

Odette Marshall: It has been a difficult year in some ways, not least occasioned by my hospitalisation in February following a heart attack. I am pleased to report that the NHS has been wonderful and I am now well on the road to a full and welcome recovery. I thank those of you who sent me messages of support over the time I was out of action.

Holding the fort in my absence, therefore, were our Committee Members as follows: Sue Edwards – Vice Chair + Groups Coordinator; Jeannine Murphy – Membership Secretary; Ian Woodhams – Social Events Organiser; John White – Treasurer; Peter Moss – Business Secretary; Jenny Peters – Really Useful Group Coordinator; Ruth Bonner – supporting the Committee in the role of Minutes Secretary.

Sue Edwards: As Vice Chair, taking over most unexpectedly, I couldn't have wished for a better team of people. Our Committee really *does* function as a team – a small one, it must be said, but all the individuals are very supportive and adept at keeping us informed and avoiding pitfalls!

You may have noticed that our Committee list no longer includes a Speakers' Secretary: Denise Barre stepped down from this role a year ago, leaving us with a full programme of most enjoyable talks. Odette managed to engage some more speakers before she was ill and I found a few more so we are now very well-prepared. Although she is not wishing to join the Committee at this point, I am delighted to announce that Veronica Jull has recently agreed to become our new Speakers' Secretary and she is already working very hard at familiarising herself with the role and getting things organised. We thank Veronica most sincerely for offering her help.

Our thanks are also due to all of the people who have helped with keeping our events running smoothly over the past year, including Val, Pete, Bruce, Ted, Peter, Kathy, Melanie, and all of you who have helped with refreshments and welcoming at monthly meetings. And although she is no longer on the Committee, many thanks are due to Penny Holland who does a marvellous job of keeping our webpages updated – our 'shop front' to the world. Outings to places of interest or to the theatre have been expertly arranged by Christine Musgrove and Judy Fowler and to them also we extend our appreciation and thanks for a considerable amount of work over several years. Outings, as such, will now need to be organised by another person/group of people as Christine will be taking some well-deserved time to enjoy other interests.

As Groups Coordinator I have been heartened by the number of our members who have come forward with suggestions for new groups. We now have Midhurst Readers and History Book (another two book groups), Bridge for Beginners, Cocktails and Mocktails, Digital Everything! and Life Story in addition to our established ones. Our very newly formed Theatre Group, bringing theatre visits in from Outings and establishing this as an interest group in its own right, will be run by Judy. If you don't yet belong to any of our groups – or have an idea for a new one – do please think about joining in. Additionally, several groups are full and have a waiting list so might you be able to assist with starting a 'second edition'? '*By the members, for the members*' is the ethos of our organisation and is one to which we should all be prepared to contribute. Huge thanks to all our wonderful Group Leaders.

And finally, thank you, once more, to David Earley for examining the accounts.

