

WMWI

Monthly Newsletter May 2007 No 30

www.womens-institute.org.uk/oxfordshire
Meeting at St Margaret's Institute Polstead Road

The Second Tuesday of every Month- Tel: Jane Finnerty on 01865 553304 for further details
President Anne Wiles – Secretary Julie Goodall Tel 427787



Walton Manor

Next WI Meeting Tuesday May



8th 7:30

We have great speaker lined up for the next meeting– **Mrs. Rachel**

Myers. Planting your garden for the wow factor/making your garden space work for you

Position 649 (in her age group) -Finish time 4:28:38 **(WOW!)** Well done

The Gatehouse café

We will be collecting again so any men or women's summer clothing would be welcome along with toiletries

Meeting April 10th 2007



We had a great turnout for all the sticking and cutting last month – just goes to show how much we all enjoy a bit

of time out to do things we would never usually do!

SPEAKERS ANY IDEAS

EMAIL Susan Wright at susanwright10@yahoo.co.uk

The OFWI annual AGM

Our President Anne Wiles reports on this and the recent Cherwell group meeting later in the newsletter and asks you to consider this years OFWI resolution

THE RESOLUTION

'This resolution urges H.M. Government to stop the closure of Community Hospitals, which provide essential services to local people.'

Congratulations



We have had recent news from WMWI member Melanie

Rigby and Peter on the birth of their daughter Anna last autumn. Congratulations from all at WMWI hope to see you soon and meet Anna too!

We are required to discuss and vote on this resolution at the May meeting; Julie will then report our decisions to our representative who will make our feelings known at the AGM.

The briefing notes can be found at www.theWI.org.uk



WMWI Member Pauline Bampton completed the Flora London Marathon

2007

WI OF THE YEAR

Please give us your photos of any events!

Forthcoming Events

A Midsummer Evening

We are getting ready for our annual event which is always a huge success

23rd June 2007 it will be a superb evening so make sure you reserve your place as soon as possible (4 left)

Tea at the RITZ watch out for details!



Car Plus workshop 30th May 2007 at Tackley

If you would like to attend this workshop please contact Jane Finnerty. There is no charge for this event and a Fairtrade lunch will be provided. Responsible car use embraces vehicle choice, alternative fuel technology, minimising car use, car clubs, car-sharing, improved driving behaviour and promoting journey planning,



Packaging Action Day -CAGs and Oxfordshire WIs SUMMERTOWN and JERICHO

10 - 12 on 30th of June

We will be working together to hold a number of awareness raising events - such as informing shoppers about their packaging options outside stores in SUMMERTOWN

All other events in News and Views or from Julie Goodall Secretary

Please bring Cheque books to the meeting as you may miss out if you cannot book a place n something you want to go on

Climate Change

Pat Clark our environment coordinator and speaker in June is working hard with Oxfordshire Climate Exchange and is looking for 'Climate Explorers', more on that next month. Hopefully you will have had the recent Oxfordshire attitude to climate exchange survey which can be found on the Campaigning page on the OFWI website. If you would like a copy posted ask Jane Finnerty
LINK ON OFWI WEBSITE
<http://www.climatex.org/survey/index.php?sid=66717>

Charitable Status

We are applying for WMWI to have charitable status so you may be asked to complete a short gift aid form soon – this could be worth up to £150 a year to our WI more details to follow

OXFORDSHIRE AGM AND VOLCANOES AND DRAGONS REPORTS by Anne Wiles



OFWI AGM

The Oxfordshire Federation AGM was, as usual, very well attended. It was a good experience, and can be recommended as a way of getting an overview of the range of activities offered within the county.

After viewing the usual stalls of merchandise and exhibits, we were called into the main hall for a full programme of reports and speakers. We received reports from the OFWI officers, and learned that our financial position is healthy. Last year saw a 1.45% rise in membership, the number currently standing at 4611.

There was feedback from a number of initiatives. Liz Eaton told us about cycling in Cuba; the poverty, the traumas, and how £80K had been raised for Denman. We heard that more than 500 ponds had been identified through the survey (though not all by the WI!), and Jane gave us an update on the work of the Campaigning and Current Affairs committee in supporting WI resolutions and campaigns. (Incidentally, listeners to the Archers may have heard David giving the WI a plug for initiating the farm milk price debate). The Diamond Site tapestry is now completed and framed. There are 30 panels, all depicting viruses and diseases.

The resolution on alternatives to prison for non-violent women was discussed. The dire consequences for families, and the financial costs to the public purse, were raised. Prisons are expensive, and the government plans to put much money into building more institutions. A small proportion of this money would finance alternative facilities for women. Votes were accepted from representatives of the WIs, and it was recommended that this resolution should be taken forward. Given that this a very topical issue, we should be hearing much more about this.

We had two guest speakers. The first, in the morning, was Sara Thornton. She is the newly appointed Chief Constable for Thames Valley Police. There are 5 women out of a total 43 Chief Constables in England and Wales. Sara started her career as a constable 21 years ago and was awarded the Queen's Police Medal last year.

The Women's Police Service was founded in 1914, but they did not have police powers until 1923. Apparently, the early female members tended to be both more educated than the men, and more radical. Perhaps this is not surprising, given the political movements in which women were involved at that time. When women police officers were given some powers, in 1923, they were recruited specifically to deal with vice and were expected to be `sensible' – and not radical! Women have been fully integrated into the police service since 1973.

New plans for Thames Valley Police include a network of services to tackle domestic violence, centres to deal with serious sexual assault, and meetings with Muslim women with a view to increasing understanding about terrorism.

The afternoon speaker was hilarious. She was a consummate entertainer, telling us stories about growing up in the Black Country as a member of a Polish family. She kept the whole hall laughing. Apparently, she had travelled into Oxford on the Park and Ride bus with a number of WI members, and amused them by playing her ukulele.

In addition to the speakers in the main hall, there was the usual array of goodies to buy, and some stunning needlework on display. Jane was manning a stand on climate change, with a university scientist. Not only did they have an impressive selection of low-energy light bulbs, but a display of underwear which seemed to suggest that, as the earth's temperature has moved upwards over the past hundred years, so our knickers have reduced from bloomers to thongs.

All in all, this was a good day. It is surprising who you find at this meeting, and what can be learned about the organisation. If you happen to have a free day next year, it is well worth coming along.

CHERWELL GROUP MEETING: VOLCANOS AND DRAGONS

Four of us attended the meeting arranged by the Cherwell Group. This was the Kidlington WI's meeting as it was their turn to organise it. We received a warm welcome from the other WIs, and learned a bit more about them as each gave a short report on the highlights of the past 6 months or so. This is the frequency of the meetings; they are held in the spring and autumn. Ours will come round in 18 months at the earliest.

Following the business meeting, we had an illustrated talk by John Tyler on Indonesian terrain and wildlife. As a photographer of unusual flora and fauna, he travels to some of the less accessible parts of the world, to seek unusual species. This trip was to some of the 13,000 islands which comprise Indonesia. Many of these are volcanic, and all have their own character and culture including 600 languages. You are never far from a volcano in Indonesia, and their periodic eruptions can have a profound effect on the surrounding area. It was said that an eruption in 1815 led to the loss of an entire culture, and to worldwide crop failure through obstruction of sunlight.

John recounted how he had to take everything he needed to sustain himself as he found his way to the arid island where he would find his dragons. There were various dangers and he was accompanied at times by `bodyguards' – teenage boys who tended to oversleep and had to catch up by public transport.

Many of the photographs were of exotic insects and reptiles, but his main quest was to find the Komodo dragon, on the island of the same name. Apparently, there are only 5,000 left – I can't say I am sorry about this. The `dragons' are the world's largest lizards; if they had wings, they could resemble dragons. In fact, they look rather like alligators with longer legs; ugly beasts which can grow to 9 feet long and can weigh up to 35 stone. They have 60 sharp teeth, which replace themselves, infective saliva and a taste for flesh. In fact, they have no identifiable redeeming features. They lurk in the undergrowth ready to feast on a passing animal, or chomp a bit off an unwary tourist.

They can run at 15 miles an hour, so there is no hope of shaking them off. At least they cannot climb, so dwellings are on stilts, with ladders for access, and trees may provide a means of escape. It would seem rather foolhardy to be exploring this area without one of the armed rangers. So these deeply unpleasant creatures are facing extinction; am I bothered?

Following the talk, we were refreshed with tea, coffee and home-made biscuits. This gave more opportunity to mingle and meet other members. Hopefully, more of you will be able to make the next group meeting in the autumn, at which the presentation is to be about women behind enemy lines.