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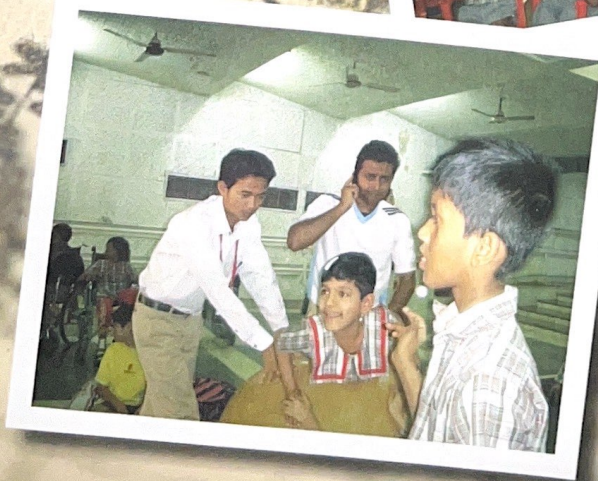
Women's Council

Edition No. 20, April 2022

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www.womenscouncil.org.uk

Aiding Disabled Asian Children and their Families



- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Brunei
- Cambodia
- China
- India
- Indonesia
- Iraq
- Japan
- Jordan
- Korea
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- Myanmar
- Morocco
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Palestine
- Papua New Guinea
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Syria
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- Thailand
- Tibetan Region
- Tonga
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- Vietnam

Newsletter - 2022

FRIENDSHIP AND FUNDRAISING

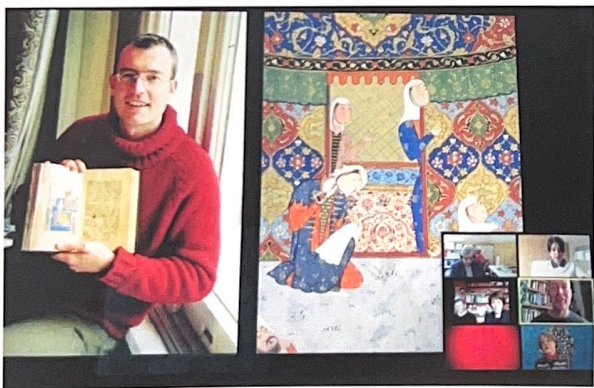
All but one of our events was held virtually and, for many of us, this meant learning new skills.

VALENTINE'S DAY



Hosted by Caroline Muir, this Coffee Morning & Quiz to celebrate the day worked very well and was great fun. Who was St Valentine? How did he die and when did the fashion to send special cards to sweethearts begin? A well-devised presentation covered the story of the saint and outlined the history of valentine cards and their format in times past. Poetry readings and appropriate classical music followed and a raffle brought the meeting to a close.

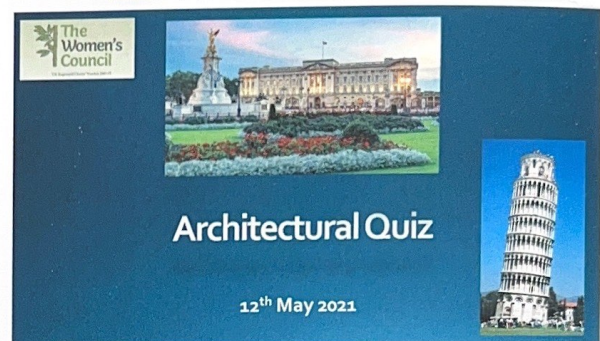
A CARPET RIDE TO KHIVA



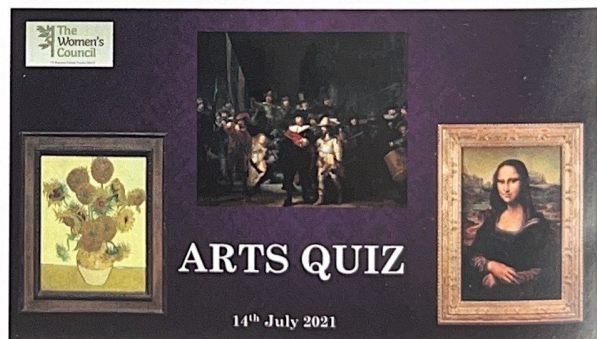
In April we were treated to a fascinating talk by Christopher Aslan Alexander. Born in Turkey, Chris grew up in Beirut. After University he moved to Central Asia. When he found himself in the remote desert oasis in Uzbekistan he embarked on a mission to rediscover the lost arts of traditional carpet weaving and set up a self-sufficient workshop, offering employment – and independence – to marginalised women and people with disabilities. We saw some of the intricate designs and use of colour all

of which was quite fascinating. His own story wove its way in and out of the talk, illustrated by photographs of some of his adventures – as well as designs for carpets! On this occasion we were joined by members from Dubai and Jordan and friends from ADAPT in India, FIWAL and Corona Worldwide (CWW). An absolute treat for us all.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE



Vice Chairman Jenny Habib devised a Quiz for each of our Coffee Mornings in May and July. The subject of the first was famous buildings. This was more difficult than the title page implied, as several of the photographs were taken from unusual angles and were less easy to recognise.



Similarly, the second Quiz featured some very familiar paintings but was the artist as easily identified as the painting? Our Quiz Master obviously put a lot of thought into her choice of photographs for both these Quiz mornings, getting us thinking while, at the same time, enjoying the challenge.

She then shared her career as an architect and her travels around the world.

Photographs by members, friends and courtesy of ADPAT and SETI. More can be seen on our website.
www.womenscouncil.org.uk

Providing training for women working with children with disabilities and their families in Asia, Asia Pacific and the Middle East

A GARDEN TOUR

During the summer of 2020 many of us had taken comfort from our gardens and shared photographs on WhatsApp. This gave us the idea of producing a calendar for 2021 (which raised a little much needed income). From this came the idea of a virtual gardens tour which we did in June. Members talked about their gardens, and shared their favourite corners with us, and there was an opportunity to ask them about the plants and flowers that were featured.



Once again members and guests from various parts of the world were able to join in, and we had added the pleasure of welcoming Patrons from Indonesia and Palestine and

a representative from Malaysia, who spoke about the indigenous plants of their countries. The high spot was undoubtedly the tour of a member's garden in Suffolk (above left) which TWC members have been invited to visit at some time in the future.

A MORNING WITH THE AUTHOR

In September we were joined for an informal talk over coffee by Sarah Harrison, a prolific author and entertainer. Her easy style had us all chuckling, especially as her experiences as the daughter of an army officer mirrored those of some of her audience – moving from country



to country, changing schools etc. Sarah told us how she started scribbling at a very early age, but in addition to being a prolific author she has been a journalist, written poetry, short stories and children's books. Sarah has the knack of engaging with her audience so it was no surprise to learn that she is in demand as a guest speaker as well as giving radio talks and taking part in Quiz Shows. Hopefully there will be another opportunity to meet up with Sarah in the future.

MEETING OUR PATRONS

TWC welcomes its Patrons to all events, but there are some which are specifically planned to provide opportunities for us to welcome them, if they've recently arrived in London, and explore ways in which we can all work together to the benefit of those with disabilities. So, in lieu of the usual luncheon, we had a special Meeting by Zoom when we

were joined by Patrons from Indonesia, Nepal, Palestine and Singapore. They each gave a short résumé of their background, previous postings and their country's culture, particularly in relation to opportunities for the disabled. It was a relaxed, informal and very useful meeting and we look forward to sharing hospitality with them in the future.

Message from The President, Doris The Lady Butterworth of Warwick



It seems strange to be writing this Annual Report after another traumatic year; the pandemic, lockdown, the loss of life, deserted towns and the quietness all around us, contributed to a strange existence.

But the steadfast attitude of The Women's Council has prevailed and with thanks to our Chair, Pat Yaxley, and our Diplomatic Liaison Officer, Caroline Muir, along with the ingenuity of Dr Rajni Rijal, we have been linked by Zoom and have shared friendship along with calendars, recipes, and news. In addition, it has been vital to keep contact with Dr Mithu Alur's work at Adapt in India and resume links with Caritas SETI.

Now we are reopening and revitalising our aims to support the work of women working with handicapped children; we look forward to meeting again, seeing our friends and working together for The Women's Council.

Promoting friendship and co-operation between women of Asia and the UK.

News of the courses supported by TWC



For over 20 years Dr Frances Moore, who retired as TWC's Training Officer in 2021, has played a pivotal role in the development of the Course initially conceived by Dr Sheila Wirz of UCL. Through contact with friends and former colleagues she knew that the Women's Council was

looking for a new project. So when she heard that the Director of The Spastics Association in India (now ADAPT) was interested in developing the Course but didn't have

the funding, Frances saw the possibilities – and everything sprang from that. Since 2002 Frances has visited Mumbai every year to discuss the development of the Course and meet the participants. She also introduced Dr Alaa Sebeh and Essam Francis of the Caritas SETI Centre to Dr Alur of ADAPT. Initially this was at the beginning of the Course. In recent years, however, she found it more beneficial to attend towards the end of the Course and assist the participants in devising their Action Plans, ensuring a better chance of their viability. TWC is tremendously grateful to her for developing the link between us and our partner agencies. Fortunately Frances is not lost to us as she is now a Trustee and supporting her successor, Rachel Tainsh, by maintaining contact with SETI and Dr Sebeh.

REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF THE PAN/ARAB ME INCLUSION TRAINING

Following a turbulent two years due to the problems caused by the Covid 19 pandemic and continuing unrest throughout much of the Middle East, TWC is once again in contact with Dr Alaa Sebeh (Regional Adviser on Disability, Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development Cluster at UNESCWA in Beirut) and SETI (Support for Education and Training on Inclusion) in Cairo.

A very useful zoom meeting involving TWC Chair, Vice Chair and Hon Training Advisors with our ME partners took place in early February to plan possible Training activities for 2022.

A Pan/Arab CBID (Community Based Inclusive Development) Course is planned to take place in Jordan in the Autumn. The host will be the El Hussein Society with

the Higher Council of Disability Jordan. The logistics and announcement for the Course are eagerly awaited and will be circulated to TWC members to advise organisations that they know to apply for places, these will necessarily be limited. TWC Trustees have approved support for this Training.

A number of other Regional activities to strengthen CBID in the Middle East are also being discussed by UNESCWA including the development of a Regional CBID Network to be affiliated to the Global CBR Network and a Regional CBR/CBID Conference. TWC would, in principle, support both of these developments which build on the Pan/Arab CBR/CBID Training that has had TWC support and funding since 2001. (Dr Frances Moore, Trustee)

AN INNOVATION



BROOCH: During 2021 we devised a special TWC brooch. These will be available at most events, or by post. For full details and an Order Form, please, please contact Rajni through enquiries-twc@outlook.com

CALENDARS AND COOKBOOK

Thanks to Rajni Rjal, for the second year a TWC Calendar was produced using photos posted on the TWC WhatsApp. A limited supply of the Cookbook produced in 2020 is still available.

OBITUARIES

During the year we heard of the deaths of Len Croxton, Nadwa ben Khadra, Maria Romilda Georgis, Alexandra Furtado and Mrs Alys Rickett. TWC conveys sincere condolences to their families and friends

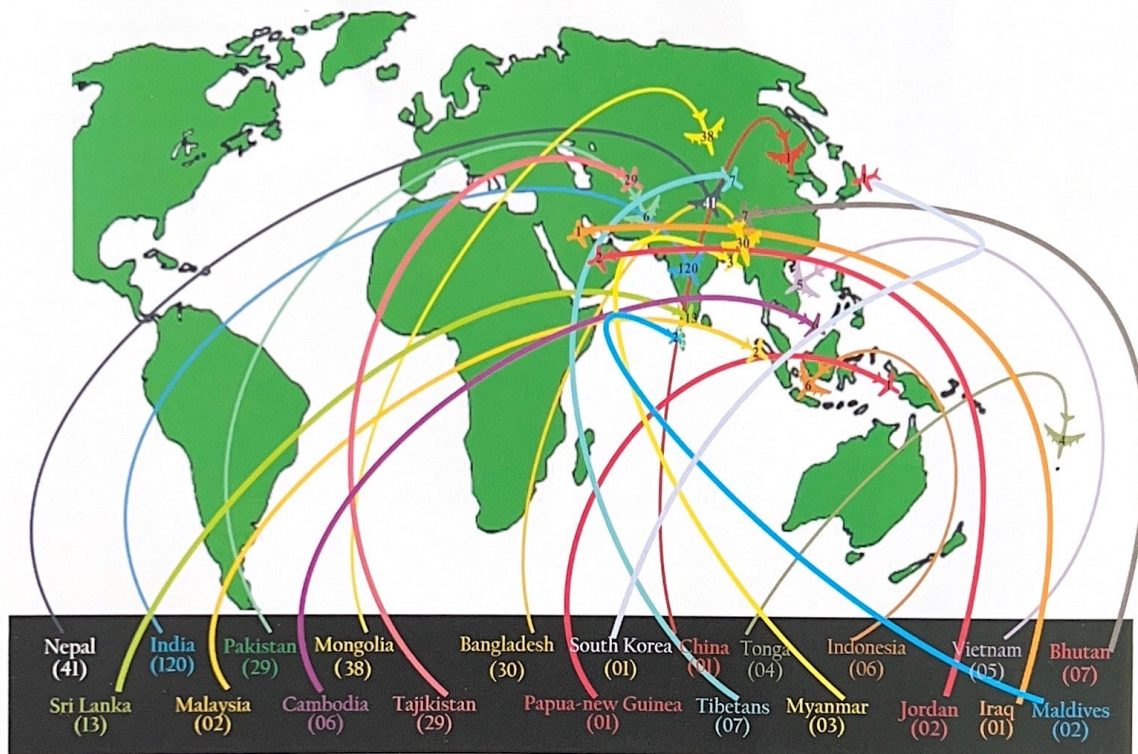
Dates for the Diary

16th June Annual General Meeting at 11 am at the University Women's Club followed by lunch. Guests are welcome but pre-booking is essential.

A special **Platinum Tea** is being arranged - details to be confirmed. Please register your interest in this event or in hearing news of other events in the autumn through enquiries-twc@outlook.com or visit our website or Facebook page.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE COUNTRIES REPRESENTED ON A CII COURSE IN INDIA & THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH COUNTRY

(This does not include women from Kuwait, Libya, Morocco and Syria who have attended a Workshop organised by Dr Alaa Sebeh through the SETI Centre)



The CII Course and the Pandemic

The ADAPT face-to-face course in 2020 was impacted by the pandemic. To date 10 out of the 18 participants have been able to submit their follow up reports.

Through 2021 the ADAPT team had continually to adapt to the COVID pandemic. Plans were made to develop an online **Inclusion Matters** course which would build on their experiences teaching and running activities this way. In preparation for the course which started in January 2022, we shared ideas about content and what works in an online context. It was decided that the course would be held on four days of the week. Wednesdays would be for reading and assignments. It was conducted for four hours from 10 – 2 pm with a 15-minute break. Participants included school teachers, special educators, therapist, social worker, medical professionals, NGO staff, parents, siblings and people with disabilities.

The ADAPT team were able to recruit 33 participants (26

women and 7 men) to the course. They were from ten Asia Pacific countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and the Tibetan Government in Exile. It took place over a 6 week period.

I was able to give an input on one session in February. The focus was on building relationships with parents. I was able to show some film of parent child interactions and we discussed how to build supportive relationships with parents.

In my experience having too large a training means that it is difficult to engage participants. Overall it appears the Course was well received. It would be useful to have more detailed feed-back from the participants to understand what was specifically helpful and what could be improved. (Rachel Tainsh, Hon Training Officer)

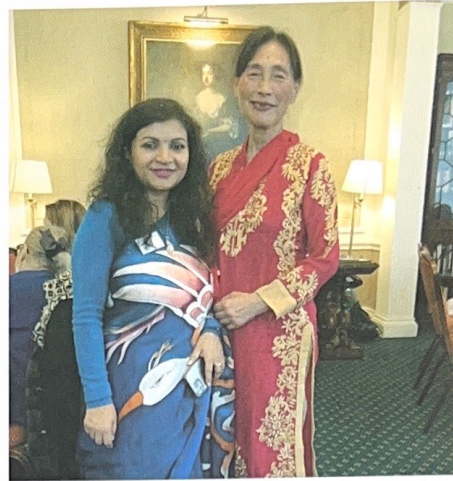
At the virtual Valedictory ceremony a short video was shown in which the 33 participants each gave a short resume of their background, experiences and how they felt the Course had helped them.

For more about CII Courses take a look at our website where you can find Course Reports and photographs of Courses in action as well as details of our social and fundraising events.

CELEBRATING DIWALI, THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

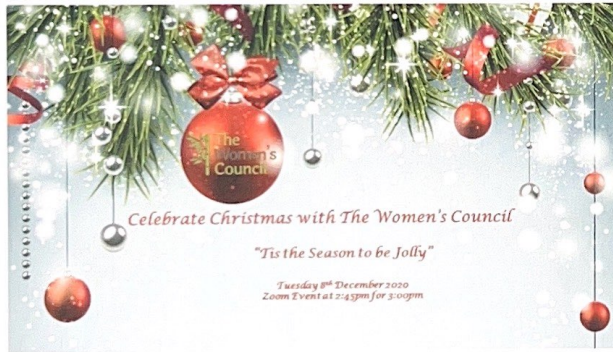


The last time we had been able to meet together was in early 2020 when we celebrated the Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival, so members were delighted at the prospect of, once more, being able to meet in person. This time we were in the gracious surroundings of The RAG in Pall Mall, where we were made very welcome. Patrons representing



Malaysia, Japan, Nepal, Palestine and Sri Lanka joined TWC Members and guests, many wearing colourful saris or shalwar kameez. Each table had lovely flower rangolis and lots of tealights and everyone enjoyed tasting the sweetmeats associated with Diwali.

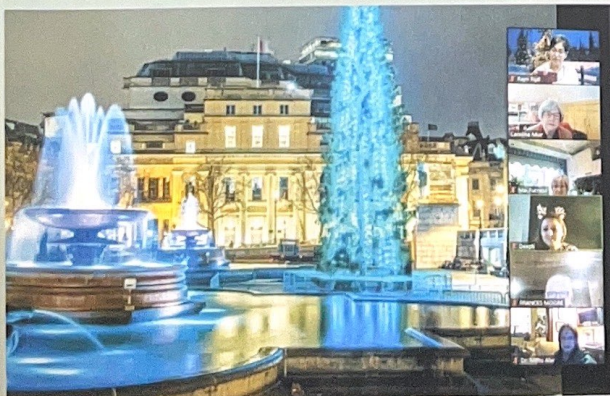
CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS



After the very enjoyable Diwali lunch it was disappointing

to have to cancel the planned Christmas Lunch, expected to take place at the same venue but, nothing daunted, we celebrated in good heart, even if we did have to pull our own Christmas crackers!

Once again we were joined by members from as far away as Lebanon and Jordan as well as members of FIWAL, KCWC and CWW. Poetry readings and a video showing Christmas lights in capital cities all over the world, preceded a raffle and we all sang along to a rendition of Jingle Bells in Arabic. The event was rounded off, very appropriately, with some lovely singing of familiar carols from Wellington College choir, specially recorded for the occasion.



A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AND EFFORT IS GIVEN TO ORGANISING EVENTS OF ANY KIND, BUT PARTICULARLY SO IN THE CASE OF THOSE WE SHARED VIRTUALLY.

GRATEFUL THANKS TO ALL THOSE INVOLVED.

TWC would like to extend grateful thanks to everyone who gave support during 2021. Without it, the Council would not be able to continue its support of the vital work which is benefitting thousands of children with disabilities in Asia, Asia Pacific and the Middle East.