



## **FAREWELL TO DENMAN?**

### **THE JEWEL IN THE WI'S CROWN.**

A special supplement in this month's County News explores the reasons for the proposed sale and an alternative view of how Denman could be used as the NFWI headquarters.

## Denman - An alternative proposal

I first went on a Denman course in May 1976. My children were five and two years old and the trip was only possible because a good WI friend had the youngest to stay. The weather was beautiful and, as I walked across the lawn to the herb garden, I couldn't believe the peace and the silence. It took a moment to realise that I could relax; that quiet wasn't a sign of trouble looming! Three days of solid undistracted work followed with friendly company and no household chores other than putting clean sheets on my bed for the next student.

By December 2019 I had clocked up my 90<sup>th</sup> course. Over those 44 years the College grew in size and its accommodation was upgraded but the basic element of highly skilled and enthusiastic tutors was there from the beginning. My courses have ranged from car maintenance to embroidery; choral singing to rambling the Thames, and picture framing to patchwork but they have barely touched on all Denman had to offer. Denman for me was always first and foremost about education and women being able to make the most of their talents. As a Denman Host I have seen how much other students have enjoyed taking advantage of the wide range of courses available.

Now it seems that I shall never see Denman again. NFWI has decided in short order that it will wash its hands of the responsibility for this unique establishment which has met so well the core aims of the WI. A place where women could go alone but still feel safe amid friends. A place where women expanded their minds and their skills and then brought the results back to their own WI and federation. Denman Online has been a wonderful expansion of the College courses but it is not a substitute for the close interaction of tutor and student.

The decision to consider closing the college looks like a fait accompli. The consultation is with staff, not with Federations or with WIs. Is this rapid decision because a strong movement to Save Denman developed very quickly when in 2012 it was proposed to sell the main house and some or all of the surrounding grounds and building? It looks as if Covid19 has given the NFWI Trustees an excuse to get rid of an asset that some of them seem to have seen as an encumbrance for years.

Why is NFWI so hung up on keeping a London office? With increased home working and many large companies moving out of London – what is the argument for staying there? Possible loss of staff? There is always natural staff turnover, and a phased move would give time for people to move with the organisation. Lobbying? In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with the rise of technology the world is changing. Consolidation on the Denman site would just need some imagination plus some of the funds which could be generated from selling the valuable London property. In fact Covid19 makes the argument for moving even stronger. From a single site, the Trustees could manage both the business of the WI and an enhanced Denman while also having the facilities of the college available for NFWI training and other events.

**Ruth Fenney** Glenfield WI

### **A letter Ruth sent in November 2012 to Ruth Bond the then National Chairman on the future of Denman College**

I read your letter in WI Life with interest and was glad to see that the NFWI Board is committed to keeping Denman College open. I believe that far more than 2% of members benefit from the work of the College because knowledge and skills learned at Denman are cascaded to other members, as they have been since the College was founded. I hope that the immediate future will see the College pulling back from the brink so that it can continue in its present form.

However, my main reason for writing is to respond to points 2 and 3 of your letter, particularly with regard to the long term planning of NFWI's future.

You state that the Denman campus is not suitable for the accommodation of large numbers of staff. However, this position surely ought to be revisited in the light of your suggestion that the College could manage to continue even if the Main House were to be sold. If, instead, the rooms on the upper 2 floors of the House were converted to office use this would surely provide enough space for all of NFWI's staff and activities, while enabling the ground floor facilities to remain in College use. It could be argued that this would be a far more efficient use of the very large rooms on the first floor, nice though they are for members to stay in, and it would share the cost of the maintenance of the building between the two uses, thus reducing its impact on the College budget. It would avoid the need to build expensive replacement facilities for the use of the College, while the loss of the 20+ beds in the House could be partially offset by converting or redeveloping the NFWI Unit to residential use.

The Board's other reasons for rejecting a move from London to Denman, relating to staff retention and current workload, would not be issues if the move was seen as a long term project and included in a definite plan of work to happen, say, in five years time. Personally, I feel that the time has come to concentrate all of the NFWI administration and training activities on one site outside London, as many other national organisations are doing, and I know that I am not alone in wishing this. Denman has the space and it has excellent public transport links, particularly to London. This was one of the reasons that the location was chosen when Denman was acquired. The capital that would be released by the sale of Kings Rd could then be invested to support NFWI activities.

I trust that the Board will look again at the best use of the Denman campus site, which members have put so much effort into buying and maintaining over the years, and ensure that the WI are able to keep the whole site for the benefit of future generations.

Yours sincerely

**Ruth Fenney**



104 New Kings Road London.

The present offices of the NFWI.

I have been to a number of meetings here as a member of the National Public Affairs committee. Getting there is a lengthy business. A morning meeting entails travel in the rush hour and a very expensive train fare plus a tube journey to West London.

For many committee members Denman would be far more accessible and for staff a great place to work. If the Trustees are prepared to close the college anyway then there would be plenty of buildings already there which could be adapted for office use.

The National Farmers Union successfully moved from London to Warwickshire in 2005 to be, as they said, 'culturally closer to its members and to provide a convenient drop in centre for NFU members and colleagues from regional offices.'

Food for thought - if it's not too late.

**Jane Harris**

### **National Federation reasons given for selling Denman**

( see message to WI secretaries and on the website for full article)

#### **Who made the decision and when was it made?**

Since March 2020 and the first week of lockdown, the NFWI Board of Trustees have been carefully examining the financial position of Denman and considering all possible options. In May and June 2020 the staff team and Board of Trustees worked hard to identify all the options available to Denman College with a view of maintaining some level of operations from July onwards. However, without sufficient numbers of participants, visitors and guests it was not possible to find a financially viable option. As such we have been left with no choice but to recommend formal closure.

#### **Why can't NFWI support Denman for longer?**

The college is a separate charitable entity and to be successful it at least must break even. NFWI subsidies to Denman are generated by membership fees and therefore have at some point to be paid back. The debt would be very difficult for Denman to manage and would continue to leave it with no reserves.

#### **Does NFWI have the permission to sell Denman and will members have a say?**

NFWI is following the advice of the Charity Commission and the NFWI solicitor. The membership will be consulted and given time to make their representations.

#### **What will happen to the proceeds of the sale?**

Any proceeds will be used for educational purposes.

#### **What happens to the funds in the 'Save Denman' fund?**

Advice is being sought from the solicitors, and information will be updated on the My WI website.

#### **Why can't you close the London office and move all London staff to Denman?**

We have always made it very clear to members that a relocation of NFWI London staff to Denman is not viable. Whilst the College was open there was insufficient space to house the staff from London office. In this scenario the only option would have been to build another office on the site or close some of the college facilities to accommodate the staff. In the former scenario this building project would have been costly and challenging to accommodate on site (with sufficient funds required prior to sale of 104) and in the latter scenario the impact of the lost revenue would have further exacerbated Denman's financial challenges. In addition to the financial and practical challenges of moving the headquarters to Denman, whilst also operating a fully-functioning College, a move of this significance would have required staff consultation and would in all likelihood have meant that we would have lost many highly valued staff who could not afford to commute to Oxfordshire.





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**Keep in Touch**

with the latest news of federation events, courses and activities.

**Via the website:**

leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk/

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just search for Leicestershire and Rutland WIs



**Use your phone to**  
Scan this QR to access the website.



We were all hoping we would be able to arrange events for you to meet up and enjoy by now, but it's not going to happen yet. We are all having to be patient and be a little more inventive about how we communicate with each other. Everyone's health and wellbeing is more important than rushing back to face to face meetings and members becoming unwell through our impatience. Lots of WIs have enjoyed socially distanced walks, picnics outside or small groups meeting in gardens. Meetings "in a bag" have also been popular as have online or Zoom meetings and many of you have had one. I do hope that whatever you have been able to do you are all managing to keep in touch.

I know some of you will have not found online things possible and that is completely understandable. I am sure you have telephoned members or put newsletters or notes through doors. We all have to work together and get any information out to as many members as we can. Annual meetings will be interesting to arrange this Autumn and we will keep you updated with information from NFWI about holding them or you can find it yourself on the NFWI website.

We have had a Summer of usual British weather - all sorts but in the wrong months, but I hope you have been able to enjoy some down time. Many of you have had to go a long time not seeing family and friends and it is so good when we are able to get together and meet up after time apart.

Having a few days away on Exmoor showed me how the tourist industry can adapt and change just as WIs will have to. Thing like the problems Coronavirus has thrown at us really make us appreciate what we have and how lucky we are. I am sure WIs have been through difficult times before and will again. We will survive ladies and thrive in the future just slightly different to what we know. You will see the pages about Denman closing and how sad we are, if you have any views you would like to share please send them to Jane the County News Editor or WI House and share them with everyone. Hope to see you as soon as it is safe.

**Janet**



**WE NEED YOU.**

Would you like to take a more active role in running our Federation? Have you thought about becoming a Trustee of the Federation and becoming more involved in making decisions?

We are a lively bunch who meet up to twelve times a year. Meetings are not all held in the day some are evening or on a Saturday so that we are open to more members.

We are responsible for running the Federation and its finances, maintaining WI House for the membership and overseeing the events that the Sub Committees put on for our members.

We are bound by Charity Commission law but other than that the only qualification you need is to be a paid up member of a WI in our Federation and lots of enthusiasm. It is a two year position with the opportunity to represent the Board by visiting WIs and other organisations and events held through the year.

If you would like to be part of this please fill in a nomination form that will be with your WI now. You can also find more information on the NFWI website - MYWI-Federation roles, or speak to any current member of the Board. We would welcome some new faces and ideas to our meetings.

**Janet Kirk**

**Membership**

Every WI will now have received the information from NFWI that annual subscriptions will now run from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. Already WIs have had meetings and social events using platforms such as Zoom and WhatsApp. We need to think outside the box. Each WI Adviser will be contacting 19 WIs to offer support. Anyone who would be interested in having a tutorial for Zoom our Adviser Mandy Cutler has offered to guide you through the setting up process. Her contact details are; mandycutler@lrfwi.org or by telephone 01455 251809. **Joy Hoult** Membership Chairman

## British Pub Names

The sign outside your local can reveal more about its history than you would think.

**RED LION:** The most popular pub name was originally the emblem of John of Gaunt, the most powerful man in England in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. James I ordered a red lion sign to be displayed in all public places.



THE FLYING HORSE

**THE HOLE IN THE WALL:** Drinks were handed to waiting coachmen through a hole in the wall.

**MORTAR & PESTLE:** Signified that the landlord was guaranteed to brew the ale himself.

**FLYING HORSE:** Stagecoaches were known as flying machines and their horses as flying horses.

**THE BULL:** Ancient sign with links to the seal attached to a Pope's edict known as the Papal Bull.

**BUSH:** Used by the Romans to indicate a wine shop.

**CHURCH INN:** Coffins were deposited at a church gate and pallbearers made for the nearest ale house.

**BOTTLE & GLASS:** Glasses and bottles were a novelty in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Publicans wanted to show they were up to date.

**CORNER PIN:** The most difficult pin to knock down in skittles.

**EAGLE & CHILD:** Sir Thomas Latham in the 14<sup>th</sup> century placed his illegitimate baby son under a tree guarded by an eagle so that he could be found by his wife. He then adopted the baby.

**DOFF COCKERS:** In Lancashire cockers means old stockings so you were invited to take off your wet stockings and sit in front of a warm fire.

**CHEQUERS:** Games like draughts were played on the premises. Also indicated that the landlord was willing to act as a banker.

**THE GATE:** Traditionally accompanied by a verse "This gate hangs well and hinders none. Refresh, pay and travel on".

**MOONRAKER:** Wiltshire smugglers conned revenue men who caught them smuggling by pretending to be magicians who could rake the moon and make it vanish.

**THE ARK:** Used to signify the landlord had animals, birds and fishes for sale.

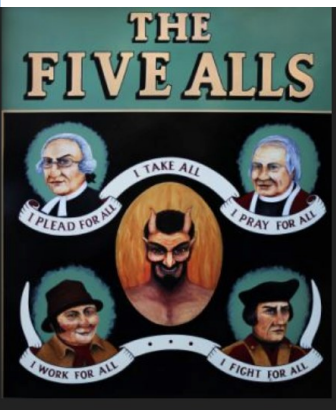
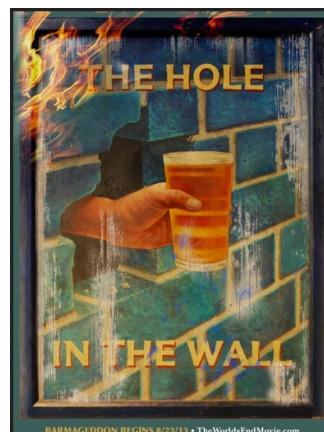
**ANTIGALLICAN:** Word coined in the 1750s meaning one who was opposed to everything French.

**BULL & GATE:** Corruption of Boulogne Gate captured by Henry VIII's army in 1544.

**THE FIVE ALLS:** The King (I rule all), a soldier (I fight for all), John Bull (I pay for all), a priest (I pray for all) and a lawyer (I plead for all).

**NAG'S HEAD:** The sign indicated that you could hire horses at the inn.

*Adapted from an article by Pat Moore in Yes! Magazine.*



### GRAPEWISE "know your grapes, understand your wine"

Ever been to California? Puglia? Croatia?

Many of you will enjoy Californian rich, dry, full bodied, reds, showing ripe red and black fruits and berries, high alcohol, medium tannin kept in check by the massive fruit. Or perhaps you prefer a lighter bodied, sweeter Californian white wine showing a hint of pale pink and a slight spritz, tasting of sweet ripe strawberry juice.

Totally different in appearance, there is nonetheless something similar in taste about these two styles even though it may have eluded you. They are, of course, made from the same grape - the ubiquitous California **ZINFANDEL**.

Others amongst you will prefer to travel to the heel of Italy, the province called Puglia. A region of Italy best known for dry full-bodied deeply coloured reds, dark berries, plums and spice with medium tannins and alcohol. Best known of the indigenous grapes grown here in Southern Italy is the **PRIMITIVO**, so named because it ripens early. It is only in recent decades that its quality has been recognised; previously it was used mainly for blending with other varieties in bulk wines.

Or perhaps some of you have been to the beautiful eastern Adriatic for holidays? the Dalmatian Coast with its islands? if so, you may have landed at Split and possibly visited the nearby small island town of Kaštela? for sure you must have tried a glass or two of the local red? Croatia has many excellent vineyards, growing local and international grape varieties. Until only a few years ago, one local grape was all but extinct except for a few vines growing on the island of Kaštela. The name? **CRLJENAK KAŠTELANSKI** (say: T'SRIL-yay-nak KASH-tel-lan-ski). Wines from this grape are amazingly deep in colour, but tannins are soft, brambles, raspberries and spice.

Finally, lest you think Winoe has lost the plot during the lockdown, step back just a few years to the early 1990s, when DNA testing proved with very little doubt that all three of the above grapes are one and the same variety, originating in Croatia centuries ago before travelling the short distance across the Adriatic to Italy and thence to California.

Cheers! Saluti! Živjeli! Sue Lobb Your Federation Winoe

Consume alcohol responsibly: [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk)



Everyone on the F&F team is disappointed that we have had to postpone so much this year, and most recently the Taste and Try booked for September at Kirby Muxloe, though that is rescheduled for September 2021 so that's something to look forward to.

Some of us have been fortunate enough to spend more time in the garden during lockdown, and we thought you might like some suggestions to help you cope with a glut of produce all arriving at the same time.

The Cherry Tomato sauce is very easy and versatile as any tomatoes can be used, the Gooseberry and Elderflower ice cream is delicious and a great way to convert anyone who doesn't like gooseberries, and the chutneys are a tasty gift – if you can prise it out of the hands of the family!

### Peter Lien's Cherry Tomato Sauce

400g cherry tomatoes, roughly chopped  
1 shallot, finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
2 tspn olive oil  
Salt and pepper



Sweat the shallot in the oil over a low heat until soft.  
Add the garlic and cook for a further minute  
Add the tomatoes and simmer for 40 mins or until the sauce thickens.  
Season  
Can be blitzed if you prefer a smoother sauce. Freezes well

### Runner Bean Chutney

2lb runner beans (when stripped and sliced)  
1 ½ lbs onions skinned and chopped  
1 heaped tablespoon cornflour  
1 level tablespoon turmeric  
1 heaped tablespoon dry mustard  
1 lb demerara sugar and 1 lb soft brown sugar  
1 ½ pints pickling vinegar



Cook the beans in salted water for approx. 10 minutes until tender. Cook the onions in half the vinegar, simmering for 20 minutes. Mix the dry ingredients to a soft paste with a little of the remaining vinegar. Strain the beans and cook gently in the remaining vinegar for 10 minutes  
Add the sugars and all remaining ingredients to the beans and boil for 15 minutes. Cool slightly and bottle and cover. Should fill 6 jars. Store for at least 2 weeks before consuming for the best flavour

### Beetroot Chutney

1 ½ lbs beetroot, medium sized and not tough  
1 lb cooking apples although eaters will work  
1 pint pickling vinegar  
1 ½ lbs onions chopped  
1 lb brown or granulated sugar  
1 level teaspoon each of salt and ground ginger



Boil the beetroot until tender, cool then skin and chop.  
Peel and chop the apples and cook with the onions in half the vinegar until tender, 20 mins  
Add the beetroot, remaining vinegar, salt, ginger and the sugar. Boil for half an hour stirring occasionally.  
Cool then pot in 6 prepared jars  
This is a beautiful colour and keeps well. Store for at least 2 weeks before eating for best flavour.

### Delia's Gooseberry and Elderflower Ice Cream

700g young green gooseberries, topped and tailed  
75g sugar  
8 tblspn elderflower cordial



**Custard**  
275ml whipping cream  
3 egg yolks  
50g sugar  
1 dessertspn liquid glucose



Place the egg yolks, sugar and cornflour in a bowl and whisk together until smooth.  
Gently heat the whipping cream in a saucepan to just below simmering, add the liquid glucose and whisk until combined.  
Pour the hot cream over the egg mixture then return it to the saucepan and whisk over a medium heat until the mixture thickens to a custard. Do not boil. Transfer the custard to a clean dry bowl, cover and cool.  
Place the gooseberries in a saucepan, add the sugar and put the lid on the pan. Cook over a low heat until soft – 5 to 6 minutes. Sieve into a bowl to remove the pips and add the elderflower cordial to the puree.  
When the custard and puree are both cold, combine and freeze-churn in an ice-cream maker.  
Alternatively tip the mixture into a 2-litre polythene freezer box, cover with a lid and freeze for 3 to 4 hours. Beat the half frozen mixture with a whisk, freeze for another 3 hours and repeat the whisking.  
Freeze until solid and store until needed. Transfer to fridge for 30 minutes before serving.

## Competitions

### 'WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER' Quiz 2020

First of all, sincere thanks to all who bought and entered this quiz. Given the difficult times in which we live currently, the number of entries received was excellent - 62 in total. Even more remarkable, in the face of a cancelled ACM when this quiz was launched together with the lack of Federation events since then, is the profit made for Federation funds: **£160**. I cannot thank all of you enough who sent in your coins and especially those who sold extra copies to your fellow members, family and friends for helping to reach this total. I was somewhat despondent when I received the news of 'no ACM 2020' but I needn't have worried thanks to you all.

Now to the quiz. Out of the 62 entries received, 23 were all correct and the lucky entry drawn at random came from Carol of Tilton on the Hill WI who has received the £25 prize. Many congratulations to you, Carol!

Commiserations to the remainder of you, who either didn't come out of the draw or didn't get all the answers correct. If you sent an SAE you will have received your entry sheets back by now, or by email if you preferred. For those who did neither, here are the answers:

1. JACK AND JILL, 2. WINNIE THE POOH, 3. HUMPTY DUMPTY, 4. SKIPPING, 5. HOME ALONE, 6. RUPERT, 7. SOOTY, 8. CABBAGE PATCH KIDS, 9. HAPPY FAMILIES, 10. THE LONE RANGER, 11. CHARLOTTE'S WEB, 12. HIDE AND SEEK, 13. CORGI, 14. TIDDLY, 15. JUNGLE BOOK, 16. PINKY AND PERKY, 17. DANDY, 18. SPIRO-GRAPH, 19. BIG EARS, 20. SCALEXTRIC, 21. TINTIN, 22. SINDY, 23. THE MAGIC ROUNDABOUT, 24. TOM AND JERRY, 25. WINKS, 26. POSTMAN PAT, 27. MARBLES, 28. MR POTATO HEAD, 29. LITTLE MISS MUFFET, 30. CARE BEARS, 31. THE SECRET SEVEN, 32. BAGPUSS, 33. BLUE PETER, 34. ANIMAL MAGIC, 35. TRUMPTON, 36. I-SPY, 37. BILLY BUNTER, 38. MECCANO SET, 39. THIS OLD MAN, 40. MUSICAL CHAIRS, 41. CLANGERS, 42. NODDY, 43. DR WHO, 44. FOLLYFOOT, 45. BARBIE, 46. POPEYE, 47. MAGPIE, 48. BEANO, 49. MATCHBOX, 50. THREE BLIND MICE

I am currently putting together my next brainteaser with the intention of publishing it mid-August. As usual, those of you on the Subscribers' List will be getting your copies by email, so please watch out for it landing in your inbox. In the meantime, take care of yourselves and please continue to stay safe.

Sue Lobb



**Sue Wainwright**

Winner of the Edith Buckley Poetry Cup



**Gillian Beavis**

of Melton Afternoon WI winners of the Programme Competition



**Beverley Ashby**

Winner of the Art Trophy



**Margaret Towsey**

Winner of the Margaret Johnston Trophy

### Margaret Johnston Trophy Competition 2021

Leisure Activities Committee

The theme of this year's writing challenge is ...

### 'The Ups and Downs in 2020'

in no more than 500 words. Your entry should be typed, if possible, on A4 paper.

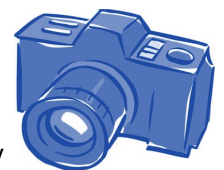
Entry fee: £4 Closing date: 10 January 2021

Entry forms are on the flyer which has gone out to WI secretaries and is also on the downloads section of the website.

The winning entry will be displayed at the Annual Council Meeting in March 2021.

Photograph Competition

### 'We've Got Talent!'



Bid to make the **front cover** of County News with **your** photo!

Photos to be submitted by 31 January 2021 for judging

The winning entry will receive a prize.

We need only digital photos sent by email or memory stick, of high resolution (min.1 MB), and portrait layout

£2.00. per entry

Entry form and details on the flyer

### Scrubbers!!!



Early during lock down my daughter, a nurse practitioner 'text to ask "are you making scrubs" my reply was a blunt "no", the reply back was "well find out then?" I emailed Janet Kirk who quickly put me in touch with a lady called Maxilyn and before I knew where I was Maxilyn's husband had delivered 30 sets of scrubs to my door step. Our president emailed all the members asking for volunteers to make them and with 8 positive replies I delivered them in varying amounts to who

felt up to the challenge. They are not easy to make and one lady had to withdraw as she felt it wasn't for her, but someone else stepped in and following yet another phone call to Maxilyn telling us all to watch a video on youtube we all started the task. I checked what I had and quickly realised of the 5 sets I had a problem with 3 of the legs as they were cut too small. A phone call from one of my ladies found she was 2 sleeves short, another had 3 sleeves and someone else needed thread. I quickly cut out 2 sleeves from my 3 legs and taking thread with me to the other lady everything was sorted. Within two weeks we had finished and Maxilyn's husband picked them up and she rang to say she was pleased with the quality. We all really enjoyed making them and felt we had achieved something in this difficult time.



### Wymondham WI



Our first committee meeting at a safe distance with face masks made by a WI member. Other members have been making scrubs and the masks are made from offcuts.

We have been giving our members telephone support and a monthly challenge but we are waiting for the time when we can meet up again.

### Thringstone WI

Some of the members taking advantage of the lifting of some lockdown rules to get together for tea and cake in a member's garden.



### Anstey WI

In order to compensate for missed meetings we arranged for a goody bag to be delivered to each member. July is our holiday month, but a garden party is usually held in a member's garden. The contents of the bag therefore included a tea bag, a selection of homemade cakes, and a decorative paper napkin. Added to this was a small felt heart, made by Angela Rossa, as well as a newsletter, and a cryptic quiz, for which a prize will be awarded, and a raffle ticket. Angela and Jan Chandler packed the bags and then delivered them to members' doors. To anyone not on the committee they came as a complete surprise, and many also expressed their pleasure at seeing a friendly face in the flesh. Many a message of thanks winged its way to the committee over the next few days.

The weather was not kind, so most of us had our little tea parties indoors, but Ann Coney saved hers until the first sunny day, and held a very civilised solo party in her garden.

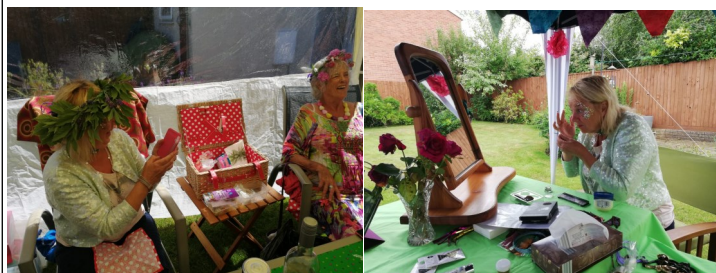
A walking group has now started, with a few members at a time going for a short walk and then having their packed lunches socially distanced in Angela's garden. They really appreciate being able to chat in person rather than virtually or by phone.





### Leicester Ladies

For our June meeting we continued with our virtual Zoom meetings. This method of still continuing meetings has proved very popular with members, although we do miss our social get togethers. Our Speaker was Phill Jesson who gave a very interesting talk on Modern Slavery our 2020 Resolution. This was his first virtual Zoom presentation, and he was able to share a PowerPoint presentation and present very cleverly. Our members were surprised to know that the number one country who has the most Modern Slaves is the UK; they work in Nail Bars, car washes, sexual exploitation and county lines drug dealing. A very disturbing and growing crime which is out there in our communities. We continue to have our virtual book club and our next club we will be reviewing the Booker Prize winner, *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernadine Evaristo.



Our Vice President Sarah kindly hosted Leicester Ladies Summertime tWist, in her garden. The weather didn't dampen the fun, the National Playlist was interesting, some choice pieces of music chosen by WI members! We did our own festival makeup, made floral festival crowns, enjoyed some crafting, fabulous pom poms, pin wheels and hand painted fridge magnets were made. All of course with social distancing observed. Refreshing Pymms and homemade Welsh Cakes was a delicious treat enjoyed by all the ladies.



### Broughton Astley WI



Our Committee met in July for the first time since March, socially distanced of course, in the garden of our Secretary, Bev Sharp, primarily to discuss the arrangements that will need to be made to make our village hall safe for members when we finally have access there. We continue to keep in touch by phone, newsletter and email and have arranged a date in August to meet up at our local park in groups of six, bringing our own chairs and refreshments. We are really looking forward to catching up with each other.

Our members are keeping busy in many different ways with walking, gardening, decorating, reading, puzzles and quizzes. Chris Riley has sewn several beautiful patchwork quilts as well as a Mouse and Rabbit family, complete with their own benches made by husband Martin, and a rabbit husband and wife, all dressed in exquisite outfits.



Broughton Astley members prefer to keep in touch by phone and email and our committee has been in contact regularly to make sure everyone is well and has everything they need. We all seem to be very fortunate in receiving help from family, friends and neighbours. We continue to keep occupied in our homes and gardens and enjoying the weather when applicable! One member has been busily knitting scarves for homeless people and another has made sleeve covers and toilet bags for NHS staff. Most members have been able to keep in touch with family members who are not local with video and zoom calls. Some have enjoyed watching live recordings of musicals and theatre productions on line and another has done virtual tours of some of the places they were due to visit this year, now sadly cancelled. Modern technology has certainly helped to keep us in touch with the outside world, but we can't wait to re-join as soon as we are allowed!

### Newbold Verdon WI

At the beginning of June, when we were all in lockdown, a member of Newbold Verdon WI gave birth to a baby daughter – Alice. This is the first baby born to a member for more than 40 years! As we were not able to meet, and celebrate this event in the usual way, we asked members if they would like to make or contribute a small item to mark this special occasion. We made up a 'baby box' of handmade items, knits, embroidery, feltwork, needlework and craft as well as local and national news items from the day. In these difficult times we hope this will be a good memory.



### Blackfordby WI

Forty-two goody bags were hand delivered to our ladies for their July meeting. The speaker should have been 'Good bread doing good' so we themed our goody bag to reflect this. We had a bread quiz, a bread recipe and some interesting facts about bread. There were also a few treats, like a handmade face mask, tissues, biscuits and a choice of tea and coffee. Thanks to everyone who helped put the bags together.



Please send material for inclusion in County News to **WI House** by e-mail: [wihouse@lrfwi.org](mailto:wihouse@lrfwi.org) or post to arrive by the **FIRST of the preceding month at the latest.**

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### Membership Committee

NFWI have circulated this information through the Federation but it's a good starting point for your own activities.

### #MyVirtualWI

If you have access to social media, you will have seen the National Federation have been using the hashtag #MyVirtualWI and have posted on the website a bit more about this initiative: [www.thewi.org.uk/home/my-virtual-wi](http://www.thewi.org.uk/home/my-virtual-wi)

As the WI has always been at the centre of communities, our first priority during this uncertain time is ensuring WI communities are as strong as ever. The National Federation have been asking all WIs to think about how they can strengthen their WI community, including taking their usual activities and meetings online, enabling them to continue running at this time, and ensuring WI members can continue to reap the benefits of their membership. They are sharing lots of case studies of inspiring WIs on social media and the website to give some ideas and inspiration. **Joy Hoult**



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