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EDITOR

Sherry Eskander

Deadline for articles for July Newsletter is Friday 25 July

President Sue's Message

It is Never Too Late or Too Early



It is amazing what good light and make up can do to mask what 'lies beneath'!

My theme has been 'it's never too late or too early', - however in hindsight putting off some surgery was left a little too late. What a difference a few weeks can make with recharged batteries and a new hip... onwards and upwards.

I have to apologise for not being able to attend the Regional Meeting on 21st June. Working together Roxanne, Keji and Yvonne delivered a great mix of content for this meeting. A big thanks to Mary Dalman for her contribution and to all of you who attended the day and contributed to the enjoyment of the proceedings. There is a 'team' who ensure these meetings go ahead without hitches and a big thanks to them. Jane for the membership video section and Hub news and Ann Reeves for the technical support and news of Refuge in Literacy UK, to Sharon our Regional Secretary and to Susie Forbes who works to ensure the refreshments and lunches are ready to go and who has scoured parts of Kent seeking out venues that can deliver value for money.

It was disappointing that with forty eight hours to go our speaker from Women in Prisons sent her apologies due to unforeseen circumstances and I do hope to welcome the organisation to our September meeting.

I was delighted to be asked to judge the nominees for Inspirational Woman 2025- Canterbury. A Zoom meeting was organised to discuss the candidates. The field was extremely strong and difficult to judge, however, we were able to come to a unanimous decision. The presentation event looked fantastic. Photographs were posted on Facebook. There is an article in this newsletter on Page 5 giving you more detail.

It is that time of year for Garden Parties and outside events and I know that Soroptimist International East Grinstead enjoyed an event on June 8th when a very large number of people attended.(Page 4) These events take time to plan and deliver and it is thanks to all our members who organise, bake, decorate, create and host fellow Soroptimists, family and friends to enjoy a meal together in friendship.

I hope to see many of you at the Region's Charity Lunch on Sunday 20th July, 2025 at the London Beach Hotel, Spa and Country Club. Your Club secretaries should have circulated information and I know details are in this Newsletter too. President Ruth Healey has accepted our invitation to join us for this event.

See you on the 20th July for Lunch!!

President Sue

SI Eastbourne members do Beach Clean

Eastbourne members do Beach Clean on Beach No: 68



Like other clubs in the Region, SI Eastbourne undertakes beach cleans during the year on their adopted beach (Beach No.68) as part of the Plastic Free Eastbourne initiative (to try to alleviate the use of plastics (especially single use) and their pollution, together with other items of detritus that people leave on the beach).

Their latest beach clean was on 11th May during Eastbourne's Spring Water Festival's Million Mile Clean.

Members collected a variety of plastic items and other rubbish (including a vaping container, broken glass, wooden picnic cutlery, a pair of socks and a rather splendid dog lead). On this occasion the beach was considerably rubbish free, so perhaps people are beginning to learn! The Club records its findings on the Marine Conservation Society's Beachwatch app, which ensures that we are contributing to international data used to inform legislation around the world.

The weather was kind to us and we all had an enjoyable time together.

Joyce Boorman SI Eastbourne & District

Medway Memory Walk raises £315



A second Memory Walk was held on 31 May around St Mary's Island led by Jenny Jones for Jane and Stella Barnes plus their dog Kayde who could not attend the previous walk earlier in the month. Between the two walks, the 9 members received donations of £315. This has been donated to the Forget Me Not Appeal

Thank you for your donation!

Nobody should face the devastation of dementia alone. Your generous donation will make sure a family living with dementia get the life-changing support they need - so a big thank you for giving your support to people living with dementia when they need it most.

Fun, Fellowship and FOOD for East Grinstead



On Sunday 8 June sixty members and guests gathered in Lingfield for East Grinstead Club's annual garden party. The weather was warm and bright and despite a cool breeze we were able to remain outside and enjoy Jane and Brian Griffiths' beautiful garden. Although a few weeks late, the theme of the afternoon was VE day with a display of wartime memorabilia and an abundance of red, white and blue, both in table decorations and guests' clothing.

We were delighted to welcome visitors from other clubs within the Region including Cathy Cottridge, SIGBI's Immediate Past President. Cathy drew the winning raffle tickets, the prizes being three Union Jack bags full of Fortnum and Mason type goodies.

In addition, there were stalls selling Helen Pond's beautiful craft items and delicious fudge as well as pre-loved books. A wine tombola where your wrapped bottle could reveal a tasty wine or plain tap water proved an attraction but sadly a disappointment for some! A competition to make a Bomber

Command paper aeroplane and see whose could fly the furthest proved both popular and a source of fun.

A delicious meal of cold meats, prawns, coronation chicken and a wonderful variety of salads was provided which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Before a wonderful and highly calorific array of desserts appeared, we were treated to a programme of songs, including a World War II Medley, by Song Sisters, a local group of singers that includes two East Grinstead Club members. The musical interlude ended with everyone joining in wartime songs such as It's a Long Way to Tipperary and We'll Meet Again.

All in all, we enjoyed a very happy afternoon of fun and fellowship and, of course, plenty of excellent food.

Money raised will be donated to Club charities.

Rosemary Stone

Inspirational Woman of 2025 in Canterbury

At the International Women's Day Breakfast at the Westgate Hall in March, we launched Inspirational Woman of 2025 in Canterbury. The criteria for the award were:

- A nominated woman should live, work or have been born in the Canterbury area and
- be selected for her contribution to the community, to improving the role of women, showing personal courage or outstanding professional achievement.

By the end of May we had several nominations. Our judges were SISEE President, Sue, the Immediate Past Lord Mayor of Canterbury, Pat Butcher and Dawn Ryder, Canterbury Club member. They met on ZOOM to discuss the entries and choose the winner. The standard was so high that eventually it was decided on two winners each receiving £75 for their chosen charity. We are very grateful to all our judges.

The winners were:

Julie Board—Julie's dedication to the Canterbury Community Hub where poorer families are supported and individuals are always offered another chance, as well as her commitment to the reduction of waste and the reuse of resources, is an inspiration to the 25 volunteers who she leads each week.

And **Janet Henley**— Janet has given so much of her time and energy over decades to support those in need, including survivors of domestic abuse, and to rebuild shattered lives.

We invited the winners, runners up and judges to the presentation evening on 19 June.

Janet said "*The breadth, scope and enthusiasm of the others to make a better world for others is - using your word "inspirational".*"

Carol Reed



Congratulations

SI Canterbury were pleasantly surprised to receive an email from Soroptimist International informing them that their club's outstanding project, "Pizza Making at RISING SUN Refuge", had been recognised as an exemplary initiative and included in SI's work for the International Day of Education!

The club was awarded their certificate at the June Region meeting by President Elect Roxanne St Claire and Pat Dale.

Clubs Highly Commended for Grace Onions Award 2024



L to R Angela Howe, Claire Bell, Yvonne Freeman and Hilary Rowberry

Yvonne Freeman, Regional Programme Action Officer presented 'Highly Commended' certificates at June Regional meeting to SI East Grinstead, SI Eastbourne and District and SI Medway and Maidstone for competition entries submitted for the Grace Onions 2024 Award – 'Our Planet, Our Future'

Margaret—Community Superhero Award

SI Sevenoaks are very proud of member Margaret Nicholson, who has been presented with the Superstar 2025 Award by The Otford Society. This is in recognition of the fantastic work she has done over many years supporting the elderly members of the community through the Otford Lunch Club. The Otford Society state in their newsletter "Many congratulations Margaret and thank you for your outstanding support and kindness!

Sandie Higgs



Trekking Sri Lanka: A Journey of Purpose

SI Croydon, joined by members from SI Bromley and guests, embarked on a virtual trek through Sri Lanka thanks to an inspiring talk by travel writer and volunteer, Marcia Summers.

Marcia shared how her work with two charities, the Women's Development Centre in Sri Lanka and UK-based Their Future Today, inspired her to walk the entire length of Sri Lanka. Her ambitious 1,000km journey, from Galle in the south to Point Pedro in the north, was completed in three stages over two plus years.

Facing leeches, dense jungles, and unpredictable terrain, Marcia relied on the kindness and knowledge of local people. Along the way, she even met the leader of the legendary indigenous Vedda tribe. Her aim was to raise £10,000. But by the end of her trek, she had raised an incredible £30,000, enough to sustain the Women's Development Centre's vital work for some time to come.

The adventure didn't end there. A visit to a tea farm revealed another issue: many tea pluckers suffer sight loss due to prolonged sun exposure. This eye-opening discovery sparked a new campaign focused on protecting the eyesight of tea workers.

Attendees left inspired, eager to explore ways to connect Marcia with organisations that provide sight-saving support.

Roxanne St Clair



What connects East Grinstead with Good King Wenceslas ?

At their June speaker meeting, East Grinstead Club were delighted to welcome Caroline Metcalfe whose talk was entitled 'Sackville College, Then and Now'. Caroline is a visitor guide at Sackville College as well as St Swithin's Parish Church, both located in East Grinstead. Having a great love of history, she has spent her adult life studying and teaching the subject. Caroline has an MA in Medieval Studies and is currently working on a fifteenth-century manuscript.



Sackville College was founded in 1609 by the Will of Robert Sackville, Second Earl of Dorset. The terms of the will provided money with which to buy land and 'build a convenient house of brick and stone to be an almshouse'. For many years part of the College was used as overnight accommodation for the Sackville family as they journeyed to and from their estates in Sussex.

The College is a charitable foundation operating in accordance with an Act of Parliament of 1624 and a Royal Charter of 1631. Its primary purpose has never changed. It still provides accommodation for local elderly people. The building, now modernized and comfortable, offers the seclusion of residents' own flats as well as communal rooms, all behind the walls of a perfectly preserved, peaceful quadrangle. The College Warden lives in part of the wing once used by the Sackville family and has a study next to the Chapel. In that study visitors can see where the Revd Dr John Mason Neale, Victorian hymnologist and Warden from 1846 to 1866, wrote many well-known hymns and carols including 'Good King Wenceslas' and 'Jerusalem the Golden'. Dr Neale died in East Grinstead in 1866 and is buried in St Swithin's Churchyard.

The Club has raised money for Sackville College over the years through its Art Group and annual Mince Pie event so it was fascinating to delve more deeply into the history and ethos of the foundation.

Gill Beeney/Rosemary Stone

SI Sevenoaks welcome their newest member Eleanor



SI Sevenoaks were delighted to welcome their newest member, Eleanor Burns, to the club at our May meeting. Pictured are Club President Margaret Crabtree, Eleanor Burns and mentor Tracey Kemp. We are now up to 25 members, which is great!

*Sandie Higgs
Membership Officer*

Bags for Bromley FoodBank

At the last meeting of the coordinating group we looked at a request from Bromley FoodBank for plastic bags; they suggested we go into charity shops and ask for any spare.

We decided that it would be easier and more effective to buy some for them. Mary C and I went into Tescos and Waitrose and spent £20 of the club's money - and the result is in the trolley with a delighted FoodBank warehouse manager. Four of them went out on the same day for an emergency delivery.

Jenni Mogridge



Soroptimists Sign Trussell's Open Letter to 'Guarantee Our Essentials'

Trussell's "Guarantee Our Essentials" campaign was launched in Autumn 2024 which seeks to ensure that everybody has sufficient income to afford the essentials of life.

The next stage of this project took place on 18th June at Westminster, when there was a mass lobby of MPs by Trussell which Medway Foodbank attended.

Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists had been asked if we wanted to sign the Open Letter in support and 3 members agreed.

The Open Letter signed by staff and volunteers from various community organisations, including Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists demonstrated the depth of feeling on this issue. .

How does Guarantee Our Essentials work?

- An independent process would at least annually determine the level of the Essentials Guarantee
- Our research indicates this should be at least **£120 a week**
- Deductions would not be allowed to reduce support below that level.

What impact would it have?

- Essentials Guarantee would lift **1.9 million people out of being at risk of hunger and hardship**
- Without change, a further **425,000 people are expected to face this situation by 2026/27.**

Jane Barnes

Open Letter to Medway MPs

We are deeply concerned about the number of people in our community experiencing hunger and hardship because they cannot afford the essentials. Many of our organisations help people by creating warm and welcoming spaces, providing advice and essential items and working together to foster a strong, supportive network for local people.

Our social security system should be there for us all when we need it most, but right now it's not even providing enough to cover the cost of life's essentials - driving hardship and hunger in our community.

Anti-poverty charity Trussell's data shows that across the UK 70% of people needing to turn to a food bank in their community are receiving Universal Credit. This includes many of the people we support in your constituency - because Universal Credit doesn't cover the cost of essentials and is pushing people to need our support.

Research shows around a quarter of the cost of essentials aren't covered by the basic payment. We won't stand by and let this continue. We know what will make the biggest difference - updating our social security system. We are calling on you, as our MP, to work with us to help secure the changes that would help ensure our social security system protects our community from going without the essentials. We look forward to hearing back from you about this.

Yours sincerely

News Update from Pat Dale SI Representative to Commonwealth

Commonwealth consists of 56 countries and the Head is King Charles III. It has 96 accredited organisations who come together to work in partnership or support each other with their expertise and knowledge. Every organisation has one representative. Independent forum Commonwealth organisation which is not accredited brings us together and gives a platform to network.

Pat attended the last event for Accredited organisation with outgoing Secretary General Baroness Patricia of Scotland KC.



In her opening remarks, the Secretary-General acknowledged that all [accredited organisations](#) have played a significant role in helping the Commonwealth Secretariat deliver on mandates, reflecting on how they stepped up in a remarkable way during the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted:

“You have dedicated your time, energy, and expertise to advancing democracy, governance, and the rule of law. Your work has helped foster a society where the youth are empowered; gender equality is championed; and education, health, and sports are developed. Additionally, you have supported our small and other vulnerable states by helping them address their unique challenges. For all of this, I extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation. Your hard work and commitment have made a profound impact in striving towards a world where prosperity, democracy, and peace are not rare, but a common reality for all citizens of the Commonwealth.”

The Commonwealth has 92 official organisations of which some were not accredited but had the word Commonwealth in the name. An accreditation badge is not just any badge but appreciates organisations. It is considered and addresses main areas of

credibility and trust verification. It is a visible sign used to confirm organisations accreditation. Each badge is unique and unique number with the name of the organisation.

Commonwealth Secretary-General, the Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC recognised the work of Soroptimist International and presented a Certificate of Appreciation.



A family photograph of Accredited organisations was taken and an opportunity to connect with others was welcomed by everyone.



Commonwealth has a new secretary general. Former Minister of foreign affairs of Ghana her Excellent Shirley Botchwey who started her new role on 1st of April 2025.

Pat attended Keynote speech by the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Hon Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, at her Welcome Reception on Thursday, 5 June 2025 held at Lancaster House, London.

Commonwealth News Update continued....

,Her Keynote speech is here

<https://thecommonwealth.org/speech/keynote-address-commonwealth-secretary-general-hon-shirley-ayorkor-botchwey-her-welcome>.

Her vision and mandate is to make the Commonwealth work together.

I encourage other accredited organisations to look at our position papers and circulate webinar details encouraging them to attend Soroptimist International events.

Pat Dale MBE

Soroptimist International Representative to Commonwealth

SI Sevenoaks are Winners at Specsavers Quiz

SI Sevenoaks put in a team to support Specsavers in Sevenoaks who held a quiz in aid of Guide Dogs UK. This is the same charity that SI Sevenoaks' President Margaret Crabtree has chosen for the year, so we were keen to support them, particularly as Specsavers had sent a team to our quiz earlier in the year.

We had a very enjoyable time, and successful too, as our team came out on top! The prize money of £80 has gone straight into our collection for Guide Dogs UK, so all good! Quizmaster Ellie Bigwood is pictured with us on the stage for the presentation.



Quizmaster Ellie Bigwood is pictured with Winning team for the presentation.



Leoni, Susan and Graham, guests, SI members Sandie Higgs, President Margaret Crabtree and Tina Fenner

Using the Regional Calendar

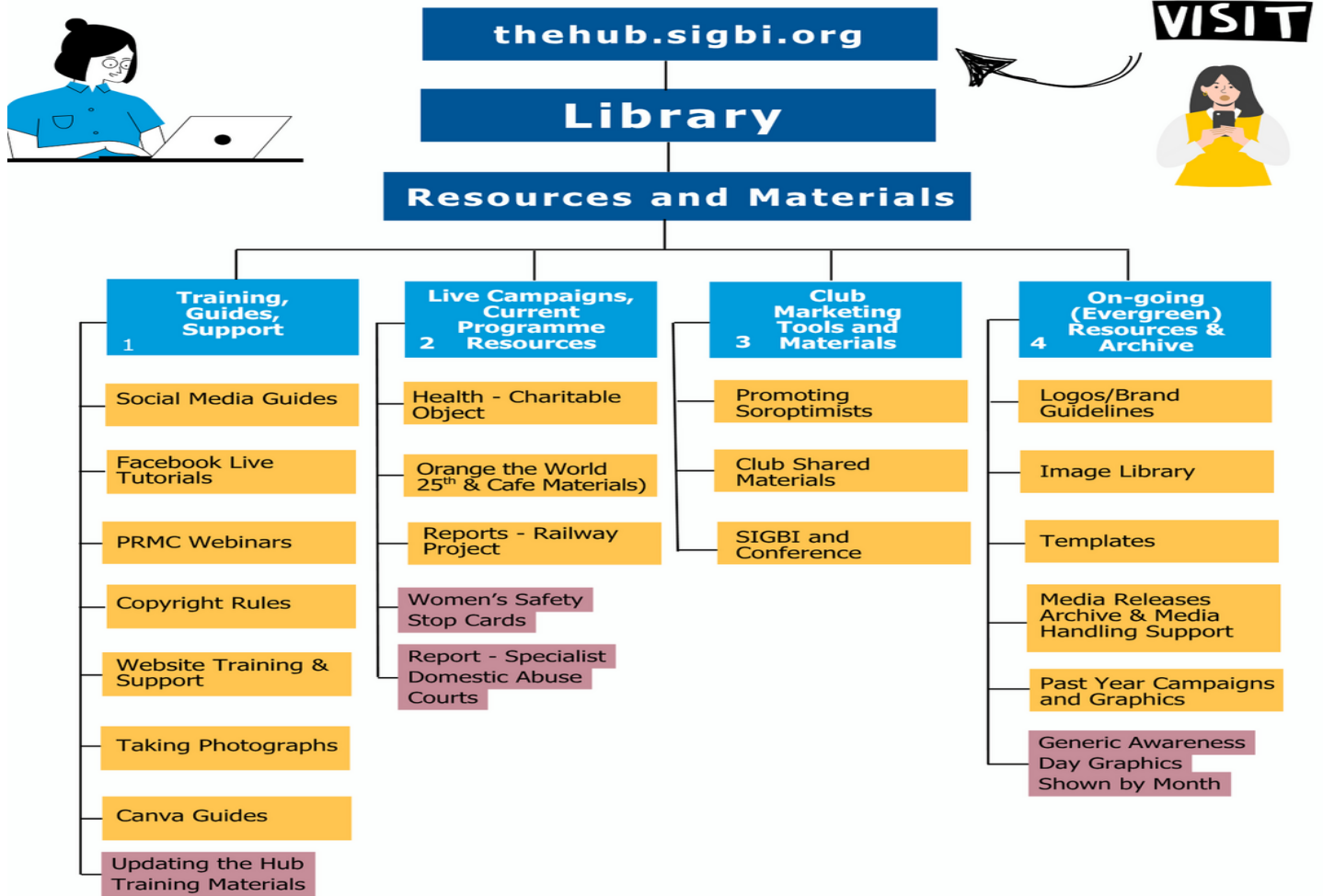
Hello from Angela Hulm

You can post your clubs events directly onto the regional calendar by making a Google calendar event and inviting siseecomunications@gmail.com as a guest. Alternatively email me on this address and I can post your event and set you to manage it so you can alter details as needed.



It's on the HUB.....

A GUIDE TO FINDING COMMS & MARKETING RESOURCES



The Hub is SIGBI's internal information repository, for members only.

Key

Links

Folders

Last updated 06/06/2025



At the June Regional meeting there was much discussion and a common response to queries raised was **'It is on the HUB....'**

Mary Dalman mentioned a useful graphic /guide to finding Comms and Marketing Resources on the HUB which is shown above.

As clubs are being proactive to recruit new members, a video has been developed and was shown at the meeting. See next page for link. It is also available as a PowerPoint.

Every month on the last Friday from midday there is a Communication Café drop-in to raise any issues.

Zoom link for Communication café is:-

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81188654442?pwd=mkuqojVi7duO12RFugSx71Zk5I44HW.1>

COMMUNICATION CAFÉ DROP-IN



**LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH,
DROP-IN SURGERY FOR AN HOUR FROM MIDDAY.**

**BRING YOUR QUESTIONS, IDEAS, CHALLENGES.
WE LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.**

Useful links on the HUB

Cervical cancer resources

[Home](#) / [Resources and Materials](#) / [2. Live Campaigns, Current Programme Resources](#) / [Health - Charitable Object](#) / [Cervical Cancer Awareness Materials](#)

New Member Video and PowerPoint

[Home](#) / [Resources and Materials](#) / [3. Club Marketing Tools and Materials](#) / [3.1 Promoting Soroptimists](#) / [Resources for new Members](#)

<https://thehub.sigbi.org/filerepository?parent=684174b531bac40008f39270>.

Finding your way around the HUB

The Hub – FAQ – Programme Reports – February 2022

The Hub – Frequently Asked Questions for Managers

The Hub – Frequently Asked Questions for Members

[Home](#) / [Finding your way around the HUB/ Using the Hub - FAQs for Members, Managers and Programme Reports](#)

SIGBI Safeguarding Risk Assessment Template and Guidance

<https://thehub.sigbi.org/file/685a7f0270a586000817c901>

Lending a hand, another connection to support Women's Aid

Bromley and Croydon Women's Aid (BCWA) celebrated its 50th anniversary at an event on 9th June. SI Bromley have been deepening their relationship with this wonderful organization, which acts as an umbrella for many of the support services needed by those experiencing or surviving domestic abuse. We asked if they would welcome some extra hands at their conference and were immediately taken up on the offer! We were able to keep the refreshments flowing smoothly all day, which allowed the BCWA team and volunteers to focus on the conference arrangements, undisturbed by the trivialities of tea and coffee as important as they were!



It does look organised... !!!

In addition to their own CEO we also heard from Farah Nazeer CEO of Women's Aid overall, Nicole Jacobs the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales and Juliet Mountford, Director at Crisis, all gave us inspiring presentations and



MP Liam Conlon and 4 courageous survivors

celebrated the advances that have been made over the last 50 years.

However, we were left in no doubt about the sheer scale of the issue and the significant underinvestment in resources at all levels. None of us will forget the emotional, hard-hitting and powerful testimonies from 4 very courageous survivors during the day. The conference was opened by local MP Liam Conlon who has really taken on championing the prevention of violence against women and supporting survivors to reestablish their lives. Domestic Abuse is one of the issues that has made the most impression on him since becoming an MP last July. The sheer extent and intensity of abuse across all areas of the Borough and different socio-economic groupings has truly shocked him.

Mary Dalman

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sunday 6 July at 11am at Moat Park Maidstone



<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/team/medway-and-maidstone-soroptimist-team>

Membership Meeting Thursday 24 July at 7pm

 **Soroptimist
International**
Great Britain & Ireland

**REGISTER
NOW**

**Membership Meeting with
Director of Membership**



**THURSDAY
24 JULY 2025
19.00-20.00 GMT**

**Open to anyone with an
interest in membership**

Please register for the event in the Events section of the Hub, The link will be sent out to those registered.

IMPORTANT DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Book your place by 14
July contacting

Susie Forbes at

susieforbessorops@gmail.com

 **Soroptimist
International**
South East England


Fundraising Regional Lunch

Sunday 20 July 2025

£38.50

12.30 for 1.00pm

Carvery and Dessert


**THE LONDON BEACH HOTEL
SPA & COUNTRY CLUB**

All proceeds to following Cancer charities



 **The ROYAL
MARSDEN
Cancer Charity**