

NFWI AGM Albert Hall June 2015 report

As you are aware the NFWI hosted its Centenary Annual Meeting at the Royal Albert Hall on Thursday 4 June 2015. The meeting was enjoyed by 5,100 members in the hall, and by thousands of viewers across the country as they tuned into the live broadcast of the proceedings from a variety of venues. There were live links to North Wales - the first WI to be formed in the UK, links also to the South West and to Chester. It was an excellent opportunity to widen participation in this momentous occasion.

We were truly honoured to have been joined by HM The Queen, HRH The Princess Royal, and HRH The Countess of Wessex at this year's very special meeting. HM The Queen is President of Sandringham WI, HRH The Princess Royal is a long-standing NFWI Associate, and HRH The Countess of Wessex is a member of Bagshot WI. Our royal guests presented national competition prizes, received the [centenary link baton](#), cut a beautifully presented [centenary fruit cake](#), and HM The Queen delivered a moving speech, congratulating the WI on its 100th anniversary.

In addition we also heard from three truly inspirational speakers: [Lucy Worsley](#), English historian, curator and television presenter on history; [Helena Morrissey](#), CEO of Newton Investment Management; and [Tanni Grey-Thompson](#), British former wheelchair racer, parliamentarian and television presenter. Each had a unique style, gave an insight into their chosen careers as well as themselves. Look out for the forthcoming BBC programme hosted by Lucy Worsley who will tell the story of **One Hundred Years Of The WI**. Here's what was said recently: *"Rather than a cosy woman's club full of ladies making jam and singing Jerusalem, Lucy sees the WI as one of Britain's most important movements of modern times. Arguing that the WI is the political party we never knew we had - a powerful group run by women, for women and still thriving today with 213,000 members – in this film, Lucy demands that the WI be taken seriously and appreciated for the bold and often radical institution that it is"*. Coming soon on BBC4

In addition to all of the above, Bleadon Belles the winners of the '[Singing for Joy](#)' competition performed, and the Kingston University Project showcased 11 stunning garments in a fashion show.

The following speeches from the meeting are available to download from the NFWI website:

- [HM The Queen](#)
- NFWI Chair, Janice Langley - [opening address](#)
- NFWI Chair, Janice Langley - [closing remarks](#)
- Hon. Treasurer, Julia Roberts - [treasurers statement](#)

You can re watch the broadcast of the 2015 AGM [here](#). Registration and viewing is free. An internet connection of 3mbps or more is required. The footage will be available to watch online until June 2016. But... on 12th June it wasn't working!

On the coach to the event we were informed that the resolution was to be amended. In essence the words 'personal' and 'informal' were to be replaced by 'health' and 'social care'. This last minute change at first seemed sensible for increased clearness but it did not bode well for the passage of the resolution itself.

The resolution was introduced to the audience with passionate speeches both for and against it. This took place, however, after the aforementioned amendments had been accepted. Initially the resolution evoked many questions but, to be honest, the forthcoming answers seemed to cause more confusion than clarity. As you may, or may not, be aware there was a move to remove the resolution and this was carried by a majority of those present. My personal view of the proceedings is that the resolution was too nebulous and has, indeed, been superseded by the recent inaction of the Care Act. I had been given discretion by the Thornborough and Thornton as well as the Maids Moreton WI to vote and, therefore, did so to remove the resolution.

This was my first visit to an NFWI AGM and I have to say it was a fabulous day out. The weather was kind, the company excellent and the proceedings interesting. It was a privilege to attend and witness not only the Royal guests delight at being there but the genuine enthusiasm of all speakers too. An informative, entertaining and educational day. Thanks for the opportunity.

Teresa Connolly