

Boudicca!

On Friday 12th August, Tutbury Women's Institute hosted a dinner with Boudicca. 150 people arrived at Tutbury Village Hall, to watch and listen, enthralled by the account of one woman's fight against an implacable enemy. Boudicca faced us, her face painted as a death mask, dressed in her armour and her jewellery, to tell us how she had rallied her followers to take on the might of the Roman army.

Lesley Smith of Tutbury Castle for once left her favourite character, Queen Elizabeth 1st, to share with us the story of another powerful woman – Boudicca.



The Romans had traded with us for years but they became greedy and decided to conquer Britain. Boudicca was tied to stakes and whipped to the bone, while her daughters were raped in front of her.

Boudicca and her daughters recovered from the Roman brutality and went on to raise an army against the invaders. We followed the story to the bitter end – and it was bitter.

While we caught our breath, Lesley went on to give us the historical background to the story, fitting it into the context of the day. As always, Lesley's mesmeric performance was backed by scholarly research.

Every item of clothing was handmade, using materials and dyes of the time, and even the shoes were based on those worn at the time.

Following the talk, Boudicca posed for photographs and answered questions. She is seen, here with Carol Hall, president of Tutbury W.I.



Lesley gave her services for free, in order to support the village Women's Institute and our most grateful thanks go to her for her generosity.

The evening was rounded off with a delicious supper provided by members of the W.I.

What a brilliant evening! I can only urge you to go and see this fascinating performance based on a woman about whom we know very little except that she very nearly defeated the might of the Roman army.