

SI Tiverton Newsletter
1st quarter - Vol. 1
January -March 2021



Welcome:

*Soroptimist International of Tiverton and District is **part of a worldwide organisation of women**, which is linked to the United Nations.*

The heart of what we do is giving service and raising funds for local and international charities.

*Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland improve the lives of women and girls through our “**Educate**”, “**Empower**”, “**Enable**” programmes.*

Our Soroptimist Club consists of a friendly group of women who are active within the local community through working and volunteering.

Should you wish to have more information please contact:

Louise: 01884 242606 or Daphne 01884 255942

Welcome to the first SI Tiverton & District Newsletter of 2021:

We are hoping to publish quarterly and fill it with news, views, diary dates, events, articles, photos and any other member contributions.

You will find a copy of the Newsletter on Social Media and our website.

We hope to use this as an introductory and recruitment tool for anyone who would like more information about our work or to join us.

The deadline for submission of contributions is -

16th March 2021/ 16th June 2021 /16th September 2021.

Please send them through to Janine Deane-Dinnis at

soroptimistnewslettertiv@gmail.com

or contact her on: **0787 987 3718.**

Website: - **<https://sigbi.org/tiverton-and-district/>**

Facebook: **<https://www.facebook.com/TivertonSoroptimists>**

Christmas Greetings from SI Tiverton & District, Devon



Christmas is a time for reminiscing about 'good times with good friends'. Here we are together in friendship at our December Zoom meeting. Bridget entertained us on her piano with a delightful Christmas Carol medley. We sang together, sharing stories of why Christmas is important to each of us. For many years we have been meeting on the 2nd Wednesdays of each month at the www.bw-tivertonhotel.co.uk. We look forward to future face-to-face meetings at our welcoming Tiverton base.



CHRISTMAS QUIZ



Supporting our chosen charities :
North Devon Refuge, Exeter Balloons
& Mercy Ships

Quiz entry £2 - Winner's prize £25

Please Contact:
mikeandpat.dillon@gmail.com



Our Christmas quiz has travelled far and wide! Special thanks go to our Sister Soroptimists in Oxford and Ilkley, also to the Red Hat Society in Penzance.

The closing date is **31/01/2021**, so there's still time to get your quiz in.

We will share all the proceeds from the quiz between the three deserving charities who need our support more than ever.

We couldn't have done it without our generous quiz sponsors: <http://brayaccounts.co.uk> for donating the £25 prize and additional printing. www.roberttinley.co.uk for all the colour printing.

And last but not least, thanks go to our Quiz Authors Mary and David Cousins and Quiz Co-ordinator Patricia Dillon.



Members of the Tiverton & District Soroptimists



Each year the Tiverton and District Soroptimists organise a May walk along our beautiful canal tow path to raise awareness, enjoy a good natter and have a delicious drink and slice of cake at the Canal Tea Rooms afterwards (just visible behind us to the right of the photos). In previous years we have been lucky enough to have had glorious weather. No May group walk for us this year, as we were in lockdown. It's always good to see photos of easier times and we look forward to being able to do this again.

Members' meeting in the Twyford Meeting Room at the Best Western Hotel, Tiverton.

A beautiful sunny day shortly after the first lockdown lifted, provided the perfect excuse for a meet-up.

Here are some of us enjoying time together and the delicious food and drink at Tiverton's Canal Tea Rooms.





Members of the Tiverton & District Soroptimists



For many years now, we have been meeting up on Lowman Bridge, Tiverton, to celebrate International Women's Day and to incorporate fundraising.

This year the theme was **#EachForEqual**.



SI Tiverton, supporting Young Minds at our Zoom club meeting - October 2020 CANVA



Susanne Stoyel celebrating 50 years as a member of the Tiverton & District Soroptimists.



September 2020 meeting at Mrs Gills Country Cakes Tea Room in Tiverton.

Janine, Mary & Daphne



Our Founding Sisters:

by Janine Stedman, Club Historian.

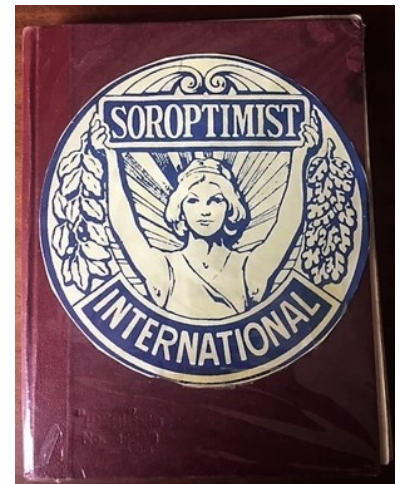
Tiverton & District Soroptimists held their inaugural meeting on 12th February 1964 in the Mayoral Room at the Town Hall.

The Club has held monthly meetings for over 56 years and contributed much to the local community.

My interest in our club history began with our current attendance book. I studied the names and wanted to know more.

The icing on the cake was the discovery of the original minute book 1964-68. This had been carefully handwritten by Founding Member (later Club President) Dr. Gillian Esther Sladden, a highly respected Clare House Doctor.

I started reading and transcribing the minutes digitally, as this was our only copy. The book was a page-turner and I was hooked.



It became the ideal 2020 lockdown project for me and I enlisted the support of current Tiverton Soroptimists, whose collective membership exceeds 175 years.

In the next newsletter I will be sharing stories of our Founding Sisters with you.

Who were these inspiring women?

What was their motivation?

What did they achieve in Tiverton?



Today, I am honoured to share a photo of Dr. Gillian *Sladden*, who went into such detail to capture the words and spirit of the early club meetings.

Through her story-telling I have often felt myself in the room with our Founding Sisters.



Friendship Links for Tiverton Soroptimists:

When I first joined the Soroptimist International Club in Tiverton some 20 years ago, it took me a long time to work out how Friendship Links formed part of the clubs' history.

We currently have a Friendship Link with Gouda in the Netherlands, which had been very active years before; however, we'd heard nothing from the link for many years.

Looking back at photos I could see our members had visited Gouda and had returned the hospitality here in Tiverton. It often happens though, when someone leaves a club or dies or the link in the country loses an address.

I like a challenge, so I decided that we were going to reconnect and we were going to visit.



We did indeed visit Gouda famed for the cheese and a beautiful cathedral and had a fantastic time visiting windmills and other places of interest.

Staying in members' homes, we attended some marvellous celebrations with them.



We returned their hospitality and were delighted to welcome them at Exeter airport for a long weekend stay.

There is always a warm welcome when Soroptimists get together. If you meet another Soroptimist anywhere in the world, you will find friendship, and members are always invited to attend their club meetings.

My next aim is to see if we can arrange to have a zoom meeting with members of SI Gouda in the New Year.

I have been a Friendship Officer for about 15 years, and this was the first Officer post I undertook.

We also started a Friendship Link with Kobe in Japan, and I was fortunate to have been given a Gift of Friendship. The clubs in the area passed me to the care of one club after another. In all, I visited five clubs, all very different.

This trip took place in 2015 and 1995 after there had been a devastating earthquake and tourists had stopped visiting.

The Tourist Board worked with the Soroptimists to pay for a visit for myself and another member of their club's Friendship link, which was a lady called Cesarina from Australia. (We are still in contact today).

All of our accommodation and meals (the food was delicious) were paid for by the clubs and the Japanese Tourist Board, and we stayed in the most incredible hotels, in suites with outstanding views. We had a home stay each, which was fascinating and so different.



Friendship Links for Tiverton Soroptimists: Cont.

We have a couple of new links, and I look after SI Jersey, which are a very progressive group; it is worth looking at their website to see all they achieve.

<https://sigbi.org/jersey/>

As a club, we support **'Empowering Girls in Nepal'**.

We sent in five stories, and although we did not win, we helped a very good cause.

The money we raised helped girls in Nepal who are the victims of rape, trafficking and violence, to have a new safe home and an education.

We are often invited as Soroptimists, to join in with other areas Zoom meetings.

This month I linked up with East Grinstead Soroptimists.

Their speaker was Melissa Thorpe, Head of Engagement at Spaceport Cornwall and leading spokesperson for the project, (and point of contact for the community, politicians and industry). <https://spaceportcornwall.com>.

She has six years of experience within the aerospace and aviation industry.

We also have a link with a club in New Zealand; another member, Jenny, looks after them, and she can tell us more about that one.

All Friendship links receive cards and emails from us, so we keep in touch and support each other. We have received a Christmas parcel from SI Kobe, Japan for us to share, containing sweet treats, small origami boxes and a Christmas card.

Daphne

SI Tiverton and District

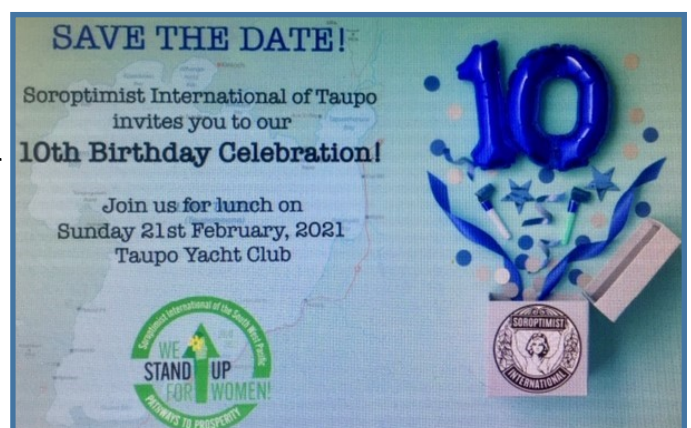
Our new Friendship Club in New Zealand:



Jenny circulated a welcome newsletter from our newest Friendship Club: Soroptimists International of Taupo.

We were delighted to receive a most kind invitation to join SI Taupo in New Zealand for their 10 Year Charter Celebration.

We are hoping to join them on Zoom for their special day in February 2021.



**Jenny Evans with the SI Taupo
Friendship Certificate.**



Recent talks at the SW SI Regional Meeting

James Woolridge spoke about living with Mental Health, the support he'd had and how he is helping others even though he continues to struggle.

As a young person James was an extrovert but became troubled and a worrier as a teenager. He found it difficult to settle at anything, despite being talented.

He joined the military and gained a place at Wellbeck College. During this time his parents divorced.

After A' Levels he went on to Sandhurst. The pressures he felt here, and his vulnerability, caused him to have a 'meltdown'. As a result, he was taken to hospital and given various medications. He was given a Mental Health diagnosis and was told that he would be unlikely to get a job. However, Mole Valley Farmers took him on, and he met his wife of 26 years there, who is his 'rock'.

Since then he has been sectioned many times.

Eight years ago, after becoming very unwell, he set up The Recovery Den which promotes and supports mental recovery.

He has produced many Podcasts and videos to help during Lockdown.

James has helped produce a leaflet with the Devon Partnership NHS Trust, **'Five Ways to Well-Being'**. He believes there is a potential tsunami ready to overwhelm services. The crisis is ever present. He suggests that we use our own communities to be supportive rather than relying on a service.



Leigh Rundle spoke about Deri, her mother, who set up the Living Legacy Trust to help reduce the poverty and deprivation she had witnessed in Rwanda. Raising over £400,000 she helped build a community health project, install clean water facilities, promote better education, housing, health and family planning. For 24 years she worked on these projects until her death. Deri has been awarded the first British Citizen's Award for international Achievement.

Leigh set up an Education fund to support 5 children between 11-25, in their secondary education. She has also set up a food programme to support families struggling for basic food during the pandemic.



Jenny Evans, November President Nov 2020.



Speakers:

The speakers we invite to our monthly club meetings give us an invaluable insight into what is being achieved by charities and community groups.

At our November Zoom meeting we invited Thomas Black to join us.



Thomas gave a most informative talk about the work of Mary's Meals which provides food for children in countries around the world whose governments don't run programmes to feed school children.

Most of the work is undertaken by local volunteers, using food grown locally, and appropriate for the diet of the children in the area.

More information can be found on their website <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/>.

Louise Clunies-Ross, Speakers and Membership Coordinator, thanked Thomas afterwards, highlighting that the talk had been full of interesting detail that made the work of Mary's Meals come alive; the photos of the children who receive the food helped us to imagine more clearly where the money raised will go, and it was inspirational to see in action the work of local volunteers who are such a strength of the organisation.



Give until 31 January 2021 and your donation will be doubled by the UK government, up to £2 million – meaning we can reach even more hungry children in Liberia with life-changing school meals.





Events & Projects:

the Created Forum

22 November 2020, 11:45 am to 6:30 pm

A Virtual Event to Commemorate the UN's Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women



Tiverton & District Soroptimists Daphne Dowsing, Janine Stedman and Mary Cousins took part in the Created Forum Event on 22 November.

This empowering conference was co-created by Tara Newley Arkle, Writer and Activist.

In recent years, Tiverton Soroptimists have been '*Railing Against Abuse*' at events organised by SI Weston Super Mare and Tara.

This year we were invited to join with inspirational women speakers, including Dame Joan Collins DBE, the Baroness Scotland of Asthal QC, Clare Balding OBE, Peaches Golding OBE and many others, who

shared their knowledge, ideas and hopes for the future.

We asked questions and joined in the conversation.

Daphne wrote to thank Tara and received a warm reply. Tara said it was a shame not to see all our lovely ladies 'railing' on the streets and trains, but she thoroughly enjoyed the Created Forum event. She felt it was worth all the hard work to see so many excellent speakers and enjoy the warmth of their companionship.

Further info: [the Created Forum | Empowering Woman Through Conversation](#)



To celebrate the Centenary project '**PlantTrees for a Brilliant Future**', we have set up a working party to explore our options.

Tiverton Soroptimist Elaine Greensmith took part in a Webinar facilitated by Sultan Ahmed Ismail PhD, D.Sc, Director of Ecoscience Research Foundation, Chennai.

Elaine reported her findings to our December Club meeting.

She talked about the idea of planting fruit trees in school grounds, as this would be a way to help feed the children and awaken an interest in nature.

Programme Action Coordinator - Bridget Tosh said that Tiverton & District Soroptimists have always worked closely with local schools and we agreed to look into this more closely.

Elaine will feedback to us from the next **PlantTrees** webinar.



**Tiverton & District Soroptimist have been supporting Housing Action Team CHAT Charity
Devon Free Housing Advice (chatmid.org) for over 25 years.**

We normally operate a club rota, taking it in turns to make monthly food/household donations to the much needed CHAT food bank.

Daphne and Jenny were invited to visit the food bank when CHAT moved to Coggan's Well House.

Since the start of the pandemic this food bank has never been more needed.

Tiverton Soroptimists have been making direct payments to them, as it is evolving such that more of us give online as we cannot get to the shops.

At least that way CHAT can make certain that what is needed turns up in their 'shop'

We will continue our support for this wonderful Tiverton Charity.



The Tiverton Sundarban Support Group.

Over the last 30 years, our group has been working with and providing annual support to a Northern Bangladesh village.

During the last three years however, the charity has been preparing to close.

This was as a result of the preschool education programme becoming more able to support itself and additional government clinics being developed in the area.

The deadline for closure was December 31st 2020.

the decision was taken to hold over the remaining funds to cover any future crisis in the village.

When Covid arrived, all the government clinics were closed, and it was decided to use the money to reinstate the health programme with many members of the original team.

At the end of June, the clinics reopened with the health team visiting all the village areas seeing on average 600 patients with varying health needs each week. They have now received the final funds but as a result of the link, two more charities have emerged which need to improve living conditions.

For the last ten years, SAFE has been working to improve house building in the area.

They demonstrated how houses could be improved using readily available materials—treating the bamboo so that it doesn't rot and raising the level of the homes above flood level etc.

Recently, our group heard a speaker who told us about a new charity called AZUKO.

This charity is also associated with house building, plus they work with women in designing better kitchens and cooking facilities. Using improved designs, allows the women to cook without the need to crouch on the earth floor and inhale the smoke from the wood fires.

We may well support this project as a club in the future.



Upcoming Events:

13th January:	Club Meeting (Zoom) - Speaker, <u>Home - FORCE Cancer Charity</u>
10th February:	Club Meeting - Speaker, Grace Jones - ' Mindsets '
21st February:	Invitation to the 10th Charter Anniversary of SI Taupo, New Zealand (Zoom)
8th March:	International Women's Day Event in Tiverton - TBC
10th March:	Club Meeting - Speaker TBC
20th March:	South West & Channel Islands Regional Meeting (Zoom)

Summer events 2021:

- ♦ Visit by our Friendship Club, Soroptimist International Gouda, Netherlands.
- ♦ Soroptimist Centenary Celebrations - Tiverton Tree Planting Ceremony.
- ♦ Musical evening at St Paul's Church.
- ♦ School Competition.



Our contact details:

Join SI Tiverton and District Today...

Want to find out more about Soroptimists in Tiverton?

We would be delighted to hear from you.

Please either Telephone **Louise: 01884 242606** or **Daphne : 01884 255942**

Or visit our website: <https://sigbi.org/tiverton-and-district/>

Twitter Tweets

<https://twitter.com/SITivertonDevon>