

Newsletter for South West & Channel Islands Region

Number 5: Summer 2014

Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships.



Regional Officers

Those of you able to come to the Regional AGM on 28th June, will know that we now have a full complement of Officers for the year 2014 – 2015 who will take office following the Harrogate Conference.

At the AGM, Daphne Dowsing, who is undertaking a second year as President of SI Tiverton, was nominated and elected Vice President

Janet Diffell had, as you know, already been elected Treasurer.

Hello Everyone

Thank you to everyone who gave up a Saturday on a sunny June day to come to the Regional AGM and Conference at Redwood Hotel, Bristol.

It was wonderful to have so many there for Ann Garvie, International President of SI and our special speakers for the afternoon conference.

I have received many cards, e-mails, comments and Facebook messages of praise for the day. I was particularly thrilled to be told by one younger member that she'd been invigorated by the day and that the PE of one Club who had only been to one Regional meeting before had been enthused by the conference.

I was particularly glad to have a good turnout for the afternoon for Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow who did the return trip from the north of Scotland in a day! That shows the value placed on our organisation.

I must also pay particular thanks to the many stewards from SI Bristol who enabled and ensured that the day ran so smoothly and well.

I look forward to meeting up with you again, at my last meeting as your President, on 20th September.

Sue

Meal Appeal Update You will remember that, following the inspiring presentation on Mary's Meals given at the Gateshead Conference (at which we were told it only cost £10.70 to feed 1 child for a year), the Region agreed to make a joint collection in the optimistic hope that we could raise sufficient to feed 100 children for a year. I am delighted that, despite the cost having risen to £12.20 per child for a year **we managed to raise sufficient to feed 114 children for a year!** I was so proud to present Magnus with a cheque for £1,390.80. Thank you all so much for making my optimistic dream come true to help this incredible charity to *Educate to Lead*.

Together, we CAN make a difference!

Message from Regional Programme Action Officer

Details of the main speakers at UKPAC's Study Day are in the Chairman's July message, which has been circulated.

Most of the breakout sessions were informative, especially '28 Too Many', run by its founder, Dr Ann-Marie Wilson who works tirelessly in the raising of awareness of FGM, and the making of sustainable changes to end the practice.

Some of the information we were given was new to me, and I suspect they would be to you. So, please visit the website:

www.28toomany.org

It was a joy for me to see some members of our Region at the Study Day, and I was very proud when, both at our Friday evening meeting, and in the main part of the following Day, Federation Programme Director, Sue Biggs, openly thanked the South West & Channel Islands for responding when she had asked for information on rural women for the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Rashida Manjoo.

On another subject, we Regional PAOs have been asked to comment on the facts in our particular areas, as contained in the draft Prison Reform Trust report, before its general release later in the year.

It was obvious, over the whole weekend, that we as a Region are greatly respected as one that not only reacts, but also acts, whether that be by reporting on, responding to or asking questions.

You should be proud of yourselves – I am to be the Region's Programme Action Officer.

Next Meeting: 20 September 2014

All the year's Regional meetings are held at: The Catholic Centre, The Mount, Taunton

20 SEPTEMBER 2014

Carwen Wynne-Howells (Procedural consultant for the Soroptimist International President) is coming to talk about SIs involvement with CEDAW (the UN convention on the elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women). Cherry Cadwallader, Secretary of SIGBI's charity, the Diamond Education Grant will also be coming to talk to us about this charity.

Future Dates for your Diary

2014-2015

29 November 2014 Regional meeting

21 March 2015 Regional Meeting

Regional AGM: 20 June 2015

At the Cliffhead Hotel, St Austell

9-12 July 2015 International
Convention in Istanbul

19 September 2015 Regional Meeting

Proposed Associate Membership

There is a great deal of discussion and some concern regarding the Resolution on Associate Membership to be brought to members at the General Meeting in Harrogate.

I would urge everyone to first read the FAQ (frequently asked questions) circulated in the mailing at the beginning of July. There will also be an article by Ann Hodgson in the August 'Soroptimist News'.

Many organisations have Associate Members, many remain in that category whilst others will become full members once personal commitments allow and they gain a greater knowledge of the organisation.

SIGBI, like so many organisations, continues to lose members. In order to ensure that we continue to serve the women in the world who, as Soroptimists, we have committed to help, we need to reverse this trend. Associate Membership may be one way of achieving this.

We cannot keep our feet stuck in the proverbial treacle. What was fine in 1921 is no longer relevant to 2014. We have to change, we have to be creative, open minded and flexible.

No one will compel women to become Associate Members, they will do so by choice and should be made welcome.

Please trust your voting delegates at the General meeting to listen to the debate on Associate Membership, keep an open mind, and vote accordingly.

Jackie Mosedale

**Women's rights are *Human Rights*.
Don't ever doubt that a small group can
change the world – that's us!**