

Chairman's Column



Writing for the May edition, I can't believe how fast the year is flying by. I'm not sure if it is because of the long awaited relaxation of some restrictions that feel a bit like waiting for the long summer holiday when we were at school or just a sign of age!

Now we all have smart hair cuts, can enjoy meals out, may have been to a pub and even looked at booking a holiday, I hope your WIs are able to plan some 'get togethers' either in a car park, garden or local park to plan some activities for yourselves now. Remember to follow guidelines and we can all stay well and meet indoors when allowed. There will be changes to our WIs and some Members will choose not to return at the moment but we can work with the Members we have to enjoy the friendship and fun we have all shared in the past. Unfortunately some of our WIs have had to be suspended for a variety of reasons and there are Members looking for new "homes", I am sure they will be warmly welcomed if they choose your WI to attend. The Membership Committee hope to revisit some of the areas where WIs have had to close in the near future to look at a restart. As I am one of the WI Advisers on the Membership Committee I said I wouldn't do a separate piece for County News as you see enough of me every month but I often mention what we are doing in the

Chairman's Column and it is something I find very enjoyable. If you would be interested in this role contact the Chairman of the Committee for more information.

The Federation were so sorry to hear of the sad loss of Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh and extend our deepest sympathy to the Queen and all members of the Royal Family. It almost feels like a member of our own family has passed away, he has always been there supporting the Queen (a fellow WI Member) for so many years.

Hope you enjoy some of the free Zoom talks we are providing for you and stay safe.

Janet

Leisure Activities

FREE EVENT Walk to Abbey Park 2nd June 2021 10am

Meeting at School Lane, Birstall, LE4 4EA, parking is available in the playing fields carpark. The walk will start at 10am prompt. We will walk along by the river/canal via Belgrave to Abbey Park and stop at the Cafe for a short break where there will be drinks available to buy (or you can take your own), returning via Ellis Meadows back to Birstall (approx. 5 miles).

If you would like to join us, please contact WI House (wihouse@lrfwi.org) to book your place as numbers will be limited and social distancing will still apply. Bookings close on 27 May 2021.



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Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes

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Find us on Facebook: Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WIs



Membership

The LRFWI Membership Committee is responsible for assisting WIs with any help they require. I hope you find the following items useful. Mandy Cutler, Membership Committee Chair.

Update: NFWI Meeting Guidance



On 29th March the NFWI released new meeting guidance in line with the roadmap out of lockdown. This can be found on My WI, please click on the following link:
<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/guide-to-running-meetings/resumption-of-wi-meetings>

Feedback from Officers' Q & A March 2021



WI Advisers enjoyed meeting up with officers from across the federation and here are some issues we wanted to share.

How are WIs keeping in touch with members who are not online?

Not all members have internet access, a smartphone, laptop, computer, or tablet, and can therefore not meet online or access My WI.

The NFWI Membership and Engagement Team have the following ideas for how members and WIs can remain connected:

- Ask speakers to produce their talk by writing it down including any pictures and related activities. This can then be posted to members.
- Create meetings in a bag and send these to members. Ideas for this include:



- ◊ Seeds for bee-friendly flowers
- ◊ A craft / cookery/ gardening challenges
- ◊ Tips on how to reduce food waste with recipe ideas that use up leftovers.
- ◊ A craft kit.

For further information:

<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/members-resources/guidance-on-goody-bags>

- Get involved in a WI campaign at a local level using the action packs created by the Public Affairs Team.
- If a member's WI are meeting online but they do not have the means to join with video, they can dial in to the meeting use their mobile or house phone.
- Members who are online can print and share resources with members who are not online e.g., articles, recipes, craft projects, the Keep Connected leaflet, and quizzes.

The Updated NFWI Meeting Guidance states that from 29 March:

A maximum of six people, or two households (the Rule of Six) are allowed to meet outdoors including in private gardens. Social distancing must be maintained, such as keeping two metres apart, etc. Outdoor sports facilities such as tennis and basketball courts, and open-air swimming pools, will also be allowed to open, and people will be able to take part in formally organised outdoor sports. This means WI members can arrange for groups of six to meet in either public outdoor spaces such as parks, allotments, woodlands etc. or a private garden.

For advice on risk assessments please see the full document at: <https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/running-your-wi/members-resources/resumption-of-wi-meetings>

Should the WI programme, Annual Meeting, end of year accounts all be aligned with the new subscription year?

The Membership Committee recommends that, following the change in the subscription year to April –March:

- WIs can choose which month to start their annual programme - January or April.
- There will be no change to the WI Annual Meeting month or the WI financial year. The date of completion of the WI Financial Statement and the WI Annual Report will remain unchanged. Scheduling Annual Meetings in spring would delay information for the new Yearbook, released in time for the ACM. WI Advisers are sometimes invited to attend Annual Meetings: the weather is usually better in the period leading up to Christmas than after it.

Membership

Revised WI Constitution 2021



The pandemic, and resulting restrictions on freedom of movement and assembly, have caused logistical difficulties for WIs and federations when attempting to comply with their governing documents (constitutions).

So the NFWI proposed changes to the constitutions of WIs and federations (as well as its own governing document), to make these processes easier.

After a consultation process and voting, all 4 motions to update the constitutions were carried.

The revised Constitution 2021 has been emailed to all WI Secretaries and can be found on My WI at:

<https://mywi.thewi.org.uk/essential-information/the-wi-constitution>

Remember it needs signing – see page 23!

Leisure Activities



The Leisure Committee spent time at their March monthly meeting discussing the Darts and Skittles Tournaments for 2021. After much deliberation it was agreed that sadly it isn't possible for Darts to go ahead. Jane Elson (the darts coordinator) has spoken to a few WIs that couldn't confirm they could get a team together for the matches. As lockdown restrictions will not be relaxed until 21st June at the earliest, we agreed it isn't practical to go ahead this year. However, for those WIs that can get a team together later in the year they may be able to arrange a friendly match with each other, a bit of practice for 2022.

Listening to the news saying there maybe another COVID peak in the autumn skittles will not go ahead either. Again, you may want to get together with other WIs for friendly matches. Let us know if you do play and please send us some photos!



Fundraising Committee

NEWS UPDATE

It is about eighteen months since we were able to hold an event but with the general easing of lock-down we are hoping to have a couple of events in the Autumn.



The first will be our Autumn Lunch on Sunday 26th September 2021 at Greetham Valley Golf Course from 12 noon. We will be entertained by two members of the D Day Darlings.

The second event will be a Fashion Show and a hairdresser's demo. This will be held on Thursday 28th October 2021 from 7.30pm – 9.30pm. The Hinckley Golf Club is the venue we are looking at. A bar will be available for drinks and light refreshments will be included in the ticket price.

We must hope that the regulations for holding events such as these will allow us to move forward. It may be that the numbers allowed to attend each event will be subject to limitation so please bear this in mind. Further information will be made available as soon as possible.



Jacqui has found two lovely recipes celebrating English seasonal produce:

Chicken and Asparagus Risotto

Serves 4 should take 25-30 mins



Ingredients

- 75ml/5tbsp olive oil
- 1 leek finely chopped
- 115g oyster or brown cap mushrooms
- 3 skinless chicken breast fillets, cubed
- 350g asparagus
- 250g risotto rice
- 900ml simmering chicken stock
- Salt and pepper.
- Parmesan cheese to serve
- 4 Tbsp white wine if wished.

Heat the olive oil, cook the leek until soft. Add the sliced mushrooms and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside

Increase the heat, cook chicken cubes until golden on all sides (do batches if necessary) return all to the pan

Discard woody ends from asparagus, cut spears in half. Set tips aside. Cut thick ends in half, add them to the pan. Return leek and mushroom mix to pan and stir in the rice. Add 4 tbsp white wine (if using) reduce down.

Add a ladleful of stock, stir frequently, until all the stock absorbed. Continue adding stock a ladleful at a time, simmering until it is absorbed, rice is tender and chicken is cooked.

Add the tips with the last ladleful of stock, for the last 5 minutes cook the risotto gently until asparagus is tender.

Season to taste, serve in warm bowls topped with parmesan curls.

Rhubarb and Ginger Ice Cream

Serves 4-6



Ingredients

- 5 pieces of preserved stem ginger
- 450g trimmed rhubarb, sliced
- 115g unrefined caster sugar
- 30ml/2 Tbsp water
- 150g mascarpone cheese
- 150ml whipping or double cream
- Wafer baskets to serve (optional)

Using a sharp knife, roughly chop stem ginger and set aside. Put the rhubarb slices into a pan and add sugar and water. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for about 5 minutes until just tender and still bright pink.

Tip mixture into a food processor or blender, process until smooth, then leave to cool. Chill if time permits.

If making by hand, in a bowl, mix together the mascarpone, cream and stem ginger with rhubarb puree. Pour the mixture into a plastic tub and freeze for 6 hours, or until firm, beating the mixture once or twice during the freezing time to break up the ice crystals.

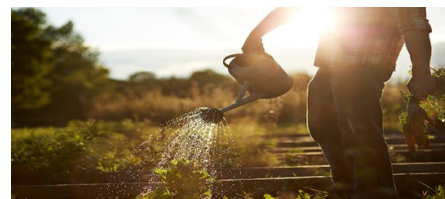
If using an ice cream maker, churn the puree until thick. Put the mascarpone into a bowl and soften with a wooden spoon, then beat in the cream. Add the stem ginger, then churn all together until firm.

Serve scoops in the wafer baskets or bowls if preferred.



Food & Flowers Committee

Now that Spring is in the air and 'being allowed out' is on the horizon, Polly wonders whether you might be tempted to visit some East Midlands gardens beyond your garden gate.



Morton Hall Gardens - Redditch

<https://mortonhallgardens.co.uk/>

Open April – September except for the Tulip Festival in May and NGS Open day in August 2021 (book separately for these events)

2021 Tulip Festival 1st to 3rd May 2021. In addition to intricate tulip planting schemes in formal borders and pots, swathes of naturalized bulbs may be enjoyed in our glorious spring meadows and woodland gardens. Many more magical tulip varieties will be on display as cut flowers with experts from Bloms, winners of sixty-eight Chelsea Gold Medals, on hand to advise. The event will be hosted jointly with the Royal Shakespeare Company, a selection of original costumes demonstrating the unparalleled craftsmanship of the RSC costume department will be on display. Sweet and savoury treats will be on offer all day in a large marquee with generous seating space. The gardens will be open from 10.00am to 4.00pm on each day. Tickets for this event at £10 per adult can now be purchased on the RSC website. Pre-booking is required.

Coton Manor Garden – Northamptonshire

<https://www.cotonmanor.co.uk/>

Open from 1st April 2021. Tuesday–Sunday 11am– 5 30pm. £8 per adult. Covid visitor social distancing applies. Stable yard Café. Garden nursery. Landscaped garden with seasonal changes with some interesting Flamingo by the pond. The house and garden can be traced back to the Domesday book.

Polly has also discovered that a number of gardens, nationally, are holding Plant Fairs over the coming months. Visit <https://www.planthuntersfairs.co.uk/> to see the diary of events, but be sure to check Covid restrictions before travelling.

Will you take up Margaret's SUNFLOWER CHALLENGE?!

What amazingly colourful wildlife friendly flowers they are. They look great.... are easy to grow, bees and insects love them, and the seeds make great food for birds.



ARE YOU FEELING COMPETITIVE?

WHY DONT YOU JOIN THE CHALLENGE AND SEE WHO CAN GROW THE TALLEST SUNFLOWER!

Perhaps you can persuade your children/grandchildren to get involved and monitor the growth of your sunflower. Did you know the tallest Sunflower ever recorded was in Germany & reached an enormous 9.17m (30ft 1inch)?!

WHAT YOU WILL NEED, STEP – by – STEP

It will take about eight weeks to grow a Sunflower from seed

1. Put some compost into a plastic cup or pot almost to the top and make a hole for the Sunflower Seed. (You may want to use a Giant Variety)
2. Pop a Sunflower seed into the hole then cover it with a little compost.... Give it a water so it is nice and damp.
3. Put the cup somewhere sunny like a windowsill. Give your Sunflower a little water whenever it feels dry.
4. You should see your plant poke through the soil after about 1 or 2 weeks. Now is the time to start measuring how much it grows each week – you could make a log of its progress.
5. When your plant grows too big for the cup or pot, plant it in a bigger flowerpot or in a warm and sunny place in the garden. You may need a stake to support it as it grows taller to protect it from been blown over.
6. Watch it grow – how high will it go?

Here's where the competition starts, and perhaps you could encourage family and friends involved too!

7. Take photos. Measure the height of the tallest sunflower and the diameter of the flower head, and email the photo/s and measurements to wihouse@lrfwi.org by **Monday 30th August 2021**.

The winning sunflower will feature in the October edition of County News!

Free Federation Online Events

Building on the success of the **free** Federation virtual events programme, the Board of Trustees has decided to continue with 2 events per month until the end of June. We want to ensure that there remains a **free** offer from your Federation recognising that, as parts of life begin to open up, many of us will continue to find the virtual events accessible and interesting.

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 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.



Monday 24 May 7pm

A Buzz in the Garden with Richard Rickitt, one of the UK's best known beekeepers and co-editor of BeeCraft magazine.

This fascinating and richly illustrated talk will introduce many of the bee species found in the UK and explain how you can help to save them by creating a pollinator oasis in your garden.

Friday 4 June 7pm

Tales from a Dairy Farmer's Wife with Jane Barnes (Bookings close 27 May)

Local farmer Jane Barnes shares her amusing stories, real life anecdotes and farming tales of being a dairy farmers' daughter, to meeting Mark at Young Farmers Club, to running her own dairy farm for the past 25 years, whilst bringing up a family, life has never been dull. Their children Charlotte (named after a favourite cow) and Harry (bred to be the next dairy man) have not only provided great material but also enlightened her life as a farmers' wife and therefore, her tales too.



Monday 28 June 7pm

Sex, Secrets, Scandal and Salacious Gossip of the Royal Court, 1660 to 1830 with Sarah Slater.

Sarah Slater, Guide Lecturer at the Historic Royal Palaces, will be back with her second talk disclosing all the naughty bits of history you would probably not have learnt about at school! She will discuss sexual diseases of the time and the methods used to prevent them. Warning, this talk is not for the prude, it is fun but rude!

How to Book

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

Bookings will close at 12pm the day before each event unless otherwise stated.

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 & photographed, we will presume permission unless we are otherwise informed.

Treasurers Q&A

Mary Hobbs and Linda Martin hosted the zoom online Treasurer Q & A. We had a mix of new and not so new treasurers. Topics included moving from handwritten accounts to computer accounts. There is a computer version for any treasurer to download from the WI website. The other main topic was online banking and this generated much debate. Any WI may have an online account for view only so they can see money coming into their account and your sort code and account number can be given to members to enable them to pay subscriptions online. However, it was clear that some WIs were using online banking to make payments with only one person authorising the transaction. For anyone still in doubt about this, they should refer to the Charity Commission website, under Internal Financial Controls, where it clearly states that a two person authorisation process is essential.

We hope to do a treasurer training and a computer treasurer training later in the year when we can meet face to face at WI House. If there are any questions, please contact Linda Martin or Mary Hobbs details in the year book or from WI House.

Art & Crafts

The Art and Crafts committee hope it will be possible to start events again in September of this year. Look out for details of an Arts and Craft Swap Shop in September, a Hardanger Embroidery workshop in October and a beginners Goldwork embroidery workshop in November. When the dates have been finalised, anyone who signed up for these embroidery workshops last year will be contacted. No doubt, there will be spaces as well. For anyone who came to the beginners Goldwork workshop in 2019 (seems a long time ago!), we will be doing a different mini project. The Art trophy will be held over until 2022 with the same theme.

Around the Counties

Huncote

Huncote WI was formed in 1966. Five members were recently individually presented with their NFWI Membership certificate by our President, Karen Smith. Anne Deacon, Hilary Comyn and Milly Rathbone were each awarded their 50 year certificate. Diane May and Jill Larter (Vice President) were awarded their 25 year certificates.

Our committee meets monthly by zoom and keeps members informed and connected via our Huncote WI Newsletter. A third of our members without internet access, are each given a paper copy of the County News. Included in our January newsletter was a "Can You Spot Your Committee member?" quiz. It caused much intrigue, comprising a baby photo of all nine committee members, along with a 2021 zoom screenshot of them. Members had to try and match them up correctly.

In February, members were asked if they would like to make a bunting flag, these will be joined up and used to remind us all of our strong WI bond. The bunting will be used to decorate our first event, 43 flags have been produced, some depicting 'what the WI means to me'.



On April 19th Chris Rigby & Sue Holmes took part in the "No more Violence to Women" walk in Croft (pictured with a friend plus dog).

An Easter Primrose, with chocolates, was given to each member, a reminder that Spring has arrived along with renewed hope. We all very much look forward to being able to meet up soon.

Blackfordby



Blackfordby WI have just received their Easter Meeting in a bag. Our committee delivered the bags to the members over the Easter weekend. Our Easter themed bags included our meeting letter, wordsearch, quiz, a recipe, biscuits, tea bag and two chocolate 'naughties' to enjoy while they completed their Easter Challenge.

Each bag had an Easter Egg template to be filled in using Doodle Art with a pen provided. The month before we had delivered plants to all our local ladies, so with lockdown being relaxed a little we were able to make sure nobody was forgotten. I would also like to thank our secretary Hilary Newton who is featured on one of the photos for all her help in supporting me and Blackfordby WI over the last year.



Hollycroft

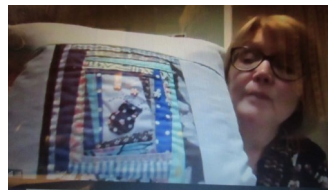
Hollycroft WI Zoomers had a very different experience when the speaker for their virtual April meeting was professional stuntman, Sam Durrani. He explained to members that, as his whole family were involved with gymnastics clubs, his career was probably mapped out from the age of three as he later became good at 'tumbling'. His mum only allowed him to give up gymnastics aged 14 on condition that he did another out of school activity. This led to him taking up swimming and, on leaving school, he became obsessed with martial art movies and kick boxing. After 5 years at college studying sport he became a full time gym coach but the lure of the movies was always there. He sent some demo tapes to London agents resulting in his first stunt job at a theme park in China, quickly followed by a panto in Belfast. This was a real turning point for him as he was enjoying the travel opportunities and the improved bank balance. He feels that his previous competitive sporting activities made it easier for him to gain a place on the UK Stunt Register. After gaining his Equity card he was able to diversify into TV and films and has appeared as an extra in several UK TV soaps. He showed videos of himself in a 'fireburn' and, although he stressed it was only half a burn, it looked terrifying. He explained how a 'dead man' is achieved and admitted it once took him about 30 takes to perfect one as, with CGI (Computer Generated Images) now being incorporated into stunts, perfection is vital. He has worked with a number of Hollywood stars and singled out Matt Damon as being the most generous. After a Q&A session he confessed that it was harder for female stunt performers to do their job in skirts and high heels!

Anstey

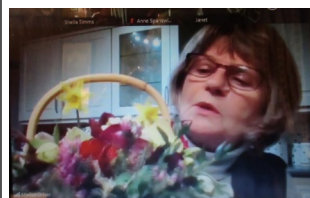
Zoom still features large in the activities of Anstey WI. Several members enjoyed taking part in the county federation's Annual Council Meeting. We were congratulated on our institute's forthcoming 80th birthday, and we are looking forward to celebrating it when we are able to meet properly.

We were also delighted and proud to hear that one of our members, Sylvia Cole, (who came to us courtesy of the closure of Thurcaston and Cropston WI) had won the Edith Buckley Trophy. We offer her our congratulations.

The March monthly meeting took the form of a 'show and tell.' Angela Rossa showed a bead necklace she had made after being given a large collection of tools and materials, and there are now plans to hold a workshop when we can. Jan Darby had crocheted an Easter basket for her baby granddaughter, and Jill Taras displayed her cushion cover made from scraps of fabric in a loose interpretation of the log cabin pattern, and explained how it was done. Anne Spanswick showed pieces of origami, and Marian Driver had arranged flowers in a basket. Heather Savage showed a work in progress, a granny square blanket, and Sheila Timms showed a knitted dinosaur hoodie which had been



received with great enthusiasm by her 5-year-old grandson. It was gratifying that the number of members accessing the meeting had increased, but we are still eagerly anticipating physically meeting in what we hope will be the not too distant future.



Hinckley Canalside

Supporting our local Women's Aid Refuge

Members donated 60 eggs and other gifts to the Women's Aid Refuge. The ladies at the refuge are often staying with their children. The gifts we donate go some way to making Easter a better time.

So thanks to Tricia Sykes for organizing the collection over the past few weeks. Tricia, Margaret Lawrence and myself delivered the goods to Hinckley Hub.



Ashby Spa

Ashby Spa WI ladies have been very crafty on the build up to Easter – and have knitted 116 little yellow chicks. We received all the yellow wool as a donation, and then shared a chick pattern amongst our ladies. Very soon we had little chicks hatching all over Ashby de la Zouch. We collected them all up – and we have donated them to our local Ashby Foodbank, we hope they bring a little Easter smile to those families that will be collecting their food parcels from the food bank over the next few weeks.



The Committee also organised another goodie-bag drop for all 120 of our members. This time with an Easter theme. Each member received a personal delivery, and a nice door step chat on most occasions. In the Easter bag were lots of goodies including activities for us to get our teeth into, sunflower seeds for a growing competition and a Chocolate Lollipop – it has to be said the lollipop won the popularity contest!



Tilton on the Hill

Tilton WI was established on 2 March 1931 with 25 members. We had hoped to celebrate our 90th birthday at a party at our March 2021 meeting. Alas COVID prevented this. Instead each member was visited and (with social distancing in place) given a silver bag with a mini Prosecco, a chocolate, a cake (in WI colours with WI and 90 on it), a quiz, a pretty pen and a bauble. The bauble was empty and each member asked to fill this with a memory of the WI or some other important event in their life and then hopefully in the summer when restrictions are finally lifted we can all meet in a garden, look (and admire the baubles) and have the party we missed.



Sapcote

At Sapcote WI's Zoom Meeting in February we had a fabulous, entertaining and informative Talk from Sarah Slater entitled Sex, Secrets, Scandal and Salacious Gossip of the Royal Court, 1660 to 1830 and, boy, did it live up to the title. Sarah kept us thoroughly entertained with pictures and diagrams and 33 of our members were enlightened about the goings on at Hampton Court Palace during that period. In March we went over the channel, literally, to France to meet with Speaker, Frances Carlaw. Frances's Talk was entitled, The Pearl Lady, yet again another fantastic speaker that knew her subject. Not only was she informative and interesting but her passion for all things pearl came through our computer screens and kept 32 Sapcote WI Ladies, enthralled.

We have also had zoom coffee mornings, in between, which have kept us all feeling that we are still part of an organisation and are not alone. The committee is still telephoning members and a newsletter each month is being produced.

It has to be said that 14 members enjoyed the A.C.M on 6th March which, for a first in the media of Zoom, went without a hitch and we were all very impressed with the voting system, thank you, Federation, for arranging this. Perhaps some kind of etiquette, as to how to behave at these meeting, needs to be put out to members, we can all see what you are doing, and there were some strange activities and moving about that would not be going on at a normal meeting, this applies to our own WI zoom meetings and it can be quite distracting but, also, very funny!

Sweepstone, Newton & Snarestone

In December we donated toiletries for women to the Marlene Reid Food Bank.



We had a Christmas quiz on Zoom which was great fun, good to see members together on screen and our President Vicky Cook organised and delivered Secret Santa to all members.

In February we had a Zoom meeting where Hilary Dolphin spoke to us on local history which was very informative and interesting.

It has been good to keep connected with Zoom, but we do look forward to the time when restrictions are lifted and it is safe to meet everyone together again.

Markfield

We have now held our first virtual coffee morning which was well received, we will shortly be inviting members to a second giving members a chance for an informal chat until we can meet up outdoors.

We discussed how we continue to challenge ourselves with new crafts or re-discovering old ones.

Our President Fran has been talking online classes with Denman College on Getting to know your Sewing Machine, judging by the tote bag she has made the course has been very successful.



Other members are looking towards Spring and the garden; our secretary Jane has seeds to grow her own loafahs, something we look forward to seeing. Others have been taking advantage of the zoom talks given by the college, being at home means husbands can listen in.

Stoke Golding

Our speaker at our March Zoom Meeting was Anne Bufton-McCoy. She gave us a talk on a book that she has been writing for a while and is near to publishing.

Anne was a head teacher at an inner City school in Birmingham, on her first day she realised that a lot of the children did not have a chair to sit on, mainly because they had broken them. Dealing with the local authority to get new chairs was a challenge and was forecast to take around a year to get them, as they had to wait for the next budget to be issued.

Luckily Anne contacted a friend who was the head of a state funded school, who were just replacing their equipment and managed to get as many chairs as she wanted.

Many of the parents were single young mothers, with no extended family to help them bringing up their children, so the children were a challenge in school. Anne discovered that the school cook was buying breakfast out of her own pocket for the children, who arrived at school having not eaten since the previous lunchtime. Anne decided to help her with that.

She was having to deal with aggressive parents coming into school to challenge teachers, and also parents asking for her help with difficult children. Some of the children explained that they didn't like reading stories, as there was no such thing as anyone living happily ever after.

The school had to do the SATS just after Anne took over and their results were dreadful. So the inspector came into the school to review how they were doing. She took him round the school showing him what they were doing to improve the figures. At the end of the visit, the inspector asked for some proof of improvement. She took him into the car park and showed him a sign in the corner, every week the children wrote graffiti on the sign, usually "F off" spelt with one F. Anne explained that the graffiti was now spelt with "two Fs" spelling was improving!!!!!!

The Inspector analysed the results from the school and did not give them the worst possible report, but gave them "In need of Improvement". When Anne left the school it was rated Good to Outstanding.

She is hoping to call her book "there are 2 Fs in F off".

Kegworth

All members of Kegworth WI were pleased to receive a delightful bag of goodies for Easter - plant, mini eggs, two quizzes and an Easter card. We all appreciate the efforts of the committee in keeping us all in touch and giving us such lovely surprises.



We have met on Zoom for our monthly meetings, in March we had a virtual tour of Cambridge by Murray Jacobs, a Cambridge Guide, which was very entertaining as well as giving us an insight into University life, past and present.

Nailstone

On Monday 15th March 5 Nailstone WI ladies met up (in stages and social distance observed) at the Millennium Gardens in the village of Nailstone to create a raised flower bed for our WI centenary rose bushes. The previous 3 having died off after being set in very poor soil. All materials for the project were purchased and delivered to a member who happens to live next door to the gardens. We arrived with spades, forks, a battery drill plus a large pair of loppers for cutting through underground large roots and suitably dressed for hard work.



After two hours and a coffee break we stood back and admired all our hard work, very pleased with the final result. Ladies involved Shirley, Hilary, Joy, Anne and Kathy not forgetting her husband Bob who supplied extra top soil when we didn't quite have enough.

WI ladies can rise to any challenge with pleasing results.



Cossington

Taken from the Federation list of Zoom speakers Cossington invited Saffron Summerfield to their March Zoom meeting. Through recordings, photographs and music Saffron's talk titled 'When Birds Sing' gave an insight on how, when and why they do. As spring approaches and we are woken by the familiar Dawn Chorus, Cossington members should now be better able to identify tweets of the various birds we hear in our gardens and parks. In addition to the March meeting Cossington members participated in, the ACM, a Zoom virtual coffee morning and have been busy crafting and 'Wombling' around the parish litter picking.



All members received a cheery phone call from Carolyn Jones to check that they were coping with lockdown.

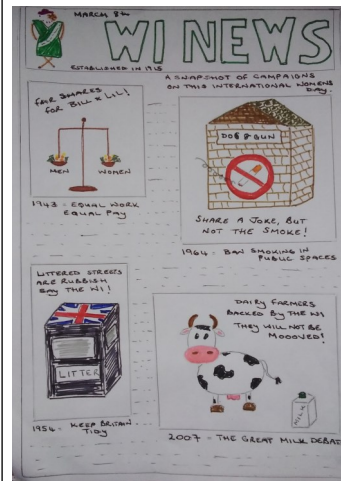


Social distancing, Cossington Womblers. L-R Carolyn, Barbara and Janette.

Broughton Astley

Our guest speaker Annamaria Dall'Anese, a London Blue Badge Guide, gave us a virtual tour of Shakespeare's London. William travelled to London in 1590, possibly following his father or travelling players or maybe to further his own acting and writing career. He acted at both Blackfriars and Globe theatres, as well as his plays being performed there and more importantly at the Royal Court. It was interesting to learn how his time lodging in the busy, cosmopolitan City of London, where there was wealth from the Guilds and merchants trading at the busy port, greatly influenced his plays, many of which are set in foreign countries. Annamaria also gave us a taste of what it would have been like to live in Elizabethan London.

Two members created posters for International Women's Day in recognition of "WI Women in Activism." One highlighted three campaigns which subsequently became law and the second detailed the first resolution in 1918 and current key campaigns.



Leicester Ladies

Leicester Ladies March meeting was via zoom. We had over 48 members join the meeting, lots of WI Wanderers from all over the country to listen to our speaker Kate Stannard from Target Ovarian Cancer who gave us some facts and figures about the disease and suggested ways that we can highlight the campaign; by lobbying the government, our GP, spreading the word with leaflets, sharing on social media and talking to friends. 7300 women are diagnosed every year, with 11 women dying every day from ovarian cancer. 85% of cases occur in women aged over 50. Early diagnosis can save many lives and the 4 most common symptoms are; bloated tummy, always feeling full, needing to wee more and tummy pains. If these symptoms become frequent (more than 12 times within a month), are persistent and are not normal for you – you need to contact your GP. A simple blood test and then possibly a scan will detect this cancer. A very informative talk on our proposed resolution.

Do you know the symptoms of ovarian cancer?



Elmesthorpe

Spring has sprung with April showers.

Elmesthorpe committee have delivered flowers.

All members were delighted to receive a bunch of daffodils (+ of course copies of Sue Lobb's chocolate/cake/buns/biscuit quizzes!) along with a friendly socially distanced chat.



The Institute continues to enjoy meetings on zoom, with recommended speakers:- Samantha Hancock, who presented the police overview on cyber awareness; David Allen's amusing talk entitled "The weird and wonderful world of the law"; and Sallie Butt, Environmental & Waste Technician quizzing us on what can and can't be recycled. No one achieved 100%!

Copy for County News

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

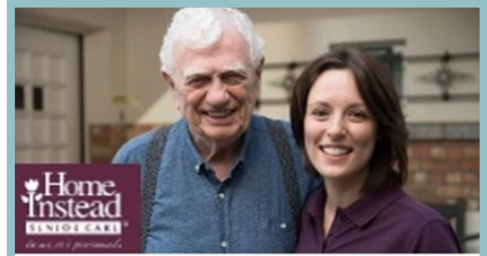
Adverts and announcements by the same time to finance@lrfwi.org.

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Age UK Leicestershire & Rutland

We are a local, independent charity and we support older people in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland. We help to promote the wellbeing of all older people and offer services and support through Home Care, Day Care Centres along with many projects and clubs, including bereavement, loneliness support, befriending services and dementia & cancer support along with financial support through our Information and Advice team.

The Big Knit



We run this campaign all through the year – knitters and crocheters are called upon to knit us tiny hats, which sit atop Innocent smoothie bottles. For each be-hatted smoothie sold, Age UK Leicestershire receives 25p from Innocent – this is a great fun fundraiser for us and we are calling on all knitters to support us with as many hats as they can. Our target this year is 74,000 hats (the same as last year!) so we need as much help as possible.

Knitting patterns can be found on our website www.ageuk.org.uk/leics or of course members can make up their own creations – they can be as simple or as detailed as they want. The picture shows the kind of patterns available – we have beginner, intermediate and advanced available for the more adventurous members – but we are more than happy with simple plain hats too!

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