

WI report

At the February meeting our guest speaker was Barbara Hatley who spoke about women working on the Inland Waterways during WW2. They were a small, but unique group of women who were from all ages, areas and social classes.

When the men who manned the narrow boats were sent off to war women were needed to take over from them. They navigated the canals with heavy cargoes of such goods as sheet steel or coal. Living conditions were cramped and very basic and those who managed to stay to the end of the training were a determined and strong group of women.

There was no uniform provided but they were given a badge to wear with IW as the logo for Inland Waterways. They were soon nicknamed Idle Women. They were far from that!!

The talk gave a fascinating insight into an area that remarkably few people know about.