

President Yvonne's message Healthy People, Healthy Planet



MY MAIN FOCUS this month has been preparing for our Regional Meeting on June 25 – our first face-to-face meeting of my year. Our venue, the Holiday Inn at Wrotham, made us very welcome despite some issues, which we have now fed back to the hotel, and which should be resolved before our AGM in September.

I was really pleased to see members from across the Region and to hear news of the excellent Programme Action work taking place in all clubs. The highlight of the day for me was our speaker, Mike Pitney, Project Manager and Collaboration Officer for the Kent Fire and Rescue Service. Mike spoke about his trips to Ukraine with convoys of fire engines and other firefighting equipment to help the people of Ukraine during these exceedingly challenging and distressing times they are currently experiencing. He thanked us for the support we have given in terms of donations and, more recently, the supply of trauma bears which our members have lovingly knitted.



I thought members would like this photo.

In conclusion, Mike said that he had a special favour to ask of the Soroptimists and that is to collect unwanted crutches and wheelchairs to aid the injured in Ukraine. As we have been unable to establish the project I had originally suggested in Meru, I took the opportunity to ask those members present if we could make Mike's request our regional project for the year and I am pleased to say they supported this. I will be sending out more details shortly to club presidents and secretaries.

After lunch, we had very helpful discussions in groups about membership with particular reference to how we could attract new members, including younger members who could be supported to take office and might one day become Federation President or indeed Soroptimist International President.

We ended the day with a photo of us wearing orange [see page 11], which we are now encouraged to do on the 25th of each month as well as during the 16 Days of Activism, to demonstrate our support for women and children who are subject to domestic violence.

Looking forward to our AGM on September 24, I am pleased to report that I have asked Cathy Cotteridge, our Federation President, to join us and I believe she is also going to be attending East Grinstead's 60th Anniversary Celebration Dinner.

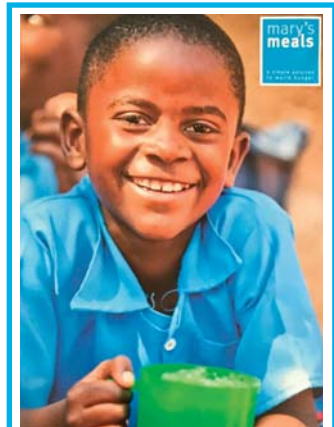
What's in this month's newsletter?



Bringing joy through African drumming workshops, page 02.



How much plastic do you throw away? Page 02.



Fun Run for Mary's Meals, page 03.



Getting crafty in Eastbourne, page 03.



A big thank you from Danni, page 04.

A Right Royal Occasion



TRADITIONALLY, EAST GRINSTEAD Club has held an annual summer garden party. After a gap of two years (for obvious reasons) we were able to hold one on May 22 and, what is more, this year it had somehow morphed into a "Royal Garden Party"!

By definition, to hold a garden party one needs a garden; we were delighted that Vice President Elect Jane Griffiths, and her husband Brian, kindly offered the use of their space.

After a week of rain the day dawned dry and bright much to our relief. Our hosts had worked tirelessly to prepare the garden which appeared as a red, white and blue kaleidoscope of colour, ever changing as the sun played on the flowers and the tables and the bunting and flags fluttered in the gentle breeze. The scene was set to welcome our members and their guests as well as fellow Soroptimists from the Bromley, Croydon and Folkestone clubs.

President Sue Darney proposed a toast to Her Majesty the Queen and there followed a delicious lunch provided by Club members. The fare included Coronation Chicken and the new Platinum Jubilee Pudding. What a right royal feast it proved to be!

There were stalls and a raffle and, thanks to the generosity of everyone present, we raised a substantial amount of money for local charities.

We, in SI East Grinstead, are proud members of a service organisation and it is good to know that in these difficult, economic times we are able to further the ideals of Soroptimism by giving of ourselves to raise money to support ventures in our local community, whilst being ever mindful of the needs of girls and young women in the wider world.

So many people worked so hard to make the occasion the huge success it turned out to be. That Sunday afternoon in May, in a sunny garden in Lingfield, through the hard work of many, we were able to further our ideals as Soroptimists.

SUE DARNEY, PRESIDENT SI EAST GRINSTEAD

Closing Date

for the next edition of SEE News
is Monday, July 25, 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 Patricia who is happy to accept late articles with prior notice.



Bringing joy through African drumming workshops



I GREW UP in Kenya listening to the story of the princess who went up to a tree house as a princess and came down as the Queen of England.

I thought it was a fairy tale until I learned that Queen Elizabeth was in Kenya in 1952 when her father died.

Princess Elizabeth used to visit Kenya regularly and liked to stay in the Treetop Hotel. The local community would come and welcome Princess Elizabeth with African drums and songs.

In 1952, Princess Elizabeth went up to the Treetop Hotel to her room as a Princess and came downstairs, with a red carpet, as Queen Elizabeth.

While growing up, I was greatly inspired by this story. This gave me an idea of the possibilities that are open to me. With hard work and determination, you can accomplish greatness.

I offer African drumming sessions as a form of therapy. Growing up in Africa, drumming, singing and dancing were vital to help us not be depressed or unhappy. We had very little, but we were very happy.

My drumming workshops bring the joyful spirit of Africa to any occasion.

It also brings together a diverse group of individuals with diverse ethical backgrounds.

All the money we raise from the workshops goes to helping our FGM project in Kenya.

JANE HENYA, MEMBER OF SI CANTERBURY



SI EASTBOURNE TOOK part in the Big Plastic Count in May. Members, and some family members, counted every single piece of plastic packaging that we threw away during the week and submitted the details to the Big Plastic Count website, however it was disposed of – in the refuse bin, the recycling bin or in a bin when we were out of the house.

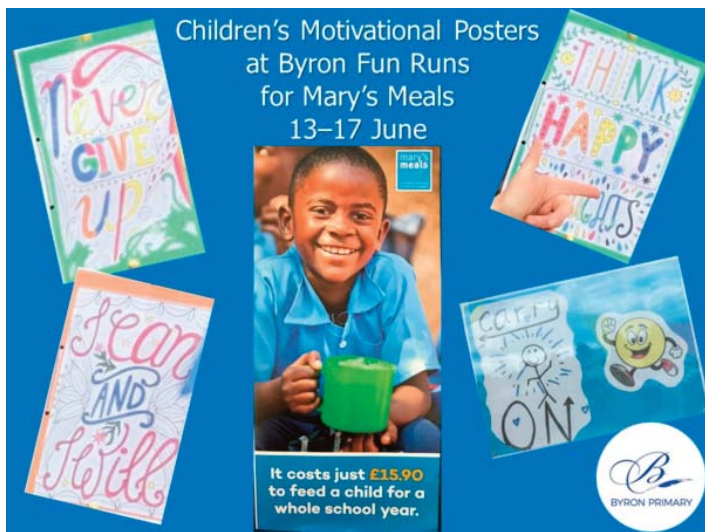
The aim of the project was to carry out the biggest ever investigation into household plastic waste.

The data collected will be submitted to the government to push them to take bold action on plastic. The hope is to get a target set of a reduction of 50% of single use plastic by 2025.

As individuals, we found it a real eye opener to receive our individual, personal plastic footprint, informing us how many pieces of plastic per year we were responsible for and this has led to an increased commitment to reduce plastic use as much as we can.

CLAIRE BELL, SI EASTBOURNE

Soroptimists Support Byron Fun Run for Mary's Meals



THE CHILDREN AT Byron Primary School in Gillingham are working to become a 'Rights Respecting School' and have chosen Mary's Meals as their charity to support.

This followed a presentation in January about Mary's Meals by Medway and Maidstone member, Annette Davies who is an Ambassador for Mary's Meals.

Mary's Meals have set up school feeding programmes in some of the world's poorest communities, where poverty and hunger prevent children from gaining an education. It costs just £15.90 to feed a child for a whole school year. Mary's Meals are now feeding 2,279,941 children every school day.

The school catchment area in North Gillingham is a deprived area with many families facing the current cost of living challenges. Plans for any fundraising efforts needed to reflect this.

It was decided to hold one mile Fun Runs for all 500 children to take part in the school playground during their PE lessons during the week June 13-17. A target of £500 was set to be raised hoping that each child could get family or friends to



sponsor them for a £1. Posters were drawn by the children with motivational messages to decorate the playground.

On a beautiful sunny Monday morning, Soroptimist members, Stella and Jane Barnes assisted teaching staff in putting up the colourful posters along with Mary's Meals posters and bunting in the two playgrounds.

Club members who could not take part in the preparations and decorating for the Fun Runs generously donated monies totalling £250 to help the school achieve the target they had set.

On June 21, these monies were presented to Hayley Hayes at Byron School. She confirmed that the Fun Runs had been a success involving all the children and with sponsorship from families and friends they had raised more than £3400 for Mary's Meals. This is the largest amount Byron School has ever raised with their fundraising efforts.

This money will mean that 213 children in one of the poorest communities will be fed for a whole school year and be able to gain an education.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Getting crafty in Eastbourne



MEMBERS OF EASTBOURNE Club have met regularly to produce craft items. These include knitted and crocheted blankets, and twiddle muffs for the frailty ward at the local hospital.

Recently we have started knitting hearts for patients and their family members to hold and remember.

DENISE STAPLEHURT, SI EASTHOURNE

2024 Forward planning in Eastbourne 2024



EASTBOURNE MEMBERS ARE raising money for for the Club's 70th Anniversary Celebrations in 2024 by holding regular car boot sales. This is an excellent way of recycling unwanted items and meeting prospective members.

DENISE STAPLEHURT, SI EASTHOURNE

Canterbury Club's Garden Projects

Volunteering at Dane John Gardens



AS PART OF our Programme Action on Climate Emergency, SI Canterbury volunteered at Dane John Gardens, in Canterbury.

Dane John Gardens is a historic park within Canterbury City's walls which dates back to 1551, and includes a mound which historical records prove was there in the first century AD.

Stroll along the city walls which border one side of the gardens and wander up to the top of the mound for an excellent view of the city.

KEJI MOSES, SI CANTEBRURY



Tunbridge Wells Yard Sale
THANK YOU!

WE WERE ABLE TO DONATE £50 TO NOURISH FOODBANK

ON JUNE 11, Tunbridge Wells Club took part in the town-wide yard sale. We were given a free pitch outside The Forum, a local music venue, where we sold bric-a-brac and plants. From the sales we were able to donate a sum to our local foodbank Nourish. We also used the opportunity to network.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, PRESIDENT, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

A big thank-you from Danni *

CANTERBURY SOROPTIMISTS HAVE been raising money for a garden project at the Canterbury women's refuge, which is run by Clarion Housing Group. After standing in charity car park events in Whitstable during 2021 and 2022, through rain, wind and, thankfully, sunshine, over £900 was collected from members of the public.

The refuge consists of 12 self-contained flats for women and children escaping domestic abuse. The garden, whilst large, was empty and unwelcoming so the staff at Clarion asked if we could make it more of a community space for the women and children.

Volunteers from another organisation painted garden seats and tables and Canterbury Club bought sun parasols, a garden bench and a bistro set for outdoor rest and relaxation. In addition, members supplied ceramic pots with a bay tree sapling, tomato plants and garden mint bushes with a view to the residents having some home grown produce.

To attract bees and other pollinators, the club also donated pots of lavender, together with bulbs of bee-friendly flowers so the children could enjoy planting and watching insect wildlife in their garden space. A bug hotel, which is now in a secluded corner, was also bought for the children to investigate any beetles and solitary bees that might take up residence.

Danni*, one of the children living at the refuge, made a thank-you card for the Club (see front page), with a lovely self-portrait, expressing the appreciation of all the women and children, especially as everything was installed in good time for their Platinum Jubilee garden party.

JAN TEBBETT, PAO, SI CANTEBRURY

*name changed to protect her identity.



Tunbridge Wells welcomes new members Sarah Salway, Cat Mennell and Anne Walter (pictured with President Caroline)



Jubilee Tea Party



TUNBRIDGE WELLS CLUB held a party to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The event was held in President Caroline's garden and the social and hospitality team put together a lovely tea with an abundance of cake.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND,
SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Jean and Carolyn cut the cake



Angela Supports Kent Association for the Blind at Carers Event



ON JUNE 07 MEDWAY and Maidstone Soroptimist, Angela Howe, (pictured right) was volunteering at an event for Carers at the Corn Exchange in Rochester. Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of caring and this year took place between June 06-12. It highlights the challenges unpaid carers face and recognises the contribution they make to families and communities throughout the UK. The theme for Carers Week 2022 was 'Make caring visible, valued and supported'.

Carers First brought together organisations that could offer information to Carers on a range of services and support in the Medway area such as the Alzheimer's Society, Medway Health, the Police and KAB.

Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists have been supporters of KAB for more than 40 years, assisting with reading for the Talking News. However, in recent months, KAB decided to cease the production of Talking News due to a drop in number of referrals, as alternative technological options are now available.

As Soroptimists we are keen to continue to support KAB and it was pleasing that Angela received the request to go and help their member of staff in staffing the stall for KAB.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Coffee time in Eastbourne



ON JUNE 18, 16 Soroptimist members and friends gathered for a coffee morning in Marlene's beautiful garden.

Members make cakes, scones and quiche to be enjoyed by everyone. We also had a raffle and sold jams and chutneys.

We were very lucky with the weather as it was a lovely sunny morning, but after we had cleared the weather decided to change and there were several spots of rain threatening a thunder storm for later in the day.

We raised £80 for President Pat's charities of Ukraine and Riding for the Disabled, and nearly £50 in the raffle for our 70th Anniversary fund.

DENISE STAPLEHURST, SI EASTOURNE

2022 Diary Dates

SI AGM July 11

UKPAC Meeting September 03

SISEE Region AGM September 24

Belfast Conference October 27-29

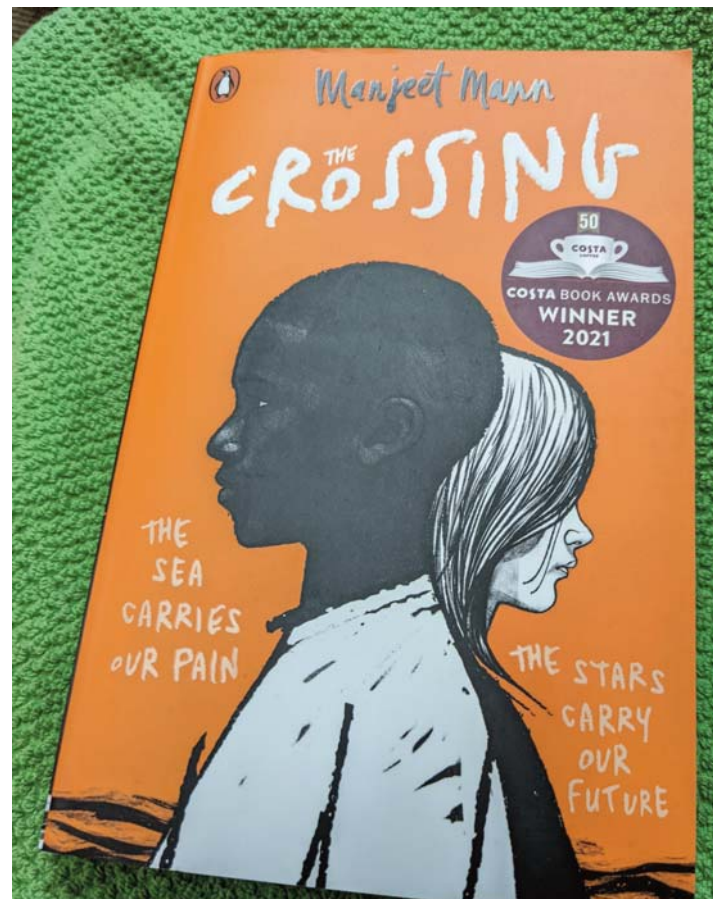
SI Thanet bring together themes, concerns, passions and values for World Book Day

DURING LOCKDOWN AND other Covid restrictions, one would have thought there would be plenty of time for catching up on unread books. I don't know about you, but I certainly found it very difficult until I was on holiday. Luckily for SI Thanet, our member Denise had no problem identifying a lockdown read that was completely suitable for us to use to mark World Book Day.

Our plan was to donate a copy of an appropriate book to as many Thanet secondary school libraries as we could within our budget. Rather than order through Amazon, Denise contacted our local independent book shop 'The Margate Bookshop' and told them about our idea. They were lovely and shared their own initiative of community funding to provide local schools with more books (definitely something we can support/promote!).

They also generously let us have copies at cost price meaning we could afford to gift one to all secondary schools in Thanet. The next idea was to contact Manjeet Mann the author and ask if she would kindly sign the copies. She was touched with our idea and was happy to do this. We were then able to raise awareness of her women/girls initiative in Folkestone 'Run the World' on a book plate within each book to explain how we were gifting them.

The 'book' takes the form of a narrative poem about two teenagers from opposite worlds and was the WINNER of the Costa Children's Book Award 2021. Entitled *The Crossing*, the review in the Observer said 'The Crossing is a profound story of hope, grief and the very real tragedies of the refugee crisis, The sea carries our pain...' The LoveReading 4Kids review includes: 'The premise of this fascinating book is two teenagers from opposite sides of the world who form a connection through odd circumstances. Natalie has just lost her Mum to cancer and struggles to find a calm place in the world, whilst her brother reacts by rebelling and joining a hate filled far right anti-refugee protest and action group. Sammy has had to leave his home in Eritrea on the chance of a new life in Europe – running from conscription into the army, which is a form of slavery in his home country. Both characters have huge issues to face. Sammy's



seem more obviously dangerous and overwhelming, though Natalie's are equally as difficult – without the imminent danger. Told through a narrative poem using both voices to alternately express their fears, dilemmas and friendships this is a book you really can't put down. You have to know if Sammy and Natalie do get to meet.'

The author Manjeet Mann is an actress, playwright, screenwriter and director. She is the founder of Run The World, an organisation that works with women and girls from marginalized backgrounds and helps to empower them through sport and storytelling. Manjeet came from a socio-economic disadvantaged background, growing up in an area of deprivation in The Black Country in the 1990s. She is an acclaimed writer and producer of several one woman shows and episodic plays of personal monologues, exploring womanhood across the socio-economic spectrum. She lives in Kent.

PHILIPPA DIXON, SI THANET



Number "63" 500 Club



THE NUMBER OF supporters for the 500 Club monthly draw has more than doubled over the past two years and now stands at 569. This has been achieved by promotion through newsletters, word of mouth, and by attaching notes with winning cheques.

An innovative idea by Ann Garvie was to give gift vouchers in the form of numbers to guests and speakers. We gave numbers to SI Delhi Club, chartered in April 2022, but equally these could be used as a way of thanks to other members.

In May the three winners received £70 to celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee.

Tickets are £12 each per annum. For more information or to purchase your ticket, please contact Pat Dale at SI Croydon.

Raising funds for Ukraine



TUNBRIDGE WELLS CLUB took part in a Craft Fair and from the proceeds raised, together with other club fundraising initiatives of sales of ribbons and bandanas, we were able to donate £172 to Disasters Emergency Commission (DEC) and 500 Euros to the Soroptimist International of Europe Disaster Relief Fund for Ukraine.

CAROLINE AUCLAND, PRESIDENT, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



Federation Consultative Council Report from FCC Jan Doyle

I ATTENDED THE last virtual meeting of the SIGBI board as an observer at the end of April when we were introduced to our new Director of Finance, Reena Bhanotha, who is, I am sure you know, a member of Croydon Club. I am sure you will join with me in wishing her every success in this role.

We learnt that SI President Maureen is keen to set up a Youth Forum and I am sure we will hear more about this.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership continues to be a concern for our Federation and although new clubs have been chartered in India and the Caribbean, in the UK our membership is declining with clubs closing.

Our region was well represented at the recent Membership Webinars when it was recognised that the pandemic has brought change to the way that many of us meet, with more and more clubs being able to embrace hybrid meetings and that smaller clubs are becoming the norm. Unfortunately, we have seen a decline in the membership within our own region – 221 full club members for the current year (238 in the previous year).

Nisha Ghosh, director of Marketing and Communications is working with Membership Director Chevonne on an external marketing campaign for the 40-50 age group with the aim of building SIGBI'S external profile to attract new members.

PROGRAMME

So far as Programme is concerned, President Elect Ruth Healey recently undertook an analysis of PFRFs on the database for the period April 01, 2020 to March 31, 2022 and has found that overall clubs within the federation have raised over £1m and have helped over 200,000 women and girls – an impressive achievement and one that we should widely publicise.

However overall, the submission of programme focus report forms continues to be patchy with a 30% drop over the last two years, although there is a slight increase in those relating to climate change.

Programme Director Kay went on to report that registration for CSW 2022 was disappointing, particularly when compared to 2021. It was felt that the parallel event website was not as good as last year's, and this has been fed back to New York. The outcome statement from CSW is on the UN Women website and the link has been provided.

There are two commentaries on the SIGBI website on the situation in Ukraine and Afghanistan and Programme Director has written to all clubs regarding donations for Ukraine.

A reminder for all clubs that climate change will be the general focus of the SIGBI Day of Action this year (July 16), with a specific focus on single use plastics.

FEDERATION POSTS

Applications have been received for the posts of Directors of Governance, Membership, PR, Marketing and Communications, APD Prosperity, and Friendship Link Co-ordinator.

A third call has gone out for the post of Director of Programme.

Many of you will, I am sure, have seen on Facebook SI President Maureen's note about SI Commonwealth Representatives with SI calling for applicants who live in or near London – so do please consider this

CONFERENCE

Conference booking for Belfast is now open and it looks as though it will be as exciting and as stimulating as ever. No resolutions have been received for the General Meeting 2022. As with last year, written resolutions will be circulated to Clubs prior to the GM, in relation to the Rules of Conduct of the GM, the SIGBI Ltd Annual Report and GM Minutes 2021.

So far as future conferences are concerned, we were told that London is under consideration as the venue for conference in 2023 and Edinburgh in 2024. Watch this space!

MICRO-FINANCING

The Federation Micro-Financing Group is working well and is supporting 93 women and groups. Current investment stands at £6,900. This includes the original £4,500, plus repaid loans. An additional £5,000 will be invested in June 2022. A PFRF has been submitted on micro-financing.

If your club is not already involved in this way of helping women, please consider it and look at one of the micro-financing platforms <https://lendwithcare.org> or <https://www.kiva.org>

Finally I would like to thank members for supporting me in my application to continue as your Federation Councillor. I received confirmation from Gina Coad earlier this week that I have been reappointed for a further two years. During that time I do hope that I can get to visit your club – it has been difficult over the last two years to do this, but I had a very enjoyable visit to Tunbridge Wells earlier this week and it would be good to get out to visit other clubs – so please let me know if you would like me to come along.



New Vice-President for Tunbridge Wells

CAT MENNELL HAS recently transferred into Tunbridge Wells Club after moving to the area and we are delighted that she has arrived with enthusiasm and new ideas, and has accepted the position of Vice President, joining President Caroline and President Elect Claire.

The recent influx of members has resulted in the creation of sub-committees to

supplement the work of the Executive Committee. So we now have teams heading up programme planning, speakers, social and hospitality and membership.

The intention behind these sub-committees is to ease the workload and also increase friendship and involvement. Together we can all make a contribution and feel involved.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Celebrating 75 years of service with Platinum Festivities



MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE Soroptimists celebrated this significant event in their club history at the end of the 75 years with a Friendship weekend between June 04-07. We were fortunate as it coincided with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and so it meant a double celebration.

Five Soroptimists from Osnabruck, one of our Friendship Link clubs of more than 20 years, joined us. Angela Howe provided a welcome lunch from where the hosts collected our visitors. A traditional fish and chip supper was provided at Julia Search's home on the first evening.

It was off to Rochester with our visitors on the Saturday to see the celebration of Charles Dickens as part of the Platinum Jubilee. In the Rochester Moat, we heard Gerald Dickens talk about his great great grandfather, Charles Dickens, and his love for Queen Victoria. We were able to see colourful Dickensian characters parading the streets of Rochester and enjoy live music, poetry, and the River pageant.

In the evening, Federation President Cathy Cottridge and Regional President Sharon Richardson from London Anglia Region were able to join us for our 75th Dinner. We were entertained by a harpist and enjoyed a rendition of the Soroptimist Symphony performed by Sigrid Heidemann, SI Osnabruck Club president. The celebrations also included the candle lighting ceremony and cutting of the cake along with delicious food and excellent company of Soroptimist friends with greetings from those unable to join us.

Sunday was time for Afternoon Tea hosted by Wanda Wright in her large garden looking out over the Medway estuary.

On our final day we took our visitors to see the Gaia artwork at Rochester Cathedral and Textus Roffensis, a 12th century legal encyclopaedia compiled by a single scribe that has been digitalised for the public to see.

The Gaia measures seven metres in diameter and shows NASA imagery of the Earth's surface. This provided a unique opportunity to see our planet on this scale. After lunch it was time to say farewell to our German visitors.

Our Friendship weekend was a time of celebration with friends old and new, reflection of our work as Soroptimists to improve the lives of women and girls, being proud to be part of an international women's organisation, plus lots of eating and drinking.

A big thank you goes to the 75th planning group led by Liz Duckworth with Angela Howe, Wanda Wright and Carol McKeough, along with the members who hosted our visitors, for making the 75th weekend special.



JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Tunbridge Wells Club continue to add to their Toilet Twinning quota.



President Caroline was delighted to present Sue at Helios Pharmacy with their Toilet Twinning Certificate, part of the local business category.



Another Toilet Twinning certificate was handed over to local Tunbridge Wells Community organisation, Mosaic Resource Centre which offer the Soup Bowl weekdays as well as support, advice (pre-employment support and CVs, debt advice, housing, and health advice) and courses. Pictured here is Soroptimist Jean outside the venue.



Receiving her Toilet Twinning certificate is Soroptimist Lucy Raj who runs her own business TukTukpilatesandyoga.com

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, PRESIDENT, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

MARKETING & PR LIVE SESSIONS

● FACEBOOK LIVE

06 USING INSTAGRAM REELS FOR CLUBS

IN JUNE'S EDITION of the monthly PR & Marketing Facebook Live session, Rachel Weinhold and Shreya Bajajshah were discussing using Reels for your club.

Reels have been a thing on Instagram for some time now, but they have also just been introduced to Facebook. So, Rachel and Shreya explained what they are, how they work and how you can use them to benefit your club?

Reels are short, entertaining videos where you can be creative and engage people. Research shows that videos used in this way are better than photos to grab people's attention. You just need a Smart phone, natural light, and creativity.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

5 TOP TIPS ON USING INSTAGRAM REELS

1. PLAN YOUR REELS

Think what you are going to do.

The first 3 seconds is important

What is the hook?

What is the call for action?

You need a mixed bag with different content each time.

See what other people are doing, especially similar organisations to ourselves.

2. MAKE A GOOD VIDEO

Make the video engaging and interesting.

Always use the senses.

It is better to have 5 people talking for 10 seconds each than one person talking for 50 seconds.

You need to shoot content in portrait (9 x16) in natural light.

There are Apps available, some of them free for video editing. 'In-shot' is free and found to be easy to use with transition and sound effects.

Do not over complicate it.

You will improve with thought and practice.

3. ADD TO YOUR VIDEO

What basics can you add to reels?

Music is a must; explore what is trending and recommended. It gives you options and you need to choose something that is appropriate.

Captions can be added over the video.

Do not make it too busy as will detract from it.

4. USE A GOOD VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Use a # to tell Instagram and Facebook why you need to be searched for and for whom is it intended?

5. CONNECTIONS

Comment on others and build on this.

Being social is what social media is all about.

Collaboration: if a friendship event with another club/charity seek agreement to put on both sites as you will reach more.

Encourage engagement and share it.

Key Message:

'You only learn by doing, you cannot break it – try it.'



Thanet's little tree for the Soroptimist International Centenary



TO MARK THE SI Centenary, Thanet club members decided to plant a tree in our local area to enhance the community.

As I had led a gardening project previously, I was asked to lead the Tree Project. I identified a site in Ramsgate linking with the Westcliff Conservation & Community Association, the Ramsgate Society, and the Council, next to where I volunteer to maintain two flower beds. It fitted in with initiatives to reduce the incidence of littering, vandalism, and other antisocial behaviour. The flowerbeds and Rose Garden on the Royal Esplanade are maintained by volunteers and are entered in the Britain in Bloom Competition.

Thanet is a new club and we wanted to mark the Centenary by planting a tree locally and raise our profile. Linking with local community organisations, especially those run by volunteers, helps us to identify potential future projects and causes to support. As overall lead I focussed on the community liaison, site identification, planting design and tree selection but certain aspects of the plan were taken up by other members who had identified potential individuals and businesses that had the right expertise. In spite of the Covid restrictions we managed to keep to the plan so that it came together for the planting.

Some of the funds raised from a car boot sale were used to buy the tree and mulch from our local Garden Centre at a generously discounted rate, but the rest of what was needed, such as the plaque, were freely donated by businesses or individuals.

The tree was planted with the help of Scouts, who then received their Community badges. We like to be 'hands on' as a Club so members also mucked in and got their hands and knees dirty. The local organisations that have supported the project also came and lent their help. The accompanying photos show the stages of the project. The tree chosen is an Amelanchier that, according to Monty Don and other gardeners, is an ideal small tree that has interest for all seasons.

The QR code for the Centenary was included on the plaque so that anyone interested can find out more. It may be too soon to judge the effect on behaviour in the area as this is seen as more long term and ongoing. Showing that this part of the area is being maintained and cared for has generated positive comments from those using the Esplanade for dog walking/exercise, both about the tree planting and a reduction in littering.

PHILIPPA DIXON, SI THANET TREE PROJECT LEAD.

Afternoon Tea held in support of Railway Children

MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE members were invited to enjoy an Afternoon Tea at Sue Hunt's home and admire her beautiful gardens in the Kent countryside. Sue organises this event every year in aid of Jeevodaya a not-for-profit organisation in Itarsi, Central India, who work with railway children. This is a cause that is dear to her heart and Sue is keen to continue supporting them.

Their mission is to uphold human dignity by working towards child rights and advocacy through a process of early intervention at the platform and provide residential support to rehabilitate and mainstream these children back into the society.



It was good for members old and new to get together and catch up for a chat, something to eat and drink on a summer's day in such beautiful surroundings. Proceeds from the Afternoon Tea raised £130 for Jeevodaya, Itarsi.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

A Joyous Big Picnic Platinum Jubilee Event!



SI SEVENOAKS PAST President Penny Robbins was invited to attend the Sevenoaks Town Council HM The Queen Platinum Jubilee Celebrations meeting. Plans were hatched!

An article was written about the club for the Sevenoaks Town Council Jubilee Celebrations magazine which was published.

Part of the Celebrations included the Big Picnic Lunch at the Vine Gardens Sevenoaks where Penny had volunteered to run a stall! Many thanks to Club members Pauline Payne, Sandie Higgs and Wendy Metcalf who took on the challenge of manning the stall and children's game. Thank you too to our new club member Ann who helped to set up on the day.

The intention of the stall was to raise the profile of Sevenoaks Club in the town, together with the Programme Action work of Soroptimists and club President Pat Downing's two Charities, Camfed and Hospice in the Weald.

The stall was well attended throughout the day and details of 18 potential new members were taken by Penny and Pauline and subsequently contacted by Membership Officer Sandie Higgs.

Various Jubilee items, knitted cushions by Pauline, handmade jewellery by Penny, Trauma Bears by Shirley were for sale at reasonable prices for families and children and, together with the children's game run by Sandie and Wendy, we raised £213.

The stall was visited by the current Mayor of Sevenoaks Cllr Rachel Parry, Past Mayor Cllr Dr. Marilyn Canet who kindly purchased a necklace, and Town Crier Chris Conlan who was so impressed with the knitted Trauma Bears he asked for one to be knitted in red to match his ceremonial coat! Shirley Brigham at a quick click of the needles has created the bear and Chris will take it with him when visiting schools together with our leaflets.

Club members enjoyed their picnic and music through the Queen's Reign provided by Sevenoaks Town Council. Much bunting and flag waving by all!

PENNY ROBBINS, PAST PRESIDENT, SI SEVENOAKS



Members at the South East England Region Meeting on June 25