



## **ACTIVITIES OF ASHTON WI IN MARCH 2014**

The President welcomed everyone to the March meeting, including two new members. The business included an appeal for some volunteers to come onto Committee, as we have two members retiring in May.

Federation outings and art days were announced. Margaret Nicklin gave a brief update of the craft group, which has been organised by Meg Archer with some of the young mums of the village. This is held in the Chapel Hall fortnightly. Several of our members have joined the group and it is hoped that at the next session they will be printing on fabric and eventually making cushions, bags or even clothes.

Maggie Dunsby gave out the dates of the county skittles and a plea for more players. The N.F.W.I are encouraging each W.I. to prepare a page exploring local social history from 1980 to 2015. This will mean delving into the Ashton WI archives and finding some interesting information and pictures. This is for a publication to celebrate the centenary of the National Federation of Women's Institutes in 2015.

The speaker this month was Helen Hurdman from "Working World". This is a charitable venture Helen runs in Evesham for young adults with special educational needs. When realising that there was very little provision for adult clients who had reached the end of their time in education, she formed a small group of eight clients at a base at "Woodlands", near Evesham Adventure Playground. She now has 32 clients who come to her and her seven volunteer helpers for typically two days in the week. The project is independent and mostly self-funding with grants from local government.

Useful activities are run from the centre and clients learn useful skills for a home and work environment. These include cooking, shopping and serving in their own little café based on site. One of the money raising projects is packing, weighing and selling sweets, which can then be placed in offices, businesses and supermarkets. Helen was accompanied by Della and Sarah who enthusiastically told us of their social times and all the activities they enjoy taking part, such as swimming, zumba, singing, and theatre visits. It was obvious that the Centre is doing a sterling job in supporting, building confidence and encouraging them to be more independent.

We were all very admiring of Helen's dedication and work. She told us that the café is open to anyone Monday – Thursday from 10.0am to 2.0pm. Mollie Groom thanked her and her team for giving a wonderful insight into this venture.

Visits this month included a visit to Alcester, where 10 members enjoyed a stroll round the many small shops in this interesting historic town. We returned to the mini-bus and stopped off at Hillers farm shop just a short distance away. Jen had booked a large table in the café and we all enjoyed a superb lunch, followed by a visit to the gift and food store and of course their garden and plant centre. Other members attended the Spring Council Meeting at No. 8 in Pershore. A very convenient venue for WIs in this area. The speaker was Sheila Dibnah, 3<sup>rd</sup> wife of the famous Fred. She recounted many amusing stories of her life with Fred and his love of the steam engine and the toppling of high industrial chimneys! She recalled their early relationship where he encouraged her to climb to the top of one of these tall chimneys where he was working at the time. A nerve-racking experience, but she did it!

Dianne Stephens organised the walk this month where we began at Broadway Tower and did an approximate 3-4 mile circular walk bringing us back to the café there. We agreed that another visit in the summer would be a good idea. The café was busy with walkers and visitors and we all agreed the lunch was very welcome after quite a wet and windy walk.

A very active March was completed with four members attending the Worcestershire weekend at Denman College. This is when the Worcestershire Federation of WIs has an exclusive booking of the College and organises the many courses available.

Judith did the Italian cookery, Marjy made decorative boxes and packages and Christine and Jen took part in the "Singing with Abba". Each agreed the weekend was very enjoyable with good tutors, excellent food with much home-made cake!







*Jen and Chris as members of Abba!*



*Boxes galore*

Jen Creese, Publicity Secretary