**Wantage Women’s Institute Annual Report for 2014/2015**

I am pleased to present our fifth Annual Report which I can report has again been a very successful, enjoyable and interesting year for Wantage Women’s Institute. Again the numbers have increased and now stand at 75 full members and 7 dual members. We again have a waiting list which continues to grow, and with only one member leaving this year it is difficult to accommodate all those who wish to join. We are continually considering the course of action to take to come to a solution, which is ongoing.

Our Committee this year has remained exactly as it was at the start of this year but there will be a slightly different Committee following the re-election process undertaken in the last few weeks. Liz Dickins has been a most dedicated and busy President for the last year. Rita Hetherington has been our Vice President and Programme Planner again a very busy role. Sandra Mitchell took over as Treasurer this year and has proved to be very competent in this role. Eileen Webster has been a most helpful member and has been able to keep everyone in the WI aware of any welfare needs for the members, and making sure those who are unwell are contacted on a regular basis. The other members of the Committee are Angie Bailey-Myers who organizes the Events Committee along with two other members, a very successful Committee. Lesley Royan has filled a new role of supervising the requirements of our WI with Denman College and Jenny Forinton, who is also a new member for the year has taken on responsibility for News & Views and action required from that.

Our speakers throughout the year were very varied and organized by Rita Hetherington. In May Diane Partington spoke and demonstrated the process of restoration of photographs. In June Simeon Courtie gave an interesting account of the journey of “The Beatnik Beatles” - his family travelling in a camper van around the world and performing the music of the Beatles. July saw an amazing demonstration and talk about the use of dogs in medical detection by Heather Shute, the assembled company that day were totally behind this charity. In July Rita Hetherington arranged a walk around Oxford which was greatly enjoyed. The September talk was given by Chris Smith, who gave some top tips to drivers. At the October meeting Carol Bunyan spoke about her 25 years of writing for television and the theatre and has now launched her first book at 60. At the Christmas meeting we met with Simon Read who demonstrated the chocolate experience to us including, of course, lots of samples. The New Year saw the meeting addressed by Dr. Tony Maisey about spare part surgery, it was quite amusing but also not for the faint hearted! Altogether this was a great year for speakers.

The Events Committee led by Angie Bailey-Myers with Liz Dickens and Rita Hetherington, arranged some very varied and great events. In April we had our second St. George’s Day Lunch which again was very well attended; in May Grey’s Court was visited to see the amazing bluebells; the June event was an excellent 3 day visit to Kent organized by Liz Dickins, with two most enjoyable nights and including a visit to Canterbury followed by an impressive visit to the Chatham Dockyard during which we saw some filming for Mr. Selfridge; the next visit in July was to Highclere Castle, ‘the home of Downton Abbey’, which was most enjoyable with good weather and some unusual things to see including the Egyptian exhibition; August saw a visit to Filkins Woolen Weavers and also a country walk; In September a visit was made to the Naval Dockyards at Portsmouth including seeing The Mary Rose, The Victory and the many other boats/ships etc. on view, this was again organized by Liz Dickins; In December Liz arranged a visit to Althorpe – the family home of Princess Diana, and on the same day to 78 Derngate for the Rene Mackintosh exhibition. All these trips were very well organized and certainly very much enjoyed by all those who took part.

The Craft/Coffee mornings continue to be well attended and a continued vehicle for existing and new members to get to know each other from the WI. The Charity Knitting is also very popular with some amazing results in providing items for several charities. Denman College Craft Shop is still going strong, albeit with some difficult situations from time to time. Lesley Royan has made a strong rapport with Joan Sherrin at Denman and much progress has been seen over the last year.

Once again we would very much like to thank Mary Lawrence for again doing some great work on the Photo Albums and Jean Stirrup for maintaining the excellent website she created for us. This year sees the Centenary Celebrations, and the team of ladies led by Lesley Wilkins have produced a magnificent banner which was unveiled for the 5th Birthday of our WI, and will be carried at the Celebrations.

Funds from the 50/50 Club were won by Angela Bailey-Myers £80; Sue Joseph £40 and Jan Abrahall £60. Bursaries of £100 each were won by Viv Hill and Sheila Jones. At the December meeting three bursaries of £200 were won by Jenny Laye, Una Cantley and Angela Bell. We also raised funds from the fruit and vegetable raffles.

Veronica Kirby

Secretary

8 March 2015