

Tetbury Advertiser – September 2024

It's been quite a month of contrasts for Tetbury WI.

Our group meeting with Avening, Kemble and Ewen and Tetbury WIs at the end of June was a resounding success. Following our speaker, John Volanthen, the audience of more than 60 were treated to a light supper of quiche and salad followed by Eton Mess, prepared and served by the committee. Thanks must go particularly to our President, Linda, who kept us all to the task in hand, but also to our volunteer bar tenders, who helped moving furniture too and to the non-committee members of Tetbury WI, who helped with laying tables and the general set up - a great deal of hard work, but, in the words of Elle Woods, "we did it"!

John Volanthen, gave us a fascinating account of his experiences, when he, along with other international cavers, was one of the team that successfully rescued the young Thai football team from flooded caves in the Tham Luang caves. He and his partner were the first to locate the boys after several days of searching and the young team were eventually brought out through the cave system, sedated, so they wouldn't panic, and tied to individual divers.

In stark contrast, the speaker at our early July meeting was Dorothy Cook with her 'Tales of a Midwife'. A Glaswegian by birth, she started her early career in Scotland. She had her audience laughing out loud at some of her tales, but her talk then turned to her account of her experiences when she volunteered to work in Muscat and Oman, where female genital mutilation is practised. Although she didn't say it, it was clear from her descriptions that the things she saw there (and was unable to do anything to prevent) affected her deeply. Opposition to FGM was one of the WI's resolutions a few years ago, Dorothy's account brought home how little most of us knew about the realities of the practice, how widespread it is and the implications for women's health, particularly in childbirth. Her readiness to address these issues through her talks and to raise awareness may have made us wince at times, but we all hope that she will continue even though she is retiring from midwifery later this year.

Earlier in June, the Garden Group visited Fresh Air Quenington, sub-titled 'A Celebration of Contemporary Art in a Beautiful English Garden', which is held biennially. More than 130 contemporary pieces are set in a tranquil setting, many of which have been created specifically for the gardens.

The Sunday Lunch Group also visited Quenington a couple of days later, although with rather more mundane interests in mind as they headed to the local pub for a roast lunch!

Tetbury WI does not meet formally in August and there will not be a coffee morning either. Instead a visit is planned to Rodmarton Manor, to tour the house and gardens. We welcome members from the Tetbury area and we would love to have new members join us.

Rowena Palser, Tetbury WI

www.tetbury-wi.org.uk