

1. August 15th 2020



COMBERBACH WI RAMBLINGS August 2020.

Edition 5

Dear Member

Life for our WI continues to be taxing and challenging, as it has been for everyone. Meetings at the Memorial Hall are not likely to restart any time soon, and regrettably, planned activities and speakers booked to come to the meetings have all had to be cancelled.

We do not take this lightly, and we are reviewing cancellations on a month by month basis. The "Chocolate Man" with his samples is the latest casualty, but we are keeping our fingers crossed that the Christmas Meal might just be able to go ahead, but that depends on what the Government dictates regarding numbers allowed to gather, and how it can be socially distanced. We won't give up easily!

Some degree of normality has resumed in the Groups getting up and running again. The Book Club has been holding meetings under Sara Smith's large awning in her back garden, the Ramblers met in Ursula Ryder's garden and the Craft Group will be doing something similar very soon. It has given our WI members the opportunity to enjoy a catch-up and each other's' company.

There have also been some ad-hoc get togethers in members' gardens, when the weather has permitted and the Committee is holding monthly Zoom meetings. Understandably, many of our WI

members do not feel ready to resume monthly meetings with all the precautions and disinfecting this would entail

We had some wonderful news this last week; Margery Hall has returned home from hospital, and the video circulating on Facebook shows the progress she has made. She is very keen to resume her WI duties and activities and this is speeding her recovery. We all wish her well, and we are sure she will be baking again before we know it! Margery is well known and much loved in the Village, and we are all delighted she is back. We need more good news like that! In the meantime, it's baby steps.....

Janine Hampton (President)

Open garden event.

There will be a Comberbach WI Open Garden event on Wednesday, August 26th at Lesley Smith's (times to be confirmed) - weather permitting! We are not expecting huge crowds, but should there be too many wishing to attend, Lindsay Entwistle has also offered the



use of her garden too! Lesley's and Lindsay's lovely large gardens will enable those attending to socially distance. In line with current guidance, no refreshments will be served, but toilets will be available. The idea is that we can have an informal get together and chat, and ladies can bring either a packed lunch or snack, cake or whatever

with a drink. **Also please bring your own chair.**

Names to Lesley, please. When we know our numbers, we can then decide if we need the 2 venues.

Lesley's contact details – 01606 892347
charlessmithxx@hotmail.com

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Recent Questionnaire

A big thank you for those who took the time to return the recent questionnaire about what direction we should be taking. We sent out 47 e mails, and some telephone contact, and received 33 responses (65%) – which is quite impressive and shows how passionate our members are about Comberbach WI.

A breakdown of the results were sent out on e mail, here's a resume of the answers - The majority of respondents are in favour of postponing all members meetings for the rest of the year and review for 2021.

Over half of respondents would like to meet outside, observing the current Government rules and guidelines.

Ramblings newsletter was well liked and should continue, and there was a small number of members who would like to meet up via Zoom, so this is something that the committee will review and see what can be put in place.

Once again thank you for taking part in the survey – it has been very helpful and will give the committee something to work with to make sure that we try to meet with your expectations for the rest of the year. Sian.

From Sara (secretary)

Since the last edition of ramblings and relaxation of government restrictions, I have attempted to go out more.

I have been to the local pub a few times where masks are not required to be worn. Apart from cleaning your hands on the way in and putting your contact details in a book it was not a lot different from normal apart from there only being table service. No leaning on the bar making conversation. We were just about 1 metre apart but probably not recommended for the vulnerable if infections increase.

I have had a few garden meet ups with the reading group and an art session. No masks again but we were 2 metres apart in the open air so pretty OK.

I have also been to Mass which was well organised. We booked to attend with our details, we were ticked off the list and cleaned our hands when we attended, we wore masks throughout, the service was shortened to half an hour and less than 40 people attended giving us ample space. I would consider attending a church service as pretty safe if conducted along these lines.

I have been in small shops wearing a mask but only for a short time. I have done the supermarket shopping and have also shopped in John Lewis. Again, well organised, plenty of hand sanitiser, limited persons allowed in and screens at cash desks. I even managed a coffee in the café at the entry. Plenty of space. I did not feel concerned.

I serve at the Antrobus village shop where no one comes inside the shop but waits outside to be served (there is a gazebo if it rains) very well organised so if you are not happy with attending a supermarket we are well stocked and have a large variety of things you need. A lot more than the post office. Open daily between 9am and 11am.

As you may be aware our WI is hoping to arrange an open garden event. As the gardens are large and all the risk boxes will be ticked I would hope you will feel quite comfortable attending. Details etc in this newsletter.

I hope other members have attempted to venture out more. I am sure we will soon get used to where we can go where the risks are limited and hopefully meet up with friends, neighbours and other members in gardens.

I still have some **Raffle Tickets** left if anyone wants some. Please ring me on **01606 891 612** you want some as the counterfoils have to be sent back by the 29th September 2020.

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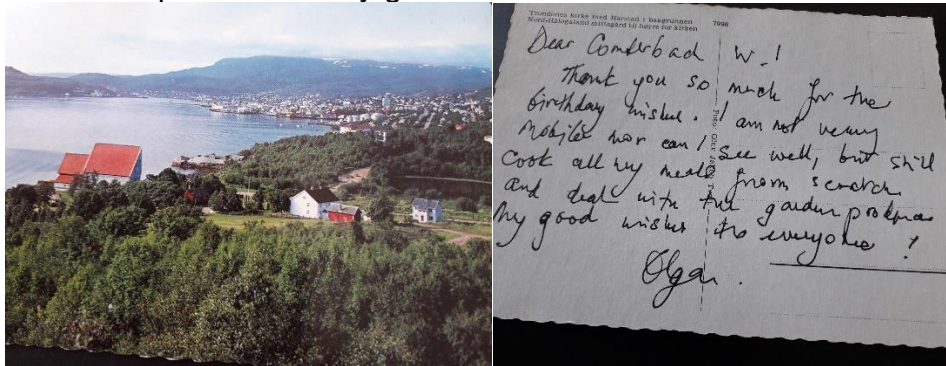
If anyone wants a **WI Diary** I will order them direct. They are £5. 10p. and are blue. Again ring me on the above number if you want one.

I hope to meet up with some of you at the open garden on the 26th

News of a former member.

You may remember Olga who left our WI a few years ago. I'm sure many of you will know the year... It was her 99th birthday in July and Cynthia thought it would be nice to send her a card. This was done and Cynthia received a lovely card in reply, addressed to our WI. She was thrilled to be remembered and her message was

"With best wishes to Comberbach WI. I am not very mobile and I cannot see too well, but I still like to cook my meals from scratch and I deal with problems in my garden."



READING GROUP

The reading group met again in my garden on Friday 24th July. We were trying to read 'The Tenant of Wildfell Hall' by Anne Brontë. Some of us found it heavy going and reminded them of school but others enjoyed it once we got into it. It is a little bit different from books by the other Brontë sisters. Quite an insight into psychological abuse of women of that time. Very topical even today.

We are not meeting next month as a lot of people are not available in August and we are also hoping to have the garden event at the end of August. The library is open and the person who organises the books for book groups has been in touch but they are not yet distributing the books. I will let book group members know when they do and arrange a meeting in September hopefully.



The Ramblers – walking group.



Hello to everybody. I hope you are all keeping safe and busy. As a W.I. member I am sure you have plenty to occupy yourselves.

On a better than expected day most of the ramblers met in my garden for coffee - what else! We were trying to decide what to do in the future but I don't think we got very far as we were too busy talking and catching up! So far next ramble day I think we decided to go to Lesley's for the W.I. day, if we are allowed to do that by then. The rules change so often We did have a couple of ideas.. Maureen managed to join us. Everyone was pleased to see her.

It's good to hear that Margery is back home and no doubt it will help with her recovery. No doubt she will have lots of visitors.

Keep safe and I hope to see you all soon. Ursula



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Life after Lockdown.

Short break in the Lakes. Now that lockdown restrictions are easing, and my brother has returned to farming in N Wales having successfully completed chemotherapy, Richard and I went for two nights to Grasmere staying at the Wordsworth Hotel. It was all very pleasant and we felt safe and comfortable. The hotel was managed very well, one way traffic, room was spotless, all staff wearing masks, pre ordered meals and waiter service at breakfast - much preferred to a buffet breakfast any day! Grasmere itself was quite busy, but the walks and the beauty of the surroundings were unbeatable – and just what I needed after so many weeks of caring and cooking! Sian

Denman College

You may have read the recent news about the difficult decision made by the Trustees to close Denman College. We asked some members if they could share with us their memories and experiences



of Denman, so we are delighted to share these two contributions from Margaret Jefferson and Marjorie Tomsett. :-

Denman College was established in 1948 in the former Marcham Park, a Georgian manor house in Oxfordshire. Named after Lady Denman the first Chairman of the National Federation of WIs, the college ran a range of courses attended by WI members from across the country.

Students were housed, some in the main house; most in one of the units in the extensive grounds. Each room was named after a county and furnished by the appropriate federation.

When the Cheshire room (in the main house) was refurbished in the 1980s, Comberbach members were invited to supply a sewing kit. Barbara Hughes had stitched a framed blackwork design for that years Cheshire Show entry.



That, along with a needle case in matching design were offered. There was already a lovely hinged wooden box there, and I undertook the task of relining, including a miniature embroidery of a typical Cheshire building on the inner lid. We equipped it with sewing implements.

I first went to Denman in the late 1980's, representing Cheshire on a course on Setting up and Running an exhibition. I was very new to WI hierarchy and standing in for the original delegate, I felt honoured if somewhat daunted alongside County chairs from across the country. The course was intense but excellent, providing valuable grounding for later involvement as WI Exhibition secretary at Cheshire Show and other County Craft exhibitions.

Our accommodation was in one of a number of 2 storey blocks within the grounds, with shared bathrooms and loos at the end of the corridor.

More recently I visited with Weaver Valley WI choir, enjoying weekend courses in the new airy lecture hall, and accommodated in

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one of the well-appointed residential blocks that replaced the former units.

Courses were always 'full on' but the beautiful gardens at Denman were a good place to relax and exercise. The catering was good and socially, was great to meet other like-minded members.

Margaret Jefferson

Thoughts and Memories of Denman Marjorie Tomsett

Denman closing permanently! That can't be true! The college has been part of the fabric of the W.I. since it was opened in 1948, yet sadly it has not been able to withstand the effects of the pandemic.

My memories go back to the early 90s when I went with a group of Cheshire members who were enrolled on a variety of courses. I produced a collage representation of our house including our two black cats. and recall the visit as a time of camaraderie and discovery - The tradition of Denman teas! - the bar whose profits pay for new carpets! - the small, cosy attic bedroom of the Cheshire federation! - the chatter in the dining hall at meal times! - the concentration and effort shown in the classes! - the evening concerts! -and finally the proud students returning to the coach clutching precious craftwork or cookery.

On two occasions I was proud to be invited to be tutor on crochet courses and at another time, with three others, took and passed the practical tests to become a NFWI craft judge. Which in turn led to the rich experience of involvement with crafts of all kinds and at all levels in institutes and county shows throughout the country

Other courses I enjoyed were water colour painting and picture framing More recently my eldest daughter and I had an enjoyable time on a "Mother and Daughter" weekend when we dabbled basketry producing "mince pie platters", beadwork making a necklace and earrings and singing a three part song "Happy



1 Marjorie with her first and last craft work - Collage of the Bungalow (mixed media) and Cheese Platter (basket work) and bead necklace.

together" by the Turtles. Even I (who arouses groans when I sing) managed to join in and enjoy it.

The excellence of the craftwork, cookery and projects undertaken by WI members in

the past owes much to the influence of Denman and its loss will be felt by many. Regards, Marjorie Tomsett

Cheshire Federation Virtual Events.

As there is still no sign of us being able to meet face to face anytime soon, we would like to invite those members that are able to use Zoom to some very interesting meetings. If anyone would like to attend and needs help with Zoom then please contact CFWIwebeditor@outlook.com who will be pleased to help you.

LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH.

Its great to have had your contributions for this edition – keep them coming.. To contribute to the next RAMBLINGS, please contact Sian on sianrc@hotmail.co.uk or ring on 01606 892157/ 07770863170

Looking to share things you have been up to during the lockdown, any good reads, films TV programmes you have enjoyed or recipes – or any craft items you are proud of, and of course things you are still looking forward to.

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