

1. September 14th 2020



COMBERBACH WI RAMBLINGS 2020. 6th Edition

Hello everyone,

Still here, as is the virus, still preventing us from resuming normal WI activities. You should have received the mailing from The WI Federation in Chester, via Sian, so that you can sign up to be in on the Zoomed speakers they have organised. I have yet to hear if any of you have done this, and if so, what you thought of it. Replies to Sian, please, for the next newsletter!

Replying to the Federation's email, I updated them on what we are doing as a WI, and how we are progressing towards holding meetings again. Other WIs sent me their versions of events, which are pretty much like ours! In other words, there won't be any WI meetings this side of Christmas. We are still Zooming as a Committee, and are having to cancel Speakers month by month.

The "bring your own lunch to Marbury" did go ahead, with around 12 members turning up, but it was quite damp and chilly, which will have put some people off coming. The ones who braved the elements seemed happy to be able to meet up and have a catch-up, and I had hoped to schedule another one this month. I had considered Thursday, 17th, as the forecast was good, but Mr Hancock has just thrown a spanner in the works by returning us to the starting post by only allowing 6 to meet up outdoors once again. The only way we can do this is to really spread ourselves out, in sixes.



I recently called to see Margery, and never cease to be amazed at her inner strength and determination to make a full recovery. I shouldn't be, though, as we all know that Margery will never stop doing her exercises and will follow instructions to the letter. She was full of the joys of the WI, showing me some old photographs and material for the archives, and telling me all about it. Her speech has come on tremendously, and she only struggled to find words when she was tiring. Suffice it to say, we (Mim had also called in) scarcely got a word in edgeways! Margery has various therapists coming to see her each week, from having exercise; she proudly told me that she and Richard had walked up Senna Lane to the Post Office and back - speech training to occupational therapy, where she has been making scones, although she declared that the finished result wasn't up to her usual standard! The downside is that she is having to relearn reading and writing, and also how to tell the time, but she is beginning to use her laptop again, and the health professionals have installed a brain training App on it, for her to practise. All good - she is getting there, and she isn't missing too much right now.

Her daughters are also busy taking her out shopping and she told me she had been taken to the garden centre at High Legh. I also went there the other day and was horrified to see the staff putting Christmas decorations out on sale! The same can also be said for some of the discount shops in Northwich, where

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Quality Save has shelves full of the stuff! Too early for me! I am still dealing with other things - Lindsay kindly gave me a large bag of damsons, and I have made a lot of jam, and I still have a big pile of Bramley apples to peel and stew for the freezer, so Christmas can wait!

We are now getting to the time of year when the weather gets worse, the days gloomier and darker, the going more treacherous underfoot, and more time will probably be spent at home. The Committee has decided that each member will take responsibility for keeping in contact with 5 WI members, just to have a chat and check things are ok, and maybe to ask what they would like us to do for our Group to move things forward. Sometimes, even the Committee can run out of ideas! It will also give members the opportunity to ask for help or an errand, should they need it. Please feel free to contact me with any suggestions or comments - I can be contacted on 07756 854042 / 01606 871512 - but my message retrieval doesn't work! In the meantime, stay safe, stay sane!

Christmas Meal, I have had an update from Louise, Winnington is due to re-open next month and they are hoping to have the meals up and running. She added that a party the size of last year's will be no problem to host in the usual room, and assures me that everyone can be suitably seated, and distanced. Based on that, I think the Christmas meal should be able to go ahead! We can roll the cancelled Birthday Party into that too....it will give everyone something to look forward to and might just be the first big step in getting our WI going again. BUT - ***Given the latest from the Government, we shall just have to play a waiting game on this one.....***

Finally, we send our best wishes to Hilary Totten, who has been struggling with her health and Rosie, whose problem with her ear, giving her vertigo, has resurfaced. Thank you, Cynthia, for sending out cards and keeping me updated. Janine.

Caption Competition

We would love you to send your caption ideas for this marvellous photos - there will be a modest prize for the winning entry.

e-mail your ideas to sianrc@hotmail.co.uk by the 1st October or ring 892157.



Update from Sara Smith.

I have now sent the raffle stubs off for a draw on October 9th. ***I have still to order the diaries for 2021. If anyone wants one please let me know asap.***

The reading group this month has decided to discuss television programmes as there are no books forthcoming from the library. We will be watching the JK Rowlings' series "Strike" on BBC and the new "All Creatures Great and Small" on Channel 5. We are meeting on the 22nd in my garden. (I have cover if it rains but it is now getting a bit chilly so I may have to light the chiminea)

Maybe we could set up a separate media group that gets together to discuss television programmes and films and could also organise cinema trips although these may be problematic at the moment. The media group could have a zoom meeting just to show how good we are at using this medium!! I am still learning.

I went on our bellringing zoom meeting last week and rang virtual bells in the virtual ringing room. A bit tricky and did nothing to help my back as I rang the bell by tapping the space bar. Easy if you can work out exactly when to ring your bell.

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My garden and vegetable plot are now a mess, my carrots are stunted, my runner beans a bit bent and I have mildew on my courgettes. I am getting about 3-4 potatoes a potato plant so I think I may leave it to you professionals next year. My neighbour brought me some of his runner beans over the other week. They were long, straight, all even sized and tasted delicious. I wonder if he enters them in the local produce show. My parsnips are yet to be dug up but I bet they will all have rust on them. Ah well! back to the Duchy counter at Waitrose.

I have not been on a staycation but have just made a couple of trips south to see the grandchildren before the infection rates start to rise then we oldies may have to take cover for a while. My daughter and her children were going to try to get over in October but with the quarantines both ways it will be impossible. It will be at least a year before I will be able to see them again. I am sure there are a few grannies in our WI who find themselves in the same position. Thank goodness for Facetime etc

As our new buddy system should be getting in touch with you all re using IT, Zoom or generally keeping everyone in the loop so do not despair if you are stuck at home again for the next few months. Time to get crafting again and producing jams etc with all that summer produce. (my jam is usually a flop too). Sara xx

Sunflower Challenge

Lindsey had a competition with the grandchildren to grow the tallest sunflower. The seeds were all planted at the same time. Hattie's and Bertie's died of neglect but Billy's did very well at about 4ft 6" however Lindsey's won at an impressive 8ft 1". Well done Granny!



WI Craft Group. Mary Tilley is keen to continue hosting the group, just as soon as groups are allowed to gather indoors, but not just yet.

Hello from Elaine.....

I hope that since lockdown has been lifted it has allowed you to get out and about a bit more, meeting friends and family, even though there are still some restrictions in place. I am certainly missing hugs!

Thankfully I was able to go on my annual holiday to The Lakes with my daughter, son-in-law, grandchildren and my best friend and her husband (who are really more like family), staying in a lovely house overlooking Loughrigg Fell, on the edge of Ambleside.



It was the very hot week and it was a good place to be together and relax. We ate at home most of the time, it was too hot to expect little ones to sit at a restaurant table. Stephanie, my daughter organised a big food shop to be delivered on the day we arrived along with a large blow up pool and water pistols, we spent many a happy hour chasing each other around the garden, shrieking at being squirted at! There was a hot tub too, so the grown ups enjoyed looking at the stars with a glass of wine in hand when the children had gone to bed.

Bowness was particularly busy, we didn't take the ferry there as usual but took out a boat of our own for a trip round the lake. Unfortunately a gust of wind blew my new sunhat into the water and it sank. Everyone else's stayed firmly on their heads! We took the children on the open top bus to Grasmere, made our usual pilgrimage to the gingerbread shop, ate ice-cream and visited the play park, I could produce a detailed guide of children's play parks in the area.

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I have some smaller breaks planned but am not keen on travelling on an aeroplane for a while, I am keeping my fingers crossed for a full refund for a holiday I booked last year to Malaysia this October. My little garden has been abundant with flowers this summer, as most of us, I spent quite a lot of time in it during lockdown. People gave me courgette, runner bean, butternut squash and tomato plants which have been successful. I already have blueberry, summer and autumn raspberries, eating apples, blackcurrants and gooseberries in my tiny plot behind the garage. It is so satisfying to come back to the house with a trug full of produce. I am a farmer's daughter, so it's in the blood!

Well, there is a taster of what I have been up to in the last few months.



Living in the centre of the village has meant I haven't felt isolated, a chat over the wall with passers by has helped in the dark days and I have walked the lanes of our lovely countryside. Friends have been generous in leaving surprise food gifts on my doorstep and I have baked little gifts in return.

I hope to come to the next WI meet up in the park, I missed the last one and look forward to having a natter with you.

Elaine

Apple and Blackcurrant and Cinnamon Chutney

I have made the first batch of this today and its delicious... a super condiment with meats and a great way to use the abundance of cooking apples and blackberries that seem to be around at the moment! Good luck and enjoy! Sian xx



1kg Bramley Apples, peeled, cored and diced.
300g onions, peeled and sliced thinly
275g granulated sugar.
150ml balsamic vinegar
2tsp ground cinnamon
Freshly ground black pepper
300g Blackberries.
Sterilise and prepare jars in the usual manner

Put apples, onions, balsamic vinegar, cinnamon, sugar and pepper into a large pan. Place on a medium heat stirring to

combine all ingredients and then bring to the boil.

Once at boiling point turn heat down at simmer for 45-55 mins. Stirring occasionally. The apples should be lovely and soft and liquid syrupy and thick.

Add the blackberries and cook for a further 10 mins. Spoon into sterilised jars and pot as usual.

Courgette and Parmesan Soup

Again, a delicious seasonal recipe to use up the bumper crop of courgettes/marrow. (When using a marrow, I peel it as the skin can be a little tough)

60 ml Olive Oli
1 tbs chopped garlic
Large handful of basil – chopped
Salt and white pepper
1kg courgettes cut lengthways and then diced.
750ml chicken stock
60 ml single cream
50g parmesan cheese, grated.



Heat oil in heavy base pan and add the courgette, garlic, basil and salt and cook for 10 mins. Add white pepper to taste and add the stock. Simmer uncovered for 8 mins.

Blend in a food processor, return to pan and add the cream and parmesan. Serve with an extra sprinkling of parmesan on top. Mmm delicious. (This freezes well if you omit the parmesan and cream, which you can add after defrosting) Sian xx

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Help for Courgettes! by Rosie....

Over the years I have learned that you don't need many courgette plants to, in a good year, end up with a glut that will keep the entire village going for weeks. This year I planted 4 seeds of 2 different varieties, intending to keep one of each. My standard conventional long green ones died and I ended up buying a better F1 hybrid plant from a garden centre. The 2 seeds of a yellow, round, variety did well. As stated and trying to be disciplined, the theory was to just plant one round one in the garden, but when one succumbed to a nasty slug nibble on its stem and it survived, I couldn't consign it to the compost. I gave it a chance in a big trug, rather than in the ground, yes, I'm a real softie.

The crop is good this year and the neighbours and close family have benefited but I have also been looking for new inspiration for what to do with the manageable, but continuous crop. Below is a recipe that I have adapted from a Tom Kerridge recipe and has become a firm favourite in the Rowe household.

Ricotta and Courgette Pancakes

250g Courgettes (Approx 8oz), grated, skin and all

Half a 250g tub of ricotta

50g Self Raising Flour (Approx 2oz)

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon of Baking powder

Garlic to taste (or not). I use about half a clove finely chopped.

1 teaspoon of ground cumin

Chilli flakes or fresh chilli (optional & to your taste)

A good handful of fresh herbs. I have used Fennel, Parsley and Coriander on separate occasions, all good.

1 Beaten egg



Method

Squeeze as much liquid out of the grated courgette as you can. Mix the courgette, ricotta, flour, baking powder, herbs, garlic and chilli in a bowl and bind with the egg. Add salt and pepper.

Heat a non-stick frying pan with a little oil on a low to medium heat. Drop about a tablespoon full of the mixture into the pan and let it slightly spread. Repeat with more tablespoons of the mixture but leaving space between the pancakes. Cook for 4 minutes and then turn over and cook for a further 4 minutes until cooked.

They should be golden brown, but this can take practice! The secret is low to medium heat only. Keep warm and repeat with the remaining mixture.

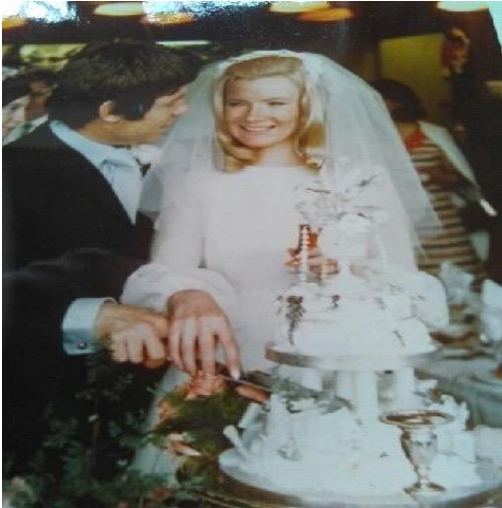
This mixture should make six to eight pancakes.

These are lovely with a light salad, crisp bacon or a salsa. Let your imagination run wild and, if you try them, I hope you enjoy them.

Rosie



GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION – THE SHOW MUST GO ON! Anne and Mike Saville.



We had plans for our Golden Wedding, after all, it is quite a milestone. Plus we have lived in the same house in Comberbach for all of those 50 years, having moved in right after the wedding.

The plan was a holiday in the Champagne region of France in June and a celebration party for family and friends on the actual date, 11th July - .BUT that was pre Covid - 19 and Lockdown.

First our holiday was cancelled - no travel to France. Then hotels and restaurants were closed - no venues. No large gatherings anywhere. It looked as though an extended family Zoom session would be our 'Celebration'.

Despite all the restrictions, we decided we could do something, within the rules, which were constantly changing. We could not

celebrate all on one day --too many people.so it had to be two days. Day one for local friends and neighbours and day two for family, all in the garden.

What if it rains, and Social Distancing.? We asked Steve at the Post Office if we could use some Fete gazebos. No problem and he even put them up for us. Two in the back garden and one in the front to help with Social Distancing, and protect against any rain.

What about Catering? we needed food. We found Gordon from Goosebrook Close who not only provided a lovely buffet on both days, but was a hive of information on the current rules for providing food under lockdown

More Tables and chairs? Steve and Paula, our neighbours opposite volunteered theirs and put them up for us.

The weather for the weekend 11th /12th July was beautiful, we had a super time, totally different to what we had originally planned, but even more memorable because of that. After celebrating on Saturday, we did it all over again on Sunday. We received some beautiful cards, and despite saying 'no presents', people were very kind and we also received some lovely 'Golden Wedding' rose bushes which we will treasure.

It's amazing what you can organise in a matter of days, when normally you would be planning for months. We would like to thank everyone who celebrated with us and are only sorry that we could not invite everyone. With love from Anne. x



LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH.

It's 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 recently, 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.