

LAUNTON WI – SECRETARY’S REPORT 2018-2019 TO COMMITTEE

(and later supplied to the PARISH COUNCIL)

Once again this past year has been a largely settled one under the continued Presidency of Helen Aris, coupled with a full Committee enabling us to share out the “jobs” very effectively. Thus we have enjoyed a smooth-running year, fully supported by the Membership which remains at healthy levels (at around the 38 mark). There has been sadness, though, as two members have died: Joy Harbison who joined us when she first moved into the Village and Patsy Stephens, a very long-standing member, who although failing health had precluded her from physically attending meetings, had kept in touch with us by renewing her Membership. We are to have a presentation from her widower, John, to celebrate her life, at our May meeting

As in all previous years the overall pattern of our year ran from our Birthday Supper (super fish and chips) in April. The Resolution debate meeting followed in May when we discussed and then supported the nationally selected motion “Mental Health Matters” which was subsequently adopted at the NFWI Annual Meeting by a vote of 98%. Our discussions revealed how wide-spread these issues can be as many of us have been touched by them. Incidentally, last year’s motion “Ending Plastic Soup” continues to attract universal interest. Our two other fixed dates were our Christmas Party, complete with a visit from Father Christmas, fantastic eats and brainteasing quizzes, and finally, our Annual Meeting in March.

At the remaining meetings during the year we were treated to another superb programme of talks and activities. In the thought-provoking category were “Therapeutic Hypnosis” (Martin Richardson) and “Behind Closed Doors” (Pauline Martindale - about life in a women’s prison) – giving food for thoughts depending on an individual’s experiences: “The Sky at Night” (Gordon Rogers - images of deep space) and “Mighty Matterhorn” (Pam Newall) – both talks illustrated by terrific photographs: “Cylinders to CDs” (Ian Breasley)- an interesting romp through the history of recordings and finally “Failed to Return” (Tony Eaton) – marvellous whodunit tales tracing the theories behind the disappearances of Amy Johnson and Leslie Howard – the former possibly the victim of a botched rescue effort in the Thames Estuary, the latter being shot down over the Bay of Biscay by the Luftwaffe in possibly a case of mistaken identity or maybe to protect the enormous progress that our code breakers were making. On the lighter side we included our usual visit from Troy of Age UK who ran a Curling session which became increasingly competitive (and rather noisy) and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. We also benefitted from a very informative craft evening when our Liz (Colyer) taught us how to make cards – she manages to awaken our latent talents in us!

We tend not to go on many outings during the year but delegates did attend both the County and National Annual Meetings. Once again, many of us continued to enjoy our monthly activity of walk (weather permitting) and lunch at various venues which gave us an opportunity to continue to socialise. On one afternoon there was a knitting session when some members met in The Bull to produce much needed tiny hats and blankets for the Neo Natal unit at the JR – the daughter of one of our members, a nurse there, joined us for the afternoon: we subsequently received a fulsome letter of thanks from the Hospital. We run a monthly competition and last year we had to bring items beginning with a designated letter of the alphabet which sometimes was quite challenging.

We have continued with our contribution to the life of the community and gained an even more enthusiastic following for our cake provision when we were invited to host a fundraising (for our coffers) endeavour to provide a Cream Tea event for the Over 60s Club – this was so successful that we have a repeat booking for this current year. We supplied cakes for the Village Clean up, for which we received a donation from the PC for PHIP (thank you for that), a Big Orange Day in aid of Muscular Dystrophy and also the Tythe Barn Quiz, once again raising money for St Mary’s Church and for PHIP. We were involved with the Village Poppy Fête, running a guess the number of poppies competition. We continued to collect for Bicester Food Bank every second month.

We are ever grateful to Karen who has generously allowed us to hold our Committee meetings in The Bull.

We are now eagerly embarking on another packed year, a year that sees the OFWI Centenary, with attendant celebrations, so there will be plenty to enjoy.

Celia Manderson March 2019