

## Members' Talks at History Group – October 2018.



The Member Speakers (from left): Carole, Nita, Audrey, Tina and Janice.

Five Members gave extremely well-researched and illustrated talks on a variety of topics at the October meeting. They all received warm applause, and the audience appreciated all their hard work and the depth of research they had done, before presenting their topics.

Audrey Hobbs – Millicent Fawcett (nee Garrett) 1847 – 1929.

Millicent Fawcett (1847 – 1929) was a leading Suffragist and campaigner for equal rights for women and votes for women. She led the biggest suffrage organisation, the non-violent National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) from 1890-1919 and played a key role in gaining women the vote.

Audrey highlighted the differences between the Suffragists and the Suffragettes. The Suffragettes campaigned with violent methods and often broke the law, whereas the Suffragists were law-abiding, non-violent and protested peacefully. Audrey highlighted that Suffragists outnumbered the Suffragettes by ten to one.



Millicent Fawcett (1847 – 1929)

Millicent was the sister of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, the first female doctor in the UK and also had another sister, Agnes, who supported her in her cause. In 1867, Millicent married Henry Fawcett MP, who had been blinded earlier in a shooting accident and was fourteen years her senior.

Audrey gave a sympathetic portrayal of this pioneering lady, detailing many important events in her illustrious career. Millicent's statue is in Parliament Square – the first woman to be thus honoured.

## Carole Clements – The Terracotta Warriors and the Qin Dynasty.

By contrast, Carole's presentation was of her personal experience of seeing the Terracotta Warriors in China. She recounted, with humour and a lively presentation, her response to seeing this significant excavation and she also outlined the life story of the first Emperor of China, Qin, the founder of the Qin dynasty, and the founder of China, whose ambitions to live well in the afterlife led to the Terracotta Army being constructed. Even a hospital was provided for the afterlife for the 'wounded' soldiers. Carole named some of his many achievements, which even affect the present day.

Carole gave the audience many facts and figures, and projected photographs including archive photographs and photos of the Army in their 'pits'. She emphasised that every Warrior was unique: each had different eyes, hairstyles, posture, stance, shoes, beards, moustaches etc. Carole also explained the restoration processes to the audience and likened it to completing a giant jigsaw.



Some of the Terracotta Warriors in situ in China.

Carole also met one of the farmers who had made the original discovery of the Terracotta Warriors. For an extra supplement she was given a book signed by him and made a visit to village of the archaeologists, currently working on the site.

Carole gave the audience much detailed information about the excavation and the Mausoleum, but also commented on how much she had enjoyed the recent History Group visit to the Terracotta Warriors in Liverpool.

## Tina Jenkins – Anna Leonowens 1831 – 1915.



Tina revealed the fascinating real story behind the lady who is immortalised in the musical 'The King and I' and in the book 'Anna and the King of Siam'. Using photographs and archive

material she recounted the amazing tale of a woman who re-invented herself, and rose above her insignificant early life to become an educator at the Royal Siamese Court. Photos included archive photos of the King of Siam.

Tina exposed the myths and debunked Anna's own version of her life, giving the audience a most enjoyable biography of a remarkable Victorian lady.

Janice Evans – Four local Characters.

Janice's presentation was on a much more sober note as she presented the first two characters on her talk on local personalities.

1) – Capt Eustace Jotham VC (posthumous) 1883 – 1915.



Captain Jotham was born in Kidderminster and was killed in action in 1915. Janice told of his life story, illustrating the talk with photos of him and of memorials to him in Kidderminster and India. Jotham Close on the Silverwoods Estate, Kidderminster, is named after him.

2) – Brian Turner Thomas Lawrence VC. 1873 – 1949. Lawrence was born in Bewdley and Janice told the story of how he got the VC, illustrated with photographs of him. Lawrence Grove, on the Silverwoods Estate, Kidderminster, is named after him.

3) – Alfred Tabbs 1883 – 1976. Tabbs built and rode miniature bicycles and is mentioned in the Guinness Book of Records. Janice told of his life story supplemented with archive photos. Tabbs Gardens, off Birmingham Road, is named after him.

4) John Heath aka 'Jonny the Cobbler'. Shell shocked in WW2, Jonny became an eccentric figure, riding round Kidderminster on his bicycle, dressed variously as a sailor or in some other costume. Many people in the audience remembered seeing this colourful character, not so long ago. Janice showed some photographs which rekindled memories of this unusual individual.

Nita Crutch – Wollaston Hall, Stourbridge.



Nita in her usual, inimitable style, recounted a childhood event connected with Wollaston Hall, and retold the episode with humour and a risqué touch. The Hall had been an Elizabethan house, previously owned by the Foleys of Witley Court. Sold to Thomas Firmstone, then let to Caleb Roberts, the Hall appeared to have a 'curse' on it, as a number of unexplained or unusual deaths had occurred in the Hall, and consequently the fine Elizabethan house could not sell. It was left in disrepair and eventually was dismantled and sold off as reclamation, some fine panelling ending up in Henry Ford's son's home in the USA. Nita augmented her amusing talk with photographs and sketches of the interior and exterior.

Heidy Hague