



Smarden WI

Newsletter for January 2021

A very belated Happy New Year to you all.

Well, here we are again. Lockdown number 3. Who would have believed back in March 2020 that nothing much would have changed nine or ten months later. Let us hope that the vaccination roll-out will continue apace and that before too many more months we can get back to life as we used to know it. We can only hope we can still remember what that was when we eventually get there!

In the meantime, the Newsletter will continue to keep everyone updated with the latest news and views. Any contributions are always welcome, particularly funny poems, limericks or anecdotes to keep people smiling.

Next month incorporates Valentine's Day which, you may recall, was the last competition we held at a proper meeting last year. Any submissions on this subject – whether poems, artwork, love-letters, etc, would be gratefully received.

Take care and stay safe.

Carol Chandler



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

7 January - Jenny Gore
12 January - Jenny Mowatt
16 January - Kathy Gibbs
25 January - Betty Bromley
29 January - Kim Marsh
30 January - Pat Hawkins

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

Many happy returns,
Ladies

The President's table
Gill's flowers for January are as lovely as ever. A reminder of Spring to come.

Christmas Goody Bags

As a committee, we wanted to come up with something to give to our members by way of a Christmas gift in these strange times, and we thought long and hard about it. In the end, the suggestion of Christmas goodie bags came up, one to be delivered to every lady with a Christmas card from us all. More brain cells went into what else to put inside the bag, and we hope you will agree that the eventual mix of items was apt and a bit of fun.

The logistics of putting the bags together really was an example of great team work, with everyone tracking down online the items we wanted. One cold Saturday morning, we then formed something of an illegal gathering in the Charter Hall car park – Boris had already put us into Tier 4 so a group of any size was not allowed but sometimes needs must. On the day, however, it seemed that half of the village population was waiting to get into the shop, the queue being enormous, so we weren't the only ones in there. We made especially sure of our social distancing whilst, in turn, visiting the back of Kathy Reynolds' car to deposit the goodies each of us had obtained and to sign the master sheet for insertion in the Christmas card. Eleanor then took everything away so she could fill the bags for us each to collect the following weekend.

We had some lovely responses thanking us for our efforts so all the clandestine activities were not in vain! Below are a few photos of some of the ladies receiving their bags.





Remember the raffle ticket in the last newsletter? This was one of the items in the goody bags, and a draw was duly made to find a winner for a box of Quality Street. Congratulations to the aptly-named Marina Hope on winning our Christmas Raffle:

IN THE TIME OF QUIET

*No one's told the daffodils about the pause to Spring
And no one's told the birds to roost and asked them
not to sing
No one's asked the lazy bee to cease his bumbling
round
And no one's stopped the bright green shoots
emerging through the ground.*

*No one's told the sap to rest, deep within the wood
And stop the sleepy trees from waking, wreathed
about in bud.
No one's told the sky to douse its brightest shades of
blue
And stop the scudding clouds from puffing headlong
into view.*

*No one's asked the lambs to still the springs beneath
their feet,
To stop their rapid rush and quell each joyful bleat
No one's told the stream to halt its gurgle or its flow
And warned the playful breezes, not to gust and
blow.*

*No one's asked the raindrops not to fall upon the
earth
And fail to quench the soil in the season of rebirth.
No one's locked the sun down, or dimmed the
shimmer of the moon
And even in the darkest night, the stars are still
immune.*



*Remember what you value,
remember who is dear.
Close the doors to danger and keep
your family near.
In the quiet all around us take the
time to sit and stare
And wonder at the beauty
unfurling everywhere.*

*Look towards the future, after the
ordeal.
And keep faith in Mother Nature's
power and will to heal.*

Philippa Atkin

YOU ARE WHAT YOU WEAR (OR NOT!)

Last night I had a new experience. As I took off my leggings, I noticed a hole in the backside. This hadn't been caused by accidentally being torn on a rough surface. On closer examination, the fabric around the hole had become very thin. The hole was due to WEAR! I can't recall ever wearing out a piece of clothing before (excluding socks and tights).

During lockdowns we've all become more "casual" in our clothes, as we have to stay indoors and not formally socialise. This involves, for many including me, wearing tracksuits, leggings and old sweatshirts. On one level I think "It doesn't matter what I wear, I don't meet anybody". The reality is that this is untrue. I see friendly neighbours almost every day, albeit at two metres' distance. Also, at various times, I meet the owners of about twenty local dogs, on the Minnis, Street or Vesper Hawk Lane. At the present time (mid-January) we are all sheltering under rainwear and wellies. Twenty years ago I bought an orange, two-layered anorak to go to New York, as the temperatures there were forecast to be at freezing point or less. I remember the date specifically because nine months later the Twin Towers were attacked. The still-worn anorak is tired, well-worn and sometimes grubby.



I recall with affection a WI event which Margaret Twort and I attended in June 2019. Egerton WI were celebrating their centenary, and as the then President I was invited. The event they had planned for this was a formal tea party. The dress code was described on the printed invitations as "Hats and Posh Frocks". It was a beautiful sunny day, so the outfits weren't compromised by various jackets or raincoats. Everybody was dressed formally, all wearing hats, and looking stunning. Many ladies expressed their great pleasure in wearing again a glamorous, expensive outfit bought for a wedding or similar, but stored unseen in a wardrobe ever since.

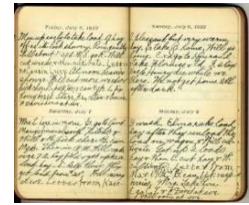
Perhaps Smarden WI could copy aspects of this event? Organise a summer meeting with an invitation to wear "Clothes for a Summer Ball", but without the "Ball", just a happy social party? Whilst currently wearing well-worn casual clothes, with elasticated waistbands, it would be something to look forward to. This is so necessary as we struggle through Lockdown Three!

Stephanie Atkins
16 January 2021



Small steps may appear unimpressive, but don't be deceived. They are the means by which perspectives are subtly altered, mountains are gradually scaled, and lives are drastically changed.

Richelle E. Goodrich, Making Wishes



MY WI DIARY RECORDS 1989-

Extracts from diaries kept by Gill Bromley

1989: *the year work began on the Ashenden local needs houses. I worked for KCC Libraries as Area Schools and Childrens Librarian across Ashford, Canterbury and Swale. Grandma (Ethel) Wickens; a very keen W.I. member for most of her life after she came to Haffenden Farm, Smarden in 1938.*

Thursday 12th January: this evening the ladies of the W.I. went to Elvey Farm at Pluckley for a meal to celebrate their 70th anniversary. It was an excellent evening with wine flowing. I ate smoked salmon, followed by beef provencale and then profiteroles. We also had cheese and biscuits and coffee.

June Field proposed a toast and made a little speech, reflecting on times past. Then Joan Craggs read a few of the 1919 press cuttings (from the Kentish Express) I had collated at Ashford Library.

There were only 4 members absent and we were all given a tiny basket of dried flowers to take home. A very pleasant evening

Saturday 4th February: went to Ashford Library this afternoon and finished checking the 1919 newspapers for the W.I.'s 70th anniversary celebrations. It's such an interesting way to spend a cold and windy afternoon.

Thursday 9th February: W.I. this evening. Eva Neve showed slides and gave an excellent talk about her visit to Canada last year. It has given me the travel bug. *N.B. It certainly did; we have since travelled quite extensively in Australia and the USA as well as the UK and Europe*

Saturday 11th March: W.I. Jumble Sale. Took Grandma's things up in Dad's truck, which I greatly enjoyed driving. It was sad to see Grandma's bits and pieces arranged on the White

Elephant stall though. I suppose it's a fitting end for a W.I. lady.

No mention of March W.I. meeting.

Thursday 13th April: Excellent W.I. meeting – a lady showing us part of her historic costume collection – items from c. 1919. What wonderful clothes. I'd love to wear some. It made me feel quite dull and it struck me how 'unoriginal' our clothes seem – all the same, off the peg. I must get a good night's sleep; off to Lancaster tomorrow for the Public Libraries Group Conference.

Thursday 25th May: Inter-village W.I. quiz tonight – Egerton won

Missed May meeting as we were on holiday in Cornwall.

Thursday 8th June: W.I. this evening was a barbecue at Adcock's (Bell Cottage). It was lovely. The rain held off and it wasn't at all windy. The food was excellent and we had a very good raffle. I won a bottle of wine.

I was working the evening of July meeting; entertaining a children's author in Canterbury

Thursday 10th August: W.I. this evening – Miss Pullar on herbs – entertaining as usual.

No mention of September meeting

Monday 16th October: W.I. Group meeting proved hectic this evening. Firstly I was declared 'projectionist' and had to operate an antiquated projector for the speaker who was from National Committee. It was a farce – the projector wouldn't work properly. I was really embarrassed. The 1919 Pageant went well and I stood on stage in my bloomers and chemise as the 'Smarden bride'. Unfortunately mother (Nora Batt) had to perform

her bit in total darkness because Mrs Barnes (Phyllis) missed her cue to turn the lamp on! The costumes looked good though and we all sang a rousing 'God Save the Queen' at the end.

Thursday 9th November: W.I. this evening - Annual Meeting. Did teas with Betty Morris. The Social Half Hour was 2 men showing slides set to music. The pictures were very good. Tonight the Berlin Wall was opened - wonderful news I hope.

Sunday 10th December: dull evening planning quiz for W.I. on events during the past 70 years. There was a good programme on tv about sheep but I missed most of it because Mum kept asking me how to spell various words (for the quiz). Bess (our sheepdog) enjoyed the programme immensely.

Thursday 14th December: the W.I. party was very good - games with Sheila Palmer, lovely food, some old slides from Ann Knight and Jeanne Phillips and carols to finish.

Thursday 21st December: W.I. carol singing this evening. We had a lovely time. It was different this year. We went to 3 houses where parties of friends, family and villagers had been invited. We sang, ate mince pies and drank mulled wine at each. We went to Mr and Mrs Grant's (Church Farm), Jim and Juliet Carr's (what a lovely barn conversion near Haffenden), and the Davidge's (Old School House) where a large crowd had assembled. We also visited the Bell and the Flyer. We finished up at Harry and Joan Craggs' (Pearsons) where we counted the proceeds - over £130 for the British Heart Foundation in memory of Frank Knight who died so recently. Joan showed us her Provencal Creche and told us the stories relating to the various character. It was the true spirit of Christmas.



When you have a spare moment (and who doesn't at present!), why not take a look at the Smarden History Society's YouTube pages?

There is a very interesting film called *The Way we Were*, showing the calendar of village events throughout the year 2006. The Duck Race, Open Gardens, School Sports, Bonfire Parade, Christmas - plus lots of other events such as the building of the Charter Hall.

It is a real Who's who of village people and all members will find it fascinating.



You will remember Margaret's magnificent Pinatas as sold at our Jam Sale. They raised a whopping £220 for WI funds. Many thanks to her for all the hard work involved

Quiz Corner

The **WordSearch**.com

Types of Food

L	R	E	T	F	R	U	I	T	T	M	M	S	U
E	E	I	O	F	T	H	G	S	R	T	A	G	K
T	T	T	S	G	A	O	O	E	A	V	C	R	R
T	T	T	E	C	D	T	D	L	D	D	A	A	C
U	U	E	L	N	L	D	T	D	I	I	R	V	A
C	B	H	B	T	R	O	O	O	S	N	O	Y	S
E	B	G	A	U	O	G	H	O	H	N	N	N	S
O	R	A	T	N	L	S	G	N	T	E	I	A	E
N	E	P	E	A	L	V	D	T	P	R	L	A	R
I	A	S	G	L	S	H	H	O	D	A	S	L	O
O	D	S	E	M	U	A	R	T	D	I	T	E	L
N	U	E	V	L	M	K	H	G	D	R	E	N	E
T	A	E	L	B	M	T	C	E	R	E	A	L	C
C	S	R	E	G	R	U	B	D	S	C	K	C	C

BREAD
PORK
CASSEROLE
STEAK
CEREAL
HOTDOGS
ONION
RADISH
SPAGHETTI
BURGERS
HOT DOG
MACARONI
SALAD
FRUIT
HAM
VEGETABLES
ROLLS
LETTUCE
BUTTER
TUNA
TV DINNER
NOODLES
GRAVY

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/289/>

Lockdown Capers!

I hope you've all been locking down
With smiley faces and not a frown
Everything is done from home
For parks and streets we mustn't roam
We cook and clean each day of the week
Our husbands and partners' approval to seek

New hobbies, old hobbies, all taken to task
Finding places to go without wearing that mask
Washing our hands over and over again
Doing puzzles to try and keep sane
Me being at home puts hubby in a flap
Now I've got to know him...he's not a bad chap!
Sandie Hughes

S marden WI News

As you will of course be aware, it was not possible for us to hold the usual AGM towards the end of last year. However, the current committee make-up was discussed at one of our committee meetings, and Eleanor Bliss asked to stand down, having served a three-year term. All committee members expressed sadness at her departure, thanked her for all that she had done and said she would be greatly missed.

After having featured in a recent Newsletter as recently joining the Smarden WI, Megan Shields has also now been co-opted on to the committee in the vacancy left by Eleanor.

Megan's knowledge of social media means that she will be a great asset to us in making more use of these facilities for publicity, etc. In particular, she will be updating and managing our Facebook account.

As the lockdown status looks as if it might continue for some while in one form or another, we have decided to try something different and have booked two online Zoom Speaker Presentations:

On 11 February, we will have a talk on the Dog's Trust by Lara Murphy, Supporter Relations Officer. She will speak for around 30 minutes in length and is happy to take questions after.

On 11 March Laure Molloy, an opera singer, will, for around 30-45 minutes, make a presentation to include song, visuals and anecdotes.

Please make a note on your calendar to join us on Zoom. All you need is a phone, tablet or laptop. Geraldine Dyer has already sent out an email with full details and giving a link to press that will take you right into the presentation. Nothing more to it.

The January edition of The East Kent News (which is now back in print) featured a long article on Eleanor's Lock Down Diaries. If you haven't seen a copy, there may be some still available in the Community Shop.

The WI Quiz launched at our Jam Sale in October proved as popular as ever. Two people tied for first place, although both got one incorrect answer. Quite an achievement, still, as it wasn't easy!

Margaret mentioned to us at the last committee meeting that Keith De La Plain happened to say how impressed he was that so many WI ladies are also now shop volunteers...

During a long period of the lockdown, Sandie Hughes has been away from home caring for an elderly relative. Her artistic contributions have therefore been sadly lacking from our Art Pages, part of the Newsletter. To rectify the matter, here is a piece of her work for your enjoyment.



Welcome to the latest member of the Smarden WI – Jacquie Mason



I lived in my last house, in Berkshire, for 32 years and having had a very busy work schedule for a long time, I really felt it was time to move. I spent all my childhood and five years of married life in Kent, so it was not surprising I chose this beautiful county.

I wanted to move to a village and feel part of a community. The whole process of moving was very stressful, but within two weeks of moving to Smarden, at the very end of September 2020, I was volunteering at the Community Store. This has kept me sane especially through what I personally feel is the hardest lockdown we have all had to endure. I have such great respect for the management committee and the team of volunteers that have made the store such a huge success. It has been a great way to meet people and I know I will be very happy here in the village.

I love to travel but, unfortunately, everything I had booked has been cancelled since March last year. My two favourite destinations are the Caribbean and Greece. Both very different, but both have the same draw - the warmth of their people. Hobbies-wise, I enjoy gardening and photography. I would really like to improve my golf once the weather improves and restrictions are lifted and also start painting/drawing again. I look forward to meeting the members of the Smarden WI

A comment on Facebook by Gill Bromley, perhaps particularly relevant in relation to Megan's new task on joining the committee:



"For those of you who use Facebook I can recommend that you follow the National Federation of Women's Institutes and the East Kent Federation of Womens Institutes. They share activities, craft ideas etc and it is inspiring to see what some are doing. One WI gave Christmas goody bags for women and children at their local refuge for instance. I occasionally share news of Smarden including our lovely Christmas Goody Bags. Facebook can be both a joy and an outrage but if you select your 'friends' with care it can bring a real sense of connection. Also ensure you have effective privacy settings.

The Smarden Community and Residents' pages provide up-to-the-minute information about crime, lost dogs and cats, local activities and news. There is occasionally some rather unpleasant stuff but it is normally managed very well (not an easy task) and you can just ignore the daft comments (they are the minority and every community has always had at least one Village Idiot). In the case of the fires at The Oaks and most recently at The Grange, it has proved a perfect way to get help and support to those who are experiencing difficult times."

Gill Bromley

Faith Spooner

Some of our members will remember Faith Spooner from Bethersden and will be sad to learn that she went into hospital with a heart condition but died in early January.

Lynda Robbins, secretary at Bethersden has explained that she only knew Faith from 2002 but that she was a long-standing and very active member of the WI, having been variously President (a few times), Secretary, constant Committee member, programme organiser, Pantomime Director. You name it, Faith had been involved. That was her mantra to members- get involved and then you reap the real benefits of being a member of the WI. She loved the WI, and will be very much missed by all who knew her.



In next month's Newsletter, for something different, we would like to include an item on old-fashioned sayings and traditions. An example below is provided by Lynn Carmichael. We all use them, some continue throughout the generations, others sadly die out. Please email Carol or Lynn with your contribution!

On visiting my in-laws' house, I was often asked to make the tea but no-one else was allowed to take over pouring a second cup.

"No interfering with the pot - ginger twins", they would say.

I had forgotten all about this until recently when the subject of sayings and traditions came up. Looking for an explanation on the Internet I found:

"Pouring the tea is fraught with dangers. If two women pour from the same pot, then one of them will have a baby within a year, or a member of her family will, and it might be ginger-haired twins!



2021

A NEW YEAR A FRESH START A NEW BEGINNING!

A
Gorgeous
Basket
of
Spring
Flowers
for you
from
Margaret
Twort
x



On Cats.....

"I'm only a cat,
and I stay in my place ...
Up there on your chair,
On your bed or your face!

I'm only a cat
And I don't finick much ...
I'm happy with cream
And anchovies and such!

I'm only a cat,
And we'll get along fine ...
As long as you know
I'm not yours ... You're all
mine!

Author Unknown

The beautiful little cat above is called Minstrel and belongs to a cousin of Sandie Hughes. Sandie used her artistic skills to capture his fluffy likeness.



In celebration of

the month of January with its sometimes-ethereal beauty - this photograph on Bethersden Road was taken on an early morning walk by a friend of Smarden WI - Diane Eccles

Left:
Stephanie Atkins sent a picture of her snowdrops in bloom alongside other bulbs seeking to join them!



Right:
Hardier than they look; early hellebores from Jenny Mowatt.

Left:
Jenny's winter honeysuckle is in flower.



Right:
Some more delicate snowdrops emerge to herald the coming spring in Jenny's garden.



From Jenny:

SPRING

by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1877)

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –

At Christmas Allan bought me a book by Clive James, "The Fire of Joy". In it were about eighty poems to 'get by heart and say aloud'. Much as I loved Clive James, I think the getting by heart part is a big ask, but I could say a lot of

When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;

Thrushes' eggs look little low heavens, and thrush

Through the echoing timber does so rise and wring

The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;

It's coming, it's coming and this is what it will feel like, so hang on in there and life WILL begin again!

Jenny M

them aloud, including this one, which I hope you will all enjoy as much as I do.

The glassy pear tree leaves and blooms, they brush

The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush

With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

“O Sunlight! The most precious gold to be found on Earth!”

~ Roman Payne

This heartwarming painting was submitted by Lynn Carmichael.



“The northern lights painted the sky with stories we hadn’t heard of yet.

We leaned back,
Letting the colours
Wash over us
And paint new dreams
For us to follow”

~ Robyn Petnik

Another fab painting from Lynn reflecting our glorious, natural world.



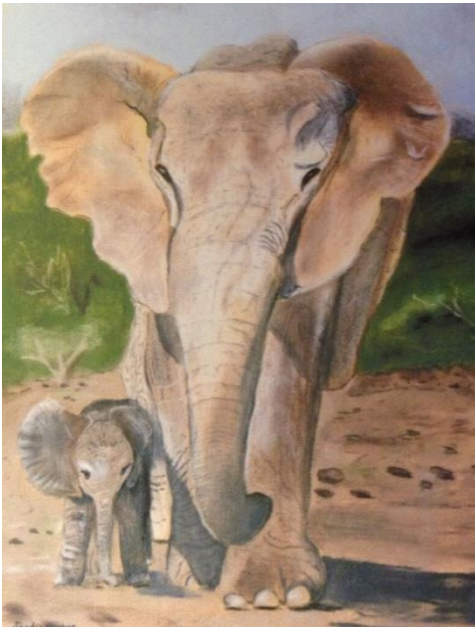
Some wonders of the season taken by Kathy R whilst out and about during January 2021

Top: *Euonymus hamiltonianus* (Common spindle) shining brightly from a bare hedgerow.

Bottom: *Stereum hirsutum* (False turkey tail) looking magnificent in the woods.

Top: A chilly morning after Jack Frost had been out painting during the night.

Bottom: *Chaenomeles speciosa* (Chinese quince) flowering a couple of months too soon!



Beautiful and uplifting; a Mama and her Calf exquisitely painted by Sandie Hughes.

Many thanks to all our wonderful contributors to the arty pages!

NEXT ISSUE ...

Well, maybe time to show some love for Valentine's Day, plus ... some more emerging **SPRINGTIME!!**

Send to katrey15@hotmail.com