

President Lynne's message

Educate to Empower and Enable



I HOPE SOME of you were able to connect with other organisations in May for Membership Month to share information about what we do and hopefully attract some new members.

I understand from our Regional Membership Officers, Jane and Lorna, that SIGBI Membership Director, Dishi Atwood, is keen to showcase links with other organisations during this month and would

welcome any feedback and photographs.

I am really looking forward to our upcoming Regional Meeting on June 24 and hope you will be able to come. It should be a very interesting meeting. Two of our own experts, Pat Dale and Helen Schortz, will talk about their experiences of setting up a school club. Something some of us may have thought about doing but were not sure where to start and what would be involved. What a great way to support and motivate girls who may become Soroptimists themselves in the future.

We are also delighted to welcome Dishi Atwood to our Region Meeting who, as mentioned above, is SIGBI's Membership Director. Dishi will talk about her important work with clubs in growing membership and her talk at our meeting is intriguingly entitled 'The stories we tell'.

I was interested to hear from our Regional Programme Action Officer Penny Robbins about a new initiative called the 'Orange Café' where members meet up on the 25th of each month and wear something orange in support of ending domestic violence (see page 02). What a good combination of awareness raising for the 'Orange the World Campaign' and an enjoyable social event.

I hope you have managed to avoid all the coughs and colds around at the moment. Unfortunately I was out of action with a chest infection for a couple of weeks and was very disappointed to miss some visits to clubs and the SI Croydon and SI Bromley Inter Club lunch on May 20 (see page 04).

However I am now looking forward to catching up over the coming weeks with missed meetings.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SEE REGION PRESIDENT

What's in this month's newsletter?



Coronation
Big Help Out, page 02.



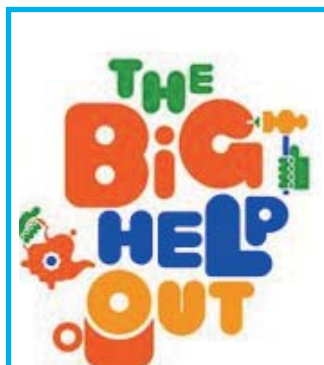
Membership Month,
open meeting, page 03.



Sevenoaks Club 'Orange
the World', 06.



Folkestone club take part
in Moonwalk, page 07.



Medway and Maidstone
'Help Out', page 09.



International Day of
Women and Girls in
Science, page 10.

Orange Cafés

Soroptimists Orange the World on the 25th of each month raising awareness of issues.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

When SI Edinburgh shared their idea at a Scotland South Programme Action meeting, none of us realised just how this would take off.

It is a simple, cost-effective way of raising our profile, while socialising. As the Clubs in Scotland South have each developed their approach to the orange cafés, there are a few things we have discovered.

Choose your venue(s) carefully!

Will you always go to the same venue, or will you vary where you meet?

Will you always meet at the same time, or vary times to target different audiences, eg after the school run?

Consider the type of women who go to the venue(s) – are they likely to be interested in Soroptimism?

Will the owner allow you to display Soroptimist literature? The venue doesn't have to be a standalone café, it could be part of a bigger venue, for example a garden centre, or supermarket.

Think about what you do at the Orange Café.

Rather than just sit and chat, do an 'activity' that will attract interest and allow you to start a conversation about Soroptimism.

Have handouts available, for example if you are knitting a trauma teddy or prem baby hat, have copies of the patterns that you can give to interested women, and tell them how to contact you to get the finished items back.

Tackle different topics at different cafés – not every woman is interested in all we do but may be attracted more by one specific topic.

Could you ask organisations to let you participate in their activity before or after your orange café, eg volunteering at the café in a hospital?

Have Soroptimist literature available.

The aim is to raise our profile, so have items that give contact details for SIGBI as well as for your own Club.

UKPAC are developing some specific items.



BECOME A

SOROPTIMIST

If you are ready to make a positive difference to the lives of women and girls in your local area and beyond, we encourage you to get involved.

SCAN ME



ENQUIRE TODAY



www.sigbi.org



East Grinstead President takes part in the Coronation Big Help Out



EAST GRINSTEAD'S new President Jane Griffiths and her husband Brian joined in the Lingfield Big Help Out Litter Pick on Bank Holiday Monday.

Suitably kitted out with yellow jackets, gloves and a grabber they cleared two ditches on the entry to Lingfield. Not only did they clear away bottles, cans and crisp packets but also a piece of carpet, bathroom tiles, a car bumper and four heavy sealant canisters.

Encouraged by the large turnout, more Community Litter Picks are planned for the future.

ROSEMARY STONE, SI EAST GRINSTEAD
(Jane can also be seen on the cover joined by a Lingfield Parish Councillor.)

Chief Fire Officer speaks to Eastbourne Club members



From left: President Lotte, Dawn Whittaker and Regional President Lynne.

EASTOURNE CLUB'S new President, Lotte Peasgood, was delighted to welcome Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer, East Sussex Fire and Rescue, to speak at a recent club meeting. There are 55 Chief Fire Officers in the UK and Dawn is just one of six women in that role.

Dawn gave a very interesting talk on how she became a CFO and what her role entails both in East Sussex and nationally. She also talked about the changing role of women in the Fire and Rescue Service. Dawn has also mentored with The Girls Network and has recently been awarded the Kings Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service.

We were also delighted to welcome SI East Grinstead President Jane Griffiths and Susan Berkshire who joined us for this speaker meeting.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SI EASTBOURNE

Inaugural meeting to mark Membership Month

WHITSTABLE MEMBERS MARKED Membership Month with the inaugural open meeting of the new club. Five members worked together to host the evening, introducing themselves and speaking about the importance of Soroptimism in their lives.

Carol Townsend explained the international links between the Whitstable club and Soroptimist International, and the emphasis on practical programme action.

Our guest speaker was Joy Kemp, international midwifery specialist with the United Nations in Bangladesh. Joy spoke about the part midwives play in enhancing the lives and health of women and their children. She stressed the importance of gender equity within the midwifery and healthcare professions, giving great examples of practical feminism and how Soroptimists can support the initiatives.

Eighteen women came along to the meeting and, most importantly, gave their contact details for invitations to future events. There was a wonderfully positive atmosphere and the feedback from our guests was enthusiastic.

JANE WEBB, WHITSTABLE CLUB

International Success for Linda!



SI SEVENOAKS MEMBER Linda Larter, who is the Sevenoaks Town Clerk, sent us this picture from Minneapolis, USA. Previously Linda has been President of UK Town Clerks.

On May 17 she was sworn in as Region X1 Director of World-wide International Institute of Municipal Clerks.

Region X1 represents all Clerks outside of the States including Canada, South Africa and Europe.

We are all very proud of her!

SANDIE HIGGS, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SI SEVENOAKS

East Grinstead Club takes part in the Lions May Fair

AT THIS YEAR'S Lions May Fair the High Street in East Grinstead was buzzing with concert band music, belly dancing, fun fairs, candy floss and a great variety of stalls. Many members of the public stopped at the East Grinstead Club's stall to find out about the club and its 60 years of service in the town.

While many cards and leaflets about the organisation were distributed, homemade fudge, biscuits and coronation cakes were sold in aid of the Club's charities.

Everyone agreed that the day had been very worthwhile especially as two guests were welcomed to the following speaker meeting.

JANE GRIFFITHS, SI EAST GRINSTEAD



Carol Townsend explaining the link to SI and the UN



Enthusiastic and interested guests



Judith Jackson, Jane Webb, Carol Townsend, Ruth Lewis and Glynis Morgan



Sevenoaks Town Coronation Street Party



SI SEVENOAKS SPENT an enjoyable afternoon at the Sevenoaks Town Big Street Party on Coronation Sunday, May 07.

Not only did we have an opportunity to speak with local women about our club, we also ran a very popular lucky dip for the younger children. We ran out of toys and sweets as the afternoon wore on and President Pauline Payne, manning the stall with Programme Action Officer Sandie Higgs, dashed into the Pound store (fortunately opposite our stall) three times to replenish supplies!

Also helping on the day were Shirley Brigham and Isobel Groves, with visits from Penny Robbins, Valerie Caton and Sevenoaks Town Cryer Chris Conlan.

PAULINE PAYNE, SI SEVENOAKS

Pictured above, Pauline with Chris Conlan, and below Sandie with Shirley



The Annual Inter Club Lunch



From left: Bromley member and Region President Elect Alison Driscoll, Croydon Joint President Reena Bhanotha, Councillor Yvette Hopley, Croydon Joint President Heather Bailey, and Bromley member Peggy Duffin.

SI CROYDON IN collaboration with SI Bromley, hosted the annual Inter Club Lunch. It was a full house, with guests from SI East Grinstead, Inner Wheel Croydon and other associated clubs in attendance.

Special guest, Councillor Yvette Hopley, representing the London Borough of Croydon, expressed her pleasure in joining members for the special lunch. The post lunch talk by former barrister, Peter Thompson, talking about his time at the Bar was delivered with a unique dramatic flair that kept listeners engaged. We were honoured to hear his final public speech, as he has decided not to accept further speaking engagements.

The three lucky raffle prize winners received beautiful hampers packed with a variety of goodies. Proceeds from the raffle will go to Bromley and Croydon Women aid (BCWA), which both clubs have supported for many years.

Peggy Duffin of Bromley club presented Heather Bailey with a certificate for her 40 years of service, signed by Federation President Catherine Cottridge.

Thank you to everyone who made the event such a success.

CORAL KONIBIRE, SI CROYDON
MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Celebrating Nellie's 30 years' service

THERE WAS A surprise presentation by Carol Infanti to Nellie Adjaye at Medway and Maidstone's May business Meeting. This was in recognition of her 30 years' service as a Soroptimist.

Nellie had been unable to attend our AGM as she had been away visiting family in Ghana when Regional President Lynne had awarded long service certificates to other club members.

Nellie is an active member and has held various officer roles in her former club SI Maidstone and now with SI Medway and Maidstone.

Nellie always enjoys the fun and friendship, taking part in social activities and programme action. Well done, Nellie.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE





SIGBI Ltd Board meeting held on April 22, 2023

Report by FCC Jan Doyle

1. Strategic Plan and Workplans

Reviewed by all Directors and revised since the January meeting, these will be available on the Hub. Some key points:

- Activities relating to SIGBI Trading have been incorporated into a combined budget and workplans.
- The Hub is receiving positive feedback; members find the Programme reports useful in supporting their own work.
- Work is in hand on the Club Constitution, with the intention of making it easier for UK clubs to get charitable status, and to enable clubs overseas to respond more flexibly to the legal situation in their own countries.

2. Governance Update

- It has become clear that clubs in the process of dissolving, do not always follow the process outlined in the constitution, and often do not inform their own Region of their intentions.
- A working party on Equality and Diversity is being established, and some applications have already been received and are being processed.

3. Membership Update

- Some clubs planning to close at the year-end have changed their minds after meetings with Directors, where they have been encouraged to think more flexibly. It would appear that too many clubs perceive there to be stringent rules on how clubs should operate, which is not the case. Clubs are encouraged to decide what works for them, rather than follow the practice of former years. Dinners, meeting venues/formats, timing, formal minutes, can all be revisited to bring down club costs and workload, making the experience more enjoyable for members.
- Some regions need to get closer to their clubs, to get their messages across and to give support and advice. I think that our region does this very well. It is recommended members keep up to date with current thinking, by reading the Blogs on the Hub by the Director of Membership and other Directors.
- Active planning is going into creating a Leadership Academy, along the lines of those running in SI Europe and elsewhere in SI, which would work in tandem with the Diamond Education Fund, perhaps offering support and mentoring. A pilot project is likely.
- Plans for new clubs are in progress in North Staffordshire and Northampton and of course in our own region Whitstable.

4. Programme Update

- The importance of being able to collect usable data from Programme Report Forms was emphasised. Recently, SI had been unable to make a high-level report to the UN because the information about club activities on report forms was impossible to measure in any meaningful way. For example, how much time has been spent on providing this service, and what was the value of the goods donated to a local charity?
- It is recognised that information from the UN about 16 Days of Activism is far too late to be of use. In future there will be a more timely SI theme that all Federations can use. An example of the Federations being encouraged, by Maureen Maguire, to work more closely together.
- July 15 is SIGBI Day of Action and UN World Youth Skills Day. FPAC would like us to use our partnerships to focus on girls, perhaps offering a practical/enjoyable activity, or run a competition.
- Toilet Twinning: a promising and mutually advantageous partnership is emerging with the Toilet Twinning organisation. While there are scores of PRFs about toilet twinning, very few identify the important SDG17 Partnerships. Please note this.

- UK Clubs have been encouraged to sign up to the King's Big Help Out, promoting volunteering in the community. Again our region rose to the challenge with a lot of volunteering seen on club Facebook pages.
- Use the Hub! Seeing reports on the Hub has been inspirational for many clubs/members. Small clubs may be discouraged from attempting or writing up projects because they can't make the same impact as large, well-established projects, but look at what small clubs are doing on the Hub, and you will be surprised. And please use the thumbs up sign against each report – it draws APDs' attention, and it heartens the Club concerned!
- The Director of Programme wants to thank all the clubs for what they have done and are doing to promote our Mission. Go out together every 25th of the month and have a coffee somewhere and wear orange! (See 'Orange Café on page 02.)

5. PR and Marketing Update

- The PR and Marketing Team is working hard on the London Conference. Registration will be out soon using the Events tab on the Hub. The Saturday programme will focus on Violence Against Women. They are keen for in non-members to participate.
- The very successful Quarterpillar project is coming to an end, and will be reported on at the next Board meeting.
- Advertisements with eye-catching graphics are being placed in magazines, Good Housekeeping in July (out in June) and Sainsbury's magazine in September (out in August). This could be a regular activity if it is successful.
- The live streamed Facebook session in May will be on using social media in recruiting new members. They are developing a social media policy which will give Dos and Don'ts.
- At our last meeting I spoke about the Social Media/Website survey that Anne Rogers had asked councillors to complete for region clubs and I managed to get everything done to meet the set deadline. Thank you to everyone I approached in getting this survey completed. As agreed at our meeting I wrote to Anne giving her a little more detail about the complications involved in posting on club websites through the SIGBI website.
- The conclusions from the Social Media/Website survey currently being carried out will be reported to the next Board meeting, and I will keep you informed.

6. Finance Update

- Ruth Healey responded to questions about the winding up of SIGBI Trading Ltd. The conditions that led to the setting up of SIGBI Trading no longer apply. The charitable objects, written in 2018 after SIGBI Trading was incorporated, allowed for the annual Conference to be classed as a charitable activity and therefore this can be run by SIGBI Ltd. The limit on non-charitable income is in excess of the remaining income of SIGBI Trading, despite enormous efforts on behalf of SIGBI Trading directors, so it will not cause any issues for SIGBI Ltd itself. Similarly, merging the reserves of the two companies does not give rise to any problems with the Charity Commission.
- The Director of Finance post is being re-advertised. Members who are Chartered Accountants are asked to consider applying. The workload is not high, but it is better carried out by a member: it is not a post that lends itself to being outsourced.
- The Hub is already working well and take up has been high – now in excess of 2500. They have improved the process of adding and removing members, and it is hoped the webinar this week for 'managers' in clubs will be very useful.

Sevenoaks Club join the Orange The World SIGBI Campaign – raising awareness and taking action to end Violence against Women and Girls



Six members of SI Sevenoaks, together with three guests including some potential new members, enjoyed a coffee and chat at the friendly Vine Café in Sevenoaks. It stands adjacent to the town's historic cricket pitch on the Vine, a lovely area where residents and visitors can have a stroll in colourful surroundings very close to the town centre. The café kindly displayed our poster and we had a photo call and chatted to other people also using the café.

A team from SI Sevenoaks regularly do volunteer gardening on the Vine, and we were able to inspect their efforts! We felt it was appropriate to have our first 25th Orange day at that café, and plan to visit others in the town in the months to come.

SANDIE HIGGS, PAO, SI SEVENOAKS

Supporting Education in the Local Area



SI Croydon member, Pat Dale, coordinated a special donation of surplus stationery to a local school (Riddlesdown).

As many families are feeling the effects of the cost of living crisis the donation was well timed, and will hopefully help to ease the burden on the school and families.

ROXANNE M ST. CLAIR
SI CROYDON



MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE Sorooptimists have been busy decluttering their wardrobes. Annette Davies collected all the high-quality unwanted clothes and on May 15 took six bags of women's clothing along to Community Sharewear at Fort Luton.

Kent & Medway Community Sharewear was launched in March 2023. It is a SATEDA-run project and a franchise of Community Sharewear based in Nottingham. It is the first franchise to be launched in the Southeast.

What it does is simple. They collect high-quality unwanted, clean clothes, and provide them free-of-charge to women and children in economic difficulty, including those fleeing domestic abuse and living a life after abuse. They are using a combination of a referral system for individuals and an outreach service for organisations.

An additional bonus is that Community Sharewear is benefiting the environment reducing clothing waste by meeting clothing needs for women and children.

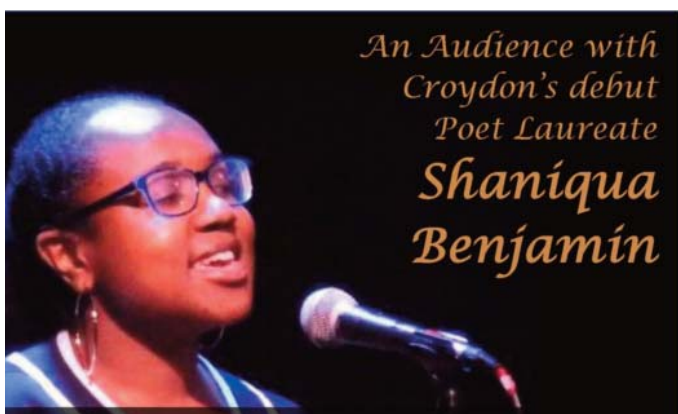
Over the next year Community Sharewear aims to help more than five hundred women and children. They are holding Mobile Sharewear days and Sorooptimists will be volunteering at the next one on June 17 at The Rainham Church Eco Hub between 10:00 to 15:00.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Dates of the 2023 Saturday Region Meetings

June 24, September 23 and December 02

Holiday Inn Maidstone/Sevenoaks,
London Road, Wrotham Heath, TN15 7RS



SI CROYDON PROUDLY presents an Audience with Croydon's first ever Poet Laureate, Shaniqua Benjamin. Her credits include writing the lyrics for the London Mozart Players' Anthem and a specially commissioned poem for the re-opening of South London's biggest arts centre, Croydon's Fairfield Halls and the 2022 One Young World summit, as well as having several published works including Trinity College, Cambridge, Black History Month.

This event will be held on Sunday July 16 at 14:30 at Le Bon Café (Cuisine is Moroccan), 61 South End, Croydon, and tickets cost £25 each and price includes a 3-course meal. Tickets must be purchased in advance by emailing PAO.SICroydonanddistrict@outlook.com where enquiries can be received.

HELEN MANGAN, PROGRAMME ACTION OFFICER, SI CROYDON

Team SI Folkestone go Moonwalking



TEAM SI FOLKESTONE took part in the London Moonwalk on the evening of Saturday, May 20 to raise funds and awareness of breast cancer. Susannah De Sanvil and I walked 15.1 miles and as a team have raised over £600, our link is still open if you would like to donate <https://walkthewalk.enthuse.com/pf/si-folkestone>.

Pat, one of our club members (and my Mum) had recently undergone treatment for breast cancer, so as a club we looked at ways we could make a difference.

I had completed the Moonwalk in 2022, having originally signed up in 2020 before Covid postponed it, so when at a club meeting Susannah suggested joining as a team for 2023 I was really pleased – strangely no one else volunteered.

It was a challenging walk through the night but we kept each other going, especially on that last mile back to Clapham Common (Susannah, I wouldn't really have kicked you over the finish line!). The amazing camaraderie of those taking part, and the volunteer supporters made the whole evening, as did some

of the London landmarks like Battersea Power Station and the Millenium Wheel being lit up in pink to raise awareness.

Crossing the finish line in the early morning sun, we both felt a terrific sense of achievement, Susannah looked at her medal in amazement, and I really don't think she believed that she would do it. My eyes welled up and I felt a total rush of emotion and was told I looked shell shocked.

So the challenge is, do we sign up for the 2024? Even with my aching legs I want to do the Full Moon (26.2 miles), so it maybe a combination of Half and Full, or are there any volunteers for a regional team?

On a more serious note, remember to check your breasts and encourage others to check theirs too – the earlier breast cancer is detected, the greater chance of successful treatment and cure.

From my Mum's experience, you are not automatically invited for breast screening if you are 71 or over, but you can still request it by contacting your local breast screening service, I strongly advocate.

JACALYN WOOD, SI FOLKESTONE

Thank you to President Pat



At SI SEVENOAKS' club meeting on May 09, Treasurer Margaret Nicholson presented Pat Downing with flowers in appreciation of her dedicated service as President during the past two years.

Pat handed the chain of office to Vice President Pauline Payne, who extended a warm welcome to newly-enrolled member Tina Fenner.

PAULINE PAYNE, SI SEVENOAKS

An evening with Sir Anthony Seldon

EAST GRINSTEAD MEMBERS and friends enjoyed a fascinating evening with Sir Anthony Seldon at the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club on April 28.

Seventy members and guests listened intently as he gave an entertaining insight into his new demanding role as Head of Epsom College, his Book "The Path of Peace" about his remarkable walk along the Western Front, and his extensive knowledge of British Prime Ministers, including Boris in his latest book "Johnson at No 10".

Guests enjoyed a glass of wine, tasty chilli, and a delicious brownie. The raffle raised £410 for local charities supported by the Club.



JANE GRIFFITHS, SI EAST GRINSTEAD

An evening of culture at Mayor Alisa Fleming's Gala Dinner



STANDING FROM LEFT: Sasha from IWPG, Croydon Soroptimist Roxanne St Clair, past Croydon Mayoress and Mayor. SEATED FROM LEFT: Croydon Soroptimist Sheila Patel and member of Croydon Rotary Club, President Patricia Painting.



SI Croydon President
Heather Bailey



Pat Dale with the Mayor of Croydon
Cllr Alisa Fleming

Members of SI Croydon and District, together with guests including, spouses, Rotary International Croydon and International Women's Peace Group (IWPG), enjoyed an evening of culture at Mayor Alisa Fleming's Gala Dinner on May 12.

The entertainment highlighted why Croydon was chosen as the Borough of Culture for 2023, from the carnival showgirls who escorted the Mayor into the ballroom to the classical Indian dancer, reggae singer-songwriter and afrobeat singer, all

embracing the diversity within the Borough. Not only was the entertainment diverse, dinner had something for everyone comprising of British, African, Asian and Caribbean cuisine.

Proceeds from the evening will support the Mayor's chosen charities, the ACLT, Croydon Sickle Cell & Thalassaemia centre and Waggy Tails.

Thank you Mayor Alisa Fleming for a lovely evening.

CORAL KONIBIRE, SI CROYDON



PRESENT AND PAST members and friends of SI Eastbourne held a very enjoyable Coronation garden party in the sunshine in the lovely seaside home of President Lotte (above right). Everyone enjoyed the delicious sandwiches and cakes made by members and a raffle was also held.

Funds raised were presented to Region President Lynne for our Regional Project, The Girls Network, and will be used to help buy inspirational books for girls completing TGN mentoring programmes.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SI EASTBOURNE

SUMMER GARDEN PARTY
With Soroptimist International of East Grinstead

Summer hats
Sunday 11th June 2023 1-4pm
Knights Farm, Crowhurst Road,
LINGFIELD RH7 6DA

Tickets £15, to include lunch/summer punch
with all proceeds going to local charities
cash/cheques to SoroptimistInternational of East Grinstead

There will be Stalls & Raffle
RSVP to: jane.griffiths144@gmail.com by 31st May

Membership Month

Soroptimists meet volunteers at Litter Pick



Litter Pickers with bags of rubbish



Soroptimists Stella B, Jane B & Angela H at litter pick





**River Medway
Foreshore**







#BigHelpOut – 8 May 2023

Membership Month

THREE MEMBERS OF Medway and Maidstone club responded to the call out to take part in a foreshore clean-up on the River Medway as part of The Big Help Out on Monday, May 08.

Throughout the UK more than six million people came together to lend a hand in their communities and experienced how rewarding volunteering can be, and the power it has to make a change.

Angela Howe, Stella Barnes and Jane Barnes joined up with some of the regular volunteers and some new faces to clean up the foreshore. It was not only King Charles' Coronation weekend

but Membership month for Soroptimists. So, Jane Barnes had gone prepared not only to volunteer but with information on being a Soroptimist. During the morning Jane got into conversation with several of the newer volunteers. They had never heard of Soroptimists nor what we do as volunteers to improve the lives of women and girls.

Hopefully, having whetted their interest they will go away and look at our website and social media to find out more and perhaps considering joining.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



Looking for a gift to take to Dublin Convention, Friendship Link visit or present to a new member, then have you thought about a Kente Sash...?













Contact Nellie Adjaye to buy
 Email: nellieadjaye1@gmail.com
 Tel: 07767441188



Closing Date

for the next edition of
SEE News
Sunday, June 25, 2023

Future Closing Dates are:

- 26 July
- 26 August
- 25 September
- 22 November for combined
 October and November
 issue (Editor is on a cruise)
- 27 December

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

Soroptimists Visit Canterbury Engineering Department



AT OUR FEBRUARY club meeting SI Medway and Maidstone were pleased to welcome Dr Anne Nortcliffe, Head of School of Engineering, Technology and Design at Christ Church University, Canterbury. This was to mark the International Day of Women and Girls in Science' and the contribution women and girls make in relation to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Namely, SDG6: clean water and sanitation; SDG7: affordable and clean energy; SDG9: industry, innovation, and infrastructure; and SDG11: sustainable cities and communities.

Anne had set up the new engineering facility at Christ Church University, at a time when there was an engineering crisis across STEM professions. She highlighted:

- The UK will require 1.8 million new engineers by 2025, currently unlikely to be achieved.
- Girls need a different approach in being taught as they do not respond to being criticized for getting things wrong.
- More female engineers are needed as male engineers design for men and not women, eg in a car a foot pedal is for a longer leg and not a shorter one. There is different spatial awareness between men and women that creates differences when parking cars which is not acknowledged in design of car parks.

An invitation was extended to visit the engineering facility, which is only four years old, and this took place on May 05. The



seven members who went were enormously impressed by so many aspects of the department. Their passion for recruiting women into engineering; their acceptance of medium grades to enter the course (they admit that a passion for the subject is of major importance); the Foundation Course which eases students in comfortably and their equipment which is second to none.

Their results and standards are so high that industry is happy to invest in them and they, in turn, invest in their students. It was nice to see that, although they have overseas students, the majority of their students come from the local area.

Comments from some of those on the visit:

"I was fascinated and if I was young again would have loved to do one of the courses they offer. I really liked the idea of the Foundation course and the projects they undertook."

"The machines they have are excellent and what they are researching. The fact that this course is so diverse both for gender and ethnicity. It really is a beacon for girls."

"A unique set up of an engineering school which is catering for local yet global market of engineers all-inclusive of sex, colour or creed. It should make a good progression for the advocates of STEM studies in schools, and I was pleased to learn they have an outreach into local primary schools as well as hold open days."

JANE BARNES AND WANDA WRIGHT, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

News from SI Folkestone

2023 IS PROVING to be a busy year for SI Folkestone and we have certainly been involved in a wide range of activities and welcomed some interesting speakers to our club meetings.

We started the New Year with a talk by Penny Shepherd, from the Steering group Aging Without Children (AWOC). Penny also gave advice about keeping our affairs in order to make life easier for those who have to deal with our estate after we pass on (see January 2023 SEE News).

In March we had an equally interesting talk by Sheridan Hammond, CEO of South Kent Mind, which covers the Folkestone and Dover Council areas. Help is provided for those with mental health issues by offering support resilience, relief and aiding rehab. One of the activities is cooking on a budget – clients prepare food by taking it turns and vegetarian options are always provided. The charity receives self-referrals and referrals from local mental health teams and GPs. There are over 120 local Mind charities across England and Wales.

Aware of the need to take care of our planet and play our part in addressing Climate Change, four Club members attended the Folkestone & Hythe Sustainable Futures Forum event on April 29, which was organised by the Carbon Innovation Lab. We listened to some interesting presentations and were able to network with a wide range of organisations working on sustainability, food poverty, carbon reduction and offering volunteering opportunities.

On May 20, Jacalyn Wood and Susannah De Sanvil did a moon walk in aid of Breast Cancer (see report on page 07).

Finally, we have some exciting news – one of our members, Belinda Walker, has just been elected Mayor of Folkestone, having been Deputy Mayor for the past year.

We wish her all the very best for her year as Mayor and we will be sharing more news of her election in the June edition of SEE News.

YVONNE FREEMAN, SI FOLKESTONE