



## ACTIVITIES OF ASHTON UNDER HILL W.I JULY – SEPTEMBER

Following on from a glorious weather in June we had a fantastic July – if not a little too hot at times!

The speaker this month was Don Adams who cooled us down slightly with his talk about his experiences and career as an engineer for the Wall's Ice-cream company. Walls ice-cream originated in Gloucester but was taken over by the multi-national Unilever and Don recounted his 'travellers tales' when setting up new processing plants in the EU, in the early days of harmonisation. Ghastly errors were discovered and one case he recounted was when a plant in Dublin had the firm Rentakil into the factory, and the poisonous white powder had also been used to treat new machines – a costly error for them! Some countries being considerably poorer; the mafia connections over labour in Italy were alarming and the lack of hygiene in Greece equally worrying as the ice-cream had been re-cycled and turned out grey. True to form he found the Belgians charming and the Germans highly organised.

He told us about the composition of ice-cream: 20% is recognisably milk solids, sugar, palm oils, fats and flavouring, but it is also made up of 30% water and 50% air. We weren't expecting cream but this seemed quite amazing for such a delicious tasting product. An unusual talk and quite fascinating.

Marjy announced that we should try and make July/August a 'plastic free' period when we should look into as many ways as possible to reduce our use of single use plastic items. We were encouraged to write a list of as many ways we can manage and the member with the most ideas to receive a prize.

Several members paid a visit to our 'twin' Ashton Keynes when they enjoyed an afternoon tea and talk in a lovely garden.

Jen arranged a most successful outing on the 12th to the Norton Museum at Bromsrove. We had no idea what to expect but were truly amazed at this huge collection of artefacts from local

manufacturers- most long since gone – nails, buttons, glassware, a rare example of motor cycle with sidecar. Some of the items were displayed in little shops with rescued original fronts - from music shops, milliners, tobacco and sweet shops to old fashioned toys and chemists. Bromsgrove was certainly a very important industrial town and there was also a display of work by the Bromsgrove Guild. The beautiful gates outside Buckingham Palace were designed and made there, also the Liver Birds Sculpture, which was designed by Carl Bernard Bartels and stands atop the Royal Liver building at Liverpool's Pier Head. The collection made by this dedicated gentleman, Denis Norton, was a wonderful tribute to Bromsgrove and well worth a visit. We finished our day off with a visit to Webbs at Wychbold for lunch and a spot of shopping.



Part of The Norton Collection and Mr Norton below



Walk at Tewkesbury – by weir

The walk this month was a walk along the riverside and eventually into Tewkesbury where we visited the newly refurbished Baptist Chapel. We spoke to the volunteer guide who gave us a brief history and we decided another visit might be in the offing. Our lunch afterwards was at El Vinos – a small Italian café nearby.

## AUGUST

We began August with our afternoon meeting on the 7th, and this year turned out to be very special indeed. The event was held in David and Jane Williams-Thomas's garden, sadly for the last time, as they were moving house the very next day! The weather was

perfect and we were able to sit in the shade of available trees. Marjy welcomed seventeen friends from Ashton Keynes WI and altogether we had forty-six present. Andy Pedrick was the speaker, local gardener and plantsman who also write monthly articles in the Vale Magazine. He spoke to us on a number of topics including the pruning of seasonal hardy shrubs and plants and how to take cuttings. August and September being the perfect time to do this. Advice on mulching and feeding and how a bedraggled special offer plant can be divided and brought back to life. He had brought along many plants for sale too.



Jane moving benches with barrow!





Teas were provided by members who brought along plates of savoury foods and the Committee provided delicious cakes and scones with cream and jam. Fruit punch was also very welcome and enjoyed by all.

A special “thank you” garden voucher was given to Jane for her hospitality and good wishes for her new life in Pershore.

A plant is also to be given to Alex Dodge who also has recently left the village with special thanks for her support of the WI.

Members were encouraged to bring ideas to the next meeting for reducing single use plastic in their everyday lives. A prize for the one with the most ideas.

On 21<sup>st</sup> August Carol and Gordon Tyler organised a great walk and once again we were lucky with the weather. Eleven of us met at Longborough village where we took a circular walk past the site of the Battle of Stow 1646 and Banks Fee, a Grade II listed building where they have an Opera Festival each year, a sort of Cotswold Glyndbourne. We were really ready for our lunch afterwards, which was at Longborough Farm shop and Café a short distance away.

The Book Club is thriving and the latest books read are “The Dog who came in from the Cold” and “The Little Coffee Shop of Kabul” Meetings are on the last Friday of the month – please ring Penny Scotland for details.



Walk from Longborough  
The monument to the Battle of Stow

## SEPTEMBER

32 members and guests attended September's meeting. The business included a reminder of help for the forthcoming Village fete with donations of bottles and jars of sweets for the adult and children tombola stalls. Also members were asked to donate any old jewellery, watches etc. for the WI Charity ACWW, which assists women in poorer countries. The ongoing campaign to reduce the use of single use plastics in everyday life is proving very difficult but Doreen Parsons and Marjy had already come up with large lists as a starter, and were given sunflower gifts for all their efforts. It was decided to continue with this project for another month or two.

The speaker was a very lively lady from the Everyman Theatre, Caro Day. She provided a very interesting history of the Theatre with the aid of slides taken of old photographs and sketches of Cheltenham dating back to 1611 where evidence of a play at the Crown Inn was performed. This was just before Cheltenham became a famous Spa Town in the 18<sup>th</sup> century where theatrical entertainments were staged in various venues for the entertainment of visitors. During her talk members were "encouraged" to dress up in various costumes she had brought along and they read and acted in a scene from "Lady Clancarty"-

Jane Wilson dressed up as King George III, and five ladies showed off their dramatic skills in acting out a scene with much aggression and sword fighting! Well done, Jane, Marjy, Marion, Christine, Gail and Gill. Henrietta Cook also read out a poem. Cara was much impressed with their good efforts. The Everyman title was introduced in the 1960s; it had previously been called 'Matcham`s Theatre and Opera House'. Although in decline in the 1950s along with many other theatres, the Everyman has adapted to modern times and hosts, youth and community events as well as a great variety of plays and shows. Photographs of many screen idols were displayed who had performed there in the past such as handsome Richard Burton and a young Penelope Keith learning her craft in repertory. Many well-known and famous stars are still performing there to this day. I feel another visit to the theatre is a must very soon, after this interesting talk. Caro was thanked by Joan Richmond.



Take that!



'King' Jane and speaker Caro



Marjy, Marion, Christine and Gail up for the challenge.

Five members attended a hand tied bouquet class on 26<sup>th</sup> September organised by the Federation. This was held in the garden of a busy lady called Jane who runs her own floral business and always uses British grown and flowers and foliage from her own huge natural garden. Set among the rolling hills of Shelsley it was truly a beautiful setting and the weather was perfect.



Christine, Marjy, Jen, Joan and Maggie