

This is the CHAIRMAN'S REPORT covering the period 1 NOVEMBER 2017 TO 31 OCTOBER 2018

2018 was a very busy year. Although the official date for the federation centenary was 18 June, celebrations went on for most of the year. It started at the Annual Council Meeting on 19th March and ended at the Autumn Federation Meeting on 8th October. During May and June many members were involved in organising a variety of celebration events throughout the county. Some events were held in the afternoon, some in the evening and some all day. Many were held on a Saturday, but some were held on a weekday. All were well supported including the event held on the day of the royal wedding. The events put on varied from an afternoon tea with entertainment, evening concert, all day fair, barn dance with hog roast and most things in between. There was plenty of variety to choose from and what a fun time we all had. Well done and many thanks to all those who contributed to the organisation of the events.

On 28 June, RHS Wisley was the venue for the Centenary Pollinator Trail event. It was a lovely dry, warm evening and more than 1,500 people attended to see the fantastic Pollinators and enjoy a picnic in the grounds. The WI marquees at all the county shows joined in the celebrations with an appropriate theme for their competitions. Even the Surrey at Denman weekend joined in the celebrations with a big cake and a special dinner. In September the federation held a special centenary service in Guildford Cathedral attended by Surrey VIPs, which was followed by a cream tea in the Refectory.

Despite all these celebrations the subcommittees did manage to fit in a few events.

The Events subcommittee organised New Speaker Auditions in November, March and July. They hosted a Christmas Extravaganza at Bookham in November and the annual Supper quiz at Worplesdon in April. In July there was a croquet taster day at the Surbiton Croquet Club and a Bridge tea in Oxshott. Three coaches were organized to take members from all over the county to Blenheim Palace and Countryfile Live in August. The year ended with a successful Literary Lunch at Reigate Golf Club in October.

The Home Economics subcommittee, organised two Food Hygiene courses and a course to train some new Surrey Craft Judges. In November there were three different types of Art Workshops and in December a Christmas Wreath workshop. In preparation for the Surrey County Show competition a Foliage Art Footstall workshop was held in April and in October there were workshops on Cushion making as well as mastering Zips. Let's Cook Local continues when suitable venues can be found. Although NFWI no longer support certified Baking and Preserves courses, Surrey have continued to offer the courses due to the high demand from members.

The Membership subcommittee, who are responsible for the welfare and development of the WIs, arranged eight committee workshops during February and March at venues throughout the county with most being held in the evening. The Resolution Briefing meeting was held as usual in April so that those involved in presenting resolutions or voting at the National AGM, can find out what they are supposed to do. Membership support all the County shows by assisting to promote the federation and recruit new members. During the year, three WIs were formed – Battersea, Bookham Bees and Cranleigh Village, however sadly two WIs were suspended - Canada Hall and Headley, and The Oaks Group closed.

The Communications and Publicity sub-committee was formed in 2017 and started with Social Media. During 2018 the committee focused on the Surrey WI News (SWIN), particularly since it was decided to produce a special centenary pull out section for inclusion in the November edition. June Green a former professional journalist was appointed as editor and after discussion with the committee has made changes to the format and presentation. The committee are now addressing the Surrey Federation website making it independent of the NFWI website.

County Shows – The Federation consider that we should promote the WI at every opportunity. Consequentially the Federation was represented at the Surrey County Show on 28 May, the Cranleigh Show on 1 July and the Edenbridge and Oxted Show on 26 and 27 August. All the shows have allocated marquee space provided by the show organisers and this year they were all decorated to reflect the Centenary. The WI marquee at the Surrey County Show was awarded a second prize by the show organisers, which was a first. All show committees are required to make attendance at the show self-financing, including the contribution towards the cost of the marquees. At all the shows there are competitions for members to enter and the schedules are made available on the SFWI website.

The federation managed to hold two ‘Meet the Board’ meetings, where a venue is booked and a number of local WIs are invited to take three members to meet the Trustees and to find out what they do. Over the last three years all WIs in Surrey have been given the opportunity to attend one of these meetings. In the spring four Treasurer workshops were held.

On the Trustee side we had to say farewell to the Treasurer Katie Kerr in July as she moved up to Scotland. Katie's replacement is Sheena Landgraf a Chartered Accountant. We also had to say farewell to Sheila Webber, who had been the Denman Ambassador for the last eight years. Lesley Earl has kindly offered to take over from Sheila however Lesley does not wish to join the Board of Trustees. We have welcomed Debbie Playle to the Board of Trustees. Debbie was President and a founder member of Old Coulsdon Cupcakes. After this meeting I will be standing down as Chairman having completed my three years in office. Also standing down is Angela Poole my federation meeting co-ordinator.

The Federation office is run by a team of employed staff. Diane Sanderson the Federation Secretary had been joined by Ellen Johnson and Jane Hide who shared the Assistant Federation Secretary position, and Jeanie Wharrier the Office Assistant. Jo Vooght who had been the Federation Secretary for over 20 years retired in July. The Bookkeeper Katie Price supports the Treasurer by keeping the accounts up to date. The Federation could not function without the office staff and the Trustees are very grateful for all their help.

During the year the shop concentrated on selling the Centenary goods and diaries, since as advised last year, all stock was being run down and would not be replaced. Once the Centenary goods have been sold the shop will close. Diaries for 2020 onwards will not be available through the federation. WI stationery will continue to be available but only from the Office.

Other federation appointments include:

Tina Cox as ACWW representative and Campaign Officer.

Valerie Jenner the SFWI Web Master.

Anne Hawkins the Year Book editor.

Linda Oliver the Archivist.

There are a number of self-funding groups where no Federation funds are made available, although they are not charged for the use of the meeting room at 6, Paris.

There are two Science groups in Surrey. The Science Group meetings are open for anyone to attend including partners, and there is a small charge to cover the cost of the meeting. The 3 Counties Science Group hold about eight meetings a year and usually meet on the third Monday of the month at a variety of halls in the West of the county. The East Surrey Science group meet twice a year in April and September, usually at the White Hart Barn in Godstone.

Crafty Ladies meet about six times a year for friendship and to help members pursue a wide range of craft activities. Membership is open to any member of SFWI. Meetings are held at 6, Paris usually on the first Wednesday of every other month. Visitors are welcome to attend and see what they do.

The Camera group members take it in turns to arrange a monthly meeting at an interesting place, with plenty of opportunity to take photographs. Non-photographers are also welcome.

The Surrey Serenaders choir performed at many of the centenary events including at the Cathedral. Unfortunately, Liz Wilcox the Music Director retired in November, but the choir have been very lucky to find Ed Sutton to lead them. Rehearsals are held almost every other Saturday throughout the year in Albury Village hall and anyone is welcome to join, WI member or not.

All these group meetings are advertised in SWIN under 'Coming up' on page 3.

That concludes my last report. Thank you for listening.