

President Lynne's message

Educate to Empower and Enable



I HAVE REALLY enjoyed taking part in Region events including celebrating with SI East Grinstead at their lovely 70th anniversary dinner, visiting SI Tunbridge Wells for a fascinating talk by a Chaplain in a women's prison, and being invited to SI Bromley's delicious coffee morning in support of women in Gaza who have breast cancer. I would like to thank members for their very

warm welcome at all events and to thank Susie Forbes and Ann Greenfield for their kind hospitality.

On a much sadder note, I also attended the very moving funeral of our past Regional President, Grace Onions, who will be very much missed in Region.

At a Membership Zoom organised by Regional Membership Officers, Lorna and Jane, it was heartening to see that some clubs are starting to recruit new members and to hear how they are doing that. So important for the future of our Region.

As you know my Regional project is working with The Girls' Network and I'm delighted to say three of us will be matched with our mentees at the beginning of next month and I have also had interest from members across our Region about online mentoring which TGN hope to begin next year.

TGN's Southern Manager will be a guest speaker at our Regional Meeting on Zoom on December 03 and it will be a good opportunity for members to ask questions about the mentoring scheme. We also hope to have a young woman who has been mentored to talk about her experience. I hope you can take part.

Just returned from the SIGBI Belfast conference which was excellent and it was good to meet up with friends old and new and to enjoy the lovely Regional dinner organised by Carol Reed and Yvonne Freeman.

What's in this month's newsletter?



Canterbury Club support SOS Whitstable, page 02



Educate a woman and you educate a family, page 02



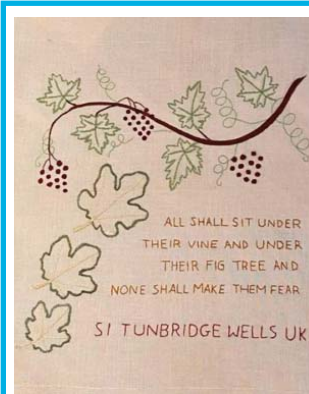
Soroptimists respond to call for knitters, page 04.



Pat Dale at the Belfast Conference. See page 05 for report from Jane Barnes.



Excitement for the Sevenoaks' Club gardening team, page 04



Patch of Peace on its way to San Fernando via Belfast, page 05.



Canterbury Soroptimists support SOS Whitstable protest for clean seas. UN SDG14 Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

SI CANTERBURY ATTENDED the SOS Whitstable protest for clean seas held in early October.

SOS Whitstable's mission is to put pressure on Southern Water to make urgent improvements to the Swalecliffe water, and they have been campaigning tirelessly for over a year.

1500 people attended this event and turned the beach red. There were speeches by SOS organisers, the local MP Rosie Duffield, local councillors from all parties, and other supporters, plus a musical performance by 'Bread & Butter' who performed a song written for SOS Whitstable.

KEJI MOSES, SI CANTERBURY

World Food Day Celebration in Croydon

SUNDAY OCTOBER 16 it was World Food Day and to celebrate SI Croydon met with friends from our daughter club SI Bromley, which included Region President Elect Alison Driscoll, at The Crown in Shirley to enjoy a nice meal and, with it being a Sunday most people opted for a traditional Sunday roast.

We were also joined by three prospective members who came along to discover more about Soroptimism and meet everyone in an informal setting. A raffle with international food themed prizes added some excitement to the proceedings and raised £30 towards club funds.

HELEN MANGAN,
PAO, SI CROYDON



Photographed above are the Club's Treasure Heather Bailey (left) and Programme Action Officer Helen Mangan displaying the haul of raffle prizes to be won.

CLOUD conversations bringing women and girls closer together



EDUCATE A WOMAN AND YOU EDUCATE A FAMILY was the message SI Sevenoaks members and guests heard at an interesting talk at their October meeting by Paramita Biswas, a member of the Rotary Club Calcutta. Her family has been active in the field of education in Dasghara village West Bengal for over 160 years; her father donating family land for Dasghara girls' school built 70 years ago.

Paramita herself was instrumental in opening a Montessori Kindergarten for 4-11 year olds. Her most recent project was to set up a College for young women aged 18-21 years which opened its doors in August 2017.

Prior to then the village girls had no access to Higher Education, as colleges were distant and mixed. Their destiny was early marriage and motherhood and without economic independence very often abuse. Now these women have a college on a green campus in their own village, affiliated to the University of Burdwan and their future is brighter.


Paramita requested Soroptimist help in providing English conversation practice on Zoom. It is important for these women to speak English well in order to progress, yet their opportunities to practise are limited. Offering an hour's conversation would be enabling and beneficial for them.

It was an inspiring talk giving hope for the future of women's education and empowerment.

ISOBEL WHITE SI SEVENOAKS



Quiz Evening Raises £400 for Water Aid



Facts and Figures

771 million people don't have clean water close to home. <small>(UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) Report 2021)</small>	1.7 billion people don't have a decent toilet of their own. <small>(UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) Report 2021)</small>	2.3 billion people lack soap and water for handwashing at home. <small>(UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) Report 2021)</small>
Every minute a newborn dies from infection caused by lack of clean water and an unclean environment. <small>(WHO, 2015 & UNICEF 2019/20)</small>	Diarrhoea caused by dirty water and poor toilets kills a child under 5 every 2 minutes. <small>Based on Pringle-Larkin et al. (2019) and The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (2020)</small>	Around the world up to 443 million school days are lost every year because of water-related illnesses. <small>(Human Development Report, 2006)</small>
Every \$1 invested in water and toilets returns an average of \$4 in increased productivity.	The World Bank says promoting good hygiene is one of the most cost effective health interventions.	If everyone, everywhere had clean water, the number of diarrhoeal deaths would be cut by a third.

SI MEDWAY AND Maidstone are fortunate to have Angela Howe with her Soroptimister husband Bob who are excellent at organising and running Quiz evenings.

After a break of three years, a Quiz evening was held on October 14 on behalf of Medway Magistrates and Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists. All proceeds from the Quiz evening would be going to Water Aid. Angela has been a long-term supporter of Water Aid, recognising the valuable work they do throughout the world.

More than 70 people attended the evening making up 12 teams that included a Soroptimist team. It was a lively and enjoyable evening with lots of food and drink to help us answer the challenging questions.

At the end of the evening a big thank you was given to Angela and Bob for all their hard work and efforts and a successful evening. A grand total of £400 from the evening was raised for Water Aid.

Water Aid recognises that the climate crisis is making life even harder for communities already struggling to get clean water – especially women and girls. We all need clean water to survive, yet one in 10 people do not have access to clean water.

Together with clean water and sanitation, good hygiene practices can transform people's lives. It is hoped the money raised will make a real difference.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

When women support each other, incredible things happen

EVERY OCTOBER, THE Al Ahli hospital in Gaza City asks women in the UK to stand in solidarity with women in Gaza by hosting a fund-raising event for their "Women 4 Women" Appeal.

SI Bromley did just that, by holding a coffee morning at the home of member Jane Bahaijoub, and attended by our Region President Lynne Chiswick (seen below with Jane and Alison). With the sale of delicious home-made cakes, a raffle plus bring & buy stall, we raised £300 thereby providing breast cancer screening and support for five women in Gaza.

We also learned, via a quick quiz, some stark facts: that the Gaza strip (about half the size of the Isle of Wight) has a population of 2.2 million of whom half are refugees and 55% aged under 18, with youth unemployment at 60%; 90% of water is unsafe to drink, and power cuts last up to 12 hours a day.

Breast cancer rates have risen dramatically and the disease now kills more women than any other form of cancer in the Gaza strip where women are three times more likely to die from breast cancer than in the UK. This horrifying statistic is caused by the social stigma surrounding breast cancer and the fear and shame which prevents women from presenting for screening when they find a lump (the husband may remarry if his wife has breast cancer).

The screening programme consists of a clinic where women receive mammograms and are taught about self-examination. Women with suspicious lumps are immediately offered ultrasound and surgical consultation, followed by a biopsy to confirm a diagnosis. Women often need radiotherapy when breast cancer is detected in later stages, presenting considerable complications as patients must travel to Jerusalem for treatment which entails the very challenging task of trying to obtain a visa to leave Gaza.

"My message to you is that the "Women 4 Women" campaign is very important because it doesn't just help the women – it saves the whole family. We really appreciate what you are doing for us." Samira, Management Team Member, Al Ahli Arab Hospital, Gaza City. When women support each other, incredible things happen.

ALISON DRISCOLL, SI BROMLEY



JANE WEBB AND Dawn Lilford (above) represented SI Canterbury at the annual United Nations Association Peace Service held in Canterbury Cathedral.

We processed alongside many other civic organisations including Amnesty International and the Ethnic Minority Council.

The address was given by Her Excellency Linda Scott, High Commissioner for Namibia. Instead of agonising about the inadequacy of our efforts, she commended us to identify each day something we do to make peace.

JANE WEBB, SI CANTERBURY



Soroptimists Respond to Call for Knitters



From L to R: Stella Barnes, Jane Barnes, Sue Hunt and Angela Howe

MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE Soroptimists received a request to take part in a sponsored knit being organised by a volunteer from Blythwood Care Shoebox Appeal. It was a fundraising event with all proceeds going towards transportation costs for the filled shoeboxes going to Eastern Europe in time for Christmas.

The sponsored knit was held on October 03 in Gillingham. Our Soroptimist Knitting Team consisted of Angela Howe, Sue Hunt, Stella Barnes and Jane Barnes. We had to knit for two x 45-minute sessions casting on 30 stitches, using size 5 mm needles and double knitting wool. When completed these were going to be scarves to go in the shoeboxes.

At the end everyone's efforts were measured and the three knitters who had knitted the longest length received a small prize. Jane was really pleased to have come in third for her efforts.

We had been asked to seek sponsors from family and friends for our efforts. Thanks to the generosity, our contribution amounted to £180. The total amount raised along with the efforts of all knitters' taking part was £1443.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



The continuing story of Sevenoaks Town's bid to win a medal in the 2022 final of RHS Britain in Bloom competition



SI SEVENOAKS GARDENING team were delighted to learn that at the RHS awards ceremony at Lindley Hall, London, Sevenoaks Town was awarded a silver gilt medal.

Linda Iarter, Sevenoaks Town Clerk and a member of the SI Sevenoaks club attended the event, where the Mayor of Sevenoaks and the Open Spaces Manager were presented with the award. It was a wonderful outcome for the town and for all those involved particularly as it was Sevenoaks town's first entry into this competition.

Our club raised its profile in the town and also at the awards ceremony as Sandie Higgs a gardening volunteer featured on the big screen at the ceremony!

The volunteers worked so hard throughout the gardening season. They didn't stop for social coffee or lunch, which had been a feature in previous years.

Members made up for this by enjoying an evening meal together at the Sun Doo Chinese restaurant .

ISOBEL GROVES, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SI SEVENOAKS



Closing Date

for the next edition of SEE News
Thursday, November 24, 2022

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

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.



Members of the gardening team

Tunbridge Wells' Patch of Peace on its way to San Fernando

IN RESPONSE TO the call for Patches of Peace for SI San Fernando's 60th Anniversary, SITunbridge Wells responded by creating a beautiful contribution (see page 01). Designed and stitched by Annette Ray the patch was completed by Angela McPherson. The patch with its border took 34 hours to create.

Transported to the Belfast conference it was presented to the San Fernando club delegates by Ann Greenfield and Lorna Blackmore, seen in the photograph with SIGBI President Cathy Cottridge, Renate Ramsay Wak-Lalla (SI San Fernando), Andrea Pearson (SI Kings Lynn) and Sandra Dieffenthaler (SI San Fernando).

We look forward to seeing the completed project which so many clubs from the Federation have contributed to.

CAROLINE AUCLAND, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



News from the Belfast Conference from Jane Barnes



MORE THAN 450 Soroptimists descended on the city of Belfast for the 88th SIGBI Federation Conference, where we were given a very warm welcome and were able to fit in some sightseeing.

Prior to the Conference we had the Federation Programme Action Committee meeting that was held as a hybrid meeting and 150 people attended.

Carol Infanti in her Assistant Programme Director – Prosperity role gave an excellent presentation with the Caribbean representatives on projects they have been doing.

President Cathy Cottridge's theme was Climate for Change, and we had some interesting speakers over the two days.

Canterbury, Medway & Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells clubs had all made Patches of Peace to present to SI San Fernando for their 60th Anniversary.

In the Exhibition Hall, during the break times we could see some of the work and displays from a wide range of exhibitors. This included Mary's Meals and speaking with Soroptimist International President Maureen Maguire about her International Appeal 'Opening Doors to a Brighter Future.' She shared with us that she was really pleased to have received a generous donation in a bequest from Brenda Beetham, a former Maidstone member for her Appeal.

On the last evening we had a more streamlined Change of Insignia. The 20 Soroptimists attending from our Region were proud to see both President Yvonne and our new President Lynne up on the stage. As the Conference ended we all went off to celebrate at our Regional dinner where we were joined by Soroptimist friends from London Anglian and Southern Region. This was a success and something to be repeated at future conferences.

After three long years, it was great to be able to meet face to face with old Soroptimist friends from across the Federation and make new friends.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Do you have a story to tell of
your visit to the Belfast Conference?

Send in your stories and photographs
for the November issue of SEE News
by Thursday, November 24, 2022