

# Newsletter for South West & Channel Islands Region

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

Number 10 Autumn: 2015



Welcome to our Autumn newsletter. I hope you have had a lovely summer break and now feel invigorated and fully re-charged, ready to take on the new challenges of the new season. May I first take this opportunity to thank those members who came to Cornwall back in June to the Regional AGM and Conference and to SI St. Austell's Friendship Weekend. We were blessed with good weather and it was our pleasure to welcome you all to our wonderful county. As Regional President it certainly was a red letter day for me and one I will remember always. (Please see report overleaf).

As Soroptimists, we have so much to look forward to and to focus on over the coming months. 8<sup>th</sup> September is **International Literacy Day**, which gives us an opportunity to showcase our 'Educate to Lead' theme. Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September – **Regional Meeting at the**

**Catholic Centre, Taunton.** (More details below). Shortly afterwards, on the 21<sup>st</sup> September, we celebrate **International Day of**

**Peace.** October, of course, is **Breast Cancer Awareness Month**, when we can be 'pretty in pink' and raise the awareness of this frightening disease and make a positive impact within our communities, and show women near and far that we care and want to make a difference. The 3<sup>rd</sup> October is **Soroptimist International Club Friendship Day.** We are asked to observe this day in recognition of the Chartering of the first Soroptimist Club in Oakland, California, which was on 3 October 1921. Perhaps each and every one of us can contact a fellow Soroptimist from another Club, send her a friend request on Facebook, ring her for a chat or send her an e-mail! The 16<sup>th</sup> October is **World Food Day**, 17<sup>th</sup> October is **International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.** Finally, the 18<sup>th</sup> October is **Anti-Slavery Day.** These are all special dates in our Soroptimist calendar. Whichever date/s you choose to remember, by doing so, as well as raising the awareness of such worthy projects, you also will be raising the profile of your Club and our wonderful organisation. Do keep the photographs coming, and send them to Anne Brooker for our regional website as well as the Soroptimist News and your Facebook page. I do hope many of you have now booked for the Glasgow Conference on **5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November.** It promises to be a wonderful event and will, of course, be my final appearance as Regional President. *Kay*

## Future Dates for your Diary

21<sup>st</sup> November 2015- Regional Meeting  
 12<sup>th</sup> March 2016 - Regional Meeting  
 25<sup>th</sup> June 2016 - Regional AGM  
 24<sup>th</sup> September 2016 - Regional Meeting  
**Pres Elect Di Steele**

26<sup>th</sup> November 2016 - Regional Meeting  
 25<sup>th</sup> March 2017 - Regional Meeting  
 17<sup>th</sup> June 2017 - Regional AGM  
 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2017 - Regional Meeting  
**Vice Pres Daphne Dowsing**

## Federation Councillor's Update

This is the final report from me; 4 years seem to have gone very quickly, Congratulations to Di Hill from Tiverton who is taking over. She is in an excellent position as she has been attending Board meetings as HR Liaison. Councillors attend the Region Officers meetings too, we can join in the discussions and advise but we don't have a vote. The handover takes place in Glasgow at the Conference. In the last newsletter I urged you to respond to the questionnaire regarding the format of Soroptimist News. Unfortunately only 11% of the membership responded and the results are being analysed. The Management Board is looking again at Honorary Membership and club secretaries have been asked to reply to a few questions, Thank you for that.

*Wendy Plaice*

## Programme Action

There are changes afoot regarding Programme Action, with SIGBI's dedicated database due to go live by the end of January 2016, hopefully alleviating the problems with which those accessing the PFRFs have been faced.

With Hilary Ratcliffe's role of International Programme Director having come to an end there are plans for this title to be changed to that of 'Advocate'.

I have mixed feelings regarding this, the dictionary definition of the word being 'person who pleads on behalf of another', whereas 'director', as we all know, means 'tell or show how to do something'.

But what's in a word, and we'll see how the person who takes on the role defines it.

The 106 PFRFs I have recently trawled for my report to FPAC for the Glasgow Conference have shown that you are all as busy as ever with your Programme Action work, whether that be supporting projects in other countries, or making the lives of those in your communities more bearable.

Please continue the amazing work for which our Region is recognised and respected.

*Irene Hockin*

## Regional AGM and Conference

The 20th June had been imprinted in my brain for as long as I can remember. My diary consisted of events either 'before the AGM' or 'after the AGM'. Since June 2014, our newly formed sub-committee had been duly turning up at my home for meetings, discussing tactics, whilst eating a lot of nuts and nibbles, jam and cream and cheese and biscuits! Even after having a cancelled venue, we persevered and hopefully got the best place for the best price!

June 2015 arrives and the first weekend, I am on official duties with my husband Andrew, enjoying the friendship and a tasty Sunday lunch with President Kathy and members of SI Cirencester. The second weekend, Andrew and I fly out to Jersey and relax in the delightful company of President Margaret Bayes and our friends from SI Jersey, but I am now becoming pre-occupied with the forthcoming weekend!

Each evening now I am e-mailing information around the region, regarding who's hosting who, where to park, who's introducing who, who's thanking who. I have the speakers' mobile numbers in case of an emergency; my conference list of 'to dos' is now getting smaller. Friday morning comes and our merry band of workers go out to the conference venue to set up. 4 hours later, it looks like a conference hall! Fabulous!

The Friendship weekend begins with a tour around the local shipwreck centre and a wonderful meal at the Bosun's diner. Saturday morning arrives - I slept very well, and woke up, so excited. Blue dress (of course!) and my fabulous new lime green shoes and off I go to the 75th AGM and CONFERENCE at the Kingsley Village Conference Centre!

Weeks and weeks of planning, organising and 'dreaming' kicks off with the AGM, which thankfully went through without a hitch. We welcomed Daphne Skinnard from Radio Cornwall who opened the conference, followed by our key note speaker Hilary Ratcliffe, International Programme Director, who did a wonderful presentation and reminded us all how important our PFRF's are! Pat Wakeford showcased SI St. Austell's 'Elizabeth Millard Bursary Fund', followed by barrister/entrepreneur Charlotte Davis, and then, lunch! The afternoon session - Greetings and good wishes from local organisations, dignitaries and SI Presidents, followed by my son, James, who gave a self defence exhibition, followed by an inspiring talk from Pauline Giles, a breast cancer survivor, and then the final presentation, Laura Smit, who is an Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate. To close the day, the Champagne Chorus, a ladies barbershop choir, filled the hall with harmony and rhythm!

Saturday night was delightful - an informal evening at the Porthpean Golf Club with good food, laughter and fun, even an appearance from Elvis! The next morning, a walk around the Pinetum Gardens followed by a wonderful Sunday buffet lunch served by our member Libby, in *her* beautiful gardens, which concluded our friendship weekend. Thank you all for your messages, your support and thoughtfulness and sincere appreciation to each and every member and regional officer, who took part in any way. It was indeed an honour to host such an event and will remain for me, one of the most memorable weekends ever. RP Kay.

### Congratulations!

#### Regional Posts (from November 2015)

Sue Kelly, (SI Weston-Super-Mare) who has been successfully elected as our next Vice President.

Shirley Alexander, (SI Cirencester) who will succeed Jackie Mosedale (SI Yeovil, Sherborne & District) as Organisational Development Officer.

#### Federation Post (from November 2015)

Di Hill, (SI Tiverton) who will represent the Region as Federation Councillor, taking over from Wendy Plaice, (SI St. Austell).

We wish you every success in your respective roles and thank you for representing SI South West and Channel Islands.



In support of  
**WaterAid**



### Organisational & Development

Shirley Alexander has arranged a stall at the Fresher's Week with SI Cheltenham. This will include giving out leaflets and raising awareness of Soroptimism and our projects.

Shirley and I have had a meeting to consider the format for the 'Train the Trainers' day. The focus will need to be on presentation skills, knowing what information is available for members and how they may access it. This will continue to develop materials prepared for the New Members' Days and build on the experience gained from them.

Jackie Mosedale.



SI Bath is celebrating 90 years and Bath Parks and Gardens have created a flower bed for us and it is in a prominent place in Bath where there is a great deal of passing traffic.

**Congratulations to SI Barnstaple with their now famous project, 'Knickers for Knowledge'**

International Programme Director Hilary Ratcliffe presented Regional Programme Action Officer Irene Hockin of SI Barnstaple with the Ellen Braun Award at the Regional AGM. This was in recognition of their innovative and successful project, which narrowly missed being selected as one of the three projects to go to Conference to be voted on for the Federation Long Term Project. Well done and congratulations to you all.

**Regional Meetings are held at The Catholic Centre, Taunton.**

**"ENABLE"**

**19th September - 3rd Meeting**

**Guest speaker Laura Redhead - Environment & Sustainability APD & WaterAid Cheque Presentation.**

**A POSTCARD FROM ISTANBUL**



Regional Delegates enjoying local cuisine in Istanbul.

Four busy days of Conference with 1400 Soroptimists from all over the world. There were a lot from Germany, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries but not many from USA. We had lots of serious speakers on gender equality and eliminating violence against women which of course varies throughout the world. There were panel discussions and workshops and reports from all 4 Federation Presidents and Ann Garvie described it all with her favourite adjective 'awesome'. The SI President Yvonne from New Zealand was installed and introduced a project in Nepal as the Int President's appeal. She suggested each member donate the cost of a cup of coffee and a cake to the appeal. We could manage that I'm sure. There was plenty of time for chatting, eating, dancing and singing together. The conference venue was excellent, fabulous views across the Bosphorus and the evening social events were outside on warm dry evenings. There were 8 from our Region 2 from Bath, 2 from Tiverton, 1 from Yeovil and 3 from St Austell.

*Wendy Plaice*



Members from SI Bath with members of their friendship link from SI Edmonton at the Gala dinner.

**Strengthening Relationships**

It was a convention noteworthy for the strength of some excellent speakers. I was particularly struck by the relationship between our organisation and the UN demonstrated by speaker Ertuk Yakin, a former UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women. The decision of the SI Board to remove the post of International Director of Programmes and replace it with the Director of Advocacy will strengthen this relationship further. The main purpose of this new role is to lead and co-ordinate the work of an advocacy team of SI Representatives to the UN and the Federation Representatives to deliver SI Advocacy.

*Di Hill*



Di Hill with Sandra from SI Gouda. Tiverton's friendship link.



Daphne with Cesarina Gigante who met on the gift of friendship visit to Japan.



Turkish Band playing on the way into the Convention.