

Dear Friends,

Here we share with you some of the highlights of the last couple of years in our Club and Region.

During the last two years we have welcomed a number of **New Members** making us one of the largest clubs in the SE Region.

We have continued to run our club without a President. The members are split into three groups. There are three Officers: Secretary, Treasurer and PA, plus an essential co-ordinator. Each group takes responsibility for organising events and speakers.

Many members have felt more involved in the running of the club. Now we have more members we can have a president again, but retain the strengths we gained from working in groups by having several supporting teams. This will come into effect at the AGM in April.

Programme of Action

For International Women's Day a group of our members joined many on London Bridge to celebrate this day.

We still raise funds to support our local charities: Crawley Open House; East Grinstead Mental Health; Ghana Education Project; Tadpoles; and Tea for the Elderly.

We continue to be involved in **Knitting Projects**: Supplying Residential Homes for the elderly with such items as **Twizzle Muffs** for those with dementia – these are knitted muffs on which different buttons, ribbons, textured shapes are sewn for the person with dementia to

explore with their fingers, which seem to be popular.

A group of members continue to help the **Brownies** learn how to knit squares which can be used to create clothing as well as blankets.

Angela Edwards & Jane Oatey were invited to attend St James Palace for the **Queen Mother's Guild Trust** and to



meet Princess Alexander. We have supplied the Guild with knitted baby clothes.

SIEG members knitted **baby blankets** for local

premature baby units – all this AND renewing our own knitting skills.

A representative group joined the protest against possible closure of the local **Glen Vue Respite centre**. This is considered essential by the East Grinstead population. We are still waiting to hear if we have been successful.



Our new members have brought renewed life and interest to the club:

In 2018 the UK celebrated 100 years since the **Suffragettes** achieved Votes for Women. Alison Tarada, won funds to put on an education evening "Battle for the Ballot Box" highlighting these historic



events. A team of club members became fully involved and presented an interesting, entertaining evening: the history of Suffragettes and Suffregists in

Sussex; a talk from a member of the Lewes Women's Football team – the first FC in the world



to pay women and men equally. In 1921-71 women's matches were banned by the FCA! Poems, our own choir, art and craft exhibitions were also included.

Earlier in the year an exhibition celebrating the **Suffragettes** was displayed in the local museum.

Again we made up many **Christmas boxes** for those women in sheltered accommodation escaping a violent



relationship. Bags of toys were collected for the staff to put in the children's boxes which we had decorated. Sue Nichols ensured their delivery.

Helen Pond, another new member, is running the **Red Box project**, supplying period products for girls in UK schools who take time off when they have their periods. Money is not always available at home for this.

Who Are Soroptimists:

To celebrate our club, members planted and care for a **community flower bed**.



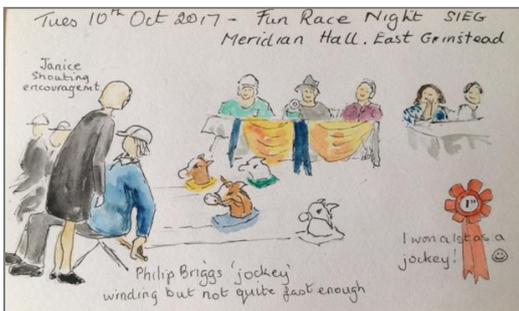
The Art group took up the challenge of creating a board to decorate Hoardings outside the site of the new Travelodge in East Grinstead. Other groups in the town also joined in.



Fund Raising Events such as a **Garden Party** at Susie Forbes'; and Angela's **Art Club teas** helped raise funds while eating and socialising. What would we do without our Soroptimister chef, Bill.

Horse Racing: an indoor event full of laughter with toy horses.

It was decided to create an **Action Fund** to support educational activities to take



place without dipping into the charity fund. Jane Griffiths had a **Coffee morning** followed by Sue Edgar's therapeutic **summer cocktail evening** to start the fund raising for this.

Club Talks - informative and entertaining:

Restorative Justice in the Prison Service: David Merrington explained how encouraging prisoners to talk to the people they have abused can completely change the outlook of both parties. He was then booked to run a workshop at the UKPAC event.

Neil Anderson spoke to us on **Humanism** covering weddings and funerals celebrating a life.

Other topics were: Pericles - drama for the disabled; The head of the highly respected Burns Unit at The Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead described their work; An entertaining talk by Gilly Halcrow on **Whatever**

Happened to Christopher Robin: the lad who grew up with Pooh Bear on Ashdown Forest, around which we live.

In the 2018/19 year so far we have had talks from a local **artist;** a writer on **Beach**

Huts in Britain followed by a delivery of fish and chips!

We also welcomed three local **inspirational women** to talk to us; and **The Eve Appeal Get Lippy** campaign to highlight gynaecological cancers.

Steve Morris, who survived a Heart attack in a gym because the staff knew what to do, gave us a talk on **"Survival can be Shocking"**. He showed us how to resuscitate and use a mobile defibrillator. These have been placed around the town for public use.

...And then there was an entertaining talk on the **History of the Fountain Pen**, the instrument we used in our youth and took for granted – but what a lot there was to know about it.

We started 2019 with a job talk by one of our new members, Brenda Waite, on **Music Therapy**. This was an



interesting subject that eventually involved us all in this expressive activity. You will have to imagine the 'unique rhythmic sound' of each doing her own thing!

The South East Region: Jacquie Emery Award: A writing competition for year 5 and 6 pupils (top Primary School) "Are men and women equal?" There were 28

entrants from local schools and three from each year group were put forward to the Regional finals. Our club invited the winner of our group to come and read her well argued piece.

SIEG received the Region's **Daphne Whitmore Award** for the work they are doing with the Tunbridge Wells Girls' School on the Ghana Education project.

UKPAC

We completed Maureen McGuire's human Trafficking questionnaire. This was an education to ourselves and our friends. It helped us understand how to recognise a trafficked person and the authorities to contact.

As well as all this we have had our **annual social weekend** at 63 Bayswater Rd, the Soroptimist Residential Club in London in March 2018 and look forward to the next;

also our annual visit to the **SIGBI Conference**, which a number of us attend. We enjoy meeting up with friends from around the World.

We, the members of SI East Grinstead, wish you all that you wish yourselves for 2019.

Beryl Bartter, Susan Berkshire Maureen Briggs, Sue Darney, Betty Deller, Chris Dettmer, Janet Doyle, Sue Edgar, Angela Edwards, Sheila Fennings, Susie Forbes, Beryl Garrod, Jane Griffiths, Teresa Haynes, Chris Jones, Janice Jones, Ann Kesteven, Bridget Newbould, Sue Nichols, Jane Oatey, Helen Pond, Anne Richards, Hilary Rowberry, Helen Schortz Alison Skinner, Lillian Skinner Rosemary Stone, Alison Tarada Anita Titjen, Shirley Tricker JoAnne Truscott, Julia Turner Vicki Turner, Pat Tyler, Janet Vanderhook, Brenda Waite