Kirkandrews- on- Eden WI August meeting.

President Margaret McKenna welcomed members to our August meeting. Apologies for absence were taken and the minutes of previous meetings were read, approved and signed. Thanks were given for the help with the local “Special Days“ event which raised £900 for Hospice at Home and £900 for St. Mary’s Church, Beaumont. The County News was read and names taken for a visit to Castle Carrock WI.

Margaret then introduced Audrey Dorman who talked on the subject of “Derbyshire Well Dressing.” We learnt that Well Dressing developed from a pagan custom of making sacrifice to the gods of wells and springs to ensure a continued supply of fresh water. It was later adopted by the Christian Church as a way of giving thanks to God and three out of four well dressings now have a religious theme. Tradition has it that it took on a special significance in Derbyshire as various villages gave thanks for their deliverance from the Plague.

Audrey described how the boards are prepared by soaking in water, often in a stream, a frame is fixed and then wet clay is applied. The picture subject is chosen, drawn full size and then laid over the board. The outline of the picture is then imprinted onto the clay. All the materials used are organic and we were amazed that individual flower petals were used to compose the picture. Hours were spent in the preparation and then the dressing was transported to the site where it is to be displayed. A blessing is usually held and the dressing is in place for one week before being dismantled. Audrey showed examples of colourful and imaginative well dressings. This is now a community affair with a number of families continuing the tradition but welcoming newcomers and children to learn and continue this ancient craft.

Margaret Harrington gave the vote of thanks.

The competition for a flower arrangement in a tea cup was won by Margaret McKenna and second Rhoda Melvin. The drawing was won by Linda Beattie.

Our next meeting is on Friday 11th September in Beaumont Parish Hall. Everyone is welcome.