

## President Alison's message

### Inside Out and Outside In



I CAN'T BELIEVE this is my last newsletter message as your Regional President. Tempus fugit and all that! The past 12 months have proved challenging yet fulfilling and I am sure that President Elect Sue Edgar will find an equally inspiring and rewarding year. If indeed SISEE still exists as a region?

As I write, nominations for neither Secretary nor Treasurer have been received and as mentioned on several

previous occasions these two roles are absolutely essential to our operation. We simply cannot function without them. Please discuss this as a matter of urgency at your next club meetings – we will send out a final appeal with the last call for AGM bookings.

On the subject of the September 14 meeting, I am still working on the final details for the agenda. I have changed one or two of my original ideas to accommodate requests from clubs and also the fact that we will be meeting during Fair Trade fortnight. I am planning a sales table of goods from Palestine in aid of ABCD and the regional project – which is not far off the lower target of £4,750 to cover Nour's annual salary (sadly due to the current calls on their grants, no donation has been received from the Trust to which I applied). I am also hoping to have a special raffle prize – all will be revealed on the day.

As you will be aware, Federation President Ruth will be with us for the day and we are asking her to speak in the afternoon just before the membership workshop. However, I am sure she will be willing to answer questions you might have about the modernisation proposals, though I hope you are able to book, via the Hub, a place at one of the three webinars on this subject to be held on September 17/18 at 19:30 and at 13:00 on September 29.

My thanks to all officers on the Executive for their unstinting support during "my year". I am also grateful to every individual member; I have been to each Club at least once, always being met with a warm welcome and great enthusiasm. These visits have been the real highlight for me and the whole experience of being your regional president has been a pleasure and a privilege. I am sorry to end what has been a very happy time on such a sad note but this is the fact of the matter. My fervent wish is that there will be two members who will step up and volunteer as Secretary and Treasurer – pretty please. Only then will PE Sue be able to carry out the exciting plans she has for her year.

YOURS HOPEFULLY AND IN FRIENDSHIP,  
ALISON DRISCOLL

## What's in this month's newsletter?



Friendship Link webinars, page 02.



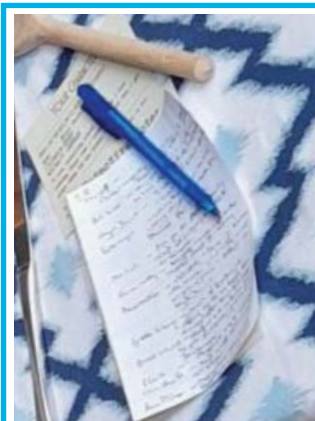
Medway and Maidstone Summer BBQ, page 04.



A special thank you from Hilary, page 03.

## Women in Red project

A talk by Tessa Woodward, page 04.



Are these the clues to the murderer? page 04.



Donation for 50 self-care kits, page 05.

## Tunbridge Wells members link up with their Delhi and Bombay Friendship Links



OVER THE LAST weekend in July, SI Tunbridge Wells participated in two webinars being run by their Friendship Clubs SI Delhi and SI Bombay Chembur.

The one run by SI Delhi was to mark UN Human Trafficking Day, a \$150 billion industry world-wide. We learned from Anuradha Koirala, a former Provincial Governor of Nepal and Founder/Director of Maiti Nepal, a non-profit organisation dedicated to helping survivors of sex trafficking that gender disparity and few job opportunities make women and children in particular vulnerable to being exploited by criminals who promise them riches if they leave their villages and take employment elsewhere.

The problem is further exacerbated by authorities' failure to adequately police borders.

The priority for her organisation is educating and thereby empowering women to resist attempts by criminals to exploit women in this way.

We heard also from Shalini Sharma from the Juvenile Justice Board of Jammu and Kashmir one of India's Union Territories,

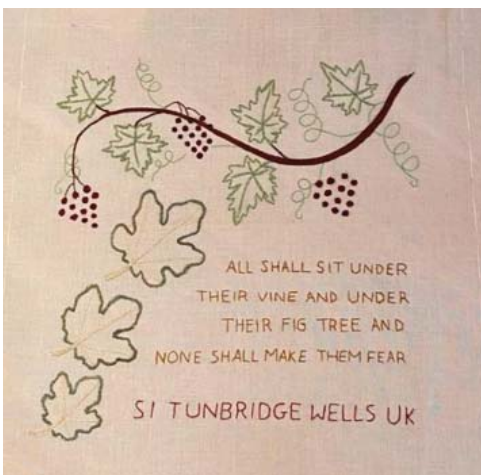
who explained that surrogacy and organ removal as well as sexual exploitation were a major strand of human trafficking activity.

The webinar hosted by SI Bombay Chembur was to celebrate the UN day of Friendship and some clubs with whom they have Friendship Links were invited to show examples of craft work done by their members as a way of providing insights into local culture.

Participants were treated to a demonstration by SI Bangalore of how to decorate saris with tassels and were able to watch a work of Warli art being created by one of a group from Dhavleri. Above is an example of a completed work used to decorate a bride's home on the day of her wedding.

Tunbridge Wells' contribution was to show three examples of their own work (below), a peace patch sewn for SI Fernando in Trinidad and Tobago, a collection of trauma teddies knitted in support of a project by SI Sevenoaks, and a banner marking International Women's Day sewn for HMP Bronzefield.

JILL RUDDOCK, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS



## A special thank you from Hilary Rowberry



Dear South East England Soroptimists,

Thank you so much for all your kind condolences and good wishes after my husband, Dick, passed away earlier this year.

I felt very supported both by my own club members as well as many Regional members too. It is amazing how cards and beautiful flowers can be so meaningful and consoling.

I thought you would all enjoy this sketch of Dick the local school sent me along with messages from the staff and pupils leaving an endearing impression of what we both really loved doing together.

HILARY ROWBERRY

**Soroptimist International**  
Croydon and District

**Programme in Action**

Our monthly visit to volunteer at a local food bank, and wearing Orange for the 25th.

WHEN SI CROYDON PRESIDENTS, Roxanne St Clair and Heather Bailey, shared their vision for their year, they highlighted a desire to support a local food bank.

In June 2024, a visit was made to one run by the town's former Mayor, Councillor Himayun Kabir, to investigate how club members could offer support.

The club now volunteers regularly at the food bank, and on August 25 it was the turn of Pat Dale and Roxanne, who wore orange to mark the campaign day for violence against women.

## Soroptimists enjoy Summer BBQ at Carol's



EVERY SUMMER, MEDWAY and Maidstone member Carol McKeough hosts a BBQ as a fundraiser when she opens up her home and garden on the North Downs inviting club members to attend.

On arrival we were given a warm welcome by our host Carol. She has everything organised, even ensuring the sun is shining and the garden in full bloom.

Soroptimister Chris Garnons-Williams is on duty in his Grill-father apron and already has the BBQ going and there is the aroma of the cooked meat to tempt us.

Janet Garnons-Williams and Liz Duckworth are inside setting out the selection of delicious salads and desserts brought by members for us to choose from.

With drinks in hand and plates full everyone sits outside for the next few hours to relax and chat with Soroptimist friends, enjoying the BBQ food and company.

Angela Howe was able to join us even though she had broken her wrist, but still managed to organise a raffle.

After an enjoyable afternoon, with donations and raffle monies the sum of £235 was raised for domestic abuse charities.

A big thank you to Carol and all those who ensured a good time was had by all.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE

## Closing Date for the next edition of SEE News Tuesday, September 24, 2024

**2024 Closing Dates are:**

October 25;  
November 24; December 27.

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

## Women in Red project

SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS indulged in an inter-Club event for our July meeting. Tessa Woodward from SI Canterbury came to talk to us about the Wikipedia "Women in Red" project that she is involved in.

The project was launched in 2015 and aims to address the gender inequality evident in Wikipedia coverage, with only 15% of biographical entries relating to women at that time. Since then, the percentage has risen to 19%, which may not sound like a big improvement but it represents an additional 72 entries every day since the start of the project.

The title of the project comes from the fact that anyone referenced in a Wikipedia entry who does not have their own entry, can have their name highlighted in red. The majority of the red entries belong to women. However, there may also be women who potentially should have entries but don't even show up as a woman in red and it is possible to create an entry for someone like this as well. This would need to then be linked to other articles, otherwise it runs the risk of being deleted.

Tessa told us that it is relatively easy to become a Wikipedia editor and that, over time, one learns a lot and gathers confidence. Every change you make as an editor is logged and checked, down to the last comma. However it is not a simple task to add a new entry for a notable woman. All information has to be verified through a reputable, independent source.

Tessa's focus has been on women of black and aboriginal heritage, so that verification is even more difficult because of the lack of written records available for people who may be marginalised.



Tessa is hoping to encourage more Soroptimists to become involved in this important project.

Cath Dodds, President of Tunbridge Wells friendship link club, SI Gold Coast Australia, was also at the meeting and was keen to discuss the project with her club members on her return.

CAT MENNELL, SI TUNBRIDGE WELLS

## A body was found on a train, but who committed the murder...?



... that's what guests from Bromley and Croydon Clubs had to find out at the Murder Mystery lunch held at the home of a member to raise funds for the Regional Project ABCD. Alison Driscoll provided an excellent meal (including the delicious fruit



meringue seen in the photo on the right) and it was a fun afternoon, despite the solemn looking faces puzzling over the clues. The lunch raised a total of £275.

CHRISTINE THOMAS, SI BROMLEY

## 50 Self-care kits from Fashion Show proceeds

IN MAY, MEDWAY and Maidstone Soroptimists held a Charity Fashion show that raised £410 with the proceeds going to the local Hygiene Banks.

As Soroptimists we are aware that in 2024, Hygiene poverty affects 4.2 million adults in the UK. In the past 12 months, 68% of those affected by hygiene poverty say it has affected their mental health, with 60% feeling depressed and embarrassed because they are being pulled into hygiene poverty.

We had planned to donate the proceeds equally between the Maidstone and Medway Hygiene Banks. Unfortunately, the Maidstone Hygiene Bank is no longer operational and so the full £410 has been donated to Hygiene Bank Medway.

Emma Thomas at the Hygiene Bank Medway is extremely grateful for the donation. They plan to spend it on ladies' self-care kits. These contain 11 or 12 items to equip women and girls to keep themselves clean. They cost around £12 each but the Hygiene Bank is able to subsidise the cost so, along with our donation, they will be able to put together around 50 kits to support woman and girls in the area.

The partners of the Hygiene Bank (schools, day centres, etc.) like the kits because they are easy to hand out discreetly thus minimising any unnecessary embarrassment.

JANE BARNES, SI MEDWAY AND MAIDSTONE



## Have you booked your place for SISEE Region's 65th Annual General Meeting?

THERE IS AN interesting agenda, but, importantly, we will have the opportunity to thank President Alison Driscoll for her work during the past year, and to welcome Sue Edgar as our Region President for 2024-2025, together with the new and current officers who ensure the smooth running of the Region.

In addition we are delighted that SIGBI President Ruth Healey will be joining us for the day. She will be speaking after lunch, before the Membership Workshop, and is willing to answer any question you may have regarding the modernisation proposals.

There will be two long-service award presentations to members from SI Bromley and SI Medway and Maidstone.

This will be followed by the Grace Onions Award.

Over the year we have been fundraising for the President's charity, ABCD, and this will be our final chance to give our support to the sales table and the raffle. Currently, £4,750 has been raised. Can we top £5,000?

Finally, please do give thought to taking on the vital role of Secretary or Treasurer to ensure the smooth running of the Region. The current post holders would be happy to guide you through your first few weeks.



### Dates of the 2024 Saturday Region Meetings

September 14 (AGM note change of date)  
to be held at the Holiday Inn, Rochester  
Maidstone Road, Rochester ME5 9SF

December 07 via ZOOM (to be confirmed)

### Proposed dates for 2025 Region Meetings

March 15; June 21; September 20

### International Day of Peace September 21

The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Peace is celebrated on September 21 each year to recognize the efforts of those who have worked hard to end conflict and promote peace. The International Day of Peace is also a day of ceasefire – personal or political. The theme for 2024 is:

CULTIVATING  
A CULTURE  
OF PEACE

