

Well I must say thank you for sending me your articles for this newsletter – I hope you will enjoy reading it. I had a great time in Melbourne, meeting up with a member of the Townsville club, our friendship link, then we attended a breakfast meeting at 7 am! and then I travelled Tasmania with 2 soroptimists from the Circular Head Club that Marcia and I met when we went to the SISWP conference in Thailand.



My next trip overseas will be to Berlin where I am attending the European conference in July with my friend Dianne from the Colchester Club.

I look forward to receiving information for the next newsletter – send after your events and I will try to include it. It would be good to hear from the other clubs.

Notes from President Angela

I can hardly believe that I am now more than half way through my year as SISEE Region President. Attending Club Dinners, Lunches and just recently, AGM's, has been a most enjoyable experience. I am becoming very aware of how strong our member's commitment as Soroptimist's is to their clubs. On May 25th I attended the launch of the UKPAC project partnership with The Prison Reform Trust in the Churchill dining room at The House of Commons. Lots of familiar faces as Region and Club Presidents had all been invited to the launch, including a very good tea! Lord Wolf introduced Lord Tom McNally (Minister of Justice) who spoke movingly and sincerely about having visited women in Holloway Prison who were telling him that it was the safest place they had been in their lives. As Soroptimist's we have a wonderful opportunity to work together on gathering information that will be passed on to the Government, and remember, "Together we can Achieve"

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Report from Hilary Rowberry your Federation Councillor Membership Matters

London Chilterns Region has reported on a friendly way to ensure that new members feel part of a bigger organisation and at the same time know what contribution a region can make in supporting them as new members.

All new members in the previous twelve months were invited to the Regional Council meeting and shared lunch with the Regional Officers. This seems a great way to put faces to names and to understand what officers at regional level do to support individual members and clubs.

So I am inviting new members to join Regional Officers at the Regional Meeting on Saturday June 15th for lunch.

SI Whitehaven is now a light touch club due to a falling and ageing membership and, instead of closing, the club members decided (with approval from SIGBI) to drastically alter the club's structure and procedures. They have three officers; Treasurer, Secretary and Programme Action and they meet once a month with social events counting as a meeting.

Subs were considerably reduced. They continue with fund raising for Programme Action, but are less active. Paperwork is kept to a minimum. The Club is surviving and enjoying a more relaxed club, which better suits the lifestyles of their members.

It is great to see ideas I instigated in Membership carried on by SIGBI.

Canterbury Club Fashion Show



What a night of high fashion! Canterbury SI organised a fashion show on May Day to raise funds for the East Kent Breast Cancer Mammography Appeal. The models strutted their stuff and had great fun. Many thanks to all of them for taking part.

Catwalk Connections ran the show ably supported by our soroptimisters who helped with all the heavy stuff at each end of the show. £565 will be given to the Appeal. Please take a look at our website and complete the "Breast Cancer Awareness" survey. It will only take a minute.

Croydon Club Celebrating Women's Achievements

For our second International Women's Day event, Croydon Club held the annual Inter-Club Friendship Supper on 14th March 2013. The supper was held at The Chateau, where we were joined by guests from local organisations and by Soroptimists from across the south east to celebrate women's achievements.



During the club year the when we celebrated our 85th Birthday, our theme has been 'Education: Science for Girls' and our programme has included talks from several women scientists. To complete this programme, we were delighted to welcome our guest speaker Mai Nguyen, a top civil engineer, specialising in tunnel engineering.

Mai has more than 8 years practical industry experience in construction. When she began her career she was one of very few women working as site engineers in what still is to some extent, a male dominated environment. Civil engineers work extremely long hours and so she decided to turn to project management, allowing her more family time.

In 2012, Mai became Chair of the Schools and Universities Group of the British Tunnelling Society Young Members Committee where she organised a series of lectures and interactive workshops for schools and universities in the UK to raise awareness of civil engineering and tunnelling.

In November 2012 Mai was named Ambassador of the Year by the Institution of Civil Engineers for her inspirational work with young people and she still wants to encourage more girls to take up engineering.

Croydon Club Public Speaking Competition

On International Women's Day the club held the final of LOUD & PROUD, the annual public speaking competition for year six girls, hosted by the Mayor of Croydon in the prestigious council chamber.

The 19 competitors impressed the judging panel, chaired by club member Cllr Maggie Mansell, with their mature approach to the set topics. The winner, Emilia Dixon,

gave a well-reasoned and detailed debate on "A woman's place – is it the kitchen or the laboratory?"

"There's nothing like a good book, but is a 'kindle' or 'ipad' better?" was a popular topic among the competitors but the consensus was that the printed book still had a place in today's modern society.

Croydon MP Gavin Barwell had once again organised a tour of the House of Commons for the prize-winners, but in his closing remarks invited all the competitors to join in the visit.

Croydon Club has been sponsoring this competition for three years. It is growing in popularity year by year and raising awareness about our work and that of Soroptimist International. Once again this event is to be featured on Croydon TV.



Eastbourne Club Race Night

Eastbourne club enjoyed an Evening at the Races in aid of Eastbourne Samaritans, the president's charity for the year. More than 70 people attended the event at St Andrew's school, Eastbourne, many dressing up for the occasion and bringing a picnic to enjoy during the Race Night. The compere John Wilton from Sovereign Rotary Club also proved a professional auctioneer of the horses which had not been sold in advance. The tote taking bets was run by Soroptimists and

a raffle proved popular, raising more than £170. The event raised more than £1,000 for the Samaritans.



The picture shows the winners of the best dressed man and the best Ascot hat competition, Frances Pritchett and Kevin Farmer

East Grinstead Club Event for International Women's Day



Education with a buzz in the air!! East Grinstead club members joined forces with local Guides, Brownies and Rainbows in an afternoon activity of BEE Education and awareness. Our aim was to educate the girls about bees and their struggle surviving in the modern world. There was a choice of making a bee or a flower brooch out of coloured felt which involved sewing and craft skills. At the same time a quiz for everyone around the table with questions such as; where do bees live? How many flowers do bees have to collect pollen from to produce a pound of honey? At the end of a twenty minute session we held a raffle and one girl out of each

group won a packet of honey coated breakfast cereal. In all, we catered for seventy girls and they all went home wearing a lovely brooch and knowing a lot more about bees.



East Grinstead Club More News

New President Christine Jones welcomed Barbara Sheerman-Chase as the first Speaker of Christine's year in office. Barbara spoke about the Air Ambulance Service for Kent, Surrey and Sussex and members of SI East Grinstead Club were amazed to hear that the service is completely run on a charitable basis. It costs £5,000,000.00 pounds a year to run with twelve Pilots, seven Doctors and twelve Paramedics who are called out on an average of four to six times a day. Funding is vital to retain this wonderful service and bringing awareness of their charitable status is crucial to the Air Ambulance's operation.



The last meeting of their Golden Jubilee Year for Presidents Angela Edwards, Alison Skinner and Jane Griffiths was the club's AGM. Parminder Summon Community Fundraising Manager for Alzheimer Research UK was invited along as a speaker, and also to receive a cheque for £1,000.00 donation from the club towards the UK's leading dementia research charity.



Gravesend Club International Women's Day Event



Left to right: Peter Cox, Chairman Croydon Community Against Trafficking; Councillor Lyn Milner, Mayor of Gravesham; Valerie Boswell, President SI Gravesend; Julie Wilson, Head Teacher, Northfleet School for Girls; Deborah Jordan, North Kent Women's Aid and Cliff Grieve, Chairman Kent Community Against Trafficking.

Facts and figures on human trafficking, the fastest growing crime in the world bringing in an estimated \$32b a year for

the perpetrators, were revealed at the Club's awareness raising Conference to mark International Women's Day.

Cliff Grieve said the UK was a major point of final destination for modern day slaves forced into prostitution, involuntary labour and other forms of servitude. Shockingly, it is women who have previously been trafficked themselves who are the prime traffickers, not men. He recommended we buy the DVD of the film The Whistleblower starring Rachel Weisz and show it at a Club meeting.

Peter Cox told how they gather intelligence, engage with schools and colleges, hold events, give presentations and use social media to highlight their activities. Their work is now used as a resource tool for other communities and can be found on the Stop the Traffik UK website.

Deborah Jordan spoke about the Healthy Relationships (Loves Me, Loves Me Not) Programme which she is currently taking into schools and youth organisations with the long term aim of reducing the numbers of future victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Advice given – if you are suspicious that trafficking is happening in your area, report to any of the following:

Police Freephone: 0800 783 2589;
Migrant Helpline: 01304 218718;
Salvation Army: 0300 303 8151; Crime Stoppers: 0800 555 111.

The event was held at Northfleet School for Girls on 9th March. Two days later the think tank The Centre for Social Justice published a report which said Britain's efforts to stop human trafficking are in a state of crisis and need a complete overhaul; the problem in the UK is barely understood and is often a low priority for police. Seven government departments have some responsibility for dealing with human trafficking, the report says this leads to confusion. These findings largely mirrored what was said by our conference speakers. The government says the current Home Office-led approach is working.

Lewes Club News

Lewes Club held its first AGM on Thursday 25th April. Two new members, Vera Gajic and Amanda Hamblin, were inducted by President Anne and presented with their badges. After the formal meeting Susie Forbes, Regional Ambassador, gave a presentation about the BIG (Birthing in Gambia) Project.



On 28th April the new Lewes club revived an old tradition with Bluebell Sunday in Piltdown but because of the late spring there were few bluebells but visitors were able to enjoy late daffodils, wood anemones, wild garlic, camellias and fritillaries. A substantial cream tea was provided and visitors enjoyed talking to students from the Pestalozzi International Village.



On Thursday 23rd May Lewes club member Ruth O'Keeffe became the Mayor of Lewes. She is seen here at the Mayor Making in Lewes Town Hall with sister Soroptimists Cllr. Amanda Dean. President Elect of SI Lewes former Mayor Lara Khour and President Anne Hudson.



From 9-17th May President Anne Hudson visited Nepal where she and Andrew met members of the Friendship link club SI Kathmandu, chartered just two weeks after Lewes. Gifts were exchanged including a Soroptimist umbrella. Anne and Andrew also visited the homes and schools of students from the International Village where were members of their host families.



Medway Club Fashion Show

SI Medway Towns modelled for a Fashion Show raising money for charity. Travelling Trends provided the fashions from high street stores at reduced prices and Soroptimists provided the models. £600 was raised for a charity called 'Dress for Success'



Providing support for women returning to work after a long absence. They equip women with suitable clothes, help with CVs and interview techniques etc. building the confidence and self-esteem to gain employment and further their careers.



Regional Events: This is just a brief summary of events – The Regional Secretary will send out flyers of events.

SI Eastbourne and District Advance notice of

60th Anniversary Celebration Lunch
at the Hydro Hotel, Eastbourne
on Saturday, 1st March 2014

SI Eastbourne and District Bar – B - Que Highlands Farm Hailsham BN22 CCD

on Saturday 22nd June at 12-00 noon
More details from Denise

Regional Meeting dates for the future.
15th. June - Meeting 21st. September
Regional AGM 30th November –
Meeting March – Conference 14th
June – Meeting 20th September –
Meeting .

Regional Exec 7th Sept 16th Nov, 1st
Feb. 31st May, 6th Sept.

I hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. I would like articles by 6th Sept. for the next newsletter please.
Denise Staplehurst Newsletter Editor.