



Congratulations
to
Lynne Lewis,
Kirby Muxloe WI
who won the
Photography
Competition with
this colourful
entry!

The judges selected
two 'Highly
Commended' entries
which are featured
inside this issue.

Federation Chairman
Janet Kirk
janetkirk@lrfwi.org

Federation Secretary
Sarah Freeman
fedsec@lrfwi.org

Accounts Assistant
Anila Patel
finance@lrfwi.org

Web Editor
Margaret Carter
margaretcarter@lrfwi.org



Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes
incorporated in England and Wales as a Company limited by Guarantee No. 02769771 Charity Reg No. 1016 766

WI House, 135 Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5LQ

Tel: 0116 2661342 Email: wihouse@lrfwi.org

Opening hours: Mon-Thurs 9.30am—1.30pm

www.leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk or scan QR code

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Chairman's Column



Well, we managed to hold the ACM on Zoom, it went extremely well and the feedback we have had has been so positive and lovely. A big thank you to all the Board and Federation Secretary for working so hard to make it all happen. I know some of you usually unable to attend were so grateful to have the opportunity to be there. The speakers were both excellent and it all ran to time. The Board had a practice run through the week before and that helped iron out a few issues, so its true practice does make perfect (almost)!

A big thank you must go to all WIs, especially the Secretaries, I know it must seem like we are bombarding you with documents regarding the changes to the Constitution from National and the Federation all with very short time scales to be dealt with. Well done for dealing with these promptly and hopefully the legal time scales are now covered and things will quieten down a bit. All documents can be found on the NFWI website and most on our own website as well along with more information if you need to refer to them, and as always your WI Advisers are there to help you as well.

Did you see "the interview " on television or catch enough about it on social media and in the press to form an opinion? What ever your view on either side at least it has given us something else to talk about for a change from Covid.

Take care and hope we can start to meet soon. Janet

The Way Forward?

ACM, Saturday 6th March 2021

This was a well organised, successful meeting. Over 400 delegates and members attended the first ACM zoom meeting. The chat function was easy to use and the delegates votes were counted within moments. Surely there is no need to return to the days when we shouted from the floor and waved bits of paper. The Treasurer's report was clear and concise in the short term we can boost funds by buying from the bulb catalogue and Sue's wonderful quiz sheets. In the autumn fundraising events may restart. Janet Kirk, our County Chair shared her positive thoughts, there have been a few changes to the board and she thanked everyone who had helped set up the meeting.

We had two excellent speakers, Sally Illsley provided an insight into how the guide movement has evolved to match the needs and aspirations of young women today. There is a long waiting list. Christine Walkden demonstrated, through a series of interesting and entertaining anecdotes, how she challenged herself to grow as a person and become a fantastic gardener. As it was a zoom meeting I could see her face clearly and felt that she was talking to me.

Next year I hope we can meet in person as I miss the positive upbeat atmosphere, the chance to chat, to see the competition entries, hear the laughter and applause and wear a favourite outfit.

Sheila Sterynowicz, delegate for Clarendon Park WI

Membership

Meet your Membership Committee!

This committee is responsible for assisting WIs with any help they require.

Pauline Holbrook, WI Adviser

I became a WI member towards the end of 1989 after I moved to Waltham on the Wolds.

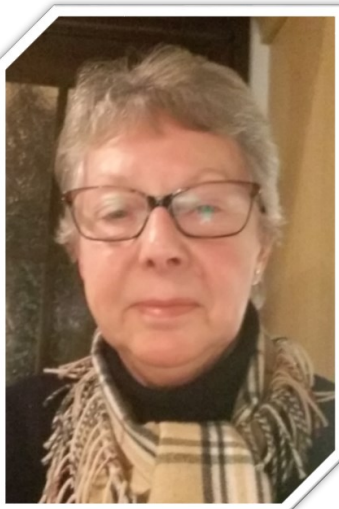
During my first few meetings I thought everything was very strict and formal, but I gradually settled into how things worked. I joined the committee a couple of years later and then became Secretary. I have also been Programme Secretary, Vice President, President and a Group Secretary.

After I retired from my job as a school secretary, I started to wonder, "What am I going to do now?" I felt I had acted in most roles in my WI but would like to do more. While I was Vice President to Joan French I often wondered why, when any member wanted to know anything the first comment was, "Ask Joan, she will know." Of course, it was then I realised she was a VCO (Voluntary County Organiser. The old title for an Adviser).

During a visit to the Royal Albert Hall as a delegate at a NFWI Annual Meeting in 2009 I spoke to the Chair of the Federation Membership committee who said would I like to go along to one of their meetings to see what they did. I did just that and attended a further two meetings and was asked if I would like to consider becoming a WI Adviser. To cut a long

story short, I began my Adviser training in October 2010 and off to Denman College I went. It was like being back at school again and was certainly an experience learning so much.

In September 2011 I became a fully- fledged WI Adviser and felt part of a very experienced committee being able to do so much more for members and the Federation. I really love visiting WI meetings and talking with everyone. I was once told by a National Federation Trainer that an Adviser does not know everything, but she knows where to look and who to ask.



Membership



National WI Newsletter

Want to keep up with what's happening in the WI? Subscribe to the monthly mailing at:

<https://www.thewi.org.uk/media-centre>

The WI's monthly newsletter includes WI stories, campaign highlights, recipes, a sneak peak of WI Life magazine and more. No fee!

Anyone can subscribe to this newsletter whether you're a member or not, so why not share the link with a friend, so they can get a taster of life in the WI.

Mandy Cutler on behalf of the Membership Committee.

Are you Zooming?

You may want to consider extending an invite to other local WIs who are not using online platforms at present, so they too can enjoy listening to speakers from across the country – it's also a good way to network and share ideas with WI members from different groups.

Maybe even an open event on Zoom? Inviting women from other local groups – craft, gym, flower, walking, sports, book clubs, etc. – could help you to recruit new members.

Technical Help

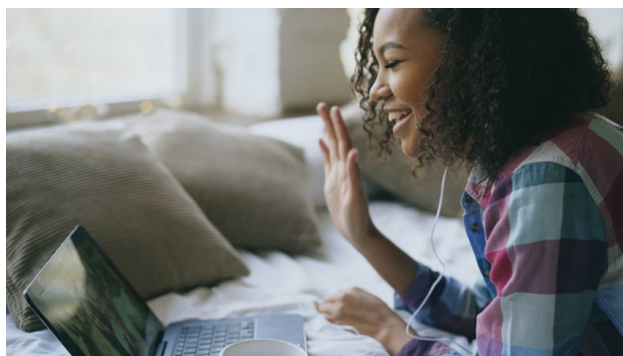
A reminder for WIs thinking of running Zoom meetings this year but haven't done so before, there is guidance on **My WI** including how to host a meeting and how to run a poll on Zoom (useful for voting on WI matters).

If you need advice or have questions about holding a virtual WI meeting, you can email pr@nfwl.org.uk

View the guidance here:

<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/guide-to-running-meetings/how-to...-host-a-virtual-meeting>

Mandy Cutler on behalf of the Membership Committee.



Federation Yearbook & Website

2021-22 Federation Yearbook

The yearbook has been released to WI Secretaries electronically rather than as a booklet this year. This enables us to distribute it and make changes more easily as well as add to our speakers list throughout the year. The yearbook is a password protected PDF file. The password must be shared separately.

WI Committees must be made aware of which members have access to the yearbook and password and why because any unauthorised sharing of the yearbook, or the information within it, constitutes a data breach in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. Under Data Protection legislation, the information included in the Yearbook must only be used for official WI purposes (WI events, speakers for your meetings, delegates, resolutions, judges for competitions, information for new members etc.) Names and contact details in the Yearbook must NOT be given to other individuals or organisations. All old yearbook copies should be destroyed rather than recycled and should not be kept for future reference.

Have you looked at the Federation website recently?

Latest News—here you will find the latest information that has been circulated by NFWI or the Federation
Federation Downloads—look here for the most commonly used forms and for event flyers.

County News—download County News directly from the website by selecting the County News heading.

<https://leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk/>

Photography Competition

We were delighted to receive over 50 entries for our Photography competition. The winning entry from Lynne Lewis, Kirby Muxloe WI is displayed on the front cover.

The quality of entries was so high that the judges picked out these photographs as 'Highly Commended'.



Patricia Baker, Quorn WI



Dianne Norwood, Whissendine WI

Public Affairs

Resolutions 2021

2021 resolutions	Selections
1 A call to increase awareness of the subtle signs of ovarian cancer	30,240
2 Stop women dying prematurely from coronary heart disease	16,285
3 Racism and discrimination	5,363
4 Now's the time to act! Protect your nature space to create wildlife-friendly communities	7,808
5 Stop the destruction of peat bogs to tackle climate change	6,616
Total selections received	66,312

The NFWI Board of Trustees has decided to put forward the top resolution. Members will vote on the resolution later in the year.

The wording of the resolution is as follows:

'Every two hours in the UK someone dies of ovarian cancer. Making sure GPs and the public know what to look for will not only ensure the early detection and treatment of this disease, but transform lives today and for generations to come. NFWI calls on WI members everywhere to help increase awareness of the subtle signs of ovarian cancer.'

We have organised a Zoom Resolution Briefing meeting on March 31st at 7pm. If you would like to join us to hear an expert presentation please let Sarah, our Federation Secretary know by emailing wihouse@lrfwi.org.

Sue Mottram

Resolutions Adviser

Annual Council Meeting & Online Events

At BOT, we were keen to bring you a range of free events during the first half of 2021 and set ourselves, the challenge of hosting a virtual events calendar as we moved into the 3rd lockdown. I hope you will agree that the events are proving to be a real success with between 50 and 100+ Federation members attending each event.

We kicked off with our very own Gail Wooliscroft demonstrating a range of decadent desserts, which I know all on the call, wished they could taste and try.

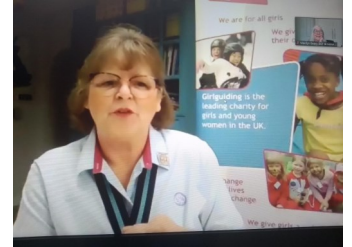
Our evening of water colours with the artist Quirky Bird saw over 50 Federation members drawing, painting and enjoying being creative. My own efforts were less artistic and more creative, but I enjoyed losing myself in the painting.

It was Cocktails galore with an evening of Mojitos and Cosmopolitans led by the Cocktail Shaker Boys for over 55 members, lots of members were making their cocktails and enjoying them during the evening.

Polly Morgans' British Flowers talk and demonstration was a really popular night with over 70 members on the call. Polly shared her skills of both the growing and arranging of British cut flowers, with lots of hints and tips. Many members went off to get planting in earnest.



March brought us the Federation Annual Council Meeting, which we hosted online for the first time, with over 430 members in attendance. The event was a huge success with our members commenting that it was an interesting and enjoyable meeting, efficiently run with the on screen voting process easy to follow. Though there were members who couldn't access the meeting due to the technology there were other members who were able to attend who would have found the usual meeting a struggle. We enjoyed talks from Sally Illsley, Girlguiding UK and horticulturalist Christine Walkden both described by members as educating and inspiring.



Our Resolutions evening on 31 March will provide the opportunity to hear from a speaker representing Target Ovarian Cancer linked to the results of the recent Resolutions voting keeping members actively involved in the future campaigns of the WI.

Ghosts of Hampton Court on 20 April is proving popular so we have increased capacity to enable as many members as possible to attend.

On 12 May we will enjoy a talk from Jo Moseley: From crying in supermarkets to being the 1st woman to paddleboard 162 miles coast to coast! To book a free place at one of our online events please email wihouse@lrfwi.org.

Heather Roythorne - Finch, BOT

ACM Competitions arranged by the Food & Flowers Committee



The José Smart Award 2021 Winner

Pat Sills, Kirby Muxloe WI



Adult Cookery Competition 2021 Winner

Aileen Ward, Caldecott WI



Children's Cookery Competition 2021 Age 8+ Winner

Faith Age 10 entered by Kibworth & Smeeton WI



Children's Cookery Competition 2021 Age 7 & under Winner

Jonah Age 6 entered by Leicester Ladies WI

I hope by now that, if you planted the Spring Bulb Lasagne that featured in the October County News, it is in flower – we'd love to see your photos. Apparently now is the time to plant a Summer Lasagne – the possibilities are almost endless but dahlias, gladioli and lillies will create a very pretty show.

I also hope that you're having more success than me with your rhubarb. The crowns in my garden are being very slow to come to life, and the two plants under forcers seem to have gone back to sleep! However, I live in hope that I'll be able to try these two recipes before too long, though whether I can keep Jane's cake for 24 hours before eating it remains to be seen. Jane is sharing her recipe for Rhubarb and Ginger Crumble Cake, and Gail's Rhubarb and Custard cake takes me back to my childhood. Enjoy.

RHUBARB AND GINGER CRUMBLE CAKE

1lb (450g) Rhubarb clean and cut into one inch long pieces
Topping
4oz (100g) Self Raising Flour
½ tsp Cinnamon
3oz (75g) Dark Brown Sugar
3oz (75g) Butter
Few pieces of finely chopped Crystallised Ginger (optional)

Base
6oz (175g) Self Raising Flour
¼ tsp Baking Powder
1tsp Cinnamon
4oz (100g) Butter
4oz (100g) Dark Brown Sugar
2 large Eggs (beaten)
½ tsp Vanilla Extract
Few pieces of Crystallised Ginger finely chopped
1-2 tbsps Milk

Grease and line with greaseproof or parchment two 1lb loaf tins or a 9"/23cm square tin. Oven at 180c/170c fan/Gas mark 4.

Topping

Rub the butter into the flour and then add the sugar, cinnamon and finely chopped ginger if using and set aside.

For the Base

Sift together the Flour, Baking Powder and cinnamon.

Cream together the butter and sugar until light and soft.

Add eggs and vanilla extract a little at a time, adding a little flour with the last bit of egg.

Fold in the flour, then the ginger and the milk a little at a time till a dropping consistency is achieved.

Spoon this mixture into tin or tins.

Cover the mixture with rhubarb.

Sprinkle Crumble topping over the top of the rhubarb.

Put in oven and bake for 1 hour for square tin or 50 minutes for loaf tins.

The cake is best served 24 hours after making.



RHUBARB AND CUSTARD CAKE

Serves 16

Ingredients

For the roasted rhubarb:

400g Rhubarb

50g caster sugar

For the cake:

250g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing

150g ready-made custard (not the chilled kind; Ambrosia or similar)

250g self-raising flour

1/2 tsp baking powder

4 large eggs

1 tsp vanilla extract

250g golden caster sugar

Icing sugar for dusting

Method for Roasted Rhubarb

Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Rinse 400g rhubarb and shake off excess water. Trim the ends, then cut into little-finger-size pieces. Put in a shallow dish or baking tray, tip over 50g caster sugar, toss together, then shuffle rhubarb so it's in a single layer. Cover with foil, then roast for 15 mins. Remove foil. Give everything a little shake, roast for 5 mins more until tender and the juices are syrupy.

Method for the Cake

Make the rhubarb first, carefully draining off the juices before you let it cool. Butter and line a 23cm loose-bottomed or springform cake tin. Heat oven to 180C/fan 160C/gas 4.

Reserve 3 tbsps. of the custard in a bowl. Beat the rest of the custard together with the butter, flour, baking powder, eggs, vanilla and sugar until creamy and smooth. Spoon one-third of the mix into the tin, add some of the rhubarb, then dot with one-third more cake mix and spread it out as well as you can. Top with some more rhubarb, then spoon over the remaining cake mix, leaving it in rough mounds and dips rather than being too neat about it. Scatter the rest of the rhubarb over the batter, then dot the remaining custard over. Bake for 40 mins until risen and golden, then cover with foil and bake for 15-20 mins more. It's ready when a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Cool in the tin, then dredge with icing sugar when cool.

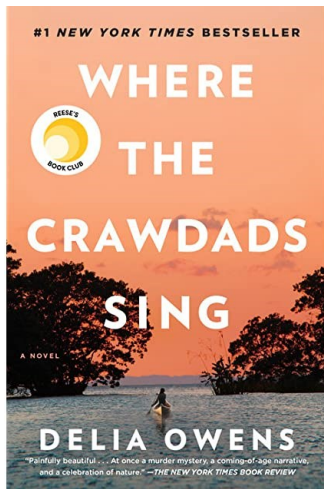
This cake is great with a cup of tea but also goes well with some prosecco or fizzy water with a splash of the rhubarb juices in it



Book Reviews

Below are the reviews of the 'keep in the bookcase' and 'put in the bin' from Loddington's 2020 Rural readers selection of books. The reports are written by Kate Mosley.

Bookcase:



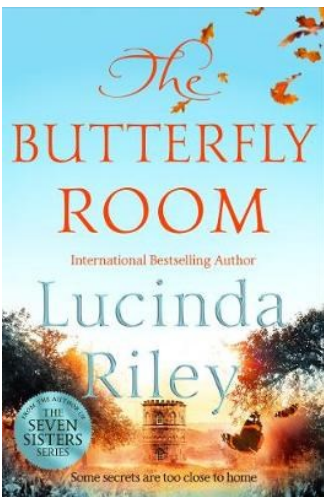
We met to discuss **'Where the Crawdads Sing' by Delia Owens**. Following the Tony Hawks effort (totally different), we talked about the Owens book - everyone loved it. Published Aug 14 2018 in America, the author (who is American) is a retired wildlife biologist and this is her debut novel. By September of that year it was selected by Reece Witherspoon for her book club, and she influenced it's translation into a film, which is still in the early stages of development. The book is a New York Times bestseller. It involves two timelines that intertwine and combines a mystery (murder?) - legal drama - coming-of-age and love story, something for everyone? The author has a poetic writing style - lyrical and rhythmic and with her masterly writing and striking imagery, she draws us into this story. Though heartbreaking at times, we all agreed that the book is a celebration of the natural world, breathtaking and beautiful descriptions convey the desolate marshlands of the North Carolina coast.

These descriptions, one member said, were the result of being passionate about this subject, and pointed out that all successful novels, that we have read, tend to have an author who enthuses and is knowledgeable about the book's subject matter. Another member asked, "How does it compare with other novels that we rate highly?" and suggested that we vote for our favourites, possibly every year.

An abandoned child, isolated and lonely, we acknowledged that she had little help when growing up, but Mother Nature protected and taught her. We also noted that Kya is intelligent, resourceful, and resilient, determined to survive, she experiences love, loss, loneliness, desperation and prejudice. She learns that love can be tender, but has some bad experiences in the name of 'love'. Though naive and unworldly, Kya always finds practical solutions to her problems (many from observations of the natural world).

As some had not read the book, we did not want to discuss it further and disclose any spoilers!

Bin:



The Butterfly Room by Lucinda Riley

We came away with the impression that, despite criticisms, most people found the book an undemanding and easy read - perfect summer/holiday escapism, and at 600+ pages it can be described as a huge family saga.

It was some members' first experience of this author, and they were not fans, it was noted that her usual writing style is different and that some had enjoyed her other offerings.

The book centres around the life of Posy and her relationship with Admiral House (the family home) in Southwold/Suffolk. We seemed to agree that both of her sons had questionable and unnecessarily prolonged stories. Everyone appeared to have secrets, they were predictable and reliant upon people not talking to each other, we seemed to agree on this. The big secret (revealed at the end) was not second-guessed by anyone. Sometimes people and events seemed too convenient, we found many things predictable, sugary and cosy.

All the men were described as handsome, and all the women 'drop-dead' gorgeous! Many agreed that Posy was too perfect at everything, and that she thought all problems could be solved with tea (mostly something stronger!) and one of her homemade cakes (baked in the Aga!) We agreed that many things were a bit 'far-fetched' and unbelievable - despite living at Admiral House most of her life, Posy never went into the folly again, or discovered the truth about her father. The garden that she supposedly created on her own is also suspect.

"Do people really say, "dear boy/girl" or "darling boy/girl" these days?" Phrases that bothered some readers, but if you're 70 and brought up in the environment Posy was - you might do.

Members agreed that the book was packed with a lot of subject matter, "it's as though she had a list of things that had to be included."

Bad things happen, but are softly dealt with (domestic violence in particular). The title of the book was questioned. The butterfly room (folly) only appears at the beginning and briefly at the end, so is the title inappropriate? One member suggested that perhaps the title is symbolic - that however carefree and innocent you may be, life can be cruel.

So perhaps the book is deep and not as superficial as it first appears?



Federation Online Events Programme

L&RFWI have put together an exciting programme of online events for our members to enjoy over the next few months. **The events are FREE to members of WIs across the Federation.** A great opportunity to see WI members from around the Federation and enjoy a range of speakers and topics.



Tuesday 20 April 7pm

The Ghosts of Hampton Court with guide lecturer, Sarah Slater

A talk by Hampton Court Palace Guide Lecturer about experiences working with the ghosts at Hampton Court Palace, the history, stories and sightings.

Wednesday 12 May 7pm

Jo Moseley: From crying in supermarkets to being the 1st woman to paddleboard 162 miles coast to coast!

In August 2019, Jo became the first woman to SUP (stand up paddleboard) coast to coast 162 miles along the Leeds Liverpool Canal, picking up litter, fundraising and raising awareness of the problems of single use plastic. She describes herself as a beach cleaner, joy encourager & midlife adventurer.



To book your place on each event, simply email WI House (wihouse@lrfwi.org) with

* **Your name** * **Name of your WI** * **Title of the event** * **Email address for the Zoom link to be sent to**

Bookings will close at 12pm the day before each event. All online events are held on Zoom, the link for each event being emailed to you directly. Full details of how to access the Zoom event will be provided in the booking confirmation email, along with the event link and entry time.

These events may be recorded and photographed, we will presume permission unless we are otherwise informed.

LRFWI Monthly Draw

**Re-launches on 1 April 2021.
ANNUAL COST - JUST £10.00**

Prize money will be 50% of applications received with a minimum each month of

1st Prize £25.00 2nd Prize £15.00 3rd Prize £10.00

In June and December, we would hope to offer extra prize money but this is dependent on the number of applications.

Tickets can be bought by individuals or groups of members, but not by WIs.

Members can join by writing to WI House, enclosing a cheque for £10 made payable to 'L&RFWI'.

We need sell a minimum of 60 tickets to cover the monthly prizes. If fewer applications are received we will cancel the draw and refund ticket money paid.

Lady Denman Cup Competition 2021 *'Let me show you what a woman can do!'*

Using no more than 500 words, WI members are invited to submit a piece of writing, fact or fiction, in any style (story, poem etc.) based on the painting by Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self Portrait as Saint Catherine of Alexandria*.

Entrants must submit 4 copies of their entry to the Federation Secretary by email/post by **Friday 30 July 21**.

An entrance fee of £10 applies to entries chosen to be forwarded to NFWI. This will be requested once the competition has been judged.

Prizes: 1st prize, £75 book tokens; 2nd prize, £50 book tokens and 3rd prize, £30 book tokens. The winner/winning Federation will be presented with the Lady Denman Cup.

All forms can be downloaded from My WI or be obtained through your WI Secretary.

Huxley Cup 2021—Revised Schedule

WIs are invited to design a planted area that could be recreated within their local community. The planted area can be designed for any season, themed to reflect the spirit of the WI, local community, or which tells a special story.

Entries must be submitted on behalf of the WI and not as an individual. Members are encouraged to work together to compose a design which will then be submitted under the name of the WI.

WIs must submit their finished design directly to the NFWI for judging. Deadline for entries is **FRIDAY 27 AUGUST 2021**. Each entry must be accompanied by a WI Entry Form.

Cost of entering is £10 per WI. An invoice will be sent after the closing date.

All forms can be downloaded from My WI or be obtained through your WI Secretary.

Congratulations to **Sylvia Cole, Anstey WI** for winning the Edith Buckley Trophy Competition.

“Lockdown”

In the words of the American poet Theodore Roethke:

“In a dark time, the eye begins to see”

2020 proved to be a strange and challenging year for people in Britain and those across the world. Daily in the media we see how life across the planet has had to change. Opportunities have been taken away, yet new doors have opened. People have been isolated and at the same time community spirit has strengthened.

Our competition this year was to use any poetic form to capture the changes and challenges of lockdown in Leicestershire, in your village or within yourself.

We hope you enjoy Sylvia’s winning entry.

Excitement mounts, as days get longer.
Lambs are born; buds grow stronger.
Sunlight’s weak rays light up our hearts.
Then, without warning, Covid starts!

At first, it seemed a trivial thing.
Then all our hopes were dashed.
Jobs, families, schools, then even lives,
All, bit by bit, were smashed!

No chance to welcome New-borns.
No chance to say Goodbye.
No cosy meals or friendly walks.
Sometimes we had to cry.

As days stretched into months,
Our homes became our cells.

Yet from this mire, a new day dawned,
Our neighbours played their part.
Comforting, shopping, sharing love;
Which came straight from the heart.

Each little gift, each friendly smile,
Has meant so much to those,
Who, until then, had lived alone,
In silence with their woes.

This dreadful virus, come what may,
Will never screen from view,
These massive acts of kindness, shown,
To her, and him, by you!

Around the Counties

Ullesthorpe

Ullesthorpe WI had their first Zoom speaker this month. Jack Bartlett from Mira Technology at Hinckley gave a very interesting insight into the research being undertaken there. It is a global centre for developing skills in key areas of automotive technology.

It opened in 2018 and is a joint collaboration between local Universities and Horiba Mira. Many other companies including Jaguar Land Rover, Bosch and Toyota are on site.

Jack told us about the developments being made with Autonomous Cars. It is at the forefront of new technology in all vehicles used in many areas including war zones.

There is so much happening there, the facilities were used to acclimatise the group of Walking Wounded who attempted the trek to the South Pole with Prince Harry.

There were many questions especially about electric cars and the problems surrounding them. We hope to visit the site as soon as lockdown restrictions are lifted.

We are looking forward to more zoom talks in the next months. We have had quizzes and chats on Zoom and members have made use of the excellent Federation talks and Denman at Home courses.



Stoke Golding

We enjoyed our monthly meeting on Zoom this month. Our speaker was Eddie Smallwood talking about The Atherstone Hatting industry, and the living arrangements of the hatting families.

The hatting industry started in the 17th century, during the Tudor dynasty, Elizabeth I passed a law stating that all men had to wear a hat and Atherstone was supplying hats around the world to anyone from slaves to nobility. There was at one time 12 different factories in Atherstone, and the last one closed in 1999.

Atherstone has a great legacy and its heritage is important in the hatting industry. In order to achieve this status it required enormous hard work from its workers, and the living conditions they endured were dreadful. Many of the workers lived in a total of 58 yards which contained 415 different houses with a total number of adults and children amounting to 1,840, of which 700 were children. In one yard alone were 22 houses containing 84 adults and 39 children. This is three and a half times more crowded than the most overcrowded part of Birmingham. When work was slow, the workers would work in the local mines or quarry to make ends meet.

The wall around the Merivale estate from the main gate and along the road, was built by the women and children with stones quarried by the men.

Lots of commonly used words come from the industry, doff your cap, I take my hat off to you, A Hat Trick, Black as your hat, Cap in hand, At the drop of a hat, Eat my Hat. Keep it under your hat (refers to archers keeping their arrows under their hat, to keep them dry).

Cossington

Cossington were delighted to welcome three members from Barkby and Beeby WI to our February Zoom meeting to hear Mark Temple's talk about the well known English poet, writer and broadcaster John Betjeman. Mark's talk titled 'The Life and Rhymes of John Betjeman' was interspersed with video clips and readings. John Betjeman was also a founder member of the Victorian Society and was instrumental in the redevelopment of London's St Pancras Station, ensuring that many of the features we see there today were retained.



In recognition of this achievement an evocative statue of him was placed at platform level looking up at the splendid Victorian wrought iron roof.

Inspired by what she had learned on a 'Denman at Home' decluttering course, Cossington member Pauline Fitchett, an avid crafter, reduced her spare stock of haberdashery items and made it available to Cossington Crafters for a charity donation.

Anstey

Anstey WI included Sue Lobb's bumper Christmas quiz in their Christmas goody bags, and Pauline Annis won the prize of two tea-light holders. February's meeting took place on Zoom. Member Sheryl Bramley demonstrated how to make a rose from marzipan, fondant icing or even clay. Talented Sheryl made it look very easy, but yours truly was so ashamed of her effort she squashed it. Several other members did far better, and proudly shared photos of their efforts on WhatsApp. It had been a very enjoyable meeting, and we are very grateful to Sheryl for doing it.



Stoney Stanton

Our members would probably have been at Badgers Mount to celebrate, but there we go in these difficult times, you do your best. All members received a bag, delivered individually to their door by Committee members. The bags contained a large piece of cake, enough for 2 or a very hungry 1; a tea bag (naturally), serviette; together with a book mark designed by one of our members; also details of the arrangements for subscriptions for 2021 and a Quiz.



Barrow Upon Soar



Before Christmas when we were allowed to, six of our members met to add a plaque to our recently planted, Cotoneaster tree on our village's Millenium Park to commemorate our 70th Birthday.

In the Autumn we delivered 'Re-usable' Goody Bags to all of our members, inside amongst other things there were sweet treats, a quiz, face mask, hand wash & some bulbs. We asked the members to then decorate the shopping bag the items came in.

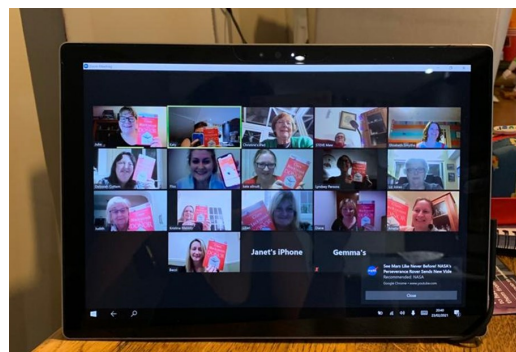


We held our first zoom meeting in December and in February we had our first zoom speaker - local lady Annette Willet talking about her new venture, the Village Vegan. Annette was hospitalised with pneumonia in 2019. She found the Indian vegan option on offer, cooked by chefs at the Leicester Royal Infirmary, the only food she enjoyed, which inspired her to change to a vegan diet. She began to experiment with recipes, with the intention of selling her homemade soup. Sorting out the legal side of the business, she posted leaflets around the area and gave samples of her soup to local establishments to try, which was a great success. She now has a Facebook page - Village Vegan Charnwood, which notifies her followers of the upcoming soup for the week, which can be delivered or picked up. Some of the selection of soups are Roast Cauli soup, Traditional Leek & Potato, Roasted Tomato & Red Lentil & Broccoli with a Golden Cashew Nut Base. By roasting the vegetables, the flavour is not lost. All stock is gluten free and any allergies must be considered when ordering. She plans to develop a selection of salads in the summer and is hoping to grow her own vegetables.

On Shrove Tuesday our President, Tilly delivered some Scotch Pancakes to all our members. We continue to send out our monthly newsletter so that we can keep in touch with everyone in our WI, not just those with the internet.

Sileby

Sileby WI held a one off Book club for their February meeting. Each member who wanted to take part, received a copy of 'The Donor' by Clare Mackintosh in the post a few weeks prior to the meeting. We then 'met' on Zoom and had a fun and interesting meeting discussing the book.



Groby

What a start to the New Year! There has been the dreadful increase in Covid cases and death rates and the closure of our schools yet again. The recent floods, snow and ice brought yet more misery to many people but I do believe there is hope on the horizon!

Some of you will have already had your first Covid vaccination and it is so encouraging that the numbers being vaccinated are increasing at such a rate, leading us to hope that at some point life may be able to return to some sort of normality; plans that were made back in 2019 may finally happen in some form in 2021. Daffodils, snowdrops and crocuses appearing in the garden are providing much needed colour and joy to our lives.

Last month saw us hold our first Zoom meeting with an external speaker. Sarah Lott from the Memory Book (www.memorybook.co.uk) spoke to us about the need to record our memories and life stories. So many of us these days take photographs with our cameras and phones and store them digitally. This seems such a good idea at the time as it is so easy, but the problem arises that these are just stored and not looked at, and more importantly, no record is maintained of who the individuals are or even where some of the locations were. Historically, we took photographs sparingly, as film was expensive, and we spent ages sticking them into albums recording who everyone was, where the photograph was taken and the year. A lot of this no longer happens so a lot of this information is lost. Sarah gave us strategies to approach recording our memories by using, for example, mind maps. Members had 'virtually brought along' a photograph of themselves when young together with an item that meant a lot to them and we had a discussion about why the item was memorable. It was a fascinating evening and the good news is that some members have been inspired to start recording their memories.

As much as many may dislike Zoom the biggest advantage is that we now have open to us a huge range of additional speakers. Sarah Lott spoke to us from her home in Leatherhead, Surrey and our February speaker is from Chelmsford, Essex.

Our February meeting is entitled 'Burlesque, Me and the WI aka How Burlesque saved my life'. We will be welcoming Lindsey Barrell (herself a WI President), also known as Ms Cherry Bombe who will talk to us about how she discovered Burlesque followed by the WI and how she brought the two worlds together. Lindsey will show us some of her costumes and even give us a demonstration. So, ladies of the WI, get those feather boas at the ready and be prepared to wiggle those bits for what we hope will be an entertaining evening.

Theatre Trips

Other news is that our very own Entertainments' Red Coat, Diane is still trying to pack our diaries with future theatre trips, tricky in the current climate. So far, we have tickets provisionally booked for:

- Everybody's Talking about Jamie
- The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe
- Wizard of Oz

As ever, the WI continues to support its members and if you fancy joining us when we eventually are able meet again, you will be very welcome.

Keep safe everyone!

Broughton Astley

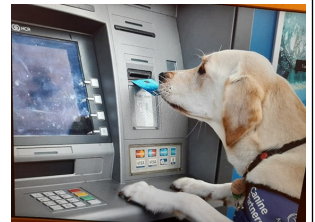
Wendy Martin paid a return visit to Broughton Astley to tell us about her extensive "Adventures in Asia". She gave us several illustrated presentations starting in Singapore, which was developed into a successful free trading port by Sir Stamford Raffles and is full of varied architecture and sculptures detailing its history. She had also paid a more sobering visit to the infamous Changi prison, which had housed many British and Commonwealth soldiers during the Japanese invasion. She has visited Borneo several times, once to climb Mount Kinabalu and more recently to explore the biggest caves in the world full of stalagmites, stalactites and bats! What we were all waiting for was her visit to the orangutan rehabilitation centre at Sepilok, where these entrancing creatures swing around in nearby trees and climb ropes, all having been rescued and cared for before being released back to the wild. Also fascinating was the sanctuary for Bornean Sunbears, which are rescued from captivity where they are milked for their bile. Her presentation finished back in Singapore with a video of the famous Son et Lumiere extravaganza from The Gardens in the Bay. A truly memorable evening.

Several of our members have zoomed into the free Federation presentations. Firstly the Quirkybird water colour Paint-Along, which they all found very successful and would like to do more. Then Polly Morgans' The Great British Flower Revival talk and flower arranging demonstration enthused us all to grow more flowers for cutting – and failing that to "Buy British" wherever possible.

We continue to keep in touch with all our members and to hold our meetings on Zoom for the time being but can't wait to getting back to meeting in person. Fingers crossed that with the roll out of vaccinations it will not be too much longer now

Leire

At our last meeting we welcomed Nick Sydenham from the charity, Canine partners founded in 1990 and based in NW Leicestershire. The charity trains assistance dogs for people who are wheelchair users due to physical disabilities. Nick provided a heart-warming online presentation of photos and videos of the 2 year journey through their training and the ways in which they help. There are 430 dogs mainly Labradors and retrievers across the UK helping with tasks such as fetching items including food from the fridge, opening doors, assisting with dressing and laundry and even getting cash from the ATM and making contactless payments in the supermarket!



The dogs clearly enjoy their job as seen from their wagging tails and enthusiasm. Once the dogs come to the end of their working life at around 8-12 years, they are often placed with members of the client's family to enjoy life as a family pet. As with all charities, Canine Partners have been significantly impacted by Covid.



However, they are looking forward to resuming the many public fun events once permitted and Nick spoke about the support that people can offer either financially or by volunteering. More information can be found on their website: caninepartners.org.uk and on social media.

In keeping with this theme our monthly competition was a photo of an animal taken by our members. The winner was Stephanie with a picture of her dog who isn't keen on the snow!

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Public Affairs

It's Spring again, the bulbs are beautiful and for many the garden beckons. Sue Kirk, WI member, is really ahead with seedlings sprouting in her conservatory and I know others have already sown bean seeds outside.

For me composting is the joy. Apart from the massive benefits of compost for enriching the soil in the garden it also has huge benefits for the planet.

Composting organic waste reduces landfill and reduces emissions and the financial cost incurred in processing it. From the Leicestershire CC website I discovered that approximately 35% to 40% of everything thrown into a domestic bin is food waste, and disposing of it in landfill sites costs the County Council in excess of £4.5 million each year not including collection costs.

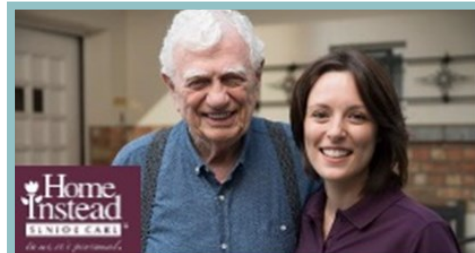
This organic waste in landfill produces greenhouse gases (primarily methane) which can escape the landfill and accumulate in the atmosphere contributing to global warming.

With a compost bin and a few worms the composting of vegetable waste, weeds, grass, and cardboard can begin. There's lots of information

online. Leicestershire CC website, waste and recycling is a super site and a bin can be ordered from there. There are lots of different sizes of wormeries on the market and I've found one just right for a granddaughter's birthday. Another generation of composters for the planet.

Happy gardening.

Jenny Berry
Public Affairs & International



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