



### Denman

When NFWI announced their proposal to close Denman I was deeply saddened, for myself and all present and future WI members, and indeed the wider population. Denman is so much more than just a college.

However, after much thought, and discussions with member and non-member Denman enthusiasts, that despair has turned to anger and a profound feeling of helplessness. My overriding concern is that this decision was made in haste, before the Covid lockdown restrictions were eased and with an absolute refusal to contemplate the relocation of the London office.

In the two years up to lockdown the fortunes of Denman had been turned around by Anupreet Jeetun, the new Head of Denman, and his team. Indeed, Denman was on track to break even by the end of 2021 – something that I think is unheard of in recent history. We are told that only 3% of the membership uses Denman each year. That is over 6000 ladies and it's not the same 6000 ladies each year, so cumulatively it is more than 3% over time. When the College closed in March all the staff bar two were furloughed, and these two worked to establish the online courses and Denman at Home. Thanks to them these courses are proving very popular, reaching a wider audience and providing some much-needed income but they are not a replacement for a residential course. In fact, they could be used as a carrot to lure more customers to Denman when normal service resumes.

By comparison with Denman, I believe all the London staff continued to work from home during lockdown – so one wonders why we need the London office. One reason given for not relocating is that a number of London staff would have to be made redundant, but if Denman is closed ALL the staff will be made redundant.

Head office can be located anywhere, but if Denman is closed it can never be replaced. No-one can know how the Covid situation is going to be resolved. But what a tragedy if we find that, having closed Denman, everything gets back to some sort of normal so that we can use Denman as was first intended – a place of safety and centre of excellence for the education of women.

I don't know whether this decision can be challenged, but I look forward to hearing from you with your views.

**Clare Robertson Smith**, Denman Ambassador

[clarerobertsonsmith@lrfwi.org](mailto:clarerobertsonsmith@lrfwi.org)

### Post script

Sadly events have moved on since I wrote this. On Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September NFWI announced that Denman will close permanently. Although members will have the opportunity to make representations regarding the future of the Denman Estate, all decisions will be made by the NFWI Board of Trustees and members will not vote on the outcome. Four zoom meetings are planned for 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September to give members the opportunity to ask questions, and a dedicated mailing will be sent to all WI secretaries at the end of September. Please ask your secretary for details and make your representations at the appropriate time and following the procedure laid down if you would like your input to be considered by the board.



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**A**utumn is really here now with the darker nights and mornings compensated by the lovely colours that are starting on the trees; does anyone else find they can't walk by a Horse Chestnut tree without picking some conkers up? There are some really big ones this year on the trees near me, I don't know what I am going to do with them I just like to pick them up. We could always start a WI Conker competition but I'm not sure on how the social distancing would work and I expect we

would need to do a risk assessment and have a First Aider standing by, so perhaps I will just enjoy admiring them until they go hard and wrinkled.

Some WIs are able to have some form of meeting now and I hope you are enjoying catching up with each other safely. None of us thought when Coronavirus started it would go on for so long, or be so devastating to so many families. I know some Members are still in lockdown or having to isolate and we haven't forgotten you and hope you can still feel part of your WI with your WI Life magazine and the County News. I hope most of you can also look at our Website and Facebook pages. The members that keep these going are working really hard to pass on as much news as they can.

Most WIs have their AGMs coming up and we are all having to be a bit inventive in how they are run, if you need any advice on this contact WI House to find an Adviser to help you answer any questions. If you take on a new role this year the Advisers are also there to help with any points you want clarifying .

Take care all and hope to see you soon. **Janet**

**Denman: Make your Thoughts Known**

NFWI have organised a series of informal member Zoom calls in September to allow members the opportunity to ask them directly any questions they have outside the FAQs (or to ask for clarification on any of our FAQ responses). This is a stage that NFWI feel is important so that all members have the opportunity to explore the facts and hear directly from the NFWI Board. You can also make suggestions regarding the sale of the Denman Estate, however please bear in mind that your input will only be formally considered by the board if you follow the formal process of making a representation at the appropriate time, as will be outlined in the dedicated mailing secretaries will receive at the end of the month.

The zoom call dates/times are below:

- 17/9 (1000-1130)
- 17/9 (1300-1430)
- 18/9 (1500-1630)
- 22/9 (1900-2030)

These zoom calls are free for all members and you can book a space using the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wi-member-zoom-calls-re-denman-tickets-116573603787>

There are 150 places available on each call, and these will be allocated on a first come first served basis. If demand significantly exceeds the number of places, NFWI will organise additional calls.

NFWI look forward to seeing many of you in September, and if you are unable to make these dates/times, please do continue to email over any questions to [membership@nfwl.org.uk](mailto:membership@nfwl.org.uk)

Many federations are encouraging concerned members to write to the NFWI headquarters at 104 New Kings Road, London SW6 4LY

If you want the WI to keep the Denman estate make sure you tell the National trustees before it's too late.

### Food & Flowers Committee news

Our committee has been meeting regularly on Zoom and unfortunately has now decided to cancel all planned events for the rest of this year.

However, we hope you enjoy the recipes we suggest and this month, alongside Jane's very tasty Courgette Bake recipe, we bring you Polly's 'recipe with a different slant' for a Bulb Lasagne!

### Zucchini Pie (Courgette Bake!)

500g grated courgettes  
1 onion, finely chopped  
4 eggs, beaten  
250g grated cheese + extra for topping  
Half teaspoon salt  
150g self-raising flour  
Pepper and herbs to taste  
Slices of tomato

Mix all the ingredients together and pour into a large baking dish allowing room for the mix to rise.

Top with more grated cheese and the tomatoes.

Bake at gas mark 6/200°C for around 40 mins until lightly browned.

Leave to stand for 5 mins before cutting into pieces. Can be eaten hot or cold and can be frozen

*To save time I use the food processor to chop the onion using the blade, the grating attachment for the courgettes and then mix the lot together in a large bowl.*

### Bulb Lasagne

Autumn is usually a time for harvesting summer crops, clearing the garden ready to rest over winter and a time to plan for Spring. The arrival of BULB catalogues in late summer are certainly tempting!

So what better way to plan ahead than to create a Dutch bulb lasagne that's really easy to do and offers a splash of flowering colour throughout Spring. You can mix and match bulbs to colour coordinate or create a kaleidoscope riot of colour. A general guide is to plant bulbs anytime between late September and November. Tulips can be planted even later and benefit from cold temperatures.

Here's what you'll need:

1 large terracotta pot – frost resistant and porous

Gravel / small stones to cover the base of the pot for drainage

Peat free compost – some have added nutrients / bulb fibre

Choose a variety of 3-4 different sized flower bulbs that grow at different heights and flower in succession – check flowering time and planting depths on the packet

Large size, deep planted bulbs : Tulips / Alliums / Large daffodils, Medium size bulbs: Hyacinths / Narcissus Tete a Tete, Small sized bulbs: crocus / muscari (grape hyacinth) / snowdrops / dwarf iris

Quality check to make sure bulbs are firm, plump and mildew free

Buying guide: Garden Centres, local stores, online: [www.peternyssen.com](http://www.peternyssen.com) [www.angliabulbs.com](http://www.angliabulbs.com) , [www.jparkers.co.uk](http://www.jparkers.co.uk)

Planting Guides online: [www.gardenersworld.com](http://www.gardenersworld.com) layering Spring Bulbs

[www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk) , [www.sarahraven.com](http://www.sarahraven.com) (youtube)



### Bulb lasagne

Plant your pot as follows:

Avoid bulbs touching to prevent fungus

Base: gravel or crocks

Compost

Large bulbs: Allium, Tulip or large Daffodil

Compost

Medium size bulb: Hyacinth or Narcissus

Compost

Small sized bulbs: dwarf iris, crocus, muscari or snowdrops

Compost

Finish with decorative gravel or plant viola or pansies on top

## Art and Crafts

After discussion, the art and crafts committee have decided to cancel their events until the end of the year. This means that the Beading, Goldwork Techniques and November Dabble Day will not take place. However, we hope that these events are just postponed and will take place next year.

L Roselli. A and C committee

### The Art and Crafts committee is looking for new members.

If you have an interest in art and crafts in general or have expertise in one particular area you can contribute to the life of our WI Federation. The committee meets 6 times a year at WI House in the mornings and you are welcome to sit in on a committee session as soon as they are resumed face to face. Register your interest with the secretary at WI House and we will contact you.



## Solar Panels

Critics of solar panels often cite the amount of energy used in their manufacture as a reason to dismiss them as a source of power. In fact a panel will have generated the amount of energy used in its manufacture in 1.52 years. Recent developments in solar panels will reduce this time to 0.35 years.

From *New Scientist* 8 August 2020

At the Green Man House my solar panels have now been producing power for 12 years. Over that time they have produced more electricity than has been

used, with the excess going into the National Grid.

Other sources of renewable energy rely on major capital investment and government backing but individual home owners can do their bit by installing solar panels where possible, reduce their bills and their carbon footprint.

**Jane Harris** Climate Change Ambassador

## Book Reviews

### A Time To Kill – John Grisham

John Grisham was what he calls a street lawyer for ten years before his writing career took off. To quote him 'There's a lot of autobiography in this book .....This one came from the heart. It's a first novel, and at times it rambles, but I wouldn't change a word if given the chance' – which makes it all the more gripping.

I wasn't really sure I would like this book and, on reading the first horrific chapter, I nearly didn't carry on with it but I obviously did and will look out for his work again. It hooked me as much as Ken Follet's writing does. Whilst it seems an open and shut case, Grisham keeps you on the edge of your seat with clever twists and turns. I even found myself holding my breath at some points! He keeps you guessing right up to the end.

I suppose I used to be a bit of a book snob. When someone asked if I'd read a particular book, I'd reply that I only read autobiographies. Over the years I collected lots. Then I had a sort out and got rid of some I hadn't read. My friend gave me this one she'd got in a charity shop and thought I would enjoy it. I have a sneaking suspicion that it was one of my offloads so thanks Pat, you were right – I DID enjoy it.

### A Kentish Lad – Frank Muir his autobiography

I can't think of Frank Muir without bursting into 'Everyone's a fruit and nutcase' so it was lovely to read his book and discover how much more there was to the man.

At the age of six he travelled alone to go on holiday. Fortunately, it was to his granny's pub 100 yards down the road in Ramsgate. His highly descriptive writing draws you in so far, you almost feel you are there with him.

Peppered with amusing anecdotes and his humorous perceptions of ordinary life, along the way he takes you through his wartime exploits (which left him with a mysterious scar on his right buttock) to his long partnership with Denis Norden producing much loved (and missed) radio and television programmes. Lots of outrageous behind the scenes stories which had me laughing out loud.

A tall gentle man with a kindly view of the world and a witty, intelligent raconteur.

**Margaret Osborne**

**Leire WI**



June Goodwin, our founder back in 1972, has been devising and sharing Quiz sheets with the local community during the lockdown period, the results of which are then posted online and printed for those who do not use social media. These have been very popular and quite challenging and have included subjects such as; Leicestershire Villages and Towns, Herbs and insects and Trees, Wildlife and Birds. June has also been sharing poetry and quiz questions with the presenters of Radio 5 live and Radio Leicester often in the early hours of the morning which have gone out to listeners far and wide This is a great example of what could be achieved from within our own homes during lockdown....

As part of our monthly zoom meetings to remain connected, we held an online photo competition of flowers and shrubs taken in members' gardens. Members then voted for their favourites. Here is a selection of these and it was difficult to choose the winners.



**New Barkby WI**

We met in Central Park, Syston, for a chat.



**Sapcote WI**

Having not been able to meet, because of Lockdown since March, we held an Afternoon meeting in August on the village playing fields.

It was lovely to see 25 ladies turning up with their chairs. Temperatures were taken as they registered and then they arranged themselves in bubbles of six around strategically placed markers, so they could all be socially distanced as the rules tell us to.

Our President welcomed the members and then we proceeded to enjoy a "Fun Quiz". It was a gloriously hot day, we chatted and laughed and enjoyed ourselves without the normal offering of tea and cake but just happy to be back in each other's company again.



**Appleby Magna WI**



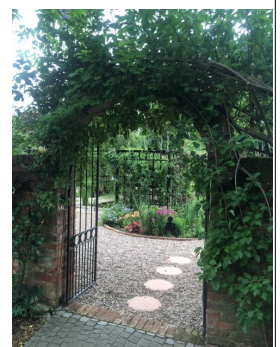
One of our members, Claire Mayles and her husband Greg, opened their wonderful garden to the public in June under the National



Garden Scheme. Despite atrocious weather on Saturday and Social distancing guidelines, the event was well attended, not the least by members and their husbands. Apart from the beautiful garden a highlight for many were their Peacocks and Hens. The garden comprised a magnificent collection of shrubs, wild garden and orchard area, small raised



vegetable beds, plus a walled garden around a pond with goldfish. A true gem in our local area.



### Cossington WI



Members enjoying a walk in the sunshine at Cossington Meadows. They are also supporting the weekly Sileby Free Trade Food Court Market which has recently been under threat of closure by Charnwood Borough Council.



The photographs demonstrate the highly variable weather conditions this summer.

### Broughton Astley WI



21 members met at our local park, our first get together since March! It was wonderful to catch up with our friends again to chat and exchange news and have a laugh together.



As it was such a beautifully sunny day we were pleased to be able to sit in the shade under some trees, where we had plenty of space to spread out, and enjoy our own refreshments.



We plan to meet outdoors for as long as the weather permits whilst we organise how to restart our regular indoor meetings, which is proving challenging due to space restrictions.

Everyone continues to keep busy at home and in gardens and most have been able to see their families following changes to meeting restrictions. Some members are beginning to go to restaurants and cafes where they are sure the correct safety measures are in place, which is a very pleasant change.

### Breedon on the Hill WI



Summer Garden Picnic - A socially distanced affair!

In these times of pandemic and anxiety, our group met at the kind invitation of our member Angie in her spacious well-tended garden. Tables and chairs had been arranged so social distancing could be maintained.

We all brought our own food and drink, glasses and cutlery.

Joy Oh joy! Ladies to see and talk to - together in person! Months of isolation, where keeping in touch meant a keyboard and Zoom paled onto the background. There is nothing to beat face to face conversation over a glass of wine.

Everyone loved meeting up again and in these strange and troubled times this picnic was the tonic we all enjoyed.

So many thanks to Angie for hosting this event in your beautiful garden.

### Anstey WI

In August the committee held their first face to face meeting in a garden, which everyone agreed was much more satisfactory than using Zoom.

The following week, four committee members entertained a group of ladies in their gardens. The weather was hot and oppressive, so finding enough shade was an issue, but a good time was had by all. It was a chance to socialise and catch up with friends, and we enjoyed a really good natter. For one or two members it was the first such opportunity they had had. Many a grateful message was received afterwards.



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Adverts and announcements by the same time to:

**Margaret Osborne**  
**16 Spencer Street**  
**Hinckley LE10 1RB**  
**Tel:01455 449956**  
[margaretosborne@lrfwi.org](mailto:margaretosborne@lrfwi.org)

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### How's your memory?

	£	s	d
Boy's name			
Girl's name			
Type of headwear			
Transport			
Male singer			
Craftsman			
Sun-moon -star			
Type of pig			
Thief			
Poorly sea creature			
	18	7	9

(Answers next month)



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### Please write to us

The County News team are doing their best to inform and entertain you, the readers. But without any events to advertise or report on we will struggle to fill the pages of County News.

So we would like to receive articles from our loyal readers on any benefits they have had from the Covid 19 restrictions. In up to 150 words let us know how you feel, what you've been doing and if you will continue with any of the lifestyle changes you have had to make.

If you find you want to write more why not enter the **Margaret Johnston competition 'The Ups and Downs in 2020'**. The closing date is 10 January 2021. Details on the website and with WI secretaries.

We would also like to receive recipes, book reviews, gardening tips and energy saving suggestions.

**Jane, Pat and Margaret** look forward to hearing from you.




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