

The SWRI was just nine years old when the Wornoch Branch was formed in April 1926. The first Honorary Presidents were Mrs Sykes of Wornoch Castle and Mrs Robichaud, Oversteps. The first meeting took place in the reading room of the Territorial Hall. In June 1926 three Sutherland Institutes - Birchen, Clashmore and Wornoch had a joint picnic followed by sports on Wornoch Sands. Mrs Andrew Carnegie presented the prizes. There was a good turn out from all three institutes and the minutes reported that "the afternoon was greatly enjoyed by all."

My first memory of the institute was as a small girl being trained to curtsy so that I could present Mrs Sykes with a bouquet of flowers. I remember thinking my dress was rather nice!

In 1931 the institute received its highest accolade for drama when they reached the finals of the Scottish Community Drama national festival in Glasgow and of the Anstruther Grey finals in Edinburgh. It must have been quite a feat to get both cast and props to Glasgow and Edinburgh - not so many cars about then!

During the 39-45 war the Institute played a major part in raising funds through whist drives, dances, jumble sales etc. They also had

a working party knitting scarves, balaclavas, socks and mitts to include in the parcels which were sent to all the service men + women through out the war. Those serving on the minesweepers H.M.S Dornoch also received parcels. For Christmas 1940 171 parcels were sent. By 1945 this number must have increased considerably requiring ever greater efforts from Dornoch S.W.R.I. members. There were lighter moments too members went frequently to darn and mend for the troops stationed in the Dornoch Hotel, the Station Hotel as it was then. My mother told me that on arriving in the front hall one day she saw an Indian soldier wheeling a barrow down the grand stairway!

Make do and mend classes were the order of the day in the lean years after the war. With the advent of more prosperous times Wornoch W.R.I. have a different type of program - floral art demonstrations, talks on health and a great variety of holiday slides.

However our members from 1926 would have felt quite at home and probably beaten the lot of us in the first competition for September last year - 4 over scores.