

## What is in this Edition?

## Page

◆ President's Message	2
◆ Statement from SIGBI re. humanitarian crisis in Gaza	3
◆ Eastbourne club supporting refuge	3
◆ Women's Grassroots Activism Podcast Series (SI Tunbridge Wells)	4
◆ Fun time on Quiz trail to Bluetown and Sheerness (SI Medway and Maidstone)	5
◆ After the Swap for Spring..... (SI Sevenoaks)	5
◆ Re-organisation of local government in Kent (SI Sevenoaks)	5
◆ Positive Use of AI Simulations in Medicine (SI Medway and Maidstone)	6
◆ Support for East Kent Mind (Keji Moses)	6
◆ Rucksacks Donated for Rucksack Roundup (SI Medway and Maidstone)	7
◆ Orange Knitted Flowers on sale at Region AGM (SI Medway and Maidstone)	7
◆ Summer Cocktails in East Grinstead	8
◆ Can you help us.....?	
Do you have any unwanted books? (SI Medway and Maidstone)	
Do you have any unwanted foreign currency? (SI Medway and Maidstone)	8
◆ It Is On The Hub, Check It Out	
SIGBI Federation Conference 2025	9
◆ Dates For Your Calendar	10
<b>6 September</b> -SI Croydon Quiz Night	
<b>20 September</b> - SISEE Regional AGM meeting	
<b>13 November</b> -SI Medway & Maidstone Speaker meeting on Women and Safety on trains/stations	
<b>29 November</b> -SI Canterbury Silent March	
<b>3 December</b> - Charity Night at Medway Little Theatre -A Sherlock Carol	11

EDITOR

Sherry Eskander

Deadline for articles for September Newsletter is Tuesday 25 September

# President Message

It has been a hot and busy time this month as many Clubs hosted Summer Events raising money for their locally supported Charities.

I joined members of Soroptimist International Eastbourne on Monday 4th August for their monthly coffee meeting. It was good to meet more of the Club members over coffee and the conversation highlighted forthcoming Programme Action activities being arranged. From an event in a local shopping centre to a 'Silent Walk' during the 16 Days of Activism. A copy of the Regional Poster will be made available for promotional purposes.

On 9th August we had a productive Executive Meeting in preparation for our AGM Meeting on 20th September. You should have received minutes and reports of the Executive and I urge you to review them before the AGM.

On the hottest day of the summer, I turned east to have lunch with Soroptimist International Canterbury. Carol Reed kindly hosted and she kept us all hydrated. Mary Adams talked of their Programme Action activities in the pipeline. We discussed reaching out to other Clubs regarding a Breast Cancer Screening campaign for women over 70. SI Swallows in the North West, had posted information about what they were up to and along with Eastbourne, Canterbury were interested in how to progress a campaign by understanding what SI Swallows had in progress.

At the end of July, Nadia Poscotis and the members of Soroptimist International Whitstable & District penned a compelling and measured 'letter' to President Ruth regarding the escalation of the Humanitarian Catastrophe in Gaza, urging SIGBI to put out a statement. With the agreement of the Club, Jane Webb, as their secretary, sent the letter to President Ruth.

*'In this desperate situation in which women, children and babies are deprived of food and water and dying in huge numbers, we consider that an international organisation such as ours, representing and supporting women and children, should have a voice.'*

I also sent a message to Ruth supporting the Club's letter. Several days later a statement was released and shared.

On Wednesday 20th August, my garden was filled with Soroptimists, Soroptimisters and Friends as they enjoyed Summer Garden Cocktails raising funds for Soroptimist International East Grinstead's local charities.

It was great that President Elect Roxanne was able to join us that evening .....  
'The Party's Over' !! and Time to Clean Up



I look forward to seeing you at our Regional AGM on Saturday 20th September.

In Friendship

President Sue

## **Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI)**

We are sharing this post from UN Women in recognition of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and in support of their position.

Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) rejects all forms of violence and we believe in a world of peace and equality especially for all women and girls across the world.

[#standingupforwomenandgirls](#) [#soroptimists](#)  
<https://lnkd.in/drt3aRTE>

## Eastbourne club supporting refuge with dressing gowns and outside play equipment

The Eastbourne club have been supporting the women's refuge for many years and we are always looking for new ways to support the ladies. The refuge asked for dressing gowns we were a little surprised in the summer but we were told after the ladies have put the children to bed they like to have a shower and curl up in a warm fluffy dressing gown to read a book or watch TV.



This sounded like a really nice idea and the task of finding 9 dressing gowns begun. After visiting several shops we discovered it is the wrong time of year to buy cosy dressing gowns. It is all summer stock and toweling bath and beach robes not what we wanted. One of the members donated a dressing gown with stars on and I found one in a high class charity shop while on holiday with suns and moons on and bought a cord belt in Dunelm to go with it. One of the members looked on the internet and found some lovely dressing gowns in the Asda George sale so we ended up with a collection of different sizes and colours for the ladies to choose.

The dressing gowns were delivered to the refuge and greatly appreciated with a cost of just over £100 for all 9! . The money was taken from President Lotte past president's fund having raised the money at several fund raising events.

When we delivered the dressing gowns we asked if there was anything else they would like. At present they have 12 children at the refuge, aged 5 to 12. This is quite unusual and it seems they all get on very well and the summer holidays are coming up so they asked for some outdoor play equipment. We were shown the garden there were a selection of bikes and a seesaw but not much to actually play games with so another challenge faced us!



Two members of the club visited the Range and came back with a huge selection of bats, balls, skipping ropes, hoops, play tunnels and outside games. There is a picture of Pat with the equipment they bought. So another £150 was spent and the children of the refuge will enjoy their summer holidays playing together.

At Christmas time we will provide a bag of toiletries for the ladies as many organisations give gifts for the children and we will keep in contact to see if there is anything else they need. We really feel helping the refuge is improving the lives of these women and their children.

Denise Staplehurst – Eastbourne and District club



# Women's Grassroots Activism Podcast Series

Soroptimist Tunbridge Wells are delighted and honoured to receive this certificate from Soroptimist International with the following message 'Your Club's outstanding project, "Grassroots Activism Podcast Series" has been selected as an exemplary initiative and included in SI's our HLPF 2025 Report.'



Grassroots activism is rooted in the belief that lasting change comes from the ground up. By organising at a local level, women can create networks of solidarity, built coalitions and work toward long-term solutions that align with the real needs of their communities. Sharing stories is an important element of this work.

SITWD has continued its collaboration on the important academic research project into Women's Grassroots Activism. The podcast series is funded by the United Kingdom Research Innovation (UKRI) Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) as part of the grant awarded for Agency and Advocacy: Locating Women's Grassroots Activism in England and Ireland, 1918 to the present (Project Reference: AH/X008606/1, August 2023 -January 2025). The research team is made up of Principal Investigator Professor Cairtriona Beaumont (London South Bank University and Visiting Full Professor at University College Dublin), Co-Investigator is Dr Anne Logan (University of Kent), Dr Ruth Davidson (Institute of Historical Research, University of London), Dr Anna Muggeridge (University of Worcester) and Rachel Collett (University of Liverpool).

This podcast series tells stories of women's grassroots activism across the island of Ireland and in England from 1918 to the present. This stage saw a production of a podcast series which highlight the diverse ways that various women's organisations, including Soroptimist Tunbridge Wells & District, and SIGBI contribute to enhancing the lives of women and girls locally, nationally and globally.

## Episode 3

Women's Grassroots Activism: SIGBI campaigns and educational work against gender-based violence

In this episode, Dr Ruth Davidson, Caroline Auckland, former President of the Tunbridge Wells and District Soroptimists Club, Kent, and Eadaoin Lawlor, national past President of Soroptimists Republic of Ireland discuss how Soroptimists have campaigned to end Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). We consider the ways this work is achieved through advocacy and campaigns around policy and education at local, national and global levels. We also discuss campaigns including the 'Safe Home Safe Community Project' and how

SIGBI supports the United Nations 'Orange the World' campaign, launched in 2008 to end violence against women and girls.

[Episode 3 Women's Grassroots Activism: SIGBI campaigns and educational work against gender-based violence](#)

Episode 4 -Women's Grassroots Activism: stories of environmental activism

In this episode, Dr Anne Logan, Chrissie Booth, Vice-Chair of the National Federation of Women's Institutes (NFWI), and Lorna Blackmore, past regional President of the Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Southeast Region, discuss the myriad ways in which women's organisations have campaigned, and continue to campaign, to protect and improve the natural environment. Topics we discuss include the formation of the iconic 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign by the NFWI in 1954 and the current NFWI campaign for 'clean rivers for people and wildlife'. We also discuss SIGBI support for 'toilet twinning' and for solar-powered cooking devices to reduce deforestation and hopes for a future less dependent upon single-use plastic items.

[Episode 4 Women's Grassroots Activism: stories of environmental activism](#)

Understanding and acknowledging women's contributions can help shift cultural norms that have historically sidelined or undervalued women's roles. It helps promote gender equality and ensures that everyone, regardless of gender, is treated fairly and with respect. By acknowledging the impact women have, we move closer to eliminating systemic discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for all.

All links to the podcasts can be accessed here: <https://historyhub.ie/womens-grassroots-activism-podcast>

Episodes 3 & 4 relate to Soroptimist Tunbridge Wells & District and also Soroptimist South East Region.

This collaborative project would not have been possible without the rich legacy of current and past Tunbridge Wells Soroptimists who have informed these podcasts and also our sisters in Ireland and other areas of the country who contributed so much in our quest to NOT be the best kept secret. We enjoyed working with other women's organisations by using the podcast as a method of demonstrating

advocacy for change, bringing influence on decision making and making positive contributions to our communities. The podcast is an exciting format to use, once published details of our soroptimist work can be accessed at the listeners leisure. The conversational format makes for a more in-depth informative listen and has more permanence in a social media bite-size driven world of communication.

Caroline Auckland SI Tunbridge Wells & District







## Fun time on Quiz trail to Bluetown and Sheerness

A group of SI Medway and Maidstone members gathered at the Criterion Heritage Centre in Bluetown for the start of our latest Quiz trail on 6 August. It is a history-based fun activity that highlights some of the wonderful history that sits around us. It had been organised by Wanda Wright and Liz Owsley who lives nearby, agreed to take the lead on the day for the trail. We set off on a circular route making our way towards Sheerness High Street looking for the answers to the clues over the next hour or two. It was then time to stop for a light lunch at the Islandworks Café at the renovated Dockyard Church before completing the rest of the Quiz trail at the Museum in the Bluetown Heritage Centre.

Jane Barnes—SI Medway and Maidstone

## After the Swap for Spring.....

Following the successful sale of clothes at their Swap for Spring in April, SI Sevenoaks have been distributing the items which remained. Our picture shows member Sandie Higgs delivering 2 large bags of items to the Manager of the Hospice in the Weald shop in Sevenoaks High Street. The items were very gratefully received!

Sandie Higgs SI Sevenoaks



## Re-organisation of local government in Kent

SI Sevenoaks President Margaret Crabtree attended a meeting hosted by Sevenoaks Town Council's Town Clerk Linda Larter, who is a member of SI Sevenoaks. Linda was welcoming members of SI Tunbridge Wells together with their President Jill Ruddock, and a presentation was made about the impending re-organisation of local government in Kent and the workings of a Town Council. We are privileged to be kept up to date with these changes!

Sandie Higgs SI Sevenoaks





## Positive Use of AI Simulations in Medicine

A group of 15 members and friends of SI Medway and Maidstone visited the Medway SIM Suite at Canterbury Christ Church University on 13 August for a talk and tour. Our mission was to find out how AI is being used in the health field.

'Medbury' hospital is fully kitted out and open all year round to be used for training and development of healthcare and associated professionals. A one-day simulation exercise for Junior doctors using mannequins and actors was held, to experience a wide range of real-life scenarios resulted in high levels of sickness being reduced to zero and increased confidence with improved patient experience. The opportunity to use and practice using highly sophisticated equipment on realistic simulators with portfolio of improvement reports available on-line for individuals Also working with 200 schools to attract 100,000 young adults into working in the healthcare field.

A brilliant visit, and we were impressed and proud of having such a leading teaching AI facility in Medway.

## Support for East Kent Mind

**Dear Sisters,**

I am writing to invite you to support my chosen charity for my year as Lord Mayor – **East Kent Mind**.

East Kent Mind is an **independent, local charity** that raises its own funds to deliver vital mental health support in our communities. This year, I **have joined East Kent Mind to launch a campaign to recruit, train, and support 100 Wellbeing Ambassadors**, with a particular focus on improving the mental health of young people. While our priority is to train ambassadors aged 16–24, applications are open to all ages.

We already have **60 ambassadors trained**,

including students from the University of Kent and Canterbury Christ Church University. Each ambassador costs **£250** to train and support, and we have **40 more to go**. This initiative is entirely unfunded and relies on the generosity of donations from individuals and organisations who share our vision.

*"I'm so delighted and proud to support the Wellbeing Ambassador initiative. I think it's a vital programme. It's about empowerment – giving people the tools to support each other and the knowledge of where to find further help if needed. My hope is for this legacy to be sustainable, embedding such programmes in our educational institutions and workplaces for years to come. Together, we can build a community of support."*

My call to action is simple: **I am asking my Soroptimist sisters to stand with me in supporting this initiative.**

If you wish to donate, please contact me directly at **Keji.a.moses@outlook.com**.

You can also learn more via the link below:

[Ambassador initiative passes milestone - East Kent Mind](#)

With sisterly gratitude,

**Keji Moses**





# Rucksacks Donated for Rucksack Roundup

## 16 Rucksacks Donated for Rucksack Roundup

At the beginning of August, we saw a posting from SATEDA, local domestic abuse support service. As part of their Sharewear scheme, they were having a Rucksack Roundup, with the aim of collecting 25 rucksacks by 25 August. Their aim was for each one collected helps a child begin their new school year with a strong start.

As part of our commitment to the advancement of education, Medway and Maidstone members wished to support this initiative and donated 16 new or nearly new rucksacks.

Stella and Jane Barnes delivered the rucksacks to Valerie Williams last week who said, *'Thank you Soroptimists for your continued support, they will help local children feel confident and ready for the new school year'*

### Rucksack Roundup

We're aiming to collect  
**25 rucksacks**  
by August 25th  
Can you help?

Each one collected helps a child begin their new school year with a strong start

sateda.org  
(live chat weekdays 10am-1pm)



## Orange Knitted Flowers on sale at Region AGM

Knitted orange flowers brooches will be available to buy at £2.50 each to wear on 25<sup>th</sup> month at Orange Cafes and during the 16 Days of Activism (25th November – 10th December). NB: If multiple supplies wanted then contact Jane Barnes in advance at [barnes786@btinternet.com](mailto:barnes786@btinternet.com) quoting how many to ensure sufficient supply?

All proceeds will go to Women's Aid who work tirelessly to change attitudes and the law so that in the future domestic abuse doesn't exist.

**women's aid**  
until women & children are safe



**ORANGE IS NOT JUST A COLOUR**

It's the colour of #OrangeTheWorld's Unite Campaign

On 25<sup>th</sup> of every month  
Soroptimists wear orange  
to raise awareness about  
violence against women and girls.  
[sigbi.org](http://sigbi.org)



# SUMMER COCKTAILS IN EAST GRINSTEAD



On Wednesday 20 August East Grinstead held its annual cocktail event at the home of Sue Edgar, our current Region President. Forty-two members, husbands and friends gathered together, to enjoy cocktails and mocktails as well as delicious scones - savoury cheese or jam and cream - and chocolate brownies, all prepared by Helen Pond a Club member.

We were delighted to welcome visitors from Sevenoaks and Folkestone Clubs as well as Roxanne St Clair our Region President Elect.

Everyone was given a raffle ticket on arrival, and several very attractive prizes were won at the end of the festivities. The weather was kind, enabling guests to mingle outside as well as in and the event raised £350.00 for Club charities – altogether a very successful and happy evening.

Rosemary Stone SI East Grinstead

## Can you help us.....?

**Do you have any unwanted books?**



Teresa Cambell volunteers at Medway hospital with the hospital library. Each week they take a trolley to some of the longer stay wards to offer patients the opportunity to borrow a book or two. When they are discharged, the patients are able to take their book(s) to finish at home if they wish. All the books are donated, and we are always keen to refresh our stock.

Patient requests vary from week to week but have included romance, thrillers, horror, family sagas, detective novels, history, Shakespeare and Marlow, biographies, travel, animals and trains! Large print books and books in languages other than English would be particularly welcome.

If you are looking for a home for any good quality books you no longer need, Medway and Maidstone members would be happy to collect them at the next Regional AGM on 20 September, if you bring them along.

Jane Barnes SI Medway and Maidstone

## UNWANTED CURRENCY → SCHOOL MEALS



**Donate your spare foreign currency to help feed hungry children with Mary's Meals!**

Mary's Meals serves nutritious school meals to children living in 17 of the world's poorest countries. The promise of a good meal attracts these hungry children into the classroom, giving them the energy to learn and hope for a better future.

Mary's Meals can turn your foreign coins and notes into meals for hungry children. We can also take British coins and notes that are no longer legal tender.

Organise a collection at your workplace, school, church or simply around your home and Mary's Meals will provide envelopes and boxes for collections and instructions on how to make your donation.

If you donate a foreign currency other than Euros or US dollars, our currency partner will add 5% to your donation.

**For more information on collecting your currency or to request envelopes/boxes please email:**

**info@marysmeals.org**

**www.marysmeals.org.uk**

Mary's Meals, Craig Lodge, Dalmally, Argyll, Scotland, PA33 1AR.  
A registered charity. SC022140

**mary's meals**  
a simple solution to world hunger

I am sure so many of you will have old and unwanted foreign bank notes and coins collected over the years from your travels hidden in the back of drawers that could be put to good use feeding children supported by Mary's Meals.

**If you can bring all your unwanted currency to the Regional AGM meeting, that will be greatly appreciated.**

Annette Davies (Medway and Maidstone) is a Mary's Meals Ambassador. She has agreed to take all the currency donated to Mary's Meals, where it will be converted into cash for meals.

Jane Barnes SI Medway and Maidstone



# It is on the HUB.....

## Check it out

### SIGBI Birmingham 2025 Conference



**PROFESSOR  
SUZIE IMBER**



**SHAZIA  
CHOUDHRY**

## SPEAKERS

We have an excellent line-up of speakers for our 2025 Conference.

**31 OCT - 2 NOV 2025**

**[sigbi.org/birmingham2025](https://sigbi.org/birmingham2025)**



**BOOK NOW**

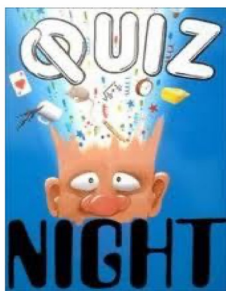


**Conference workshops are filling up.  
Book soon to get your  
preferred sessions.**

There's so much to look forward to at our 2025 Soroptimist Conference in Birmingham, you can register via the Events tab in the Hub **[thehub.sigbi.org/events](https://thehub.sigbi.org/events)**.



# Dates For Your Calendar



## Where?

The Selsdon Centre  
for the Retired,  
132 Addington Road,  
Selsdon CR2 8LA

In the same building as Sainsbury's (opposite the store entrance) and we can use their car park

Hosted by Soroptimist Club of Croydon fundraising for  
Bromley & Croydon Women's Aid and Croydon Vision

## When?

**Saturday**

**6<sup>th</sup> September**

**5.30 – 9.30pm**

## Who? Everyone!

Teams of 2 – 8 people  
Individuals welcome,  
we can arrange teams

Tickets in advance only

To request a booking form  
please email:

[baileyheather@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:baileyheather@blueyonder.co.uk)

## How much?

£18.00 per person,  
Includes Chicken or  
Vegetable Biryani

Please BYO drinks and cash  
for raffle tickets!

Tea/coffee and a cookie  
included.

Glasses available.

A non-curry option is available if required



**Regional AGM Meeting**

**Saturday 20 September**

**10am—3pm**

**Holiday Inn, Rochester**

**Cost: £32**

Please confirm with Susie Forbes  
[susieforbessorops@gmail.com](mailto:susieforbessorops@gmail.com) by Wednesday,  
10<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at the latest  
please.



**Speaker at**

**13th November Club Meeting**

**7.30—9.30pm**

**at Holiday Inn, Rochester**

**Adam Downing**

Safeguarding Liaison Manager - Southeastern Rail

**southeastern**

Team's role across Kent in relation to measures  
taken for the safety of women and girls on  
trains and at stations.

**RSVP: Sharon Forghani (Secretary)**

[sharon.forghani1@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.forghani1@gmail.com)

**by 6 November if wish to attend**

**SILENT MARCH  
PROTESTING  
AGAINST**

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

**SATURDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**

**SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL CANTERBURY**

**INVITE YOU AND YOUR ORGANISATION TO ONCE**

**AGAIN MARCH WITH US IN SILENT PROTEST**

**AND RAISE AWARENESS OF**

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS**

~

**MEET AT THE BUTTERMARKE**

**HEAR KEYNOTE SPEECH FROM A SURVIVOR**

**TIME 10:45AM SATURDAY 29<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER**

**PROCESSING VIA BURGATE, HIGH STREET, ORANGE St, SUN St**

**RETURN TO THE BUTTERMARKE**

**WE WILL BE JOINED BY THE LORD MAYOR**

~

**POSTERS WILL BE PROVIDED OR BRING YOUR OWN  
APPROPRIATELY WORDED BANNER**

**WEAR SOMETHING ORANGE IF YOU CAN**

~

**SUPPORTING THE UNITED NATIONS 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-  
BASED VIOLENCE**

**25<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER – 10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**





Medway & Maidstone Soroptimists  
are hosting a  
**Charity Night at the Medway Little Theatre**  
on  
**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**  
7 for 7.30 pm



## **A Sherlock Carol**

by Mark Shanahan

Moriarty is dead and famous detective Sherlock Holmes is feeling rather redundant, until he is approached by a grown-up Tiny Tim to investigate the suspicious circumstances of the death of a certain Ebenezer Scrooge. After some persuasion, Holmes takes on the case and the game is afoot! Six actors playing multiple parts will certainly delight any audience and provide a Christmas show to remember.

**Ticket Price £10.00**

**Bring change because there will be a raffle!**

**To book or further information please contact**

**Angela Howe on 01634 724365**

**[howeangela@btinternet.com](mailto:howeangela@btinternet.com)**

**Raffle Prizes gratefully received**

**Proceeds towards Soroptimist Charities**