

# OXFORDSHIRE WI

*Stay Home Stay Safe*



# CHAIRMAN'S LETTER



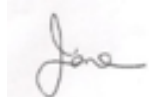
## Hello members

The sun is shining and I'm told the bluebells are looking spectacular in the woods around where I live although I'm not 'allowed out' to see them for myself. I expect many of you are under the same restrictions. Our office staff are either on 'furlough' or working reduced hours from home and the trustees are grateful for their understanding of the situation. The trustees continue to hold online meetings and the team is still there to support our members. While we're still answering your questions things may take a little longer.

I would like to share with you an update about a cherry tree that my WI in Stoke Row planted to mark the Millennium 20 years ago. It was just a spindly little thing back then, but full of potential, and was planted in the Cherry Orchard at the heart of the village next to Maharajah's Well. A husband of one of our members kindly made a wooden post and rail fence to put round it to protect from the cows that used to graze in the orchard back then. A few weeks after planting I accompanied our then President to place the plaque in front of the tree identifying it as planted by the WI for the Millennium. We were inside the fence focused on the job in hand when we became aware of company..... Some inquisitive young cows were pushing their wet noses between the fence getting a little too close for comfort, while their mums stood protectively behind them. We were surrounded. No mobile signal in Stoke Row back then, and no one around to come to our aid. It took us a good half hour to pluck up courage and negotiate our way out of the situation and scurry back home.

Twenty years later I thought I'd show you what a magnificent tree it has become. No cows graze in the orchard now and the fence is no longer needed. Thankfully the natural world around us is oblivious to the threat of coronavirus, and is probably breathing more easily due to the reduction in pollution.

With  
my best wishes



*"Keep your face to the  
sun and you will never see  
the shadows."*

**Helen Keller**



# FROM YOUR BOARD

## #SPEAKERSCORNER

As a Board we are working on an exciting new development to deliver an amazing programme of speakers and demos. So watch this space as they are coming to a living room near you soon.

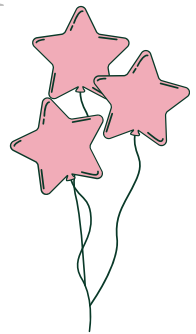


visit - [www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk/events](http://www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk/events)

The Board are continually looking at new ideas and different ways of doing things and we hope that you have enjoyed the first edition of our special News & Views. Your support for this, the second edition has been fantastic with lots of input from all of you our members. Please keep sending in your articles and photos and do please feel free to contact any of us either directly or through the office. We know that the WI spirit will see us through these times. We are Inspiring Women.



Greys WI celebrated their centenary last month and had great publicity in the local media, in The Henley Standard as well as a brilliant article in another local publication Round & About. Here's to the next hundred years.



## A note from your Oxfordshire WI Secretary Linda Mustill



We usually work so far in advance for our printed version that we struggle to have seasonal photos. Please can you take photos when you are on your daily walk and send them in. We will then have a lovely photo library ready for next year! Thank you and please continue to send in photos and details of what you are all doing at the moment, your contributions are vital to the success of these special editions of News & Views.

### MCS UPDATES

Please email me with any changes that you need help with making on MCS.

[fedsec@oxfordshirewi.co.uk](mailto:fedsec@oxfordshirewi.co.uk)

# #MYVIRTUALOXFORDSHIREWI

WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE START OF THE ONLINE OXFORDSHIRE WI CALENDAR OF EVENTS.

It is a tricky time and we know so many of you are missing attending WI events so your Board of Trustees have been working really hard to put on some events - all online of course. Each event will run via zoom and will be booked via our website. So grab a cup of coffee, put your lippy on and join us for the following awesome free events.

FREE



TO BOOK VISIT [www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk/events](http://www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk/events)

## THE MIRACLE OF BLETCHLEY PARK

THURSDAY 30th APRIL 2020 2pm  
VIA ZOOM



### GILLIAN CANE

In these challenging times I have gained much inspiration from the story of Bletchley Park, from the people who worked there and what they achieved against all the odds. Today there are so many people, young and not so young, all around the world, who are working tirelessly to help us through our current crisis. The spirit of Bletchley Park lives on and I hope that you gain some comfort and inspiration from hearing more about those brilliant, eccentric and entertaining heroes who worked there, in secret, during the second world war.

## PROPAGATION

FRIDAY 1st MAY 2020 2pm  
VIA ZOOM



### PAUL GRAY

A talk and demo live on Zoom all about the art of propagation and how to get many plants for next to nothing.

Paul Gray has well over 40 year's experience including as Head Gardener for the National Trust. Paul would describe himself as a very hands on gardener. Aiming to inspire all from amateurs to fellow professionals.

## DRESSED FOR WAR

TUESDAY 5th MAY 2020 2pm  
VIA ZOOM



### JULIE SUMMERS

The story of Vogue editor, Audrey Withers, from the Blitz to the Swinging Sixties by Julie Summers In this brand new talk for the brand new age of lockdown, Julie will talk about the remarkable wartime editor of British Vogue, Audrey Withers. Described during the war by the Board of Trade as the most powerful woman in London, Audrey kept the magazine going in the toughest of circumstances. The first three editions under her role as editor were put together in a bomb cellar in New Bond Street.

## LIFE IN LONDON

TUESDAY 11th MAY 2020 2pm  
VIA ZOOM



### SIMON GREGOR

Simon Gregor is an historian, tour guide, lecturer and tutor at Denman. Over the course of the coming weeks he will be offering a variety of short lectures online; precise subjects are still to be decided, but are likely to include his particular passions which are the First World War, the interwar years, the Second World War, and the Cold War. Not someone who likes to be pigeon-holed (!), Simon also loves talking about the wider history of London, and even about meditation and mindfulness. So watch this space!



# #INSPIRINGWOMEN

Chairman - Catherine Blaxhall

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07736698738

catherine.blaxhall@oxfordshirewi.co.uk



Dear Member

Perhaps like me you are waking up each day and wondering what day it is as each day seems a bit like the one before, and the one after! Week 4 of lockdown and we are settling down to a world of social distancing, self isolating and getting used to communicating with our family, friends and WIs using online social media platforms, making telephone calls and even writing letters again! The WI has always been at the centre of its community, so our first priority during this uncertain time is to try to ensure our WI communities are as strong as ever. Has your WI thought about organising some of your usual activities and meetings online which will enable them to continue running to ensure your members can continue to reap the benefits of their membership and stay connected. Many of our members have already successfully held virtual meetings through platforms such as Skype and Zoom and you will see photographs of some of these meetings in this newsletter. For those of you who think this may be a bit of a challenge, can I please reassure you that it really is relatively simple to set up. You will need one member who is confident using IT to set up the virtual meeting and be 'the host', but once this is done, all you need to do as attendees is to click the link they will send to you and you will be able to access the meeting. I really do recommend you try it so I have included some information here which I hope you will find helpful to help you get started.

**ZOOM** This is a very popular tool to virtually meet – either by video or audio call. The free version allows you to hold an unlimited number of meetings with up to 100 participants, and meetings can be recorded. However, video calls with a larger group of people are limited to 40 minutes in length. Of course, you can always restart your video call after 40 minutes, so there is a way around this time limit. Take a look at the following blog posts to learn how to host a Zoom meeting. • <https://www.howtogeek.com/661924/how-to-set-up-a-zoom-meeting/> • <https://www.owllabs.com/blog/zoom> In light of COVID-19, Zoom has also put together a help page with a lot of useful information and guidance on how to use their tool most effectively. Not sure which tool is right for you? This page offers a good overview of the differences between Skype and Zoom, making it easier for you to choose: <https://www.dgicommunications.com/zoom-vs-skype/>

We are aware that some of our members are not online so please do consider how you can keep in touch with them too. Knowing how supportive our members are to each other I am sure you have already set up a support system of some kind to make sure these members receive all the information we are sending out, which of course includes these special editions of News & Views. The office in Tackley is closed in line with Government recommendations and staff are working from home and therefore we are unable to print any hard copies of the newsletter at this time.



## Membership Support Committee

To ensure that members without internet access don't miss out on receiving the newsletter we are asking you to perhaps consider setting up a 'Member Assisting Member' system where for each person unable to receive a newsletter digitally another member prints her a copy. This would mean a few members just printing one copy each to make sure a fellow member doesn't miss out. The newsletter is offered in a printable format which uses less ink and of course, it can also just be printed in black & white.

You will find lots of resources to help too on My WI - [www.mywi.thewi.org.uk](http://www.mywi.thewi.org.uk). This is the place to go to find everything you need to get the most from your WI membership. It includes help on organising virtual meetings, craft and cookery ideas, including a new section on 'Get crafting with your children', looking after your mental health and so much more, so if you haven't already checked it out now is the time to do so.

**ANNUAL MEETINGS** Please don't worry if you weren't able to hold your Annual Meeting last month that's fine and you can wait to hold it until it is possible for you to all meet again. However, some of our WIs have held their Annual Meetings very successfully online with their WI Adviser acting as teller. If this is something you would like to consider doing please do just contact your WI Adviser who will be very happy to help you.

**MEMBERSHIP COMMUNICATION SYSTEM** Please can you make sure your WI's details on the Membership Communication System are up to date this month. It is really important that you check:• Is where and when my WI meets correct? Are all paid-up members listed? Are all members' details correct? Are all lapsed members removed? Are all officers' roles and committee positions assigned to the correct members?

There are currently over 6,300 WIs throughout the organisation with more than 200,000 members. This would make it difficult for the system to be maintained centrally and the NFWI board is very grateful to all the MCS Reps for helping to take care of WI records. If you have any problems at all with this please contact Linda Mustill by email who will be very happy to help [Fedsec@Oxfordshirewi.co.uk](mailto:Fedsec@Oxfordshirewi.co.uk) .

Finally, just a reminder to encourage you to join our mailing list. Just click the link here to sign up <https://www.oxfordshirewi.co.uk/mailling-list> and you will receive the special edition newsletters and other important information direct to your own email inbox. I know I speak for the whole Membership Support Team in sending our very best wishes to all our members at this difficult time. I hope you stay safe, stay well and are able to stay in touch with each other. WI members have always come together to support each other to stay connected and support each other through challenging times and we know from the lovely emails and updates we are receiving from you that this is exactly what you are doing right now.

With very best wishes,





# #MYVIRTUALWI

The first weekend of lockdown left me wanting to do something to cheer up local friends and neighbours so I decided to bake a large batch of butterfly cakes, box them with ribbons tied around the boxes and do doorstep drops. I received some lovely messages back from them and they enjoyed my gesture. Now - what shall I bake next!

**Mandy Vanstone,**  
Hanborough WI



Here at BRIGHTWELL CUM SOTWELL WI , we're using mail chimp to send out our newsletters - We aim to send one out every 7-10 days at the moment. We had our first virtual WI meeting last night - via zoom - was great to catch up with members - had 23 on line, including one member stuck in France (they were visiting their holiday home!) We plan to do it again - probably not waiting a month.

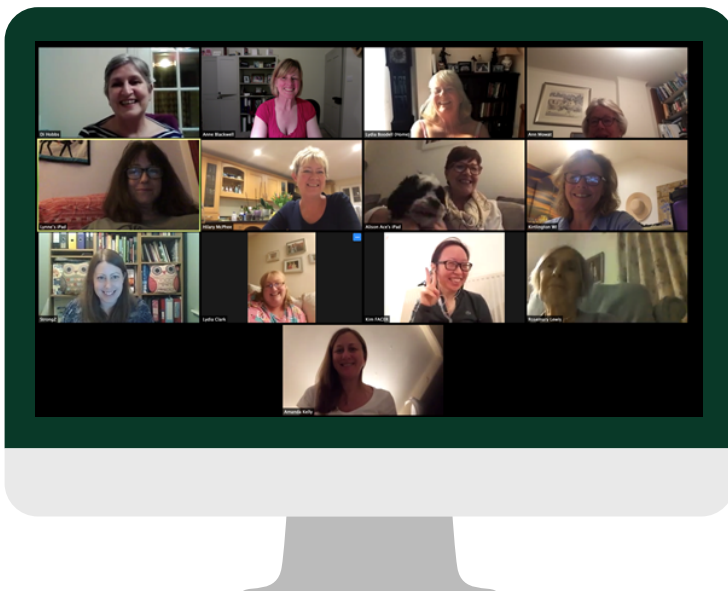
**Annie Brooker,**  
Brightwell-cum-Sotwell WI



MailChimp

We had an amazing first full WI zoom meeting last night with a guest speaker (my Goddaughter) who is a psychotherapist and art therapist talking to us about maintaining well-being and good mental health during the pandemic. It was great to be in touch with those who can be on zoom and an extremely pertinent subject. I've asked her if she would be willing to do it for other groups but as she is working full time I wait to find out if this is something she has the energy for at the moment. She made us all think about our feelings at the moment and emphasised the need for self-compassion.

**Anne Blackwell Kirtlington WI**



Our committee are keeping in touch with our members by phone. The membership list has been shared out amongst the committee so that everyone gets a phone call.

**Penny Marsh, Harwell WI**



# A WAY TO HELP



Chairman Veronica Wilson  
07855 414045  
veronica.wilson@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

## LAUNDRY BAGS

A huge thank you to everyone who has been busy making Laundry Bags. UK Crafters have now supplied over 6,000 bags to the NHS and have asked that we just halt supply for the moment. In our next issue we will inform you of the up to date situation regarding bags only. Contact UK Crafters.

[ukcraftersoxon@gmail.com](mailto:ukcraftersoxon@gmail.com)



I'm just packing up the parcel of 12 x 2 poly bags of laundry sacks, made and packed to the given spec.

Margaret Sharp, East & West Hendred WI

## SCRUBS

Are you able to make scrubs? There are two groups working on this: Tina Herringshaw-Dodd is from the Oxfordshire Crafters for Scrubs specifically making for Oxfordshire Community Hospitals and other medical groups. Go to their Facebook page or please contact her direct on [tinaherringshaw01@gmail.com](mailto:tinaherringshaw01@gmail.com) for more details on how to get involved. Annelize Littlefair is co-ordinating For The Love of Scrubs for Henley on Thames area. Please contact her direct on [littlefair634@btinternet.com](mailto:littlefair634@btinternet.com) for more details on how to get involved.

I am pleased to let you know that our laundry bag making is well underway. After contacting ukcrafters oxon I was given the Hub address allocated to us. We post the packeted bags direct to this hub and have sent 24 so far and will continue to do this on a regular basis. I aim to get a packet of 8 posted every few days. They are so urgently required to assist with the laundering of scrubs, which are in such short supply, it is good to be able to help in this way.

Jenny Ward,  
Sonning Common WI



GARSINGTON WI posted its first shipment of laundry scrub bags today - 12 in total - to the John Radcliffe Hospital. Please remind anyone wishing to help to follow the specific guidelines provided by the UK Crafters group, as they are the requirements direct from the hospital and health trusts. They also have the information about sewing other items (scrubs, headbands, etc.) and should be consulted first.

Martha S.J. Griffiths,  
Garsington WI





Over to you

# #OVERTOYOU

## UPCYCLING WINE BOTTLES

Christine, one of WITNEY WI's members, demonstrated how to make bottle lights out of wine bottles and our members enjoyed an afternoon of fun making their own bottle lights.

**Valerie Nelson, Witney WI**



## SPECIAL BIRTHDAYS

Two of our members from KENNINGTON WI, Jean Holt and Heather Davis, celebrated their special birthdays together at our February meeting.

The lovely cake was made by Kath Suckling.

**Margaret Young, Kennington WI**

## IT'S A CAT'S LIFE ...

Here is a super photograph of 'Max' relaxing on a pile of March's issue before I distributed them to our deliverers. I think he'd make a handsome cover-boy!!! Max belongs to Kath who is Secretary of BLEWBURY WI. He obviously knows a good read when he sees it...

**Sandra Lewis, Blewbury WI**



## AN EASTER STAYCATION

I thought you might be interested in hearing about my stay at home camp! I was hoping, along with many other of my WI friends to take part again this year in several camps around the country, organised by other WI members, following on from the success of Tea & Tents started in 2014.

However due to the current situation, many have sensibly been postponed for this year. A couple of members I know from the camping sessions, and also through the Unofficial Women's Institute-UWI Facebook page, have set up virtual camps on Facebook suggesting we put up our tents in our gardens or camped on our driveways.

The groups' Daisy Fest Easter 2020, organised by Catherine Langran, and The Great Indoor/Outdoor Camp 2020 set up by, amongst others a lady known on Facebook as Jupiter Jean, who rents out beautiful bell tents on our weekends, have proved to be fun as well as encouraging a bit of frivolity in these difficult times we are living with at the moment.

I attach a photo of my 'camp out' on the drive of my home in Fringford, Oxfordshire, trying to depict all the things we are missing, the green heart bunting, the afternoon tea, the company and sleeping outside of course.

I hope you like it, it was a great Easter staycation!

**Christine Underwood,  
Shelswell WI**



## KINDNESS TO OTHERS

WANTAGE WI President Rita Hetherington made a visit to Fitzwaryn Special School to present a cheque for £300 collected from raffles and members donations. The two Library Ambassadors were delighted to receive this to “buy lots more books.”

**Rita Hetherington,  
Wantage WI**



## TOILETRIES BAGS

WANTAGE WI ladies have been very generous, giving toiletries and money donations which are much needed at the moment with the current coronavirus situation. This is however an ongoing project which we do on a regular basis - It gives not only essential toiletries, but gives the recipients a feeling that someone cares - whether it goes to someone who is rushed into the JR hospital, who has been involved in an accident, or to someone that doesn't have anything at all.

**Diane Monnery, President  
Wantage WI**



## KEEPING BUSY - SEWING

One way to keep busy. These are the dog's beds that one of SUTTON COURTENAY WI's members Tina Wade has been busy making, and much appreciated, for the local dog's home. To date Tina has so far made 32 from donated duvets and covers from our members and friends.

**Val Melville. Sutton Courtenay WI**



## REMINDER OF KINDNESS

I have often thought I should tell you a little snippet: I was very fortunate to go to the WI Annual meeting in Bournemouth in 2019. At one point I got a tickle and annoying cough. Someone in front of me turned round and I feared I was annoying her..... she turned round again and gave me a peppermint. That peppermint is still in my dressing table as a reminder of the kindness of an unknown member of the WI. Let's not dwell on the pushing and shoving when trying to visit the shopping stands!

As you might guess, I am spending a lot of time on the iPad as locked in.  
With kind regards and happy memories of the lovely meeting at Bournemouth.

**Angela Jacob, Watlington WI**



# “WHAT I HEARD ON THE BUS”



Chairman - Pauline Goddard  
01869 240663  
pbgwendlebury@gmail.com



## LADY DENMAN CUP - “WHAT I HEARD ON THE BUS”

Using no more than 500 words you are invited to write about 'what you heard on the bus'.

I know it may be a problem at this present moment but I am sure with your brilliant imagination you will find no difficulty is producing a stunning story.

Please send 4 copies with your name, address, WI and Oxfordshire WI on the first page only which must be accompanied with your entry form, a stamped address envelope if you wish your story to be returned and a cheque made payable to OFWI for £4 to the office at Tackley. An individual entry form is attached. The full schedule and the entry form can also be downloaded from the MyWI.

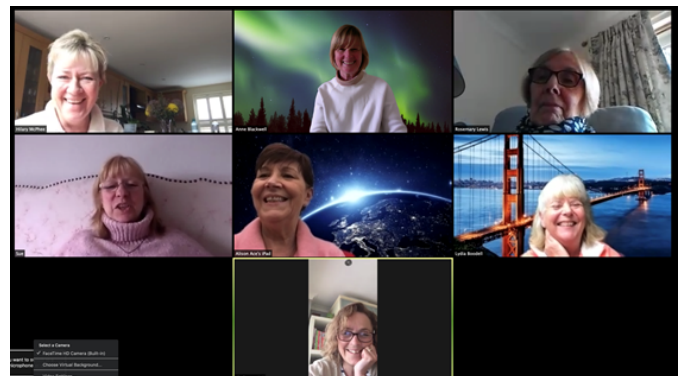
Closing date:  
Friday  
26 June 2020

Cost: £4

## A GOOD READ

Our book group goes from strength to strength and Zoom hasn't stopped us getting together for cheese and wine and a good discussion. Our last book was *The Bees* by Laline Paul which we all enjoyed and we are currently reading *Not Without My Daughter*. Perhaps not the ideal choice for stressful times!

Anne Blackwell,  
Kirtlington WI



The New York Metropolitan Opera are streaming different operas every night go to <https://www.metopera.org/>

Annie Sharman, Associate Member



# HAVE YOU TRIED WALKING NETBALL?



Jean Geary  
01235869070  
07799 766566  
jean.geary@oxfordshirewi.co.uk



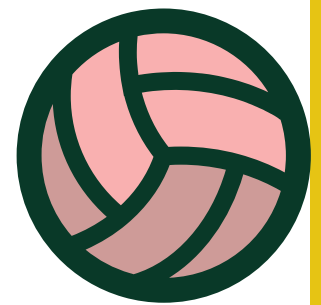
Before the dreadful virus

lockdown an extra activity of joy landed with me. As a new member of the Begbroke WI, I was made aware of the opportunity to participate in locally organised Walking Netball.

Confessing to having played gentle league netball until my fifties, I then coached for ten years and then due to breast cancer gave up physical involvement with the sport; I am now 68. On hearing about Walking Netball I was dubious but having gone along to the session it was just so good.

What is it about a sport such as this? Is it the direct connection with another person?

To move the ball along requires hand to hand contact, via a ball – perhaps with a stranger - and what else in life does this. You have to throw the ball in such a way that the catcher – whatever her skills – can receive it – you have to consider other players in order for your team to get another goal. It also makes you stretch a bit more (after a fun-warm up of course) and then those steps – at a walking pace! There was plenty of laughter and plenty of achievement as the group of women with very varied backgrounds tried to do what was asked of them, even though the maths involved often took just a bit too much brain power – it was hilarious – you think we could count to three! In the group are many who had never been involved in team sport since leaving school. The coach Ali has just the right hands on to enable the group to get so much from the session; and the group leader Virginia (sv.lawrence@btopenworld.com) from Otmoor WI does a grand job in organising us. The sessions are on Wednesday early evening at a primary school in Kidlington (thanks to Maureen the original instigator of the initiative in this area) and whilst the hall itself is on the small side – when better weather arrives the one hour sessions are taken out of doors. I can't wait to get back



Thank you WI for considering the physical needs of the membership and enabling this initiative to go forward.

Sue Blackshaw,  
Begbroke WI





# VERSATILE FLUFFY OMELETTE



Chairman - Tracy Strain  
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tracy.strain@oxfordshirewi.co.uk



1 to 2 eggs per person

Any vegetables - carrots, peas, courgette, potatoes, tomatoes, broccoli, even if previously cooked in garlic, herbs, honey, etc. (Mashed veg doesn't really work!) Various colours make for a pretty dish!

+/- sausages, cold meat, cheese (nice, but not necessary)

Dice and warm leftover veg and a couple of sausages (all pre-cooked from a previous meal) in frying pan on low heat. Whisk the white of the eggs until stiff, then the yolks until creamy, add seasoning and blend together. Remove pan contents and lightly grease if necessary. Pour in egg mix and spread evenly. Gently return veg mix all over the egg. Sprinkle grated cheese or sliced mozzarella over the top. Partly cover with lid to keep heat in and allow steam to escape. Cook on low heat (or put in oven without lid, if pan handle permits or in greased baking tin) for 20-30 minutes until egg shrinks from the sides of the pan and cheese has melted. Slide onto a warmed platter and serve (or serve straight from the pan!). All gluten free (if sausages are also GF). Variations: If preferred, serve some veg or meat separately to accommodate different family tastes or for presentation. Bake in a small pie dish or ramekin for individuality. Line a flan tin/dish with pastry and pour in egg and veg mix. May like to blind bake the pastry first. (Beware: GF pastry?) Add a teaspoon of curry paste (check GF?) when seasoning. Can be used as starter, side dish, main meal. Try swapping the veg with fruit for a dessert? Use a little sugar or honey instead of seasoning - watch sugar doesn't burn in frying pan!

Enjoy experimenting!

The opinions expressed in News & Views are not necessarily those of the Oxfordshire WI.

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*Stay safe and Stay home*

