



From our President Kat

My year started with our AGM and a formal handover from our previous president Linda. Not long after, on 1st June Sarah, Jane and I went to the SIGBI development day in Nottingham. Although not every element felt appropriate to our club the day was a fascinating opportunity to meet members from other clubs around the country, hear from members of SIGBI and get a greater overview of how our club fits in within SIGBI and SI as a whole. I especially enjoyed the final speaker of the day Dishy Attwood from SI Lichfield who talked about the roles members play within a club and what motivates members to stay members. At the end of June SI St Albans hosted the regional meeting. While scary in the sense that I had to speak briefly in a more formal setting the day was both moving and enormously inspiring. Although both speakers were talking about some emotionally charged and upsetting subjects their talks were so engaging and left me with a sense of hope for the future. Also, under the direction of Jane and Helen, we banded together to create an incredible day and, in spite of the heat, kept cool heads and the day ran without a hitch.

Coming up for the months ahead I am looking forward to welcoming Irma Mullins, from New Leaf Wellbeing College on 23rd September and Herts Rape Crisis on 7th October. I'm passionate about the work of both services. I am one of the tutors for New Leaf and have been a part of the college since its opening. Herts Rape Crisis have been working with women like myself to help them to make sense of their past experiences and feel empowered to move forwards. I'm hoping they'll give the club a better understanding of their work and help motivate us in our fundraising efforts during the remainder of my year.

Kat

Groan from Jean....

I often go to the police station in the middle of the night and destroy hundreds of fingerprints. I do not however consider myself a criminal. Who am I?

Answer at the end.

Meet our longest serving member

I asked Joan Williams, our longest standing members to do a Q&A piece for this newsletter. Joan joined in 1967 and has seen some changes over the years. Here is what she said.



1 You joined in 1967. How did you get to know about Soroptimism and why did you join?

I was teaching at Staggs when the head of PE (Winifred Rudkins) , a keen Soroptimist, thought, that me being head of department, I was suitable to be asked to join. At that time only people with the “top” jobs were invited to join.

2 After so many years membership you must like the organisation, do you think it has changed much over the years, if so how?

It has changed and mostly for the better! It used to be rather elitist and very keen on the rules and regulations. In the earlier days most of the members were single ladies dedicated to their jobs and often pioneers in their field. Now it is more relaxed and friendly.

3 What changes to our Soroptimist programme would you like to see?

Many of the speakers are excellent. It would be good to sometimes have something lighter as they are on occasions getting very intense. I like to hear from the girls reporting back from their expeditions and wonder how their experience affects their lives later on. Fund raising events can be fun, working and getting to know other members of the club as well as informing the general public of what Soroptimism is all about. Not to mention raising money for good causes.

4 What do you like or not like about the changes comparing 1967 with 2019?

The biggest change is the reduced formality which can be good or bad. People tend to have wider interests so less attachment to club interests. Some events seem to happen in an “ad hoc” manner. One thing I would like to go back to is a more structured programme. I do also wonder about the “group” system we have now as it seems that the old way of teams for social, fundraising, programme action, membership etc worked better.

5 What are your main interests/hobbies?

Listening to classical music. Visiting people and places (sadly friends and family are now reduced in numbers). I read and do crosswords also tending my garden especially my lovely roses . Much of my time is taken up with running the Coffee Lounge at Wesleys which in a way has become my family.

6 What sort of holidays do you like to take?

Sightseeing – scenery, buildings of historical interest, interesting company. I don’t like cruises unless they are on the river. I have enjoyed my membership over the years and hope that the club continues and prospers as it has in the past. One of the precious things that I thank our club for is the friendship of Margaret & Richard as our link at Chico which goes back many years. *Thank you Joan for this also the tea and cake consumed during the Q & A. Jean*

Since the last newsletter:-

1st June



Coffee at Welseys. Joan Williams hosts a coffee morning to support the Womens' Refuge

Pictured here are baristas Jean Eaton, Janet Audley-Charles and Joan Williams with John Powell, our Member Denise's husband, who completed the team on the 1 June.

Coffee mornings at the Wesley Coffee Shop are a great way for us to swell the coffers for our Club's charities – this time we raised a tasty £75 for the St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge

10th June

Mary Moran was officially welcomed to the Club. Mary is a poet and moved to St Albans from the US many years ago. Mary is very keen to end violence against women and for the and education of women and girls. We were able to get to know little better later in the evening when she read some of her thought-provoking poems to us. Mary is pictured here on the right laughing with President Katherine Clark as she accepts the hand of Soroptimist friendship from the Club's mascot Sally Bear.



and
support
Mary a
(paw)



Our speaker for the evening was our new Member **Ann Beatty**, who joined us in February this year. Ann is the **Chief Executive of the Steve Sinnott Foundation**. For Ann working with women is a passion. Ann is pictured left with Club President Kat Clark. Her presentation is available to download and view here [SteveSinnottFoundationSoroptimists June 2019](#) It is a small charity based in Watford dedicated to education for all. If you

read the Presentation on the website you can see some of the wonderful work it does. One example is a sanitary protection project in the Gambia – teaching the girls to make their own washable sanitary wear, locally and in a sustainable way, so they don't drop out of school when they menstruate. The Club will be looking at how to partner with the charity in the future.

19th June President Kat hosted a Coffee morning at the Green Kitchen Coffee Shop in Hatfield Road. About 6 of our members enjoyed a good chat over a coffee.

24th June

Brigid Brennan, Chair of the **Harpenden Child Contact**

Centre HCCC www.harpendenchildcontactcentre.org.uk visited us to us about the services they provide.

A Child Contact Centre is a safe, friendly and neutral place where children from separated families can spend time with one or both parents, and sometimes other family members. It is a child-centred environment that puts the needs of the children first.

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tell



After coffee we had a group activity cutting out dresses for www.dressagirlaroundtheworlduk.co.uk Some of the team are pictured here with fabric, patterns and sharp scissors – Amanda Brown who is behind this project is in the centre at the front of the pic – the table on the left has Denise Powell, Rita Andrews and Joan Williams deep in concentration (the other Member Jane Slatter left the team to take this pic) and the table on the right has Sarah Lichman, Kat Clark, Diana Kingham and Janet Audley-Charles showing us their efforts.

29th June

We held a regional conference in Redbourn on the hottest day so far with two inspirational speakers.



Janet Fyle MBE Policy Adviser at the Royal College of Midwives and Ruby Raut CEO and Co-founder of WUKA Periodwear The Focus was on **#SoroptimistThinkOnIt** covered by both of these speakers. They spoke about the impact on women and girls' mental health from the taboos around having children and menstruation and FGM .

On the right we have our Helen Byrne with Ruby Raut and President Kat. Left we see President Kat with Janet Fyle.



Both of our powerful women speakers were presented with the book **"Women and Power" by Mary Beard** – we thought an appropriate thank you gift for both of them which we are sure they will enjoy reading.



At the beginning of the day Regional Secretary Rita Beaumont led us efficiently through our **Soroptimist** business – this included presenting Kathleen Martin from Slough Windsor & Maidenhead club with a plant to celebrate her recognition in the Queen’s Birthday Honours this year. Kathleen is pictured here in the centre with Helen Byrne Regional Membership Officer (l) and Rita Beaumont (r). In the morning and afternoon sessions we asked to hear from the Clubs represented about projects that their Clubs are proud of – these are sessions that is always inspiring and this was no exception

In spite of the extremely hot weather a good day was had by all with lots of interest as well as some fun.

8th July Jenny Scotland from Harpenden, one of our student volunteers, now graduated from Bristol University, came to our Club Meeting to report back on her 2 month project in Bolivia last year. Before she went the Club gave her a donation and she promised to come back and tell us about working to help street children from Santa Cruz
Here on the right we see President Kat with Jenny



On the same evening **Sanaya Patel** (left) came to sell us cakes to fundraise and tell us about her forthcoming trip to Uganda recognising that play is important for children’s learning, wellbeing and for healthy brain development. She will be in a team building a playground and will also have the opportunity to work with the Ugandan Wildlife Authority on a conservation project with the endangered Ugandan gorillas. We gave a donation and with the sale of her cakes she said she was “on her way” to raising what she needed.

30th July At a coffee morning at Jean’s four members enjoyed coffee biscuits and a relaxed chat The next coffee morning will be 18th September at Cross Street Tea room at Dagnall Street Baptist church where we hope to meet some of Syrian families being helped by Pamela Rochford.

15th August Jane Barbara and Jean met with Sub Dean Abie Thompson at St Albans Abbey to donate four toilet twinning certificates for the new toilets which are now part of the new reburbishment at the Abbey.

Abi Thompson, Sub Dean of St Albans Cathedral was thrilled and said “what a great idea – we are so pleased you chose the new toilets at St Albans Cathedral to receive these certificates and we hope it will encourage more people to support the charity” **The lack of safe and private toilet facilities for girls and women in some parts of the world is incredibly important issue. We are very glad at St Albans Cathedral to be able to draw attention to this problem, and hope that our involvement with the Soroptimist’s toilet twinning project will inform lots of our visitors of this great need in many countries across the world.”**



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For St Albans to become a “Toilet Twinned City” 30 need to be installed.

We have now donated 14, so 16 to go. Our next fund raising event for this will be on 11th November when we will have a bottle stall at our club meeting, so start collecting any bottles of wine, shampoo, sauce, anything so we can donate more of these certificates.

21st August



Four Members of the Club visited the **New Maynard Gallery** in Welwyn Garden City. President Katherine Clark as a Trustee of the gallery showed Amanda Brown, Sarah Lichman and Jane Slatter the display space available for exhibitors. They enjoyed seeing the paintings and ceramic pieces being shown by the three artists Jo Gold, Kerry Brown and Sarah Merry followed by a very nice lunch. All agreed it was well worth a visit whenever any of us is in the area to see what is on show in the gallery and visit the excellent cafe too.

To read much more about of any of these items go to the website www.sigbi.org/st-albans



Coffee at Club Meetings

The coffee rota for the next session is as below. All that is needed is that the two who “volunteer” will arrange between them who will bring along some milk. Otherwise everything will be available.

9 th Sept	Jane Slatter and Barbara Saunders
23 rd Sept	Sarah Lichman and Denise Powell
7 th Oct	Catherine Moore and Rita Andrews
21 st Oct	Amanda Brown and Ameeta Sabharwai
11 th Nov	Liz Tillet and Janet Tansley

If you cannot make the date I give please either swap with someone else and/or let me know. Jean

Success for St Albans in the Audrey Collins Under 14 Girls Cricket League

While England’s men were battling it out in the final of the Cricket World Cup in June, Helen Byrne and Barbara Saunders made the trip up the A1 to Knebworth cricket club, a beautiful ground in the middle of the Hertfordshire countryside to support the under 14 girls playing their finals after a summer of hard-fought matches. The season has been successful with regular matches for the girls’ teams in the County. The final was played in good spirits between St Albans and Bishop’s Stortford but St Albans had the competitive edge and won the match. There was lots of enthusiasm and skill on display from both teams, but good length bowling from the Bishop Stortford girls gave St Albans batswomen a chance to hit out, find the boundaries and score more runs. Helen presented the Shield and Cup to a very happy St Albans team – the first time they have won it. Bishop’s Stortford were runners up for the second time after joining the league last year. Thus, eight years after Audrey Collins legacy inspired our club to support girl’s cricket as a foundation for personal development, good health and team work, the League is in good shape. Many thanks also go to the parents and volunteers at the local cricket clubs who arrange all the matches and ensure the girls get to the grounds on time!

News travels and good news travels fast! Sue Merrill of SI Kidderminster was messaging Soroptimists about the result. A justifiably proud grandmother, her grand-daughter Jessica Cowen is captain of the St Albans Under 14 Team and apart from receiving the Shield and Audrey Collins Cup on behalf of her team, she also received the players’ player award. Inspiring leadership and a great role model for her team-mates, and connections across

the counties with our Soroptimist sisters!

To read more about our support and Audrey Collins involvement in the Club and her cricketing career please click on this link www.sigbi.org/st-albans/projects/cricket/ -



Helen and the winning team



Helen presenting the cup to the winners!

Thanks to Barbara Saunders for this item

Well done St Albans!!

Congratulations to Ameeta Sabharwal who tells me "I have just been selected as Judge for the English Speaking Union schools debate competition in Hertfordshire schools. I'm of course thrilled with this appointment"

Friendship Links

Chico USA

Our friends Margaret & Richard are now back in their home after the terrible fires in Paradise. The infrastructure around their home is devastated and about 10 members of Chico club lost their homes to the terrible fire last year. The way the club helped was that two members took a family devastated by this tragedy under their wing and made sure help was given as needed. The whole of Paradise is still like a ghost town with very little rebuilding going on just yet. The club is back to having about 100 members!

Poland

We are expecting some visitors from Warsaw club on an unofficial visit October 18th to 20th so they can practice and improve their English. This is still to be confirmed but if you can keep some of this weekend free to help entertain these ladies over a walk or refreshments it would be much appreciated.

Muenster

August 30th-Sept 1st 7 of our members (well 4 plus three husbands) are going to Muenster. We will fly to Dortmund from Luton Friday afternoon. Our first evening we have dinner with our friends from Muenster, Saturday we are out and about, also Sunday returning home Sunday afternoon

Osaka

We have had confirmation that the 50th Anniversary celebrations of SI Osaka will be on May 12th 2020 and they hope that we will come and we will be most welcome.

We have also been told that the current President of SI Osaka is Midori Tanaka who we had the pleasure to meet when she came over for our 60th celebrations.

At that time they were also able to meet some of our friends from SI Munster and they have now made a more formal link with that club

Thanks to Catherine Moore for this piece

The exec asks "are there any members who might like to go to Osaka next May, and perhaps do some sightseeing with our friends from Muenster. It will be expensive (flights min £500 return plus other expenses), but we will need to check." If you can and want to, please contact anyone on the exec.

Jean



Crisis Bears

Jean Eaton was approached by a friend, Mary, who is a keen volunteer and has spoken to us about the service she runs getting people to doctor/hospital appointments and asking for volunteer drivers. Mary had been asked if she knew of anyone who could make use of a bag of crisis bears – small knitted teddy bears with a smile on their faces aimed at young children who have been traumatised. Jean wondered if the Women's Refuge might make use of them so I rang the Refuge and they said they would be delighted to have them to give to new young arrivals. I delivered a large bag of boy and girl teddies which were gratefully received. Soon after I received a call from the Refuge with a 'strange' request, they said. "Would it be possible for me to knit underwear for the bears (the girls already had knickers on) but the boys needed vests and pants?" The Refuge is using the bears to teach youngsters about who is allowed to see and touch their underwear and the knitted sets would aid this programme.

Consequently I am knitting with thin yarn and on small needles to adapt an underwear pattern I found on the Internet! So these crisis bears are becoming a comfort and as well as a teaching aid.

If anyone is interested in knitting crisis bears please contact me.

Rita Andrews



Jack and Jill – the Crisis Bears!!!

Thank you Rita for this piece – good luck with the knitting... Jean

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.

Get your diary ready!!

Fri 30 Aug- Sun 1st Sept Visit to our Friendship Link in Muenster Germany

Mon 9 Sep – Club Meeting – first meeting after summer break

Wed 18th Sept Coffee at Dagnall Street Baptist Church coffee shop. From St Peters Street turning down by W H Smith not far down it is ahead of you – just go up the steps into Cross Street Coffee Shop

Mon 23 Sep – Speaker New Leaf Wellbeing College

Mon 7 Oct – Club Meeting Speaker from Herts Rape Crisis

Sat 12 Oct AGM and Region Meeting/Conference at Lancaster Hall Hotel London

Fri 18th – Sun 20th Oct Warsaw Visit – to be confirmed

Mon 21 Oct – Social Evening + prep for Conference

Thur 24 to Sat 26 Oct – Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland Annual Conference in Bournemouth

Mon 11 Nov – Club Meeting – OWCH Older Womens Co-housing for over 50's, World Toilet Day Bottle Stall + **report back from Region and Conference**

Fri 15 Nov - S I Hertford Quiz

Mon 25 Nov – Speaker Meeting

Sat 30 Nov - Region Human Rights Day meeting/conference/celebration

Mon 9 Dec – Carol Singing at St Albans City Station followed by pot luck supper at Sarah's

The club programme is kept up-to-date on the club website so please keep checking this link:

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

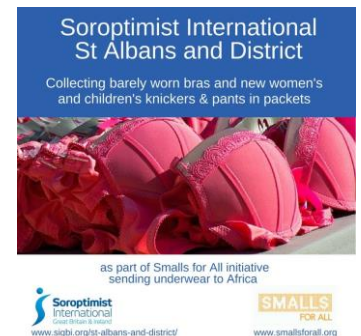
The SIGBI Conference is to be held in Bournemouth in 2019, 24th-26th October. The cost to attend the whole conference will be about £140 for the early bird bookings so a bit more for the late bookings. As this is a location easy for us to get to, how about a few of us getting to together and going along. Accommodation is cheaper if two or more share and obviously cheaper the sooner the booking is made. Arrive on Thursday you can witness to moving opening ceremony and leave Sunday morning - or of course stay on and enjoy Bournemouth, lots to see near there never mind your bucket and spade activities!! It isn't necessary to go the whole conference, you can go as a day delegate (Saturday is best) or any part of the weekend. Jane

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**



Dont forget.....

*your milk bottle tops, 'gently' used bras, uses postage stamps, broken jewellery. Just bring them along to club.
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

The police station cleaner!!!!!!



Note from the Editor

The next newsletter will be in November 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 a comment about the Club or a particular item you would like to share

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!. I would love to hear from you, this is YOUR newsletter. May I also say a big thank you to Jane Slatter. Our wonderful web site is my main source of information and Jane always keeps it bang up to date with interesting detail

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
Or ask any of the executive committee members.*

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