

HIARA MEETING – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021-

Our Chairman, Liz Jeffery welcomed over 80 members and guests to the November meeting. Liz congratulated the committee for the luxury Christmas Raffle – tickets £1 – which will be drawn today.

Liz also gave us a date for our diaries – Hiara AGM to be held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

We then welcomed Amanda from the Maidstone Gin Distillery which re-opened 18 months ago.

There is a small team of six in charge of this small artisan very successful company.

Amanda explained that the original Distillery on this Maidstone site dated from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Producing 5,000 gallons of gin each week. This was in the days when water was not pure and the population drank either beer or gin. This was the subject of the many paintings of the Artist William Hogarth.

After family problems, the Maidstone Distillery was closed and another company produced Cherry Brandy on the site. This lasted until 1982.

Amanda recommended a visit to the Distillery to enjoy a guided tour and the shop and bar. She had brought with her bottles of George Bishop Gin (Kent Spirit of the year), Ranscombe Wild Gin (using flowers and herbs picked at the nearby Ranscombe Farm) and Sharps Toffee Gin (remembering the Maidstone Sharps Toffee company).

Members were able to sample the three gins and many bottles were sold.

Liz thanked Amanda for her interesting talk and wished the company continued success.

The next Hiara meeting is on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December – a Christmas Tea Party with entertainment.