

Report of Renhold WI 6th September 2018

Our subject was Stained Glass- Not just for Churches, our speaker Anna Conti, gave us an interesting account of her career, from the days as a child when she started to collect old bottles from dumps, and was fascinated by the colours and glass types, through her first assignment aged nineteen, for Richard Branson, working on his recording studio. She gets asked to replace old front doors and windows and quickly realised after college that she needed to be able to do the whole job by learning to replace windows and frames in their entirety.

Her first commission was nearly a disaster when an Irish wolfhound belonging to Richard Branson, broke one of her finished panels and she had to make an emergency replacement overnight at her own cost.

Anna's children have been brought up with her glass work, and she began teaching leaded glass techniques at the WI Denman college some years ago. Anna also runs workshops in Leighton Buzzard, where you can have a go at Stained Glass techniques for a day.

Anna was then invited to become the leaded glass expert on This Morning television. She showed us many styles of windows and doors that she has been commissioned to make over the years, such as Victorian and Edwardian and modern and differing techniques and samples of glass.

One member than had a go at cutting glass and breaking off a slice, this would become part of a pattern to be secured in a lead edging, and then soldered and secured by a chemical type putty. Most of her glass comes from abroad, and is not very expensive, but mouth blown glass which is made by hand is four times the price of the machine made samples. Anna then treated us to a slide show of her work in and around the country, including huge panels she had made for churches and windows in public buildings.

The WI thoroughly enjoyed the talk and some of our members have had courses with Anna at Denman College which is open to WI members to learn new skills. Some of our members are attending to learn calligraphy this autumn.

We are always looking for new members to join us, and if you are not sure, come as a visitor to see what we do. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at The Village Hall at 7.30pm. Please Contact Geraldine on 01234 772390

We are running a trip to Northampton on 17th October 2108– to the Derngate & Royal Theatre - behind the scenes tour, with an additional 78 Derngate tour optional, Leather Museum optional. Places are still available -please contact Julie Roberts on 07766478974