

## Melissa's Thought for the Month – July/August 2015

I have no doubt that many of you, like me, watch some of the interesting sets of programmes broadcast on television. Recently I have enjoyed “The Natural World” with Professor Brian Cox and “The Greatest Generation”. This last is of course my generation – it may have been “The Greatest” though not all of us as individuals can claim that distinction! As I watched it though, I recalled so many events and personalities of my life time.

In particular, I have always been conscious of the procession of “The First Women Who....” many of us found ourselves pioneers in different ways. I know I have written for The Link previously of what it was like being the first woman in the pulpit in many small rural and even some better known Methodist Churches.

Thinking back this second and much greater emancipation of women was to a very large extent the direct result of World War II. I know that when Britain was “standing alone” after the Nazi Party had over run most of continental Europe and even Scandinavia had a Quisling Government whose leaders were appointed by The Party. German U-Boats (Undersea boats, i.e. Submarines) threatened ships attempting to bring us supplies from our colonies and overseas dominions. Those were still the days when “The sun never set on the British Empire.”

When we were “standing along” it was inevitable that the majority of men were involved in the war but so were the women. Had I not been training at the time for a “reserved occupation” in teaching, I should have been “called up”. It would have been into the A.T.S., the W.R.E.N.S., the W.A.A.F. or the Land Army.

It was also meant that we “weak females” had the choice in many other spheres. We had women bus conductors and railway guards as well as women’s wear and baby clothes. In the professions, women could become medical doctors and lawyers of all types as well as Ministers of religion. It is intriguing that the Anglican Church has only just reached the point of consecrating women bishops. I suppose our equivalent would be Chair of District and I imagine that dizzy height was passed long ago!

Royalty have always been “ahead of the game”! Elizabeth I was the first woman to occupy the throne in her own right. Clearly she was fully accepted.

The other television series I, of course, enjoyed very much. Nature study and its more “advanced” branches have been favourite of mine from childhood. If you also watched it I wonder if you were struck as I was by the concluding remarks of Professor Cox. He “expressed” to wondering if there could be a “personality” behind the origin of our Universe and any others which might exist!?!

**Melissa.**