

**BLAKESLEY CUM WOODEND WI  
NCFWI CHALLENGE TROPHY  
2017**

**A CELEBRATION PICNIC**

**THE BEST OF  
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**ITS FOOD, CULTURE, ARTS AND  
HISTORY**





## SUMMER

Come we to the summer, to the summer we will come,  
For the woods are full of bluebells and the hedges full of bloom,  
And the crow is on the oak a-building of her nest,  
And love is burning diamonds in my true lover's breast;  
She sits beneath the whitethorn a-plaiting of her hair,  
And I will to my true lover with a fond request repair;  
I will look upon her face, I will in her beauty rest,  
And lay my aching weariness upon her lovely breast.

The clock-a-clay is creeping on the open bloom of May,  
The merry bee is trampling the pinky threads all day,  
And the chaffinch it is brooding on its grey mossy nest  
In the whitethorn bush where I will lean upon my lover's breast;  
I'll lean upon her breast and I'll whisper in her ear  
That I cannot get a wink o'sleep for thinking of my dear;  
I hunger at my meat and I daily fade away  
Like the hedge rose that is broken in the heat of the day.

John Clare



## THE BRIEF

To design and produce a celebration picnic for the  
Chairman of the Northamptonshire Federation and her  
three guests

### To consist of

4 savoury dishes

3 sweet dishes

2 drinks

## DESIGN TEAM

Kate Nash, Vicky Norman, Sara Cousin, Julie Hartfield,  
Lynda Jefferson, Julie Diment,  
with support and consultation from all the members of  
Blakesley cum Woodend WI.

## OUR THEME

We chose “The best of Northamptonshire” for the theme of our picnic foods and presentation, as we are surrounded by award winning artisan food producers, arable and cattle farmland and countryside. The County’s wealth of history, culture and art means that this is also a perfect reflection for the NCFWI forthcoming centenary.

We have researched the traditional dishes by looking at online resources and old Northamptonshire recipe books.

The dishes we have selected will be homemade and feature local produce and products where possible. We will also use ingredients grown by our members in their gardens or allotments, or foraged in our local hedgerows.

We aim to reflect the culinary delights of the county and bring the flavours to life for this memorable picnic made with care by a dedicated team.



## PRESENTATION

The food for the picnic will be presented in a shoe box as homage to the shoe industry in the County.

A shoe shaped bottle will be used for the homemade rhubarb gin. The elderflower cordial will be served in a kilner bottle. The water too will be in a stopper bottle.

The tablecloth will be handmade lace, sadly not Northamptonshire made, as few handmade lace pieces remain. Lace making was a key cottage industry in Northamptonshire from the 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century. There was a lace maker called Leopold Stanton who lived in Maidford, 4 miles from Blakesley, around 1877.

The crockery and cutlery will be contained in traditional wicker picnic hampers. The cutlery will be wrapped in serviettes with a cuff imprinted with images of four stately homes in the County.





# MENU



## SAVOURY DISHES

### **Cobblers Nibble Cheese Scones**

The handmade scones will be made using Cobblers Nibble. This cheese is an award winning cheese made by hand from the milk of a Northamptonshire Friesian herd.

The scone will be filled with soft cream cheese and chives.

### **Earls Barton Leek Pie**

A Northamptonshire pastry pie, traditionally eaten by farm labourers made with layers of leeks and pork. This recipe is still going strong and is eaten in Earls Barton on Shrove Tuesday.

### **Mushroom pate and Weetabix biscuits**

Using mushrooms from the mushroom farm in Morton Pinkney, this dish gives great textures and flavours to the picnic. A large employer and producer in Northamptonshire is Weetabix and reflects arable farming in the county.

### **Scotch eggs & Courgette Chutney**

A traditional mainstay of a picnic, we will use quail eggs from Bell Plantation in Towcester and sausage meat from the award winning Elliott's butcher of Towcester.

These savoury dishes will be accompanied by seasonal salad and vegetables from our members' gardens. The actual ingredients and salads are subject to availability e.g. ribbons of cucumber and cherry tomato kebabs, salad of sweetcorn kernels and radish, green leaves, spring onions and baby carrots, beetroot and potato salad, all garnished with home grown herbs.



## SWEET DISHES

### **Towcester Cheesecake**

Once famed for its dairy, butter and cheese making, this local cheesecake reflects Towcester's rural history. In fact, Towcester's Roman name is Lactodorum, which means milk town.

### **Seed Biscuits with Caraway**

These biscuits are based on a seed cake, which would have been made at sheep shearing time and festivals.

### **Blackberry Fool**

The berries are foraged from the local hedgerows. The cream will be from local dairies.



## BEVERAGES

### **Rhubarb Gin and Tonic**

This homemade rhubarb flavoured gin was awarded best drink in show at the Weston and Lois Weedon Horticultural show in 2015.

### **Elderflower Cordial**

This homemade cordial is made from flower heads foraged from local hedgerows.

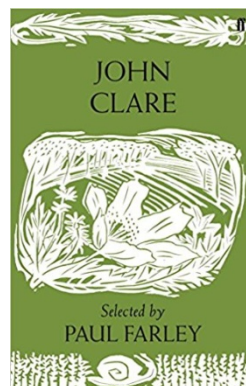
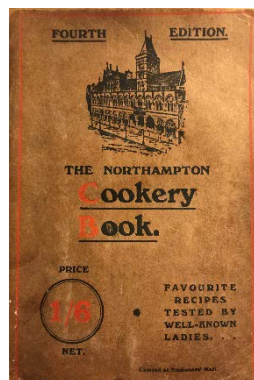
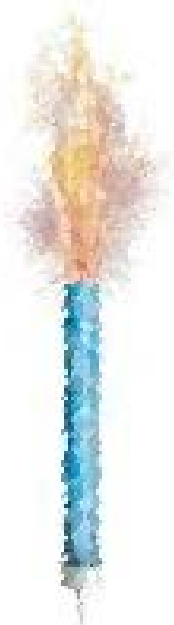
# AMUSEMENTS

**Fireworks:** A celebration fountain candle to represent Ashby St Ledger where Guy Fawkes and his friends planned the gunpowder plot.

**Conkers on string.** The world conker championship is held annually in Southwick near Oundle.

**Poems of John Clare.** He was born in Helpston Northamptonshire in 1793. His poems celebrated the English countryside.

**Food:** The Northampton Cookery Book printed in 1921





## PLEASURES OF FANCY

A path, old tree, goes by thee crooking on,  
And through this little gate that claps and bangs  
Against thy rifted trunk, what steps hath gone?  
Though but a lonely way, yet mystery hangs  
O'er crowds of pastoral scenes recordless here.  
The boy might climb the nest in thy young boughs  
That's slept half an eternity; in fear  
The herdsman may have left his startled cows  
For shelter when heaven's thunder voice was near;  
Here too the woodman on his wallet laid  
For pillow may have slept an hour away;  
And poet pastoral, lover of the shade,  
Here sat and mused half some long summer day  
While some old shepherd listened to the lay.

John Clare



# RECIPES

## COBBLERS NIBBLE CHEESE SCONES

### Ingredients

225g/8oz Heygates self raising flour  
pinch of salt  
55g/2oz butter  
25g/1oz Cobblers Nibble cheese, grated  
150ml/5fl oz milk

### Method

Heat the oven to 220C/425F/Gas 7. Lightly grease a baking sheet.

Mix together the flour and salt and rub in the butter.

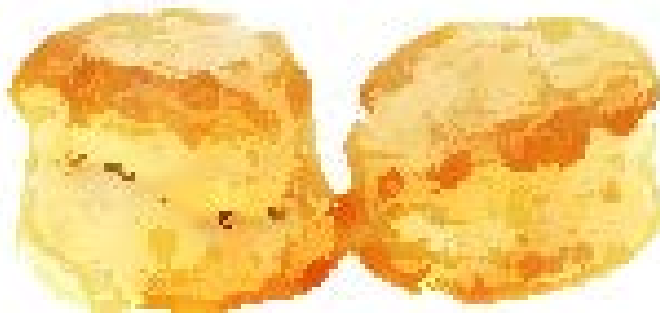
Stir in the cheese and then the milk to get a soft dough.

Turn on to a floured work surface and knead very lightly. Pat out to a round 2cm/<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>in thick. Use a 5cm/2in cutter to stamp out rounds and place on the baking sheet.

Lightly knead together the rest of the dough and stamp out more scones to use it all up.

Brush the tops of the scones with a little milk. Bake for 12-15 minutes until well risen and golden. Cool on a wire rack.

Serve filled with cream cheese and chopped chives.



## EARLS BARTON LEEK PIE

### Ingredients

225g / 8oz Heygates Plain flour  
140g / 5oz lard  
water  
350g / ¾ lb pork steak  
350g / ¾ lb streaky bacon  
3 leeks  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

### Method

First stew the chopped pork and beef in the oven, then allow it to cool and set so the fat may be removed. Then wash, slice and boil the leeks. Make a pastry from the flour, lard and water. Take a pie-dish and fill it with alternate layers of meat and leeks, topping it with a layer of leeks. Cover with some of the gravy and put on the pie-crust, decorated with pastry leeks. Cook in a moderate to hot oven until the pastry is done.



# MUSHROOM PATE

## Ingredients

250g mushrooms  
30g butter  
3-4 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped  
250g cream cheese  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

## Method

Clean and trim the mushrooms and chop them finely.  
Heat the butter in a large frying pan over a medium heat.  
Drop in the mushrooms and garlic and sauté, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes, or until all the moisture the mushrooms release has evaporated.  
Leave to cool for a few minutes.  
Blitz the mushrooms in a food processor until smooth, then add the cream cheese and blitz again until well blended.  
Season to taste then leave to cool.



## WEETABIX OATCAKES

### Ingredients

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda  
60g butter  
1 tsp salt  
225g crushed Weetabix  
60g Heygates wholewheat flour  
½ tsp sugar  
60-80ml hot water

### Method

Pre-heat the oven to 190C.

Mix together the crushed Weetabix, flour, salt, sugar and bicarbonate of soda.

Add the butter and rub together until everything is mixed and has the consistency of large bread crumbs.

Add the water (from a recently boiled kettle) bit by bit and combine until you have a thick dough.

Sprinkle some extra flour and oats on a work surface and roll out the dough to approx. 1/2cm thickness.

Use a cookie cutter to cut out shapes.



## SCOTCH EGGS

### Ingredients

450g Elliotts Pork Sausagemeat  
12 Hard Boiled Quail Eggs  
2 tbsp Heygates plain flour  
2 medium eggs, beaten  
100g fresh breadcrumbs  
Farrington rapeseed oil for frying

### Method

Divide the sausagemeat into 12 equal portions.

Take a piece of the sausagemeat and flatten it in the palm of your hand. Place one of the quail eggs in the centre and stretch the sausagemeat around to cover the egg completely, then roll between your hands to make an even-shaped ball. Repeat. Place the flour, beaten egg and breadcrumbs in 3 separate shallow bowls. Dip each Scotch egg first in the flour to lightly coat, then in the beaten egg, and finally in the breadcrumbs. Repeat with the remaining eggs and place on a plate until ready to cook.

Heat the oil in a deep, heavy-based pan (fill to a third deep with oil) or deep fat fryer to about 160°C (or test with a cube of bread – it should go golden in about 45 seconds). Cook the eggs in several batches, about 4 at a time, for 7-9 minutes until evenly golden brown. Drain well on kitchen paper then chill in the fridge until needed.



# COURGETTE CHUTNEY

## Ingredients

4lb courgettes

2lb 8oz onions

2lb 8oz brown sugar

Large piece of fresh ginger

½ tsp pepper

2 pints malt vinegar

2 heads of garlic

2lb 8oz tomatoes

1 tsp cayenne pepper

2 tsp salt

## Method

Chop all the vegetables, add vinegar, sugar and spices and bring slowly to the boil, stirring now and again.

Simmer for about two hours (don't forget to stir regularly) until thick.

Pour into heated jars and seal.



## TOWCESTER CURD CHEESECAKE

### Ingredients

60g / 2oz butter

85g / 3oz sugar

115g / 4oz currants

2 eggs

Almond essence

Grated rind of lemon

A little nutmeg

Curds from 1 quart (1.1L) of milk.

### Method

If you have no curds, boil the quart of milk with a dessert spoonful of lemon juice or vinegar. When separated, leave to cool after straining.

Stir butter, sugar, well-beaten eggs in a pan until thick but not curdsh. Add currants, spice, curds etc. Mix well, and when quite cold bake in pastry-lined tins (make some simple shortcrust pastry), 20 to 30 minutes according to size and tins.



## SEED BISCUITS WITH CARAWAY

### Ingredients

225g / 8oz Heygates plain flour

115g / 4oz butter

115g / 4oz caster sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon caraway seeds

### Method

Mix dry ingredients together.

Add the egg and bring together to form a dough.

Cut out the biscuits.

Bake for 20 mins in a fairly hot oven.



# BLACKBERRY FOOL

## Ingredients

1 vanilla pod  
500g blackberries  
100g caster sugar  
1 lemon  
330ml double cream  
200ml fat-free Greek yoghurt

## Method

Halve, the vanilla pod and scrape out the seeds, then place in a large pan along with 350g of the berries, the sugar and lemon juice. Bring to the boil over a medium heat. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes, or until syrupy and the berries are soft but holding their shape. Set aside to cool.

In a large bowl, whisk the cream to form peaks, fold through the yoghurt and swirl through a third of the syrup.

Layer the rest of the syrup and cream in dessert glasses, garnish with syrup and fresh berries



# RHUBARB GIN

## Ingredients

300g rhubarb  
300ml rhubarb

## Method

Chop the rhubarb into 1 inch lengths  
Place in a kilner jar  
Pour in the gin  
Leave to steep for 2 days  
Strain and put into a bottle



# ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL

## Ingredients

30 elderflower heads  
1.7litres/3 pints boiling water  
900g/2lb caster sugar  
50g/2oz citric acid (available from chemists)  
3 unwaxed lemons, sliced

## Method

Gently rinse over the elderflowers to remove any dirt or little creatures.

Pour the boiling water over the sugar in a very large mixing bowl. Stir well and leave to cool.

Add the citric acid, the orange and lemon slices, and then the flowers.

Leave in a cool place for 24 hours, stirring occasionally.

Strain through some muslin and transfer to sterilised bottles.

