

President Yvonne's message

Healthy People, Healthy Planet



APRIL HAS BEEN another busy month and I have really enjoyed visiting more clubs in our Region and getting to know our members better. My first visit was to Medway and Maidstone on April 12 for their annual dinner, this year at Oliver's Restaurant in Rochester [SEE PAGE 08]. After a lovely meal, I was delighted to present Liz Duckworth with her 40 year membership certificate, Maya Bangar with her 20 year certificate and Carol Perry and Stella Barnes with new member's badges. A week later I joined the club for their AGM on Zoom.

On the following evening, April 20, I joined Folkestone for their AGM (I'm now a member of that club). During the following business meeting, we appointed our new officers and set out plans for the coming year. The club now has a promising future and I look forward to working together with the members as we move forwards.



My first programme action for the club was to organise some Easter eggs for the women and children at the Folkestone Women's Refuge, kindly donated by Morrisons Supermarket. Belinda Walker and I delivered the eggs shortly before Easter and they were delighted to receive them. Whilst there, we also discussed other ways in which we can provide support.

On April 26, I will be joining Sevenoaks for their AGM and it will be good to see club members once again. The following week on May 03, I am looking forward to visiting Thanet club in Westgate, which will be a trip down memory lane for me as I grew up and spent many happy years in Westgate.

I am pleased to report that the Holiday Inn at Wrotham is now open for business and we plan to meet there on June 25 for our Region Meeting, and on September 24 for our AGM. It will be nice to meet in person again and I look forward to seeing you at both events. Many thanks to Carol Reed, Regional Secretary, for continuing to liaise with the hotel to secure our bookings.

Finally, our Annual Conference will be held in Belfast from October 27-29, and registration will open mid-May. The early bird registration fee will be available until the end of July. It will be good to have a face-to-face conference once again and I look forward to seeing members from our Region there.

I will be organising a regional dinner for the Saturday evening and so do please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to join us. I do hope you will.

What's in this month's newsletter?



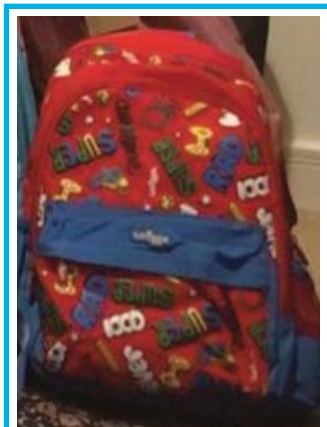
Canterbury's final action of 60th year, page 02.



Eastbourne mark World Earth Day, page 02.



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Backpack project comes to an end, page 03.



Trees for Minyanga Village, page 05.



Kangaroos in East Grinstead? Page 06.



IN 2021, SI CANTERBURY began their Sixtieth Anniversary celebrations with the Inspirational Woman of the Year Award, and on March 30, 2022 completed the celebrations by planting three special trees, Malus floribunda, Malus Neville Copeman and Quercus ilex at Simon

Langton Grammar School for Girls in Canterbury.

Luckily Dawn does not live far from the school so was able to carry the trees from her house and deliver them for planting!

The school's Orchard Club have already planted 30 Small copse trees, 10 silver

birch, 10 rowan and 10 wild cherry trees requested by us and provided by the Woodland Trust and we purchased 30 avocado trees that have been planted in Meru by CIFORD.

It's been a good year!

CAROL REED, SI CANTERBURY

Eastbourne Club mark World Earth Day



SI EASTBOURNE MARKED World Earth Day 2022 by donating a large number of medical blister packs to the Superdrug recycling programme. The photograph shows just some of the blister packs collected over the past few months. We have been very successful in getting friends and family to collect as well.

We had a very informative talk from Neil Peters, Community Recycling officer from Eastbourne District Council, at our last meeting but he worried us by suggesting that Superdrug were no longer recycling blister packs. Luckily Superdrug in Brighton are still accepting the packs so the collecting will continue.

CLAIRE BELL, SI EASTBOURNE

Message on TerraCycle's Website

"As of 1 March 2022, Superdrug is working with an alternative recycling partner to support the recycling of medicine blister packs via their participating 200 pharmacy locations. As such TerraCycle is no longer involved in the solution available via the Superdrug stores. For any further questions in relation to the Superdrug recycling solution for medicine blister packs please contact the Superdrug Customer Team on 03456 710 709 or by email at help@superdrug.com."

BEACH CLEAN CHALLENGE



MY CHALLENGE FOR Canterbury's 60th Anniversary, was to collect 60 bags of rubbish over the year.

I live near the sea and swim most days so I was very aware of the hazards of plastic pollution.

Especially in the summer, and when its a sunny evening, the rubbish is left by the public. That's when the champagne corks and fish and chip wrappers appear. But there is plastic from the sea all year round. It's worse after a high tide and even worse after a sewage outfall.

I estimate that I've picked up 240 kilos of rubbish over the last 12 months and thousands of sticks from cotton wool buds.

Every litter pick seems to include a Red Bull can, a ketchup

sachet, at least one mask (though the numbers are dropping as people wear them less), some fishing twine, the sole of a shoe and even more cotton bud sticks.

I hope that I've left the beaches in a pleasanter, safer and more hygienic place. I've also raised awareness that litter picking is the responsibility of us all. And, additionally, it's a calming and therapeutic activity. Lose yourself in the moment as you hunt for little bits of plastic.

Once you start, you won't be able to stop!

Thank you to our communication officer Keji for this beautiful representation of the rubbish collected from Kent beaches.

Backpack Project comes to an end

BACK IN 2021 at the start of our 75th anniversary celebrations, Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists set themselves a target to fill 75 backpacks for Mary's Meals over the next year.

Our first shipment of 59 filled backpacks was collected in December 2021 and was transported by Mary's Meals to children in Malawi aged between 4-12 years.

In January 2022, the pupils at Byron Primary School who we work in partnership with and are working towards achieving their Rights Respecting Award, chose Mary's Meals as the charity they wanted to support.

It was therefore extremely disappointing to both of us in March to hear from Mary's Meals that they had taken the difficult decision to bring The Backpack Project to an end. This is as a result the greater logistical complexities and costs to bear that have proved to be unsustainable for Mary's Meals.

All backpack donations had to be collected by April 22 so that Mary's Meals can make one final shipment to Malawi.

To ensure we met this deadline an urgent call went out to all our Soroptimist members for a final big push. Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists not only managed to fill more backpacks but exceeded our original 75 target. The final number of filled

backpacks was 84 and the remaining 25 were collected on April 06.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



Learning how to be a racial equality ally

Another in the occasional series of articles by Tessa Woodward, SI Canterbury

Understanding how we all gain from the trickle-down financial benefit from slavery

BECAUSE OF THE geographical distance between Britain and the West Indies and the Americas, and the time distance between the centuries of African enslavement and the present day, it's easy for us to forget British involvement in slavery. We imagine perhaps that just a few rich people were involved. And a few ships. And thanks to William Wilberforce, a leading abolitionist, we can also think that we were on the side of the angels really.

'Britain's forgotten slave-owners' is a two-part TV documentary presented by David Olusoga, the British historian. I learned a lot from it. British plantation records list the names, ages and worth, in sterling, of the women, children and men who were enslaved on British plantations. So, we know that, with the Slavery Abolition (SA) Act of 1833, 800,000 Africans, the legal property of British owners, were (technically) freed. The British government then borrowed £20 million (which is about £17 billion in today's money) to pay reparations. This was the largest bailout in history, until that of the banks in 2009. The word 'reparation' means making amends, usually financial, to those who have been wronged. However, not one penny of the money went to those who had been enslaved. It went instead to those who had, as a result of the SA Act, lost their human 'property'. Reparation is thus the wrong word to use.

The Slave Compensation Commission (there is irony in that name too!), a committee of ten men, divvied up the bailout money and kept detailed records of the financial outgoings. So, we know exactly who the slave owners were who registered for and received compensation. The records are a de facto census of British slave owners, as of 1834. We might imagine that there were just a few hundred wealthy British slave owners at the time. In fact, slave ownership was very common and some 46,000 British people, slave owners, are on the list, together with the amounts of money they received.

Thanks to the project 'Legacies of British Slave Ownership', a team of historians at University College London have been

combing through the 46,000 entries. As a result, we now know that British slave owners not only grew rich from slave labour while it was legal, but also received generous amounts of money as compensation for the loss of their human property. We learn, for example, that a country vicar received the equivalent of £800 or so for his one servant and that John Gladstone (father of prime minister William) received the equivalent of £80 million for the 'loss' of thousands of unpaid workers on his plantations in Guyana. There are then some famous people, some high and mighty families, firms, companies on the list. But there are also in the records a lot of very ordinary people listed, and lots of women, often widows who inherited slaves or part shares in plantations from their dead husbands.

Thanks to the Legacy project and the paper trails the researchers have found and investigated, we can also see the extent of the trickle-down effect of all this wealth on our cultural and social institutions. For, as well as passing their wealth to the next generations, these rich individuals bought houses and estates for their families, had their portraits painted, collected and donated fine art, put money into banks, schools, colleges, insurance companies, libraries, and museums.

I did not know any of this. If it weren't for Olusoga and other historians this would have been airbrushed out of history.

So, even if I check the names on the compensation list and, with a sigh of relief, do not find my ancestors' names there, can I say I have not benefitted from slave ownership? This is something worth thinking about perhaps when I next pop into a library or museum, visit a grand National Trust property or stare at an oil painting of some 'worthy' gentleman in an art gallery.

'Britain's forgotten slave-owners' is available to view on BBC iPlayer.

The 'Legacies of British Slave Ownership' project is at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>

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 Tuesday, May 24, 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.

Trees for Minyanga Village in Malawi



AS A RESULT OF funding from SI Tunbridge Wells & District, the Mbedza Projects support team has been able to provide trees at Minyanga village in Malawi. The £250 gift has contributed 250 trees towards a total of 740 trees. These 740 trees at Minyanga village are made up of 500 trees for a woodlot and a distribution of 20 trees to each household. The following report from Nina Gunde in Malawi evidences the joy that this has caused.

From Nina Gunde, March 11, 2022

Malawi has a wood fuel crisis and the most recent government strategy paper (Charcoal Strategy) states “by 2030 there will not be enough biomass in the country to meet demand for fire-wood.” The same strategy paper also identifies that wood supply in Zomba is deficient. Pillar 2 of this strategy is “to promote the adoption of improved cook stoves for household cooking.”

Our organization, Mbedza Projects support, is doing this in villages around Zomba district where we have been building Esperanza Stoves since 2014. By March 2022 we have planted trees in Minyanga village.

Minyanga village is located to the east of Zomba town. This village has 12 households and the village chief is a female called Jane Minyanga. Jane is 72 years old and stays with her three grandchildren namely Neverson, Kumbukani and Promise. This village is under the group village head Mikulumu and traditional authority Mlumbe in Zomba district.

Jane is so happy for this project. According to her, this has been the first development ever during her reign. She has seen organizations donating trees to nearby villages but unfortunately her village is always side-lined because they said it has a few households. So instead they were just helping in taking care of the trees but her village was not benefiting anything from the projects. She is so thankful for the group of ladies who helped them to plant their own trees.

The members of the community expressed gratitude for being given Kesha trees. They said Kesha tree trunks are medicine. When boiled, the solution helps treat abdominal pains and malaria.

In the photo left Chief Jane Menyanga and VDC Chair Meria Stephano proudly carry their trees ready for planting. The picture on the cover shows a beneficiary carrying some of the trees to be planted by her household.

Nabil (left) and Naomie (right) happily helping their parents carry trees to their household.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



Federation Programme Action

An update from APD Carol Infanti

THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME Action (FPAT) are busy planning the FPAC meeting for the Thursday before conference. It will be a hybrid meeting, so those of you who are unable or who have decided not to travel to Belfast for conference this year will be able to take part.

The theme will be based around climate action. We are currently looking for speakers and clubs who have some exciting and different messages to share with us. Please make a note in your diary to join us, whether in person or virtually.

During August FPAT will be selecting the Best Practice Award winners and working with the clubs to prepare presentations for

conference. So don't forget to complete all your programme focus reports before July 30. Don't forget to include all the information and tips that I shared with you at the last regional meeting.

I would also like to remind you to give consideration to becoming an APD.

I have to stand down after conference as I have completed 2 x 2 years. It is time for someone else to step forward with new ideas. I would be happy to tell you more about the role and mentor/support you should you decide to go ahead. I look forward to hearing from you.



MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE Soroptimists provided the women and children at our local Women's Refuge with some Easter gifts. These were chocolates for the Mums and Easter eggs and a knitted trauma bear for each child. The gifts were dropped off in plenty of time for Easter and were extremely well received, especially loving the knitted trauma bears.

It can be a difficult time for these families who have been affected by domestic abuse. It was hoped this small gesture would bring some comfort and enjoyment for each of them over the holiday period.

After the visit a staff member sent a thank you message saying 'We appreciate your kindness and are grateful to everyone and wishing you all a Happy Easter'.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Mentoring with The Girls' Network



THE GIRLS' NETWORK (TGN) is a charity that works to inspire and empower girls aged 13-19 from the least advantaged communities by connecting them to a mentor and a network of professional role models who are women. TGN believe that no girl's future should be limited by her background, gender or parental income and just like Soroptimists, they look to transform the lives of girls and young women. Mentors give their time and share their experience and skills to support a girl, often from a disadvantaged background, to grow their confidence, resilience, aspirations and their belief in their worth and their ability to achieve the future they want for themselves.

Lynne Chiswick is a mentor with The Girls Network and recently completed a second year supporting a girl in a local school. The attached photo shows some of the mentees receiving their certificates at a Celebration Evening recently.



EAST GRINSTEAD CLUB recently welcomed the Chief Executive Officer and Marketing Manager of Kangaroos to speak to the club with a view to learning about their valuable work in the Sussex Area.

The charity was established in 1994 by a group of parents whose children attended a school in Cuckfield Sussex which specialised in supporting children with learning disabilities. The parents' aim was for their children to be able to access similar after school activities and opportunities to those offered to mainstream children.

The parents initially set up a Saturday play scheme for six children, but the organisation has grown enormously and currently supports over 200 members ranging in age from six to 35 years.

Why the name 'Kangaroos'? At the very first play group session a parent commented that the children were all so happy, 'bouncing around from activity to activity just like kangaroos' and so the name was born.

Kangaroos' five values are – Family centred, Fun and friendship, Safe and supported, Pushing boundaries and Building independence, confidence and self-esteem. Their approach is a holistic one, supporting the whole family with a wide range of services.

Currently the charity's centres are based in Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill but some recipients of their services live in East Grinstead. As a result they are seeking suitable premises in East Grinstead with a view to extending their facilities into our area. Should this vision become a reality, East Grinstead Club may well be able to support the charity in whatever ways would benefit it most.

ROSEMARY STONE, SI EAST GRINSTEAD

Girls who have completed the mentoring year, go on to become Ambassadors for TGN and are able to draw on support throughout their lives and hopefully go on to be mentors themselves.

TGN are really keen to recruit more mentors as they have more girls wanting support than mentors. Although they are expanding provision in Sussex, unfortunately TGN does not operate in Kent as they do not have the infrastructure in place and, of course, this is dependent on funding. Lynne has been pressing TGN on this as mentoring is a perfect fit for Soroptimists.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SI EASTOURNE

An article about the event was published in The Herald. The journalist present interviewed me as a mentor but unfortunately my plug for Soroptimists was cut from The Herald although the journalist had sent me a copy of what she had written. Well you can only try! Lynne

East eggs for the local refuge



EACH YEAR EASTBOURNE club sends money to the refuge for the children to buy Mothering Sunday gifts. We also send Easter eggs for the mothers and children to enjoy.

This year our incoming president Pat approached Tesco's and they have given us 20 eggs. So, together with the eggs from members, we were able to give each person two eggs to enjoy.

DENISE STAPLEHURST, SI EASTBOURNE

Soroptimists take part in Great British Spring Clean in Rochester



THE GREAT BRITISH Spring Clean takes place annually between March 25 to April 10. This year the message was simple – Join the #BigBagChallenge and pledge to pick up as much litter as you can during the campaign.

Friends of Rochester, Churchfields and Esplanade (FoRCE) held their litter pick during the morning of April 02 at the Rochester Esplanade. Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists, Sue Daykin, Stella Barnes and Jane Barnes joined in with other FoRCE volunteer litter pickers. To ensure our safety we were provided with long handled pickers, black bags and wore Hi-Viz jackets.

We set off with our pickers along the Esplanade, around the outside walls of Rochester Castle and onto the paved area in front of Rochester Cathedral to pick up any discarded litter.

Although it was a rather chilly and windy day, we were fortunate that the sun was shining and the flower beds along the Esplanade were all in full bloom.

It was a productive and worthwhile time and we returned with our bags of rubbish. The filled bags were all put together at a collection point ready for the local council to take away.

Across the UK nearly half a million bags – 449,406 to be precise – have been pledged during this year's campaign.

Everyone taking part contributed to making a difference in their community.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



On Friday 1st April Our Own Sylvia Wachuku-King joined colleagues from other regions in the UK and a well known Celebrity Mel Geidroyc for a photoshoot at Buckingham Palace gardens to launch this years Big Jubilee Lunch from 2-5 June

Sylvia leads the Cultural Diversity Group in her Addiscombe Catholic Church Croydon and they have been organising big lunches since 2017 which explains her traditional attire



The Big Lunch is an idea of the Eden Project made possible by the National Lottery
So visit www.thebigjubileelunch.com
To get your packs and PLAN Your Own Party in your community

Welderlies Tel: 07497328230 web: www.wellbeingyou.org

Sylvia Wachuku-King is a past member of SI Croydon and District

A job well done!



NOT FEELING PEACHY DOWNSTAIRS?

NO BUTTS

EARLY BOWEL CANCER DIAGNOSIS SAVES LIVES. CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE:

- B**lood in your poo or from your bottom
- O**bvious change in your bowel habit
- W**eight loss you can't explain
- E**xtrême tiredness for no apparent reason
- L**ump and/or pain in your tummy

If you notice anything unusual see your doctor or nurse as soon as possible. Early diagnosis could mean a better chance of successful treatment.

@Lorraine #NOBUTTS
More information at itv.com/Lorraine

Lorraine NO BUTTS

April is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

EVERY 15 MINUTES somebody is diagnosed with bowel cancer in the UK, which is nearly 43,000 people each year.

The relaunch of the No Butts campaign is to remind everyone of the symptoms of bowel cancer (see above) and encourage everyone not feeling peachy downstairs to get checked if you have any doubt.

Stella Barnes is our newest member at SI Medway and Maidstone, having moved to Kent from Wales in late January. Following a routine bowel screening test after her 60th birthday, Stella was diagnosed with early-stage bowel cancer at the end of November 2021.



She was successfully operated on in early January in Cardiff.

So Stella's message to everyone is clear, "Do complete the bowel screening kit sent to your home and submit it, as early diagnosis is so important".

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

In Invitation from SI East Grinstead

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

*You're Invited to Celebrate with Us
Crowns & Tiaras may be worn*

Sunday 22nd May 2022 1-4pm
Knights Farm, Crowhurst Road,
LINGFIELD RH7 6DA

Tickets £15, with all proceeds going to local charities (cheques/cash to SIEG)

There will be Stalls & a Raffle & includes your Jubilee Punch

RSVP to: jane.griffiths@care4free.net by May 13th

Celebrating 225 years as Soroptimists



ON APRIL 12, Regional President Yvonne attended SI Medway and Maidstone's AGM dinner at Oliver's Restaurant in Rochester. It was an enjoyable evening for everyone being able to get together face-to-face for a club AGM dinner after a gap of three years due to lockdown.

2021/22 has been a year when Soroptimist International has celebrated their centenary and Medway and Maidstone have been celebrating our 75th anniversary.

We therefore wanted to mark the occasion by recognising long service as Soroptimists by six of our members. They were: -

- Dr Mary Buchanan - Honorary member – 55 years
- Jill Squires – 50 years
- Liz Duckworth – 40 years
- Janet Garnons-Williams – 40 years
- Maya Bangar – 20 years
- Lillian Gould – 20 years

During the evening President Yvonne presented long service certificates to two of those members, Liz Duckworth and Maya Bangar. The other certificates were presented virtually at our AGM meeting held the following week on Zoom.

As a club, Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists are extremely proud of the commitment and service shown over the years by these members, benefiting the lives of women and girls locally, nationally, and internationally.

President Yvonne also presented Carol Perry and Stella Barnes with their new members badges at the end of the dinner.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



ON APRIL 16 the fourth in the series of the SIGBI PR and Marketing Live sessions was held on Facebook. The theme was 'Using Facebook and Instagram for Clubs' and was facilitated by Rachel Weinhold. It is essential for clubs to be part of these platforms to evolve and increase our reach and profile.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

5 Top Tips on using Facebook and Instagram for clubs

1. THINK ABOUT YOUR GOAL AND WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

Understand what kind of audience you want to reach and age group.

Older audience more likely to use Facebook.

Younger audience use Instagram.

What is the purpose of the post i.e., fundraising?

2. CONSIDER HOW YOU WANT TO CONVEY YOUR MESSAGE

Write compelling captions.

Use hashtags to increase your reach but check they are not ones that are overpopulated as can hinder your reach. Ensure the hashtag is relevant to the posting and photo being used.

Tag people in photos only if you have their permission. Be brief and concise.

3. MAKE USE OF ALL FEATURES AVAILABLE

Try them.

Features such as images, reels, stories etc.

What is a reel? Reels are a new way to create short videos and get discovered by new audiences. Effects and music can be added to your reel allowing you to bring your ideas to life and share them with your audience.

4. ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT

It is more than the number of likes on your page.

It is the future engagements and conversations that make a difference.

Try and keep the conversation going.

Comments made can be positive or negative – if the latter then important how you respond.

5. USE YOUR INSIGHTS

What time to post?

When to post?

To whom?

Which hashtag is being used?

Plan your next posts based on what is working and what is not.

FINAL THOUGHT - if you post daily to increase popularity

Keep it slow and steady.

Do not over-post.

Think quality over quantity.

SI East Grinstead would like to invite you to join them for their Speaker meeting on Wednesday, June 01, 2022 19:30 at East Court, in East Grinstead.

The speaker is Commander Dr Alison Heydari of the Metropolitan Police Service.

Commander Heydari is the highest ranking black Police Officer in the country.

If you wish to attend, please contact East Grinstead Club

“ Even now, no woman in public life is so powerful that she can't be instantly reduced to the sum of her body parts.

Gaby Hinsliff
article headed

Has parliament got to grips with #MeToo?
Ask Angela Rayner

THE GUARDIAN, APRIL 26, 2022

Upcoming UN World Days

20 May
World Bee Day

23 May
International Day to End
Obstetric Fistula

29 May
International Day
of UN Peacekeepers

05 June
World Environment Day

08 June
World Oceans Day



THIS COMING SATURDAY, April 30, Margaret Ikiara, SI Meru and Programme Coordinator for CIFORD in Kenya, will lead a webinar on the 'Meru Women's Garden Project - 4 years on' between 14:30 and 15:30 BST. Many members will remember this Federation Project, which was put forward at the Glasgow Conference in 2018 by Canterbury club and won the vote. It went on to be a very successful project.

Tickets are available via www.sigbishop.com and all proceeds will go to the Meru Women's Garden Project. I do hope members will join in.

YVONNE FREEMAN REGIONAL PRESIDENT