

## NEWTON FERRERS AND NOSS MAYO WI ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

What a year this has been! Throughout the history of our WI, the state of the Hall has been of main concern. How lucky are we today to stand in this wonderfully Refurbished Hall, amongst our friends, united together in the knowledge that so much has been achieved. Our thanks must go to all those who helped to bring this about.

This time last year we held our Annual Meeting in the Church, as our WI was in effect "homeless" as we prepared for the works ahead. We had wondered if our WI would be able to continue in the same manner due to the change of venue, but I am sure we can look back and say that it was a pleasant time and that we enjoyed being in the Church for our meetings. During this Annual Meeting it was decided that the Committee and President should remain in place to speed up proceedings with the Hall. This month also saw progress with the Crockery sponsorship and use of the recently introduced Bring and Buy Stall. Our enthusiasm for WI events continued and a group of Ladies enjoyed a trip to Pentille Castle gardens, by all accounts they enjoyed the Tea too! Throughout May we kept busy with the Drama Group pondering the direction of the Annual performance, with lack of a stage and no certain dates for rehearsal availability. The Craft Group started meeting at members' homes as an easy way to keep the group together. This was greatly appreciated by all and made for some interesting meetings. Emma held some Coffee Mornings to welcome the new members who had joined us this year. Several Committee Members attended these to extend the hand of friendship and introduce themselves.

While the sun shone through June, Emma kept an eye on proceedings at the Hall. Scarcely a day passed that she or Brenda were not on site helping to sort out plans and problems. June was busy for the rest of the WI too. Caroline organised a lunch at PL1 which 17 members attended, through car share. This was a very Jolly event, thank you Caroline. The DFWI Agatha Christie Day was attended by 8 Ladies with mysteries in mind. Emma and Carrie attended a meeting of the Dementia Friendly Parishes of the Yealm in order to represent the WI. The craft Group met at Jeanne Vennings' home and made beautiful boxes under her guidance.

In July the usual Craft Group Summer Party had a change of venue as the Green outside the hall or what was left of the Hall, had disappeared under builders tools and skips. We were kindly entertained by Rosemary Watts where we brought plates of food to share and had a Show and Tell which gave rise to much admiration and mirth. The Choir sang at St. Peter's open day.

There was no formal meeting in August as we all busied about with friends and family enjoying the Regatta. The Presidents Evening was thus moved to September 2<sup>nd</sup>, when we enjoyed a wonderful evening of homespun entertainment and a delicious 2 course meal, prepared by Caroline and her band of willing helpers, the Social Committee. The Church proved to be a lovely venue if a little difficult for the preparation of food. Thank you to all involved. September continued as busily as it started with 6 members attending the DFWI meeting at Sparkwell on Female Genital Mutilation which was by all accounts a thought provoking if difficult subject. The Skittles Group had their first meeting and selected a team to play in our area rounds. The Choir sang at Selkirk House, while the Craft Group met at Angela's. A band of willing cleaners set to work cleaning the almost completed Hall. This was a giant task as the building dust continued to settle. The newly purchased China had to be washed and stored, the chairs were hovered washed and mended, so many tasks were undertaken.

On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October, the Hall was officially reopened. The opening ceremonial ribbon was cut by Mary Thomas, our oldest member and also the Head Girl of our School, hopefully a budding WI member for the future. It was a joyful day and Ladies from other WI's came to join in our celebrations. On display was a History of our Hall, displays of Craft items, cakes and preserves were on sale, tea and homemade biscuits were served and a wedding reception table complete with cake and flowers was displayed to show how the hall could be used in the future. This was a momentous day which was enjoyed by all. The number of people who turned out to look around was marvellous. The hard work was worth it. Thank you to all who helped on this occasion, to all of you who helped at stalls, made teas, baked, cleared up etc. Our lovely President gave thanks to all involved on the day and to the Hall Committee, the Builders and indeed everyone, but it is we who must thank her, for without her hard work and financial backing we would never have achieved this Refurbishment. I am sure that now that you have all used the Hall the improvements speak for themselves. Our kitchen is fit for purpose and a delight to use. We look

forward to seeing it used for many events through the years. Don't forget Ladies, our Hall makes the perfect party venue so book early!

We continued throughout this time to support other WI events, with 8 attending Sparkwell Harvest Supper which unfortunately clashed with our own. Entertainment was by Jigsaw, a Barber shop group, which we thoroughly enjoyed. The next day 8 of us set off for a Fashion show at Down Thomas. This proved to be great fun with clothes available to buy and nice but simple food. A few ladies were later seen sporting new styles! The Choir later gave a concert at the United Reformed Church, Plymstock. Carrie and Emma once again attended the Dementia Friendly Parishes of the Yealm meeting on behalf of the WI. On the 29<sup>th</sup> October the Yealm Group Meeting was attended by 12 members who instead of hearing about Polar Travels were entertained by a local group singing sea shanties. Some of us sang ourselves hoarse. During this time the Drama rehearsals became more mysterious!

On 31<sup>st</sup> October we held a Barn Dance with entertainment by Maggie Duffy. This was fully booked! The sausage and mash went down well and much fun was had during the dancing. Maggie was on form as usual. Splendidly decked out with black and orange decoration by Annette and Vicki the Hall looked amazing.

November was the month of the Devon Federation visit to Denman which was attended by some of our members. The Box office opened for one morning for the sale of Tickets for The Murder Mystery Dinner. Sales were rapid as this was only being performed over 2 nights. The show was well received as was the delicious meal served by Jeanne Venning and her willing helpers. Our thanks go to Jeanne, all the helpers and those involved in the entertainment and drama, for such a successful fund raiser.

During November 2 members attended the Yealm Consultative Meeting, while 2 others went on the DFWI trip to the Salisbury Christmas Market.

All these things, of which I am reminding you, took place in addition to our usual programme of monthly meetings with Guest Speakers, so ably arranged by Pat Middleton, but I must mention the wonderful evening of Malaysian Cookery when Puck so generously fed us all! The wonderful smells that came from her wok had us all eagerly waiting for the next taster. How those smells lingered! Her easy manner and generosity made for a most enjoyable evening. In November we introduced the Secretaries Social Hour, a monthly meeting held on the third week of the month for

members to chat over tea and share in a slice of cake wishing Happy Birthday to those members celebrating their Birthday that month. This means that there is a WI related meeting every week of the month.

With Christmas rapidly approaching we entered December with the Choir joining the massed choirs of Devon WI at Exeter Cathedral. This is always a wonderful service and this was no exception. I would urge you to make a note to attend this years' service. Our WI Christmas Party was a nice relaxed mix of shared food, homespun entertainment including a Santa Drive and Carols. We also had a tasting of Georgian lemon mincemeat pies and Quince marmalade being tested for inclusion in a Georgian Recipe Book. Many of us attended the festive Lunch at PL1 organised again by Caroline. This was great fun and put us all in the mood for the Yealm Group Carol Service at Yealmpton on our way home. The craft group made Christmas table decorations. It had been a very busy 2014.

We started January still in festive mood with the Craft Group Lunch at St. Elizabeth House in Plympton. Two large tables were set in a side room and a delicious meal was enjoyed by all, New Year resolutions went out of the window! The Skittles group, who had won through to the third round, played again and lost but enjoyed the match and lunch! Is the WI all about Food? Well no, but we certainly are a very sociable bunch of Ladies.

February passed with little to note except that the Craft group finished knitting Hats for Africa and moved on to Knit or crochet knee blankets for the residents at Rosemont.

March saw the meeting of the Hall AGM, which was attended by only 2 Ladies of our WI excluding those on the Committee. While we now have our lovely Hall, we do still have to pay off some loans so fundraising will still be needed. Please continue to support these events so that we can protect the future of our Hall. The Black and White fund raising Dinner made an enormous £3500. With entertainment by Jigsaw and 93 people sitting down to a delicious 3 course meal, the evening was a wonderful success. Our thanks go to Emma for all her hard work in arranging this. Also this month 7 members of our WI attended the Yealm Group Spring Meeting in Yealmpton when Brenda Loosemoor told of her life on the wicked stage. DFWI organised a singing day held in our Hall and catered for by Jean Ellis and her helpers. Joyce led the morning session and singing and meal were enjoyed by all. The Choir held a concert

in Harewood House which they greatly enjoyed singing and was well received. Our new programme of more jazzy music is obviously the way forward. The newly formed Cinema Group, organised by Nicki, had their first outing. They went to see The Second Best Marigold Hotel, an outing enjoyed by all.

During April we held a Fashion show. Chris Phillipson of Breeze, Totnes showed clothes with the help of our models who all thoroughly enjoyed the experience. We enjoyed wonderful Canapés made by the social committee and a glass of wine to relax with while we watched the show. The discount vouchers given out on the evening has ensured that Totnes was the place to visit last month. Rosemary organised the Raffle which was well supported. The Craft group had a trip to China Blue organised by Carol and the Secretaries Social continued in its usual manner. The Spring Annual Council Meeting in Torquay was attended by 8 members who enjoyed hearing the Guest speaker, Alice Roberts. A coach was arranged by Cornwood WI which our members took the opportunity to join.

The Hundred Club has continued to run throughout this year, with all 100 tickets sold. Our thanks go to Angela for continuing with this fabulous fund raiser. In this our centenary year, we are delighted to announce that we are able to send 4 Ladies to the Royal Garden Party in June. We held a ballot in March for these places and we wish our lucky Ladies a very enjoyable day and look forward to hearing all about it.

Looking back over all that has been enjoyed this year, one thing sticks in the mind. We have all enjoyed friendship. The events that we have enjoyed are a welcome place to chat and enjoy friend's company or to make new friendships. The things we have done, we have done together. Our big achievements have been made together. Through our friendship cards we have supported our friends when they have been unwell, often visiting with a plant. The WI logo says inspiring women. Whether you take that to mean that we inspire women or we are inspiring women, I think that this year we have lived up to our moto.