

THE HARBOUR WI

President Diane Beere welcomed 64 members and two visitors to the April meeting of the Harbour WI and everyone had dressed in spring colours with a touch of yellow.

There was lots of excitement when the speaker arrived with his very friendly and inquisitive dog Drimmie. Owner James Baird was a volunteer speaker for the charity [Medical Detection Dogs](#); a charity set up in 2008 to fund the training of dogs for medical detection and medical alert assistance.

MDD was co-founded by Claire Guest after her Labrador Daisy alerted her to her own breast cancer. Claire wrote a book about Daisy and the formation of the charity; and Daisy was awarded the Blue Cross medal, the highest accolade for a working dog. Queen Camilla is patron of the charity and a regular visitor to their Buckinghamshire premises to see the dogs in training.

During the Covid pandemic a test was carried out at Paddington station to see if the dogs could detect Covid. 60 volunteers were tested with the standard test kits and all found to be negative. They then sent the dogs in, who detected 16 people to have the virus! When these people were tested in hospital they were all found to be positive! Because it is not possible for dogs to be used for everyone all the time, an American physicist called Andreas Mersch is in the process of developing an 'Electronic Nose' to hopefully do a similar job.



The dogs are bought or donated, mainly from reputable breeders, and provided they have the right temperament, are trained for 18 months to 2 years. Their success rate for detecting conditions such as allergies, diabetes and epilepsy is 96-97% accurate, which makes them invaluable as Medical Alert Assistance Dogs. James had merchandise and a donation bucket. [There is also a website where you can sponsor a puppy.](#)

Diane Groot Copp thanked James and Drimmie for the talk and gave him a group donation of £80. With this, the merchandise sales and the member donations the Harbour WI donated £269.95 to the charity!

During tea members were kept busy colouring pictures printed by Frances Harrap while eating delicious cakes made by the new 'Star Bakers'! A new member was judged to have the best coloured picture and received a small prize.

After tea the Raffle was drawn. The President distributed birthday cards and thanked the tea ladies and raffle organisers.

The following dates were noted:

Craft Club	Monday 27 th April at Sandie's house
Lunch Club	Wednesday 22 nd April at the Thai Marina
Family History Club	Monday 27 th April at Sue's house
Coffee Morning	Tuesday 28 th April in Seasons

The next meeting is on the 11th May at 2pm in the Sovereign Suite of the Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club. Naomi Lane will be giving a talk on the 'History of Underwear' Information on the Harbour WI can be found on our webpages on the SHRA website: www.shra.co.uk/wi