

ACWW

ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

28TH TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, UK

17-23 AUGUST 2016

Our Association the Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) is an affiliated member of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) so Ireland was represented at the 28th Triennial Conference. My colleague Catherine Leavey and myself Úna Flynn accompanied by our National President Marie O'Toole, Angela O'Byrne, Patricia Blake, and Nellie Dillon-Forde attended as Voting Delegates at the Conference.

The Conference was hosted by the West Midlands Federation of Women's Institutes(WI). They had a small Committee of fine committed women together with the Board members and the Central Office Staff, London who prepared a wonderful programme and all of the arrangements ran very smoothly.

The Triennial Conference is an opportunity for members and Member Societies to come together and enjoy each other's company as well as carrying out the important business of ACWW.

There were representatives from 42 Countries worldwide present. At the opening Ceremony on 18th August the Parade of Flags took place, which was quite an emotional event with the singing of the Song of Peace by Sibelius and God Save the Queen

REPORTS

During the Conference we had Reports from 9 Area Presidents; including Africa, Asia, Canada, South America, Europe, South Pacific, USA and the UN. Each President presented highlights of the work carried out in their respective areas. There were 11 Resolutions for discussion at length, debated and voted upon. This work was concluded with Area meetings and Workshops which proved interesting, very successful and beneficial.

ENTERTAINMENT

There were 3 nights of Entertainment ; "The World Entertains", English Cultural Evening and the Gala Dinner. At the Gala Dinner our National President Marie O'Toole presented a cheque towards the "Pennies for Friendship" fund to the World President Ruth Shanks which was much appreciated.

VOTING

Voting took place towards the end of the Conference where we voted back in the World President Ruth Shanks, Australia for another 3 year term with her Board of Officers and various Area Presidents. We were delighted that the new Area President for Europe was Margaret Mc Millan, FWI, Northern Ireland.

TOURS

The Hostess Committee had arranged a mystery tour on the last day, 6 Coaches left the Centre at 9am each going to a different destination in the West Midlands. We visited Aston Hall (near Birmingham). A magnificent building, it was constructed in 1618-1635, its history is tangible and very much alive. Sir Thomas Holte lived there 1651 (a rather interesting character to say the least!). We were entertained to Lunch by the members of the Meridian WI in their

beautiful local Parish Hall, each received a little memento on leaving. We continued on our journey and visited Sarehole Mill. It is a 250 years old working Watermill steeped in history and is now run as a museum by the Birmingham Museum Trust. On another day Catherine and I had a very interesting trip to Coventry where we visited the Cathedral and the Blitz Museum, a really worthwhile visit.

DELEGATES

We met and interacted with the delegates from diverse backgrounds and cultures such as women like Alice from Swaziland, Joyce from South Australia, Christine from "Westmeath" in Canada, Mjoll and Sigridur from Iceland, Sr. Viji, Sr Maria and Sr Lucas from Chennai (we had met them at the last Conference in India), Mabel from Zimbabwe and Jeanne from Netherlands. These women had most interesting stories to share about their families, culture and countries. On a personal note, I feel that I have been enriched in every aspect through knowledge and broadening my horizons

THEME

The theme of this Conference was "Women working together for a better future". Having listened to all the Reports by our members worldwide I can honestly say that the seeds of this theme have already been sown and hopefully they will grow and grow in the years to come.

CLOSING CEREMONY

On Monday 22nd August the closing ceremony took place with various speeches, procession of Flags representing the ACWW, a repeat of the singing of the Song of Peace by all the Delegates, an unforgettable experience.

The next conference, the 29th Triennial Conference of ACWW will be held in Melbourne Australia in 2019, see you there !

Beidh mé ann, má fhágann Dia an tsláinte agam!