



Smarden WI

Newsletter for September

Autumn is fast approaching (or so the weather would have us believe with the recent rain, reminiscent of February) and it will soon be six months since everyday life changed immensely for all of us.

Nowadays wearing a mask has become the new norm and meetings of any kind are still difficult to arrange without an enormous number of dos and don'ts. Hopefully, though, other things are edging back more to how they once were.

Who knows, though, what we will face in the last quarter of 2020? We can, I believe, only hope for the best.

I hope you enjoy this September edition after last month's break and any contributions for October will be gratefully received.

And don't forget too, please contact any of us – about anything – if you would like to do so.

Carol Chandler



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

Kim Rushton	3 September
Joan Mortley	3 September
Alison Stimson	15 September
Pat Smith	24 September
Lilian de la Plain	5 October
Honor Ferris	17 October
Cathy Poile	27 October

*Many happy returns,
Ladies*

The President's table

September's autumnal-coloured flowers provided by Gill are a reminder of how quickly this year is passing. Thank goodness, some might say!



Ladies will no doubt recall that it was Alison Stimpson's wonderful idea to donate to everyone a sunflower seedling to nurture during lockdown. No doubt some didn't survive the very varied weather conditions of extreme heat and/or torrential rain, let alone slugs and other garden pests, but many did, and we have been forwarded a number of great photographs as proof of everyone's efforts.



This sunflower was planted by Judith Hardy - the photo was taken on Thursday 13 August when the sunflower measured 7' 07" Did it grow any taller?

Two views of Kim Marsh's sunflower which continued to grow!



This photo was taken by Stephanie on 22 July so her sunflower was a quick starter. "Don't think my sunflower will grow any taller! Looks perhaps taller than it really is, measured against me. I'm at floor level, sunflower is in a raised bed. Measures a massive 9 ft 4 in!



Jane Fleet says "My official WI sunflower is the yellow one - about 3 ft tall with a single flower - very lovely - BUT if I were a less honest member I'd submit the second one - about 6ft 6" tall, this beauty appeared in my garden on its own - a dark brown/orange colour just coming out, but with multiple heads to follow on!!!

**BUT YOU KNOW I'M HONEST REALLY
SO IT'S THE YELLOW ONE!**





Lynn's sunflowers has loads of leaves, whilst Hilary Sutton says that hers has been so pretty with such a colourful head.



Jocelyn's sunflower(below left) grew enormous very quickly and looked very pretty in her colourful courtyard garden, whilst Carol's next door, only a matter of yards away, was a very slow starter, obviously the runt of the litter. Even at the beginning of August it was still only about 5 foot tall with no flower. But, then, at last, it had a growth spurt overnight, ending up nearly as tall as Jocelyn's and was still in full bloom after hers had joined the compost heap!



Geraldine's grandson, George, shows how tall the one he has helped nurture has grown

Sunflowers

Your golden heads like spirals as you stretch up to the sky
Delighting with your sunny faces reaching up so high.

I feel a glow within my heart as sun does first arise,
Bathing earth in magic hues of gold to meet my eyes.

I stand here kissed by morning's light and feel an inner ease.

The grass is softly dancing with a wisp of gentle breeze.

Delighted, I begin to dance, with my music in my soul.

The coloured glow of sunflowers bright, such beauty to behold

The day begins to brighten as you idly turn my way,
Showing all your sunny faces, begging me to play.

I turn and spin a little bit, enchanted by the scene,
Refreshed by morning's glory, and the fresh, sweet flush of green.

I marvel at the spirals you display within your seed,
A matrix of geometry, a wondrous way to breed.

Van Gogh was captured by your form, and painted you with love,
In worship of his loving God who dwelt on high above.

If I could be an artist, even for a single day,
I'd love to paint your beauty in a most poetic way.
But as I stand alone right here, with not a soul around,
I bless your brilliant colour, and the absence of all sound...

(With thanks to Artyjules)

Zoom Background –Wall full of books? Me neither!

Have you ever wondered why, when many people are shown on TV using Zoom in their own home, they choose to sit in front of a wall full of books? Are they trying to impress viewers with their erudition? I find it somewhat distracting, as I attempt to read the book spines, and therefore miss the gist of what the person is saying.

Marie Kondo, fashionable Japanese minimalist home furnisher, recommends no household should have more than 30 books cluttering up their home. I break that rule. My bookcase measures 2' 3" wide, and 3' 2" tall. I'd have to crouch very low to use Zoom in front of it! In the photo below, the top shelf contains mainly reference books such as Shakespeare and the Bible. As yet unread paperback novels fill the middle shelf. I don't keep such books; when they are read I pass them on to Sue Ryder/similar. The lowest shelf contains a variety of larger books, which don't physically fit anywhere else.



I am a great believer in public libraries. Outside lockdown, I use the Tenterden branch of KCC libraries regularly and find their range of books on offer appropriate, relevant and recent. I frequently reserve new books recommended in the Arts section of a newspaper, and happily pay the 80p fee.

About a year ago, impressed with the reviews of "Lady in waiting – My extraordinary life in the Shadow of the Crown" by Lady Anne Glenconner, I attempted to order it from Tenterden Library. I was questioned "Do you want the good news or the bad news?" The bad news was that I was on a list which already numbered over 80 people. The better news was that Kent Libraries had purchased 14 copies, for use throughout Kent. In the event I cancelled my request because I found the book on special offer (Tesco's) at £10, not the cover price of £20.

As those of you who have seen me on WI chats via Zoom, all you can see is plain wall and a bit of ceiling. In the same way that other members of WI have increased the amount they read because of the lockdown, I have done this too. As for what I'm reading, you'll have to ask me because the books won't feature on the (non-existent) shelves behind my head!

Stephanie Atkins
August 2020

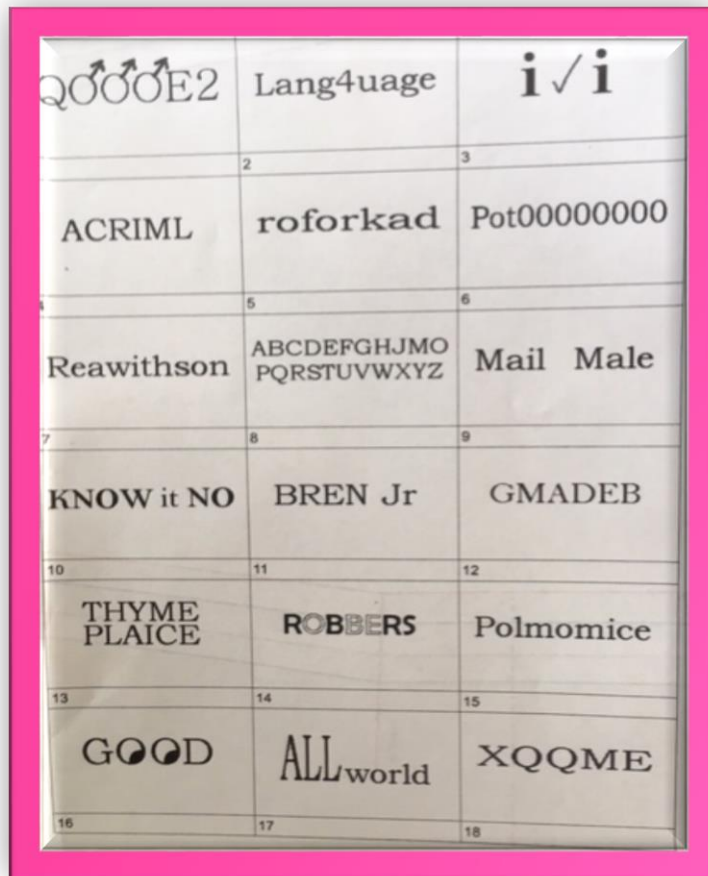


In the end, it's not the years in your life that count.

It's the life in your years.

Quiz Corner

Dingbats



Answers to Dingbats

1. Three men in a boat
2. Foreign Language
3. Right between the eyes
4. Criminal
5. Fork in the road
6. Potatoes
7. Within reason
8. Missing Link
9. Postman
10. No two ways about it
11. Son of a gun
12. Made in Great Britain
13. Another time, another place
14. Honour among thieves

It seemed like a good idea at the time!

Do you have lots of supposedly useful but unidentifiable items cluttering your kitchen cutlery drawers?

Here are some of ours. Please send pictures of strange and un-useful objects in your kitchen to lynncarmichael25@yahoo.co.uk If you can identify any of those below for which the purpose is unknown, we would be also like to hear!



Lynn Carmichael has no idea what this is for..



..but says this is for assistance with ring pulls on cans.



Again, she has no idea!



.. but says this a melon baller at one end and a butter curler at the other.

Part of Jenny Mowatt's cutlery drawer belonged to her mother-in-law.

The lemon squeezer below was part of her tea-making paraphernalia whilst perhaps the knife and fork were for filleting fish?

The spoon to the right has a silver badge and mount and a glass bead at the top, and is really useful as it can be left in mayonnaise or chutney with no fear of tarnishing.



Lynn is not the only one with these! Carol has them too but thinks the first is a butter curler and the second a lemon zester.



No idea! Perhaps for making pretty pictures on butter?



Never had a clue until today when she wondered if it is like a syringe for getting pickles from a jar?

Kathy Reynolds is holding on to these items above! The "pencil sharpener" she thinks is for carrots! The tiny bottle is probably obvious, but the others...?!

Christmas Fair/Jam-making

As many of you will be aware, the decision has been taken to cancel this year's Christmas fair and with that goes our very successful fund raising efforts by way of the sale of jams, marmalades and chutneys. However, that has not stopped our keen jam makers from continuing their own production lines, especially Margaret and Gill. It is very much hoped that another way will be found for us to be able to sell the finished products to the village but, in the meantime, if you or any one you know would like first pickings at £2.50 a jar, please contact me, Margaret or Gill for details.

URGENT REQUEST: JARS NEEDED!



So far I have made raspberry, cherry, damson and plum jam; damson jelly; marmalade; and spicy pear chutney. There are now apples and blackberries to gather plus haws ripening in the hedgerow. I only have 2 jars left. Any size jam jars welcome. Can collect. Hoping Stephanie has some gingham left from last year for covers.
Thankyou. Gill

Denman College

You will all by now know that Denman College has unfortunately succumbed to the ravages of Coronavirus and other influencing factors and has, sadly, had to close its doors for the last time. If anyone has any photos or special memories of Denman that they would like to share, please email them to carolm.chandler@btinternet.com for inclusion in next month's newsletter.

Smarden WI Relaxed Book Group

We are the relaxed Book Group as we only meet every two months so there is hopefully no panic to finish a book in a few weeks. We have been meeting on Zoom which we find very unsatisfactory as you can give your views but it does not allow discussion.

However, on the 24 August we met in person which was very exciting. We had a good discussion on the latest book 'The 100 Year Old Man Who Climbed out of the Window and Disappeared' by Jonas Jonasson. The title gives a clue to this amusing and actually quite silly book which seemed ideal for the present times. We all enjoyed it.

Next time we are reading 'The Husband Hunters' by Anne de Courcy about the dozens of young wealthy American heiresses who married into the British peerage in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

We are due to meet again at the end of October. It may be outside with coats, hats and gloves or hopefully indoors.

Elizabeth McLeish



The Workout by Cynthia C Naspinski

I need to lose weight, just one pound or twenty.
If I could lose fifty, well that would be plenty.
I could join a gym, but I don't have the gumption
My legging-clad legs aren't for public consumption.

My exercise bike is succumbing to rust
And only gets touched when I really must dust.
And much like a pet in need of attention,
It makes me feel guilty (and slack not to mention).

The solution, of course, was such a no brainer.
I bought it a mate ... an elliptical trainer!
This is quite easy! Or so I reckoned
When I tried it in store for a whole fifteen seconds.

But once it was home and I tried it for longer,
The pain in my side was all that got stronger.
I puffed and I gasped, till I couldn't breathe.
Kicked off at nine. It was now nine oh three.

Of course! The resistance must be way too high.
But no. It read zero; I thought I might cry.
The six on the dial sat silently mocking,
My level of fitness was really quite shocking.

Motivation was all that I saw myself losing.
Any my self-esteem was taking a bruising.
I tried it to music but all that achieved,
It drowned out the sound of my poor creaking knees.

The instrument of torture could go take a hike.
I glanced now with longing at my trusty bike.
I couldn't recall why we had parted ways.
Climbed up on the seat and thought, Happy Days.



I pedalled with gusto, but soon I remembered
It felt like my buttocks were being dismembered.
The padding on my derriere is quite thick.
So why does it feel like I'm perched on a brick?

It was all just too hard, I gave up in disgust.
My plan to lose weight was clearly a bust.
Oh well...at least, I can say that I tried it.
I mean, really, I can't be expected to diet!

"There is nowhere that a person can find a more peaceful and trouble-free retreat than in his own mind..."

So constantly give yourself this retreat, and renew yourself."

-MARCUS AURELIUS

And finally:

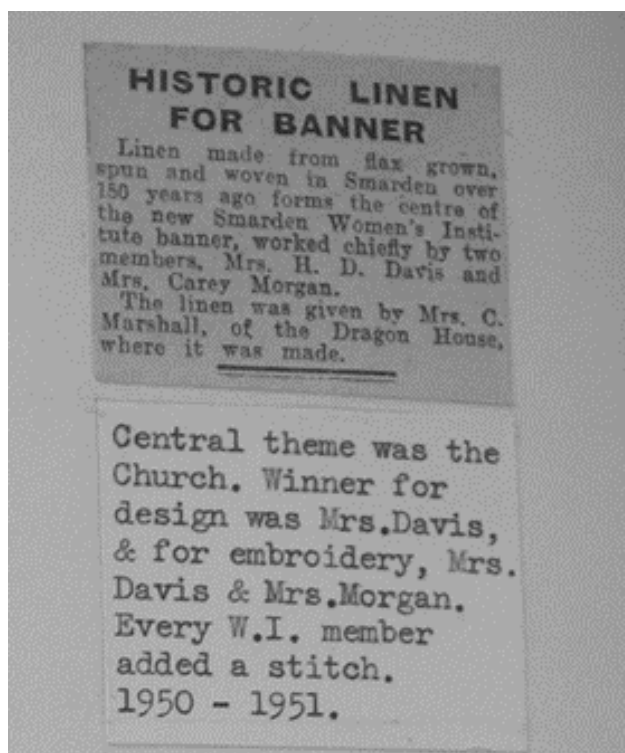
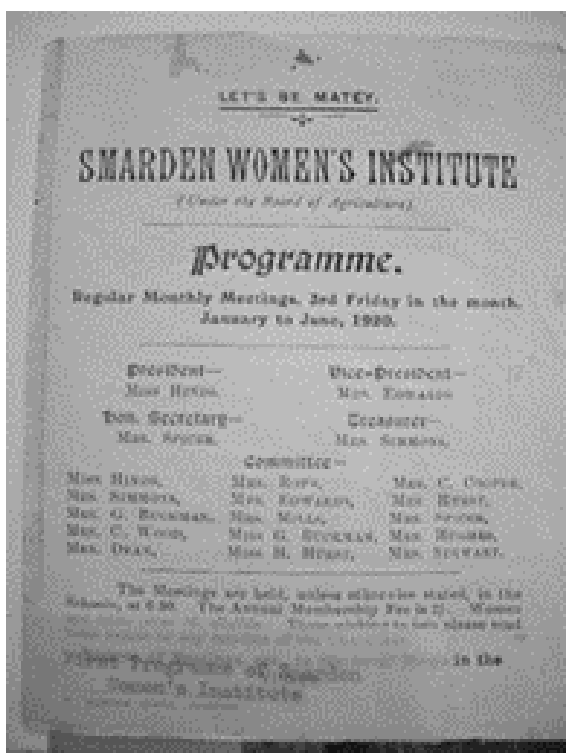


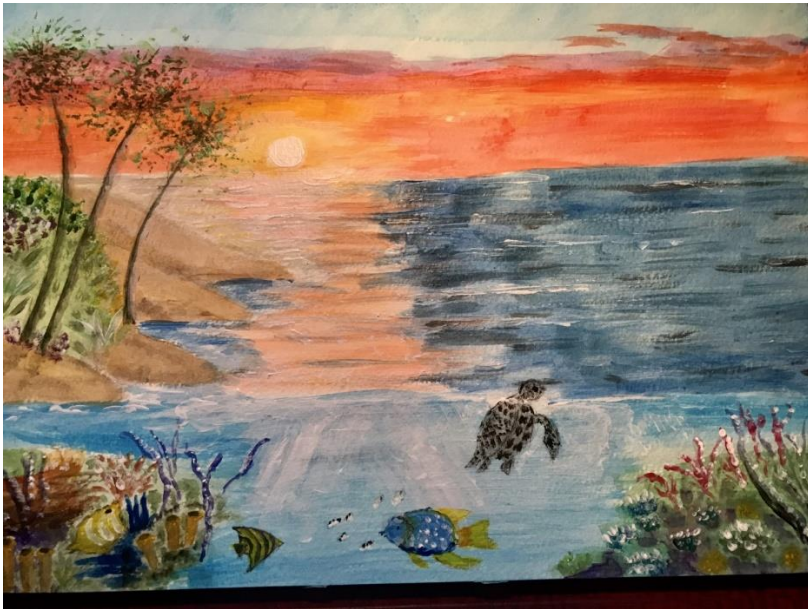
Had our September meeting gone ahead as normal, our speaker would have been Rachel Room from Chapel Down Winery and her topic “from Grape to Bottle”.

The competition was to have been to design a label for a wine bottle. Unfortunately, we can’t have the speaker yet but we can still have the competition. So, entries please!

Please forward your designs to Lynn Carmichael for inclusion in October’s newsletter.

And finally, finally - a blast from the (far more formal) past:





[Lynn Carmichael](#)

This Month's Art Pages feature the Sea and Coast



[Geraldine Dyer](#)



[Gill Bromley](#)



[Stephanie Atkins](#)



[Dorothy Mather](#)

[Kathy Reynolds \(left\)](#)

[Jenny Mowatt \(below\)](#)



Many thanks to all of you marvellous contributors; always a pleasure to see the many variations on a theme. You may be wondering about Dorothy Mather? Dorothy was the lovely mum of a friend of mine and was a very, very long-standing member of Quarndon WI in Derbyshire. She encouraged me to paint and would be thrilled to know she's once again contributing to a WI activity!

For October – how about an Autumnal Theme?
Please send to me, Kathy Reynolds at katrey15@hotmail.com