**1938 – 1947 The War years**

**1938** began with a change of Secretary. Miss Mumford and her salary was £150 per annum and she was allowed to look for a secondhand typewriter! 2 WIs were formed. A Handicraft Exhibition in September was a success and in November 48 exhibits were sent to the National Exhibition in London. **Gedling WI** excelled with a novel contribution of a dolls house, made from 2,000 matchboxes.

**In 1939**, Lady Sibell told members “**Whatever happens, in times like the present, I feel that our WIs might well be of great value. Whatever happens, I hope that the WI in each village will become a centre for useful work towards peace”.** The lead came from the top as Lady Denman and the NFWI staff worked out plans for the wartime Land Army at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture. Recruitment and billeting were largely achieved through the WI, and the Counties, including ours.

**1940** saw some WIs suspend but there was 1 new one. The WI waged a war on waste and Canning machines were bought by the County. In the first season 57 Produce Guild and Preservation Centres made over **7 tons Jam, 4 cwts Chutney and produced 6,386 cans of fruit**. 571 cans were the result of the mobile canning team being sent to Laxton as the plums were in danger of going to waste. **87 lbs of Herbs** were collected. Bacon curing and goats milk cheesemaking were still practised and so there was no shortage of teachers. In June Evacuees started to arrive. Pig and Rabbit Clubs were opened for the meat and skins.

**1941 and 1 WI** was formed.

**1942, the ‘Pie’ scheme** was undertaken at the request of the Notts War Agricultural Committee. **3,600 Pies** made by local butchers were distributed weekly by WI members to residents and workers in rural areas. WIs responded generously with extra contributions to cover the increased expenses of war work and grants were received from NFWI to run the Produce Guild and Preservation Centres. The Federation office was let to the Land Army, many WI halls were lent to service men and women stationed nearby. Most WIs ran a National Saving group, one reaching £1,765 during the year. One WI knitted 60 jumpers in a month for the prisoners of war. Normal community work was not neglected with the collection of vegetables and eggs to be sent to hospitals as they had been for many years together with clothes and blankets.

**1943 and Post - War** planning with meetings on housing and education were held. There was a scarcity of fruit and they only produced 3,266lbs of jam. Soft toys were made for refugee children, hospitals and nursery schools. There was an exhibition of renovated garments at the Federation Council meeting. Many WIs regularly mended uniforms and socks for soldiers. Women took on the roles previously held by men, not just in factories but the Parish Council and similar. There was a National Conference of Women held in London, attended by our delegate, with **Winston Churchill** as the speaker. He said women tipped the balance between victory and defeat.

**In 1944,** 3 Carol Services were held around the county and were responsible for the reforming of several WI choirs. Members were sending hampers of fresh vegetables to the minesweepers at Grimsby. Knitting garments for liberated Europe.

**1945 and 4 WIs** were formed bringing the number to **77 WIs 3660 members**. A large number of parcels were sent to France. Three WI members from around the country were invited to France and Mrs. Pick, Postmistress and Secretary of **West Leake WI** was chosen to go. She gave talks on her return.

**1946 and a Post War** upsurge with 6 new WIs. A Combined Arts Festival produced a winning team from **Burton Joyce** who went to a semi - final then final in London. Most WIs had outings and many started fund raising for the future WI College.

**1947 and 7 new WIs** bringing the total now to **92 and 5,291 members**. **Denman College was brought by NFWI for £16,000**. The Council meeting was affected by the very bad weather. Rationing was still in operation and a produce exhibition, a cake recipe leaflet was printed for this – back to normal except for the dried egg! We have a copy of this leaflet in our archives. But haven’t tried out the recipes!