



ACTIVITIES OF ASHTON UNDER HILL WI from MAY to OCTOBER 2015

MAY is the month when we hold our Annual General Meeting and Sue White the Chairman of WFWI Advisors was present to give us all the latest news from the Federation and to supervise the proceedings.

Secretary, Judith Hunter gave a full report of activities and speakers from the previous 12 months. Christine Powell, treasurer, was pleased to report another healthy statement of accounts, and Marjorie Facer, President concluded with thanks to the Committee and all the work done and support she had received during the year. She also thanked members for their support and contribution to making Ashton WI the success that it is. The new Committee 2015/16 consists of Marjy Facer, President; Christine Powell, Treasurer; Judith Hunter, Secretary; Andrea Garland, Ruth Clarkson, and new member Jane Wilson. (Jen Creese retiring).

On 8th May our winning florist Doreen Parson, ably assisted by Joan Richmond and Judith Hunter again decorated Worcester Cathedral with 4 massive arrangements. On 14th May, we enjoyed an interesting trip to Much Marcle, Herefordshire where we first had lunch at Westons Cider then moved on to Hellens Manor and gardens for a guided tour. A very historic and rather crumbling property with lots of interesting tales, including family ghosts! We also enjoyed a film night in the Village Hall where we enjoyed "Calendar Girls", organised by Christine Shaw and Malcolm Nelson.



Hellens Manor

The speaker in **JUNE** was Alan Hudson who spoke of the history of tea. This was very enlightening and informative about our daily “cuppa” which we take so much for granted. The earliest mention of tea was in 1615 when the first travellers to China referred to it as a “Pot of Tay”. The East India Companies established the trade and tea became a valuable source of income from the 17th century to the 19th century as it attracted high taxes for the British revenue. The whole business is estimated to be worth £700 million and 30 million cups of tea are drunk every day in this country.

June 13/14 was of course Open Gardens in the village, which always presents the WI with plenty to do! Cake making and organising the teas at the village hall, plus getting their own gardens ready for viewing (if taking part). This was again a great success, despite a rainy Saturday the WI was able to contribute £789.58 to the final funds raised.

The walk this month was organised by Judy Templeton and Jane Wilson and we left cars at Westmancote and walked to Bredons Norton and back – a lovely walk! All the miles walked by members are being added to the Federation’s “moon mission walk” and includes April’s cycling weekend in Devon last April.



Members looked forward very much to the visit to Highgrove on 18th June and were not disappointed. Stopping off at Tetbury for a wander round and enjoying lunch at The Trouble House (!), finally joining the guide at 2.00pm for a wonderful tour around Prince Charles’s beautiful gardens.



In **JULY** the speaker was Sue Peasgood, who represented the UK Dementia Society. This was a sympathetic approach to the disease, which we tend to assume affects mainly the elderly but happens, quite often in younger members of the population. She gave very good advice as to how to treat and care for any member of family or friend who may suffer this condition.

Linda Richardson gave an account of the exciting day when she attended the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. Rubbing shoulders with royalty, hundreds of colourful outfits and hats and a day to remember.

Judith Hunter organised the walk this month that led us from Offenham weir along the river Avon passing several fishermen, then back to The Fish and Anchor for lunch. Another lovely sunny day.



Our outing this month, organised by Andrea, was to Evesham's Almonry Museum. Dianne Rachael, a very well known local figure who was born and bred in Evesham, gave a very interesting guided tour. Dianne has a wealth of knowledge to share about the content of the museum and the history of Evesham. We later walked down to the river where a boat was waiting to take us on a lovely trip to the Hampton Ferry and Café, which is owned by the Raphael family. We there enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea laid on by the family.

In **AUGUST** this year we took the chance of holding the afternoon meeting in the garden of Jane Williams-Thomas. Threatening rain held off mainly, though a small shower had members putting up brollies or running for shelter for a short time! Seventeen members of Ashton Keynes WI attended also and the speaker was Jim Teague who works for the Blue Diamond Group as a plant buyer. He gave us lots of interesting advice when buying and planting our flowers and also answered questions regarding members own gardening problems.

Christine, Doreen and Jen attended the Worcestershire weekend at Denman College on 7th August. Chris and Doreen used their cooking skills and created some lovely foods from Italy. Jen learned some of the crafts on the floral arts course which involved grass weaving with arrangements and bouquet making.



SEPTEMBER was a very exciting month as members celebrated a jolly evening to celebrate 100 years since the formation of the Women's Institute. Members were invited to wear a variety of hats to suit the occasion, and everyone enjoyed music hall style entertainment. Poems were read by Jane Wilson and Judith Hunter, Marion Nelson performed a monologue on the woes of slimming and Margaret Satchell gave a rendition of the old favourite "Albert and the Lion". Ruth Clarkson and friend Terry sang a comic version of "Two Little Maids on HRT". Molly did what she always does best and played the piano with jolly sing-along songs from the wartime era. Marjy had organised the quiz "Who is this little girl" (photos of members when very young) which was won by Joan Richmond who also won the prize for the best hat. Maggie Dunsby's table won the quiz. We all then enjoyed a delicious supper provided by members.





On 4/5th September Doreen Parsons represented Worcestershire Federation at the Harrogate Centennial Fair competing in the Huxley Cup floral art section. Doreen did very well considering the very stiff competition and was thanked by the Executive for her efforts. Marjy and Judith also attended the fair travelling with other members from Worcestershire.

On 17th September we visited Sezincote House and Indian Gardens. As this is situated very close to Batsford Arboretum we first enjoyed a wander round the newly refurbished garden and gift shop and a lunch at the café. Sezincote House is a

delightful property, the owners having spent many years living in India, have made architectural changes, taking on an Indian theme. The gardens also on the same theme with sweeping lawns and shrubs and a very large sculpture of elephants taking pride of place. We enjoyed cream teas inside the beautiful orangery.



Judy Templeton and Jane Wilson organised a local walk on Bredon Hill and despite some windy and threatening weather managed at least 4 miles. We were certainly ready for a drink and lunch at the Star afterwards!

In **OCTOBER** the speaker was Rose Hewlett whose talk was “The Great Severn Estuary Flood”. Rose took us back to 1606/07, and an almost forgotten disaster. This was a time of a catastrophic event in the Bristol Channel, which reached all the way up to the tidal limit of the River Severn. Fierce storms, and hurricane force winds created untold damage to people, animals, crops and property. It was thought thousands of people lost their lives and it was an event not many of us had heard about. Experts are still not sure of the cause, whether a freak tsunami or full moon and the high spring tide. A very interesting talk.

On 20th October twelve members attended the Annual Council Meeting at Malvern. This proved to be a very successful day for Ashton WI, as we achieved the most points overall in the many entries for the competition. So for the 3rd time we were awarded the special shield. Doreen won a first with her vivid autumn arrangement. Alex a first with tasty apricot jam, Marjy third with stitched napkin, Margaret Nicklin third for the member’s choice painting. Marion, Henrietta, Gail, Ruth and Jen also entered and achieved high marks.

Ashton also received a Highly Commended certificate for the 2014/15 Programme. This had been designed and printed by Linda Richardson. The speakers were again truly inspiring and a good day was had by all!



Jen Creese November 2015