

Thornborough and Thornton WI report 2020-21



This past year has certainly been a different one that has required adaptation, determination and, of course, social distancing. Our WI had an excellent programme planned for 2020-21 with a variety of new speakers and some exciting events but “things” changed. For example, plans for our 85th birthday meeting in January went somewhat awry due to lockdown restrictions. We had hoped to have our annual birthday lunch at Barley Hill farm, provided by Alice Woodyard, but had to cancel it. Next idea was a piece of cake and a party bag for every member. Had to abandon that too but we did manage to hold a very successful zoom meeting that included a game of Dingbats and a mini version of “Would I lie to you?” A good time was had by all but 2020 certainly wasn’t the vision we had expected, was it?

Yet, despite the Covid-19 restrictions and lockdowns we have managed to keep our WI show on the road using, new to us all, online technology. Zoom isn’t for everyone, of course, but it has enabled us to continue our meetings at a distance; to see each other and have a chat too. We’ve seen some excellent presentations with a variety of speakers talking about a diversity of subjects. Most of whom, like us, had never used Zoom before events forced us to look for new ways of meeting safely.

Taking up a suggestion from our member Janet some time ago we’ve also been able to meet socially too via Zoom. Each month we have had the opportunity to hear from WI members who’ve moved away, for example Gay in Devon and Ren in Cornwall, as well as from other villagers who’ve moved to pastures new such as Gussie enjoying her retirement back home in deepest Surrey. Since then, of course, Gay has moved on to a better place. We’ve also said farewell to former member Virginia Baud and to Bert, husband of Wendy, in Nash. May they rest in peace and their memory be a blessing.

Other visitors to our social Zoom meetings have allowed us to hear more details about the great Scrubs Laundry bags creation in 2020. Thelma, our Buckinghamshire Federation of Women’s Institutes (BFWI) Resilience coordinator who personally organised WI girls and their sewing friends across Buckinghamshire, in the making of more than 7,000 laundry bags. Thelma was awarded a highly commended certificate from the “Proud of Bucks” awards to acknowledge her hard work with said bag making organisation. For the record T&T WI and friends made 450 of them. A great effort from all who participated. Thank you.

The current request to our community is to make Tote bags for Milton Keynes hospital. When the bereaved return to the hospital to collect their loved one’s belongings they are given them in a grey plastic bag with NHS property written on it. These handmade tote bags will offer a level of dignity to all bereaved families at such a sensitive time.

We continue to support the Women’s refuge in Milton Keynes. They are most grateful.

In these strange times its hard to say what the future may bring in terms of Covid-19. One thing is for certain though: the Thornborough and Thornton WI continues from strength to strength. We have been able to continue meeting online via Zoom and will continue to offer friendship and fun to all members and visitors too.

Teresa Connolly
31st March 2021
President, Thornborough and Thornton WI