

Holt WI

After something of an existential crisis this month, when we were unsure for a time whether Holt WI would continue to exist, I am pleased to say that two loyal members have stepped forward to job share the Presidency after the current President's three year term of office expires. So happily Holt WI will be back in the New Year at a slightly earlier time, on the same day each month, with something of a different feel, but nevertheless hosting speakers on a monthly basis and with lunch club as strong as ever.

At our AGM we looked back at the events and speakers of the last three years and celebrated with a special raffle: a stone-age pot made by members in June and now planted up with hyacinths, which should be nicely ready for Christmas. An extract from the President's address gives a sense of the range of events and speakers we have enjoyed.

"I have in my mind a wonderful series of vignettes from all sorts of moments. Amongst my favourites: Di and Jenny dancing across the lawns of Ralph Court Gardens to the strains of a Viennese waltz; Denise performing the most elegant "fall" to act as the casualty during First Aid training; Margaret H, part of the Dream Team, whispering frantically behind her hand at the Worcestershire Federation Quiz night; Gill E frantically trying to stop a Christmas tree falling on her as we were decorating it in Holt Church; Kate, merry on mulled wine, in stitches over her holly wreath; Dot, in the beautiful environs of Bentley Farm – our hostess every year, bustling and busy; Pauline in the same venue fighting with the flap of the marquee to stop the rain and wind blowing away her stall contents; Jean S's exquisite first class winning entry for the ACM; Val H collecting lavender; Val G chatting away at lunch club; Sylvia adding all those dancing miles to the Moon Mission Challenge; Margaret B winning yet another raffle; Sarah in the dungeons under the Guildhall and in the Mayor's parlour; Jane on the back of a motor-bike with the Centenary baton.....

"We have enjoyed some superb speakers. The talks have taken us as far as Turkmenistan (on a horse) and Australia in a convict ship. We have visited a medieval hospital, a Civil War headquarters and the Georgian era in Worcester. We have travelled to Kew, to Hampton Court in Herefordshire, to gardens locally, to Powys Castle, Attingham Park and Bath. We have walked, danced and swum further than any other WI in Worcestershire in response to the Moon Mission. We

now know how to make a Stone Age bowl and how to deal with a medical emergency. We can make wreaths (lavender or holly) and Christmas boxes; we know how to garden in a small space. We have raised funds through superb coffee mornings at Bentley Farm and well-supported jumble sales. We have sent three people to Denman for courses in painting and exotic salads we have played skittles, wrapped presents Furushki style, decorated Christmas trees, competed vigorously in the county quiz and the Shrawley Cup. We have embraced the needs of bees and cleaning up the plastic soup in our seas; we have given our support to the Air Ambulance, St Richard's Hospice, the food bank and those who need transplants.....”

And we will be back in 2018, looking forward to the Worcestershire Federation's Centenary and our own in 2019.