

WI News 2014

December ~ Members enjoyed a lively social evening on 9th December. After a Christmas quiz, Singing for Fun entertained the audience with favourite Christmas carols and this was followed by a magnificent bring and share supper. For the second year running ladies generously donated a wide range of tinned and dried food for the Chippenham Food Bank.

November ~ On a misty, moist November morning 21 walkers set off across the recreation field and on through the Nymph Hay, reaching Easton Piercy Lane. The bridleway led us to Down Farm and Allington Lane and on through the hamlet of Allington. We passed Bolehyde Manor and then headed across fields and the golf course, finally reaching Stubbs Lane. After passing the church and village shop in the pouring rain we reached our destination, The Jolly Huntsman, for a delicious lunch.

~ Members enjoyed a humorous and interesting talk when Andrew Skelton, Learning & Outreach Officer at Chippenham Museum, spoke about 'Chippenham in 100 Objects'. President Jenny Hayne thanked Andrew for stepping in at short notice after the original speaker had to cancel due to ill health. Andrew also judged the competition and drew the name of the winner of the £200 Denman Bursary, and the winner was Sandra Sigee.

October ~ On the morning of October 18th we joined forces with All Angels WI for our annual bulb planting event. Thanks to everyone's efforts the bulbs have been planted along the verge near The Ridings.



~ Members enjoyed a lively team quiz at October 14's meeting, after the guest speaker had to cancel due to illness.

September ~ School in a Bag was a most intriguing title for a talk. Luke Simon explained how losing his brother Piers in the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami had been the initial trigger to set up an appeal to help the people of Thailand and this then led to the fund helping the victims in disaster areas worldwide. The Piers Simon appeal has now become involved in a new initiative "School in a Bag", supplying school bags to poor, orphan, vulnerable and disaster affected children all over the world. Each bag costs £15 and contains stationery equipment, learning resources and eating utensils enabling a child to write, draw, colour, calculate, express themselves, eat, drink and above all learn. Latterly, knitted teddies have been included in the bags which have proved to be a great success. So far over 40,000 bags have been distributed to 23 countries around the world from South America to Africa and from India to the Far East. Luke explained how an education for these children could be a lifeline to a future out of poverty. It was a most interesting and thought provoking evening and many members will be knitting teddies for this worthwhile cause.

August ~ A colourful display of flowers, fruit and vegetables lent a festive air to Kington St Michael village hall at this year's annual show. Delicious cakes, tasty jams and chutneys, beautifully hand-worked craft items and children's fun entries all added to the competition. The afternoon was rounded off with a light hearted auction of donated produce.

The overall winner was Pat Woodward. Other cup winners were:

WI Trophy for men - John Woodward

Vaughan Cup for ladies - Claire Broomsgrove,

IK Alderman Shield for homebaking and preserves - Liz McCarron Heal

WI Vase for floral art - Claire Broomsgrove

Hughes Cup for the top scoring WI member - Claire Broomsgrove

Woodward Cup for photography - Pat Woodward

Novice Cup - Bruce Low

Singer Cup for 5-10 years old - Charlotte Clark

John Gilbert Cup for under 5 years old - Elizabeth Clark

July ~ At last! Third time lucky, on a glorious July morning, members and friends left Ramsbury, crossing the tranquil Kennet and following tracks, we arrived at Littlecote

Manor and admired the beautiful Roman mosaics. A gradual incline through cool woodland eventually brought us back to Ramsbury and a delicious lunch at The Bell.



WI walk at Littlecote Manor, July 2014

~ In “My Life as an Auctioneer” Gordon Brockman entertained us with the story of how an enforced change of career had taken him from saleroom porter to trainee auctioneer and valuer, and finally to his position today as a trusted auctioneer at a local saleroom. He shared with us the problems of valuation days and the thrill of bringing down the hammer on an exciting lot. Gordon passed on a number of tips for those considering buying or selling antiques and we even tried our hands, rather unsuccessfully, at valuing a number of items he had brought with him. It was a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining evening.

June ~ WI Walk 17th June: The view from the top of Edington Hill more than compensated for the heavy rain which poured down on a dozen WI members and friends. After the hill we followed the Imber Range path, eventually dropping down through Baynton Hillside Wood to reach Baynton House, along a narrow path leading onto the pretty little Church at Coulston and on through the village. We travelled along field paths, passing the remains of a moat and on a steep hill, the site of an early castle. A lane brought us back to the village of Edington and, at last, sunshine. After a few more minutes walking we reached The Three Daggers for a delicious lunch.

~ “Natural skin care and beauty without poisons” was the subject of our June meeting. Jill Cockerton talked about the toxicity of many of the preparations which we buy in the shops. She told us how she had spent several years researching

natural products, talking to chemists and negotiating European Union regulations before producing her own range of 100% natural skin care products. Having been a social worker for 20 years she proceeded to set up her own business and was enjoying passing on her knowledge to others. Finally Jill demonstrated how easy it is to make a facial scrub and a lavender scented bath bombe at home, as well as giving helpful tips for using strawberries, avocado and oatmeal and many other everyday products for the care of our skin.

May ~ April's race night raised £558.

~ We joined forces with All Angels WI for a litter pick-up around the village.



The litter pickers, 12th May 2014.

April ~ WI walk: Would it stop raining? It didn't, so 12 members and friends and Tinca the dog braved the elements and set off from the Old Post Office in Guiting Power. We walked along tracks, through the hamlet of Barton, crossed the Windrush river, through valleys adorned with cowslips and gorse to reach the Cotswold Farm Park. After passing through Adam Henson's farmyard, we approached open countryside; the only thing brightening up the skyline, was the oilseed rape! The walk was shortened, the picnic eaten at home, but we enjoyed the exercise and company.

~ April's talk was entitled "Pots for the Patio" and Maureen Hinton gave us plenty of hints for planting pots to give colour and interest all the year round, from black grass and snowdrops in winter to patio sweet peas which flower for several months in the summer. There were also helpful ideas for growing seasonal vegetables in pots. She also passed on handy tips for making cut flowers last longer when put in water and

demonstrated several beautiful flower arrangements. Finally Maureen told us how to make a scented summer pot pourri.

March ~ The Annual Meeting of the WI was held. Various Bye Laws were adopted and a new committee was elected. Those standing down were thanked for their hard work and new members were introduced to the meeting. Jenny Hayne was re-elected as President. The Committee's Annual Report and Treasurer's Report were both approved and, in the President's address we heard details of another very successful year, with the sewing group, walking group, book club and skittles team all continuing to thrive. The Denman Bursary was won by Carol Barratt and the Betty Wiggins Rose Bowl was awarded to Norma Hughes for the most competition points over the past year.

February ~ Our speaker, Charlotte Popescu, began by telling us about how her idyllic country childhood in Oxfordshire with ponies, bantams, an orchard and a large vegetable garden had sowed the seeds for her future foray into keeping hens in her own garden. Fifteen years ago Charlotte purchased two light Sussex hens and two bantams and her passion for chickens has continued unabated until now. Her garden is full with a mixture of 50 chickens, cockerels and bantams of all shapes, sizes and colours. We were entertained with an amazing slideshow and tales of the escapades of the various hens. Foxes and badgers had proved a problem and so CCTV cameras had been installed and two alpacas joined the menagerie with a view to deterring the predators. Finally, Charlotte, who has written a number of books on the subject, gave advice on how to begin keeping chickens in the garden, the best breeds and the type of henhouses. It was clear that if you want really fresh, free range eggs, then the only answer is to keep your own chickens.

January ~ Our first meeting of the New Year was well supported for an entertaining talk entitled "Location, Location, Location" by Lynda Warren. After leaving school and acquiring a secretarial training, which her mother thought would be a good idea, Lynda was successful in her application to join a Swindon theatre company and this was the beginning of a long and happy career as a location scout. At the theatre she met her husband, a props and special effects expert, and together they set up their own company to support film and television crews. They travelled all over the country sourcing locations in places such as castles, stately homes, supermarkets, launderettes and even a London sewer. Lynda explained the difficulties of preparing the sites for filming, looking after the film crews, keeping the locals happy and then returning everything to its original condition or in some cases into a better state. Finally Lynda regaled us with some behind the scenes anecdotes from such TV

favourites as Casualty, Only Fools and Horses and Fawlty Towers. It was a very interesting and amusing talk and Lynda concluded by telling us that she is now enjoying working at Disneyland in Paris.