

THE YEAR of activities to celebrate the centenary of the Co-operative Women's Guild ended on a high note at a rally at Westminster in December with the singing of the Guild's new song 'The Second Century' and the presentation of a new banner designed to mark the centenary.

Those attending the Rally enjoyed a performance of 'Of Whole Heart Cometh Hope', a new play with music commissioned by CRS London Region specially for the centenary. The play, presented by the Age Exchange Theatre Company, was devised and researched by Chrys Salt using word for word the memories of Guild members now in

their 70's and 80's. The show tells the history of the Guild as remembered by those involved and, with music and popular songs, proved a great success wherever it was performed. As well as the Westminster Rally, the show was also performed at over 40 other venues in London and the home counties, receiving rapturous applause wherever it went

as is indicated by this selection of comments sent in after the show:—

"It was excellent."

"Without exception all the people I have spoken to who saw the performance have been rapturous in their praise of the production."

"It was so good that some of our members who saw it in the afternoon journeyed to

the evening performance to see it again."

Earlier in the year the Hastings Branch of the Guild was greatly honoured by the town with the planting of a magnificent clock flower bed! The flower bed was in the design of a clock and was both practical and decorative, not only providing a marvellous sight, but also serving as a fully func-

ional time-piece with the familiar Co-op logo providing the eye-catching centre-piece.

In Reading, Guildswomen teamed up with members of other women's organisations to stage a fortnight of events under the umbrella 'Reading Women and Work'. The exhibition, films and meetings which made up the two weeks'

activities were the 'brain child' of Anne Hillocks, the women's worker at the Reading Centre for the Unemployed, and was the culmination of over six months' work. When Anne heard that 1983 was also the year of the Guild centenary, she was very keen to have the Guild involved. As well as pro-

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 viding material for the exhibition, the Guild, with the help of CRS, arranged for a centenary exhibition to be on display during the event. The first week's events were rounded off by a performance of 'Of Whole Heart Cometh Hope' and a meeting addressed by Jean Gaffin and Claire Turner on the history and future of the Guild.



'Age Exchange' — left to right, front, Criss Healy, Catherine Charlton, Suzanne Owens, Jessica Higgs, back Mervyn Wilson (CRS London Member Relations Officer), Jean Tassell (Stage Manager), Chrys Salt and Pam Schweitzer (Director).

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AS OVER LEAF:

## 'Of Whole Heart Cometh Hope'

**"Of Whole Heart Cometh Hope" is also the title of a book compiled and edited by Chrys Salt, Pam Schweitzer and Mervyn Wilson for the Age Exchange Theatre Company and launched at the same time as the play.**

"Of Whole Heart Cometh Hope" consists of the personal recollections by Guild members of the most active campaigning years of the Guild. The text is word for word that of the Guild members from London and the Home Counties, including past General Secretaries Kathleen Kempton and Mabel Ridealgh and 1983 Co-operative Congress President Norah Willis JP. All recall the fight of the Guild for peace, co-operation and women's rights over many decades.

The loyalty and devotion of the Guild to the Co-operative Movement is vividly portrayed, with members now in their 70's and 80's recalling how their lifelong involvement with the Co-op began when they were taken as toddlers to the Guild meetings. Again the Guild's work on peace is strikingly recalled, and the 1935 Peace Ballot, the

proud wearing of white poppies for peace, throughout the 1930's and the postwar campaigns against nuclear weapons tests are all included.

The book has received very good reviews, and Will Watkins, former director of the International Co-operative Alliance, now in his 90th year wrote:-

"It is a fascinating record of the Women's Guild in the language of the women themselves which stimulates the memory even more than the illustrations and reproductions of old advertisements."

"Of Whole Heart Cometh Hope" is available price £2.00 post free from CRS London Region, Member Relations Department, 54 Maryland Street, Stratford, London E15 1JE or CRS National Office, Member Relations Dept., 29 Dantzic Street, Manchester M4 4BA.