



## Smarden WI

# Newsletter for February 2021

Two months into 2021 already. With luck, by the time you read this, many of us will have been vaccinated and Boris will have announced his road map for slowly returning our lives back to some sort of normality.

In the meantime, we continue as before. But, at least, there are signs of Spring in the air as March approaches. We can only hope that we are blessed with the beautiful weather we had last year. Wouldn't that be wonderful?

None of us know how long it will be before we can have proper meetings again so, for the time being anyway, the newsletter continues. If you have any items you feel may be of interest, stories, photographs, poems, puzzles etc, please forward them to us so they can be shared by all in the next edition.

**Carol Chandler**



*Wishing a very happy birthday to the following ladies whose special days are on the horizon or were celebrated earlier this month:*

2 February - Carol Chandler  
12 February - Carole Chapman  
12 February - Hilary Sutton  
28 February - Alison Townsley  
29 February - Deborah Wells

5 March - Gill Bromley  
7th March - Terry Sherman  
9 March - Joan Tumbridge  
22 March - Jean Ridley

*Many happy returns,  
Ladies*

### **The President's table**

A Spring flower arrangement from Gill who says it always lifts the spirits to see spring colours emerging, including her favourite flower, the primrose.

## Melt-in-the-middle Chocolate Puddings

Serves 2

### Ingredients:

50g chocolate (min 70% cacao)  
50g unsalted butter, plus extra to grease  
1 egg  
1 egg yolk

60g caster sugar  
2 tablespoons cocoa powder  
50g plain flour

### Method:

(Prep 20 mins Cook 15 mins)  
Heat oven to 180C / Gas 4  
Break the chocolate into squares and melt it with the butter in a bowl over a saucepan of hot water. Take off the heat and leave to cool.  
Whisk the egg, egg yolk and sugar with an electric mixer until well mixed.

Butter 2 ramekins, about 75mm in diameter. Dust well with cocoa powder, then shake off any excess.  
Whisk the cooled chocolate mixture into the eggs and sugar mixture.  
Sift the flour over the mixture, then fold in. Divide between the 2 ramekins.  
Bake for 15 minutes.  
Run a knife around the edge of each cake and turn out onto plates.

### Tips:

When turning the cakes out of the oven, expect them to appear a little bit wet on the top and be a bit wobbly, so take care when running the knife around the edge. There will be quite a lot of the melted part in the middle. For more cake and less sauce in the middle, cook for an extra 2 to 3 minutes.

(For St Valentine's day, serve in heart-shaped moulds as shown in the picture in the art pages at the end of the newsletter.)

### Does anybody want my heart?!

For possibly twenty years this baking tin has knocked around with all the other baking tins. Every time I come across it, I think to myself "I must get round to using this next 14 February". Have I ever actually ever used it? Never!! I would be more than happy to donate it (free, of course) to any member of Swarden WI. At least it MIGHT get used!! Sorry this wasn't in the January Newsletter as by the time you read this, Valentine's Day will have passed. But there's always 2022!

**Stephanie Atkins**  
6 February 2021



## Pancreatic Cancer Research Fundraising Adventure 2020

It was in sad circumstances that I made my 2020 New Year resolution to undertake monthly fundraising activities. My great friend Blanche was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in September 2019. Distraught that we could not visit her (in Pennsylvania where she lived) during her six months' chemotherapy, we were determined to meet up in April 2020.

I set myself a target of raising £2,000 for the year and it began with a swim in the sea in January (training involved cold showers which I'm told are beneficial to health).



*January: a dip in the sea (8 degrees centigrade) at Hythe with the swimmers who do this at 8.00 a.m. every Sunday!*

This raised a significant amount and got my fundraising off to an encouraging start. In February my lovely hairdresser, Debbie, hosted a Ladies' Pamper Afternoon on a day when her salon was normally closed.



*February: Ladies Pamper Afternoon*

Then Covid struck and we were locked down.

Plans for coffee mornings, cream teas, a sponsored walk, aerobathon etc were put on hold and I got creative. I made and sold felt brooches in the shape of roses.



*March onwards: felt rose brooches (3 for £10)*

I also delivered prescriptions in my village. While this was never intended as a fundraiser, some insisted on giving me donations or asked me to keep the change from their prescriptions.

What proved beneficial was that in telling friends and family about my fundraising efforts (many of whom had met Blanche on her visits to England) several offered to organise activities or support me in other ways. Jen, a second cousin, hosted a virtual Flamingo Paperie Evening (cards, crafts, gift wrap etc) in May which was so successful that she ran another in October selling a range of Christmas cards etc.

I continued making roses during the summer. Sadly Blanche died in early August just a few days after her 77<sup>th</sup> birthday. I was devastated not to have seen her during her illness (we had previously holidayed in Yorkshire in May 2019). Grief spurred me on to a new approach: challenges!

It was well known that Blanche and I had no head for heights (I recall the number of castle ramparts, church towers and even a lighthouse we began to ascend but never reached the top!) so everyone knew I was serious when I announced that I was going to do a Wing Walk in September. We live near Headcorn airfield and I had seen wing-walkers near



our house. It cost over £300 but our long-awaited holiday in New Zealand had been cancelled so I didn't hesitate to see a good use for some of the money we'd saved. I was amazed at how much I enjoyed it; it was a thrilling ten-minute adventure. I carried a photo of Blanche in my pocket so she was beside me to give me courage. Friends and family were able to come along and cheer me on in their socially-distanced groups.



September: Wing Walk

My brother Andy, a keen cyclist, challenged me to cycle from the north Kent to the south Kent coast on my rickety old bicycle. Again friends came to the rescue; Liza, who cycles as infrequently as I do, said she needed a challenge and would like to join me. Our enthusiastic cycling pals, Mary and Angela, offered to train us. These friends also raised money



October: Cycling 40 miles North to South Kent coast: the start at Seasalter

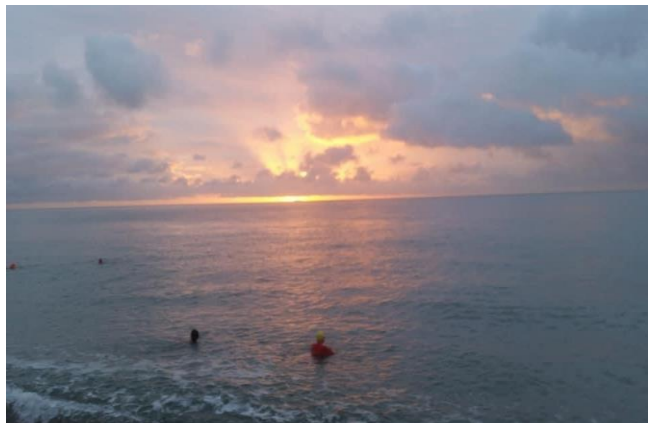
through sponsorship, boosting my funds. We did it on a perfect October day. Angela's husband drove us and our bikes to Seasalter. The route took us 40 miles along country lanes and we were six hours in the saddle. It was very hilly, with stunning views, over the North Downs but the final third was flat as we rode across Romney Marsh and along the sea wall from Dymchurch to Dungeness. It was cold when we arrived but sitting outside the Britannia eating fish and chips, washed down with a pint of beer, was the perfect ending to a great day.



Cycle ride: the finish at Dungeness

In November someone I barely knew died of pancreatic cancer. A mutual friend told the family of my fundraising campaign and they requested donations for PCRF. The mutual friend, Margaret, also embarked on making and selling Christmas pinatas, raising £220 for the cause.

Having completed my brother's challenge, I challenged him to swim in the sea with me in December. We scraped ice off the cars at 7.00am and were in the sea an hour later where we were joined by friend Steve.



*December: another swim at Hythe (temperature 4 degrees centigrade)*

We stayed in for ten minutes watching the sun rise with views across to France. It was an exhilarating way to end the year and we were back home eating porridge at 9.00am.



I am now knitting beaded necklaces and bracelets which I will start to sell soon. Once we are all free to enjoy life beyond Covid, I will hold that aerobathon, coffee morning and cream tea. Three friends are keen to walk the 28 mile Royal Military Canal from Winchelsea in East Sussex to Hythe on the Kent coast. I'm also hoping to organise a music event (we have friends who play in three different bands), a Bake-and-Share, and a Cheese and Wine evening. Challenges, include kayaking along the River Rother, and I may just be brave enough to do a tandem parachute jump!

When I look back on 2020, a difficult year for everyone, I am tinged with great sadness for the loss of a dear friend, but also with pride at having raised over £4500 through my various activities. It was all helped me maintain a sense of purpose and helped to get me through. Thank you PCRF for this and everything you do, with special thanks to Maggie Blanks for her constant support. I will hang on to the collecting tin, banners and balloons..... here's to 2021!

**Gill Bromley  
January 2021**



**Errata:** It was incorrectly stated in last month's newsletter that the money raised from the sale of Margaret's magnificent Pinatas went to WI funds. In fact, a donation was made to Pancreatic Cancer research

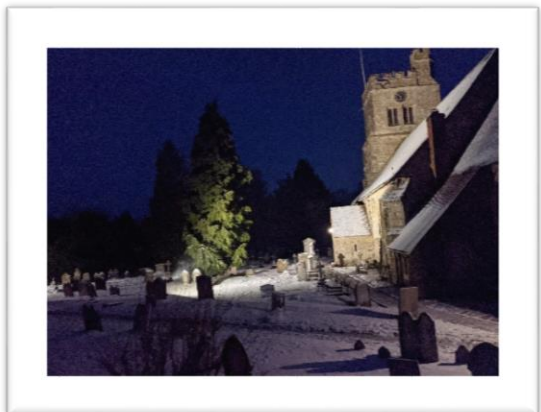
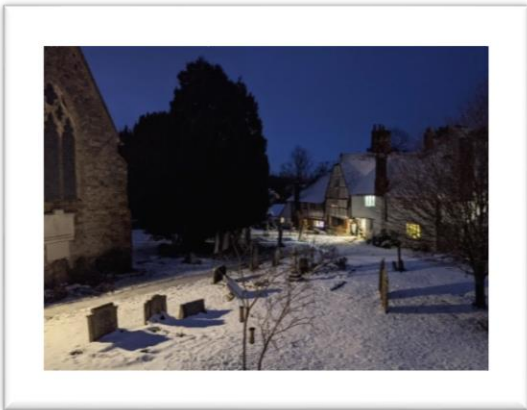






As many of our members will know, Jenny Mowatt is nominally in charge of the phone box on Bethersden Road. She has passed on this article from the March 21 edition of "The Oldie" magazine, which you may find of interest as it is the centenary year of the installation of the first ever phone "kiosk"!

You may have noticed the change of photograph of Smarden on Page 1 of this edition. This was taken by Sarah Hayward of Poor Row Cottage, Cage Lane during the recent snowy weather. Here are a few more of her lovely pictures of the church in the snow. For those of you who don't know, Poor Row Cottage is one of the properties adjacent to the Flying Horse that have St Michael's church yard as their back garden!





*Very Early Spring Katherine Mansfield*

The fields are snowbound no longer; there are little blue lakes and flags of tenderest green. The snow has been caught up into the sky- So many white clouds-and the blue of the sky is cold. Now the sun walks in the forest, He touches the bows and stems with his golden fingers; they shiver, and wake from slumber. Over the barren branches he shakes his yellow curls. Yet is the forest full of the sound of tears.... A wind dances over the fields. Shrill and clear the sound of her waking laughter, yet the little blue lakes tremble And the flags of tenderest green bend and quiver.



Top right: Carol Chandler's first daffodils

Right: Joceyln Craig's "Winter Beauty", winter flowering clematis.



Margaret's red Amaryllis

and

Jocelyn's pink one

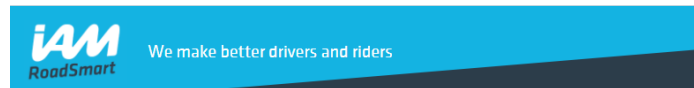
*So long Winter  
Goodbye snow.  
It's time to watch  
The flowers grow.*

*(Author unknown)*



## MAINTAINING and BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN DRIVING

Reproduced below is an extract from Not the East Kent News below relating to the NFWI partnership with IAM Roadsmart (previously known as the Institute of Advanced Motorists).



Gill Bromley undertook their Advanced Motoring course, over a period of three months a couple of years ago, and can highly recommend it.

*"When working, I travelled daily on local roads, through towns and on motorways. On retirement, I realised that my confidence was likely to wane. Knowing that I wanted to drive and tour parts of the UK and be able to drive for as long as possible I signed up. At that time, the cost was around £120 for three sessions (one per month).*

*Sunday morning sessions involved going to Maidstone (there is also a centre near Canterbury) for a monthly illustrated lecture on an aspect of driving, followed by a drive with one of the IAM Roadsmart volunteers. . While it seemed a bit daunting at first to have someone observe and comment on my driving (although my husband occasionally chips in!), I found the volunteers and everyone on the course really friendly and helpful. I*

*quickly realised that having learnt to drive in the 1980s my skills required some fine-tuning. The cars we drive today are very different, including manual and automatic, roads are busier and some of the rules have changed. The course included driving on the motorway as well as on country lanes and in town. It was excellent and I have remained a Member. Taking a test (with a police driving instructor) at the end of the course is optional.*

*IAMSmart offer a range of other options including one-off driver assessment sessions etc. Take a look at their website at <https://www.iamroadsmart.com/> for details. Overall it was one of the best investments I've made. Others on my course were buying Advanced Motoring courses for Christmas gifts for their children and grandchildren."*

The NFWI and IAM RoadSmart have been working together closely, sharing knowledge and experience, to put together a programme of activities, bespoke for the WI, that offer a variety of opportunities which members could access. Following lockdown and getting back behind the wheel, drivers may feel out of practice or may have lost some confidence in their competence. More detailed information is being sent to all WIs. Members are asked to click on the link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X3XXC9L> and complete a short survey in order to help build a programme that meets the needs and interest of members.





# Quiz Corner

Can you guess these well-known sayings from the pictures?

Answers below.



- |                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Forget it                   | 13. Bump in the night                 |
| 2. Jack in the box             | 14. First Aid                         |
| 3. Somewhere over the rainbow  | 15. One in a million                  |
| 4. Back door                   | 16. Apple pie                         |
| 5. Read between the lines      | 17. Ice cube                          |
| 6. Blood is thicker than water | 18. Rocking around the Christmas tree |
| 7. Beeline                     | 19. Think outside the box             |
| 8. Cancelled cheque            | 20. Six feet underground              |
| 9. Once upon a time            | 21. Won by a nose                     |
| 10. Green eggs and ham         | 22. Too big to ignore                 |
| 11. Try to understand          | 23. Half-baked                        |
| 12. Downtown                   | 24. Neon lights                       |

In last month's Newsletter, we mentioned an example from Lynn Carmichael of an old-fashioned saying which has passed down throughout the generations but may well in future probably, sadly, die out. Below are some more old sayings, customs and traditions which we hope will continue for many years to come:

### Kathy Reynolds remembers "First Footings – A New Year's Eve custom:



The origins of First Footing seem to have been lost in the mists of time and various regions seem to have slightly different ways of observing this ancient tradition. Although not as common as it used to be, the north-east of England is still something of a regional stronghold for this practice.

Having married a Yorkshire lad and spent many a Christmas and New Year 'up north' with my extended family in the 1980s and 90s and in addition to Christmas cake always being served with a slice of cheese (which was also new to me), First Footing was always observed on New Year's Eve.

Stephen's Dad used to disappear from the gathered assembly shortly before midnight to wrap up warm and gather the necessary accoutrements for the task ahead. He would then leave the house by the back door. Shortly after the chimes of midnight there would be a knock at the front door and we'd all go into the hall while my Mum-in-law opened the door to let in our First-Footer, bringing with him good fortune to home and family for the following twelve months.

Of course, this only actually worked as long as he remembered to bring with him a piece of coal, a piece of bread and a silver sixpence! A further observation for the purist is that the First Footer should be a dark-haired man which was not the case with Stephen's Dad during the years I knew him – he had a lovely head of snowy-white hair - but as he had been dark in his younger days this was lovingly overlooked! Happy memories!

**Kathy Reynolds**

### Stephanie Atkins remembers "Gifts of sharp items which had to be paid for!:



A tradition in our family, and presumably others, is that when someone receives a gift of something sharp, like knives or scissors, they have to "pay" the giver a very small amount, like 1p or 2p. This is to turn the transaction into one between buyer and seller. This comes from a very old fear that anyone approaching you with a knife or blade means you harm!

In my experience this is not a widely known tradition, because when I've attempted to give someone a small coin for their bladed gift, they are nonplussed. I've said, "Just humour me – take the money". I'd be interested to know if others have heard of this tradition.

**Stephanie Atkins**



## Sandie Hughes remembers "Mother never had a jibber!"



I always said that I had the best Mother-in-law! Her name was Daisy Hughes (she was Betty Bromley's mum). I believe she was also a member of Smarden WI in the early days! Mother had many old sayings and traditions, but the one that sticks in my mind - and I often use it myself - is "Mother never had a jibber".

Whenever she had a task she didn't want to do, but she knew it had to be done, she would quote this saying, knuckle down, and get on with the job in hand!

She has passed this on to me! I'm sure we all get jobs that we don't want to do! It helps just to say it and get on with it! I hope some of you try it out!

['Jibber' means....to refuse to proceed!]

Sandie Hughes

**Our latest committee member, Megan Shields,** does of course hail from across the pond. As is very well known, Thanksgiving is celebrated every November by everyone in or from the USA. But perhaps not everyone is aware of its origins?

Megan tells us that it is modelled on the 1621 harvest feast shared by the Pilgrims and the Native Americans. Today, of course, it has evolved in to a reason to get together with family and friends, to share food, and to be thankful together for all you have.



**Carol Chandler's offering** is more simple ....



...but was just as keenly observed: If you ever gave anyone a gift of a purse or wallet, you had to put money in it – even if only a penny or two. This was to ensure that the receiver was never without money in the future!

**Kim Marsh's mum** was correct when she said "never say no when opportunity knocks" and that "there's a solution to every problem, you just have to find it". This approach has certainly helped Kim to live a fantastically varied life over the years!

# HEARTY PAGES FOR FEBRUARY - Feel the Love!

This month - a lovely selection celebrating Romance, Spring and a bit relating to the WI's association with The Climate Coalition and the 'Show the Love' campaign (see [theclimatecoalition.org/show-the-love](https://theclimatecoalition.org/show-the-love) for more information)



Collage 'Bucket Loads of Love' by Geraldine Dyer





# 'For the Love of Dance'

by  
*Sandie Hughes*

"You dance love  
And you dance joy  
And you dance dreams."  
Gene Kelly



A real heart-melter - the image of the

# 'Melt-in-the-Middle' Chocolate

Puddings  
by  
*Lynn Carmichael*



(see recipe shown previously - you know you want to !!)

**Emerging Spring – as witnessed in our Gardens!**



Jan Barnes



Kathy Reynolds



Stephanie Atkins



Stephanie Atkins



Stephanie Atkins



Stephanie Atkins





Felted Hearts of Wool  
For the  
**'Show the Love'**  
Campaign  
With some Wonders  
From  
Our Amazing Natural  
World  
~Kathy Reynolds

From Jacqui Mason on  
**Robins**

Robins are a comfort to  
everyone living on their own.  
Especially if they have lost a  
dear one. I call this one Norma  
after my Mum.  
It follows me around the garden  
and is on the window sill  
waiting for food each morning.





## Sahara Sunset in Smarden

by Jacqui Mason

Jacqui captured this beautiful sunset ~ a great example of the colourful lightshows we have been enjoying at dawn and dusk following a big sandstorm in Africa across the Sahara ~ sweeping red sand into the atmosphere and across to our shores on strong southerly winds.

### Next Time ...

Well, hard to believe it but Eastertime 2021 will be taking place around the time of our next publication.

Please send anything art-themed to [katrey15@hotmail.com](mailto:katrey15@hotmail.com) in any medium you like. Easter is an uplifting, tasty and colourful theme you could explore, but send, well, anything that you would like to share with our lovely WI Membership.

Many thanks to all our contributors who make these pages so interesting!

