THE first 'real' in person meeting for our club since the beginning of Covid. It was a meeting of many firsts; it was our first hybrid meeting as we were also providing a zoom facility for those members who still preferred to join from home and for those who were unable to get to the meeting. It was our first meeting in a new venue as our previous meeting place, the Holiday Inn, had been booked out for the year by the Judicial Service.

We are delighted to welcome seven new members to our club since the beginning of the year. Some joined us as a result of personal friendship, others being involved with similar charities/organisations and wanting to continue their support for women found us on the website, while others were a speaker at our club meeting. In Teresa's case, it was 20 years ago when she first found out about Soroptimists!

During the summer it has been possible to have a few social events and meet some of our new members. At this meeting we presented them with their badges. It is a pleasure to see the

energy and enthusiasm which they bring and their new ideas.

We wish them many happy years of involvement with Soroptimists.

CAROL INFANTI, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

FROM LEFT: Annette Davis, Margaret Albert, Carol Infanti (Membership Officer), Teresa Cambell, Sandra Covington, Maryjane Williams, Farbin Nessa and Carol Perry (inset)

