Soroptimist International St Albans & District



www.sigbi.org/st-albans

Newsletter May 2020

Letter from your Editor

Hello ladies

I can't believe I am doing another Newsletter so soon after the other one but I thought it would give us a bit of continuity as we are not all zooming!

I have continued to ring some of our members who are on their own and all seem to be ok but again if I have missed you, why not call me and have a short chat. I live alone so am always pleased to hear, it's good to know that everybody is ok. If you are not and think we can help in some way, do please let me know and I will see what we can do to help. Don't forget that as a Soroptimist if you need some financial help SIGBI has the Benevolent Fund. Just contact me, Jean Eaton jean.eaton43@gmail.com and I will handle any enquiries confidentially.

Jane Slatter and Kat Clark are organising some Zoom meetings and have been having virtual coffee mornings which seem to have gone down well. Watch out for the emails with details. They would be delighted if you can join in or if you want any help, Jane, Kat or Helen Byrne I am sure will be pleased to advise. Even Joan (by phone) and I (by old iPad) managed to join and enjoy the virtual club meeting on Monday 18th May – more about that later – so do join in if you can.



I expect many of us will be clapping to thank our health service and key workers – this one is of Jane on her doorstep kindly taken by Jack, Jane's husband.
How about we have lots of pics and make a collage of them? Just send them to to Jane.



I need to social distance my fridge in order to flatten my curve!!!!!

Don't forget if you are putting a new cartridge into your printer use one of our recycle envelopes and pop them in the post. You will be helping our refuge and recycling at the same time. If you need more envelopes let me know and I will get some to you.
Keep well and safe, Jean Eaton

Groan from Jean....

Why are 1984 bottles of whiskey more valuable than 1977 bottles of the same whiskey?

Answer at the end.



Thanks Kat! As a thank you to Kat for being our President last year we made a gift – which Kat would have been presented with at the AGM – she loves it – especially the cat in the corner…

From Jane Slatter on behalf of Exec

A New Club Year and New Teams for Programme Action/Club Projects – the P's. The Club rearranged the Projects/Programme Action into Teams a number of years ago now to put Programme Action at the heart of the Club, to allow the Club to be more focused in its project work and so that all Members would feel more engaged with projects of particular interest to them. The Teams were aligned with the Soroptimist International (SI) Programme areas and after some adjustments our Club has everyone being a Member of one of these 3 Teams:

VAW – Violence Against Women
SEW – Sustainable Environment and Wellbeing
LO – Learning Opportunities

The new Programme areas defined by SI to align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the 5 Ps:
Peace, Planet, People, Prosperity, Partnerships
The proposed plan is that the Club changes the teams as they stand to align with the rest of the organisation. The obvious ones for us to have are:

Peace - this would cover VAW – projects to end and support violence against women
Planet – this would cover the SE part of SEW – projects related to sustainability and the environment
People – this would cover LO and the W part of SEW – projects covering learning opportunities/education and wellbeing/health.
The work the Club does on **Prosperity** at the moment is via the "Lend With Care" project that Sarah Lichman administers for us.
Partnerships – this is the work we do with outside organisations so this Programme area goes across all of our work.

Which Team would you like to be in? Peace Planet or People?

When we changed to Project Teams we always wanted people to feel it was ok to switch teams – or to work with a Team other than their own on Projects of particular interest. So please decide which Team will be the most attractive to you. You can be in more than one Team, but please don't overload yourself.
Katherine Clark will send out a survey for you to say which team you'd like to be in or alternatively you can send an email to sistalbans@hotmail.com Once we have the new Teams they will be able to meet up online or by telephone to start thinking about what projects we can achieve as a Club during and post lockdown.

Exciting times ahead!

Farewell to SISTAs



It is with sadness that the Club says “au revoir” to Rita Andrews – a Member of the Club for 8 years and past President 2017/18.
Rita is moving out of the area to a new home and we wish her every happiness. Jane sent Rita this card from the Club which would have been presented to her at our AGM…

Rita sent us a thank you for her “lovely surprise. She is gradually packing up her home while she waits for her moving date.

There is news of some other Members who have decided not to renew there Membership – more in the next newsletter after Sarah has contacted everyone.

Clubs Officers for 2020/21

There is a full list of the Club’s Officers on the Club website
www.sigbi.org/st-albans/about-our-club/club-officers/
It is important to know that the Club is having a shared Presidency for 2020/21
May to Aug – Katherine Clark and Sarah Lichman
Sep to Dec – Denise Powell and Ameeta Sabharwal
Jan to Apr – Barbara Saunders and Jane Slatter
The Club’s Executive Officers are meeting by Zoom at the moment and if anyone would like to join them to find out more please just ask to be included – it’s not a secret and they do try to be transparent.

First Club Meeting on Zoom was a Success!



On Monday 18 May the Club held its first Virtual Club Meeting on Zoom – SISTAs in Lockdown
16 Members attended – plus the Club’s mascot Sally Bear (of course!). In the attached screen shot you can see Kat, Sally Bear, Sarah, Ameeta, Jean, Debbie, Diana, Denise, Janet A-C, Janet T, Barbara, Pamela, Helen and Bev. Joan joined us by telephone and Patsy joined after the photo was taken.
Kat and Sarah ran the meeting really well and we made some decisions about making additional donations to three local charities close to our hearts who are really in need of financial support at the moment – Home-Start Herts, the St Albans and Hertsmere Women’s Refuge and the Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline.
Everyone on the call shared their experiences of lockdown – challenges and successes.
To read more about it please see the website **www.sigbi.org/st-albans/2020/lockdown/**

We agreed that it was lovely to see/hear one another and that the meeting had been a great success therefore we are planning future virtual events for Club Members. The Club Programme includes dates and will be updated with details of themes and speakers as soon as they are confirmed www.sigbi.org/st-albans/club-programme/

What we are doing in Lockdown

Jane Slatter says : As the **Communications Officer** for our Club and for our Region I have been trying to keep everyone up to date with Soroptimist information and supporting people to communicate with one another - via email, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and telephone. Once I had tried **Zoom** I decided to be a paid subscriber so that I can host Zoom sessions for longer than 40 mins (the free version allows 40 mins). I seem to spend quite a bit of time hosting Zoom sessions - not just for the Club but with friends and family too. I have been learning how to update our new website - it looks better already but I do still have quite a bit of work to do on it - please take a look www.sigbi.org/st-albans

I am the co-chair of my local **Residents Association** in Watford and manage a Facebook Group to help keep everyone updated on what's happening during lockdown locally. I have been helping to co-ordinate a local church support group for families in need - sending out emails, posting on Facebook and Next Door meaning that last week they were able to deliver supplied to helped more than 200 families. My neighbour is turning pillowcases into scrubs laundry bags so I put a call out through the Residents Association again and so far she has received about 600 pillowcases.

I am also supporting my **Mum** during lockdown - she was 90 at the end of March. She is very active and is normally very busy running around all over the place so she is extremely frustrated with the lockdown, so one of my important jobs is to keep her buoyed up.

The worst thing is missing my **grandchildren** but we do have face to face activities via Zoom and WhatsApp and we are sent lots of photos and videos which is lovely - especially not being able to meet our new granddaughter Hannah or see Ellie and Leo on their birthdays. Max's home-education means that we are now pen-pals which is great fun.

Of course I am really lucky to have a super supportive **husband** Jack - I know all of this is the hardest for people living alone. Most days I'm just not sure where the time has gone!

From Jean Eaton I am not able to do any of my charity "stuff". Even the food bank where I help doesn't want anybody over 70 although they are continuing their service albeit in a slightly different way. I felt a bit redundant so am making lots of telephone calls to those I think might need them and have started doing jig saws and as you know doing more newsletters than I would normally.

Bev Keech sent us this to let us know what she was doing during this lockdown

I've been a qualified AT teacher for 30 years now and working part-time at Barts Health supporting medical staff with musculoskeletal health since 2011.

Alexander Technique is taught one to one or in small groups with the teacher using hands on to guide pupils into better balance and use.

During the current Coronavirus pandemic I've been volunteering via zoom with Barts as part of their Wellbeing programme.

I'm delivering 30 minute sessions a couple of times a week on 'Breathing and Grounding' for Emergency Department staff. ED is a high pressure area and the aim of the session is to give a brief period where staff can be quiet and come to a sense of themselves.

I lead them through a series of breathing exercises concentrating on the free movement of the whole respiratory system. As they become more centred we include sensory awareness and coming to the moment. Hopefully this brings people back from dealing with the demands of the day and the stresses of the work to a calmer and more neutral balance.

I talk about using the breathing and grounding techniques as a tool that they can return to and use, for example as a space for transition, from one task to the next or to separate from work to home and vice versa. Using breathing techniques as transition allows a moment to return to balance before the next challenge.

Barts has developed a wide programme to support staff wherever possible, and I am only a very small part of the whole. *Thanks Bev – Does anybody else have anything to share with us about what they are doing.*

Please let me know of any stories you have come across and I can out them in the next newsletter - Jean

Letter to MPs re Domestic Abuse Bill

Following the request for volunteers to write to MPs our Members Bev Keech, Denise Powell, Pamela Rochford, Ann Beatty and Jane Slatter wrote to the following MPs respectively - Daisy Cooper St Albans, Bin Afolami Hitchin and Harpenden, Grant Shapps Welwyn Hatfield, Theresa Villiers Chipping Barnet and Dean Russell Watford.
It is great that Members of our Club are able to lobby as many MPs as that, we can make quite an impact as part of a UK wide Soroptimist lobbying campaign.

The letter to the MPs was requesting amendments to the Domestic Abuse Bill at its second reading in Parliament on 28 April and also a request for additional funding for Women's support services during lockdown, when there are more cases of domestic abuse than ever. The good news is that the Bill passed its Second Reading but because of the restrictions, no amendments were possible. We are hopeful that amendments will be included when the Bill is in its next stage in the House of Lords. We will keep you all updated on progress.

We have been able to submit a Programme Focus Report for this lobbying. This is a great example of Soroptimist Programme Action work continuing during lockdown.

VE Day celebrations:-

I have lived now in Westminster Court for nearly ten years but hardly felt I knew anybody. A new neighbour who I only met on the day before VE Day (on my way to the compost heap) put this around and on the day some of us were to be seen on the grass in front of the flats having picnics and chatting away. Social distancing of course! It was a joy to be not only sitting in the sunshine but making new friends.

Does Anybody else have any stories about celebrating VE Day.



Following our making our "end of year"donations we have had delightful thank you letters from :-

Earthworks
Harpenden Child Contact Centre
Home Start
Herts Domestic Abuse Help Line

These donations may not seem much but they are always appreciated by our local charities.

A few ideas of "stuff" to watch…

https://www.u3a.org.uk/component/content/article/197-covid-19/568-keep-learning-ideas-to-consider-update-2?Itemid=490

FREE virtual tours of Art galleries etc. at https://www.hotukdeals.com/deals/free-virtual-tours-louvre-british-museum-wall-of-china-exoplanet-nasa-uffizi-van-gogh-salvatore-dali-museum-and-more-3429850

Explore top museums at https://mumsdotravel.com/2020/03/how-to-explore-londons-top-museums-from-home/

Coronavirus Scams to avoid: https://www.nationaltradingstandards.uk/news/beware-of-covid19-scams/

Live Music Streams at https://www.jambase.com/livestreams

National Theatre. Full length plays starting every Thursday at https://www.youtube.com/user/ntdiscovertheatre

Full-length, smash-hit musicals changed once a week at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdmPjhKMaXNNeCr1FjuMvag

Cirque Du Soleil – 60 Minute Specials at https://www.cirquedusoleil.com/cirqueconnect

Top ten Games to Play at Home at https://www.allcleartravel.co.uk/blog/top-games-over-50s-home /

Royal Albert Hall various events at https://www.list.co.uk/article/115618-royal-albert-hall-launches-royalalberthome-to-stream-season-of-free-shows/

Metropolitan Opera Live streams at https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/

Shakespeare's Globe productions at https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/watch/#now-showing

Royal Institute Lectures at https://www.rigb.org/christmas-lectures/watch



This is the Club Programme from July onwards that was set before lockdown….

Mon 13 Jul – Club 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
1st Aug UKPAC Study Day in Durham. "Sex Drugs and Rock'n Roll"
? Aug ? Summer Club Outing – TBA
Sept to Dec to Denise Powell and Ameeta Sabharwal to chair meetings
Sat 5 Sep Earthworks Summer Fair www.earthworksstalbans.co.uk
14 Sep – Club Meeting (note Sep 8 Int Literacy Day)
Sep 28 – Speaker Meeting TBA (note Sep 21 Int Day of Peace)
10th 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

Meantime a suggested virtual programme has happened thanks to the success of using Zoom to meet virtually:

26th May Zoom coffee morning – Jane hosts and will send the invitation
1st June Zoom coffee morning – Jane hosts and will send the invitation
8th June Club/Speaker eve meeting – details TBC
22nd June Club/Speaker eve meeting – details TBC
13th July Club/Speaker eve meeting – details TBC
27th July Club/Speaker eve meeting – details TBC

The club programme is kept up-to-date on the club website. Do have a look to "keep up to date. Thanks Jane for getting us up and running again with the website.

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

Here is a Garden Party Quiz for you to have ago at to while away some time perhaps in your garden ….



1. Canine got up
2. Romance in a fog
3. Hurry successfully
4. A new one sweeps clean
5. Serrates the edges
6. Communist with high temperature plays cards
7. Material for fences
8. Goat's drinking vessel
9. Is allowed
10. Bovine mistake
11. A mild explosion, softly, with first of youth
12. Vital organs at rest
13. Sly, hand in
14. Watering can attachment
15. White fall
16. Very active familiar queen
17. Wed precious metal
18. Evergreen to pawn
19. Sweet thick fluid feeding the young
20. Musical instrument

Nobody replied to the last quiz but perhaps I will get some replies for this one. 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 (jean.eaton43@gmail.com)*

Friendship Links

Chico.

They are in lockdown in a similar way to us, but like us gradually easing.



Muenster.

Also in partial lockdown. Sylvia and Axel were hoping to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary in June but have now postponed to 2021. On April 27th Sylvia writes that their lock down is beginning to ease with some students going back to school for final exams. They are able to go out with their own household but have to use PPE gear for their medical work.

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. Jane has sent one of her Moonpig Cards for their anniversary. See right for front page where we are raising our glasses…..

Seychelles

Also in lockdown with only 11 cases, all now recovered. They say " I do hope that humanity will come out the better from it all." They tell us that some businesses went back 5th May and some schools on 11th. A Member hopes to join our Zoom coffee morning on 26th May.

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.
Perhaps with the success of using Zoom for our Club meeting and coffee mornings, representatives of our Friendship Links may be able to join us online for some of them? Wouldn't that be great!?

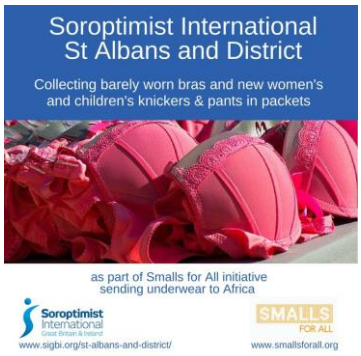
Please don't forget to always let Denise Powell or Sarah Lichman know if you change your telephone number or address so that we can keep our records straight. Denise will update the Contact Sheet and Sarah will advise SIGBI if you haven't already done it on your on-line SIGBI Membership record. Also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



Region Meetings are usually held quarterly (the June one has been cancelled this year). 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.**
Of course check when they will resume after this Corona Crisis.



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" !!!

Groan from Jean solution

Because there are 7more bottles of whiskey!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Because numbers are quantities not dates!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! *Sorry….*

Note from the Editor

The next newsletter will be in June or July 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!!!

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

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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.