

# A Tale of Fellowship

By Helen Wilson

As members of the Women's Institute, we all have a story to tell. I am a third generation Institute member. My grandmother and mother were members before me. I liken our involvement with the WI to the voyage of a ship. The analogy goes like this:

The ship set sail in 1897. Over the years the ship has had many captains, crew members and passengers, all of whom were important to the voyage. While sailing through the waters of life, the ship experienced calms and storms, smooth sailing and near shipwrecks.



The ship is still with us today, sailing towards the 21st Century. As captains, crew members and passengers, it has been our task to navigate and chart the course of the WI. As navigators, we have drawn on our talents and experiences, our tolerance and compassion, and our dedication and determination to keep the ship on course.

Many captains and crew members have left the ship over the years, while others boarded at various points along the jour-

ney. At times, we wondered where we were going. And we questioned the skills of the captain and the crew. But we always stayed afloat, and sailed on.

It was my privilege to board the ship as a passenger in 1956 when I first joined the Maitland Women's Institute. As a crew member I have held various positions over the years, including President of the Maitland Branch, President and PRO for both the Grenville District and Ottawa Area, and Board Director for Subdivision 2. While in these positions, I used charts and compasses and the knowledge I had gained to help chart the course of the Women's Institute.

When my job as a crew member was up, I continued on the ship's voyage as a passenger helping with whatever needed to be done, and always flying the colours of blue and gold "For Home and Country."

One of the highlights of my term as Board Director, or crew member of the ship, was initiating a Barrier Free Community Project to make all Women's Institute Halls wheelchair accessible. As Area President, I helped organize a cruise of the 1000 Islands for 500 Area members.

Presently, I am Chaplain for the Brockville General Hospital. I co-ordinate their Pastoral Care Program and the thirty Clergy who volunteer one night a month. I go to the Hospital every day. My work there involves visiting, grief counselling, crisis care and family support. The Program was praised by an



Rev. Helen Wilson

Accreditation Team for the "excellent spiritual care" it provides.

My message to Women's Institute members is this: While motherhood is the greatest of all careers, don't stop there. I attended College and University as a mother and grandmother. Universities and Colleges offer many challenging opportunities. Remember, the mind does not grow older, but has a tremendous capacity for new learning. So set your goals and go for them.

I received my Masters from Queen's University and was ordained a Minister in 1981. I am currently working on a Doctorate of Philosophy in Religion. And I eagerly continue on my voyage into the uncharted waters of the future.

Rev. Helen Wilson is presently a Chaplain at the Brockville General Hospital and a member of the Maitland Women's Institute in the Grenville District.

## WI's on the Move

By Audrey Ricker

The Wiltshire County Federation of Women's Institutes in England celebrated their 75th anniversary this year by visiting the birthplace of the organization - Ontario. A bus load of 41 Women's Institute members toured the province. Highlights of their tour were visits to the Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Homestead and the Erland Lee (Museum) Home, as well as their last two days as guests of the Hamilton Area Women's Institute.

Lincoln District hosted a welcoming supper for the British guests and their hosts in Beamsville. One of the British members had made an anniversary cake and carefully transported it en route to Canada. It was served at the welcoming supper. Women's Institute members from the area billeted the guests for the next two nights and organized a day of sightseeing.

Members of the Binbrook and Woodburn Branches served a farewell dinner. Both hosts and guests were pleased with the visit; gifts were exchanged and many friendships formed. Jerinne Porteous, Secretary-Treasurer of the Hamilton Area and former Board Director, was commended for doing a great job of looking after the local billeting arrangements.



On a pilgrimage, members of the Wiltshire County Federation of Women's Institutes in England made a stop in Dunnville, where they were hosted by members from the Haldimand East District. The British guests, seated in the front row from left to right, are Diane Yeman, Eunice Prynn, Nora Curnick, Ellfrede Graham, Joan Chaffe, Edna Huband and Peter Yeman. The hosts, pictured in the back row from left to right, are Audrey Ricker, Ulla Bartlett, David Bartlett, Heather Topp, Fred Topp, Ken Dickhout, Jean Dickhout, and Max Ricker.

Photo courtesy of the Dunnville Chronicle.

Audrey Ricker is a member of the Canboro Women's Institute in the Haldimand East District.