

December has been a month of fundraising and fun. Fundraising in the form of a tombola stall at the Stalham Yuletide Street Fair, and fun in the form of our Christmas meal.

The month started with the decoration of our Christmas tree in St Mary's Church for the town's annual tree festival. There had been some debate with regards to the theme this year. Originally it had been planned to have a 12 Days of Christmas theme but that got changed when it was realised we were going to have difficulty with the human elements. So the theme changed slightly to a 'Victorian' Christmas which was very loosely interpreted to be honest.

Like last year the topper for the tree reflected a theme of its own. Last year we had a Harnser, this year we had a Wherry. Both were created by our Secretary (who is dreading what next year will be). This reflected in the fact that Stalham is a Broadland town and has a town sign showing a Wherry, which was paid for and erected as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of original Stalham WI in 1972. The rest of the decorations were a mixture of handmade items and photo baubles depicting some of the things The Stalham Broads WI has got up to in the last two years.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> December we hosted a tombola stall at the Stalham Street Fair. The weather on the day deterred some from attending, but those that did, enjoyed the event immensely. The tombola itself proved to be a hit with picture cards providing the winning 'tickets' (saving on paper waste which is good for the environment).

December is also the one month of the year when the Committee have a 'rest' or maybe that should read as the one month the Committee don't have to run a meeting. Instead of a normal meeting we get dressed up and visit one of the many excellent eateries in the area. This year's celebration took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> December in The Greyhound in Hickling. The meal proved to be very popular with members, so much so in fact, that we had to limit the numbers so we could fit in the dining area. Even so it was still a little tight.

True to form with Stalham something didn't go to plan this time. Rosemarie our President (who organised the meal) had a little issue on the way to Hickling (a flat tyre issue to be exact) so was slightly delayed. Thankfully our resident naughty elf (also known as Paula the Secretary), had arrived early, and with the help of Irene, another committee member, provided a more than adequate welcome to members. She did though refuse to let the members open the paper bags containing the Stalham Secretary's Secret Santa Surprise (5 S's) until everyone (including the President) had arrived. Last year the surprise was little badges, this year there was much amusement when the bags revealed wind up Christmas toys. (Planning for next year's 5 S's is already in hand).

Of course there is always one table of troublemakers. At Stalham it is usually the table with the secretary on which may explain why the other Committee members sat elsewhere. So it was no surprise that there was a mishap involving an elf, a wind up penguin and a glass of wine (there was a second incident on the same table but the elf and penguin weren't responsible for the second spill) resulting in a very damp tablecloth. The food was excellent and plentiful, the chatter was lively and everyone enjoyed it. All in all it was the perfect end to 2023. What 2024 will bring we don't know other than the one thing which will be certain, as we will have a new President elected at our Annual Meeting.