

at the hotel. Remember the train trip to Ottawa when a number of Thamesford were among the one hundred and twenty-five who saw the sights of that city - we walked the streets to see the Parliament Buildings, the Mint and the canal - when Mrs. R. Armour seemed to be often in the spotlight especially when she got "misplaced" in the Parliament Buildings tower. Mrs. Archie Armour co-planned a trip to the East Coast in 1967 when the bus broke down in the Expo grounds in Montreal. Then on to another trip in 1977 to Pennsylvania, Washington and Virginia where we lost Mrs. J. Gill and found her exploring the cemetery in Jamestown; a day trip to ACWW triennial in Lansing; to F.W.I.C. in Guelph one sweltering hot day in June; and our most recent trip hosted by Mrs. Archie Armour through Michigan to Sault Ste. Marie and Agawa Canyon. On all of these trips what would we have done without the travellers from Grace Patterson W.I.?

We have toured nearby industries such as Hardee Farms, Fish Hatchery, Douglas Furniture, Free Press and also Participation House in Brantford. There have been short trips to flower shows, quilt shows, rug exhibits, Erland Lee Museum Home at Christmas, to Fanshawe Park, and through Oxford South to see historical sites. To round out our travels Armchair trips have taken us all around the world giving us the opportunity to visit countries that we would not otherwise see.

In 1946 a Friendship Link was formed with Woodmansterne W.I. in Surrey, England, when, for a short time during wartime restrictions we sent food parcels, soap and wash cloths, canned goods, cheese and tea. Correspondence continued when we exchanged news, ideas and gifts until Woodmansterne disbanded a few years ago. Visits were made to Surrey by Mrs. R. Ross and Mrs. Archie Armour in the seventies, and in 1978 Mrs. Irene Hammerton visited Thamesford and spent one afternoon reminiscing with Mrs. Geo. Woods, Mrs. Ross and Mrs. Armour.

The Tweedsmuir History books tell the story of our community. Mrs. Harold Kerr and Mrs. Jim Gill have been Curators since 1979. Mrs. Kerr is a dedicated historian, as well as a geneologist; and spent many hours in the early eighties compiling more recent community and Women's Institute history. Her historical programs of people and places in this area were enjoyed by members and friends. These books are presently being updated in preparation for microfilming. In the Tweedsmuir competitions in 1955 the books won first prize. In 1955 Mrs. Geo. Woods won first prize in the essay competition in Ontario. The hooked chair seat covers won first prize at Area, and second prize at F.W.I.O. in 1960. We should be proud of the members who contributed their talents towards these competitions.

Oxford County Conference of the Women's Institute was organized in 1949. Mrs. Jack Shewan was on the first executive as one of the directors. At their twenty-fifth anniversary in 1974 W.I. members who had reached eighty years of age and over were guests of honour at the Conference. Mrs. Archie Armour had the privilege that day of taking Miss Grace Patterson, Miss Halpenny and Mrs. Geo. Weir from this branch.

Our branch has been privileged to have members serve on other levels of Women's Institutes. In Oxford North District past presidents include Mrs. Fred Slater (1954-1956) who was a member of Uniondale at that time; the late Mrs. O.C. Powers (1969-1971); Mrs. Archie Armour (1975-1977); and Mrs. Roy Ross (1985-1987). As well Mrs. Bruce McKay acted as Secretary-Treasurer from 1964-1970. Mrs. A. Armour is the present Secretary-Treasurer serving since 1984. Mrs. Roy Ross was recently Tweedsmuir History Curator of London Conference Area. Mrs. A. Armour is a past chairman of Oxford County Conference, and is presently Chairman of Scholarship Committee.

Branch competitions at meeting were an interesting feature for a few years. The talents of our members were shown in making Valentines, Tarts, Shortbread, pumpkin pie, paper tearing, vegetable figures, muffins, flower arrangements, pressed maple leaves. Demonstrations have added to the knowledge of learning from others - smocking, first aid, flower arranging, paper flowers, rug making, liquid embroidery, how to wear scarves and pins, dried apple dolls, Christmas pine wreaths, making of sour dough, making the best use of the blender, microwave cooking, wood carving, pork casseroles, candy and so on.

Profitable enterprises have included auctions, hobby sale, Christmas Fair, euchres, catering, bake sales, fashion shows, the selling of commemorative spoons, tickets on quilts, Luncheon is Served, Hydro Show Time. The proceeds from our annual Birthday Box have gone towards such projects as the cost of 4-H spoons, handi-bags and Sleeping Children.

In 1980 Oxford County hosted the International Plowing Match held near Woodstock