



Smarden WI

Newsletter for October

.Welcome to Autumn! The nights are drawing in, the clocks will soon go back and Winter approaches. And, yes, we are still living a different "normal" life.

We so very nearly got to have a socially-distanced, trial meeting but in the end it was not to be so the Newsletter, which I know lots of you look forward to, is still here. Apologies for the lateness of this edition due my leaving these shores for some much-needed R&R and more hot weather in Rhodes. And very nice it was too.

As before, all contributions are welcome and will be included as long as there is space. Please forward your comments, pictures, news etc to any of the committee and we will ensure it is shared with all the other members of the Smarden WI.

Carol Chandler



Wishing a very happy birthday to the following ladies whose special days are on the horizon:

Lilian de la Plain	5 October
Honor Ferris	17 October
Cathy Poile	27 October
Denise Newman	5 November
Lin Cosens	21 November

*Many happy returns,
Ladies*

The President's table

Just visible amongst this arrangement of fruits and berries is the President's Vase. Everything in the picture was gathered in the lanes around Smarden.

A prize will be given to anyone who can name all the fruits and berries So look closely!

Please send entries to gillbrom57@btinternet.com or post to Gill Bromley, 32 Orchard Glade, Headcorn TN27 9SR on or before 31st October. If more than one correct entry Les will draw the winner.



Goodbye Denman – You’ll Be Missed!

The saying “Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today” rang very true for me, when I read in the newspaper the most unwelcome news that Denman College has – effectively – already closed. Whilst I understand the economics of this decision, I thought more effort could have been put into explaining why the W.I. main offices could not have moved there, leaving some space – albeit reduced – for the college. There is no logical reason why the headquarters have to inhabit expensive office facilities in London SW6. Although there are some recently formed town WIs, the majority of branches are still situated in rural areas.

I had always had in the back of my mind a desire to attend a course at Denman which did not involve wielding a needle or a sewing machine. I thought a non-threatening few days studying Jane Austen novels, or visiting Oxford colleges would be an enjoyable and relaxing break. Sadly, now never to be!

The quality of the Denman tutors was – in my experience – very high. Examples are Barbara Chainey who has written a quilting “bible”, and is in high demand for lectures in the States. Richard Box, I was surprised to discover, is only a couple of years older than me. I say “surprised” because when I attended teacher training college to become a Needlecraft Teacher (1975-78), we were taken to an exhibition of his work. I was particularly impressed with a large embroidery entitled “Crocus field”, and I bought a postcard of it – sadly lost in the mists of time! I googled him, and discovered that he was once commissioned to cover a wall in one of the reception rooms at The Little Silver Hotel in Tenterden, with a huge collage/embroidery. When I visited their Reception and asked to see this artwork, the receptionist laughed and said whilst of course I could in theory, it was currently behind swathes of white chiffon. The room in question is used for weddings, and is kept semi-permanently in a state resembling the inside of a palatial Middle Eastern tent. I guess I should revisit now, as because of the Covid situation there won’t have been too many large wedding receptions in recent months!



Initial practice piece “Poppies” at the first Richard Box course



Me with Richard Box holding one of his large textile pieces – March 2013

Courses attended		
Date	Topic	Tutor
Jan 2009	Machine Applique	Not recorded
June 2011	Corded Quilting/Trapunto (1)	Barbara Chainey
April 2012	Corded Quilting/Trapunto (2)	Barbara Chainey
March 2013	Fabric collage and machine embroidery	Richard Box
Jan 2014	Advanced machine embroidery	Richard Box
Jan 2015	Ribbon embroidery in the style of Monet	Not recorded
Nov 2016	Textile Christmas tree decorations	Pat Lumsdale
Dec 2017	Machine embroidered Christmas tree decorations	Claire Muir

For the teachers amongst you, the style of teaching was instructional: “I’ll show you the technique, and then you copy.” Usually we were told to work a small sample to practice, then moved immediately on to the planned project. It reminded me of painting by numbers. Whilst the style may not have suited everybody, I liked it and understood, after the practical work.

Clearly, having attended comparatively many courses, I must have enjoyed them. I did, but they were very “full on”! If they covered a weekend, the tutor would usually say, on Saturday afternoon, “I’m not required to run a session this evening, but if the group is prepared to take the H&S risk, I’ll leave the room open for you”. I can’t recall any occasion when the group didn’t take advantage of using the room, until our eyesight failed due to too many hours of close work! We were also encouraged by the practice of having to display our FINISHED work on the final morning of the course, when all the participants of – say – five other courses toured all the specialist rooms to see what we’d been up to.



"In the jungle" – collage with collage, machine embroidery and hand embroidery copy of a watercolour by Stephanie Harrison. (March 2013)

The title refers to the small ginger cat in the lower right hand corner. The watercolour was bought in a gallery in Headcorn. For those of you with long memories, you may remember this small shop in Headcorn situated in or near the site of the Little Shop of Fabrics.

After attending two quilting courses led by Barbara Chainey, there was no specific end use for the corded (or trapunto) quilting I worked on fine white fabric, with yellow wool (for the stuffed cords), embellished with seed pearls. The net result was an ivory finish. Four years later, my God-daughter, Suzanne (40) was getting married in a traditional wedding service in Calgary, Canada. Unable to attend myself, I offered the embroidery as the basis for a ring-bearing cushion, and was



very pleased to be involved, albeit from thousands of miles away!

Another aspect of Denman courses which all participants seemed to enjoy in the early years that I attended, was the concert on the final evening. Each course was invited to provide a “turn” – sing a solo, or an impromptu choir, tell jokes, perform a monologue, or act out a little play. There was an A4 ringbinder listing possible turns available for course members. It was at one of these concerts that I heard the “I look down on her because she’s just a member, and I look up to her because she’s a regional advisor” sketch. Brought up to date by Margaret Twort, and performed by Margaret, Terry Sherman and me at the last Christmas “do”, it would appear that our members thought it very funny, too. I spent quite a long time trying to track it down from Denman, who denied all knowledge, but then years later Margaret and I heard it performed at Swan WI (Ashford) and successfully begged a photocopy.



Picture of a flag/iris from a colour supplement with string across, copied in machine embroidery, on the second Richard Box course. (Jan 2014)

I have heard that some of the Denman material will be available on line. Whilst I guess this is better than nothing, it can’t have the same benefits as a residential course. This was described to me recently by a member as “a little holiday” – I totally agree. It was always mind expanding to talk to other women from different, mainly rural, locations and hear about different practices, some of which were superior to those in the East Kent Federation. However, I always had confidence that we in Smarden were doing well, with a strong committee and effective leadership. Onwards and upwards!

Stephanie Atkins
5 September 2020

I first went to Denman in the 1990s with Mum. We did a Mother and Daughter course on 'Colour with confidence'. The aim was to help us dress well and use make-up effectively. Not sure how successful you will judge it to have been but we really enjoyed it and I did a follow-up course the next year while Mum studied antiques. That particular trip involved a day in Oxford buying clothes under the guidance of our tutor, Joan, an ex-model. I spent £200, a vast amount at that time, but wisely spent as the skirt, jacket, hat, shoes and various tops, as in the photo, lasted me years. Mum and I returned to Denman several times and because we shared a room we were usually in the mansion. The bedrooms were wonderful; each named after and maintained by a different federation. The Durham Room, Surrey and Northumberland (which had 3 beds right above the main entrance) were vast and fabulous. I enjoyed more recent trips with various Smarden WI members including Stephanie, Angela, Elizabeth and Jocelyn. They ran several courses simultaneously so we could all do something different if we wished. I sometimes went on my own; I always felt at home at Denman. There was a warm welcome and, like mum, I enjoyed meeting women from all over England and Wales in my class, in the bar and at mealtimes. I tended to opt for courses which spent time outside, exploring Oxford and the surrounding area.



I did many courses but Church, Medieval the Thames with a visit



The tutors were always annual retreat when I forward to. There was always a free afternoon grounds which had some great trees, a lake and went to Denman the final evening was set aside provide some form of entertainment. This could were very funny and I returned home with a which was performed at Smarden WI. I still have day. I was so looking forward to doing a Stained Glass course with Jocelyn in July but sadly it was not to be.....

these spring to mind: Social History of Churches, the Victorian Oxford, Advent in Oxford (Christmas shopping included), Walking to Kelmscott Manor, Jane Austen's Bath, Gardens of Oxford etc.

top notch; Sewing Bee's May Martin was one. Denman became my was working; something I really looked when I'd take time to walk through the a wonderful flower border. When I first and attendees were encouraged to be cringeworthy at times but some 'turns' great deadpan production of Cinderella the script if SWIPAG wish to perform it one



Gill Bromley – September 2020

**WI walk on
Wednesday 30 September**

Six WI members met at The Charter Hall and had a very enjoyable walk across the fields at the back of the hall, then along Romden Rd with a slight detour to visit the newly carved Easter Islander. They then went back across the fields past Vesper Hawk and back to the hall for a much appreciated coffee outside the Community Shop.



28 October (Wednesday) WI Walk - The Pluckley Orchard Walk - led by Eleanor Bliss

Following September's very enjoyable walk, another is in the pipeline. Eleanor has offered to guide us through the Pluckley Orchards. Groups of Six will walk together. The meeting point is Pluckley Car Park at 10am - unfortunately car-sharing is not permissible at the present time. Please book your place with Eleanor on 01233 770082 or by email to eleanorbliss1@gmail.com

FREE HOLLYHOCKS

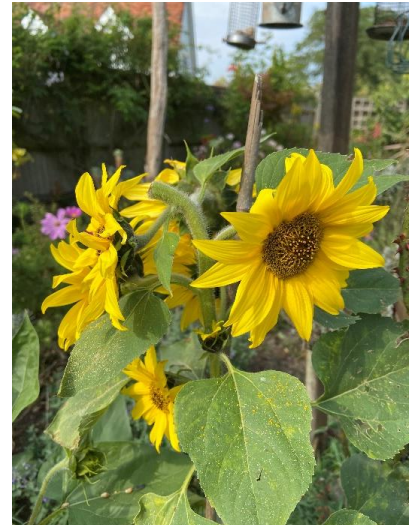
Earlier in the summer, a kind neighbour allowed me to take some seeds from her dark red hollyhock plant. Unsure of their germination success rate, I planted a seed tray. I successfully pricked out 20 small plants. I only needed three, which have been distributed around my garden.

Does anybody want any surplus, healthy hollyhock seedlings? They are in my unheated greenhouse, and are a bit of a nuisance to water, so I would appreciate them being taken away!! Contact me by email or telephone, or just turn up and take some. They are going on the compost in a few weeks!

Please contact Stephanie Atkins at East Lake Barn, Vesper Hawk Lane.
Tel: 01233 770 736
Email: stephaniebedford@hotmail.co.uk

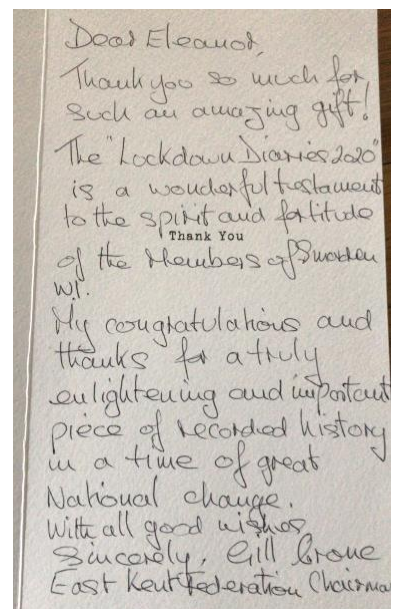


These sunflowers were not those provided by Smarden WI but self-seeded themselves anyway in to Judith Hardy's garden at Vine Cottage. It may be that we will all have some self-seeded plants next year, if the bird's left any seeds behind, that is.



Thanks!

Following the very successful publication of our Lockdown diary, Eleanor forwarded a copy to Gill Crone of the East Kent Federation. Below is her thank you card which, although addressed to Eleanor, is really for all of us. For those of you who use Twitter, our diary also got a mention on the WI Twitter feed on 14 September!





If the mountain seems too big today
 then climb a hill instead
 if the morning brings you sadness
 it's ok to stay in bed
 if the day ahead weighs heavy
 and your plans feel like a curse
 there's no shame in rearranging
 don't make yourself feel worse
 if a shower stings like needles
 and a bath feels like you'll drown
 if you haven't washed your hair for days
 don't throw away your crown
 a day is not a lifetime
 a rest is not defeat
 don't think of it as failure
 just a quiet, kind retreat
 it's ok to take a moment
 from an anxious, fractured mind
 the world will not stop turning
 while you get realigned
 the mountain will still be there
 when you want to try again
 you can climb it in your own time
 just love yourself til then

© Laura Ding-Edwards

~ By Laura Ding-Edwards ~

@rainbirdroots

Quiz Corner

Sudoku Medium

			6		4	1		
2							9	4
	6	5	3	1				
		4		7			1	
3		6				5		2
	5			3		8		
				6	7	9	5	
5	8							7
		7	5		2			

Sudoku Expert

8				4			2	
1		6				9		3
	9		6		7			
9					8			
	7	5				2	8	
				1				4
				8		4		3
3		8					1	9
	1				9			5

**Sale of WI home-made preserves, Christmas cards and gifts
Smerden Charter Hall, Saturday 31 October, 10am to 12 noon**



Many of you have been busy producing goods for the sale which has been carefully planned with everybody's well-being in mind and to conform with all Covid-related Government guidelines. This being so and to avoid any bottleneck, we are asking that you please, if at all possible, deliver your goods to the Charter Hall on Friday morning (30 October) between 10 and 11am, when Eleanor, Elizabeth and Jane will be around to take them into their safekeeping. If this is absolutely not possible, please bring them promptly on the Saturday morning at 9am, well before the sale begins. There will be a limit on how many people can enter the building at a time and so this will avoid unnecessary congestion.

Thank you so much for both your hard work and your help in following the delivery timetable.



Continuing the preserve theme, Gill Bromley is offering to any WI Member who would like it, a Freshtech automatic jam and jelly maker which once belonged to Jenny Mowatt.

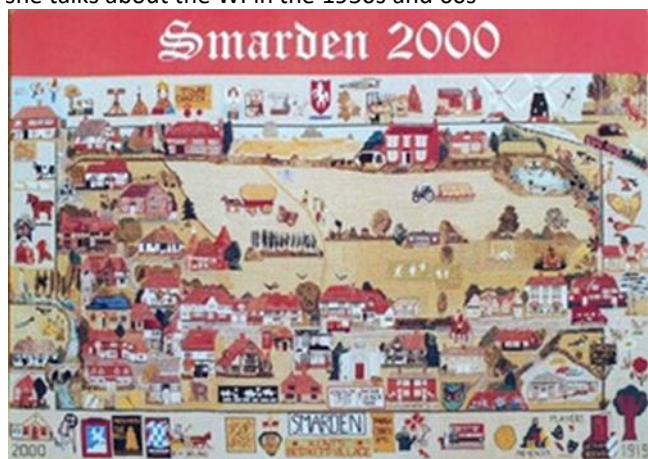
Please contact Gill Bromley via gillbrom57@btinternet.com or on 01622 890214 if you would like it. First come, first served. If no one is interested it will be taken to a charity,



A sad farewell to our former President, June Field, who died earlier this year, aged 94

Members will be saddened to hear of the death of June Field, who had been a long-standing and valued member of Smarden WI, joining in 1955. She was an active member of the group, and after serving on the Committee in many different roles, she became President for several years.

She, along with Betty Bromley and Eve Phillips, created the wonderful Village Tapestry which is displayed in the Hop Pocket of the Charter Hall. The WI website (www.smardenwi.yolasite.com) contains a report she gave on the creation of this amazing work of art (see picture below). There is also an interview with Eric Spear, where she talks about the WI in the 1950s and 60s



And an introduction from our latest new member ...



Hi, I am Megan Shields. I am originally from Arkansas and moved to the UK in 2016 to join my husband. I have a BSc and an MBPA. I am an avid believer in conservation, sustainability, diversity, inclusion, education and women's rights. I was lucky enough to get to promote those in my Assistant Parks and Recreation Director position in Arkansas and hope to do more of that here.

I love animals and have tried to have them in my life as much as possible. My dog, Finley, and I are a part of the Kent Cynophobia Assistance Group. I am also becoming a member of NSARDA. I play the tuba and am a member of Cranbrook Town Band and Bodiam Band. I enjoy writing, music and swimming in my spare time. I am super excited to join an institute where all women are encouraged and progressive ideas shared throughout the community. Thank you for allowing me to be a member of the Smarden WI!

Hymn to Corona

(by courtesy of a friend of Geraldine Dyer)

When the dark days of winter
Are cruelly short
And bored with inaction
You dream up some sport.

You eye up the globe
With malicious grin,
'Those fat states of Europe
Is where I'll begin'

While Brexit keeps nations
Squabbling and scrapping,
You creep up behind them
And catch them napping

You leach life from Italy
And rattle bones in Spain,
Then wing them out, throw them away.
The UK's now your game.

But we're supremely confident
We have the best health care,
Our scientists beyond reproach,
Attack us if you dare!

And so we plan our future lives,
The films we think of seeing
While some of us go down the pub,
Others talk of ski-ing.

We might take a Baltic cruise
Or else a river boat ...
But you leap from the bushes
And grab us by the throat.

You fell us by the thousands,
You sweep us with your scythe,
In masks and ventilators
Your victims weep and writhe.

You had our blest prime minister
Pinned down in your grip,
But your attention wandered
And he gave you the slip.

You took away our Easter
You'll steal our summer too,
You ransack our cathedrals
And empty every pew.

You locked up all our tennis courts
And quarantined our fairways,
High-jacked our foreign holidays
And ruined British Airways.

More powerful than Genghis
And mightier than Mars
And all those Grecian warriors
Whose names are in the stars,

For you achieved what governments
Had striven long to do,
You stripped away our murky skies
And turned them back to blue.

And citizens of India
While grieving for their dead
Where once they woke to smoke and fog
See Everest instead!



For those of you who may not know, Gill Bromley has been carrying out a series of intrepid escapades to raise funds for Pancreatic Cancer, a disease from which a close friend of hers died.

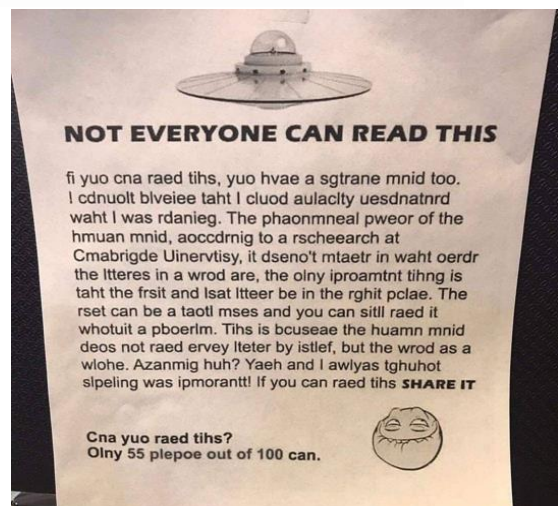
Here is a picture of her latest adventure, wing-walking, carried out from Headcorn Aerodrome. Go Gill!

And finally -

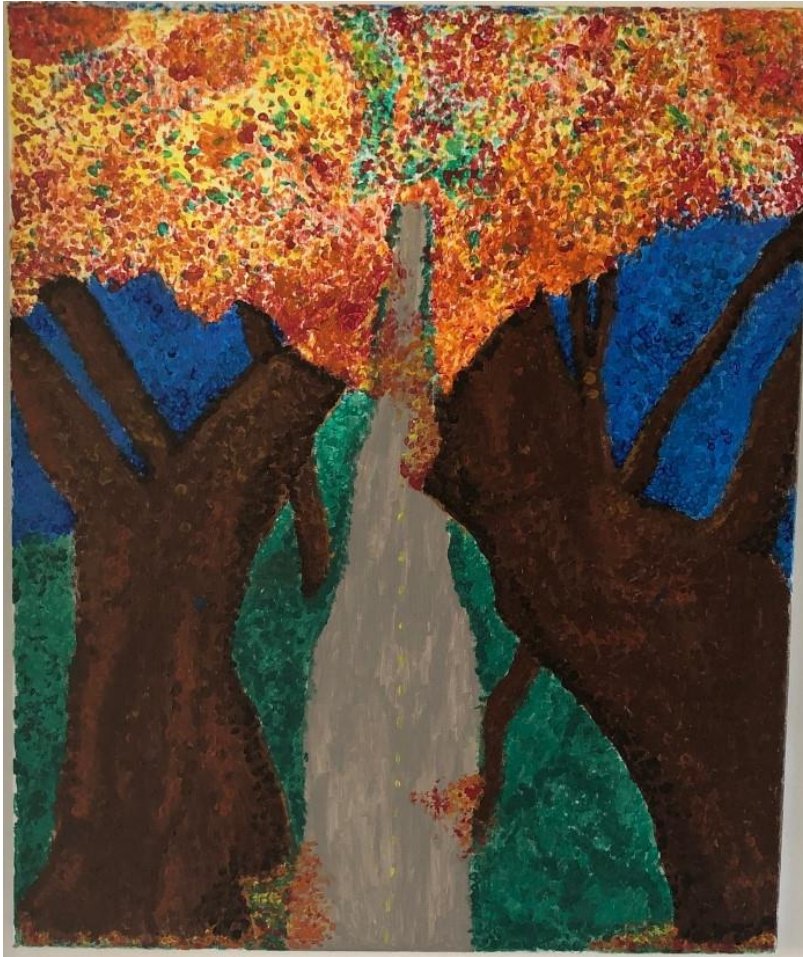
Perhaps to remind us of hot Summer days now a distant memory, a wine label offering from Lynn Carmichael!



Although after drinking it, could you still read this?



My Favourite Colour is October ~ Anon



AUTUMN

“IS A SECOND
SPRING WHEN
EVERY LEAF IS A
FLOWER”

Albert Camus



Megan Shields

Autumn

“The year’s
last, loveliest
smile”



William Cullen Bryant



Geraldine Dyer



Kathy Reynolds



"I'm so glad I live in a world with October"

Anne of Green Gables



Megan Shields



“It’s the first day of autumn! A time of hot chocolatey mornings and toasty evenings, and, best of all, leaping into leaves”

Winnie the Pooh

Next Time – Well it will be a Christmassy theme....anything from designing a bauble to Santa getting stuck in the chimney! Contributions to katrey15@hotmail.com