

## President Yvonne's message

### Healthy People, Healthy Planet



THIS MONTH HAS given me some excellent opportunities to visit clubs in our Region and to spend quality time with our members. Regional meetings are great for networking, sharing information and ideas for programme action, but it is by joining clubs at their meetings and special events that we really get to know each other better.

On March 10, Penny Robbins and I joined members of Croydon Club at Croydon Town Hall for their 'Loud and Proud' speaking competition for Year 6 girls from local primary schools [report on page 02]. Reena Bhanotha, Club President, and Sheila Patel, organiser of the competition, welcomed us on arrival. I was a privileged to be the senior judge and it was most interesting to listen to the presentations by the twelve girls who took part. The young lady who won the competition, Shwetika Arun, had only stepped in a few weeks previously and had chosen the topic Women's Groups like Soroptimists – I can assure you we were not biased! In fact, all the girls made their teachers and parents very proud of the ways they researched their chosen topics and presented them to the audience.

Later that day, I joined Folkestone Club for a supper, which Jan Doyle kindly organised at her home, to discuss the way forward for the club with those seven members who are very keen for the club to continue. As it is close to where I live, I have decided to transfer to SI Folkestone to give them all the support I can as Regional President moving forwards. Jan has given more details about the future on page 05.

I will, of course, be sad to leave SI Canterbury as this is the club I first joined almost thirteen years ago, but I know I am leaving a thriving club, which has recruited nine new members since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. I have also assured my Sister Soroptimists in Canterbury that I will continue to attend their meetings and social events whenever I can.

My third club visit on March 16 was to Sevenoaks for their President's Lunch at St Julian's Club, where the Wisteria was in full bloom [more details on pages 09 and 11].



Our Regional Meeting took place via Zoom on March 19, and my report is on page 10.

I am really hoping that we will be able to meet in person for our next Regional Meeting on June 25, and I will be making regular contact with the Holiday Inn at Wrotham to try and achieve this.

## What's in this month's newsletter?



Loud and Proud in Croydon, page 02



A cold water dip for IWD, page 03.



Fair trading in Thanet, page 03.



Zisize, our 20 years of support, page 04.



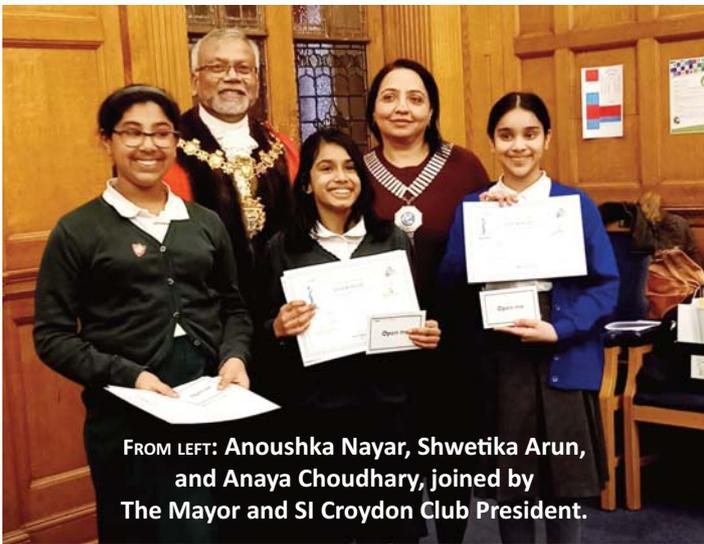
Cream tea and magic tricks, page 06.



# Loud and Proud in Croydon



The twelve competitors with The Mayor of Croydon



FROM LEFT: Anoushka Nayar, Shwetika Arun, and Anaya Choudhary, joined by The Mayor and SI Croydon Club President.

CROYDON CLUB'S PRESIDENT, Reena Bhanotha, was delighted that after a two-year postponement following the Pandemic, the Club's popular Loud and Proud Public Speaking Competition, held annually to celebrate International Women's Day, finally took place on March 11.

Twelve, year-6 girls from six schools – St Peter's Primary, Winterbourne Junior Girls, Minster Junior School, The Robert Fitzroy Academy, St Cyprian's Primary School and Fairchildes & Rowdown Primary – competed, and we were all filled with pride to hear their incredible submissions.

Favoured topics were The Pandemic and Our Hero/Heroine. First prize went to Shwetika Arun from St Peter's Primary School with "My expectations if I were to join a women's group like the Soroptimists", second place went to Anoushka Nayar, also from St Peter's Primary, and third place was won by Anaya Choudhary from Fairchildes & Rowdown Primary.

There were four judges, including our South East England Region President Yvonne Freeman, and the event was attended by The Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury, who presented the prizes.

As you will see from the front page photo, we all managed to strike the #BreakTheBias pose in celebration of International Women's Day.

Our sponsor this year was my hubby, Michael Pereira from Croydon Whitgift Rotary Club and his Health and Safety Company, Ablemarsh Safety Consultants.



GISELLA PEREIRA, SI CROYDON AND DISTRICT



## Supporting the Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust

THE SEVENOAKS DISTRICT Council Community Awards ceremony 2022 was held on March 09, at St Nicholas' Church, hosted by the Leader of SDC, Councillor Peter Fleming.

SI Sevenoaks club received an invitation to be a guest of SAYT who had been nominated for an award.

Soroptimist members have been making cakes once a month for many years now for the young people who board the Youth Bus one evening a week. The bus is a safe haven where they can chat about anything and everything on their minds over a drink of hot chocolate and a piece of homemade cake.

A certificate was presented to the Youth workers and volunteers.

ISOBEL WHITE, SI SEVENOAKS



## Fairtrade raffling to spread the Soroptimist message

SOMETIMES THINGS THAT start off very simply can grow, take off and have a life of their own, I am sure you can think of examples.

Well, when it involves an enthusiastic prospective new SI Thanet member the speed of take-off can be almost scarily fast.

In the past our Fairtrade activity has been for each member to bring some Fairtrade goods to the appropriate meeting as part of our regular foodbank collection. It was suggested that for 2022 we could bring goods to raffle as a hamper amongst ourselves and donate the proceeds, keeping it local and simple.

We have been trying ways to attract new members as our numbers have fallen during Covid. Two ladies had responded through our online presence and were attending their first meeting. During the meeting we discussed various marketing ideas about how we might raise our profile and increase membership.

Stephy, one of the prospective members had been buzzing with ideas and then put several together to suggest widening the scope of the raffle to a wider audience, but unfortunately there wasn't going to be enough time. However, she volunteered to create a proper basket display and take a photo so that it could be shared on line with friends and family. Almost before we knew it, our WhatsApp group had six shared photos of the hamper, which can be seen on the front page.

To go alongside the hamper, and to use on social media, a poster setting out the aims of Fairtrade and SI Thanet was quickly drafted.

The raffle draw is due to take place at our next meeting in April and we wait breathlessly to see whether the marketing results in interest from even more enthusiastic ladies!

PHILIPPA DIXON, MEMBERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, SI THANET

## A cold water dip for International Women's Day



MANY OF YOU may know that Claire Bell of SI Eastbourne is a keen sea swimmer and swims year round, waves permitting.

Living currently about two miles away from her favourite beach at Seaford, Claire gets many opportunities to indulge her hobby, and when she saw on Facebook a plea from Refuge to raise money for them by taking part in a cold water swim on International Women's Day, she jumped at the chance.

Having recently lost her beloved mum Janet, Claire's fundraiser was supported in her mum's name by a number of relatives and she surpassed her target of £150 fairly quickly.

Claire finds no better stress relief than a plunge into cold water and would be delighted to be joined by any other budding cold water swimmers.

CLAIRE BELL, SI EASTBOURNE

## Easter egg collection for the local foodbank



SI BROMLEY CONTINUES its long term support for the foodbank by helping with the Easter egg collection at Bromley Methodist Church. We were asked to give only small eggs and Easter biscuits and cakes, as larger eggs might get smashed if put in with the groceries.

The photo shows, members Susan Lee, Alison Driscoll and Christine Thomas with members of the church and with the box of Easter treats.

CHRISTINE THOMAS, SI BROMLEY

## Fundraising Quiz in aid of Ukrainian refugees



SI BROMLEY HAD a very successful quiz evening, with the questions set by Mary Dalman. We were joined by many visitors and the raffle raised £375, which we sent to the Disasters Emergency Fund for aid to Ukrainian refugees in addition to the £200 we had already allocated. Flowers for the raffle in the national colours of Ukraine were very kindly donated by Petals Galore of Beckenham.



The photo shows the winner, Beryl, a guest, holding the flower arrangement with Karen Shanley who, with the Social Group, took a lead in organising the event. It was lovely to be able to get back together again and it was a fun evening.

CHRISTINE THOMAS, SI BROMLEY



## Medway and Maidstone's 20 years of support for Zisize (Zulu for 'Help Yourself')



Afternoon Tea provided for local Women at the formal opening of Soroptimist House in 2006

DID YOU GO to the Federation Conference in Durban in 2001? You may have seen Niki Lee with her stand (flying the Welsh flag) and showing Zisize and the work she was doing to feed, house and educate children who had been orphaned because of the HIV situation. Jane Barnes and Julia Search had taken assorted items to Durban to donate to an educational charity but had not brought them to conference that day. Niki said she had only booked the stand for one day as money was tight, so Julia paid for her to return the following day and our friendship was born.

Medway Soroptimists had recently sold the house they owned and agreed to send money to the charity to provide housing for volunteers as there were no hotels or lodges for visitors in Ingwavuma, KwaZulu-Natal. Wanda Wright and Judy Bilsland were the first members to visit and stayed with Niki, running a play scheme during the school holiday.

Jane and Julia followed on a visit in 2006 to cut the ribbon on Soroptimist House – a rondavel in Ingwavuma and were the first

volunteers to stay there. Two rondavels were built with the money donated by Medway Soroptimists.

While we were there, we witnessed the feeding programme where child-headed households were struggling to feed themselves. £25 paid for a month's supply of basic food and candles. We found out that some children had no food at the weekends and during school holidays. So we started making monthly donations which have continued ever since.

We also took cotton bags for the women to embroider for our 60th anniversary (see front page photo) and we paid them per bag. From the money left over from that project we were able to pay local women to assist us in painting the orphanage – a task they had never undertaken before because they could not afford paint or brushes.

The charity, The Heaton Lee Foundation, named after Niki's dad who left South Africa as a young man because he opposed apartheid, has been supported by Medway (and now Medway and Maidstone) Soroptimists for more than 20 years and we will continue to support them both as a club and as individuals.

<http://zisize.org>

Julie Search, SI Medway and Maidston



Julia at Zisize Display at Federation Conference in Durban 2001



Allocating food supplies for children to take home as part of the feeding programme

## Time for Blue Sky Thinking at Folkestone Club



WE ALL HAD a bit of a shock at Folkestone when at least six of our long serving members decided they would not be renewing their membership of the club at the end of the club year. Would we have to close?

We are really sorry that we will be losing so many valued members – who leave us for a variety of reasons – but we know they will not only continue to support our club whenever they can, and we will all continue with the friendships we have formed over so many years.

At our March meeting we were able to celebrate and reflect on our memories of the club, and we agreed donations to President Glynis' charity for the year, Baby Basics, the local Foodbank, and our local Women's Refuge. The picture above shows club members – those resigning and those continuing.

The photo top right shows Glynis, the outgoing President of the Club – who is one of those members leaving – handing the chain to club members for safekeeping. Pictured from left: Yvonne (who is joining us from Canterbury), Pat, Jean, Ann, Jan, Belinda, Susannah, and Jacalyn, and we will work together as a team to ensure that the club continues to serve not only the women in Folkestone, but carries on the traditions of Soroptimism in improving the lives of women and girls across the world.

**So, it was time to rethink how we work in future to achieve this.**

Folkestone Club have decided to move to a more flexible management approach; we will not have a president as we feel this will help us develop as a team. Of course, we will have a Secretary: Susannah de Sanvil; a Programme Officer: Ann Reeves; a Treasurer: Jan Doyle, and Jacalyn Wood will be our Communication/Membership Officer as we feel that these two roles go hand in hand.

We are being supported by the Region. Jane Barnes has been to a couple of our meetings recently and this has certainly



helped us to realise that with only a few we are able to continue, and of course Yvonne joining us from Canterbury is a considerable boost for us. (Yvonne lives in one of the villages near to Folkestone).

We also have Federation support as President Elect Ruth came to one of our meetings recently as her club, Surrey Hills, successfully increased their membership during lockdown and they have offered to help us.

Despite this setback, life goes on and the club recently gave a donation to the Chernobyl Children's Life Line (Ashford and Romney Marsh Link).

Susannah de Sanvil is currently in Prague having met up with two girls from Chernobyl who have managed to safely leave Ukraine. She and her husband Tim, pictured above with Lisa (in pink) and Nastliia, are now trying to get their visas and hopefully it won't be too long before they can all come to the UK.

The club is anxious to continue supporting Susannah and the Ashford and Romney Link in helping young people facing the continuing conflict in Ukraine. We will let you know more about this in the next SEE News.

JAN DOYLE, SI FOLKESTONE

### 2022 Diary Dates

SSISEE Region Meeting June 25

SI AGM July 11

UKPAC Meeting September 03

SISEE Region Meeting September 24

CSW66 (2022) Commission on the Status of Women  
March 14 to 25 (Representatives of Member States,  
UN entities, and ECOSOC-accredited non-governmental  
organizations (NGOs) from all regions of the world  
are invited to attend the session.)

Belfast Conference October 27-29

which it is hoped will be in person at the Belfast Waterfront.

### Closing Date

for the next edition of SEE News

is Saturday, April 23, 2022

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

### PLEASE NOTE

If you have events coming up after the closing date, which you would like to appear in SEE News, please advise the Editor who is happy to accept late articles with prior notice.

## International Women's Day in Sevenoaks



SI SEVENOAKS PRESIDENT Pat Downing and PAO Isobel Groves, joined a hundred attenders at the Mayor of Sevenoaks Merilyn Canet's International Women's Day lunch at the Bat and Ball Centre. It was a joyous occasion, planned carefully and hosted by the Mayor and Linda Larter, town clerk, who is a Sevenoaks Soroptimist.

The aim of the lunch was to invite sixth form pupils from local schools and young women starting out on their careers, together with professional and business women, in the hope that by thoughtful mixing at lunch the opportunity of mentoring would be offered.

The event was enhanced by having three speakers from different walks of life: Jenny Proctor spoke about her book *The Suffragettes of Kent*, Councillor Suzanne Clerk spoke about Women and their Impact on the High Street, and Juliette Cheveley spoke about her Acting Career principally as a stunt performer! Isobel's granddaughter Valentina, a member of Sevenoaks Youth Council, attended the event. Valentina has given a talk to a Sevenoaks club meeting on the UN SDGs and their relevance to modern day living.

The lunch ended with the group photograph above\* kindly taken by Zoe a sixth former who was sitting with the Soroptimist group at lunch.

ISOBEL GROVES, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SEVENOAKS

\*[from left: Linda Larter, Isobel Groves, Valentina Groves, Pat Downing and Merilyn Canet, Mayor of Sevenoaks]



AT THE SEVENOAKS Club's meeting, members and guests mingled to celebrate International Women's Day.

A powerful talk was given to the club by solicitor Gillian Bishop on Gender Bias in Family Law? Gillian's greatest achievement was setting up her Family Law firm in London in 1995, specialising in divorce. Her law firm's aim is to keep the family unit as amiably cohesive as possible, always looking for a holistic approach to divorce. Gilly's talk ended with a lively question and answer session.

Following the reading of the Soroptimist Vision, Mission and Values at the beginning of the business meeting, members and guests remained standing in remembrance of the atrocities in Ukraine, followed by President Pat Downing lighting a candle in remembrance of the Women of Ukraine.

ISOBEL GROVES, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER



## Cream tea and magic tricks in Eastbourne



ON A LOVELY Saturday afternoon in February, five Eastbourne Soroptimists helped with a community cream tea for 72 local seniors. The tea was sponsored by the Hampden Park and Willingdon Trees Panel and hosted by our incoming President Pat Hearn and her husband Philip. [Pat will be joint President with Lucy McKeon.]

The tea was provided by Vintage Catering and included sandwiches, cakes, and scones with jam and cream. We were also entertained by a magician (see front page photo) who did card tricks at each table, and two female singers.

We also had a visit from the local MP Caroline Ansell, who spoke to the residents within her constituency. She is pictured in the cream jacket, with the Eastbourne Soroptimists.

The highlight of the event was the raffle. Everyone was given a free ticket and nearly everyone went home with a prize. The community centre contributed to the raffle prizes.

The event was enjoyed by everyone and it is hoped it will take place again next year.

DENISE STAPLEHURST, SI EASTBOURNE

# SI Tunbridge Wells

## Fundraising for Ukraine

MOVED, OF COURSE, by the terrible events in Ukraine, the displacement of all affected by war, especially women and children, Club members decided to fundraise to support some of the many charitable initiatives which are dedicated to providing aid to this humanitarian crisis.

Dedicated to People and Peace, Tunbridge Wells members are sewing again to raise funds to provide aid in the form of food, medicines and any support needed as people cross borders to escape the war zone.

**Neckerchiefs:** We launched our neckerchiefs during the week of International Women's Day and SOLD OUT in one day.

All of the proceeds from the sale of these will be sent to support our sisters in Europe with their marvellous campaigns around the borders.

The neckerchiefs are £5 each, with p&p to a UK address at £1 for up to three in a pack.

**Ribbons:** We have also produced ribbons in yellow and blue for wearing on lapels to show your support for Ukraine.

This is Ann Greenfield's initiative and we now have a team making these, priced at £1 each, with p&p to the UK at £1 for up to 10 ribbons in an envelope.

All proceeds will go to the dedicated Ukrainian charity links as suggested by SIGBI.

To place an order for the neckerchiefs, or the ribbons, please email [situnbridgewells@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:situnbridgewells@yahoo.co.uk)

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS & DISTRICT



Angela McPherson PA (left) and Louise Taylor Treasurer, the team behind their production, seen modelling the neckerchiefs on sale for £5 each.

Pictured left are the ribbons on sale for £1 each.



ON SUNDAY, MARCH 13, community groups and businesses in East Grinstead were invited to take part in 'Love East Grinstead'.

The High Street was closed and local organisations, shops and companies set up stalls and displays demonstrating the diversity of commercial and social activity taking place in the town.

East Grinstead Club acquired a gazebo – fortunate as the morning was wet – and produced information boards outlining the Club's projects as well as providing literature about SIGBI and our own Club.

Since this is our 60th Anniversary Year the opportunity for publicity was all the more welcome. Handmade items, home-made fudge and some pre-loved items were offered for sale in aid of local charities and despite the fact that fund-raising was not the main objective, over £100 was collected.

We were particularly heartened by the level of interest shown in the Club and its activities by many of the town's residents and there were some expressions of interest in membership which we hope to follow up.

Altogether this was a very successful day both in terms of awareness raising and in working in partnership with the wider East Grinstead community.

ROSEMARY STONE, SI EAST GRINSTEAD



## All about toilets on International Women's Day



THE SI TUNBRIDGE Wells Toilet Twinning campaign continues apace.

As part of International Women's Day, Tunbridge Wells member Jean Meadows had a Toilet Twinning information stand inside the Tunbridge Wells Forum venue.

Our trusty aluminium can model toilet was once again utilised to raise awareness of the need for improved sanitary conditions around the world.

Focusing on Sustainable Development Goals SDG1 eradication of poverty, and SDG3 good health and well-being, as well as SDG5 gender equality, violence and exploitation against women and girls, Jean also gave an impassioned talk to the assembled audience.

This culminated in the presentation to the Forum, and acceptance of a Toilet Twinned certificate for their disabled loo.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, SI TUBRIDGE WELLS



## East Grinstead President's Lunch



ON A LOVELY spring Sunday, SI East Grinstead were able to host a Presidential Lunch for their outgoing President, Sue Edgar.

Quickly organised they had hoped for around 25 attendees, but were in fact a group of 36 on the day with apologies from four other members who could not attend.

It was smiles all round as friends met, chatted and enjoyed each other's company after such a long time.

Formalities were kept to a minimum – Caroline Auckland, President of Tunbridge Wells, was warmly welcomed then it was on to the 'business' of chatting!

ROSEMARY STONE, SI EAST GRINSTEAD

## Plastic milk bottle tops

DO YOU REMEMBER those enjoyable Saturdays when we had face-to-face Region meetings, and Denise Staplehurst from SI Eastbourne would leave at the end of the day laden with bags of plastic milk bottle tops donated by other clubs? Do you ever wonder what happens with them now?

Well, there's no need to worry, as they now go to a couple in Eastbourne named Mary and John Carden who send out regular updates, and below is an extract from their recent newsletter:

*"We are very pleased to announce that we have handed over several cheques, including a donation of £750 to the Friends of Eastbourne District General Hospital New Da Vinci Robot Fund. This is equivalent to 3,750,000 tops sent for recycling (7.5 tons)."*

Below is Sue Duffell Secretary of the Friends, with John and the Friends' Shop Manager Sue Hitchen at the cheque handover.

DENISE STAPLEHURST, SI EASTBOURNE



## President Yvonne joins Sevenoaks Club for lunch at St Julian's

PRESIDENT YVONNE'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01

MY THIRD CLUB visit was to Sevenoaks for their President's Lunch on March 16. Club President, Patricia Downing, and Sevenoaks club members gave me a very warm welcome and we enjoyed a very nice lunch together. It was good to see members from other clubs present as well.

After lunch, Councillor Dr Marilyn Canet, Mayor of Sevenoaks, who has been a firm supporter of SI Sevenoaks for some years, spoke about the Presidents' charities during the period 2019-2022 and the programme action work carried out by the club over the past few years.

I was asked to respond, and I also highlighted the excellent work carried out by the club despite the restrictions of the pandemic and also our work overseas.

Shortly before leaving the lunch, I was presented with some lovely flowers which was a really pleasant surprise.

YVONNE FREEMAN, PRESIDENT SI SEE REGION

GO TO PAGE 11 FOR PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LUNCH AND ISOBEL WHITE'S REPORT OF THE EVENT.



## Adding to the Queen's Green Canopy

SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS were delighted to be able to add to our tree planting total with a set of saplings planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy Jubilee celebrations.

We planted our hawthorn, hazel, hornbeam, field maple and wild cherry in Southwood Recreation Grounds, Rusthall, and joined with Tunbridge Wells U3a as they planted theirs.

We then enjoyed refreshments, including this splendid cake made by Soroptimist Carolyn Clutterbuck.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



## Medway and Maidstone at International Women's Day Event



ON MARCH 08, Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists took part in an International Women's Day event held at Medway Park in Gillingham (12:30 to 19:00).

The event was for Women and Girls and the theme was 'Keeping Medway Safe.' It was organised by Medway Sport, Kent Police, Medway Council, Medway Community Partnership and Medway Task Force.

We joined with other organisations to #BreakTheBias.

At the event those attending could try new physical activities and sports, hear guest speakers, visit information stands on women's wellbeing and chat to local supporters whilst enjoying refreshments.

Liz Duckworth set up our display stand in the Marketplace and was supported by Jane Barnes and Stella Barnes. Stella is Jane's sister and our latest recruit and has recently moved from Wales to live in Kent. Stella can be seen striking the #BreakTheBias pose in front of our Soroptimist display.

Carol McKeough, Nellie Adjaye, Teresa Cambell, Annette Davies, Wanda Wright, and Sharon Forghani also took turns at the display stand to meet with those Women and Girls interested in finding out more about Soroptimists and the work we do.

The event was well attended with an excellent footfall. It was good to see so many women and girls of all ages together in one place. Many coming up to our stand asking us, 'What is a Soroptimist' and hearing about all the project work we are involved with and all the fun and friendship.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE





OVER RECENT WEEKS we have heard about events taking place in Ukraine and looked at how best to offer support and assistance at these challenging times. In the early days we heard about collection points for Ukraine being set up in and around Kent and shared this information with our members.

Julia Search followed up with one of these in Maidstone, QP Online, before she took items for Ukraine. They were leaving by the end of the week and said they needed baby essentials, medical supplies such as bandages and tablets for pain relief, sanitary products, and non-perishable food items. Her grandsons each gave her £10 from their pocket money which she used to buy nappies and baby milk. She also took a large bag of groceries, towels, plastic plates, and cutlery, as well as soap, toothpaste, and face flannels, which were all well received.

She found out about another collection the following week at a Council Office in Ashford. They were asking for filled shoeboxes. Julia collected donations from members and family, and these can be seen in the photograph above.

Further advice received from SIGBI suggested where financial donations may be made. One of these was the UK Humanitarian Appeal being organised by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC). Although members had made individual donations, at our March club meeting, we agreed to donate £500 to DEC.

The Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal has reached £200 million in the two weeks since it was launched.

The number of refugees has passed three million, with almost two million more people displaced inside Ukraine as intense fighting, shelling and air strikes continue across Ukraine, affecting many civilian areas and destroying homes and vital infrastructure such as hospitals, schools and water supplies. Donations to the appeal are funding work by DEC charities and their local partners inside Ukraine and in neighbouring countries. They are helping people with their immediate needs while also planning to support refugees and displaced people over the coming months and years.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MASIDSTONE



## President Yvonne's report on the Region Zoom meeting

PRESIDENT YVONNE'S MESSAGE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 01

AT OUR REGIONAL Meeting on March 19, I was pleased to welcome 46 members including two new members, Stella Barnes from SI Medway & Maidstone, and Keji Moses from SI Canterbury.

Our speaker, Susan Booth, Executive Director, Development with Target Ovarian Cancer told us about the work of the charity, which includes supporting women diagnosed with the cancer, funding vital research, and improving GP education which in turn improves recognition of symptoms.

Susan noted that over 7,000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year and 11 women die from the cancer every day. Throughout the year a range of fund-raising events take place which members can support.

Three clubs gave presentations on their 'Good News Story from the last six months': Canterbury focused on their increased membership, Croydon had managed to achieve a recording of Shwetika's presentation on 'Women's Groups like Soroptimists', and East Grinstead told us about their very comprehensive Programme Action.

Carol Infanti, Assistant Programme Director – Prosperity, led a workshop on completing Programme Focus forms. Following a presentation on 'knowing our brand' and 'telling our story', we reviewed three completed forms and judged them in order of 'Good, Better and Best'.

We also considered which of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals fitted with each Programme Focus form and which of the 5Ps – People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace or Partnerships.

We hope the information and guidance shared in this workshop will help members to complete their forms moving forwards by using the table of UN Ps, SDGs and UN targets circulated at the meeting and to fully answer the questions what, why, how and outcomes.

At the end of the meeting, I was delighted to announce that Alison Driscoll from SI Bromley has kindly agreed to become Vice President for the Region following our AGM in September. Alison noted that she will be the first from Bromley Club.

I am really hoping that we will be able to meet in person for our next Regional Meeting on June 25, and I will be making regular contact with the Holiday Inn at Wrotham to try and achieve this.

YVONNE FREEMAN, PRESIDENT SI SEE REGION

## A letter to Associate Members

Dear Associate Members,

I do hope you enjoy reading your copies of SEE News, packed with monthly updates on the amazing work undertaken by the Clubs in our Region.

I don't doubt that those of you who were once full members still support your former clubs when you can.

Perhaps you are working in the background supporting your favourite causes, or your local community, or even undertaking your own projects?

Whatever you do, please send me your news and photographs, as I know that our Region members would be interested to hear from you. [Closing date for next edition is April 23.]

Yours in friendship,  
Patricia Painting, Editor, SEE News

## A Spotlight on Safety



DURING THE INTERNATIONAL Women's Day Event at The Forum (see page 08), Tunbridge Wells Soroptimists launched our survey 'A Spotlight on Safety in Tunbridge Wells'.

We also held a safety panel discussion during the IWD event and President Caroline interviewed the Borough Council's Community Safety Manager Terry Hughes, Head Girl Phoebe Root from one of the local schools, and Inspector Ian Jones of Tunbridge Wells Police.

The discussion was based around the topics of safety concerns, behaviour modifications, cat calling, victim blaming, night time economy and drink spiking, CCTV and lighting.

We also discussed the ways police and the local services in Tunbridge Wells are striving to create change around awareness and intolerance of all forms of violence and sexual harassment.

There were some quite challenging questions from the floor and it was evident that concerns exist within our community. The local council had also helpfully provided a large town map which we used for community engagement during the event at The Forum. This was used to encourage an informal discussion around areas of concern.

We feel very strongly that discussions such as these are useful as we are all encouraged to embrace active travel routes with the use of public transport and cycle lanes rather than using the car as a mode of transport. Walking females of all ages need to feel safe and not excluded from activities due to fear.

We need data to understand the issues being experienced locally and effect change by passing on the community collective voices to the local organisations who can create action plans to prevent sexual harassment and violence in Tunbridge Wells.

Should this be something your club is interested in exploring in your area we are very happy to share our survey as a useful resource/template.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

## IN THE NEWS

The election of an avowed anti-feminist as the next president of South Korea has been greeted with dismay amid accusations that Yoon Suk-yeol fuelled the country's gender divide to win over young male voters.

Yoon has blamed the country's low birthrate on feminism. He has called for the abolition of the gender equality ministry, which he claims focuses too much on women's rights and is no longer necessary.

SOURCE: THE GUARDIAN, MARCH 12, 2022

## SI Sevenoaks President's Lunch



Mayor of Sevenoaks Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet, President Pat Downing MBE, Ann Hines, Region President Yvonne Freeman, Penny Robbins, Pat Dale and Lynette Richards, both from SI Croydon.

ON MARCH 16, SEVENOAKS President Pat Downing and club members were delighted to be able to hold their annual lunch at St Julian's, after two years Covid postponement... and the wisteria was in all its glory!

The 40 guests included Regional President Yvonne Freeman, Town Mayor Dr Marilyn Canet, members from Bromley, Croydon and Tunbridge Wells, together with prospective and former members, friends and family.

Penny Robbins had fully briefed the Mayor who proposed the toast to SI and Yvonne responded. Ann Greenfield responded on behalf of the guests.

Guests stayed on chatting for a long time and many thank you letters received indicated that it was a very happy and successful occasion.

ISOBEL WHITE, SI SEVENOAKS

SEE PRESIDENT YVONNE'S REPORT ON PAGE 09



# Civic Medallion awarded by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to Soroptimist June Bridgeman



## Statement from TWBC

TUNBRIDGE WELLS RESIDENT, Mrs June Bridgeman CB, was awarded a Civic Medallion by Members of the Council in appreciation for her outstanding contribution and active participation in community life, and recognising her involvement in community projects based on historical, environmental and educational engagement promoting women's perspectives.

Councillor Jane March, Portfolio Holder for Environment, Culture and Leisure who made the nomination said:

"This award recognises the many elements of community life in Tunbridge Wells that June has initiated and supported. She has put time and energy into improving the lives of residents and the environmental benefits of various areas around Tunbridge Wells.

"A truly worthy recipient of this award."

June Bridgeman is a founding member of the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery and Friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery, established to encourage historical, environmental and educational engagement, especially by local school children.

She championed the link between Woodbury Park Cemetery and the Jeffery Hale Foundation in Canada which led to the Jeffery Hale Award, an educational awards scheme for local primary schools. She is a founder of the Friends of Trinity Churchyard, a member of Royal Tunbridge Wells Civic Society and the Town Forum. As a member of the Soroptimist Tunbridge Wells club, she has done much to further the work of Soroptimist International.

Full Council considered the nomination at their meeting on December 15, 2021 and gave their unanimous approval for the award to be presented at their meeting on February 23, 2022.

The Medallion scheme has been in operation since 1981 during which time 34 Medallions have been awarded recognising those people who have made an outstanding contribution and given exceptional service to the local community. Medallions are only given once a year and it is not automatic that an award will be made. The nomination process is made through borough councillors.



June received her award on February 23 during the Full Council meeting and was presented with the medal by the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells Councillor Chris Woodward, and Chief Executive of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council William Benson.

SI Tunbridge Wells President Caroline Auckland, was invited to attend the ceremony and endorsed the award with the following speech during the evening:

"We would like to support this award to Past President June Bridgeman who has achieved all the charitable objectives of our organisation during her long career as a Soroptimist.

"Her love of Tunbridge Wells in terms of its historical development and current town planning issues has embraced many individuals in ensuring the maintenance of green open spaces, the development of friends groups such as the Friends of Woodbury Park Cemetery and the friends of Tunbridge Wells Cemetery. This is an illustration of June's ability to bring people together of varied backgrounds and politics who combine their knowledge and skills for the betterment of Tunbridge Wells or 'A Place of Leisure and Resort' the title of a report June presented to the Town Forum during her term as Chair.

"She is a highly respected member of our community and an example of practicing good citizenship and community development, embracing all ages in her outlook with the introduction of the Jeffery Hale educational Award for schools ensuring the continued relationship with Quebec, Canada, and Tunbridge Wells alongside the advancement of education as well as environmental issues.

"Her commitment to women's issues locally and nationally has resulted in number of surveys and scoping documents on issues such as safety, toilets, waste, litter prevention, antisocial behaviour, recycling and transport, all of which have been received favourably by TWBC.

"She is a great orator herself with a brilliant insightful mind, often anticipating issues which need investigation before they become national issues.

"She is a perfect example of the phrase 'Women hold up half the Sky' and encourages others to achieve their full potential. We are very fortunate to have her as a guiding Soroptimist in our Tunbridge Wells Club and thank her for her contribution to Tunbridge Wells life."

After the award ceremony June was presented with flowers by Lorna Blackmore on behalf of the SISEE Region.

CAROLINE AUCLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

# MARKETING & PR LIVE SESSIONS



● FACEBOOK LIVE

THE PR AND MARKETING team are holding a series of Facebook Live sessions throughout 2022, which give hints and tips on single areas. Each session is half an hour long, and the videos from the sessions will be made available on the SIGBI website after each session.

I attended the third one of these Facebook Live sessions on Saturday, March 19 with Rachel Weinhold, and Liz Hall who is a professional photographer. Below are their five top tips.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

## 5 Top Tips for Taking Worthy Photos

### 1. REMEMBER TO TAKE PHOTOS

Think about it ahead of the event and how you will use it, such as social media and your club website.  
Ensure you get into the habit of taking photos.  
With many of us having smartphones then these can be used.

### 2. THINK ABOUT PHOTO IN ADVANCE

Consider where the photo is to be used and for what purpose, such as raising awareness and/or attracting new members.  
Create a bank of photos/images that you can fall back on.  
It is better to have a person in the photo.  
Ensure photos include different images, members of different ages.  
With projects take photos before and after, follow the story through from start to finish.

### 3. FRAME YOUR PHOTO

Ensure people are close and in the forefront as possible.  
If not then the Press will crop your photo to achieve this.  
Ensure sufficient lighting as this does make a difference.  
If presenting a cheque then use a large Drywipe Blank version with logo that can be customised each time.

### 4. ASK WOULD A VIDEO BE BETTER

Consider whether this is a better option to tell your story.  
It need only be about one minute in length.

### 5. SHARE SHARE SHARE

Ensure that you do something with the photo, such as use on social media, website, Photo of the Month.  
Good photos need to be shared as otherwise they have no value.  
Upload to an account that others can also access ie, Dropbox.  
Others may be able to use the photos for other purposes they are responsible for.



Rachel Weinhold



Liz Hall

SATURDAY  
19TH MARCH

14:00 - 14.30 GMT

03 TOP TIPS FOR TAKING WORTHY PHOTOS