



WMWI

Walton Manor WI

Monthly Newsletter

March 2007 No 28

www.freewebs.com/wmwi Meeting at St Margaret's Institute Polstead Road *the Second Tuesday of every Month*- Tel: Jane Finnerty on 01865 553304 for details

President [Anne Wiles](#) **Secretary** [Julie Goodall](#) Tel 427787 **Treasurer** [Sue Field](#)

Tuesday 13th March – Walton Manor AGM – also celebrating Fair Trade fortnight which ends on March 11th at this meeting and of course it is International Women's day on the 8th March

<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/women/womday97.htm>

The Bulletin for forthcoming events can be found on our website

www.freewebs.com/wmwi and in your monthly copy of News and Views

Editor this month Susan Wright

There is only one thing to be said about February. It's gone, thank heaven!

Spring lies ahead. Already geraniums are out – only 2 months early. Because of the mild weather blue tits didn't want my nuts and are now building their nests – but there too they don't need my help – it would look funny anyhow. I won't hold it against them as they now sound so sweet and clear in the early morning.

A good meeting was held on Tuesday Feb.13th. News of absent members was circulated and Pauline Bampton much congratulated for entering the London Marathon. (Perhaps more WI members should have entered too as what a brave and strange contingent us Walton Manor members might have made, training en masse with whistles perhaps, in the cold early mornings on Port Meadow.)

Arrangements were discussed for the summer months ahead. WMWI has an excellent record in devising spectacularly attractive outings for ourselves (and I speak as one, who wrapped in a white robe the autumn before last at health farm, spied other members all pink and white and glowing after their 'treatment' facials and enjoyed too a blissful massage myself as well as super grub. Champneys watch out!

Arrangements started to be made under Julie's supremely capable hands First of all our Midsummer party in June, at Yvonne's wonderfully hospitable and lovely home. Nearer in time an expedition is planned all the way round the corner from the weird and wonderful St. Margaret's Institute to The Anchor in Fyfield Road (1st March). Will this become our local Gastro pub of choice? The

restaurant critic of The Oxford Times (of Rosemarie's pudding fame) much recommends it. His own reputation is now on the line...

The idea that most caught my fancy was the proposal for a WIWM trip to The Savoy in the summer travelling by bus and wearing pretty –(ish) frocks – and hats with flowers I hope... To prepare for this reckless expenditure, the career girls amongst us proposed putting aside £10 quid a month. OUCH! The awful good manners and natural laziness of the committee prevented us comparing tea at The Savoy with Fortnum and Mason but, socially committed as we are, we like to keep to the essentials and I expect we'll stick with The Savoy.

Business affairs were mentioned and quickly despatched. The way was clear for a fascinating talk by Ann Borrowdale on writing and getting published. Since childhood she had been making up stories. Do novelists put their friends into their books? No they don't, (funny that), yet she has noticed that Art does have an extraordinary way of imitating Life so that what was only imagined has a way of actually happening later on in real life. Sadly, patience, hard work and consistency form a large part of writing we learnt. Most interestingly, the author had created her own publishing company and was following keenly developments for writers on the internet. She explained how competitive the literary market is, yet still held out hope for newcomers.

Post Office Consultation – a reply from Susan Wright WMWI

1. Queues

See Which magazine (12.1.07).

There is already a problem of long queues in some post offices. With PO closures, this only gets worse. This affects both those customers who need 'traditional' postal services and those without bank accounts seeking 'financial' services e.g. benefits.

2. Physical Access. The suggestion of 1 mile access in towns is, it might be thought, rather too far. Towns present the problems of traffic to negotiate. How are the elderly (an increasing proportion of the population) and the infirm and sick to cope with Post Offices so far away? I consider this proposal to be unrealistic.

3. Information Gap

How will people who are new to an area access the new services? Such a system ignores the brilliance of the old scheme. Who will know where the new PO is or how to get hold of it? Would yet more street signs really be acceptable?

4. Stability

- a) The 'stability' mentioned can only, implicitly, mean financial stability.
- b) Without dedicated premises and staff, there will be less stability not more. Cf the Which article (above) where there were practical problems setting up such a new scheme over the question of holidays which were not acceptable to the person offering to run such a scheme, as not being a PO employee she had needs not met by a bureaucratic response. Such differences might be inevitable. Thus the new system appears a lot less stable than the old one.

5. Crime

Hard to provide_adequate access to PO services together with the safety of customers/clients. In the old post offices, the relative safety of customers was assured. The same cannot be said for any 'machine' withdrawals.

6. Cost of weakening community links

Traditionally the Post Office has both served the local community and been a symbol of the neighbourhood. In many ways they have acted as a social hub. To ignore such affections and loyalty is to run the risks of increasing social 'alienation'. Neighbourhoods are much easier to destroy than to build. Taking away post offices in this context can be seen as destructive.

You cannot talk to a machine and friendly staff would be much missed. There are both significant risks , and probable costs, in doing anything that de-humanizes a neighbourhood.

The completed consultation from the Campaigns and Current affairs committee for all of the WIs responses in Oxfordshire will be on the OFWI website by 1ST March