Kirkandrews- on- Eden WI February meeting.

Our December meeting was a “Christmas Surprise” when members enjoyed a delicious festive meal at the Castlegate Coffee House prepared by Edwin and his staff. January was our holiday month and so it was “back to normal” in February when President Margaret McKenna gave a warm welcome to members and visitors for our February meeting. Apologies for absence were received and the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed. Items from the County News were noted.

Margaret then introduced Mari Reay and her subject “Life as a lady vet”

The daughter of a dairy farmer in the Borders Mari always wanted to farm and be involved with animals. This was not an easy option for a girl who was dyslexic and a female in the nineties! However their local vet at the time encouraged and mentored her even though the attitude of some family members was not encouraging. Her mother was also a great inspiration for her choice of career as a vet.

Only a small number of places were available at university and it was interesting that of 104 students starting the course there were 86 females – a sign that the tide was turning. Studying was difficult because of her dyslexia however the practical aspects of attending to race horses and a post mortem on a whale washed up in the Firth of Forth were interesting.

After graduating in 2004 Mari moved to Cumbria and worked in West Cumbria for a year before moving to the Craig Robinson Practice in Carlisle which involves work with both farm and small animals. The work was initially “nerve-wracking” but always interesting and the wonderful farming community made her feel at home.

Now in the next phase of her life she is combining her work commitments with life as a farmer’s wife and the mother of a toddler.

Mari then demonstrated, using an orange, how to suture an animal and how to give an injection and encouraged a volunteer to try.

Questions were asked and she admitted that, although she is not keen on rats and snakes, it is not animals that are strange.

Rosalind thanked Mari for a very interesting talk.

The competition for an animal ornament was won by Pat Dixon and second was Mary Clark. The drawing was won by Lynn Graham

Our next meeting is on Friday 11th March in Beaumont Parish Hall.