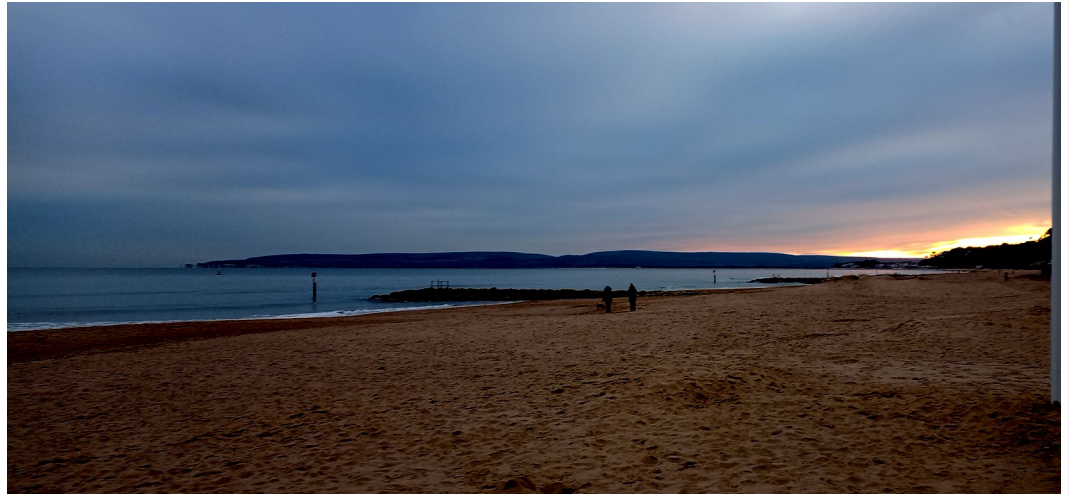



Bournemouth Holiday





Travelling, the hotel and Bournemouth views.



<p>Federation Chairman Glenice Wignall glenicewignall@lrfwi.org</p>	<p>Federation Treasurer Linda Martin lindamartin@lrfwi.org</p>	<p>Federation Secretary Sandra Woodward fedsec@lrfwi.org</p>	<p>Accounts Assistant Anila Patel finance@lrfwi.org</p>	<p>Admin Assistant Lauren Saunders wihouse@lrfwi.org</p>
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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
WI House, 135 Loughborough Road, Leicester, LE4 5LQ
Tel: 0116 2661342 Email: wihouse@lrfwi.org
Opening hours: Mon-Thurs 9.30am—1.30pm
www.leicestershire-and-rutland.thewi.org.uk or scan QR code
 Find us on Facebook: Leicestershire & Rutland Federation of WIs

Bournemouth Holiday

Angela Fielding, Melton Mowbray W.I.

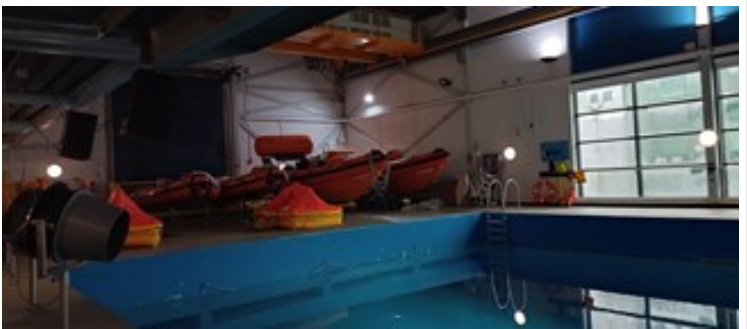
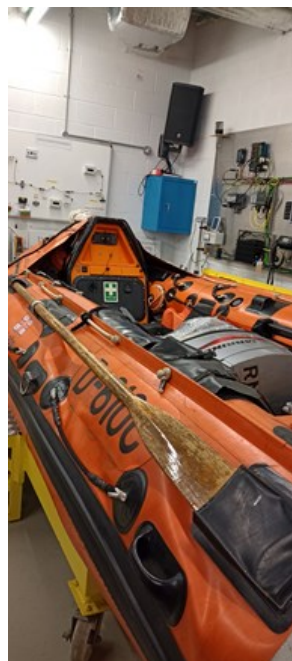
At the hotel, I was lucky to have a room with a sea view. We had excellent service from all staff, delicious and varied food, high standards of cleanliness throughout.

The weather, although cold, was extremely sunny with little or no wind most days so, provided that you were wrapped up, you were warm and cosy.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to visit the RNLI at Poole to see the extensive modern training facilities. The general public are able to visit the coffee / tea room and use the restaurant throughout the year. Anyone can book for a weekend accommodation at the training facility – an alternative to other B& Bs or hotels.

My day at Portsmouth was magical – having the opportunity to see the Spinnaker Tower, going to the top and appreciating how high it was compared to other landmarks throughout the world. We had both coffee and lunch looking out at the various landmarks in the city and the bright sunlight enabled visibility to the Isle of Wight and other resorts.

Thursday was the day in Bournemouth. We went to the Russell-Cotes Museum with magnificent paintings and porcelain in a beautiful house, plus the talented pianist on the grand piano who gave a relaxing repartee of traditional music. At the Pier, the sea was calm with bright sunshine and we saw where the zip-wire sped participants back to the beach – fortunately it was not working that day, so we did not have to “chicken-out”.



Outing to Poole.

Some visited the RNLI training centre and had a lovely lunch. Others did a little shopping and walked along the Quay



Bournemouth Holiday



Portsmouth—a lovely day and spectacular views from the Spinnaker Tower. Some people even braved standing on the glass!



Val Skeffington

Birstall & Wanlip WI

Heading home and a quick stop at the Bicester garden centre.



We set off promptly from WI House, in comfortable coaches, and headed south to Bournemouth. There was a break en route at the Bicester Avenue Garden Centre and we arrived at the Riviera Hotel, Alum Chine to sunshine and blue skies. The hotel was clean, comfortable and pleasantly situated overlooking the Chine. The meals were tasty and varied, served by pleasant and friendly staff and our evening entertainment was enhanced by short bursts of rhythmic dancing from one of the staff members – encouraged by some of our own enthusiastic dancers!

Outings to Poole and Portsmouth had been organised and both proved extremely interesting. In Poole I was able to join a tour of the RNLi Training College and in Portsmouth I ascended the Spinnaker Tower for fabulous views over the city and dockyards. The Historic Dockyard was certainly worth a visit and although HMS Victory was still undergoing renovation, the Mary Rose Museum was superb. Thursday was a free day when most of us decided to explore Bournemouth itself and the Church of St Peter, near the centre, was a real gem of a parish church. Beautiful interior and the churchyard contained the family tomb of the Wollstonecraft/ Shelley family with remains of Mary Shelley (author of Frankenstein) and the heart of her son, the poet Percy Bysshe Shelly.

After five days of blue skies and warm sunshine, it was time to return home, stopping again for refreshments at Bicester and arriving almost to the minute of our driver's predicted time.

A huge thank you to the organisers at Leicestershire and Rutland Federation of WI for yet another excellent holiday.



JERUSALEM JAMMERS NEED YOUR HELP PLEASE

Our musician, Peter, of 40 years unstinting service is having to take a step back so we are desperately in need of a lead musician in order to continue our tradition as the only WI Morris garland dancers in the UK.

DO YOU KNOW OF ANYONE WHO CAN HELP US?

We are seeking a musician of any age or gender, playing any portable instrument who could commit initially to playing for us on the last Saturday morning each month from 10.00-12.00 in Kirby Muxloe church hall. Without a lead musician our future bookings are in serious jeopardy so it is a major problem for us. To that end, can we please urge you to pass this request on our behalf to all your musical acquaintances?

Please contact our secretary Sue 01455 458107 / suecrockett55@gmail.com

Membership Report

The Membership Committee have found that some WIs no longer wish to be part of a Group and some have been disbanded. We understand WIs feelings on this but there are many advantages to belonging to a Group that are lost

- The opportunity to run social or fundraising events with your neighbouring WIs
- The chance to afford more expensive speakers for a Group Meeting that a smaller WI may not be able to afford on their own
- The chance to put larger Groups of Members together for outing, classes or Theatre trips often with cheaper rates
- The chance to share ideas and problems with other WIs in your area.

Groups will run more successfully if there is a willing volunteer to take on the role of group Secretary, and we have some excellent ones in place, along with Group Treasurers. Groups without willing volunteers can take it in turn to run Group Meetings and this works well in some areas.

As with most things WI related, Groups we do depend so much on the army of volunteers that keep us smoothly running, so please support your Group when they are organised.

We are busy arranging the Annual Quiz we run so save the date Friday 7th July and watch for more soon!

Board of Trustees

We all had a lovely belated Christmas lunch after the January Board meeting



Federation Events

Annual Council Meeting 2023

Leicester Grammar School,
Great Glen, Leicester LE8 9FL

Saturday, 18 March 2023 10.30 am – 3.30pm

Tickets: £15 each (£7.50 for stewards)

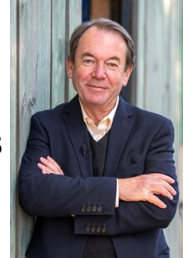
Doors open at 9.30am to shop at the stalls, view competitions and Committee displays. Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks are available for sale and you may wish to bring your own reusable cup.

Our speakers for the Annual Council Meeting 2023:



Ruth Goodman

Social & domestic historian & TV presenter



Eric Knowles

Antiques expert, writer & TV presenter

Federation Competitions

Cookery, Craft and Flower exhibits

Please bring to Leicester Grammar School on Saturday, 18 March 2023 between 8.30am & 9.45am.

Competitor must make arrangements for collection of the item after the meeting.

The entrance fees can be paid on the day, but please let WI House know you are entering by completing the slip on the schedule and returning it to WI House by Friday 3 March 2023.



Monthly Draw Winners!

Congratulations to our Monthly Draw winners for January!

1st Prize £25—Patricia White Shearsby & Arnesby

2nd Prize £50—Jenny Carr Burbage

3rd Prize £25—Gina Ward Shearsby & Arnesby

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



INDIVIDUAL COMPETITIONS

Open to all members

ADULT COOKERY

Schedule: Victoria Sandwich on a plate (see schedule for recipe)

The winner be awarded the Leicestershire tray for 1 year

CHILDREN'S COOKERY

Schedule: 3 Decorated Cupcakes
£1.00 per entry

Class 1: Age 7 and under; Class 2: Age: 8 to 15

The winners in each class will receive a small prize

CRAFT

Schedule: A Card Inspired by Poetry

In any medium, no larger than A5. The title of the poem should be written on the back. Envelope or box optional.

£1.00 per entry on the day, no entry form required.

The winner of this competition will receive gift voucher

FLOWER COMPETITION

"THE JOSÉ SMART AWARD"

Schedule: A fresh spring flower arrangement in an egg cup
£1.00 per entry

The winner of this competition will be awarded the José Smart cut glass trophy for one year

Oops!

In the schedule recipe for the Victoria sandwich reads for the filling 4 teaspoons of raspberry jam, should be 4 tablespoons not teaspoons of jam. 4 teaspoons would not really cover the sandwich! Apologies

Quiz

"RAGS, MAGS & DAILIES QUIZ 2022" As ever, thanks to everyone for supporting this quiz, which raised a superb £192 for LRFWI funds. There were 89 entries received altogether, so another one you liked rather a lot. Of these, just 14 were all correct and the lucky winner drawn from these at random was Pam of Uppingham WI who has now received her £25 prize - congratulations Pam! The most common mistakes were:

- 6) Many put EDIT instead of HACK
- 15) Quite a few HOMES and gardens, rather than HOUSE and gardens
- 30) Several of you put STYLE instead of VOGUE
- 45) The one that stumped most CAROUSEL instead of CARTOONS

In addition to the above, there were many errors where the answer was simply wrongly spelt and this shows just how important it is to check the number of letters in your answers. Although in essence some of the answers were correct, the adjudicator's spelling check (including missed plurals) is rigidly applied in order to make sure that the draw contains only those answers which are 100% correct in all respects. Every quiz sheet, at the top, does remind you to take care with spelling, letter count, plurals, etc.

If you sent an SAE you will have received your entry sheets back by now, or by email if you preferred. Otherwise you will find the solution on the website page.

By the way, quite a few members now have new quizzes emailed directly to them, so that copies can be sold at their own WI. If you would like to do this, then please contact me by emailing via WI House and I will explain how it works. My next quiz will be published at the ACM on 18th March, so if you are going, make sure you get hold of a copy there.

Sue Lobb

Board of Trustees



I'm Maxilyn Geary, I have been a WI member at Birstall & Wanlip for 16 years and their treasurer and MCS rep for 14 years.

I joined the L&RF Board of Trustees about 6 years ago and was asked to join the Leisure Committee as a BOT representative, I am now chair of that

committee and actively arrange federation events throughout the year. I am also on the Finance and House Management Committee and for the past few years have arranged the annual federation holiday.

In 2020 when COVID hit us I started to post daily at 12 noon on the LRFWI face book page, these posts include upcoming events, WI news and around the County events, this part can be difficult if WIs haven't sent me photos of their activities.

I also tried to involve as many WI members as possible to sew, make scrubs, knit or crochets when everyone was having to stay at home during lockdown.

I enjoy being involved with Federation activities and would encourage any WI member to come along to a committee to join or even observe. It is very satisfying when you arrange an event or activity and get lovely feedback from people that attended. Obviously, there can be downsides if it all goes pear shaped but that doesn't happen often.

I have met a lot of lovely WI members from various WIs across the Federation and look forward to meeting a lot more in the future.

In my spare time I enjoy crafting (not messy things), walking, cycling (I cheat as I have an electric bike) and going on holiday, especially cruising.

Maxilyn Geary

Benches in memory of WI members

We are so grateful to Angela Williams and family for donating the funds for a new bench in tribute to her Mum, Jean Williams.

We also give thanks to Countesthorpe WI in memory of Janet Timson and Newton Harcourt WI for their donations towards a second bench and commemorative plaque. The benches are made from recycled plastic and are very hard wearing and are an excellent tribute.



Around the Counties

Hinckley Canalside

At our December meeting we had our Christmas party with a fabulous buffet and beautiful flower arrangements made by Margaret Lawrence. We had the inspirational Rock Choir provide us with our entertainment for the evening. They were brilliant and sang a mixture of songs including some well-known festive songs. The Rock Choir had such good energy which was great for lifting our spirits and getting us all in the Christmas mood. We had the talented Cath Greenwell on the keyboard playing some festive tunes and a great Christmas raffle. We finished with our traditional 'The Twelve Days of Christmas' which was as entertaining as usual.



At our first WI meeting of 2023 we had exotic dancer Roxanne Dinsdale give us a demonstration of her amazing dancing and a very informative talk on the myths and origins of Belly Dancing. She myth busted a lot of what we think belly dancing is today.

She was very entertaining and inspiring and, whilst dancing and wearing amazing costumes, she was able to deliver a fascinating insight into exotic dancing. We were shown traditional dance costumes and the different style of dances that originate from each country and how they have been blended together over the years.

Roxanne danced with props such as a veil, for veil dancing, angel wings and a sequined cane. It was truly captivating to watch and we were all mesmerised by the brightly coloured sequined costumes she wore.

Stoke Golding

Every Picture Tells a Story

Eddie gave a very interesting talk on the interpretation of some of the most famous paintings.

Our first Painting to be discussed is the painting of the Execution of Lady Jane Grey, by Paul de la Roche.

It was painted a couple of hundred years after the execution and the depiction was not as accurate as written in the contemporary documents of the time. Lady Jane is depicted in the picture wearing white in a style not worn at the time of her death. Written records show that Jane had worn Black at her execution, it showed her looking terrified, whereas it was stated that she went to her death very bravely. Some of the clothing of other people in the picture were in Italian type of clothing. It is now a famous picture depicting an inaccurate depiction.

The Painting of the Princes in the Tower by De La Roche is also using artistic licence. It suggests that the boys were awake and fearful of someone coming into the room, though in the historical record, it is believed that the boys were smothered in their sleep.

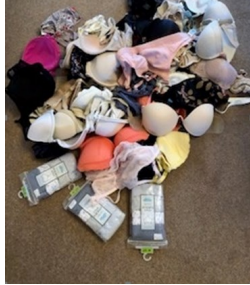
Richard III, the famous painting of Richard shows him with uneven shoulders and small eyes and thin lips, but it has been proven that the painting has been overpainted to create that result, probably as part of the propaganda to damage his reputation in Tudor times.

The Painting of "The Ambassadors" done by Hans Holbein the younger is full of suggestions of discord, and distorted at the bottom of the picture is a skull, which can be seen clearly if the picture is viewed looking across it from the side of the picture.

The Armada portrait of Elizabeth 1st shows her in a magnificent dress with pictures of the Armada, behind her, on the left Drake's ships sailing out to confront the Spanish and on the right the storm battered and defeated Spanish fleeing. Elizabeth is shown as a beautiful lady, but was actually in her 50s with black teeth and pock-marked face, obviously not the way she wanted to be depicted. A very informative and interesting talk by Eddie, much enjoyed by all of us.

QE Community Group

Last Year, Cheryl, one of our committee members, suggested we set up a group within our WI to help and support women. Our first project was to send used bras and new packs of underwear to women in Africa. We are told that rape is a frequent occurrence and, as many women cannot afford underwear, the perpetrators believe women wearing underwear must have a rich husband. Wealth being a symbol of power this often deters them from their vicious acts. The parcels of underwear can be taken to Bravissimo in Nottingham who forward them on for distribution or posted to "Smalls for All" a charity that donates directly to women in need. We posted six months collection of 45 bras and a few packs of pants for £6.95. Bras of any condition can be donated and if they are not fit for wear, they are recycled responsibly.



Our second project was to invite our members to bring along one food or toiletry item to each meeting. These were donated to the Soar Valley Outreach Project who were delighted to receive them before Christmas and distribute them to the local villages. Due to the success of these initiatives we intend to keep boxes available at all our meetings so our members can continue to donate if they are able.

Broughton Astley



Local artist Jayne Good was our guest speaker to start off the new year and demonstrated the technique of "Wet on Wet" oil painting. She told us that she started painting as a hobby by attending what she thought was a watercolour art class, but when this turned out to be "wet on wet oil painting" in the style of Bob Ross, she became totally hooked. We were

amazed that with seemingly just a few strokes of her brush and green paint she added leaves and stems onto the white-painted background and then with some more strokes in shades of pinks and highlights of white her flowers came to life! She created the beautiful painting in such a short time whilst entertaining us with anecdotes of her artistic life. Jayne runs workshops on a variety of subjects including floral and landscapes, which several of our members were interested in, and of course sells her artwork. It was a really inspiring evening.

Barbara Budd was presented with a gift voucher and the glass bowl as the winner of our 2022 season of competitions.



Sheepy

Our January speaker was Wendy Patterson from Achelios Clinical Therapy who talked to us about her work as a hypnotherapist. Hypnotherapy can treat anxiety, low mood, phobia, stress in adults and children, friendship issues, exam stress, can support IBS, pain control and smoking cessation.

Hypnotherapy has been used for over 4000 years and it is possible to have surgery using hypnosis!

Albert Einstein used self hypnosis and he came up with theory of relativity. We all experience a state of hypnosis during daily life e.g driving the car but not having to think about the process!

Hypnotherapy utilises this natural state of mind and it takes 21 repetitions of an action to create a habit. The hypnotherapist can't make you do something you wouldn't normally do so not able to make you rob a bank! It can help to change your habits for the better. We ended the session with 15 minutes of guided relaxation. Quite a few members reported having a really good night's sleep following this evening.

What's Coming Up?

- Starting 16th Feb** Which Craft? 10 –12 3rd Thursday monthly at WI House
- Sat 18 March** ACM, Leicester Grammar School, 10.30am-3.30pm
- Tues 28 March** Resolutions Briefing WI House 2pm and 7pm
- Wed 19 April** Afternoon Tea with Baroness

Bitteswell



We have been celebrating our 100th anniversary with a thoroughly enjoyable Christmas party. Celebration mugs and bags were presented to all members. A very large donation of Christmas treats were also donated to Leicestershire Women's Aid. January celebration was a lovely meal together with very amusing entertainment from Four Square Quartet. Certificates were presented to all members to mark their membership in the WI.



Cutting the cake is Jill Smith in her 63rd year and Maureen Elden who has recently joined our WI.

Around the Counties

Quorn



Loughborough based award winning writer, poet and playwright and might we say actress, Char March performed some of her poetry in an inspiring talk about her work as a Writer in Residence with the NHS.

This was just one of her many roles in a varied and interesting career.

Dealing with end of life patients, dementia patients as well as the beginnings of life in

Maternity wards, Char brought a sometimes emotional subject to life while bringing humour into the mix as well.

We had an exceptionally good attendance and it was clear that everyone was listening intently as you could have heard a pin drop throughout.

The "Favourite Poem" competition was one of the best contributions to date with a varied selection of poems and one written by Christine Cox about her life growing up in Quorn.

Char takes an active role in Literary Festivals, mentoring budding writers and writing workshops and her plays have been performed on radio and stage.

Glenfield

When you wish upon a Star' - November's speaker was Rachel Bradley who stepped in at the last minute and it was only her second talk so she was a little nervous but she gave a very interesting talk about how the charity was started, how difficult it is to decide who benefits from one of their wishes, (the children have to have life limiting conditions and it has to be confirmed by their consultants).

This can be a very difficult time for families so to grant their wish is something quite special. Each child is granted two small wishes, maybe a call from someone famous, a visit to a theatre, top football match or visit to a local attraction and one major wish which could be a trip to Lapland to see Father Christmas or to Disneyland to name a couple. Rachel said that the charity also supports the families through the child's illness and afterwards as well and tries to include the immediate family if a wish is granted. Everyone there was very touched by the talk, so much so that many wanted to make a donation for her to take back to HQ. Glenfield WI donated £50 and members had a separate collection which amounted to £101. Rachel gave a very interesting talk and was a very caring and compassionate speaker.

Thurnby and Bushby

We were given masks to decorate for the Christmas Party held in Thurnby Village Hall. Here are some photos of the masks. A prize was awarded for the best mask and for the most original mask.



At the end of November some members attended 'smARTsy' at Ratby for a Glass Fusion workshop. It certainly got their creative juices flowing and gave them the opportunity to make some great Christmas presents.

'Christmas in true Victorian Style' - In December we were thoroughly entertained by Jo Golby, a favourite speaker with Glenfield WI. Not only was she very interesting but hilarious at times also. She explained the history behind some of our most popular Christmas traditions from Mistletoe to Christmas trees and decorations. We had a brilliant afternoon. Our January meeting was just a social event which gave members the chance to catch up, chat and share a cake to celebrate our 101st



Countesthorpe

We kick started the New Year with a very interesting demonstration given by Laraine Tucker a Tai Chi instructor. Tai Chi improves balance, increases stamina and can regulate blood pressure, promote restorative sleep and improve concentration. Laraine has been teaching Tai Chi for over 21 years and holds several classes in and around the Leicester area. Laraine showed us some posture and relaxation techniques and our ladies were able to join in with these. I must say we didn't let anyone loose with the sword!!



Botcheston

We hope that the New Year has started well for you all and that you have weathered the cold weather.

We have just had our January meeting that was unfortunately cut short! We had a visit from the watch at Market Bosworth Fire Station – 3 very nice guys came to talk to us about fire safety in the home and regale us with anecdotes of life as a fulltime and retained fire fighter. From stories of a cat (who turned out to be a squirrel!) stuck up a tree to statistics – only 20% of their call outs are to fires, this being down to the smoke alarm (that should be tested weekly). Unfortunately half way through the evening they got a call and had to depart, promising to come back another time.



We had 3 guests this month who hopefully will become members.

Cossington WI

From January to March we are using zoom for our meetings.

Instead of having to venture out on what was a very cold and wet January evening members learned about the discovery of TutAnkhAmun's tomb from the comfort of their own homes. With the aid of slides, the speaker Eric Jackson, gave a short biography of archeologist Howard Carter who discovered the tomb in 1922. Eric went on to talk about the young Pharaoh, his family and the layout of the tomb. Like many tombs TutAnkhAmun's had previously been entered by grave robbers. Fortunately the robbers hadn't succeeded in breaking into the inner chamber where the principal treasures were found, including the famous golden mask.



Festival of Light

"The Festival of Light" celebration took place at All Saints Church, Cossington on Monday, 19 December, 2022. Instead of the traditional Carol Service it was decided to hold "The Festival of Light" whereby we spoke about various religions to include different cultures and explain some of their meanings. Sharon Astill, our Soar Valley Group Secretary, gave a welcome, followed by an introduction to the event, "setting the scene" by Judith Follows. Christmas Carols were sung in between readings relating to the Winter Solstice, Diwali, Hanukkah and the Christmas traditions. Thanks were given to the ladies who had helped organize this event, the lighting of the candles, refreshments and our organist, Simon, who had travelled from Rothley.

Barkby and Beeby

Curiosity and a whim took Alison Emery & BARKBY & BEEBY WI on a trip to Chernobyl the Ukraine. With little preparation and research, she visited the sights by Uber despite finding a dubious hotel and not knowing the local language. She booked a trip to Chernobyl the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster. 90 homes were demolished and buried due to radiation levels. The desolate landscape was littered with echoes from the past. 7,000 people still live & work in the area. She described how heart-breaking it would be to return now following the current conflicts.

New Barkby

At our December meeting members enjoyed a Christmas party. Shirley Franklin, president welcomed everyone to a quiz seasonal refreshments and a festive sing-a-long. Our January meeting heard a talk from Adrian Walker who gave a PowerPoint presentation and spoke of a group of volunteers for the LOROS charity, as they followed in the steps of Alfred Wainwright, and, over 14 days, travelled 192 miles in the coast to coast walk from St Bees Head, Cumbria to Robin Hoods Bay, Yorkshire

Glenfield Park

Well, we have had a busy few weeks. We began with a Christmas dabble day. What this means is that we dabbled in some Christmas crafts surprisingly! At the end of the session we had achieved a gnome, a sock snowman, a fabric tree and a patchwork bauble. Not bad going but we did enjoy a faith lunch which spurred us on. Thanks to everyone who contributed and to the members who passed on their expertise. It was a very enjoyable day and lovely to see the delight of those who had not done any craft before. Then on to the business side, our Annual Meeting. Did you say boring. Far from it. It turned out to be very informal with lots of banter, while still managing to fulfil the necessary requirements. We recapped on the past year and were amazed at how much we had done. We have a good committee for the coming year, and the president and treasurer agreed to continue in their roles. Of course, it goes without saying there was food, (surprise, surprise), contributed by members!!!! The next event was the Group Carol Evening organised by Kirby Muxloe. It was a lovely evening and as well as the usual carols and readings we were entertained by the Loros choir and the Kirby Muxloe WI hand bell ringers. It definitely put us in the festive mood. Finally, we finished the year with a meal at the Copt Oak. We had a lovely meal, a convivial get together and not only did we have food for the body we also had food for the brain with a quiz devised by a member.



A new year and a new start. Well, nothing can go wrong this year surely?

Oh no it can't. Sorry but Oh yes it can. This time the jinx took the form of the dreaded Covid. There we were expecting to have another go at Indoor Curling when horror of horrors we couldn't get the equipment. Still after our experiences last year, as in Blackadder, we had a cunning plan or at least a plan B and even a plan C. After the business part of the evening, when we discussed some of our plans for the year, which included a visit to the theatre to see 42nd Street, a boat trip (as last year's was very popular) and a visit to Barnsdale garden, we had an impromptu birthday party.

One of our founders members celebrated her 90th birthday over the Christmas holiday so to

commemorate the occasion we presented her with a lovely orchid and then invited her to cut the cake we had provided. Needless to say we had a candle on the cake which she duly blew out. Just one candle. We couldn't run to 90 and there wouldn't have been room on the cake or even enough puff to blow them out.



Plan B went by the board as we enjoyed a very enjoyable social evening, with lots of chat and reminiscing and even the chance to try our hand at handbell ringing. (Sorry for the pun). What a lovely way to begin the year (and we still have a plan B up our sleeve and an evening's curling to look forward to.. Sorted).

Around the Counties

Hinckley Hollycroft

We were thrilled to welcome back John Parnell (aka Hoop Guy) for a second time to tell us all about the History of Circus. Donning typical Showman's garb, complete with whip, he surprised us all by explaining that the circus began in England. Philip Astley, an army horse trainer, realised his skills could be extended to provide entertainment for the general public. On Easter Monday in 1768 he hired Ha'penny field in London and filled the gaps in between riders performing tricks with jugglers and clowns. John demonstrated several circus skills, including upside down juggling, the Diablo and the Devil Stick.

He urged members not to be afraid of taking up something new, particularly as you can now find anything on You Tube. He was 41 when he learnt juggling, 42 was uni-cycling, 47 tight rope walking and 53 hula hooping. In true showman style, he kept us waiting until the end of his talk for the world-famous Diablo trick - 'from milking a cow to windscreen wipers' - and I missed it because I was busy taking notes! John invited members to have a go during the tea break and, under his expert guidance, several were surprised to find they were quite good at juggling.

He even waited for the washer-uppers to finish so they could have a go too. A delightful speaker who we thoroughly recommend.

Newbold Vernon

The first meeting of 2023 was held on Monday 9th January and our speaker Mr John Whitehead gave a very interesting and informative talk entitled "Mad as a Hatter". He was talking about the making of hats from as far back as from Ancient Egypt to the modern day. In between those times we learned that early on it was only men who wore hats (women wore wimples or veils). It became necessary for everyone to have a hat in Elizabethan times as Elizabeth I made a law that everyone had to wear a hat on Sundays and Religious Days. Many hats had required beaver fur which required a process which caused men to go mad as they used several poisonous chemicals to treat the fur before it was made into hats. During the 17th and 18th centuries ladies' hats became ornate with stuffed birds and floral arrangements on the hat and men's hats had grown very tall and were called stovepipe hats. Eventually, hats became more manageable and the town of Atherstone became a centre for milliners with some 30 factories making hats. Today there are very few. It was a very enjoyable talk and we all learned a great deal about both hats and Atherstone.



Barrow on Soar

After our AGM in November we did 'Barrow Goes Blankety Blank'. Sadly our funds wouldn't run to hiring Bradley Walsh so our Secretary was the Compare! We converted our Notice board to a Reveal Board, we had a Celebrity Committee Panel, altered the format so that *all* the members could play each round and as we are trying to go 'Chequebookless' we awarded all the runners up a well known make of Gold Chocolate Bear to hang on their Christmas trees instead!



Our project for 2022 was knitting beanie Hats for the Homeless, we started this off at a Knit & Natter night in March when our planned speaker had to cancel. The knitting members were absolutely amazing knitting over **100 HATS!!**, whilst the non knitter ladies made ALL the pom poms. The accompanying picture shows the TWO trees we covered with our hats at our Church Christmas Tree Festival along with a 'Festive Fusion' Tree which displayed Glass Fusion Plaques we made at our August meeting with SMARSTY GLASS. We had so many lovely comments from the village and along with some advertising material it was also a good way to promote our WI.



Our ladies also excelled themselves for our Christmas Street Market stall by filling and decorating 110 recycled jars for a JAMBOLA, this was a very good money maker for our 2022 Charity attracting lots of people to our stall which was also filled

with all the usual cakes and bakes.

For our Christmas Party in December we were entertained by local, semi acoustic group, 'Heart of Oak'. They played a range of hits from the 50s to present day along with some Christmas tunes. It was a great night and a lot of the ladies got up for a boogie!



Burns Night is celebrated in Scotland (and globally) on 25th January annually to celebrate their national bard, Robert Burns. The first Burns supper is thought to have started over 200 years ago when friends of Burns drank a toast to the late poet, with a wee dram of whisky or two followed by the national dish of haggis and of course poetry recitals. Haggis is made from a sheep's stomach, stuffed with diced sheep's liver, lungs, heart and oatmeal, suet, onion and seasoning. Our venue was decked out in tartan with tables dressed with beautiful flower arrangements with a Scottish theme, we enjoyed a Burn's Night treat.

Starting with the "Ode to the Haggis" nicknamed "Hamish", the haggis is put on a tray and piped in during the recital. The "wee beastie" (the haggis) is believed by some USA visitors to Scotland that you can actually catch one! We tasked our brains with an "All Scottish" quiz whilst eating mini haggis rolls, and cranachan, (cream, whisky, raspberries, mixed together on a small cracker) delicious. We finished off with a rendition of "Auld Lang Syne".



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