Soroptimist International
St Albans & District



www.sigbi.org/st-albans

Newsletter January 2021

Letter from the Editor

Friends,
Well, here we are still in lockdown but now awaiting a vaccination which we hope will bring some sort of closure to this difficult time. Some of us older Members I know had had their first "jab" so progress IS being made. It is hard for us all, maybe for different reasons. Some may be, like me, living alone and feeling very isolated or perhaps worrying about jobs and/or our children. Either way it is a difficult time for everybody. All the more reason to try and attend some of the Zoom meetings or pick up the telephone. I am trying to do both.



I have just finished a jigsaw, a whacky one which is a cartoon collage of Alice in Wonderland – see on the left.

Please remember that if you feel you would like to have a chat with me or any Member of the Club's Exec do please just pick up the phone or send an email. We might just also be fancying a chat…. When you are out, I know not so much these days, but smile at people and they will often smile back 😊

I am finding lots of Zoom lectures, some free others not, but most are very interesting, it is just finding a subject you are interested in. I have been keen on art lectures by Stella Grace Lyons (just look on the website stellagracelyons.co.uk) she is excellent and costs only £8 for an hour.

Do let me know what sort of things you are doing to pass the time – any new languages, exercise regimes, interesting books????

Keep well,

Jean Eaton (Editor)

Groan from Jean….

How can I stick a pin in a balloon without making a noise or the balloon releasing air?





Christmas Greetings we have received :-



From IPI in Meru, Kenya
We have supported International Peace Initiatives (IPI) over a number of years. They have achieved a lot in that time, including work for young widows and schooling for children.



Dr Karumbu Ringera, our friend and IPI Founder says:-
Dear SI Family and Friends! This is to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, Blessed Holidays, and a fabulous 2021!
Thank you for your love and support over the years!
From all of us at KACH (Kithoka Amani Community Home – one of the IPI projects).
With much love!

From our Friendship Link SI Chico, USA
Their President sent a lovely photo of Bidwell Park local to Chico. And they send a quotation "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks." *John Muir.*

From our Friendship Link, Muenster Germany
They send warm wishes for a safe healthy and optimistic 2021. Later we will receive a report of their Club activities over the year and thank us for the Newsletter as it's a great way to keep in contact

From Aldbury Wodonga Club in Australia
This is a friendship link we no longer have because the Club sadly closed, however, a past Member and visitor to St Albans, Holly Cotterell sent Christmas Greetings to us all.

We have also received many greetings from around the world with good wishes for Christmas and 2021.

Friendship Links

SI Chico USA

We have had a Friendship link with Chico for many years and some of us have been fortunate enough to visit their Club which has 100 members!!!. Our link is Margaret Van Laan Martin who tells of how they are all missing their Theatre visits, meals out and meeting with each other. As we do, but main thing is to keep safe and well. They too have been Zooming a lot. Not only have they had Covid to deal with but also some devastating fires. Margaret was evacuated in 2019 and last year there more fires but luckily she managed to stay put this time! They have a 100 year Legacy Project led by their President Billie Araiza in which they are funding the Girl Scouts of Northern California who need a pavilion and bathroom at their programme centre. Another of their projects is "Dream It Be It" and "Live Your Dream" awards where young girls and adult women receive help to overcome their struggles in life. SI Chico have their hearts and thoughts connected in spirit with themselves and us and like us look forward to the day when we can all get together again.

SI Osaka in Japan



"I'm Tomoko Kobayashi.
I am the chairman of this year's IGU (International Goodwill and Understanding).
Keiko Shinke is the chairman of SI Osaka this year.

I saw a lot of very interesting newsletters.
It looks fine and above all we are currently holding regular meetings while maintaining social distance."

(*from Jean – I am pleased to hear they enjoy our newsletter*!)

Muenster in Germany and Warsaw in Poland

We will be hearing soon of the latest news from them. Will share it in the next newsletter.

Don't forget - SIGBI Benevolent Fund

The Benevolent Fund is a confidential fund available to ease financial difficulties for those who apply.

The Fund can give a quarterly payment to help cover outgoings or a one-off payment to help cover an unexpected item. Discretionary help may be considered for such items as utility bills, telephone bills, essential living expenses or house maintenance.
Any Soroptimist who has been a member for 3 years or more, living in the UK including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man and the Republic of Ireland can apply. Support is given subject to simple confidential financial checks.
How to apply ? If a Member would like to apply, contact Rita who will talk through the application process.

Rita Beaumont – Fund Trustee and SI London Chilterns SIGBI Councillor
Email r.beaumont3@ntlworld.com Phone 01234 401475 Mobile 07764511006

The St Albans & Hertsmere Womens' Refuge sahwr.org.uk

I am enjoying my stint as the contact between our Club and the Refuge. The ladies who work there that I have met have all been delightful. They are so grateful for what we do. When we did the project last year to help set up a new house they were a bit overwhelmed at how much "stuff" we gave them and told me that they had been able to use everything. At the time we also topped them up with tea and coffee etc to keep them all sustained.

Just before Christmas we once again rose to the occasion
And gave them lots of gifts which would be used for the ladies (and gents) on Christmas Day. It seems they went down really well (see on the right the pile on my dining table).



At the same time we once again topped up their tea coffee etc supplies – see below.



I have received a very nice "thank you" letter from them. They say "on behalf of the management committee staff and residents they express their immense thanks for our very generous donations. If anybody would like to see the letter do please ask me as I have it on my file.

I know we are not meeting at present and don't know yet when we can, can I ask if you can purchase an extra packet of tea or biscuits, coffee or shower gel for the ladies (and a few gents). You can hang on to them until we can meet, drop them in to me, or I can always come and collect, just ask.

I have had a few offers of unwanted items with the thought that the Refuge might be able to use them. On each occasion I have asked and the answer is thank you, but no. They do appreciate this and if you do have anything, let me know and I can always ask the question. I know they have a little storage space so the consumable items are ideal for them. Sarah, our Treasurer, has received a donation of £500 for the Refuge from lady who is not one of our Members. This has been passed on to them with thanks from us and a big thank you from the Refuge. How kind people are.

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Recycle 4 Charity

As a club we have been recycling our ink cartridges and raising some extra money for the Womens' Refuge. To date we have raised £30.50 for which I, and the Womens Refuge thank you. Recycle for Charity are changing the way that they collect these cartridges. Instead of using the individual envelopes if you could bear to keep your cartridges for me and I will send them en masse. They are sending me boxes so I can send 15 at a time and I have printed labels ready to use. When we do meet again I will collect all the cartridges you have saved for me and then send them off. If,meanwhile you are not happy to store them you can always pop them round to me or I will come and collect if you let me know. It ticks two of our boxes to do this – recycling and raising money for charity – seems like a win win to me!!
With some of our members now working from home perhaps there are more cartridges to recycle.
Any problems do please contact me and I am sure we can sort them out between us. Any envelopes you currently have, if you could recycle them now with your other papers. They will no longer accept envelopes.

Many thanks - Jean

In April we will be Introducing our new Club President, **Barbara Saunders**. I asked her a few questions about herself and of her feelings about becoming President of our club. She says:-



Barbara is pictured here on the occasion of her induction into our Club in 2017. She has Helen Byrne, Membership Officer at that time and now our Regional President on her left and Denise Powell Club President at that time and now our Immediate Past Regional President on her right.

1 *How did you hear of our organisation and what made you want to join?*
I knew of the local Club as it met in Greenwood Park where I play tennis, and had participated in a couple of good quizzes at the invitation of Past President, Helen. The real catalyst, however, was Judy Faraday who was speaking at a local U3A group. After a particularly appalling AGM, I was in the process of leaving, when I bumped into Judy who said 'You need to join Soroptimists!' Needless to say, I followed her back into the hall for an inspirational talk about being an archivist for John Lewis and the rest is history!

2 *Now you have been a member for a while and indeed our Secretary, in what ways are you happy to be a Member?* The Club is small, and that makes it easy to get to know people and make new friends. This is particularly so when we meet face to face and engage in activities together such as the bookstall, and fundraising events for really important local causes such as the Refuge, and international project action, such as Toilet Twinning. However, the highlights of my time as a Soroptimist have been the visits I made to the Centenary of Votes for Women in Poland, and SI Warsaw's visit to St Albans, SIGBI's Conference in Cardiff, the Club's involvement in encouraging participation and leadership skills among girls and women through cricket and interviewing girls at St Alban's Girl's School as part of their personal development programme.

3 *What would you like to see change during your year. If anything?* After a year of lock down, I would love to meet in person again, even if it is small groups planting trees, celebrating the centenary year and having some fun together again! Zoom has allowed us to engage with a wider community of fascinating women, have meetings with inspirational speakers and virtual meetings with friendship iinks overseas. The big challenge moving forward will be to use technology to our advantage, having mixed events including people present in the room and others on Zoom; maintaining and improving our profile, and being flexible so we can encourage new Members to offer their ideas and get involved.

4 *What are your interests outside of Soroptimism?* I'm naturally quite self-contained and have inherited a devotion to duty from my Mother – whether it be to public life or helping look after my family, aged from 6 months to 94 and spread out across England and Wales. So there is quite a lot of travelling to Wales, walking on the Gower coast and chilling with a good book and glass of wine in all seasons! I have played tennis all my life, and love to watch live play when I get the chance. Eastbourne and Wimbledon are regular features in my diary. All the family are keen on sport; so Welsh rugby, Watford Football Club and walking all feature in our regular commitments. Having a young grandson who is football mad also gets me out pitch side to watch him play for Hemel Blues on Sunday mornings. I'm not a good cook, but the kitchen is my home from home and I like to grow and prepare as much of my own food as possible.

5 *Do you have a favourite film or TV programme?*
I don't really have a favourite film, but Nordic Noir features highly in my TV entertainment. My husband and I are currently enjoying the final series of 'Engrenages' (French for Spiral) about episodes of crime in France.

Thanks Barbara – enjoy your year!

Events since our last newsletter

November 25-10 Dec - 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence

On 9 Nov, To mark the United Nations 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence, Jude Tisdall presented the brilliant new 1 hour film about **domestic abuse in the traveller community** called "Never Going to Beat You". The film was followed by a Q&A on Zoom. www.sigbi.org/st-albans/2020/16days



For more information and resources go to:
www.travellermovement.org.uk/advocacy-support/woman-girls/domestic-violence-and-sexual-abuse-project



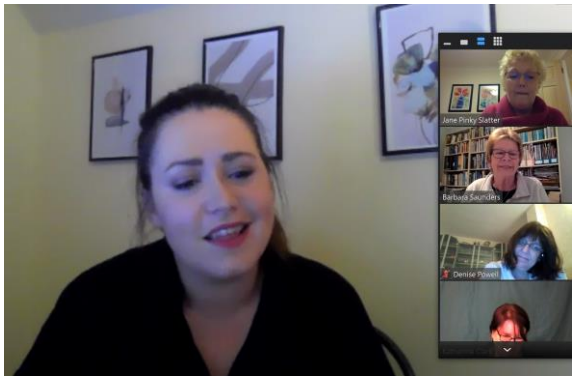
25 Nov marked the **International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women** Thanks to the Museum and St Albans City and District Council for lighting the museum, making this happen for the first time! It remained orange until Monday 30 Nov when it changed to Christmas colours. Well done to Ameeta for asking! The story made it into the Herts Advertiser www.hertsad.co.uk/news/museum-orange-for-action-against-gender-based-violence-1-6946806 This article was followed by some great editorial for the following two weeks about Domestic Abuse and support services – including an interview with our own Denise Powell about the Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline.

Dec 14th There was a virtual **Christmas meeting**. As we couldn't sing carols at the station this year or have our meal our we raised our glasses to each other on Zoom.



25th December, Christmas Day there was a **virtual Balloon Race**. Our Members and others paid £3 for each balloon, choosing its name shape etc. The first prize of an Ipad was won by Barbara's daughter's partner who was delighted. £232 was raised to be shared between the Womens' Refuge and Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline.

New Member at First Meeting of the New Club Year and Soroptimist Centenary!
www.sigbi.org/st-albans/2021/1st-club At the Jan 11th Zoom meeting we officially welcomed Louise Marron as a new Member. Louise – we welcome you to our Club and look forward to actually meeting you. We also heard from our Regional President Helen Byrne about plans for the Soroptimist International Centenary Year to inspire us to think of ideas for our Club this year.



There is much more about all of these events on our web site www.sigbi.org/st-albans under Club News

100 Years old!!!!!!!!!!!

Our Soroptimist organisation is 100 this year! We are trying to think of things we could do to celebrate.

I came up with the idea of, as a Club, walking round the lake in Verulam park 100 times.
I had the idea for this, flippantly mentioned it to the exec, forgetting that that meant I would be organising it!!!!

Ok here are my thoughts thus far….

We can park nearby, meet somewhere by the lake and take over one of the seats there (assuming it is not flooded again) I am thinking that between us we could do 100 circuits of the lake. Some might like to do 1 some maybe up to 5. It should not be impossible to do as we can bring friends, husbands, children and even dogs! I would be happy to keep the records so that we know we have achieved our goal. I am not thinking of it as a fund raiser but maybe some publicity. I am not sure if I need to get permission for this but can make enquiries. An easy walk. it takes about 10-15 minutes to do a circuit.



When, I don't know but of course it would have to be when there are fewer restrictions than now.

I would be very pleased to have a small group of Members helping on the day or helping make all the arrangements.

Please let me know if you might be interested in helping either on the day or thinking how to make it happen.

Also, if YOU have any ideas for celebrating this anniversary, do let me or the Exec know. We are looking for ideas.

Jean



Membership Record – are your details correct?
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 Club records straight and please let Jane know if you change your email address for the email distribution list. The best way to let SIGBI know about changes is to update your own Membership record on the SIGBI Membership database (you need your Membership number to access) – it is a good idea to check what's there anyway sigbi.org/members Denise updates the Contact Sheet and Sarah will advise SIGBI, if you haven't already done it.

From our Treasurer, Sarah Lichman Causes supported October to December 2020

Along with our own reduced activity there were only limited financial transactions during the last quarter. Nevertheless, I think we should be proud that we were able to support very worthwhile causes in the following ways:

It was great to transfer **£1000** to **Herts Rape Crisis**. This was the amount we raised during Kat's year of presidency. Given that they have had to work from home during the pandemic and incurred extra expenses this impressive amount was very much appreciated by the charity.
We gave a donation of **£200** to the **Steve Sinnott Foundation** for their **Period Poverty** project. We took this from the Club's Education Fund which is now closed. We received a lovely letter of thanks from them.
We paid an early 'end of year' donation to **Homestart Herts** from the Club's Diamond Legacy fund. We did this in December rather than our year end in March so that they benefited from an offer doubling up on any donations received around Christmas time.
We raised **£250** from the showing of the powerful film about domestic abuse in the traveller community and this has been paid over to the charity the **Traveller Movement**. We have had a lovely thank you letter from them.
As usual we made a donation in lieu of Christmas cards. This year it was **£70 to the SI Road to Equality** appeal.
We had an amazing **£500** donation from a non-member specifically for the **St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge**. I paid that over and the donor received a lovely appreciative letter from Liz at the Refuge.

End of Year Donations – Recommendations Please
It is almost time to make decisions about our usual **end of year donations** which are paid from the Club's Diamond Legacy fund. If anyone has any causes that they would like to suggest please let me know in the next couple of weeks. Given the very difficult year that we have had there are many people in need of support including our 'usual' causes. I do think, however, that it would be great to have the opportunity to consider others.

Finally, I monitor and manage our account with **Lendwithcare** and am pleased to say that despite their warning of the pandemic impacting loan repayments we have received regular credits. We are now almost £70 in credit so I will keep an eye out for further groups to support. Our current loans have been made to the following groups: Munga 0103, Chilungamo 3 and Chingoma. You can find their details on the Lendwithcare website lendwithcare.org

Hopefully, it won't be too long before we can all meet in person once again. Sarah

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From our member Ameeta Sabharwal who has set up a new business
We invited Ameeta to share information here – just contact her to find out more.

Light up your day the AVES way
There is something comforting and hopeful about candlelight – a little, flickering heart of pure scented magic.

For more than 5,000 years, candles have been used as a source of light and to illuminate celebrations. Today, candles symbolise a celebration, ignite romance, soothe the senses, honour a ceremony, and instantly cast a warm fragranced glow making our homes cosy, inviting and calm.
AVES candles are lovingly hand crafted using 100 per cent natural, clean burning soy wax (no unsightly black soot) and vegan and cruelty-free fragrances.
AVES candles will be pleased to offer complimentary local deliveries using Coupon Code RADNOW.
For more information, head to the website at www.avescandles.co.uk



Thanks Ameeta

Would you like to be on the Club's Executive Committee and take responsibility for managing the Club and shaping it's future?

Our AGM is held in the latter part of April each year and that is when we choose our new Executive Committee.

For the current year our Officers are:-

President May to Aug – Katherine Clark and Sarah Lichman
President Sep to Dec – Denise Powell and Ameeta Sabharwal
President Jan to Apr – Barbara Saunders and Jane Slatter
President Elect: Barbara Saunders
Secretary: Barbara Saunders (caretaker), shadow minute secretary Debbie Tankard
Past President: Katherine Clark
Treasurer: Sarah Lichman
Programme Action: Denise Powell
Membership: Ameeta Sabharwal
Welfare: Jean Eaton
Communications: Jane Slatter
Regional Rep: Janet Audley-Charles
International Project : Diana Kingham

For next year (starting this coming April) we will have
President - Barbara
President Elect - vacancy – role is to shadow Barbara, help her when needed and prepare for her year as President April 2022/23
Vice President – vacancy - April 2023/24
Secretary – Kat Clark but would like to share with another member
Past President – as per this year's shared presidency
Treasurer: Sarah Lichman
Programme Action: Denise Powell
Membership: Ameeta Sabharwal
Communications: Jane Slatter
Regional Rep: Janet Audley-Charles
International Project : Diana Kingham
Welfare: Jean Eaton (non exec)

If any of our members would like to know more about any of these roles do please get in touch. It would not mean a commitment – you need to know more before even thinking about any of them



Dates for the diary for the rest of this year (our Club year is from April)

Jan to Apr Jane Slatter and Barbara Saunders to chair meetings

Mon 1 Feb – Cuppa on Zoom – 4pm – all are welcome – just drop in from 4pm onwards – Members will be sent the link. If you'd like to join us for a natter please email sistalbans@hotmail.com

Mon 8 Feb – Club Meeting - details to be issued soon…

Mon 22 Feb **– Dr Margaret Ashwell OBE** Margaret is a public health nutritionist, also the biographer of Elsie Widdowson. Picking up on our theme of women inspiring action and transforming lives, Margaret will speak about 'Elsie Widdowson- a woman who inspired action in the world of diet and health'. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elsie_Widdowson

Mon 1 Mar – Cuppa on Zoom – 4pm – all are welcome

Mon 8 Mar – Club Meeting (note 8 Mar Int'l Women's Day)

Sat 13 Mar – SI London Chilterns Region Meeting/Conference and Celebration of International Women's Day Zoom 10am to 1pm

Mon 22 Mar – Speaker – Club Member Linda Shall on Sustainability

Mon 5 Apr – Cuppa on Zoom – 4pm – all are welcome

Mon 12 Apr – Club Meeting – Rotarian Fiona Miles will tell us about the work of the charity Global Sight Solutions www.globalsightsolutions.org marking 7th Apr World Health Day

Mon 26 Apr – AGM details to be announced.

Dont forget.....



To hang on to your your milk bottle tops, used postage stamps or broken jewellery. Also your gently worn bras and unused pants in packs as we hope in due course to continue sending to Smalls for All again soon.

Bring them along to club when we next meet. All go to a good cause. The milk bottle tops go to Lush so if you are passing one of their shops, when they are open again, perhaps you can take them in there if you are running out of places to store them.

Any packets of tea, jars coffee, shower gels or shampoo also bring along for me to take to the Refuge, You can deliver to my address or ask me to collect.

Groan from Jean solution

The balloon isn't inflated!!



Note from the Editor

The next newsletter will be in May 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. Perhaps you would rather deliver your "life talk" in writing rather than present it verbally, 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. Perhaps you have some "tales of the epidemic". Tell us if you have a favourite famous woman in business, art, history, music, and I am sure you all know SOMEONE!!!

If you have any news of Members - be it yourself or another Member (with their permission of course) that you think we would like to 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! Perhaps some ideas for things we can do when we get back to whatever the new normal is.



. *I look forward to hearing from you, Jean*

If you want any further information on anything do look at the website
www.sigbi.org/st-albans

Jean Eaton *jean.eaton43@gmail.com*

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

