

COMBERBACH WI RAMBLINGS. January 2021. 10th edition

Whatever next?

I recall bemoaning the shops selling Christmas cards as early as last July, but suddenly Christmas has been and gone, having been swept up in the Covid crisis. The decorations have gone, and we are into January. It is a long, cold month which seems to go on for ever, but I try to remain positive, knowing that it will get lighter in the evening, albeit slowly, but we are now moving towards the Spring. I obviously spoke too soon, when I said 2021 should be better, as here we are in lockdown again! Reading about the increase in the rates of infection, it was always on the cards, especially with Cheshire going from Tier 2 to Tier 4 virtually overnight. My blood has boiled on numerous occasions, when I have seen pictures in the Manchester Evening News of people cramming into the Trafford Centre for the Sales. The walkways were rammed, to say nothing of how things must have been in the stores themselves...and then there are the idiots who think the rules don't apply to them and hold parties, or attend them.....anyway, we're all in it together now, and it's hard if you are on your own, but hope that you managed to have some quality time with family members or close friends.

Following our latest Zoom Committee meeting, the general opinion is that we might see an easing of restrictions in the Spring, but not enough for us to resume as a WI. We think that the summer is a more realistic proposition, but even then we shall have to take baby steps - having Marbury meet-ups or a stroll around the gardens at Arley, or perhaps an afternoon of Bowls if the weather permits. If we manage to meet in the Hall we shall stick to our original plan of "chats and cuppas", having meetings which are a bit shorter. A Games Night, Quiz and a Bring and Buy were also suggested, and we are going to start re-booking speakers from September and I am going to book a Christmas Meal for December with Louise, hoping that none of these will need to be cancelled. We thought that not too many people would be very keen on getting on a coach together, so we don't anticipate any outings yet, but we might just be able to organise Christmas shopping, maybe at Trentham again, where we could go in groups of four in our cars, rather than on a coach, as it isn't too far to drive and we would all feel safer. I shall work on that one...

Today, I have received the latest updates from CFWI. I have passed these on to Sara and Sian, and the details appear in this issue of Ramblings. The Zoomed events are worth getting involved in, so you can still listen to a Speaker each month! CFWI have worked hard to give us a good variety. A decision about the Cheshire Show is also imminent, as it is still in the balance, despite the roll-out of vaccines. We will keep you updated but hope it will still go ahead – we will all be climbing the walls by then, I'm sure!

My little crocus pot has not made a great deal of progress: initially, I put it on a windowsill, but then decided to put it outside in a sheltered spot. It was sheltered from the snow and ice, but the crocuses haven't really grown either. Now that the Christmas decorations have been put away, I have decided to bring the pot in and put it on the kitchen windowsill, so might have some flowers soon. Any colour at this time of year really lifts the spirits, as does a spell of sunshine. I have resolved to make the most of any sunshine we get, even if I only walk around my small garden, but there is always something to look at. My bulbs outside are showing now. Life does indeed go on. Stay safe, but let's try to be part of it. Janine

Happy New year to everyone from Sian.

I thought I would share some special photos with you – The crocuses are coming on nicely – and I must share some cute photos of my grandson Rowan who flew all the way from USA to spend Christmas with us. Such a delight and a lovely little family.



CFWI Carols at Christmas.

On Tuesday, December 22nd, 250 WI members from all over Cheshire logged in to Zoom to join in this event. Zoom needed 11 pages to contain us all! Whilst we couldn't sing as a choir, we could all sing from the comfort of our own homes, knowing that it wouldn't matter if we missed the high notes!

The carols were led by Helen Eadie, from Cale Green WI in Stockport, who as well as being a music teacher, runs several choirs in her spare time, as well as being an active WI member! She has worked with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bolton Symphony Orchestra and now works with the Symphony Orchestra in Stockport. One of the choirs she runs is "Doing Dementia differently" which shows how music can be beneficial to all. Janine Hampton, Margery Hall, Marjorie Tomsett, Irene Robinson and Tricia Jones all joined in.

Sorry if I missed anyone from our WI! There was a nice mix of traditional and more modern carols, as well as some of the old favourites. The evening was a huge success. This was CFWI's 18th zoomed event. Don't forget.... further Zoom events on 13th and 28th January, 2021.

Janine has spent these long winter evenings embroidering her WI Centenary bag – If you feel inspired – please share your design – we could even give a prize for the best!

We can also exhibit them when we get to meet up.



Work in progress.....

A few more thank you's

I would like to thank everyone who sent me cards flowers good wishes and Christmas greetings after losing Mike.

It was a very distressful 6 months or so but very peaceful at the end. I have been overwhelmed and very humbled by the love and thoughtfulness of you all.

Thank you for your kindness - it is such a comfort for me to know you care!

Happy New Year to you all I'm sure 2021 MUST be a better year Love from Monica x

Dear Janine & team.

What a bag full of surprises! I really appreciate the thought and effort made by the committee to produce individual gift bags. You reflect the W.I ethos in care for us all. Thank you for lifting my spirits. Best wishes, Heather Morris

Happy New Year. Sorry it has taken me some time to say a very huge thank you to you, Janine and all the committee for the most thoughtful bag of goodies. I am in awe of your commitment, hard work and caring in putting together such a lovely gift. It certainly gave me the feeling that I am privileged to be part of a very special group of people. It really brightened my day. Thank you to each one of you. God bless. Ellen

Dear President/Secretary from *Jean Harding, Federation Chairman*

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your members a very Happy and Healthy New Year. I know the news is currently not good but let us hope the vaccine will soon kick in and things will improve enabling your WIs to meet again.

Late last year we sent out information concerning the voting for Resolutions and voting on changes to the Constitution. I appreciate many of you have difficulty contacting your members but if you have been able to pass this information on.

I am also including notices of virtual events being offered by the Federation for all members. If you are in a position to cascade this information to your members it would be much appreciated. It also means that should your members contact you asking if you have the information you are equipped with the answers. All these flyers will appear on the **Federation's website**.

I will be issuing an Update at the end of the month when I will furnish you with updates from NFWI and the Federation.

Please remember you are not on your own and if you are experiencing problems do not hesitate to contact me, any Trustee or your WI Adviser. You are not alone we are all here to help. Stay safe.

Here is a short resume of virtual events scheduled for January and February -

On Wednesday the 13th January at 7pm for a 7.30pm start we have the pleasure in welcoming Clare Pooley. Clare graduated from Newnham College, Cambridge and spent twenty years in the heady world of advertising before becoming a full-time mum.

On Thursday the 28th January at 7pm for a 7.30pm start we have the pleasure in welcoming Jacqui Felix-Mitchell - Member of the Chartered Institute of Horticulture and RHS Garden Design Consultancy.

On Wednesday the 10th February at 7pm for a 7.30 we have the pleasure in welcoming Dr Jackie Bell a Senior Teaching Fellow at Imperial College London and Honorary Fellow of the University of Liverpool Mathematics Department.

On Thursday the 25th February at 7pm for a 7.30 start we have the pleasure in welcoming Katie Awdas talking about Living with Endometriosis.

If anyone would like to attend and needs help with Zoom then please contact CFWlwebeditor@outlook.com and who will be pleased to help you. Full details available on My WI and sent out in an e mail from Sian on 8/1/21

A Winter Walk

With New Year quietly over, a day prior to the lockdown announcement, Lesley and I agreed that a socially distanced trip to Arley Hall to walk around the gardens and have an outdoors lunch was in order. ***It is also going to remain open during the lockdown, so if you haven't already been this winter, here is what to expect:***

Walking through the snow after meeting in the car park to the shop to buy our tickets, there were several 'real' snow men to be seen: half built, half melted or still intact, evidence that some fun had been had by younger (or maybe not so young) previous visitors.

Entering the shop to buy our tickets, no items could be bought, a shame as I had spied the perfect card for a friend's birthday in mid-January. The charge to view the gardens is £7 per person plus £2 per car. It is necessary to have a ticket for the gardens to be able to purchase a takeout from the cafe. A selection of sandwiches, hot dishes and soup was available, as well as some very tempting looking cakes, which I reluctantly resisted!

We timed it perfectly to sit out in the winter sunshine with our spiced parsnip soup and hunk of bread and butter. Undercover seating is available in the barn, but it was so pleasant and picturesque to see the hall in the snow and feed crumbs to the birds. We took fold up cushion pads to sit on which avoided us getting chilly bottoms!

There were signs warning of untreated surfaces, the paths were very icy. We were also not informed that parts the gardens were closed. It was still lovely to stroll around and also to see the



surrounding countryside dotted with sheep. The fountain splashed to keep it from icing over. Sprouts, red and green cabbages and other vegetables sat in their beds in the kitchen garden.

We were fascinated by the variety of mint in the herb garden: strawberry, apple, banana, pineapple, amongst others and incredibly, eau-de-cologne mint which smelled exactly as named. I'm not sure what that could be used for!

We are very fortunate to have such a beautiful hall and gardens so nearby. As we walked, we reminisced about attending food fairs, antique fairs, tours of the house etc. I hope those times are not too far away again. Best regards. Elaine Perry.



Some more thank you's to share,,,



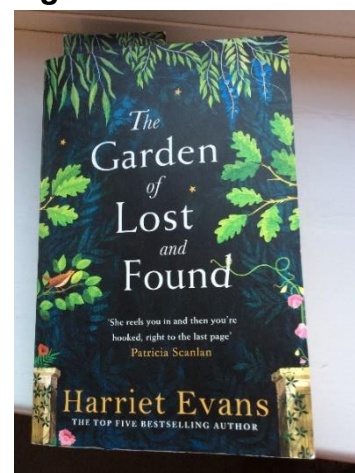
Happy New Year everyone from Sara,

Despite being in lockdown I am still pleased they have not shut the churches and I can still go to the dentist. The latest book the library has supplied the book group is quite good if anyone is looking for something to read. *The Garden of Lost and Found*, Harriet Evans.

The garden centres and DIY shops are also open but it is a bit too cold for gardening although I still have some soggy, now frozen leaves to clear up. I do not really feel like starting any projects in the house so it is back to sewing knitting and painting. (Not that a lot of that has been done recently.) I have recently bought some double knitting wool to make myself a **jumper but I cannot find a plain pattern with a round or V neck. If anyone has one knocking around that would be great** otherwise I thought I could just adapt a more fancy pattern.

We hopefully will only have another 3 months to keep going, (I will never finish all my half started projects by then) after all they originally thought the last war "would be over by Christmas" so we cannot complain that this pandemic is going on a bit longer than we thought although I am quite sure we are all looking forward to seeing friends and family who live away.

Keep the home fires burning. I am really looking forward to meeting everyone again. Our first party will be that much better because we have had to wait so long for it



The Chetwode Arms at Lower Whitley are doing a great job of providing excellent take away food. I can personally recommend it – good choice of menu – and generous Sunday Lunch portions! They are currently promoting an interesting Burns Night Menu (29th Jan).

Do let us know if you have enjoyed a take away meal from here – or anywhere else recently! Tel 07788447324



Some years ago it was suggested that we form a friendship with another WI in another part of the country. It was called **The Link Scheme**.

That is where the term Surrey Link comes from. I (Lyn McCulloch) offered to be the correspondent and chose Beacon Hill WI which is a very small WI in Surrey. The original lady lived in Huntingford Close which tickled me because for 40 years plus I have been doing a One Name Study of the Huntingford name. We write once a year and send a calendar which is usually raffled. I usually read the letter at the January meeting as

December is a busy meeting in normal years

As we are not able to meet up, here is the letter from our Surrey WI link, Sheila at Beacon Hill WI written at the beginning of December, before the current government lockdown restrictions were announced.

Dear Lyn and friends at Comberbach WI 5/12/2020

What a year this has been!! I hope you and all your members have kept safe and well.

We managed our first 3 meetings and rejoiced that our membership had risen to 22!!

Then came lockdown!! Only 3 of our members aren't on e mail, so it was fairly easy to keep in touch. We managed two outdoor meetings in the village park with our own chairs. We did it in the afternoon which meant we lost a few working members. I got tea/coffees from the local café (he was delighted with 18 cups!) and one of our ladies who loves baking made us cakes.

We thought we would be able to meet in October as we were small enough to socially distance in our hall but alas the Government said NO! It was a shame as our local USA has some good talks planned as well - but No....

Our village fete in September, usually held in the park, took place in the Legions car park. It was very successful. We held our usual tombola and made £100.

We were hoping to do the tombola again at the street market we hold in the village when we switch our Christmas lights on, but lockdown 2 happened!

As soon as you were able to meet one person outside, I met Sue from the committee and we walked our dogs. It was lovely, not a lot to talk about but we could moan a lot! Then when it got to "six" we told the other dog walkers and instead of a once a month walk, we do it every it every Wednesday, we even progressed to having lunch.

My treasurer resigned, she kept herself isolated apart from going to her allotment and said she thought she was doing too much. We tried several people with no luck, then my daughter, Louise, stepped in. Bless her little cotton socks. She lives 30 miles away and is a member but only comes to meetings 4 to 5 times per year.

My ladies are not really into Zoom so we have not done anything much. The only good thing you could say was that it was quite easy doing programme for 2021 - April to



December stayed the same – I rebooked everyone. I doubt we will be able to meet in January so I just put “catch-up” our local gardener said he’d come in February if it was allowed and we always have a quiz in March.

How have you been coping? There are some advantages to being small and most of our members live in the village. We usually exchange Christmas cards at our December meetings so we decided to get some cards and send them out to our members (or deliver) from the committee with the programme for 2021. It’s the best we can do.

At least we have Christmas to look forward to. I am breaking the rules – it’s my turn to go to Louise for Christmas and it is also her turn to have her daughter and partner and son and partner, (last year they went to her parents) The other son lives on his own. So, we’re going to be 8 from 5 households! Louise said that if anyone asks, she’d say Joe lived with me and she thought she could meet 3 households and did not realise she had to count her own!! Oh, we are so wicked...

I have managed quite well but I have lots of talks with my dog but they are very one sided!! I must admit to being fed up with it all by now, and I do get confused with what I can and can’t do. The minute I put my mask on my nose runs, so I sniff my way round the shops and can’t wait to get out and blow my nose.

There will be so many stories to tell, that I am sure we’ll be talking about it all next year. I only know one person who has had Covid – 19, a friend of mine, he’s over 80, overweight and had heart attack in his 50’s. He rang me to tell me all about it when he got out of hospital.

I was due to have a second cataract operation at the end of March which was cancelled. I finally had it done in June, after I had self-isolated for two weeks and had a Covid test. I can see now and it’s wonderful.

Well, I hope you had a good Christmas and we can hope for a better 2021. Let’s hope the vaccine works and things become a bit more normal.

What I really missed was a big hug – but both my daughters put their masks on and gave me one. Bliss!!!

Keep well and safe. Love from Sheila and all at Beacon – Hill WI.

