



Redlynch and District WI

Charity Registration No.292382

June 2019 Report

For our June Meeting, Rosemary Pugh, our President, welcomed everyone, including a new member and a visitor from Australia. There were 8 apologies and Birthday posies for June and July were presented. Business included booking tickets for our Autumn Lunch on October 25th, the outing to Portsmouth in July and the Centenary Council Meeting in October: Diaries and Calendars were available to order now, a letter of thanks from the C.A.B has been received for their representative's visit in April; Salisbury Library will House a special display to honour the Centenary celebrations in July.

Rosemary then introduced our Speaker, Jill Daniels from Chandlers Ford. She and her husband had made a journey through Russia from Moscow, in the centre of the country to St Petersburg, 1,000 miles, by water, visiting and photographing places fashioned by long-past rulers and seeing the impact these people, mostly very unpleasant, had had on the country and its people. From Ivan the Terrible, who preceded the Tsars, and built 'convents', not for religious retreats but as somewhere to put troublesome wives or other unwanted women, although these were outwardly beautiful buildings which have survived till today. He also built St. Basil's Cathedral, which was for worship, with 8 turrets and domes; when Napoleon was trying to take Moscow he made a plan to dismantle it and re-erect it in Paris, but was thwarted by the weather which was so wet and dampened down the gunpowder he intended to use to blow up parts of it.

The Kremlin is actually a group of buildings, all beautiful and important, with golden domes, this shape so that the heavy snow could not settle on them and they were always visible. It contains many fabulous treasures, including a tiny train of gold inside a golden Faberge egg, made to celebrate the opening of the Trans-Siberian Railway. The Metro was created by Stalin with monuments to the 'workers' at every turn and also a golden memorial to wheat, at one time Russia grew enough wheat to feed the whole nation. Lenin's tomb, in which one can still see his body and Red Square, not quite as big as expected, a wonderful collection of icons and many other treasures. Stalin had also initiated the making and linking of the Waterways for travel and transport

After the sights of Moscow we were off into this vast country and looking at more palaces and public buildings, all full of beautiful artefacts in the face of the poverty-stricken mass of the people. Peter the Great started the building of St. Petersburg, copying some French ideas, until he was deposed by his wife, Catherine the Great, who had many lovers including Potemkin, who was disliked by most of her Court who gradually 'disappeared' She created the Hermitage and filled it with treasure from all over Europe in fabulous rooms of immense splendour. They were followed by Alexander III, who was more humanitarian towards his people and sought to abolish "serfdom", but in fact made their plight much worse, as it took away their living, their homes and their whole way of life. He was eventually assassinated in one of his richly decorated

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palaces. The tombs of all the Romanovs are placed in the fortress of Peter and Paul in St Petersburg.

A fascinating picture of a vast, blood-soaked land, full of beautiful public buildings containing fabulous collections of treasure in every form and colour.

Mrs Daniels was warmly thanked and applauded.

We then enjoyed tea, booked tickets and voted for the flower of the month.

Our next Meeting will be on August 14th at 2.15 pm, in MVVWH, when we shall be entertained by Sandra Simmons ' talk, "Under the Veil". Please remember Flower of the Month.

We are always pleased to welcome visitors and new members, so do come along if one of our Speakers is of interest to you.

Queries to Val on 01725 510850.

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