

OXFORDSHIRE WI

Stay Home Stay Safe



CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

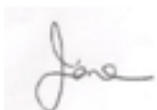


Dear members

In the last week or so we have achieved much to bring you our online speaker programme, aiming to bring our members together. Our first event was Gillian Cane - known to many of you, talking about Bletchley Park and was 'attended' by over 70 of our members using Zoom. A couple of days later a very knowledgeable Paul Gray showed us how to propagate plants. I certainly learnt a lot from both talks. It was exciting to see so many familiar faces from around the county, and while not as good as actually gathering together, it is certainly a way of making sure everyone can have a good seat, a cup of tea made to their liking, and no problems with traffic, navigation or parking! We have many further excellent speakers already lined up - details follow in this newsletter. My thanks to the team who are organising all of this.

I had intended to step down as Oxfordshire Chairman at the Annual Meeting on 25 March, but events caused the best-laid plans to be rethought. The Officers stayed in post to sort out the urgent actions necessitated by the Coronavirus pandemic: ensuring we could cancel our activities scheduled for the next few months, addressing the staff situation and closing the Oxfordshire WI office until the government advise us it is safe to do otherwise, while assessing the financial implications for Oxfordshire WI. It has been a stressful time for us all. I know it has also been uppermost in our minds to look at how we can best support our members - many of you having to adapt to a new style of everyday life and the concerns and isolation it has brought; whether you are having to find a different way of working, home schooling or being asked to stay home for at least 12 weeks. Many of you will have learnt new skills to keep in touch.

Now though, it really is time for me to hand over to my successor and in the next few days the trustees will elect their new officers making use of technology to conduct a secret ballot. I wish my successor and the new team all the very best during this unusual time as I head into the garden or to my sewing room, while like you, looking forward to a brighter future. I wish all of you well and hope to see many of you again before too long.



FROM YOUR BOARD

#SPEAKERSCORNER



We know from your emails that you have enjoyed the first few talks in our virtual Activities and Events programme. Long-time friend of Oxfordshire WI, Gillian Cane gave a brilliant talk about Bletchley Park and members picked up many handy tips on propagation from Paul Gray and bookings are rapidly building for the next topics. More details of the upcoming programme are under MY VIRTUAL WI OXFORDSHIRE and <https://www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk/events>

Message from Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

PRACTICE NURSES – YOUR COUNTY NEEDS YOU!

Oxfordshire's Patient Care during Coronavirus programme is asking experienced practice nurses to join the teams in our dedicated COVID-19 clinics across the county. If you are not currently working in one of our Oxfordshire practices but are interested in helping care for patients during the pandemic, please complete this quick availability survey and we will contact you. Thank you

<https://surveyhero.com/c/e7684979>



A note from your Oxfordshire WI Secretary Linda Mustill



NEWS & VIEWS

OXFORDSHIRE

Thank you for your contribution for the front cover photo library, keep them coming as the seasons change. Please continue to send in photos and details of what you are all doing, your contributions are vital to the success of these special editions of News & Views so a big thank you to everyone.



DIARIES

Thank you to everyone that has sent in the diary orders. In the current circumstances, if you weren't able to pay, all WIs will be invoiced. Delivery is expected at the usual time in the autumn.





MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Chairman - Catherine Blaxhall

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07736698738

catherine.blaxhall@oxfordshirewi.co.uk



You have amazed us with your wonderful and inspiring initiatives to keep in touch with each other and your members during this difficult time. You have organised and enjoyed so many online meetings, events, quizzes and get togethers and we love hearing about them. Huge congratulations to you all – do keep it up! Have a look below at MY VIRTUAL WI. How many of us had even heard of Zoom seven weeks ago and how many of you are now using it (and other platforms) regularly to maintain contact with your WIs. The message in this month's 'WI Life' from our National Chair, Lynne Stubbings, is 'Keep Calm and Carry on' and that is exactly what so many of you are doing. We are also being encouraged to 'Adapt, Survive and Thrive' and it is really important that we do keep the WI going forward strongly just now. Life will almost certainly look very different when we emerge from this crisis and many more women will be seeking to join organisations at the heart of their communities and we need to be prepared and ready to welcome them to the WI.

We are hoping to be able help all our WIs connect with their members using online platforms so if you would like to find out more about how we can help, contact your WI Adviser who will put you in touch with someone who can talk you through the process. Our Adviser team has been busy contacting all our WIs over the past few weeks but if you haven't received any communication from her yet, please can you let us know as we may not have the correct contact details for you.

The new special edition of News & Views has been incredibly well received and we are planning to send it direct to as many of our members as possible in addition to all our WIs. In order to do this, we need your help to ensure that your email addresses on the MCS (Membership Communication System) are accurate and up to date. Please contact your WI Secretary or MCS representative to check your details asap.

Stay safe, stay connected, stay home.

With very best wishes from all of us on the Membership Support Team.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE WI? HERE'S A QUIZ TO TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE.....!



Answers in Special Edition 4

1. In which year was the first ever WI formed in the UK?
2. Who was the first elected Chairman of the NFWI?
3. In what year did the WI pass the resolution that led to the formation of the 'Keep Britain Tidy' campaign?
4. Who are the Officers of a WI? (hint: there are usually 3)
5. How many WIs are there in Oxfordshire?

#MYVIRTUALWI

WOWI's 1st Virtual Meeting was held in April with 23 members joining in via Zoom, a first for many of us. It was great to see and listen to so many members taking part including someone currently in Lanzarote. Once the initial chatter had settled down a little, we were all muted!! This allowed our new President to welcome everyone and express her gratitude that so many members had joined in and how good it was to see everyone.

We were then unmuted and led by our Treasurer as Quizmaster in a lively quiz. We all enjoyed the challenging questions with lots of banter and laughter which got a bit noisy at times provoking the suggestion that we should all be muted again!! The winner of the Quiz scored 18/25 and won a bottle of wine, delivered at a safe social distance of course.

Debbie Johnson, WOWI



WALLINGFORD WI had a really good response from members to join April's virtual Zoom meeting. We are holding a meeting every two weeks to keep in contact with everyone. Our meeting was very successful and we talked for over 90 mins, discussing our isolation and how we are all keeping busy. Advice was passed amongst members about local help and support and ideas for making the best of our isolation situation. We are also going to hold our book club as a virtual meeting so there is no stopping us.

**Ann Hill,
Wallingford WI**

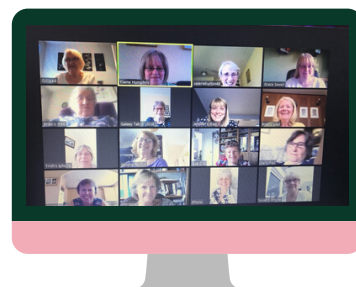
We just thought we would get in contact to say how much we are loving the new online News & Views! It is great that this has gone virtual now! We have been embracing modern technology at THAME BELLES WI also. We have successfully hosted several committee meetings and catch-ups on Zoom, and even managed a full member event for our April Meeting. After a couple of accidental screen shares, missing videos and microphones we had an excellent online meeting consisting of a quiz and a few rounds of Pictionary! Here are our happy isolating Belles who attended the online meeting, and some of the Pictionary drawings! We are sad to not be able to complete all of the great plans we had proposed for meetings at the start of the year, but we are glad to still be able to offer content and support to all of our members, especially throughout this difficult time! As a committee, we are looking into ways that we might be able to continue to offer virtual content once the lock down begins to lift, as we imagine there might be members who are still unable or timid to join our in-person meetings when we are permitted to hold them again.

The Thame Belles WI



Since the 5th April about 18 members from WEST WITNEY WI have been enjoying weekly 'Meetings' organised by member, Elaine Humphris, via the Zoom App. She then came up with the idea of having a 'Quiz', so on Easter Sunday, 17 of us joined her on Zoom for a 20 question quiz. She asked the questions and we wrote the answers down at home and then we marked our own answers (as we WI members are a trustworthy lot!!). It was so much fun as of course not everyone knew what Elaine was even asking about. Although the highest score was only 9.5, we had such a good time and are now looking forward to the next one. The free Zoom session only lasts 40 minutes so we had to keep moving along. Nevertheless, it was a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Ann Bradley, West Witney WI





WILD GARLIC PESTO



Chairman - Tracy Strain

01235 765285.

tracy.strain@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

Transform your wild garlic growing in your garden into a tangy sauce by combining with Parmesan, garlic, lemon and pine nuts.

Ingredients

150g wild garlic leaves

50g Parmesan or

vegetarian alternative finely grated

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

½ lemon, zested & a few squeezes of juice

50g pine nuts, toasted

150ml rapeseed oil

1. Rinse & roughly chop the wild garlic leaves.
2. Blitz the wild garlic, Parmesan, garlic, lemon zest and pine nuts to a rough paste in a food processor. Season, with the motor running slowly add almost all the oil. Taste, season & add a few squeezes of lemon juice.
3. Transfer the pesto to clean jar and top with remaining oil.
4. Portions can be frozen in an ice cube tray.



SPRING BULBS

Did you have gaps in your spring bulbs this year? Do need some different colours for next year's display? Why not treat yourself by buying some fabulous bulbs for your garden. So many gorgeous, colourful and fragrant ones to choose from! Now is the time to place your bulb order. All WIs have received bulb catalogues and an order form. Give your orders to the Bulb Secretary in your own WI. Bulb Secretaries, please compile all the orders from your members and then post the large order form (keeping the blue page for yourself) and cheque to

Lynn Humberstone,
Oxfordshire WI Bulb Secretary.
Hayston Barn, Market Square,
Lower Heyford, BICESTER, OX25 5NY
by 1st June 2020.

Bulbs are delivered from mid-September to mid-October to Bulb Secretaries for distribution to members ready for planting. This is a fund-raiser for Oxfordshire WI, so the more WIs that take part, the more successful the scheme will be, regardless of the size of the order. Additional catalogues and order forms can be emailed from the office and contact Lynn with any queries on 01869 340596.



CREATIVE WRITING



LADY DENMAN CUP - "What I heard on the Bus"

This creative writing competition could be the perfect way for you all to 'escape' and let your imagination run wild. Maybe you have never thought of entering before but with more leisure time at the moment this would be a great opportunity. Using no more than 500 words, the topic is 'What I heard on the bus'. I am sure with your brilliant imagination you will find no difficulty in producing a stunning story.

Add your name, address, WI and Oxfordshire federation on the first page only, please send 4 copies of your entry which must be accompanied with your entry form, (a stamped address envelope if you wish your story to be returned) and a cheque made payable to OFWI for £4 to the office at Tackley. To allow a fair and standardised competition timescale, the NFWI has set a closing date of **Friday 18 September 2020** for members to submit their entry to Oxfordshire WI office. After this date, county federations have until Friday 16 October 2020 to select up to three entries to

go forward for national judging. Results will be announced by mid-December 2020. A revised schedule, individual entry form and federation entry form will be available to download from My WI shortly. <https://www.thewi.org.uk/>

Cost: £4

NEW Closing date: Friday 18 September 2020

POETRY

Some of our members have been busy writing already, this time poetry;

While I'm sitting here today
it feels like I'm wishing the time away.

Since the start it seems surreal
I can't explain just how I feel.

Lots of people doing a frenzied shop
I'm glad to say that this has stopped.
Staying inside, No Family, No Friends
how we long for the day when this all ENDS.

At 8 we all clap as loud as we can
with hands, tambourine or even a pan.
There will come the day and of that I am sure
where we'll go as we please, and our lives will restore.

One thing is for sure without their dedication
the NHS has helped save OUR LITTLE NATION

To show that we care we all do it together
To shout NHS we will LOVE you FOREVER.



On the doorstep

Butterflies and bees, birdsong and trees,
These are the simple things I see and hear.
A dainty holly blue, an orange tip, a pair of
specked wood butterflies, dancing in the breeze.

A woodpecker knocking from up on high
Framed by the trees in a clear blue sky.

No traffic, no people, just me and my dogs

It would be bliss if not for the worry

A deadly virus has the country on alert
We cannot see family or talk face to face,
for fear of endangering the rest of our race.

Across the world people are coping
But still folk are dying, we cannot see the end.

The birds and the bees have no idea

The bluebells are out, buttercups too

Squirrels are getting bolder, stealing nuts from the feeder
Then drinking from the pond, where the tadpoles are growing.

Lambs are being born and the kites still soar

And we all pray for the day when the virus is no more.

Linda Jeffrey, Minster Lovell WI

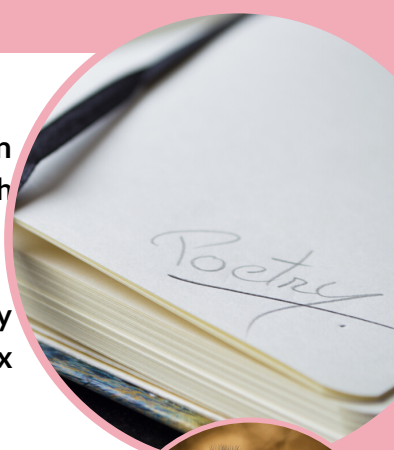


Penny Noble, Stoke Row WI

Six members of THAME WI formed a poetry group a few years ago and met once a month in members' homes to read aloud their own choice of poems, either with an agreed theme, or by a certain poet, or starting with a chosen letter of the alphabet. Of course, we cannot get together at the moment, so I suggested we each have a day of the week when we email two poems to the other members, on any theme we like. This is working really well, and the variety of poems we get is wonderful, from Pam Ayres to Wordsworth, and from Max Boyce to Shakespeare. We look forward each day to reading them, and the added bits of news from our members about the wild-life, birds, and trees and flowers blossoming in our gardens.

Maybe other WIs in our county would like to try it? I can assure them it's well worth it!

Janet Carr, Thame WI



Activities

A HISTORIC TOWN TRAIL



Jean Geary
01235869070
07799 766566
jean.geary@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

On a chilly and breezy morning back in February before the lockdown, members of WHEATLEY WI caught the 9.32am bus to Thame Town Hall. From there we started the Historic Town Trail 3. It was an easy trail to follow and ideal for that time of the year. The walk started at the Memorial Gardens and goes from 1 to 32. We eventually arrived at the start of the Railway Bridge and took the path to join the Phoenix Trail. We got as far as Elms Park and decided to head back to Thame as we were all rather cold! We enjoyed refreshments at a local coffee shop which warmed us through. It was interesting to explore the Victorian and Edwardian area of Thame which is east of the Town Centre.

Lucy Collinson, Wheatley WI





A WAY TO HELP



Chairman Veronica Wilson
07855 414045
veronica.wilson@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

The message below illustrates what WEST WITNEY WI has been up to during lockdown. We have a small sewing team (Ilona Povey, President; Margaret Lund, Treasurer; Val Burton, member and Diane Clapton, member) who, between them have made 200 laundry scrubs bags and 20 well-being bags for the NHS and local front line care workers. We have been supported by other members with donations of fabric and postage sponsorship. A true team effort!

Below is a FB message posted by Millers Grange Care Home in Witney. They have given their permission to share the image and their thanks.

Ilona Povey, West Witney WI



*Random acts of kindness....
It's amazing how the current situation has brought the very best in many people and we are so thankful to the wonderful ladies of the WEST WITNEY WI who very kindly donated some "Scrub Laundry" bags which they have been busy making for the staff to put their uniforms into when going off shift. They are so much more practical than plastic bags and a lot more colourful!
Thank you ladies x #westwitneywi
#wi #randomactsofkindness #bekind*

YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to the enormous success in making Laundry Bags for NHS staff - very many of our WIs have contributed:

I am thrilled to let you know that the small group of seven members of WHEATLEY WI have, so far, made a grand total of 90 laundry bags which have been distributed to the local hospitals. We have more materials on standby if required!

Carol Hunt, Wheatley WI



The photo shows some of the 150 laundry bags made by members of BLOXHAM WI. They have been distributed to local care homes, Oxford, Banbury and Nightingale hospitals through contacts working in those establishments. Anne Twedde in the other photo made the majority of the bags.

**Sue Myburgh,
Bloxham WI**



TALENTED EXPERIENCED SEWERS

Please continue your excellent work - anyone who wishes to join them please contact :

Laundry Bags - UK Crafters - ukcraftersoxon@gmail.com

Oxfordshire Crafters for Scrubs - tinaherringshaw01@gmail.com

For the love of Scrubs for Henley-on-Thames area littlefair634@btinternet.com

Tutorials and Patterns - <https://sewdifferent.co.uk/scrubs-paper-pattern-not-for-profit/>

DENMAN

FABERDASHERY SALE

This has currently been rescheduled for Saturday 11 July, 10am-3pm but look out for updates in these changing times. If you have been crafting during self-isolation, we hope that you will take this opportunity to restock with all your favourite items. We have some fabulous fabric, pretty papers, stunning stamps, colourful cottons and wonderful wools. All here at Denman at bargain prices.

Make a day of it, bring a friend and a picnic and enjoy the fragrant flowers of the Denman garden. Car parking and admission are free. Tea & Coffee will be available.

For the latest information on this event, please contact vjoansherrin@ntlworld.com or christinefarmer26@yahoo.co.uk



Over to you



#OVERTOYOU

NEW ARRIVAL

THE TEA BIRDS WI (Upton) are excited to announce that our "Mrs Pres" - Jo Christie - has given birth to a future WI member.

Elvira Gladys Christie was born on 27th April at 0647, weighing in at 8lb 11oz - both Mum and baby are doing well.

This is the third child born to Jo while President of the Tea Birds which was founded seven years ago by her and a group of enthusiastic friends. We currently have 50 members. Her sons Alfie - age (just over 5) and Frankie (age 3½) are, I'm sure, delighted to have a baby sister to poke and tease, oops, sorry meant cuddle & play with.

We wish Jo, Wallace and their now three children a very happy life together.
The Tea Birds WI



SEWING PROJECTS

In January, pre- coronavirus crisis, SHRIVENHAM & DISTRICT WI craft group started the "Sew A Purse" project for Zambian schoolgirls, using fabric donated by members. The subsequent lockdown has provided a glorious opportunity to enjoy sewing these purses. This project was to make hygiene purses for schoolgirls in Zambia to carry their reusable STs and soap in, the latter made by others working on the project. By agreeing to accept a purse each schoolgirl would be making a promise to stay in school all month, when previously they would often miss valuable education on the days when they were menstruating. Several members were involved in the project, Jackie Attridge, Audrey Jeffries, Mary Hewitt, Steph Muir, Sue Reade and craft group organiser Penny Hockley. A total of 35 purses, each containing a handmade bead bracelet, and the inscription "With Best Wishes for a Happy & Healthy Life from Shrivenham & District Women's Institute, Oxfordshire England" were posted off to the UK representative of the project in late April. Postage money was kindly donated by non-sewing members, eager to contribute towards the project. Ever industrious, the WI craft group have now turned their attention to making Scrub Bags for NHS and Care Home workers.

Penny Hockley, Shrivenham & District WI



#MYVIRTUALOXFORDSHIREWI

FREE ONLINE EVENTS TO BOOK VISIT www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk/events

LIFE IN LONDON

MONDAY 11 MAY 2020 2pm

SIMON GREGOR



Simon Gregor is an historian, tour guide, lecturer and tutor at Denman. Over the course of the coming weeks he will be offering a variety of short lectures online; precise subjects are still to be decided, but are likely to include his particular passions which are the First World War, the interwar years, the Second World War, and the Cold War. Not someone who likes to be pigeon-holed (!), Simon also loves talking about the wider history of London, and even about meditation and mindfulness. So watch this space!

SURVIVING THE HOUSE THAT SAT DOWN

THURSDAY 14 MAY 7pm

ALICE MAY



Alice May is a multi-tasking mother with four not-so-small children. She is fortunate enough to be married to (probably) the most patient man on the planet and they live in, what used to be, a ramshackle old cottage in the New Forest. Following many years working as a GP practice manager, Alice decided that 2016 was the year she would start writing. Inspired by true-life events 'The House That Sat Down' trilogy simply wouldn't leave her alone until it was written. Packed with humorous anecdotes about family life and full of positivity, this is a tale about life, love and the true meaning of family values.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF EDITH CAVELL

MONDAY 18 MAY 2020 2pm

MELANIE BARTON-GIBSON:



Exploring the story of the British heroine who died in Brussels in 1915. Presenting the experience of regular visits to Brussels to research the hospitals and homes where Edith worked in her nursing career, as well as the place of her execution - a humbling experience. The Life and Times of Edith Cavell talk tells her story supported by photographs of existing artefacts of her life. "Her story needed to be told and you told it!" - Hythe Civic Society. I have been delighted by the comments of members of Edith's family and relatives of the key players who have attended the talk.

DOODLE ART FOR BEGINNERS

THURSDAY 21 MAY 10am

GRAEME GETTINGS



Join Graeme for a live art class on 'Doodle Art'. Suitable for beginners who have little or no experience of watercolour painting. The product will be a beautiful unique hand-painted panel which can be framed or set on a greeting card. You'll amaze yourself with your talent!

Materials required:

Pencil, ruler, rubber. Watercolour paints, fat watercolour brush + thin brush (or any medium size brush). Black fine gel pen, rollerball or black biro. Sheet of watercolour paper 5" x 7" or similar (plain white regular card will do for practice but may 'buckle') + some scrap plain paper. Jam jar of water, piece of kitchen paper.

Stay safe and Stay home

The opinions expressed in News & Views are not necessarily those of the Oxfordshire WI.

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Cover picture with thanks to Pauline Buzzard Milton Under Wychwood WI



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

