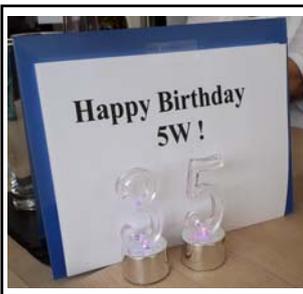




womenwelcomewomen
World Wide

Happy Birthday 5W - A Year of Celebrations Around the World



35 years! That is a lot of friendship and travel

Much has changed since 5W was birthed in 1984 around the High Wycombe UK kitchen table in the home of our founder, Frances Alexander. Since then we have seen many many members come and go. We have grown to our current membership of about 2400 members in 79 countries. If we could see each 5W member's travels and the friendships we have created over these 35 years, we would see a web of threads, circling, crossing and uniting our global community of members.



1984 was the year that Russian cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya became the first woman to walk in space. Japan was one of the most popular travel destinations. Overheads in planes were referred to as hat racks, used more for hats and coats than luggage. Suitcases on wheels were not yet available. We flew through the clouds, in clouds of smoke, since smoking was still allowed on board. We checked in with handwritten tickets. People dressed up to go on a plane. Selfies were not a craze, print film was too expensive for that pleasure and we didn't have the instant ways to share our happy moments with family/friends everywhere else in the world but with us. We didn't travel with mobile phones, we sent postcards instead of emails. Much has changed in 35 years, within 5W and in the world we continue to explore.

Currently, travel trends include conscious travel, disaster tourism, voluntourism, ecotourism, dark tourism and experiential travel. 5W is very much the latter, as we experience the lives and homes of members we befriend around the world.



What will we see in the future? Medical tourism? Underwater hotels? Holograms at check-in desks instead of real people? Expanded virtual travel is sure to increase, as baby boomers' mobility decreases and climate change increases risks of travel to some destinations, or even causes some destinations to disappear.

As you celebrate 5W's 35th Anniversary, I congratulate you each for being part of this web of friendship. Thank you for making the world smaller and friendlier via your 5W hosting and visiting, for all the small gestures of kindness, helping plan trips via emails, for overnight hospitality, for the laughter and adventures, and for being part of this remarkable organization in whatever way you choose. May we continue to weave curiosity, courage, adventure and friendship, together as a whole and amongst our many countries.

In friendship, Elinor Warkentin 5W Chair

