

Annual report from Henley Womens' Institute for year May 2014 to May 2015

The Henley WI continues to thrive after 85 years. We have 37 members who enjoy friendship, good speakers at our monthly meeting held in the Boughton room at the Henley Community Centre, the opportunities to learn new skills, a monthly book club and various outings throughout the year. A local monthly magazine is distributed to each member to keep them up to date with events organised by head office and other WI groups in the area, plus 10 issues per year of a magazine outlining items of interest from nationwide groups.

In the last year we have listened to talks on various subjects including Suffragettes in and around Ipswich, History of Stowmarket Operatic and Dramatic Society and Origin of Pearly Kings and Queens. We have learned about tea, and flower arranging. We had a "60's theme" evening, and a garden party (which had to be held indoors thanks to the weather!). We also had a Christmas party with good food and a chance not only to listen to the Phoenix Handbell ringers but to join them in playing carols. May I say they did not ask any of us to join the team! We held a very successful "Winter warmer" lunch in February, consisting of a choice of three different soups and three different puddings. This was very well attended, and we hope to repeat this event in the future.

We try out our skills by entering various competitions at events like the Suffolk Show, Group meetings, and local fetes/flower shows, and have recently, proudly won the rose-bowl presented by the local group committee, for the second time. Also, of course, we excel at jam and cake making and enjoy presenting these for sale at local events.

This year is the 100th Anniversary of the founding in this country of the WI which will be celebrated by all members nationwide. Henley WI will be holding a special event, inviting members of local groups to join them for a ploughmans lunch and to watch a live broadcast of the WI AGM from the Royal Albert Hall, London, with HM Queen Elizabeth in attendance (yes she is a member as was Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother).

The official phrase is "The WI offers opportunities for all women to enjoy friendship, to learn, to widen their horizons and together to influence national and international affairs" but we think of it as fun.

Kay Swinger (Programme organiser for Henley WI)

May 2015