

Report of Stapleford WI Committee - 2021/22

The last annual report I presented was in March 2020, and I finished up by saying that we were looking forward to celebrating our centenary in the coming year. How wrong I was. As we all know, due to circumstances beyond our control, the year turned out very differently from what we had anticipated.

Because of our historical good record keeping, we were able to read, on our centenary, about the first meeting of our Institute, which covered the topic of glove making. It would be nice to think that 100 years from now, members can read about our switch to Zoom presentations, although I imagine this may be very old-hat by that time.

The Zoom meetings enabled us to keep in touch with our members and members of neighbouring WIs who wished to join us. These talks covered a wide range of topics and the beauty of Zoom talks was that the speaker could be located anywhere in the world. Faith Powell entertained us with her journey into the world of quiz shows. Misba Khan told us about her expedition to the North Pole with nine other women, a mixture of Middle Eastern and Western ladies of varying faiths. Misba was a speaker we would never have been able to host in normal times as she joined us from Manchester. Dr Seppe Cassettari explained to us the story of London in maps. He spoke about the development of London as seen through maps created at different periods of history. Siobhan Clarke, who is a Guide Lecturer at Historic Royal Palaces, told us about us about The Tower of London. Julie Bounford gave a talk about Heffers. Julie was due to have spoken in June 2020, but due to the pandemic we had to postpone her and during this time she moved to Lincolnshire, fortunately she was very happy to speak to us via Zoom. Another long distance talk came to us from Brighton when Paul Couchman spoke of heritage cooking, from an 1898 cookbook.

Another way we kept in touch was via a weekly quiz, e-mailed to members. The book group continued to meet via Zoom and some of the members improved their computer skills using this medium. There was one socially distanced meeting during the summer in a member's garden, which was enjoyed by all who attended.

Just before Easter, the committee was at St Andrew's Church to wish Members a happy Easter and give out Easter Eggs. Those members who were unable to collect their eggs received them via special delivery.

It was lovely to all meet up in the open air on Stapleford Rec, when the weather was kind, and particularly good to hold our first face-to-face meeting in the Jubilee Pavilion in September. We held our belated Centenary Dinner and a good time was had by all.

Every member received a card on their birthday and our President, Liz Hodgkins, wrote a newsletter which was e-mailed to members on the first Thursday in each month.

The main difference for our face-to-face meetings, was a change of meeting night and venue. We moved from the first Thursday in the month to the fourth Thursday and at the Pavilion, after full consultation with all members. It was felt that the Johnson Hall was too small.

Lets hope that once the pandemic is finally behind us, our Institute can again look forward to a full and rewarding programme of events for members.