Soroptimist International St Albans & District



www.sigbi.org/st-albans

Newsletter April 2020

Letter from your Editor

Hello ladies

I wouldn't normally be doing another Newsletter so soon but times have changed. We are now living in a strange new world which I am sure none of us is happy about. I know that some of our Members continue to work, maybe at home now, but I hope that this Newsletter will be either useful or create a smile.
You will see that your Exec is still working away in the background even if we are not meeting as usual and there is a surprising amount of news to report.

This letter will be quite different from the usual one but I hope there will be some items of interest.

I recently re-read 1984 and it feels a bit like that albeit different reasons for all the restrictions. I have also made a list of the jobs that I plan to get done during this time of staying at home but I do wonder though how many actually WILL be done!!! We shall see!

I have a bad habit of doing things too quickly. Listening to the wonderful Stephen Fry the other day who was speaking about dealing with having lots of time on your hands without getting depressed. He said to do things slowly. Take time to make the bed, make breakfast or whatever. He likes to cook but usually whizzes through but now he is slowly putting all the ingredients into little bowls at the ready and then slowly fries, boils, or whatever, using those dishes as if he is a TV cook. I can learn from that. I can remember my mother scolding me to slow down saying "Jean, slower is often quicker"!!!!!

I have been telephoning those Members who I know are on their own. If I have missed you, perhaps I don't know that you are on your own, and I am sorry. Being on my own myself, I have really enjoyed some lovely chats. We have all been advised of our small "buddy" support groups and I urge you to call anybody in your group even if you perhaps don't know them too well, are not needy, but just fancy a chat. If you find that anybody in your group is needing anything and you can't help please let me know and I can see what I can do. Or if you want to contact me directly that's ok too. Also, don't forget there are virtual Zoom meetings organised by Jane so if you are able tap into that. The need to communicate I think is never more needed than now. Virtual conversations are good and to be recommended but nothing is like a personal chat. I love picking up the phone to chat to a friend or better still if they call me.

I recently read in a book By Sandi Toksvig that Socrates all those years ago objected to the invention of writing as he thought it would erode the memory. What would he have thought of the technology we have today?

Later in this Newsletter are two pieces from President Kat to help us through this strange time, also some other items which might just help, thanks to all my contributors. If you are thinking "oh I could have sent that" please do so as I will probably be doing another newsletter in a month or so if we are still in this pickle.

Keep well Jean

Groan from Jean....

As I left the reptile house at the zoo I felt something in my pocket. I put my hand in and discovered something with no legs and several teeth. Once I knew what it was I left it there undisturbed. What is it?

Answer at the end.

From Jane Slatter following an Exec meeting:

What projects can we, as Soroptimists, do during this crisis?
Apart from staying home and washing our hands…. Have you heard of any initiatives to support local groups and charities (local, national and international) that you can share with other Members? We know some of our Members are working and and others are volunteering to help keep things running and keep people well and safe, and some others of our Members are looking for ways they can help without putting others at risk. If people have ideas please share them with sistalbans@hotmail.com - or bounce them off your Buddy Group or your Team (VAW, SEW or LO) first if you prefer - remember there is no such thing as a silly idea... News Briefings from SIGBI will start to include things that other Clubs are doing that we could pick up on – and there are ideas on TV/Radio and social media too.
Projects - Reports – a little reminder that if you are responsible for submitting the form to SIGBI for a project we completed in the year then please submit it – if you need help please ask Denise Powell or Jane Slatter – one of those perfect "tidying up" jobs before the end of the Club year….

Keeping in touch
We have set up Buddy Groups and weekly coffee mornings on Zoom and sending out regular emails including this newsletter - should we be doing something else as a Club or is that enough? Again let us know your thoughts sistalbans@hotmail.com

Since the last newsletter….

March 9th at our Club we celebrated International Womens Day by sharing moments which relate to Womens' independence. A few of us in our career paths had overcome one sort or another of discrimination against our sex. Seated in a circle, Ann Beatty and Ameeta Sabharwal kept us all in order watching our timings. Ameeta summed up the evening with a lovely anecdote of when she was trying to hurry her daughter walking to school and Sasha was dawdling. Ameeta tried to coax her and Sasha looked behind and then looked at her Mum and said - "but Mum look how far we've come!". Sometimes we do need to stop and take look back at just how far we have come to give us the drive to keep going...



Coffee Mornings

March 10th A few Members (and a past Member) met at Jean's for coffee and biscuits. Let's say there were no embarrassing silences as we discussed all sorts of things. For obvious reasons no further date is arranged.

and then we went virtual…..

Tue March 31st and Mon April 6th nine of our Members a virtual coffee mornings with Zoom (there were 12 different Members over the 2 events). They were fun and chatty as well as covering some of the more serious side of our current situation. It's just lovely to see everyone's faces and everyone seems to sign off a bit brighter than when they logged in.
The next one will be at **11am Tuesday April 14th** The sessions last 40 mins before timing out. Jane, as the host, will send out the link to join in an email. It is simple to use from a smartphone, tablet or PC.

If you are unable to join at this time then please suggest a different day and/or time for the weeks ahead – we are flexible and happy to arrange. Also if you need help with the technology please ask Jane pinkyslatter@hotmail.com

Small anecdotes of the current times

A friend of mine is wearing something different each day, and each item brightly coloured to cheer her up.

This kindly sent to me from Pamela Rochford

Thanks Pamela



Another friend of mine was telling me how the close she lives in was great at helping each other. There was a young mum there who couldn't work due to the virus and was going crazy with three young children. To occupy an afternoon she thought she would do some cooking with them and make a cake. She had no flour and at the time none was to be had in the shops. A note went round the close asking if anybody had any flour. My friend had some which she gave and was rewarded with a large slice of cake. That's what it is about surely.

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Please let me know of any stories you have come across and I can put them in the next Newsletter.

From our Treasurer Sarah Lichman

I hope you are all coping with this strange and worrying life that we are living. It is quite odd how the abnormal soon seems to be normal and I am very surprised at the fact that the days do seem to go by quite quickly. I had great intentions to start with but have hardly ticked anything off my to do list. I have, however, started on the Club's year end accounts. Although I had a very basic knowledge of Excel spreadsheets I have hardly worked with them before, so this whole year has been a learning curve for me. I always said that I wanted to do new things in retirement and this has definitely been one of them; the production of these accounts will show whether I have actually risen to that challenge!

Talking of accounts leads me to remind you that the subs are now due. (See the email from Barbara on 18th March). Thank you to those who have already set up their Standing Order. For those who have not yet done so please transfer one payment of £102 (£114 inc refreshments) or set up a standing order for £8.50 (£9.50) to be paid on the 10th of each month (if you have missed the April payment please start the SO in May and just transfer the first payment directly). Our bank details are 30-97-25 00486329. (I have sent separate information to our Linked Members). The Club is committed to pay the **whole** capitation fee for every Member and so I must reiterate that if you pay by SO you are **committed to do so for the whole year.**

It may seem strange to be asking for subs whilst we are unable to meet but SIGBI and SI still need to cover their expenses and charitable commitments and of course at the moment we are unable to do anything else to bolster our finances. There is no doubt that once this crisis is over there will be no shortage of worthwhile causes for us to support.

Just to clarify what happens to the money that we collect for refreshments at Club meetings. It is not subsumed into general funds but is put into the hospitality account. I understand that this was originally set up for friendship link visits and is still used on these lovely occasions. It also provides us with extra "treats" as some meetings and we sometimes use it to purchase tea and coffee etc for the Women's Refuge.

I am happy to chat to anyone regarding the subs so please do email me or phone on sarah.lichman@gmail.com or 01727 375006; I will almost certainly be at home!

Following the end of year donations (£50 each to Earthworks, Home-Start, Domestic Abuse Helpline, Harpenden Family Contact Centre, Viewpoint) . We have so far received three lovely thank you letters. We know that donations are always appreciated but it is lovely to hear that directly.

Lendwithcare; the most recent loans have started to be repaid but of course it will all depend on what happens with Covid19 in the more undeveloped nations where these loans have been made.

That's it from me. I hope everyone stays safe and well, enjoys the better weather and comes out of this awful experience feeling that at least some of the time was put to good use!

Thanks Sarah

I am thinking positive that we might be able to meet again by June but of course, who knows???? As soon as we are able to pick up again I have no doubt that the exec will let us all know.

13 Jun Region Meeting held this time at Milton Keynes

20 Jun – 2.30pm to 4pm Soroptimists Visit to New Ground Co-Housing Barnet for afternoon tea. This visit was promised when two residents came to our Club to tell us about it last November – please see the website for more www.sigbi.org/2019/wtd19/

Mon 22 Jun – Speaker Linda Shall – Carbon Literacy Project

Jul Date TBC – Earthworks 25th Anniversary Celebration event www.earthworksstalbans.co.uk

Sun 12 Jul – Harpenden Highland Gathering – Rothamsted Park – see the Harpenden Lions website for more info – Soroptimists will be "womanning" the raffle to raise money for charities.

Mon 13 Jul – Club Meeting + Feedback from June Region meeting (note 18 Jul SIGBI Day of Action)

Sun 19 Jul – Cricket – Herts Junior League Finals Day

Mon 27 Jul – social event at the URC Hall – pot luck supper? TBA

Sat 1 Aug UKPAC Study Day in Durham. "Sex Drugs and Rock'n Roll"

? Aug ? Summer Club Outing – TBA

Sat 5 Sep Earthworks Summer Fair www.earthworksstalbans.co.uk

Mon 14 Sep – Club Meeting (note Sep 8 Int Literacy Day)

Mon Sep 28 – Speaker Meeting TBA (note Sep 21 Int Day of Peace)

Sat 10 Oct Region AGM at Lancaster Hall Hotel . Welcome our own Helen Byrne as new Regional President

Mon Oct 12 – Club Meeting + Prep for Conference

Mon Oct 26 – Social TBA

Thu 29 to Sat 31 Oct – SIGBI Annual Conference Belfast "We Stand Up for Women" www.sigbi.org/belfast2020/

Mon 9 Nov – Club Meeting + Feedback from Oct Region Meeting (note Nov 19 is World Toilet Day)

Mon 23 Nov – Soroptimist Event from the Violence Against Women Team (Nov 25 is the Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and starts 16 days of action 25 Nov to 10 Dec Human Rights Day)

Sat 28 Nov Earthworks Christmas Fair www.earthworksstalbans.co.uk

Mon Dec 7 – TBC – Carol singing at St Albans Station – fundraising event (note 10 Dec is Human Rights Day)

Sat 12 Dec – SI London Chilterns Region Human Rights Day event

The club programme is usually kept up-to-date on the Club website. Unfortunately there are problems at the moment with all of the SIGBI websites but hopefully will soon be back. We will let you know when it is up and running again.

www.sigbi.org/st-albans/club/programme/

Mary Moran has kindly sent these….

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR
IS NOT THE FACE IN MY MIND

My eyebrows are turning white.
Teeth don't belong to me.
Joints crack and call the doctor
on their own.
My kitchen doesn't remember
why I came.
Seats suddenly appear on
the train.
Everybody's going deaf
I thought I would have stopped
being twelve by now.



Here are 2 current news briefs:
Only in America:
A priest has begun taking
drive-through confessions. 🤪

Only in America:
A man tipped the delivery driver
with toilet paper.



Thank you Mary

Here is a General Knowledge Quiz for you use to while away some time

1. In which town is the smallest pub in the UK?

2. What colour is a polar bear's skin?

3. What is another name for passion fruit?

4. What percentage of air is oxygen?

5. In the title of 1930 Evelyn Waugh's novel which word precedes 'Bodies'?

6. Mariposa, Farfalla and Sommerfugl are European words for what?

7. Which country invented hot dogs?

8. Which bone are babies born without?

9. Which two countries share the longest international border?

10. Which coffee chain did Madonna work at?

11. In which African country is Windhoek the capital?

12. Who was the last Tudor monarch?

13. Why was the Ukrainian town of Pripyat in the news in 1986?

14. What type of animal is a schipperke?

15. Who wrote the book of verse called 'Now We Are Six'?

16. What colour is the semi precious stone malachite?

17. Which composer wrote the Eroica symphony?

18. What is the proper word for the funny bone?

19. What is the common name for the wild plant Urtica dioica?

20. Who was burned at the stake in Romeland in 1555?

(Question courtesy of "Local Girls" Quiz Team – thank you)

Whoever sends me the first answer with all questions correctly answered will get a small prize from me when we get back together again. *Jean*

This is from Kat to help us on our way…

10 Things to Remember

1. You are not in this alone – even if you are living alone reach out to friends by phone, letter, email, social media or other means of virtual chats. They will appreciate hearing from you.

2. This will end - we might not be able to see the end yet but countries like China and Italy have seen a significant drop in new cases.

3. Staying inside saves lives.

4. It's okay to feel scared or lonely. Reach out to one of your buddy group or another SISTA for support.

5. You are loved and your friends and loved ones miss your company, even on your bad days.

6. You cannot control another's behaviour. Focus on what is within your control, your own behaviour and words.

7. Not everything you read or see will be accurate. Avoid sensationalist media reports and stick to trusted sources like the NHS, Government websites, WHO, etc.

8. Try to get daily sunshine, fresh air and exercise - you can get all of these without leaving your home, you just need to be creative.

9. Learn to enjoy the quiet - listen out for birdsong, rain, running water, all the sounds of nature that normally gets drown out by the sounds of traffic and crowds.

10. Seek out the positive, however small.

Some more advice from Kat…

Useful Links for Things to do at Home and Sources of Support

St Albans and Hertsmere Community First

If you need help (shopping, dog walking/pet hosting, telephone tech support for online shopping or using skype/facetime etc) whilst isolated, you (or someone on your behalf) can make contact. You will then be either matched with one of the Compassionate Community Connector volunteers, offered support immediately or signposted/referred on to a local voluntary/community organisation.
Complete an online form at www.communitiest1st.org.uk/covid19support
or call Communities 1st on 020 8207 5115 or email help@communities1st.org.uk

Librivox

Free audiobooks https://librivox.org/

Open Culture

Free cultural and educational resources http://www.openculture.com/

Duolingo

Free online or app-based language lessons www.duolingo.com/learn

Coursera

Free online educational courses www.coursera.org/

Khan Academy

Popcorn Flix Free online films https://www.popcornflix.com/pages/discover/d/movies

Classic Cinema Online

Free classic films https://classiccinemaonline.com/

The National Geographic

Free documentaries, news and photography https://www.nationalgeographic.com/

Unclutterer

US website with tips on decluttering. https://unclutterer.com/

International Space Station

Use the NASA website to find out when the ISS passes over your town
https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/sightings/

Samaritans

Support and a listening ear 24hours a day, 7 days a week.
Tel: 116 123 or Email: jo@samaritans.org

Silverline

Free confidential helpline providing information,friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year
www.thesilverline.org.uk/ Phone 0800 4 708090

7 Cups

International online service offering listening ear to people who need a chat.
https://www.7cups.com/

Thank you Kat – two pages of helpful tips.

This is from Jane – things to help you with your spare time…….

1. free audio books from amazon in 6 languages
stories.audible.com/discovery

2. Free virtual Visits to 17 European museums.
https://www.demotivateur.fr/article/visiter-des-musees-sans-bouger-de-son-canape-le-plan-parfait-pendant-la-quarantaine-19057

3. 700 Free books from Cambridge press
https://www.cambridge.org/core/what-we-publish/textbooks#

4. Free broadway shows
https://www.insider.com/stream-broadway-musicals-plays-for-free-online-limited-time-coronavirus-2020-3

This from Helen sent from St Albans Trust

Please pass the information on to anyone you know in St Albans that may need some financial help. There are bound to be schemes in other areas too.

"If you are 60 or over and struggling financially at this difficult time please consider contacting St Albans Old People's Trust. We give grants to people 60 or over, across the District, in need hardship or distress eg we can pay for Meals on Wheels or groceries (but unfortunately cannot arrange deliveries). If a vital kitchen appliance has broken we will try and get it replaced, as the shop we use is still doing installations (taking all precautions).

We have a short form which we can fill over the phone and a decision is usually made within 5 days.

Contact: 07541 659442. grants.admin@staopt.org. Details and application form also on our website staopt.org. If you prefer calling a landline call 01727 260701 and leave a message, as the office is closed but we can pick up your message from home.

The Trust has been established as a registered charity 222522 for 20 years and was set up with proceeds from the sale of Glenalmond nursing home on King Harry Lane and the gift of 2 other properties from elderly residents."

Also

I recently found this helpful link from the District Council :
https://www.enjoystalbans.com/offers-3/
It lists businesses in St Albans and some in Harpenden offering services at the moment - including online ordering, delivery, collections , emergency services e.g. mending glasses and info about Virtual events. We have ordered deliveries from several local restaurants so far so I shall be investigating the list for more opportunities ...

Thanks Helen

And Jane adds…

Also don't forget that as a Soroptimist if you need some help SIGBI has the Benevolent Fund. Just contact Jean Eaton jean.eaton43@gmail.com and she will handle any enquiries confidentially.

Yes I will - from Jean

We are now into the Club New Year

It is hard to believe that Kat Clark's year as President has finished. Our AGM is of course cancelled and will be briefly held at our next meeting whenever that might be. Executive Officers of the Club will produce reports by the end of April and they will be circulated as they would if we were going to have an AGM. Meanwhile we think positive and hope it will not be too long before we can all meet again. President Kat would have handed over to the President-elect, but Ameeta Sabharwal is unable to take on the responsibility for a year because of other commitments. As a result, the Executive members of the 3 Project Teams are sharing the year between them, and it looks as if it will be an exciting time. Kat, from SEW team will continue until August with Sarah Lichman's help chairing meetings, then the Violence against Women team will take over from September until Christmas, Denise Powell and Ameeta taking the chair. Jane Slatter and Barbara Saunders (President-elect) from Learning Opportunities will cover January until the AGM in 2021 which will lead nicely into Barbara's Presidential year.

Can you help us?

Our Club, like all voluntary organisations, depends on its really useful Members to keep the Club going, organise events, and manage the routine business so that we can all enjoy the Programme, make friends, contribute to local activities and continue to raise money for good causes. We also need to recruit new Members to ensure our Club remains viable. Our priorities for the forthcoming year will be based on the SIGBI themes in which "An equal world is an enabled world" enabling women and girls to play a full part in their communities, through equality, empowerment and education. The environment will also feature significantly next year because of the Climate Emergency and need for urgent action. We will also be Standing up for Women through our ongoing commitment to end violence against women, helping those who have suffered, and trying to understand and improve mental health. To achieve our common goals, we need help on the Executive and are looking for Members who will be prepared to take on roles in the future. In particular, we desperately need a new Secretary to take over from Barbara or share the responsibility. It gives a fascinating insight into all the things that are going on in the Club ,and brings you to the heart of the action. Come and talk to Barbara if you are willing to give it a go or want to know more of what is involved. We have a new Membership Officer (Ameeta), and relatively new Treasurer (Sarah) who are doing great work. Our Communications within the Club and through Social Media rely wholly on Jane's expertise, time and devotion. The Regional Representative (Janet A-C) keeps in touch with Region and communicates with those who are attending regional meetings. Friendship link co-ordinators (Jean, Joan, Rita/Barbara, Catherine and now Jane) correspond with our linked Clubs overseas. Jean takes an interest in the welfare of Members, sorts the coffee rota and organises coffee mornings, and Joan can be relied on for supplies. But it would be helpful to have some more volunteers who can get involved, see what happens at Exec and perhaps volunteer to assist with arrangements for Club meetings, socials and booking speakers.



Barbara/Jean

From Barbara…

Girls' and Women's Cricket - It is good to have some good news and be able to look forward to a time beyond the immediate crisis. Earlier this year, I attended a meeting with the local club coaches who are responsible for local girls' cricket. This is an annual meeting where the plans for the year are discussed including topics such as the length of the boundary at different ages, the number of overs, the rules for different types of competition to encourage beginners to have fun, stick with it and improve their skills, and when to use soft balls and ultimately the hard ball which the adults use. Technical but vital to encourage and foster girls and women's cricket in an age very different from when our own Member Audrey Collins was playing and inspiring others to take up the sport. At that meeting, it was agreed that the Under 15s League this year will be the Audrey Collins League although at the moment everything is on hold until restrictions on movement are eased. The English Cricket Board is very focussed on the top level of women cricket and trying to narrow the gap with Australia. We believe that such excellence, must be built on firm foundations, which means having enough girls coming through to play at all levels of the game and sustain healthy grass-roots girls' teams through their teenage years. Our Club's Executive agreed this week to contribute £200 from our Cricket Fund for the purchase of trophies to encourage a new competition and support the ongoing activity. The new East of England county championship is intended to help our young county players get more matches in a 50 overs competition and we will fund 'The Soroptimist Shield' (like the Audrey Collins Shield) which we expect to be used for the next 10 years. Individual trophies will be provided for the batter and bowler of the competition. We will also provide a cup for the Herts T20 festival for girls, and trophy for the player of the tournament. It is not clear whether the Finals day planned for 19 July will go ahead, but it is hoped that at least 3 of the new 50 over matches can be played and that the T20 festival on 6 September will happen. It will be all the more important to encourage the girls to keep playing after a few months without any matches or training.

Re Quiz : Exec has agreed to postpone the Quiz until March next year because there are likely to be lots of rearranged events in the autumn. A date will be announced in due course.

Barbara

Friendship Links

Chico.

They are in lockdown in a similar way to us.

Muenster.

They also. Sylvia and Axel Vornhecke, who many of us have met, are hoping to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary in June but wonder now if it will happen.

Osaka

Helen has sent best wishes and received a reply from their President to tell me they are all well but had sadly had to postpone their 50th Anniversary celebration in May.

Seychelles

Also in lockdown with new local cases. They say " I do hope that humanity will come out the better from it all."

Warsaw

Also in partial lockdown.

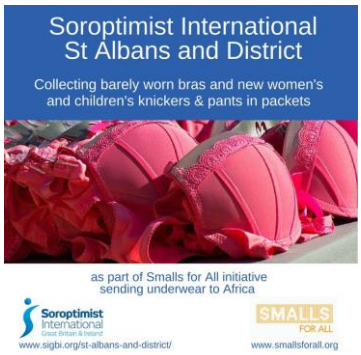
Messages have been sent to all our links to say that we are thinking of them at this difficult time, hoping they are managing, and sharing some experiences of living in partial lockdown

Please don't forget to always let Denise Powell or Sarah Lichman know if you change your telephone number or address so that we can keep our records straight. Denise will update the Contact Sheet and Sarah will advise SIGBI if you haven't already done it on your on-line SIGBI Membership record. Also Jane Slatter needs to know if you change your email address please!





Dont forget to still collect …



…your milk bottle tops, 'gently' used bras, uses postage stamps, broken jewellery. Save them up and bring them along to club when we next meet. All go to a good cause

Also when you are shopping why not get an extra packet of tea or coffee, bring it along to club and it will go the Womens' Refuge - they get through a lot of "Cuppas" !!!

Region Meetings are held quarterly. If you have never been to a Region meeting I would recommend it as they are always very interesting. **Also don't forget that if you are a "first timer" to a Region Meeting, you will receive £10 for a London meeting or £15 for an out of London one toward your expenses. If you are going and never been before mention it to Sarah. We are very honoured in that Denise Powell is the current Regional President and from October Helen Byrne will be following in her footsteps**

Groan from Jean solution

A Comb!!!! ***Sorry….***

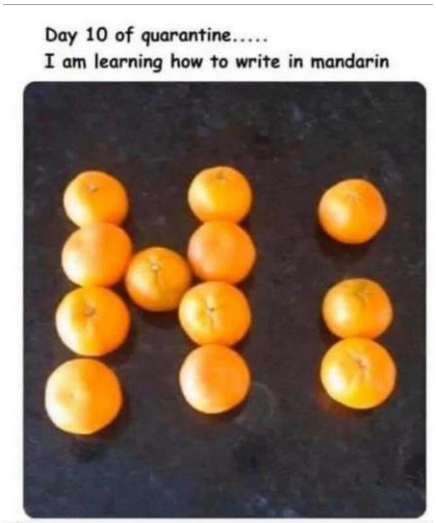
Stop press

After Kat's nasty fall she has now had the pins removed from her broken finger which is mending nicely…

Jane is a Grandma again to Hannah Lily 7th April 9lb 1oz. Congratulations to all.

Note from the Editor

The next newsletter will be in June so if you have anything you would like to put in, please send it to me, no need to wait until then, get it off your desk on to mine and I will make sure it is included. If you have an interesting story to share with us, a comment about the Club or a particular item you would like to air or an interesting holiday story. If you have a favourite famous woman in business, art, history, music, and I am sure you all know SOMEONE!!! I would also love to hear of any anecdotes of how people are coping with this crisis. Some of the stories I have heard have been amazing. Please tell me!!! There are some daft things being shared at the moment – I hope this one here will amuse….



If you have any news of members - be it yourself or another member (with their permission of course) that you think we can share do please let me know. Maybe you might like to do a "Letter to the Editor" with any comments about our club - could be a new section! Or if you want to be the Q&A subject just let me know…

Thank you to all those have contributed to this letter, it's a great help.

If you have any problems at this time or need any help please let me know and I will do what I can.

I look forward to hearing from you, Jean

Jean Eaton jean.eaton43@gmail.com

www.sigbi.org/st-albans



As part of General Data Protection Regulation please advise if you don't want to be contacted by us in the future.