

Asby WI Secretary's Annual Report 2015

Susan Renshaw remained as our President for a fourth 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 has risen to 19 during this year as two very welcome new members joined, Ann Johnson and Helen Cooper. Average attendance over the year was 14, with 16 the highest attendance in April and only 11 members at the meeting in March. We were pleased that, thanks to a subsidy from the Parish Council, the Village Hall committee were able to maintain the rental cost of the hall at a reasonable & sustainable level. The dwindling membership is not such a problem as it was because of the new members who have joined, but it does remain a slight concern for the future.

A convivial hour of 'Poetry & Plonk' was enjoyed by members after the 2014 AGM, whilst members of the committee served a savoury supper.

In this the WI Centenary year we have had a full & varied programme, collecting photographs & memorabilia along the way for our scrapbook to record this special year. Our year started with another very significant anniversary in December 2014, the 90th Anniversary of Asby WI, this was marked by a special meal at the Tufton Arms in Appleby. In December we also decorated a window, on the theme of 'Angels', in St Peter's Church in Great Asby, a competition between village organisations & some families, which remained in place over the Christmas & New Year period. A 'Centenary Challenge', was devised by Pat Bevan which aimed to raise £100 this year for ACWW, we are currently on target to do this.

January is now our holiday month, so we started the year in February with a fascinating presentation by Vivienne Gate, who is Secretary of the Appleby & Westmorland Society, about 'Tracing your Family Tree': this was followed in March by Debra Jisset telling us about being a Humanist Celebrant & how the different types of Humanist celebrations she performs are relaxed, informal & tailored to individual needs. In April Asby History Group & other friends joined us to listen to a lively & interesting presentation by Phil Hill, who had travelled all the way from Sutton Coldfield to tell us about 'the Duchess of Richmond's Ball', particularly apposite in this the 200th Anniversary year since the Battle of Waterloo. May found us giving serious thought to this year's resolution for the NFWI AGM to be held in the Royal Albert Hall, it was our turn to send a delegate & Pam Cowey was chosen to represent us & Colby WI. Pam thoroughly enjoyed this rather special Centenary AGM. Other members attended the screening of the AGM at the Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal & felt they were part of this extraordinary day. After our consideration of the resolution, we had a lively Beetle Drive, giving members the opportunity to get to know our new members better.

In June Brenda Austin gave an interesting & humorous talk about her enthusiasm for collecting tins; followed, on a beautiful summer's day in July, by an outing to Hawes where we visited the market, the quaint shops & the Wensleydale creamery cheese shop & café. At our Open meeting in August we welcomed Julie Chrisp who works

for the RSPB as the Skydancer Engagement Officer. She gave us an informative & encouraging presentation about the reintroduction of the 'Skydancer' Hen Harrier to northern Britain. Due to a mix up with the speaker in September who was unable to attend, we held an impromptu quiz provided by Anne Hulse. Finally, in October, Mr & Mrs Walton spoke to us about the charity 'Tools with a Mission', which aims to enable people throughout the world to earn a living & support themselves, using donated 'tools'.

Our major fundraiser for the year was a very successful trip to York in May, organised by Carol Smith. An almost full coach of members, villagers & friends enjoyed a sunny day in the city. We also raised funds at the Table Top sale held in Appleby Market hall in April. We again manned a collection point & sold refreshments at the 'Bag Ladies café' in October to raise funds for the Air Ambulance service in Cumbria, many people from within the village & beyond donated old clothes, rags & bedding etc, as well as joining us for lunch or a cuppa during the day, raising funds for this worthy local cause.

Pat Bevan & Susan Renshaw enjoyed the day when they took part in the 'Reading Aloud Competition', at Sedbergh in March, being placed in the middle ranking. We enjoyed another splendid day on 2nd May when we walked from Crosby Ravensworth to Maulds Meaburn village hall to join members from other local branches for a delicious lunch at the 'WI Centenary Year Lets Connect' event. We formed a Knit & Natter group in June, initially in response to the Nepal Earthquake appeal, we planned to knit squares for blankets, however we now meet every month & are currently knitting 'Kings' for the window display in Church this coming Christmas period. Another fine day in August saw an impromptu visit to Brougham Hall, when ten members enjoyed the refreshments & investigating the Hall. Another outing was organised to the Yves St Laurent Exhibition at Bowes Museum for the end of September; members were fascinated & intrigued by the wonderful clothes on show & the history of the YSL name plus, of course, we partook of a very good lunch in the café. Two teams entered the Federation Quiz at the beginning of November where a fun evening was only slightly spoilt by the difficult driving conditions, thick fog. The teams were placed joint fifth out of the thirteen teams which entered at Hackthorpe.

Finally, many members have enjoyed other Federation events; we sent a delegate to both the Half Yearly & Annual Council meetings; we also attended other local branch meetings on a variety of interesting subjects, including the two Crossfell Group meetings in Spring & Autumn. We supported the Federation Bulb scheme & one member took advantage of the free tickets to the Holker Hall Garden Festival. One member attended a course at Denman College.

A very busy year which has been enjoyed by all our members.