

Asby WI Secretary's Annual Report 2016

Susan Renshaw remained our President for a fifth 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, Helen Horn, Carol Smith and June Sowerby.

Total membership has risen to 20 during this year as two very welcome new members joined, Jackie Smart and Louise Reeve. Average attendance over the year was 15, with 17 the highest attendance in April but only 14 members at the meeting in September. 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 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 concern for the future. The other major concern is filling the Officer posts, in particular this year The President, to enable Asby WI to remain viable.

Following the AGM in 2015, members of the committee served a two course supper and everyone enjoyed a very pleasant hour of chat, food & drink.

As usual we have enjoyed a full & varied programme which started in December with a Christmas meal at BettyAnn's Café in Brougham Hall on 1st December 2015. Everyone agreed that we were looked after very well in a cosy & festive atmosphere. Also in December we decorated a window, on the theme of 'Kings', 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 (photograph attached). Our December meeting was held at Pam Cowey's home where we had fun deciphering a Musical mystery story competition followed by a Christmas themed Beetle Drive.

January is our holiday month, so we started 2016 in February with a talk which filled us all with admiration, by local villager, Jane Close, about her 'Fostering' experiences: this was followed in March by May Marsh who showed us how to make beautiful, simple floral arrangements, her wonderful displays were won by members in a raffle afterwards. Also, later in March we hosted the Spring meeting of the Crossfell Group where we were joined by other WI branches to listen to a fascinating talk by Phil Hill, who travelled all the way from Sutton Coldfield to join us, his subject being 'The Historical Novel' In April Richard Mathews resplendent in his Kendal Town Crier's attire, joined us to tell us about what his job involves. May found us giving serious thought to this year's two resolutions for the NFWI AGM to be held in Brighton, our delegate this year was Linda Ronan from Colby WI.

Despite the forecast of possible rain we continued with our afternoon visit to Askham Hall gardens in June where we were greeted by beautiful sunshine to enjoy our walk around the gardens followed by refreshments, also taken outside in the sun. In July Jacquie Dalby brought along many examples of her quilting work for us to see as she told us about her love of the art. At our August meeting the speaker failed to turn up so we enjoyed two entertaining quizzes provided by Anne Hulse & a convivial social hour. September saw us joined by members of Asby History Group & Appleby Textile Group to listen to a presentation by Christine Raafat about 'Lady Anne

Clifford in the South' Finally, in October Susan Coyne joined us to demonstrate 'Gift Wrapping' making it appear so simple & easy, giving us lots of ideas to try.

Our major fundraiser for the year was a successful trip to Leeds in May, organised by Carol Smith. A coach of members, villagers & friends enjoyed a rather wet day in the city. We manned (or should that be womanned) a collection point & sold refreshments at the 'Bag Ladies café' in April to raise funds for the Tools with a Mission (TWAM) charity. Many people from within the village & beyond donated old tools & joined us for a cuppa during the morning, bringing tools to be sent by TWAM across the world to communities in need & help us raise funds for this worthy cause.

On 12th March we had success at the Northern Show in Appleby with awards at gold, silver & bronze level & in particular Pat Bevan, Anne Hulse & Ann Johnson came second with their calligraphy, sewing & knitting entry in the cooperative craft section. Several members also acted as stewards for this event. The Knit & Natter group we formed in 2015 has gone from strength to strength, now meeting twice a month. It is well attended & has expanded to encompass other crafts, Ann Johnson even taught us all how to crochet one afternoon. Of course lots of nattering goes on plus tea & cake always seem to be involved.

Members enjoyed visits to Farfield Mill in February to see a Patchwork Exhibition: to Bowes Museum in April to view an exhibition of wall hangings & in September another visit to Bowes Museum to a Shoe Exhibition. We were enchanted by all the displays & of course enjoyed lunch or tea/cake on all these occasions. Our 2015 Centenary Scrapbook formed part of the exhibition in Kendal Town Hall in February, we visited this & were fascinated by all the entries appreciating the amount of work involved in producing them & surprised at the variety of things WI members do. We have now sent a digital copy of ours for inclusion in the Federation collection. We successfully met our target of raising £100 for ACWW during the Centenary year by the end of 2015. Once again we are sending two teams to the Federation Quiz at the beginning of November.

Finally, many members have enjoyed many other Federation events; one member attended the Food Hygiene course in November & we sent a delegate to both the Half Yearly & Annual Council meetings. We also attended other local branch meetings on a variety of interesting & intriguing subjects, including the Autumn Crossfell Group meeting at Colby WI about Morecambe Bay. We supported the Federation Bulb scheme & we took advantage of the free tickets to the Holker Hall Garden Festival.

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