

## **Little Budworth W.I. February News**

The speaker at our February meeting was Susan Sellars from Rushton whose talk was entitled My Year as High Sheriff of Cheshire 2014 -2015. She is an enthusiastic and natural speaker whose topic was fascinating as well as entertaining. She wore her uniform as she called it minus the large ostrich plumed hat because it had been borrowed from another lady High Sheriff from Wales and had been returned to its owner. She then went on to speak about the role of the High Sheriff past and present.

The office of High Sheriff is an independent non political Royal appointment for one year. It is the oldest secular office under the Crown. The "Shire Reeve" used to be responsible for the maintenance of law and order and the collection and return of taxes within the county but most of these responsibilities have been transferred elsewhere or are defunct so that its functions are now largely ceremonial. The High Sheriff supports within the county the Royal Family, the Judiciary, the Police, the emergency services, the voluntary sector, and the Church and faith groups. The High Sheriff ensures the welfare of visiting High Court Judges and attends them at Court and offers them hospitality when visiting the county.

The office of High Sheriff of Cheshire dates back to 1135 and Susan Sellars is only the fourth lady to hold this office. This might be due to the fact that High Sheriffs oversaw the execution of criminals until the death penalty was abolished in 1965; not for the faint hearted.

There are 55 High Sheriffs in England and Wales selected each year in March, in a meeting of the Privy Council, by the Sovereign in the traditional custom of "pricking" the appointee's name written on a vellum scroll with a bodkin.

During the course of her year Susan attended 300 appointments, and notable ones to mention were attending the Church of England consecration of its first female bishop Libby Lane at a ceremony at York Minster, meeting Terry Waite, speaking at the W.I. Conference in Winsford and unveiling two plaques in memory of the US 80<sup>th</sup> (Blue Ridge) Infantry Division stationed at Sandiway Golf Club during WW11.

High Sheriffs receive no remuneration and no part of expense falls on the public purse. Susan brought with her two very large albums filled with photographs, newspaper cuttings, invitations etc and we were able to look through these after her talk finished.

The vote of thanks was given by Ruby Speed and following the talk when members have their social time refreshments were served by Sandra Farr and Carol Mason.

Forthcoming events are an evening meal at Manor Farm, Byley on April 27<sup>th</sup> and our ever popular Cheese and Wine evening in May. More details on that next time.

The next meeting is on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm when Matthew Lepp is giving a talk on The History of Soap. Visitors most welcome.

