

MARTON cum GRAFTON WI

80th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS 11 NOVEMBER 2004

Although our official birthday is on 18 November 2004 it was felt to be a good idea to celebrate it on our AGM evening on Thursday, 11 November in the Memorial Hall with **members** past and present to attend the meeting as part of the evening and followed by a party with memorabilia and lots of exchange of memories etc. Look at the photos and refresh your memories.

The following extracts have been taken from the minute books and put into storylines for everyone to see and start the ball rolling whilst enjoying a glass or two of wine, a finger buffet supper and celebratory cake made by member Brenda Rayner and decorated beautifully by her daughter in law. Our thanks to them both.

Our official minutes don't begin until July 1929 but WI was founded in Stoney-Creek, Canada in 1897 by Adelaide Hoodless. Six years later in 1915 it was started in the UK, Llanfair PG being one of the first Institutes. Lady Denman was elected National Chairman in 1916 and the first Federation formed a year later and the subscription was 2 shillings!

In 1924 the year we were formed "Jerusalem" was first suggested at the AGM and there were already 3,223 Institutes. It was proving to be a very popular organisation and we follow closely behind National with our celebrations so we have a lot of heritage to be proud of.

Mrs Parva-Crowe from Ornhams was President for many years but we have no record of a founder President – was it she? Mrs A Cook and Mrs Sadler were two founder members. The format follows very closely to our present day programmes. The speakers, an annual outing and the same problems such as not wanting cups borrowed in case they got broken or damaged and tea towels getting lost!

A room was obtained in the Mens' Institute which had to have someone to light the fire and heat the copper before the monthly afternoon meetings and many debates went on about who to have and what to pay them plus trying to get repairs and decorations done.

The 10th anniversary in 1934 was a whist drive and supper.

The outing was always a trip to the coast but to different resorts and a cold breakfast booked and then later on someone requested they had a hot lunch booked. Members were very enthusiastic and WI generally enjoyed drama, festivals, folk dancing and competitions. Whist was extremely popular and if the speaker didn't turn up – the members were always glad to have a game of whist.

Lady Denman became Chairman of the Womens Land Army at the start of the war whilst still remaining National Chairman of WI.

The Second World War seems quite incidental in the minutes just to say "because of the war, the speaker couldn't come or the bus company wouldn't run a bus for the annual trip" The Speakers were mainly demonstrators on war time cookery and canning/bottling. Most themes were "domestic". Avid knitters supplied socks and gloves etc for the "lads from the village" who were away fighting and money was sent with these presents at Christmas and the year we had two prisoners of war from here, 7/6d was sent to them plus the knitted comforts. Girls away fighting were looked after too but more mention was made of the "lads". We also had evacuee children staying and they were included in the invitations to the annual WI January Childrens' Christmas Party (always followed by a Whist Drive) and our WI entertained the Home Guard and their wives to Whist.

Our 21st birthday was celebrated in November 1945 in the hall. This was an extra special event because it was just after the end of war. Mrs Sadler, a founder member was the special guest brought from a home in Scarborough.

Denman College also opened in 1945 and two or three of our members over the years have enjoyed their visits there.

Our WI progressed and was still very enthusiastic and attended the area meetings and Triennials and AGMs but interesting to note, our membership has never been very high". Thirty four about the highest recorded. We "jogged" on uneventfully and the meeting went from afternoon to evening but on a Tuesday for a while.

The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth 11 was in June 1953 and our beautiful committee tablecloth was made for the "Hanbury" Competition. Unfortunately details are lacking in the minutes and verbal enquiries were unsuccessful in trying to find out about the embroiderers and the competition. This is now recorded in the new National Archives along with our other textiles. When the cloth went missing in 2003, it was a big upset but it turned up eventually and all was well. Mrs Cate Naish was the then President. A presentation was made to the Queen in 1954 from Federation and we have a picture of the gift.

In 1965 our first of the two village scrapbooks was produced and the cover done by Mrs Anne Moss who is with us tonight. (She also spoke to WI in June 1984 about her collection of hatpins – some chatting should result from this). This was also the year of the National Golden Jubilee and Garden Party with the Queen at Buckingham Palace was held.

Mrs Naish knew Lady Isobel Barnett the famous television panellist and she was the Guest Speaker at a Group Dinner in the Crown Hotel, Boroughbridge on 16 April 1970 and Mrs Josie Daniel attended this with Mrs Naish.

In December 1972 the school was invited to join us in the annual carol singing – something we are doing again in 2004.

The Golden Jubilee was celebrated on 18 April 1974 with a sit down meal provided by members in the village hall for 76 people and Mrs Yewdall the Yorkshire Federation President was guest of honour.

The Second Scrapbook was suggested in 1980 and compiled and printed in 1981 by Mrs Mona Stott who is too poorly to join us this evening. (Her son Lee continues to run the village shop). She also did some of the illustrations and line drawings were by Mrs Naish and cover by Mrs F Backhouse.

The Diamond Jubilee dinner 10 years later in 1984 was celebrated with a dinner at the Crown Hotel, Roecliffe and Mrs Barbara Cooke made the cake.

We were enthusiastic members of the Group until a few years ago because we could not commit ourselves. We have several mentions of the Aldborough Show and there are some photos displayed of Granny's Attic which should jog some memories tonight.

Mr Bevers of the National Trust has always been a popular Speaker with us and his name is mentioned several times.

On 11 September 1990 we held a "Tea Cartzy" in the village and tea was served from a horse and cart. Who was Old Ted? This was a national Tea Party to raise funds to celebrate 75 years of National in the UK

On July 4 1992 our WI Garden adjoining the village hall was officially opened and a there was a coffee morning in the village hall and plants were on sale. This idea had grown from a suggestion in 1990 and a rota of members was formed to maintain the garden. This is still in operation today and **November 2003** a total revamp of the garden was undertaken with a few men volunteers to help us. This was our contribution to the National's "**Community Project**". The new look garden has looked especially pretty this year.

We also still provide teas for the annual Open Gardens which were re-started in the early 90s and at one time made teas at the annual Sports Days held in Grafton. The Sports Days finished but there was a special one for the **Millennium on June 14 2000** and members helped with the teas on this occasion.

In 1994 a prunus tree was planted in our garden in memory of Joy Ainley who had died in the May. Is the tree still blossoming?

The same year a suggestion was made for men and families to join us on our annual outing but it was overwhelmingly over-ruled! Who remembers this?

A complaint was made about the formality of the annual Group Quiz supported by the whole Group but the reply was in favour of the way it had been done!

WI wrote to the bus company about the proposed cutting back of the service to the village which did result eventually in some improvements.

This was also the year of our 70th birthday but no mention can be found in the minutes but a fund raising event took place in November called "Naughty Ladies of the Opera". Did this replace a formal celebration?

1999 a Certificate was received from Federation to celebrate our 75 years as a WI.

For several years we supported the annual sale for the blind in the village.

To celebrate the Millennium in 2000 we presented a wallhanging to Christ Church, something to be very, very proud of. It came from an original idea of a member, the late Mrs Elsie Stockwell (mother of Margaret Gore) and depicts in rainbow colour format the stories of the Bible. Both members and villagers contributed to this embroidery. We have it here tonight for all to see.

In 2000 WI became famous nationally with the now infamous **Calendar Girls** from Rylstone and District WI who had made a tasteful nude calendar to raise money for leukaemia in memory of one of their members, Angela Baker's husband. This really took off and in 2003 a film was released. The night before the Harrogate premiere on the 12 September, we had Tricia Stewart the originator of the idea with Linda, the photographer's wife who also one of the models. We had a village hall filled to capacity to hear their story and we raised money for their project and the girls signed copies of their new calendar. Several members enjoyed the film premiere in the Odeon Cinema, Harrogate with champagne and chocolates and the film producers and the "girls" there. It was a wonderful two days! We all enjoyed putting our posh" frocks on.

We must mention that WI also became famous in the 90s when our present Prime Minister spoke at our national meeting at the Albert Hall in London. He got political and was "handbagged" We made the national newspapers. Hazel Smyth was there.

What a wonderful 80 years being part of a National Organisation. Let us drink to our Centenary.