

QWG Secretary's Report

As we all know, we are living in unprecedented times, although there is now some hope of a return to relative normality due to the majority of the adult population having received the Covid vaccines.

The year began with the AGM on 6 March 2021, which took place via Zoom. This was well attended, and an unexpected event took place, namely our then President Leighanne Montgomery went into labour the night before, meaning that the meeting had to be chaired by our incoming President Clare-Louise Wilkinson! Members were subsequently delighted by the news of the safe arrival of little Eleanora (Nellie) Sullivan who was born on 9 March weighing 7.14 lbs.

President Clare-Louise reflected on a successful year and thanked all those involved. Deirdre McCauley agreed to stay on as Secretary and Carolyn Foster as Treasurer. All current committee members remained.

As we are all aware, no physical events were able to be organised due to the pandemic, however Clare-Louise has organised two virtual events. The first was 'Storytelling with Liz Weir' on 27 May 2021. Liz is a County Antrim based storyteller, who in 2019 was awarded an MBE for services to the arts and to education. This was well-attended and most interesting and thought-provoking, giving rise to much discussion and many questions. There was also another virtual event on 11 September, which was a talk by Dr Jane Lugea entitled 'Examining how fiction can help us understand the lives of those with dementia.' This was a fascinating and informative talk.

Clare-Louise has also been busy making great efforts to keep members connected with one another through a series of informal Zoom 'drop-in' coffee mornings, which have taken place every few weeks and have been enjoyed by those who attended.

Clare-Louise also has one or two physical events in the planning stage, namely a wine-tasting and a tour of the Grand Opera House in Belfast. As always, these depend on what Covid restrictions will still be in place in Northern Ireland.

The Committee was able to return to meeting in person at Queen's in November 2021 which was nice as we could gather in person rather than just see one another on a screen. We also had a Christmas 'Mince Pies and Coffee' meet-up in the café at the Ulster Museum on 18 December 2021, which several members of QWGA attended.

It is to be hoped that we will soon all be able to come together once again, in the meantime I hope everyone stays safe and well.

Deirdre McCauley
Secretary, QWGA
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