

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CENTENARY in York was an inspiration to many, both women and men, proving that if we work together, play together, and share equal opportunities the world would be a better place.



We remembered women in many parts of the world where equal respect is not the norm – we support their struggle and honour their courage. 80% of subsistence farmers in Africa are women and they have most to gain through fair trade projects as highlighted in the York Fairtrade Fair. Closer to home we note that only 22% of MPs are women and of 25 in the Cabinet only 4 are women, and that women are still paid on average 17% less than men for the same job. Do we still need International Women's



Day? Yes we surely do and this was well explored by many events in the Carnival of Feminist Activism coordinated by the University of York Centre for Women's Studies.

However, while bearing in mind women around the world, the women of York spent most of their time CELEBRATING what we have to offer. Beryl Nairn as Mrs Alving in the York Settlement Players' production of *Ghosts* at the Theatre Royal won critical acclaim: "The production was really excellent and the acting beautifully nuanced and subtle.....perfect for the studio space. Well done, Beryl, on your terrific performance in a very demanding role and to everyone else involved in another Settlement production to be proud of."



The Hafla Dance Party attracted 70 women: "Thanks so much for inviting me to your dancing event. I really enjoyed the evening, it made a real change and everyone was so warm and welcoming. I very much like the idea of groups of women sharing thoughts, dancing and singing." Also dancing were 22 women who joined the "Dance Your Inner Fire" workshop with Karen Michaelsen: "Excellent workshop. Very powerful music and dancing." "A wonderfully inspiring afternoon..."



The 2 guided walks with Lynn Harper of Yorkwalk were most enlightening as we heard all about the Women in York History and Literary Women of York: have you noticed the 4 female faces from Shakespeare's plays carved in stone on the front of the Theatre Royal? 18 men and women gathered for the Spoken Word, at one of its ongoing monthly open mic meetings where a haiku about how women don't feel safe about walking at night shook the audience, and later in the week 22 heard all about the amazing Githa Sowerby whose play, *Rutherford & Son*, won plaudits in 1912 until the public realised she was a woman!

Over 30 people (and a baby!) gathered in Clements Hall to hear the excellent harmony of Lennanshees (Bella, Tracey and Maria), sample coffee and cakes, and vote on which of 5 films they wanted to see. *Bread and Tulips* won the vote and we thoroughly enjoyed this Italian film about a woman creating her own life in Venice.

Pilates with Louise Bowden, and weight loss and pregnancy yoga with Anna Semlyen were well attended as were the women's swims at Yearsley (Thursdays) and Energise (Tuesdays). The WI morning in Dunnington attracted over 80 people and was a big success. Only a handful came on the Hagg Wood walk but we were all supporters of the Save Our Forests campaign!



Encounters, the forum theatre production by the Real People Theatre, work-shopped scenes



dealing with homelessness, learning difficulty, mental health, care homes and refugees and had a total audience over 2 nights of 57 people. It was a showcase of possibilities that the company hopes will be taken up by organisations dealing with these issues for future staff training, conferences or workshops. The Director is Sue Lister who can be contacted on 01904 488870. She also coordinates YIWW and anyone interested in taking part next year should contact her.

Further information about York International Women's Week can be found at www.yorkwomen.org.uk.

ENDS

300 dpi photos available from Sue Lister sueann@curlew.totalserve.co.uk