

Great Asby WI Secretary's Annual Report 2014

Susan Renshaw remained President for a third year whilst Gwen Hadrill and Anne Hulse continued to serve as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Other committee members were Pat Bevan, Pam Cowey, Rachel Forrest, Dorothy Hayton, Helen Horn and Carol Smith.

Total membership is 17. Average attendance over the year was 10, with 14 the highest and 6 the lowest. We were pleased this year when the Village Hall Committee were able to significantly reduce the cost of hall rental due to a grant, but for this year only. Our dwindling membership continues to be a concern.

After the 2013 AGM, at which it was agreed to change our holiday month from August to January, members enjoyed a 'soup & sweet supper' served by the committee, along with a very enjoyable social evening.

It was another busy year with a full and varied programme which started with an excellent Christmas lunch at Millyard Café in Morland at the beginning of December, whilst later in December our Secretary, Gwen Hadrill, shared with us her experiences of her trips to New Zealand in 2007 & 2012, focussing on the 'Earthquakes, volcanoes & glaciers' of that country, along with a slideshow of wonderful photographs.

In March, Dawn Smart, a Style & Image consultant, gave us an enjoyable & thought provoking event when she explained & demonstrated the art of selecting colours & shades to enhance & suit each individual, then in May, at a meeting held in our President's home, we gave serious thought to this year's resolution for the NFWI AGM. Linda Longrigg of Ormside WI represented us in Leeds & voted on our behalf. Business was followed by a fun bird quiz devised by Susan. The Garden quiz had to be abandoned due to the inclement weather. In September, Barbara Colbear, fellow WI member from Ormside, patiently guided us through making Novelty Purses, while, in contrast, at our meeting in August, we welcomed back Edward Lawton who spoke about 'The Oboe & I'. He told us about his life & the history of the Oboe, he played several wonderful pieces for us. For our July meeting we had a trip to Farfield Mill, Sedbergh to see the arts & craft & of course enjoy the refreshments in the café. June saw us trying our hand at 'Calligraphy' instructed by Tony Craig, results were variable but everyone found it thoroughly absorbing & inspiring. Marjorie Bridgeway shared her enthusiasm for 'Buttons' in February, she displayed & spoke about, her large, impressive collection originally inspired by her grandmother's button tin. Finally, in October we were joined by Margaret Gowling who through her research of local archives & wills from the 17 & 18th centuries, showed that despite having few legal rights women enjoyed a vital role in the rural economy.

Our major fund raiser for the year was a very successful trip to Newcastle in May, organised by Carol Smith. An almost full coach of members, villagers and friends enjoyed a beautiful sunny day in the city. We again manned a collection point & sold refreshments in October to raise funds for the Air Ambulance service in Cumbria, which saw many people within the village and beyond donate old clothes, bedding & rags, as well as join us for lunch or a cuppa during the day which raised £? for this worthy local cause.

We arranged & catered for the Federation walks held on a fine day in April. This was an extremely successful event when many CFWFI members & friends joined us for walks of varying lengths in our local environs. Sales of refreshments also raised funds to be used for our 90th Anniversary celebration in December. Stewards were provided for the Northern Show in March & several members were successful in the entries they placed in a variety of categories.

Many members have enjoyed Federation events, including the Literary lunch in April, the Centenary Baton tea at Lowther Castle in March & our team won the Quiz at Hackthorpe in November 2013. On our behalf a delegate attended Half yearly & Annual Council meetings & the Secretary attended the NFWI Inspiring Women Conference at Chester in March. Members attended many local branch meetings on a wide variety of topics. We continued to support ACWW, the Federation Bulb Scheme and the NFWI Raffle.

Finally & sadly I have to report the news of the deaths in October of two of our older & long serving members. Janey Taylor, who was 102 years old, was a WI member until her demise, she must have had one of the longest WI memberships ever in our Federation, being a member for 86 years. Also, Ada Atkinson, aged 80 years old served as a committee member until last year when unfortunately she had to retire from the WI due to ill health. Ada had been a member for about 60 years. Both will be fondly remembered.