

Thornborough & Thornton Report: December 2015



No-one would disagree that Thornborough Village Hall is a long way from the harems of India, but on an unseasonably warm night in early December, illuminated for all to see, was the sight of most of the women of the W.I. swaying, sashaying, shimmying, with undulating hips and fluid arm movement, in a not dissimilar way to those women, long ago, who entertained each other whilst waiting for a call from their sheik or some such. Admittedly, we were not dressed for the part. Our teacher, (the gorgeous Marique) was tightly wrapped in a full length, figure-hugging, glittery gold one piece, bejewelled and bedecked with all things gold and tinkly. There were we, a little shy, somewhat hesitant, in sensible skirts and jumpers, but essentially conjoined in the dance and loving every minute of it!

Of course, the dancing came at the end of Marique's talk and demo in which our favourite 'fact' was that essentially, this oldest form of dance was developed for women by women and apart from being brilliant exercise, celebrates the female body. Anyone can do it (even men apparently, who can master the art with great skill and athleticism) and Marique described how women of every age can benefit from the lovely, empowering movement of the dance. Hollywood and the Turkish tourist trade are responsible for selling belly dancing as a performance with bare midriffs and tantalising gestures. The real stuff is much less about entertainment, more to do with individual expression and love of movement.

Those of you who keep abreast of our news, will know that W.I. members don't just swan around having fun, but try to take seriously (and do something about) important issues in our community and beyond. For example, Madge Carey has just taken to a local women's refuge,

piles of Christmas presents donated by Thornborough & Thornton WI members and for the next few months we are donating all our old bras and jewellery to go to help women in Africa. On a political level, we are in the process of deciding on a resolution to be adopted by the national W.I. and which will then be used to pressure the government for legislative or policy change. There are eight suggestions this year ranging from - banning the microbead, to prevention of sudden cardiac death in young adults to appropriate care for hospitalised dementia patients. It takes quite a long time to talk about and finally agree on one of the resolutions, but when it is chosen: watch out. 'The monstrous regiment of women' will leave their belly dancing kit aside and be banging on drums instead.

Cath Sayer