Kirkandrews- on- Eden WI March meeting.

President Margaret McKenna welcomed members and guests to our March meeting in Beaumont Parish Hall.

A short business meeting followed when apologies for absence were received and the County News was read. We have received invitations to several WI meetings and Jean circulated the lists for members who wished to attend.

Margaret then welcomed Tracey Fawcett for the third time to tell us about the fifth and sixth wives of Henry VIII. After a brief background to Henry at this stage in his life when he was at tyrant level and had lost or executed his closest friends and advisors he was described as a fat, smelly, syphilitic man with ulcerated legs and a 55inch waist who was virtually immobile and had to be carried everywhere. He was hoisted into bed and upstairs with rope and pulley systems. Into this household came Catherine Howard, who had been subject to child abuse, she was married to Henry at the age of 16 when he was 49. He was besotted and lavished her with gifts but he was often ill and she was left alone for weeks. Inevitably she became bored and subject to blackmail by previous lovers. Henry was told of her lovers and was so humiliated that he ordered her to be taken to the Tower. This vulnerable young girl was beheaded at the age of 18.

Henry was heartbroken but in just over a year he remarried. Catherine Parr had been married twice before, was part of the northern aristocracy and had links with Cumbria. A nursemaid to Henry who was also clever and wrote several books which were well received. A good stepmother to Henry’s three children she was instrumental in them coming to court and reinstating Mary and Elizabeth in the line of succession. When Henry died she married again but sadly died ten days after giving birth to a daughter.

Margaret McKenna thanked Tracey who once again had brought the Tudor period alive with anecdotes and gruesome details of the politics and religion at that time.

The competition for a pretty handkerchief was won by Judith Swinsco and second was Alice Graham. The drawing was won by Tracey Fawcett..

The next meeting is on the 13th April in Beaumont Parish Hall when we welcome John Huggon with a talk called “Bygone Carlisle”