

# NORTH HILL WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

1939 – 1945

The North Hill branch of the national Women's Institute was set up in March 1932. The records show that through the years to September 1939 the group attended regular meetings, film shows, visits to and from other branches in the area, talks ranging from India to witchcraft to the National Savings movement, together with classes and competition and fund-raising events. Not to mention jam-making.

The July 1939 minutes record a forthcoming visit to Exmouth (return fare 6/6d), a planned September talk on eiderdowns, and a competition to peel a potato blindfolded. Early that same September Britain declared war against Germany.

The minutes of a Special Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1939 show us one of the immediate effects of the Second World War on the population – the Blackout (see handwritten page reproduced below).

From here on, the minutes of meetings go calmly on to show a clear determination that life should go on as normally as possible in the circumstances (such an important part of the Home Front), but also gradually reveal how changes and restrictions affected everyone. Here are some excerpts:

*November 16<sup>th</sup> 1939: 'It was decided to arrange for the meetings from month to month. Under war conditions it seemed impossible to arrange the programme for a year ahead.'*

*December 14<sup>th</sup> 1939: 'It would be impossible under present transport conditions to give talks to other Institutes.'*

*June 13<sup>th</sup> 1940: '...Major Rodd also referred to their coming departure from Trebartha Hall with deep feeling and regret.'*

*February 12<sup>th</sup> 1941: 'It was also decided to hold the next meeting later – i.e. 6.30, in order to escape the blackout.'*

*October 16<sup>th</sup> 1941: 'After the business part of the meeting a talk was given by Mrs. Warburton of Holland. She described her flight or escape from her native land, the journey to England and its effect upon her.'*

*November 11<sup>th</sup> 1941: 'The Secretary read a letter from ..the Parish Council re the collection (parish) for Xmas presents for Men and Girls who are serving.'*

*February 17<sup>th</sup> 1942: '...also stressed the importance of the Jam-making and urged members to carry on for 1942 although fruit might (not) be available until the Blackberry Crop.'*

*February 18<sup>th</sup> 1943: 'The Members who had previously attended the Cheese and Potato Cookery Class at Launceston then gave a demonstration ... dropped scones ... potato soup ... cheese cakes ... potato pasties with cheese and onion or cheese and parsley ...'*

*June 16<sup>th</sup> 1943: 'A list of Members on the Jam-making committee to be now forwarded' (to the Jam-making Centre of the local WIs)*

*September 9<sup>th</sup> 1943: 'Attention was drawn to the appeal on the monthly letter for material etc. for occupational work parcels for the Prisoners of War.'*

*July 13<sup>th</sup> 1944: 'Mrs. Trahair offered to arrange the collection of foxglove leaves ...' (These were collected by the children and eventually raised 18/- for the Blind, minuted February 5<sup>th</sup> 1945.)*

*October 12<sup>th</sup> 1944: 'The Collectors were asked to attend a meeting ... for the purpose of making arrangements for sending the 'Xmas Gift' to each Service Man and Woman from the Parishioners of North Hill. Postal orders (for) 12/9d were sent to each of the above, 59 receiving gifts.*

Meetings were held variously at the Schoolroom, most frequently in the Vestry Room, Trebartha Hall (until the Rodds left) and the Rectory.

Throughout the Members continued to raise funds for the Cornish Blind and for the Prince of Wales Hospital, largely through Whist Drives.

Sept: 28<sup>th</sup> 1939.  
A Special Meeting was held in the afternoon of Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> Sept. Mr. Guy presided. After discussion it was decided to carry on the Monthly Meetings as usual in the Vestry Room. The Secretary offered to darken the windows - The offer was accepted, and the Meeting for 26<sup>th</sup> Oct was arranged for the evening at 7.15 - All future Meetings should take place during the week of "Full Moon."  
E. W. Guy Presides 24/10/39

Oct: 26<sup>th</sup> 1939.  
A Meeting was held in the Vestry Room on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October, at 7.15 pm. Mr. Guy presided. Members of the Red Cross Working Party were invited. A very amusing story of How to knit a sock was read by Mr. Guy. The Secretary was asked to make arrangements for the Annual Meeting on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Nov. Mr. P. Chapman and Mr. Halls to