

## Belgrave Community Culture



36 ladies went on our second visit to the Hindu Temple next door to WI House in Belgrave.

The visit was followed by a cream tea at WI house served by our willing helpers. Members had the opportunity to wander around the house, see the new garden benches and view some materials from the archive. Samosas were on sale again along with some craft supplies.

Members of the temple were very friendly and welcoming and told us all about their customs and festivals. It was very informative.

Watch out for details of the next visit!



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### Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of Women's Institutes

incorporated in England and Wales as a Company limited by Guarantee No. 02769771 Charity Reg No. 1016 766

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## Support for a school in Sierra Leone

Mike Fielding, a former secondary teacher, from Extra Mile visited Wigston Magna WI and talked to us about the charity he founded in Sierra Leone after finding out about boy soldiers, who had been through desperate experiences, living rough and not being able to go to school. With the local community, fundraising in the UK and massive dedication he was able to secure land and start building a secondary school. Building wasn't easy as everything had to be either made on site or carried in. Phase I was completed and the Ober Funkia Free Community School opened in 2016 with 55 students despite the Ebola crisis.



After gaining official recognition the school has gone from strength to strength with pupil numbers increasing. Phase 2 is now being developed. Girls now attend and this has created some difficulties regarding sanitary arrangements and issues with lack of available sanitary products for the girls, as they were unable to attend school when they were menstruating. This presented a huge risk as the girls are at risk of kidnap and being trafficked.



Mike Fielding explained how people in the UK could help to maintain and develop the school through fundraising. Another way of helping was to make reusable sanitary packs for the girls including cotton and towelling pads, pants and a small bag to keep them in. The school started getting volunteers in the UK to make the kits and started providing for the girls. However, the girls' mums and older relatives often took them for themselves.

Wigston Magna WI decided we needed to do something to help. A request for donations of fabric, towelling and shower curtain went out. We managed to acquire a huge amount of towelling, cotton fabric and shower curtains and set to work. Not only were a large number of sanitary kits made but also a massive amount of the fabrics were collected from us by Mike. He had also mentioned that they wanted to teach the girls to make their own kits but they had to be handsewn as there was no electricity. Two of our members donated hand powered sewing machines which were very gratefully received. We understand that now there is an after-school session for the girls to make sanitary kits. There will obviously be an ongoing need for donations.



We receive regular newsletters from the charity and we were very pleased to find out that the school has had fantastic results in the Sierra Leone equivalent to A levels, coming second in the area. One of the pupils actually achieved the best results in the whole area and the student and school received prestigious awards. It is particularly impressive when you realise that the school functions on donations.

This free school has made a huge difference to the young people of the community, enabling them to go on to further education. We feel that we have, in our small way, made a difference.

## Which Craft?

Which Craft? had their first meeting at WI house on the 3rd Thursday in February. Ten ladies arrived with their different projects. One lady was crocheting a beehive while another was making flowers for Alice in wonderland. There were cards made, a rag doll and a fascinating coiled pot beginning to come to life. One lady had knitting needles to envy!



Everyone had a good chat sharing ideas. Our 'tea lady' Rosalie kept us supplied with tea and biscuits and more importantly did the washing up.

Meetings will be on the 3rd Thursday of the month at WI House 10am—12 noon. The next one is 16th March and then 20th April. All welcome, we look forward to seeing you there.



## Green theme—Did you know?

Are members aware that empty medication blister packs can be recycled at Superdrug shops with a pharmacy to save these items, of which there are vast amounts, going to landfill? Superdrug pharmacies have a dedicated container to receive these packs and it's amazing the quantity that come from each household so save empty blister packs and save landfill. I have used Superdrug in Humberstone gate (close to M&S entrance) and the branch in Loughborough Market Place - the Superdrug must have its own pharmacy. As WIs we could make a real difference so carry on the green theme ladies! **Lynn Mellor - Groby & Markfield joint member**



I heard of someone who in efforts to go plastic free embarked on using store cupboard products to tackle grime. I tried it, successfully and I'm getting hooked - inexpensive, natural and plastic free.

Using different mixes of water, washing up liquid, white vinegar, bicarbonate of soda, soda crystals and lemon I have revitalised a rug, a sofa, removed burns from pans, spruced up wood floors, given knives new lustre and the shower cubicle sparkle.

A friend gave me a few recipes and others I googled. I typed in 'cleaning using natural products', and of course tried a small area first. Recently on Countryfile there was an article about historical cleaning at Audley End House. The use of tea leaves to clean rugs and bread to freshen wallpaper was demonstrated! I've not tried those nor leaving greasy oven shelves on the grass overnight-but the latter's worth a go.

**Jenny Berry—Public Affairs Committee**

## What's Coming Up?

3rd Thursday	Which Craft? at WI House 10 –12 monthly
Tues 28 March	Resolutions Briefing WI House 2pm and 7pm
Wed 19 April	Afternoon Tea with Baroness Bolsover
Sat 20th May	Spring Lunch
Sat 9 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Beading workshop date
Sat 23rd Sept	Big Green Week—bulb planting
Sat 7 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Embroidery follow up day
Sat 25 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Xmas Dabble Day

2024 ACM art competition 'Celebration'

## Board of Trustees

We would encourage any treasurers who can to become an Independent Financial Examiner (IFE). This work is crucial in supporting WIs with completing their accounts and is incredibly rewarding work. If you are interested in the role or would like to find out more please contact Mary Hobbs on 07713 641093 or email [maryhobbs@lrfwi.org](mailto:maryhobbs@lrfwi.org)

We have had to review and increase our prices for postage and printing as costs have increased . Every WI will **continue to receive 2 free copies of County News on a monthly basis.**

It is now **£1.50 per additional copy** plus postage <3 = £1 4-6 = £1.50 7-10 = £2 11-15 = £2.50

In addition, to reduce paper waste it is a good opportunity to review the number of printed County News copies you may need and gain views of members about how they prefer to read it.

## Membership Report

As a Federation we could do with some more WI Advisers. If you have no idea what we do here is a brief outline!

- We help WIs and Members make the most of their Membership.
- We can set up new WIs and sometimes have to close existing ones.
- We can offer help and advice with any difficulties
- We go out and promote the WI at outside events.
- We make up the County Membership Committee where we get together and share ideas and help we have given WIs.
- We run training for WI officers to help them in their roles.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in taking on have an informal chat with any of the current Advisers (contact details in the yearbook) or come and observe a Membership meeting and see what you think.

### Monthly Draw Winners!



**Congratulations to our Monthly Draw winners for February!**

**1st Prize £25— Linda Fenn, Ketton**

**2nd Prize £15— Mary Tuckey, Ashby castle**

**3rd Prize £10—Val Blowfield, QE**

**Thank you to all of the members who have supported the Federation by buying a Monthly Draw ticket!**

# Around the Counties

## Stoke Golding

### People of Bradgate :- talk by Steve Cockett

Bradgate has been inhabited for 15,000 years, recent discoveries found on the rocky outcrops have produced napped flint tools. The Romans called the area Broadgate probably the first derivation of Bradgate.

One for the first family's to own Bradgate was the Ferrers family and it passed to the Grey family by marriage. John Grey was killed in battle but had been guilty of rebellion against the king and his widow Elizabeth and her two young sons were ejected from the house and forced to stay with her parents in Northamptonshire. She approached the King Edward IV to ask for his help in getting her land back for her sons. The king fell in love with her and married her, she produced 10 children with the king, two of whom were the Princes in the Tower. As her sons from her first husband grew up honours were heaped on them and her son

Thomas began building at Groby near the site of the castle. However he was soon attracted to a more beautiful site at Bradgate where he began a large mansion but it is unlikely that he finished this house. Henry Grey was created Earl of Suffolk probably as his wife Frances was a granddaughter of Henry VII. Therefore their daughter Jane has a right to the throne grounded on her direct descent from Edward IV and Henry VII and also as Edward VI named her as his successor in his will. Jane grew up at Bradgate.

Jane refused to accept the crown but was proclaimed queen at the age of 15 mainly driven by the greed and ambition of her father in law John Dudley (Duke of Northumberland)

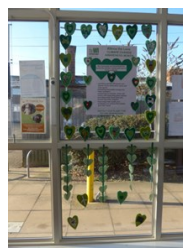
After Mary came to the throne, Jane was eventually executed in 1554, as a mark of respect the oak trees at Bradgate were Pollarded (Beheaded).

## Broughton Astley

Daisy Edwards, teacher of British Sign Language and Programme Manager of Leicestershire County Council's Adult Learning, was our guest speaker to tell us about the history of sign languages. Finger spelling has been around since 700 AD and the first record of sign language is in Leicestershire in 1576! In a retrograde step in 1880 the Milan Conference decided that oral methods should be promoted to make deaf people speak and signing was discouraged. Fortunately this decision was subsequently reversed and British Sign Language was named in 1975 with a campaign for it to be officially recognised as a language starting ten years later. It took until 2000 for this to happen and the British Sign Language Act was finally passed in 2002. It is now law that there has to be a BSL interpreter at all important news bulletins, which we did see during the Covid pandemic.

Daisy gave us tips on how to best communicate with a deaf or partially hearing person and taught us the alphabet, which we all practised to sign our names. It was a really interesting and informative evening, which we all enjoyed.

Hilda, one of our longest serving members, celebrated an extra special birthday and we presented her with a colourful bouquet.



For the #Show the Love campaign Lyn, Kim and Fran put up a green hearts display in our local library, which was well received.

We held our annual Table Top Sale in our village hall, selling all available tables and offering a wide variety of items for sale. This was well attended by our community and refreshments and delicious home baked cakes were enjoyed by all.



## Barkby and Beeby

Ian Pettit an amateur photographer took us on an atmospheric slide journey through Beautiful Britain via a tour of the UK. From Devon to scenic Scotland he showed us stunning landscapes, steam engines, windmills and castles. He gave us tips on how to view the composition of our photographs using a noughts & crosses grid. He encouraged us to experiment with different

angles, shafts of light, fore/background features & breathtaking reflections.

What an inspiration!



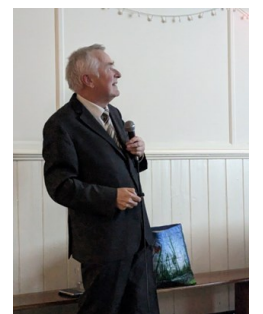
## Sheepy

Dr Ray Lowery entertained us at our February meeting.

He told the story of his quest to find his place in the world from dreams of being a pilot to becoming a dentist and doctor. He told us many anecdotes of the famous people he wrote material for when he was younger, The two Ronnies, Dave Allen, John Cleese to name a few.

Along the way he told jokes and shared funny clips from the media.

The evening was light hearted and full of laughter.



## Around the Counties

### Glenfield Park

This evening we were joined by Richard Warren to talk to us about the life and times of Thomas Cook.

Thomas was born in Melbourne Derbyshire in 1808. Sadly, his father died when he was only 3 years old. As was the way in those times his mother remarried. At the age of 10 he went to work at Melbourne Hall as an apprentice gardener, subsequently he completed a further apprenticeship with an uncle becoming a cabinet maker. He was brought up within the Baptist church spending much time travelling the neighbourhood evangelising and distributing leaflets. He went on to become a Baptist Preacher, he also became involved in the temperance movement although not as fervently as his wife Marianne whom he married in 1833.

As most of the miles he travelled were on foot it is not hard to imagine how attractive the idea of travelling on the latest invention of the railways was. He arranged a group trip between Leicester Campbell Street railway and Loughborough to a

temperance rally. Thus began his first organised escorted excursion selling it for a shilling return.

In 1845 there was no direct link between the English and Scottish railways so he organised for 350 people to travel to Scotland by rail to Liverpool then boat to the West coast of Scotland and further by train. This could be described as the first package tour.

He and his wife went on to arrange for 150,000 people to travel to the Great Exhibition in 1851. This was followed by their first excursions abroad when they took two groups on the grand tour through Belgium, Germany and France ending in Paris when it held its Great Exhibition.

For these tours they created guide books which were another world first. These booklets recommended places to go, to stay and to avoid. Another innovation was the equivalent of travellers' cheques. During this time he had overstretched himself by booking a journey and paying for all of it in advance but the tickets were not taken up and he was declared bankrupt. Rather unusually he subsequently paid all of his creditors in full.

### Anstey

The speaker at Anstey WI's February meeting was Sageena Thakur, a forthright Glaswegian who showed us her memory albums. She is passionately in favour of having photographs printed, rather than leaving them to languish, unloved and unviewed on our phones, discarded when the phone is replaced. Instead, she has them printed and mounts them in scrapbook, embellished to elevate them from a mere photo album.

Each photo is mounted on card to afford a coloured frame, placed on a page of patterned papers or papers, and given an embellished caption. She adds other pictures and text. The pages are then inserted into a 12in by 12in or 8in by 8in book. Some were colourful, others more subtle, as appropriate for the subject matter. Single pages can also be framed. As well as personal projects, she accepts commissions. She was assisted in her demonstration by her daughter Jasmin, who also featured as an

infant in one of the albums that were handed round.

Sabeena was an amusing speaker, encouraging banter from the audience, but unafraid to rebuke those she felt were not paying attention.

The competition, for a childhood memento, produced a fascinating range of entries (pictured.) The winner was Maureen Cook, with a scrapbook of her 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> birthdays, very much redolent of the era, which provoked a wave of nostalgia among the members.



### Wing

Our speaker was Tom Johnson, Chairman of Rutland Musical Theatre, Funeral Director at E M Dorman Funeral Directors in Uppingham, and an Uppingham Town Councillor – all this although he is not yet 30 years old.

In a most entertaining talk Tom told us how, in spite of excellent academic achievements and an undoubted theatrical talent, he decided while still a teenager that he really wanted to work for the local funeral directors.

Many who had seen Tom in local theatre productions and also knew of his experience with the National Youth Theatre thought he might follow a stage career. He did go as far as auditioning at a London stage school but realised that a full-time life in the theatre was not for him. He had done work experience with Dormans and finally persuaded Eddie Dorman that he really was serious about becoming an undertaker and that is what he has been doing since he left school.

He first became interested in the work of an undertaker following deaths in his own family and explained that doing this work in Rutland is a vocation, not just a job, as it gives him the chance to get close to and help local families. Many Wing members have experienced for themselves how Tom's sympathetic nature and desire to make everything run smoothly reassures those involved that all the details and requirements are taken care of at a time when help and comfort is most needed.

Tom is still very active in the Rutland Musical Theatre, currently directing the musical "Kinky Boots" which will be at The Cube in Corby in April. As if this were not enough to be going on with, he is now a Town Councillor in Uppingham, although he said he did have the sense to turn down the chance to become a Governor of his old school, Uppingham Community College.

He had time for a cup of tea and cake before dashing off to take a rehearsal. He left us wondering how he found the energy to do so much, delighted that we have such a talented young man in Rutland.

# Around the Counties

## Newbold Verdon

Carol and Steve from the Bradgate Park Trust came to tell Newbold Verdon WI about the people of Bradgate Park. Beginning from around 13,000 BC when the first people set up their tents, though the Romans and Anglo-Saxons, we moved on to 1241 when the site was first enclosed as a deer park (grazed by Red and Fallow Deer), which it remains today.

The most famous family the Greys, took over in 1427 and remained there until Mary Tudor had both Lady Jane Grey (Queen for 9 days) and her father Thomas Grey beheaded in 1657. Lady Elizabeth Hervey and the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Stamford through the 1800s. It was then gifted to the people of Leicestershire for recreation in the 1900s.

Steve told us that the house was originally about 1/3 the size it is today and has been added to over the centuries. A very interesting and informative talk.

## Sileby



Members took part in a Sound Therapy evening with the lovely Petra. She explained how sound therapy works and did a demonstration where we listened to the sounds in the dark. It was a very interesting and relaxing evening!



## Avon Group

On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February representatives from the Avon Group of W.I.s met at The Wycliffe Rooms in Lutterworth.

We were there to recognise the effort and work which had been completed by longstanding Group Secretary Rita Byrne.

The Institutes in the Group clubbed together and bought Rita a Gift Card and some flowers to acknowledge her 10 years as Secretary/Treasurer.



## Loddington Lopers



Apart from the physical and mental benefits of regular walking, this activity done as part of a group, provides space to strengthen existing friendships and develop new ones.

The Loddington Lopers, a cheerful gang of women from the local WI, meet most Tuesday mornings to enjoy each other's company whilst walking in the gorgeous countryside of Rutland and East Leicestershire.

After meeting at a pub, or café carpark the group set off as one. As the walk progresses across fields, along lanes and through the woods, the group splits into twos and threes, then reunites into one again as the conversation flows from one subject to another. There is always much to discuss, regular topics include all the usual. Politics (more women in charge needed) TV serials (at



present Happy Valley) The Royal family (mostly positive) and the mysteries of coping with IT (when there is nobody young around to help). Should anyone have problems, family issues or health concerns the whole group are instinctively supportive and sympathetic. Happy events are cheered and funny events become hilarious when the story is told.

At the end of the walk muddy boots are replaced with clean ones. Fitbit and phone data is compared to establish the distance travelled, before heading into the pub for much needed refreshment and even more chatting.

What luck to be in such a superb part of the UK and to be amongst good friends.



## Hinckley Canalside



At our February meeting we had the very talented wildlife photographer, Nick Martin, give an excellent talk on Wildlife in The Blue Mountains and Sydney. Nick was a brilliant speaker, giving us an

interesting talk on the wildlife he was able to capture with his camera on his last trip to Australia. He took photographs of various wild birds both in the urban areas, harbour and Blue Mountains of Sydney.

Nick gave us hints and tips on how best to position yourself when taking photographs in the wild. There was an array of amazing colourful birds, Kangaroos, Wallaroos, Koala Bears and Wallabies. He gave us a fascinating insight into their habitat, mating and feeding habits. He explained what a Wallaroo was and why the mountains were blue.

## Ashby Spa

Ashby Spa WI is part of the Leicestershire & Rutland Federation. With 120 members we are a vibrant bunch and like to support National Campaigns. Green Hearts are displayed this February in the Ashby de la Zouch town garden tended by our WI Gardening Gang. Our speaker this month was from Women's Aid Leicestershire offering refuge for victims of domestic abuse. (We support this charity annually with donations including toiletries for women and their children.)



On a lighter note, member Christine led our craft group for many years and has inspired us all to have a go at a variety of projects, leading to some winning prizes at the local Ashby Show. In the Autumn of last year, Christine was very poorly in hospital and, with time to reflect, decided to set us an annual challenge in November, with a different theme each year. This year the theme was 'The Woodland'. All attending the February meeting got a token so that they could vote for their chosen entry. There was such a variety of items displayed it was difficult for us to vote on only one! Our winner was another founding member and past President, Carole Booth, with a felted picture of a Bluebell Wood. Christine awarded her unique Trophy and we are looking forward to 'Have a Go' Challenges for many more years.

Perhaps other WIs will pick up the challenge for their WI.



## Cossington



Members welcomed, by zoom, Mildred Freeman to their February meeting for her talk 'One Lump or Two' The History of Tea.

From the comfort of her parlour, Mildred dressed in Victorian costume, told us everything there was to know about this popular beverage. First introduced in England in the 1660s we learnt how the innocent afternoon tea spread bought about war, addiction, poison, slavery and female liberation.

## Kilby

At our January meeting we were treated to a talk about Wildlife in Kibworth by an enthusiastic amateur who is a member of our WI. The speaker was Julie Harrison accompanied by her husband Ian. Julie spoke about the different species of birds and other animals illustrated by superb photographs taken by Ian.

Their garden at home is visited by many different types of wild life because ponds are provided for water dwellers, flat bluish flowers which are loved by bees and buddleia for the butterflies. As yet they have not had a cuckoo in their garden. These birds are able to throw their voices so it is difficult to locate them accurately. These are well known for ejecting eggs from an established nest and replacing them by their own; the cuckoo egg is of similar appearance to the host egg. Also, they would like to see a harvest mouse which uses its prehensile tail to hang on to stalks.

Around Kibworth hares can be seen on the golf course and around Mill Lane there is a variety of wildlife including foxes, tree creepers, and tawny owls, the latter which are sometimes difficult to spot. Goldcrests which weigh about 20p and wrens which weigh about 50p can also be seen.

There are a pair of peregrine falcons nesting on Market Harborough church. These are the fastest birds reaching speeds up to 186 miles per hour when diving. We have more red kites at the moment thanks to a national reintroduction programme. These birds were very common and popular in the Middle Ages as they kept the streets clean of carrion; however a bounty was put on their heads and they were almost wiped out. Now we are in a position to send fledged birds to Spain to boost their numbers.

The talk was enjoyed by all our ladies and next month we are looking forward to Tom Philips talking about chocolate.

## Bitteswell

It is with great sadness we announce the sudden death of our dear friend Margaret Foster. Margaret had been a WI member for 24 years, even though she "was too young to join the WI". Margaret was our President for over nine years and worked tirelessly in the community, church and village school. Margaret was always willing to help anyone who needed it and will be greatly missed.

Our latest speaker was Adrian Walker who gave a very informative talk on the Coast 2 Coast walks he organises to raise funds for LOROS. The walk is 195 miles long from St Bees in Cumbria to Robin Hood's Bay on the North Yorks Moor. There were many lovely photographs to accompany the talk showing the beautiful countryside the walkers cover during the 2 week walk.



# Around the Counties

## Hollycroft



Frances Rathbone volunteered on the Mercy Ships after hearing about them at her own WI and came to Hollycroft to tell us all about it. As she had always wanted to do voluntary work overseas this was a perfect opportunity for her to reach a personal goal. With help from her own WI she managed to raise the necessary

funds as it proved to be extremely expensive and the list of injections she had to have was eye-watering.

Mercy Ships, an international charity, provides humanitarian aid including free health care in third world countries. She initially applied to be a hostess but became a housekeeper, i.e. cleaner. The ship was a refurbished cruise liner with seven decks and, although the job was very challenging at times, the diverse experiences made up for it. Frances explained that of the 484 workers of 31 nationalities, 350 slept on board. One surgeon had lived there for 28 years with his wife and three children. Medical treatments ranged from dentistry and cataracts to maxi facial tumours. The hospital deck was well equipped with a scanner and fully functioning operating theatre. One notable experience was giving blood, even though she is unable to do so at home, and then be able to meet the recipient who she called her 'blood sister'. She was pleased to discover that the small box garden she established on the top deck to grow salad was developed further after she left and is now called the Garden of Eden. With her infectious enthusiasm for the scheme Frances gave us a fascinating insight into the enormous scale of this invaluable project.

## Leire



At our recent meeting we were entertained by The Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society, Leicester Branch. They demonstrated a number of dances including Rhona, Highland Welcome, Toast To The

Mouses and The Ferry Boat. Members were able to join in with some of these, learning steps and rhythms such as Strathspey (which is specific to Scottish Country Dancing), reels and Jigs. A rather dubious story related to The Haggis Tree dance written by mathematician John Drewry who claimed that his father's mother descended from Sir Isaac Newton and that a haggis falling on his head made him gravitate toward Scottish Country Dancing!

One member of the group read a poem titled "The Tartan" which led to some interesting facts about the fabric and who was allowed to wear it. There are 2,500 different tartans! We all enjoyed joining in and the group are always looking for more members.

Our monthly competition was "an item of tartan" which was won by Stephanie. We also announced the annual trophy winner of the monthly competitions which was also Stephanie.



## Oakham

Oakham WI has had a busy start to 2023. We started the year with our Post Christmas lunch at Rutland Water Gold Club attended by 40 members. A week later some hardy members braved the cold for a walk to Egleton where we saw our first snowdrops of the year.



Our monthly meeting found us learning about and practising Zentangle.



Into February and fourteen members of Oakham WI enjoyed a visit to the Richard III visitor centre in Leicester, ten years after the Greyfriars archaeological dig, which uncovered the remains of King Richard III, took place.

We started with a tour of the ground floor which gave us a good understanding of the turbulent history of the War of the

Roses and how Richard rose to power before losing his life on the battlefield. We then moved upstairs to find out about the finding of the body of Richard III and how DNA sampling proved that the skeleton was definitely that of Richard.

As the Cathedral is currently closed for refurbishment, we had a talk from a member of the Cathedral staff about the re interment and commemorations in 2015

We concluded the day with a visit to the excellent cafe for a late lunch and a chance to talk about all that we had seen.



February continues with a coffee morning, a card making session and our monthly meeting. We look forward to another WI year of fun and friendship.



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**DEADLINE for MAY ISSUE 1st APRIL**

Please try to keep Around the Counties articles to 120 words and 2 photos so we can include as many as we can and save paper, ink and postage costs also



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