

Kilmington W.I.

Memories of the Kilmington Flower Festival, held last weekend at St Giles Church, were still fresh in members' minds at this month's meeting. Those who had attended the evening service at the church, were pleased to have sung 'Jerusalem' as the last hymn, reminding us of Joy's beautiful arrangement as the W.I.'s contribution to the festival. Our grateful thanks go to Caroline Lavender and Coral Dunmow and all the arrangers for all their hard work and for creating such a magnificent display.

This month's speaker was Mike Tyler, known to many of us already, as he has lived in Kilmington for the past ten years. After a career in local government, Mike is now free to pursue his interests, such as taking an active part in a local jazz and swing group. It was, however, his keen interest in, and depth of knowledge of ornithology that we celebrated at the meeting, as Mike was there to tell us about his experience of bird ringing in the Axe Estuary. He was the original member of a group now numbering forty, drawn from a wide variety of professions and backgrounds. There are about 3,000 ringers in Britain, all of whom have to be licensed. Each year about 800,000 birds are ringed, but sadly only 2-3% are recovered, not only in the UK, but across the near continent and even Russia and Africa. A variety of methods of capture are used, including mist nets and cannon nets, for which Mike had to have a long period of training in order to work with explosives. We saw a wonderful collection of slides of the captured birds, ranging from the little sedge warblers and the ever popular kingfishers through to the much larger shelduck, particularly common in this area. Mike recounted how one night he had about 50 damp and sulky crows drying off in his garage after having been caught over water by the cannon nets! The work of the group is becoming well recognized, as Mike and his colleagues have recently appeared on television, once with the wellknown presenter, Chris Packham. Members of the public are able to observe the birds for themselves, as the recently developed reserve, with hides and walkways is freely accessible from several points around Colyford and Seaton.

This month's competition winners were Christine East, for a poem about birds, and Joy Churchill for her Flower of the Month.

Next month's meeting will be held at Jean Rainsford's home, Silver Birches at Blackpool Corner, where she will give us a demonstration of cooking summer foods, starting at 7.00pm.