

President Lynne's message

Educate to Empower and Enable



IT'S BEEN A very busy but enjoyable month catching up with members at different events, club meetings and at Region. Some of the recent UN CSW webinars were interesting, especially the SI webinar on gender equality, innovation, technology and education.

Many thanks to clubs for making me feel so welcome during visits. These have included:

A very enjoyable day with SI Sevenoaks members and guests at President Pat's lovely lunch at Nizels Golf Club.

Adjudicating at SI Croydon's excellent Loud and Proud competition held in Croydon's Town Hall, with presentations from brilliantly confident girls in the final year of primary school who addressed set topics, including climate change and the impact of the Lionesses on gender equality (see page 04).

Visiting SI Tunbridge Wells to talk about our Regional Project and hear about the impressive programme action being undertaken (see page 02). A big thank you to Ann Greenfield for kindly offering me accommodation once again.

What good speakers we had at our Region meeting this month. Annette Davies gave an inspiring talk about Mary's Meals who help feed and educate children in some of the poorest countries. Raffle proceeds were donated to this charity (see report and thank you letter on page 06).

In the afternoon, Gillie O'Rourke, Chair of UKPAC, gave a very helpful presentation about the importance of the work UKPAC carries out in helping Programme Action be recorded and promoted amongst clubs.

Thank you so much for the donations received for our Regional Project. I have been really impressed at the variety of fundraising methods to buy books for girls completing programmes with The Girls' Network. My mentoring continues and I am pleased to see we now have five mentors in our Region with another member applying and others waiting to hear what new programmes will be available later this year.

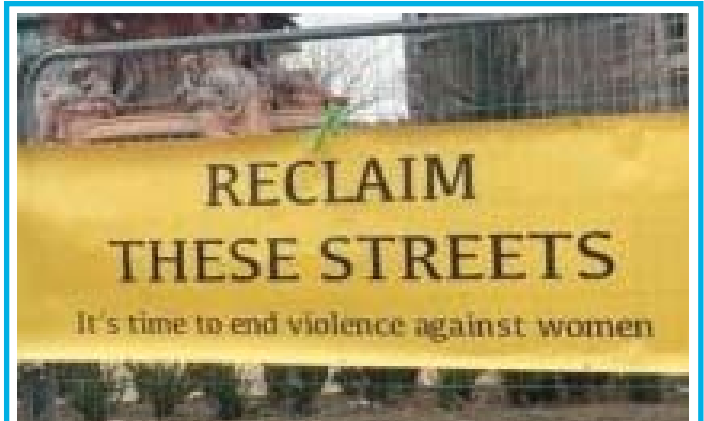
The book we have chosen for our Regional book award is 'You can change the World' by Margaret Rooke and I welcome designs for a bookplate stating that it is given by SISEE.

And finally, we have a very interesting webinar for Region members coming up at 10:00 on Saturday, April 29, on the Menopause (see page 08). Hope you can take part.

I hope you have a very happy Easter break.

LYNNE CHISWICK, SEE REGION PRESIDENT

In March we celebrated International Women's Day



What do we want? SAFER STREETS.
When do we want them? NOW, page 02.



Speaking out LOUD and standing PROUD in Croydon, page 04.



She Made it Happen in Sevenoaks, page 04.



The difference a meal makes, page 06.

Tunbridge Wells film night celebrating women



AS PART OF International Women's Day 2023 SI Tunbridge Wells held a film night for members. We came together to watch the film *Hidden Figures*, the story of three African American female mathematicians who worked at NASA during the Space Race. The film was chosen to highlight the IWD theme of 'Embrace Equity'. The three women highlighted in the film were Katherine Goble Johnson, Dorothy Vaughan and Mary Jackson, all of whom are females whose careers are worth investigating further.

The club enjoyed the evening so much that we have decided to hold future film nights to come together to watch and discuss films relating to women's issues in an informal setting.



FOLLOWING REGION PRESIDENT Lynne Chiswick's talk to Tunbridge Wells Members in early March, a collection was held for her project, *The Girls' Network*. Vice President Cat Mennell and PA Officer Angela McPherson were pleased to present President Lynne with a donation of £100.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, PRESIDENT, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

What do we want? SAFER STREETS. When do we want them? NOW



THE SECOND RECLAIM these Streets March took place in Ashford on Sunday March 05, to raise awareness for Safer Streets. It was attended by members of SI Folkestone who live in the Ashford area.

The march was led by the Mayor of Ashford, Councillor Jenny Webb, commencing at Victoria Park, through the town centre ending at The Coachworks. Susannah De Sanvil and Jacalyn Wood walked to make a stand for women's safety in Ashford and in solidarity with women across the world.

Despite the cold weather the march was attended by local councillors as well as people from the local community.

Once at The Coachworks, and revitalised by warming drinks, there were a number of speakers to recognise International Women's Day including the Mayoral address, a music video from Rose Gold, who had sadly lost her voice, songs from Georgie-Jane, women from the Ukraine and Iran, as well as Rev Cathy Aldiss-Saunders.

In summing up, Councillor Lyn Suddards concluded that we cannot stop until we have gender equality, something that we as Soroptimists strive for.

The evening was rounded up with an event from Equator Women of the World which featured music, dance, and poetry, as a celebration of women from different cultures across the world. There was a sister event to this held in Folkestone on Saturday evening which some other of our members managed to attend.

JACALYN WOOD, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, SI FOLKESTONE

Walk in different shoes for gender equality



IN LINE WITH SI Europe and our own SI Clubs, Folkestone Club took up the challenge to 'Walk in Different Shoes for Gender Equity' on March 08, International Women's Day.

The aim was to raise awareness of the inequality which is still prevalent in many countries of the world.

This inequality is one of the wrongs in this world that we must continue to strive against for all women and girls.

JACALYN WOOD, COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, SI FOLKESTONE

Community celebration of International Women's Day



ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SI Bromley, along with Rotary, joined an event organised in Orpington by Community Links Bromley. It is the umbrella body for a number of voluntary and volunteer organisations in the Borough.

Members were able to network with eight organisations and visitors, providing information and answering questions.

The stall, manned by Angela Hulme and Lesley Darvill, certainly caught visitors' attention on what was a bitterly cold day.

Let's hope we may have created interest in Soroptimism too!

LESLEY DARVILL, SI BROMLEY

Soroptimists wear purple for International Women's Day



FIFTY SOROPTIMISTS FROM across the South East England Region attended the Regional meeting at the Holiday Inn, Maidstone, on Saturday, March 18.

President Lynne Chiswick hosted the meeting welcoming everyone to her first face to face Regional meeting.

In the morning session we had a presentation on Mary's Meals by Annette Davies from SI Medway and Maidstone (see report on page 06). This was followed by short presentations by Canterbury, Croydon, East Grinstead and Eastbourne clubs sharing their good news stories.

After lunch, Gillie O'Rourke, Chair of UKPAC joined us via Zoom. She spoke about the Mysteries and Magic of Programme Action and explained where it sits within our organisation.

Everyone had been asked to wear purple to mark our support for International Women's Day. So after a full and informative day, we gathered for a group photo.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Dates of the 2023 Saturday Region Meetings

June 24 and September 23

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

#EmbraceEquity by Overcoming Domestic Violence



SI CROYDON EMBRACED this year's International Women's Day theme #EmbraceEquity by inviting a representative from the Cassandra Centre (CC) in South West London to give a talk about their work.

The centre was set up in 2007, following the tragic loss of the founder's daughter to domestic violence. Cassandra, aged 19, was brutally murdered by her partner in 2001. The ensuing case set legal history, overturning an 800 year old ruling, and resulted in the eventual conviction of the assailant.

SI Croydon members learned that in addition to providing support to women and children affected by domestic violence, the centre also provides support to perpetrators. All clients are referred to the centre by other professional services. The ethos at CC is one of "walking beside you until you feel ready and able to lead, then we will walk behind you."

Since it's opening in 2007 the centre has expanded the services that it offers, to include:

- Weekly lunch club for over 50s.
- Talks and workshops for schools and colleges.
- Fathers' caring group.
- Girls Squad (for teenage girls).
- Holiday activities for supported families.
- And more.

A major undertaking for staff is also the raising of funds, because the centre does not receive government funding. This means that a lot of time is spent writing applications for grants, planning seasonal fundraising activities, and relying on donations.

Following her riveting talk and question and answer session, the guest speaker drew tickets for the raffle, which raised £30 as a donation from SI Croydon members.

ROXANNE M ST CLAIR, SI CROYDON

Closing Date

for the next edition of SEE News
Monday, April 24, 2023

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.

Croydon Club's annual LOUD and PROUD competition

EACH YEAR, AROUND International Women's Day, Croydon Club hold their annual public speaking competition, LOUD and PROUD, for primary school girls.

This year there were 14 entrants, two from each of seven schools: St Peter's Primary; Winterbourne Junior Girls; Selsdon Primary School; Oasis Academy Ryelands; Fairchildes Primary School; Rowdown Primary School; Park Hill Junior Schools. Sadly, one pupil was taken ill just before the competition, so 13 took part.

The subjects offered were:

1. What makes Croydon the London Borough of Culture. (No takers.)
2. What impact do you think the Lionesses will have on sports for women and girls? (Nine spoke on this!)
3. How do we convince the older generation and local and central government about climate change. (Two pupils spoke on this.)
4. Impact of Inflation on Food and Fuel. (Only one taker.)
5. Monarchy or Republic, which is better and why. (Only one brave girl selected this subject.)

The Competition Judges were Danae Bird, Christine Fender, Roxanne St Clair, Lynne Chiswick and Michael Pereira. They can be seen in the back row of the photograph on the front page.

The Civic Mayor of Croydon, Cllr Alisa Fleming, presented certificates to the following winners:

- 1st Prize: Christiana Assamoah, subject – Women and Sport.
2nd Prize: Rita Lindsay-Tose, subject – Climate Change.
3rd Prize: Isha Kalia, subject – Women and Sport.



FROM LEFT: Civic Mayor of Croydon, Cllr Alisa Fleming, Isha Kalia (3rd place), SI SE England Region President Lynne Chiswick, Michael Pereira, Christiana Assamoah (1st place), and Rita Lindsay-Tose (2nd place).

The Club will be following-up the event with a tour of the House of Commons in the Spring Term.

SHEILA PATEL, SI CROYDON

SI Croydon and District launched LOUD and PROUD in 2010 and it has remained a popular annual event celebrating International Women's Day. In recent years, the Club has been fortunate to receive sponsorship from Michael Pereira and his health and safety company, Ablemarsh Safety Consultants. Michael is a Rotarian and husband to Croydon Club member Gisella.

Sevenoak's Soroptimist receives Local Hero Award

Making It Happen : Community and Voluntary Awards

DELIGHTED SI SEVENOAKS members received the news that Shirley Brigham's nomination by her club to receive the coveted Sevenoaks District Council's 'Making It Happen' Community

Awards trophy in the Local Hero category was successful. Shirley accompanied by Isobel White and Isobel Groves attended the Award event at St. Nicholas Church, Sevenoaks on Wednesday March 15 to hear that she had won the trophy.



The packed church was told that there had been a very strong field in the competition making it difficult to choose a winner. Shirley was nominated due to her fantastic support of the Trauma Teddies appeal knitting 350 bears, supporting Climate Change by gardening on her hands and knees weekly at the Vine, and baking tray bakes for the Sevenoaks Area Youth Trust.

All activities at 87 years old!

No wonder the presenter of the award, Dr. Hilary Jones, said he must get the name of Shirley's moisturiser!

Soroptimist International also had a very high profile due to Shirley's response to Programme Action projects.

Many congratulations Shirley and thank you.

ISOBEL GROVES, PAO,
SI SEVENOAKS

Communities coming together to Reclaim the Night

ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S Day 2023, SI Tunbridge Wells & District were invited to join a panel of women to discuss issues around 'the power of communities coming together to effect change.'

The event was organised by a local partnership of women, Reclaim the Night Tunbridge Wells, who we had previously joined in a night walk through our town. The venue was the Sussex Arms where Eva had set the scene by decorating the entrance with images of powerful and inspiring women along the entrance stairway.

During the evening, at the standing room only event, held in the Sussex Arms, Tunbridge Wells, the panel discussion was interspersed with music from Anna Howie and poetry readings from Kate Phipps and Jess Mookherjee, and presentations from DAVSS (Domestic Abuse Volunteer Service), plus Joy Neal on the magic of 'Women's Circles'.

Soroptimist Jill Ruddock (pictured right) as well as representing DAVSS also shared her poem which she has kindly agreed to have published. It is at the end of this report.

Soroptimist TW President Caroline Auckland joined the panel along with organisers Lauren Brook and Jayne Sharratt, Cora Valentine-Golds (Family

Law Solicitor) and a representative from Plan International UK, also involved with Greg Clark MP Private Member's Bill on public sexual harassment. The discussion was around local activism, community and inclusion, domestic abuse, women's safety including our Soroptimist report, lobbying and involvement of men and boys to effect change.

CAROLINE AUCKLAND, PRESIDENT
SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



She Was Only Walking Home
By Jill Ruddock

She was only walking home.
She wasn't breaking the law.
It should have been safe
for her to reach her front door.

Instead she was killed
by someone we paid
to keep us all safe
but by him she was betrayed.

Why does the world ask
women to change what they do
instead of insisting
that men think in ways that are new?

The roll call of names
of women killed by a man
continues to grow
but to stop it there's no plan.

Measures recently passed
mean laws now demand
we respect race, creed and class
but misogyny gets no reprimand.

How many more women must die
in this unending pandemic
of which the causes, alas,
are entrenched and systemic?

Bromley Club continue their support for Ukraine

Motivation! A deadline!

DINAH SCUDDER HAD asked for more warm clothes for Ukraine to be taken over via a Rotary contact.

Having run the Charity Quiz night on a Saturday night I was not feeling fit enough the next morning to go on my planned walk. I was tempted to read my book club book as a treat, but decided to show the flag and tackle the 'prune the wardrobes' job that was continually falling off the bottom of the 'to do' list!

I still have the lighter blouses to do but, after a good two and a half hours of trying on and being very firm with myself, I had two black bags full of mainly warm clothing ranging from jackets



to really snug cardigans and jumpers to, trousers and skirts. I have even parted with a wonderful pair of heavy duty shoes that were my mother's that I had hit the pavements in during lockdown. They are one of only

two pairs of hand stitched ladies outdoor shoes I have ever seen. I know she would have approved and hoped, as I do, that all the items are warmly welcomed and well used by those in such need just now. Just shows what a deadline can do!

MARY DALMAN, SI BROMLEY

Friendship with Ukraine, through food of course!



A GROUP OF SI Bromley members visited a Ukrainian restaurant called 'Old Kyiv' which has opened in Chislehurst. We wanted to share friendship, but also support the enterprise. Much fun was had by all and the food was delicious. The restaurant had a welcoming warm atmosphere, decorated as it is with many pictures of famous buildings in Ukraine on the wall.

It was a very pleasant afternoon enjoyed by all. We will spread the word!

MARY DALMAN, SI BROMLEY



PRESIDENT LYNNE CHISWICK was pleased to introduce Annette Davies of SI Medway & Maidstone to speak about Mary's Meals. Mary's Meals is a simple idea that works. They feed children from some of the world's poorest communities a daily meal at school. This attracts chronically hungry children into the classroom where they can get an education which gives them, and their communities hope of a better future.

The charity is named after Mary, mother of Jesus, who, regardless of faith, is known globally as the most famous mother. Hunger remains the number one health risk in the world today. Tragically, hunger kills more people each year than AIDS, malaria and TB combined. 200 million children's lives are at risk because they are malnourished, and more than 67 million primary school-age children are out of school around the world. Instead of sitting in classrooms, children are working in fields, begging on street corners or scavenging among rubbish to find enough food just to survive. Today, too many children will wake up and go to bed hungry.

The Mary's Meals charity was founded in 2002 and it all started with the inspiration of one man, Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow, from a village called Dalmally in the Highlands. They started by feeding 200 children in Malawi and now, 2.5 million children, in 18 countries, are being fed.

They always work with local communities and consult everyone before agreeing to provide food for a school. This includes the local chief, teachers and families. Everyone needs to get on board for Mary's Meals to be a success. They seek, and gain, community ownership for the feeding programmes and in that way they can contribute to, and protect this work, on behalf of their children.

A kitchen is built and relatives, usually mothers, cook the meals. The school feeding programmes are owned by the community and run by local volunteers, with Mary's Meals providing the food. Wherever possible, this is locally sourced and produced, which supports the local economy and respects local cultural preferences. This has the added benefit of being environmentally friendly, as food travels a minimal distance from source to point of consumption.

Mary's Meals is not only a powerful incentive to come to school, the daily meal also gives children the energy to learn and play. Research shows that when Mary's Meals starts at a school, hunger is reduced, there is improved school enrolment and attendance levels, improved attainment, increased community support for education, and children are happier!

50% of the recipients are girls, which encourages girls education and helps to reduce pregnancy rates. 93% of every donation goes to funding the meals and 7% is used for administration with much of the service being delivered by volunteers. It currently costs £19.15 per annum to feed one child for a school year.

Annette explained that they are beginning to see a new generation, once fed by Mary's Meals, finding its voice. They are known as 'Generation Hope' – these are the young people who have completed their education and are going on to become doctors, teachers and even professional athletes.

Soroptimists can help by fund raising and volunteering to spread the word about the charity. Information films about Mary's Meals are available on YouTube, such as <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EowuHMxlrkx>

The proceeds from the raffle at the Regional meeting raised £215 and was given to Mary's Meals.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

A thank you from Mary's Meals

FOLLOWING ANNETTE DAVIES inspiring talk about the work of Mary's Meals at our recent Region meeting, we were able to donate £212 from the proceeds of the raffle.

I have just received this email from Mary's Meals Executive Director, Daniel Adams.

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your precious gift of £212.00, which is helping us to transform the lives of hungry children around the world with a nutritious daily meal in school.

Your kindness is bringing food, joy and hope to the children who eat Mary's Meals, allowing them to make the most of their education and giving them the chance of a better future.

Our meals make a huge difference to children like 14-year-old Mona from Yemen, who says: "The meal is delicious with varied food. I really feel full with this and it helps my family to save

money that we really need. The food enables me to better understand the lessons and do my homework. I hope to be a paediatric doctor when I am older, caring for and helping children."

Today, more than 2.4 million hungry children in 18 of the world's poorest countries – including South Sudan, Ethiopia, India and Yemen – are sitting in classrooms with full stomachs, and learning how to read and write, thanks to supporters like you.

Together, we are bringing the hope of a brighter future to so many little ones who depend on the promise of a daily meal in school. I thank you, with all my heart, on behalf of the children who eat Mary's Meals.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Adams, Executive Director, Mary's Meals

LYNNE CHISWICK, PRESIDENT SI SE ENGLAND REGION

Eastbourne club enjoy Beatles Tribute Band



IT WAS WITH great excitement that Eastbourne members turned up to a Beatles Tribute Band at the Royal Sussex Golf Club in Eastbourne.

This charity event was organised by joint president Lucy Mckeon and the band played free of charge. The golf club kindly gave us their club house for the event, and fitted a dance floor, taking their income from the bar.

Denise Staplehurst brought along dancing friends and had a table of fourteen.

Eight other Soroptimists, friends and golf club members attended making a total of 60 people.

When the band started their first number Denise's friends Gordon and Trisha took to the floor for a quickstep. Throughout the evening every number was danced to with rumba, jive, cha cha, modern jive, foxtrot and salsa by her friends and other Soroptimists individually moving to the beat! The band said they had never had someone dancing to every number they played and really enjoyed the event.

A huge raffle was held and £635 was raised for the President's charities in a really fun way.

DENISE STAPLEHURST, SI EASTBOURNE



YOU WILL HAVE read the article in the February Newsletter about how Medway and Maidstone members marked their support for the #ShowTheLove for the Planet campaign.

A group photo was taken with members wearing green and holding green hearts. The photo was sent to Selina at SIGBI office to be considered for the February Photo of the Month.

Medway and Maidstone members were extremely pleased to hear that our photo had been chosen as the February Photo of the Month.

For any other clubs thinking of entering for the Photo of the Month, SIGBI needs a stock of photos that they can use time and time again in promotional material. They need them to be excellent quality, high resolution and pertinent.

By sending in photographs, you give SIGBI permission to use them.

Before sending your photo to selina@sigbi.org, you need to ensure the following:

- It is relevant.
- It tells a story. No words are needed as it is clear what the picture represents.
- It evokes an emotion.
- It includes the SIGBI branding in some form.
- It is high resolution.

Good luck to all those clubs thinking of entering their photos.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

Tunbridge Wells Junior Enterprise Challenge

TUNBRIDGE WELLS SOROPTIMISTS have a history of taking part in judging this Challenge, and donating a prize to either second or third placed school (a selection of books to value of £50 and £10 book token for each child on that team). This year we chose five books on the theme of climate change (which we were able to buy at a 20% discount from Mr Books, Tonbridge).



Ten local schools took part in the Challenge with the brief of designing 'a product that will encourage primary school aged children to choose healthier eating options'.

The schools spent two days preparing – listening to talks, researching and deciding on their product, creating their product, creating an attractive display for the trade fair, and then creating a presentation, which could be either a PowerPoint or promotional video, or both.

The teams consisted of lively, engaged and interested young people aged 9-11. It was a delight to talk to them in groups at their stalls.

Their products were colourful and imaginative, while the presentations showed wit, clever ideas and some impressive engagement with technology.

The winners were the Beechwood Barracudas who produced their Kingdom of Colour healthy lunchboxes. The judges agreed that the product could probably hit the shelves this month, especially given the celebrity endorsement from Joe Wicks !(?)

KATHLEEN LYNCH-HOWARD, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Easter Gifts for the Refuges



AS EASTER APPROACHES Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists wanted to ensure the women and children in both the Maidstone and Medway Refuges are remembered.

Our friendship link club SI Voorburg had donated monies to us for our 75th anniversary. These monies were to be spent on activities relating to domestic abuse. There was a small sum of money still remaining so it was agreed to buy Easter eggs for the children in residence, and chocolates for the mothers and staff.

The Refuges were contacted to identify the number of children, and these included a young baby. The photograph shows Carol McKeough (left) and Angela Howe with the Easter eggs and a teddy bear for the baby. The gifts are being delivered to the Refuges this week in plenty of time for Easter.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

St David's Day Celebrations

East Grinstead's first meeting of the month falling on March 01, and our President having been born and lived most of her life in Wales, it seemed the obvious choice to celebrate her year in office with a St David's Day evening.



The room was set out café style with vases of daffodils, the national flower of Wales, on every table alongside plates of delicious Welsh Cakes and Bara Brith.

Our President Sue Darney and Brian Griffiths the husband of our President Elect, delighted members and Soroptimists with Welsh readings including excerpts from Dylan Thomas' Under

Milk Wood. Readings were interspersed with music by Tom Jones, Shirley Bassey and the Treorchy Male Voice Choir.

After the entertainment various members of the audience shared anecdotes relating to their personal experiences of visits to Wales.

This was a very enjoyable evening, unique and special for our President and cheering and uplifting for us all.

ROSEMARY STONE, SI EAST GRINSTEAD

Quiz Night raises £1000



SI SEVENOAKS HELD a very successful quiz night on February 18, the first one after a gap due to the pandemic. SI Tunbridge Wells supported us, and an enjoyable time was had by all.

A very successful raffle was run by member Anne Bond and we raised over £1,000 for President Pat Downing's two charities, Hospice in the Weald and CamFed. The winning team, I-Care, take part in all quizzes in the area and any funds or raffle prizes they win go towards providing rehabilitative support to people in the Orpington area who are recovering from a stroke.

I-Care have been supporting our quiz for many years, and they are very hard to beat! They are pictured holding their bottles of fizz, with President Pat, Graham Higgs our excellent quizmaster and Club member Sandie Higgs who organised the quiz.

SANDIE HIGGS, SI SEVENOAKS

REGION WEBINAR ON THE MENOPAUSE

ON SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 2023 at 10:00 we are delighted to welcome Elizabeth Carr-Lewis to give a webinar presentation for Region members on the important subject of the menopause.



Elizabeth is the creator and co-founder of the Pausitivity KnowYourMenopause campaign. As well as creating menopause awareness resources in a variety of languages, including Urdu and a video for people with SEN, she has worked closely with NHS GPs and trusts, trade unions and companies around the UK.

She was a key speaker to MPs and peers at the first APPG Menopause and has been named a Big Issue Changemaker for 2023 for her work taking menopause to vulnerable communities. She is now standing to be a councillor in the local elections to fight for better menopause awareness in our local communities.

I hope you can take part and here's the Zoom invite:

Carol Reed is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: SISEE Region Menopause meeting

Time: Apr 29, 2023 10:00 AM London

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81390903824?pwd=MmpVOTZwOThwNForRUJlcFc3SXZ3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 813 9090 3824

Passcode: 832144

LYNNE CHISWICK, SI SE ENGLAND PRESIDENT

Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists take part in Litter Pick along River Medway



Great British Spring Clean – 25 March 2023

Now INTO ITS eighth year, the Great British Spring Clean is Keep Britain Tidy's annual national clean-up campaign. The Great British Spring Clean is held from March 17 to April 02, 2023.

During the campaign, members of the great British public join forces with a range of partners to get rubbish off the ground, safely collected and recycled. In 2022, people pledged to pick up one bag, or more, because one bag makes a big difference. Last year, nearly half a million bags – 449,406 were pledged.

Two members of SI Medway and Maidstone, Jane and Stella Barnes, joined volunteers taking part in a litter pick along the Rochester Esplanade foreshore of the River Medway. This was organised as part of the Great British Spring Clean by the Friends of Rochester Churchfields Esplanade group on March 25.

We were fortunate that the morning was dry although rather

windy. The 18 volunteers taking part were issued with black sacks and pickers and given guidance to ensure our safety. Along the foreshore we found old shoes, a rucksack, wooden planks, melamine boards, back seat of a car, and pipes, to name a few of the items.

As we progressed further there had been high tides that had left flotsam and jetsam right across the Esplanade walkways (see above). All the plastic debris was collected leaving the remaining debris to be collected by the local council contractors.

It was a successful morning as we filled a total of 30 black sacks. These sacks, together with the larger discarded items found, were left at a collection point on the edge of the Esplanade. This was ready for Medway Council to pick up later.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

A proud mum writes...

MY DAUGHTER, ELLA Dorman-Gajic is a writer and performer of Serbian and Austrian heritage, whose work has been described as "impassioned" by The Guardian. She has been nominated for several awards.

Ella's first full length play, TRADE, opened at the Pleasance Theatre, Islington, London, from March 20-25 and is now on tour and will be staged at Nottingham Nonsuch on April 01, Exeter Pheonix on April 06, Birmingham Old Joint Stock from April 07-09 and Norwich Arts Centre on April 13.

The play is about sex trafficking told from the view point of a Bosnian girl which is, of course, very relevant to all Soroptimists. It is also fully captioned in English and Serbo-Croat for the hard of hearing.

You may remember she did a couple of audio plays during lockdown including one about period poverty which was reviewed by The Guardian and mentioned in SEE News.

As you know the cultural sector was particularly badly hit by Covid and she has been working tirelessly to make her way in this most difficult of industries. When she lived at home she was a member of the Lewes club and performed her poems at some of our meetings.

VERA GAJIC, SI LEWES

