

Essex WI News

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN



View from the Chair

Dear members,

When the Editorial Team completed the first of these special editions, they weren't sure if they'd have to work on another one. They certainly hoped it wouldn't be needed but here we are with Cocooning Edition 2.

The Out & About section includes reports of pre lockdown meetings received between issues and there is now the Home from Home section highlighting the wonderful ways WIs and members are keeping in touch. See below for a picture of the Trustees recent virtual Board meeting.

As you know our fab Federation staff have been furloughed – that's a bit of a tongue twister – and WI Centre closed but our merry band of volunteers are busily keeping things going, and making plans for when we can all meet up again. I know this is as much appreciated by you as it is by me.

One positive thought that I'm holding on to is that our homes and gardens will be immaculate, all our craft projects will be completed and we'll have saved money by not going out, so we'll have much more time, once this is all over, to meet up in person and spend quality time with those we cherish.

Stay safe.

Jan

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New Speakers Days 2020

At the time of writing
the New Speakers Days
on

Friday 2nd October
and

Friday 27th November

will go ahead as
planned, but do keep
an eye on the regular
bulletins being sent to
all WIs for updates.
Those who were due to
attend the cancelled
events will be offered
first refusal to attend
future events.





County Annual Meeting update

There will not be an Autumn County Meeting to replace the cancelled County Annual Meeting this year. Instead, once WI Centre reopens, each WI will receive copies of the presentations that would have been given at the County Annual Meeting by the Federation Chair, Treasurer and Sub Committee Chairs. The financial statement and report were sent to all WIs in an earlier mailing.

New WI – Rainham Village Belles

A belated welcome to Rainham Village Belles WI which formed in February. WI Advisers Jan Curtis and Shirley Perkins oversaw their formation meeting but sadly due to the current situation members have not been able to meet in person since. They are keeping up to date with each other via email, phone, and newsletters.



If you would like to become a Friend Against Scams you can complete a free short online training course and start taking action to take a stand against scams.

After this you will be able to talk to your family, neighbours and friends about scams, to help stop people from being scammed.

For more information visit

www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

Federation Flutter

As the Trustees are not physically meeting (only virtual meetings) we are unable to draw the Federation Flutter at this time. As soon as we can, we will draw the winner for April and any subsequent months and announce the winners in the normal way.

Lady Denman Cup Competition extension

Please note that the deadline for the “What I heard on the bus...” competition has been extended and you now have until Friday 18th September 2020 to submit your entry. Full details are in the March edition of Essex WI News and on the website.

Hazel’s Retirement

Current circumstances meant we were unable to present the wonderful Hazel Ridgwell with a thank you gift to mark her retirement from the Board of Trustees at the County Annual Meeting. Instead, we invited her along to WI centre in early March, before lockdown was implemented, to give her a hamper of treats including chocolate, wine and a plant. Hazel has promised we can call on her for her sage advice and knowledge of Federation history as well as her dry wit and humour. Hazel remains a member of the Creative Craft and Cookery committee and a MAC Helper.



Bumper Craft Takeaway Course Report

At the end of February I enjoyed a super course “Bumper Craft Takeaway” with tutor Natalie Green. It was also an opportunity to catch up with June Ward (former Federation Chairman) who now lives in Sidmouth, Devon. She came with her sister Frances and we had a great time together. The idea was to learn different techniques to cascade on to our own members. Each craft could be completed in a relatively short time so would be ideal for WI meetings, dabble sessions etc. Amongst the various options on offer I made fabric flowers, button flowers, a coaster crafted with Fimo (this had to be fired so took longer), needle felted, made pom-poms using a fork (yes really!) made a tassel and finally nearly finished a fabric and button picture using a small embroidery frame. Essex member Sandra, Secretary of Knightswick WI, was also there and she helped me get to grips with blanket stitch when we crafted without the tutor being present! We were all very keen and made items we were very pleased with. Coronavirus was talked about but it was very much business as usual for the college.

Less than two weeks later I was back to host for the week (my husband Michael came with me as he volunteers and works outside in the gardens) and things had changed. Hand sanitiser was everywhere and everyone entering the college had to complete a medical declaration to say they were in good health. NHS guidance banners arrived and were put up. Everyone acted sensibly and courses ran as normal. It was a busy and happy week.

A week on and the college closed. Who knows as you read this what kind of state the country will be in? However, summer will be with us soon and hopefully we will have turned the corner as far as coronavirus is concerned....

Julie Alen
Stisted WI



Essex Federation Denman Weekend 25– 27 June 2021

Before finishing her time as Denman Ambassador, Pat Pratley kindly put in place the plans for next year’s weekend. As Denman and the coach companies we usually use are all closed we have been unable to finalise costs but thought you’d like to know the list of courses that will be on offer. These were booked pre-pandemic so maybe subject to change once Denman reopens, but we will keep you updated. Pat took on board the responses to the questionnaire she sent out and we’re sure you’ll agree these are a good selection of courses for you to choose from.



Weekend Courses

- Bumper Craft Takeaway
- Summer Preserves
- Wildlife Walks through Time
(up to 5 miles a day)
- Herbs & History walk and visit to Oxford Botanic Gardens
- Tai Chi for Health and Vitality
- Mosaics – an Introduction

Great Bromley

Ditty by Jenny Nicols

I'm normally a social girl
I love to meet my mates
But lately with the virus here
We can't go out the gates.

You see, we are the 'oldies' now
We need to stay inside
If they haven't seen us for a while
They'll think we've upped and died.

They'll never know the things we did
Before we got this old
There wasn't any Facebook
So not everything was told.

We may seem sweet old ladies
Who would never be uncouth
But we grew up in the 60s -
If you only knew the truth!

There was sex and drugs and rock 'n roll
The pill and miniskirts
We smoked, we drank, we partied
And were quite outrageous flirts.

Witham WISH

Aftermath by Malcolm Wood (WI Husband)

I looked up from my garden
into a clear, rich bright blue sky in which
a variety of butterflies and birds did fly.
The wonder of nature revelling in the lack of pollution.

And who would have thought
that a dreaded virus would be the solution
to make our world resemble paradise
right before my wondrous eyes
to see God's creatures on the rise.

I hope and pray that come the day
that this horrid virus has gone away,
that the world changes in many ways
and that life and love can work as one
to ensure a new era has truly begun.

Then we settled down, got married
And turned into someone's mum,
Somebody's wife, then nana,
Who on earth did we become?

We didn't mind the change of pace
Because our lives were full
But to bury us before we're dead
Is like a red rag to a bull!

So here you find me stuck inside
For 4 weeks, maybe more
I finally found myself again
Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me
I'd while away the hour
I'd bake for all the family
But I've got no bloody flour!

Now Netflix is just wonderful
I like a gutsy thriller
I'm swooning over Idris
Or some random sexy killer.

At least I've got a stash of booze
For when I'm being idle
There's wine and whiskey, even gin
If I'm feeling suicidal!

So let's all drink to lockdown
To recovery and health
And hope this bloody virus
Doesn't decimate our wealth.

We'll all get through the crisis
And be back to join our mates
Just hoping I'm not far too wide
To fit through the flaming gates!

Rayleigh Mount Evening

Ode by Jane Livermore

So it looks like we will be locking down
Let's be positive and please don't frown.
Try to smile in these uncertain times
We can't afford to add to our lines.

There's many thing that we can try
As proud members of Rayleigh WI
First, sing Jerusalem daily to uplift us from doom
When we return we could be in tune.

Bake tasty cakes, pastries, and crusty bread
This could come in quite handy which has to be said.
Team, practice your darts, don't miss, firmly hit
Never give up and certainly not quit.

Work on your crafting, crochet, quilting or knitting.
I've not started yet but already quitting
It's really not bad being at home
But you can't win the raffle when you're alone.

Wickham Bishops

As with most clubs in the village, the WI have had to suspend all meetings due to social distancing rules. By the time you are reading this edition of the magazine, we're hoping the worst is over and the country is striving towards recovery, however I fear that more stringent measures will be in place - namely that masks may have to be worn while outside. Member Jayne Kneale has been researching how to make a mask for her family. If you would like to have a go too, Jayne used a pattern at

www.sewmuchmoore.com

She used a Hepa vacuum bag as a filter which lies between the two layers of fabric. Just to let you know that this is not a surgical mask so no guarantee of safety but in my opinion, something is better than nothing!

Harold Wood



Rayleigh Mount Evening

As most of our members are in lockdown due to the COVID 9 crisis, our President set up a WhatsApp group. Every day we get lots of messages, we have humorous discussions on subjects such as baking, pets, and gardening and of course all the funny jokes that are going round! It's very comforting to know there are other members feeling the same as you. We are, of course keeping in touch with ladies who do not have mobile phones or the technology. Here's hoping this will be over soon and we can get back to our meetings, coffee mornings, book clubs, darts matches and trips out!

New City Girls

We held our April monthly meeting on Zoom, hosted by our President. 50 members joined the meeting singing (muted!) Jerusalem, and then taking part in a NCGWI related scavenger hunt - both jam and Jerusalem were found, as were something magical (in honour of February's main meeting) and something fake (to represent the fact our meeting wasn't 'real!'). Memorable items included guide books, bingo cards, pineapple upside down cakes and even a baby bump for something new!

After a break for DIY coffee and cake, the winning entry in the upcycled loo roll tube competition, an NHS Rainbow, was chosen by an on screen vote.

We are all looking forward to our May Zoom meeting!



We have started a 'Sunflower-Off'. We have 21 sunflower seedlings that we have randomly allocated to a member's name. There will be a prize for the sunflower which grows the highest. Mandy Fox is in charge of nurturing and repotting (so anything could happen!) . She has given a pep talk to the seedlings lagging behind.

Burnham on Crouch

We've been keeping members up to date via email and Facebook and for those without internet/social media, we've been telephoning them. We've also been posting interactive and printable crosswords, jokes and recipes. The crosswords have been popular and the jokes appreciated to brighten up the days. Phone numbers of local organisations who deliver food to those unable to leave home have also been circulated, plus news about our local shops, Post Office and pharmacy.

A large number of members responded to requests from two nurses working at Broomfield and Basildon Hospitals. Donations of cakes, homemade and bought, chocolates, sweets and toiletries were organised and the nurses collected them, using the correct social distancing. The response from members has been overwhelmingly generous, for which they are heartily thanked. The donations went to staff isolated in Covid-19 wards and also to staff working in mental health units, which were gratefully received. A further collection has been arranged.

Bulphan

We celebrated our 91st birthday with a first in our history – a virtual meeting. Members dressed in their finest party outfits, sang Happy Birthday to us, omitting the hand washing for this time, and had birthday candles glowing. Everyone enjoyed it so much they wanted another set up before our regular meeting date. Well, no sooner said than done and as our members do love a theme with an excuse to dress up we marked St George's Day by wearing red and white.



Doddinghurst

At the beginning of the lockdown our President asked members to buddy up with those who live alone. This proved to be wise as we have had a couple of incidents during the lockdown which illustrate the effect of Covid-19 on normal NHS care. A member who had celebrated her 90th birthday recently became quite ill but the doctor decided it would be too risky to send her to hospital. Her WI Buddy was so worried that she stayed with her for two days ensuring she was looked after and liaised with Social Services who organised carers to go in. Other members made soup and tempting desserts. Thankfully, she is now much better. Another much younger member had a fall when out exercising, and broke her ankle. Following a difficult operation, she is home with her leg in plaster being cared for by her husband. Surprisingly, she has been asked not to return to the hospital but to remove the plaster herself in four weeks. Her husband is threatening to use various implements from his toolbox for this, so she is on her best behaviour.

Fox Hatch

Sadly, our regular March meeting had to be cancelled, but we still held a virtual competition entered by photo: we had to decorate a jam jar and make a posy of flowers to put in it. To keep up our spirits, we set up a WhatsApp group to keep in touch. Using this, we have had a "where is it?" photo from members out for their daily walk; a daily puzzle question; information about how to stay safe; funny stories or videos; various quizzes, and offers of help from those able to get to the shops.



Doddinghurst



One of our members read about Project Linus in Essex WI News and felt it was something that our members might want to support. The membership felt this was a very worthy cause and soon provided Pat with 15 beautiful blankets. She was also given two by local ladies who are not members. Our blankets will be given to the Foster Association. Members will be making more of these during lockdown.

Millwood

At our February Meeting we had a fantastic evening being entertained by our speaker David Webb who played the part of one of the twins in the TV show Hi-de-Hi with his twin brother Bruce. The pilot show first aired in October 1979 and was an instant success. Hi-de-Hi ran until 1988 with 58 episodes in total.



Bulphan

February was an in-house auction with members invited to contribute items. There was lots of fun bidding against each other. In March we welcomed South Woodham Ferrers Absolutely Chiming Handbell ringers to our monthly meeting. The sounds of the notes from the bells were beautiful and the range from classical to folk music had the members entranced. Members had the chance to participate and twelve plucky volunteers took up the challenge. Their rendition of 'Daisy, Daisy' was good enough to have all the other members singing along and they all reported it was more difficult than they expected. Jane, leader of the handbell ringers took time to explain how the bells worked and members expressed their thanks for a very enjoyable evening.



Snapshots

ORSETT

Our first speaker of the year will be hard to follow. Russell Savory who is a Wildlife photographer and filmmaker gave an impassioned talk. Combining snippets of film with delightful photographs, and insights into how he manages to get up close and personal with the animals, made for a very special evening.

PURLEIGH

In February, Mr and Mrs Brace, wildlife photographers, gave us a wonderful illustrated talk on animals and birds found in Brazil.

SPRINGFIELD AFTERNOON

At the February meeting Mark Smith from Essex County Council came to explain why it is important to recycle as much as possible for our weekly collections. He explained the reasons for keeping materials separate and what happens to them after collection.

SHENFIELD AND HUTTON MORNING

We held a very successful magical evening in February. The Ilford Magical Society kept us entertained and entranced with their close-up magic and cabaret. In March, Ian Kirby (husband of a committee member) gave a very interesting talk on the city of London and the River Thames.

GREAT BROMLEY

In March Sarah Curtis from the English Spirit company came along to tell us the history of the brand – and brought along many samples of the range of drinks for us to try!

Snapshots

WICKHAM BISHOPS

Our January meeting included a short talk by the Fire Service about home safety. In February we had a talk by Andrew Wiltshire called Humorous Hassle.

MAPLIN

In March speaker Sharon Gould whose talk was entitled "Who is H?" about her daughter, Heather who was born in 1976 with Downs Syndrome.

FOX HATCH

In March we held a social event which took the form of a Murder Mystery evening organised by members.

SANDON

In February Karen Lawlie put us through our paces with chair exercises. In March we learned about cyber fraud and Internet safety from Ian Davidson.

BLACKMORE

In March Margaret Mills told us tales of Frances Evelyn Maude, heiress of Easton Lodge near Great Dunmow.

THORPE LE SOKEN

In February we were entertained by Barbara Faulkner who gave a presentation entitled When the Clock Strikes Twelve.

Elsenham

This year, Elsenham took 'Show the Love' to a new level. As well as crafting green hearts, we organised a variety of recycling points. The focus was on items that can't usually be recycled via the council kerbside collection and those things that can be reused by, or could help raise money for, charities. Carol James shared her passion for collecting costume jewellery with her 'Confessions of a Jewellery Junkie'. Carol has a vast range that she has organised by decade. And she took us on a journey from the 1930s to the modern day with examples of ceramic brooches, mosaic pendants, strings of pearls, pop it beads and large bling items of the 1980s amongst them.



Rayleigh Mount Evening



During our meeting in March, little did we think that as we said 'goodnight', we would not be getting together again in April and beyond. Fortunately we had a very enjoyable evening. Our speaker was a lady called Helen Tobias who gave a demonstration on Different Ways to Tie Scarves. We had all brought our own scarves so that we could have a go! She left an instruction leaflet for everyone so that we can practice at home.

Tell us what you have been doing for our next issue's Home from Home section

These have been challenging times but we know that WI groups are resourceful and innovative, not to mention generous and caring. So please tell us how your WI has been getting together, helping in the community, keeping yourselves busy or simply supporting each other.

Space permitting, we hope to publish all reports, but WIs are busy and informative so your challenge is to portray this to our readers in no more than 175 words in Word format. Please include a clear picture if possible as a jpeg as a separate attachment to your email. Please ensure you have the permission for publication of all persons appearing in photos.

Send articles to essexnews@essexwi.org.uk

Cocooning Projects

Nicky Martin on Maldon Wycke WI carried out an Easter lockdown project when she found some Hama Beads that her now grown up daughters used to enjoy as children.



Clare Wood from Witham WI has been practicing Mandala dot painting that they learnt during their last meeting.



Several of you have been busy with jigsaws. Here are a few pictures that have been sent in of completed ones, more pictures can be seen on the Federation website at www.essexwi.org.uk

This is just one of the many Jocelyn Cobb from Westcliffe on Sea WI has completed.



Jan Curtis, Bulphan WI and Federation Chair, completed this Suffragette themed jigsaw.



A lovely village scene from Sue MacEwen, Purleigh WI and Federation Vice Chair.



Linda Davidson from Springfield Afternoon WI finished this lovely shop jigsaw.



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Please note that we have no access to post or telephone while working from home or furloughing

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