Soroptimist International St Albans & District

www.sigbi.org/st-albans

Newsletter October 2018



Message from President Linda

Dear Members,

I am amazed that we are already half way through my Presidential year, which has been crammed full of excellent Club and Speaker meetings covering an eclectic range of subjects and issues – an initiative to manage population growth to relieve environmental stress; supporting women and girls' cricket around the county; learning more about the legal options available to victims of domestic abuse; discovering where our precious wildlife is in Hertfordshire and Middlesex and becoming better informed about the differences between mental health conditions like depression and anxiety.

But it has not all been 'heavy', we've had fun too! Attendees to Fanny's First Play at Shaw's Corner were treated to some fine acting about the changing attitude of women to their status that also hinted at some contemporary Brexit issues. Then we won the Hertfordshire SME Business Award in the Not-for-Profit category a week later and topped the summer recess off with an enjoyable and superbly informative visit to the Suffragette Centenary Exhibition in Camden (concluded by tea and yummy cakes!).

In the middle of all this we also managed to raise funds for our parcel of good causes. The value is 'in' for what we earned at the Harpenden Highland Gathering by selling raffle tickets – all will be revealed to the Club in November; and the bookstall raised over £230 in September for the Womens' Refuges that we support not just with tea, coffee and biscuits that is warmly appreciated.

Looking ahead, we have a packed calendar of Club and Speaker meetings coming up during the rest of the year, and whilst we think planning for Christmas gets earlier each year, would you believe we have already booked the venue for the Annual General Meeting next April! As well as Denise attending SIGBI Conference in Liverpool, club members Carol Singing at St Albans City station and many of us helping to marshall the Pancake Day races, we can also look forward to the annual Quiz Night and another Club Social around the end of February.

As we head for the second 6 months I want us also to remember that since April 'life' of a less-than-welcome nature has been getting in the way for some of our members who are managing various challenges. They have our wholehearted support for positive outcomes over the coming months. But on a lighter note it would be remiss of me not to mention the clutch of grand-children born to members, all of whom have our joyful congratulations.

Finally, as we will undoubtedly mourn the end of a record-breaking, sunny summer let us also embrace the coming autumn and winter for its restorative value to our environment, getting it ready for a blossoming spring and blooming summer again next year.

From Linda xx

Groan from Jean A woman watched her husband plunge head first down a deep ravine. She returned home to find him chopping onions in the kitchen. How is this possible?

Answer at the end of this letter....

Since the last newsletter.....

The new **St Albans Museum and Gallery** has opened! It is in the old Town Hall building right in the centre of the City. Soroptimist International St Albans and District made a donation of £250 towards the development of the new museum and we are very proud that our name now appears on an Honours Board in the museum.



See picture of board - you can just see our name!



Denise Powell, Jean Eaton and Jane Slatter attended two of the special evenings held for the Honours Board donors. The refurbishment of the museum is a real triumph and well worth a visit. The Honours Boards are in the basement where you can also see the original cells (now lavatories!) used to detain prisoners before they appear went up a staircase to end up in the dock in the Courtroom – which is now available for you to sit and enjoy refreshments from the cafe – perfect!. To the left we have two of the temporary art exhibits, one you might recognise.



8th June – Highland Gathering



Once again we supported the **Harpenden Lions** at their annual **Highland Gathering** by selling Prize Draw raffle tickets.

Pictured here are Soroptimists Debbie Tankard, Catherine Moore, Denise Powell, Club Mascot Sally Bear (of course!) and Jane Slatter – just part of the team of volunteers who worked through the day selling tickets to win 25 great prizes with a value of almost £1000! It was a beautiful (if very hot!) day and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves doing good while having a good time .

Charities benefiting from this event are:

Harpenden Lions Club charities, including the Life Skills Programme in local schools.

Rennie Grove Hospice Care is a charity providing care and support for adults and children diagnosed with cancer and other life-limiting illness and their families. Every year through their 24/7 Hospice at Home service, Family Support services and the range of Day Services at Grove House they give thousands of patients the choice to stay at home, surrounded by their families and friends. The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading charity dedicated to creating a world without barriers for deaf children and young people.



25th June – Domestic Abuse and Options for Victims

Mary McEvoy, Partner and Head of Divorce and Family Law and Notary Public at Neves Solicitors in Harpenden came to the Club in June and spoke about: Development of the Law in the area of domestic violence, the current position, practical information: what to do if you are the victim of abusive behaviour, what help is out there for both for victims & perpetrators. What other help/support/frameworks should be provided?
With a knowledgeable audience a lively discussion and Q&A session was held at the end of the meeting, which continued throughout the coffee break.
We can feel justly proud of bringing together people in different areas of the field, who were then able to network with others that they had never encountered.



Pictured here with Mary are Soroptimists Denise Powell (L) and Kathy Weston (R) who were the main organisers of this successful event.

8th July – Girls' Cricket – Soroptimist Trophy 2018

A few years ago one of our older members, Audrey Collins OBE , who played cricket for England and was one of the first group of ladies to become a member of the MCC left us a legacy which we have used to create a league for young girls in Hertfordshire. It was on 8th July that the exciting finale to the 8th Soroptimist International Audrey Collins Girls' Cricket League took place. Amy Price, Captain of the Herts Ladies Cricket Team presented medals to both teams and Helen Byrne presented the SI Audrey Collins Shield and Winners Cup to Harpenden, winners for the second year running. As you can see, a hot sunny day in July!



26th July – Business Award Winner!

Our Club won the SME Hertfordshire Business Award in the "Not for Profit Business of the Year" category and here we see our member Amanda Brown, The Club's Membership Officer and local business woman (pictured here) proudly represented the Club at the Awards dinner on Thursday 26 July, and here she is with the award looking justly proud !!!



During August we don't meet formally but we had three summer outings which were both entertaining and interesting and provided a perfect opportunity for some Members to catch up with one another!

The first enjoyable outing was on **Sat 21 Jul** when a group went to see **"Fanny's First Play"** at **Shaw's Corner Outdoor Theatre**. With a warm summer evening and picnic before the well acted play, a good evening was enjoyed by some of our Members.



On **2 August** a group of nine St Albans Soroptimists plus two guests attended the first **"Museum Late"** event at the newly opened **St Albans Museum and Gallery** in the centre of St Albans. The theme of this first event was printing which played a big part in St Albans history. The group had an enjoyable evening learning about and doing some hands-on printing and they were also able to see a 3D Printer in operation.



Outing number three was on **24 August** when another group of nine St Albans Soroptimists visited the "**VOTE 100 Suffragettes" exhibition at the** Camden Local Studies & Archives Centre, Holborn Library. The group was warmly welcomed by Irene Cockroft, writer and historian on women's suffrage, co-curator of the exhibition and also a Member of the Greater London Soroptimist Club.
Irene is pictured here on the left in the library with the wonderful Votes for Women tea cosy made especially to make this special centenary year. Our group learnt a huge amount from just a morning with Irene's wealth of knowledge – earning a well deserved lunch at a nearby cafe – see pic of the group with Irene.



This year Club Members have been knitting squares to make blankets. We had "knit-ins" at Amanda's which were very sociable and chatty occasions. Away from the "knit-ins" many of the knitters found the knitting to be therapeutic. One of our Members encouraged her elderly Mum to join in with the knitting – she hadn't knitted for years and seemed to get pleasure from the creative process. Another knitter found that it stopped her from being so obsessed with her Smart phone and a very kind supporter donated squares that she had knitted while sitting at her sick husband's bedside.



5th Sept The picture here is of work beginning to turn the squares into blankets at a coffee morning chez Helen Byrne. Don't miss the 11 December coffee morning when work will continue (but is not compulsory!).

8th Sept – Bookstall

Each year we mark **International Literacy Day** every year selling 2nd hand books on **St Albans market**. This year the event raised more than £230 providing much needed funds for the St Albans & Hertsmere Women's Refuge and the Welwyn Hatfield Women's Refuge. Our stall was busy all day and our Members enjoyed meeting many generous supporters in the town. Left over books were gratefully received by the Lions Charity Bookshop in the Maltings, Hemel Hempstead.

Pictured here are some of the Soroptimist willing volunteers who always enjoy our day on St Albans Market.



10th Sept – New Term, New Member and Volunteer Alisha



This lively meeting was the perfect opportunity for Club Members to catch up after the Summer break. The first thing we did was to welcome **Jude Kenyon** as a **new Member** of our club. **Welcome Jude.**

The same evening, **Alisha Mirza,** a 22 year old marine biology graduate from Welwyn Garden City spoke to the Club about her forthcoming visit to a **ICS Project in Tanzania.** ICS work with VSO to send volunteers from the UK to work on overseas projects. Alisha will be staying with a local family in the rural area where she will be working. She has already undergone training in the culture and staying safe and healthy. Alisha understands that food sustainability is a big issue with farming practices not making enough money for families to be able to afford to send their children to school. We hope Alisha will return to tell us of her adventures in travel.



24th Sept – Wildlife and Environment



We held a WildLife and Environment Themed Evening. Our Guest Speakers were **Wendy Hartnell from** Herts and Middlesex Wild Life Trust and **Janet Bruce from** FoodSmiles (pictured here are Janet on the left, Wendy on the right and Jane Slatter who chaired the evening as the happy sandwich filling!). Wendy gave us a fascinating talk with fabulous photographs called "Where the Wild Things Are". She told us about all the brilliant work that the Wildlife Trust does in Hertfordshire to protect and enhance places for wildlife that have been lost in Herts. They face the challenges created by climate change and habitat loss through development. To find out more about the work they do and the wonderful places you can visit to see our local wildlife and think about becoming a Member look at www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk

Janet Bruce is the Chair of FoodSmiles St Albans and talked to us about their co-operative community of food growers in Harpenden and St Albans including the "incredible edible gardens" outside St Albans Civic Centre. We realised how little we knew about how this worked. It is a fantastic initiative which was a spin-off from Transition St Albans which is now Sustainable St Albans. Do look at the website to find out more about the work they do and see how you can join in for as little as £1 www.foodsmilesstalbans.org.uk We were delighted to welcome lots of guests along too. What an inspiring evening!



8th Oct we had a brilliant evening to mark **World Mental Health Day**. We now all understand so much more about the mental health challenges facing many women. We looked into the many aspects of mental health including dementia and received advice for how to live a better life for mental health well being. Our Member Katherine Clark (L) ran the event. Kat is an experienced Mental Healthcare professional with her own specialist support and training service "Essential Life Skills", working with individuals with a wide variety of needs. Kat delivered an excellent presentation covering the many aspects of mental health and how to manage them which can be downloaded and viewed from the website www.sigbi.org/st-albans-and-district/2018/wmhd18 It covers depression and anxiety and what can help. Kat also did a relaxation exercise with us all – leaving us feeling like the cat in Kat's presentation – see the pic!



After coffee we heard from Louise Bates (pictured here with Kat), Regional Representative for **Dementia Friends**, Louise took us, brilliantly step by step through the five key messages:

1. Dementia is not a natural part of ageing
2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain
3. It's not just about losing your memory – it can affect thinking, communicating and doing every day tasks
4. People can still live well with dementia
5. There is more to the person than the dementia

Louise used analogies and answered lots of question making a really interactive and useful evening for all present. One thing we can all do is to sign the petition to fix dementia care in the UK – please add your name via the website **www.alzheimers.org.uk/our-campaigns/fix-dementia-care**

To find out much more about any of these events go to "Club News" on the website www.sigbi.org/st-albans/category/club-news

A reminder of who are our Club Officers:-

President	Linda Shall
President Elect	Katherine Clark
Imm Past President	Rita Andrews
Secretary	Barbara Saunders
Treasurer	Jean Eaton
Shadow Treasurer	Sarah Lichman
Programme Action	Linda Shall
Membership	Amanda brown
Communications	Jane Slatter
Regional Rep	Rita Andrews
International Project	Diana Kingham
Finance Officer	Catherine Moore
Handbook Co-ordinator	Denise Powell
Newsletter Editor	Jean Eaton
Social Media	Katherine Clark

If you wonder what happens at our Exec meetings do just ask any of the above to attend at any time. You will be most welcome. Perhaps you would like to know more about any of these roles, just ask.

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

Coffee at Club Meetings

The coffee rota for the rest of the year is as below. There is not too much involved. The two who "volunteer" will arrange between them who will bring along some milk. Otherwise everything will be available courtesy Joan Williams.

12th November Madeline Sinner and Liz Tillett
26th November Kat Clark and Sarah Lichman

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The names for the next session (January) will be allocated during the Christmas break - so please watch out in case your name is there so you can check your diary. If you cannot make the date I give please either swap with someone else or let me know. *Jean*

Another amazing female - Lady Justice Nicola Davies.



Born in Llanelli in 1953, son of an engineer, Nicola went to Grammar School and then University of Birmingham where she studied law, not really liking it so went into industry. Working for a barrister she was advised to go into law as she had "more lawyer in her than she admitted to". From Llanelli she came to London, passed her solicitors' exams and later turned her attention to becoming a barrister. Having joined Grays Inn she was advised that as a woman she would never get on. She was called to the bar in 1976 specialising in medical law. She worked on the Cleveland Child Abuse enquiry and the Harold Shipman criminal trial. She became a QC in 1992, Deputy High Court Judge 2003, appointed to the Queens Bench Division of High Court in 2010. Nicola Davies DBE has just become the first Welsh female Appeal Court Judge . When asked what advice she would have given herself all those years ago, Nicola said that she should have studied English and History which is she really wanted to do and then do the conversion course and then the professional exams but definitely go to the Bar. She would also have told herself to have more confidence in herself. When asked about future ambitions she laughed and said she wanted to get on with this one first!!!

Thank you Denise for advising me of this wonderful lady. *Jean*

Please, if you know of someone who has achieved in spite of the setbacks, whatever they are, do please let me know that I can include them next time.

Now, get out your diaries !

Mon 22 Oct – Club Meeting – Life Talk, Report back from Oct Region Meeting + Prep for SIGBI Conference
Thur 25 to Sat 27 Oct – Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland Annual Conference in Liverpool
Mon 12 Nov – Club Meeting + Toilet Twinning evening. We will mark World Toilet Day with a bottle sale to raise funds for more twinnings, speaker and presentation of a Twinned Toilet certificate to Caroline Eldred and Cllr Annie Brewster from the St Albans Museum and Gallery. Plus Jenny Scotland, one of our student volunteers, will report back from her ICYE project in Bolivia and Denise will report back from the SIGBI conference.
16th November. Charity Quiz Night at S I Hertford– join a team from SI St Albans & District. Ask any of the exec members if you wish to go.
20th November - Coffee morning at Ayletts. Meet in Coffee Shop from 10.30
Mon 26 Nov – Speaker – new Club Environment Project – more info to follow ….
Sat 1 Dec – Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline Quiz Night – always a great evening . Do come along.
Mon 3 Dec – Shake Rattle and Sing – We will be singing carols at St Albans City Station for charity from 6pm to 7.30pm and then retiring to Avos in Beaconsfield Road for a well earned supper.
Tue 11 Dec – Coffee and Sewing Morning at Sarah's – drop in between 10.30 and 12.30. We will have a coffee and sew the blanket squares together to finish the blanket we've been knitting (sewing optional!).

I hope you have your 2019 Diary at the ready !

Sat 12 Jan – Coffee Morning with yummy cakes **for a great cause – 10am to 12.30pm Wesley's Cafe High Street Methodist Church Harpenden AL5 2RU** in aid of local women's refuges, come along , enjoy and relax on a Saturday morning – and please let us know if you can help on the day.

Mon 14 Jan – Club Meeting + catch up after the Christmas Break +report back from Regional Meeting

Wed 16 Jan – STAGS Year 11 Big Interview Day**, 08:30-14:00 (Continental breakfast from 08:00 and a buffet lunch are provided)**

Mon 28 Jan – Open Evening

Mon 11 Feb – Club Meeting + Growth Plan Review

Tue 12 Feb (tbc) St Albans Pancake Race

Mon 25 Feb – Social – TBA

Thu 7 Mar – Soroptimist Event to mark "International Women's Day" – Sandpit Theatre, Sandringham School,

Fri 8 Mar STAGS International Women's Day Inspiring Women Speed Networking Event **with Year 12 and Year 8 students, 08:00-11:00 (Includes a networking breakfast)**

Sat 9 March SI London Chilterns Region Meeting Lancaster Hall Hotel London

Sat 23 Mar – Our Quiz Night

Mon 25 Mar – Club Meeting + Report back from Region Meeting + Club finance review

Mon 1 Apr – Coffee Morning – President Linda's swansong….

Mon 8 Apr – Club Meeting +

Mon 29 Apr – AGM **transept at St Mary's Redbourn from** 7pm. **Hemel Hempstead Road Redbourn AL3 7DU**,
A review of the year just gone, a look forward to the year ahead welcoming the new executive committee (some new and some not so!!) Be thinking if you are interested in any of the roles or just want to ask more about them or the exec. and if so just ask any member of the exec beforehand – we will celebrate together with a light buffet and refreshments.

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***

Looking even further ahead...

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 (Jan to June) 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 the moving opening ceremony and leave Sunday morning - or of course stay on and enjoy Bournemoth, 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. A suggestion is the Travelodge hotel about 10 minutes walk from the Bournemouth International Conference Centre. Watch this space! *Jane*

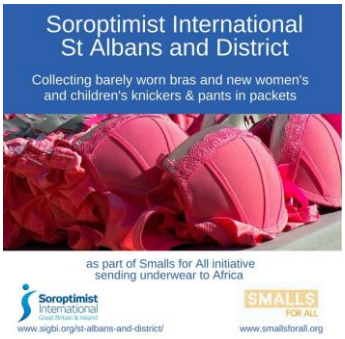
Region Meetings are held quarterly. If you have never been to a Region meeting I would recommend it as they are always very interesting. Next one is 15 December in London – see www.sigbi.org/london-chilterns

If you are a "first timer" you will receive £10 for a London meeting or £15 for an out of London one toward your expenses.



Don't forget.....

your milk bottle tops and 'gently' used bras. Just bring them along to club.



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' Refuges - they get through a lot of "Cuppas" !!!

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Groan from Jean - Her husband was a stunt man and she had been watching him on TV

Note from the Editor

The next newsletter will be in February 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. 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 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 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



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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.