

Marton cum Grafton WI
100th Anniversary Celebration
November 14th 2024

McG WI founded Nov.18th 1924

*So how did we get here, to be celebrating 100 years of a Women's Institute group in the village of Marton cum Grafton, North Yorkshire . . .
. . . . 'with engaged, committed and active members.'*

A brief recap from the 90th account written 13th November 2014.

'We have in our possession almost continuous McG WI meeting notes for the 90 years of our existence, except for the very first four years. Sometimes those notes have raised more questions than answers.'

A printed 'potted' history written in 2004 (80th Birthday) has extra details of our WI. The author is identified as Pauline Sneddon, an active WI member still today.

For the 90th Celebration a narrative account of selected monthly meetings covering many of the nine decades was written by Pauline Kilburn in booklet form, call it *Chapter 1*

This is my narrative account of life as a Marton cm Grafton member for the period 2014 - 2024.

Members receive all WI Federation news from the team at Alma House, Ripon. An attachment is sent to our secretary who forwards the news using the group's email address.

National WI post out a monthly glossy WI Life publication to each member's personal home address. Contents include - *Regulars*/ Campaigns, Membership, maybe seasonal Book recommendations & Puzzles.

Features - varied, topical, inspiring & specific WI accounts.

Lifestyle - Tips and skills, Craft, Cookery & gardening.

&

Promotions - Shop, Travel Promotion & (annual) WI Raffle

One secretary prepares a monthly Agenda using chosen National and Federation items and then adds our specific local points. A Second Secretary writes up Meeting Notes to email to individual McG members.

Now for Chapter 2
Nov. 2014 - 2024

There might have been a gaping hole in this account if we hadn't decided to continue meeting throughout COVID, albeit on ZOOM, a familiar format for some and a quite mystifying experience for others! How many members tidied the area behind their computer screen, forgot they could be heard or told husbands, family members and pets to stay out of view? Zoom did allow a wide variety of speakers from all parts of the country to educate, amuse and challenge.

To get a feel for this narrative account I've had to trawl through all the Annual Reports, specific meeting notes and Parish News reports.

I've really enjoyed reminding myself of the diverse content of every meeting.

2015

In January 2015 Annie Austen effectively turned a pair of tights (10 denier, glossy - important) into a beautifully decorated fabric plant pot or soft pot! In addition to the one leg of the tights, Annie used builder's vermiculite, garden compost, fine grit or gravel and then any manner of beads, ribbons, feathers, sequins, vibrant coloured wig material and decorative colour grass. All now sounds a little like an hallucination episode!

As well as Hazel having the lion's share of leading the meetings and discussions during 2015, so no change there then, two other member's have continuously played an important and often unsung contribution to our WI life. Pauline Sneddon and June Sanderson are our stalwart

attendees at the official Council and Resolution meetings. At April's 2015 meeting Pauline Sneddon gave a comprehensive account of the Resolution Meeting she attended on our behalf at Alma House, in preparation for the National AGM later in the year. Later in June Pauline attended the National AGM in Brighton as link delegate. Pauline and June both attended the (33rd) Spring Council Meeting. From all these events June and Pauline gave individual accounts to members.

Our meeting in September 2015 was also our chance to join in the National WI Federation Centenary Celebrations but to celebrate it in our own way. Helen from the village shop provided a magnificent buffet - so many flavours, so many textures, so many tastes. We began the meeting with singing 'Jerusalem.' We had a short business meeting and the games began.

First we played 'Pass the Parcel' with five parcels circulating at one time. Helen B tried to sabotage the game by holding onto each parcel for rather too long but we triumphed and Helen didn't open the last parcel - boo hoo!

The Rogues Gallery (of Committee as babies, infants) was much harder than we thought it would be. A miniscule size baby in a bonnet is nigh on impossible to name! Perhaps we should ask for teenage photos next time.

Finally we played WI Fashion Drive, a version of a Beetle Drive - a nod to times and games played at the WI in our previous 90th history.

2016

Hazel closed May's business meeting and introduced William from Traveleyes, guest speaker for the evening. Now, if any of you watch SCD you'll be inspired by Chris McCausland's dancing as the first blind contestant with partner Dianne Buswell. But since 2016 Traveleyes has been a specialist travel company that makes the world a more accessible place for blind and vision impaired people to enjoy. This is a unique holiday experience where a sighted participant becomes the 'eyes' for their blind/ vision impaired partner. William, our travel guide for the evening, gave us a brief account of the history of this company. William had such an easy manner, his enthusiasm magnetic, his knowledge impressive, and a charming young man to boot!

Georgia Wilkinson proved to be a great find by our programme secretary for the September meeting. Georgia brought bold colour and patterns to our meeting in the form of lampshades, cushions, fabrics and wall coverings. Where did it all begin? . . . Georgia related how she was often found by her infant school teacher diving into the bin containing coloured scraps of paper. So Georgia's love of colour and pattern started at a young age. Members arranged to go to Georgia's studio at the family farm to make their own lampshades - hands up who still has a GW homemade lampshade!

What stands out about 2016

A reminder of why we are member's of our fabulous McG WI.

REMEMBER YOUR CUP/ MUG & PLATE !

(started this long ago!)

. . . and . . .

If you attend the monthly meetings -

**YOU nurture your (WI) neighbour with your company -
especially at supper!**

**YOU provide comfort and support when things don't go
right**

YOU'RE there to offer another point of view

YOU laugh with each other - I know I've heard you!

**YOU enrich not only each other's lives but also those of the
wider community too!**

. . and you learn a lot on the way.

So well done YOU!!

2017

You'd be forgiven for thinking that May 2017 McG WI meeting had a (very tenuous) link to the earlier March's meeting where Andy Dennis who works as a staff nurse at Harrogate Hospital talked of his work with Medicin Sans Frontiere - treating people in natural disaster areas.

It's true to say that member's were in awe of Andy Dennis - and his total commitment to the work of MSF. Through a very powerful presentation of videos and images Andy told the stories of some of the lives of the people his work has touched, like Sebit, a little boy we saw tucking into 'Plumpy'nut' a peanut based paste prescribed for the treatment of severe malnutrition. After the administration of plumpy'nut, over a period of time, Sebit became 'plumpy' in a very good sense of the word!

So not such a leap to the theme of 'Stitches, split sides, belly ache, doubled up, fit to burst' - then you realise all these expressions have a link to - LAUGHTER!

And so Jude Robinson came to our meeting to help us laugh ferociously and with feeling and at the same time improve our well being both mentally and physically.

First of all each member was given a sticker of a smiley face and that's where it all fell apart, from the very beginning really. The first member stuck her smiley face to her jumper, the next on a blouse - by the last member they were stuck on cheeks, foreheads, noses, glasses. Trust McG members to find humour in displaying a sticker!

Jude took the group through warm up exercises, standing informally in the hall space pretending to be a chicken. Slightly funny! Then onto specific laughter routines and

interacting with fellow members, like using a hand as a mirror and showing that reflection to each other - greeting and speaking gibberish - by which time we were participating and getting fully involved. Absolute hysteria!

Jude must have enjoyed herself too as she reported on her Facebook page that . . . 'Wow!! The WI ladies at Marton cum Grafton can really, really laugh...I mean REALLY REALLY laugh. What a joy to see so many women, of all ages, having so much fun.'

Later in June 2017 home grown, but not a WI member for obvious reasons, Roger Naish had cleared and tidied his barn.

So, after a record breaking, very short business meeting, Hazel introduced our guest for the evening, Dan Byrne.

Member's sat in a semi circle arrangement for optimum viewing in the said barn.

Dan and Bex, his able assistant and prompt, were ready to perform behind a semi-circular wooden 'bar'. The bar and area behind was decorated with bottles of various colours and shapes.

Have you guessed yet? Member's were eagerly waiting for a first for our WI - a cocktail demonstration and TASTING!! Yeh!! Did this set a precedence for future years?

The making of specific cocktails demonstrated and tasted were a 'Mojito,' a 'Porn Star Martini' and a 'Rosie and Gin.' With a dash and a splash and a shake and a thump members were presented with their colourful cocktails in a tall glass, a cocktail glass and then a tumbler - each came with an assorted recommended 'five a day' - a few mint leaves, crushed lime, passion fruit segment - who said alcoholic drinks were harmful?! Cranberry juice (in the Rosie and Gin

cocktail) can play a part in delaying the ageing process - RESULT for the more mature!

A great evening. McG WI group have a range of ages to consider when organising the annual programme. This title 'A Cocktail Making Demonstration and Tasting' appeared not to deter any age from attending. An opportunity to learn something new. An opportunity to share and to socialise.

And not to forget one member with a new hip, convalescing at home, who received a 'Porn Star Martini' to help speed her recovery.

October's meeting had been listed as being loosely around the theme of Halloween and witches. Local resident, Keith Lumsden was to be the guest speaker.

Was it to be a talk, a slide show, power point presentation?

In fact the evening and the hall evolved into a dramatisation of the actual trial of two elderly widows, both from Lowestoft who had been indicted for bewitching the complainants; several girls and young women.

For the evening two members played the parts of Rose Cullender and Amy Denny the two accused, suitably seated behind a makeshift prisoner's dock, generally scowling during the trial's proceedings. Three member's played the parts of the complainants who appeared well at the start of the trial but who's mood and demeanour deteriorated into strange fits and shrieking out aloud in the most sad manner. Others were dressed as further witnesses against the accused.

Now to the reason we had so many men in the hall with us. The court room officials including the judge, court clerk etc and the local farmers and fathers of the young women were the men invited to join the MGM production. What a cast of aspiring and potential actors we have in McG!

It was a unique and most entertaining way of presenting a trial of witches from the Assizes and Court of General Gaol Delivery, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk 10th of March 1665. WI members without acting parts made up the jury and after deliberation pronounced the two accused guilty, concurring with the original jury of 1665. Interestingly at no point during the trial proceedings did either women offer to speak to defend themselves.

In retrospect, doubts about the expertise and impartiality of one of the prosecution witnesses, Sir Thomas Browne, renowned doctor and philosopher, had been questioned.

2018

First meeting after Christmas, and maybe too much indulgence, has become a tradition to invite a speaker to encourage a healthy lifestyle.

Cindy Cressey, a local teacher of Tai Chi shared the history of this, what do we call it - martial art, self defence, exercise or meditation?

Way back to 16th century China, Tai Chi was taught in the Chen village as a martial art. Members had a go using a beautiful, albeit innocent looking, fan. What you today might use to cool you down, with a quick flick of the wrist, became a sharpened lethal weapon!

After that frenetic activity the evening finished with an exercise to concentrate the mind and relax the body, accompanied by calming, gentle music.

So many of the monthly reports confirm that we are not passive participants at our meetings and some individual members even enjoy particular attention. And so for two

months in the 2018 programme attention was focused specifically on Annie and Ness!

It's always special when a luxury cosmetic brand visit. Jay and Antonia from Space NK in Harrogate came to give a demonstration on skin care and make up application. Annie bravely offered to bare her face and we watched Jay apply a deep hydrating face mask then make up sharing tips and advice along the way. Finishing touches to Annie, our model, who looked lovely before, now looked beautiful.

Later in the same year Ness became our gorgeous model for the evening and after Kirsty, from Lancome, had cleansed her skin and applied her make up, she too looked absolutely stunning.

So many varied speakers and topics. September 2018 was Wendy Lill's turn to regale her heroic charity treks that have culminated in a massive fund of £30,000 raised for St Michael's Hospice in Harrogate. Most recent was to Norway, to cover 60 miles per day on a husky- pulled sled. The adventure sounded amazing and incredible however members were left in no doubt about the hardships along the way, (falling off a speeding sled, eating freeze dried food and night time temperatures as low as -32 degrees C.

Her next trek, along with home grown member, Pauline Kilburn, whom she met on a previous charity trek (China 2009), is to Petra in Jordan 2019.

2019

Note from April's Meeting Notes. 'Following Pauline Kilburn's accident at the end of her Jordan Charity Trek she is now in Harrogate Hospital.' So I am eternally grateful to Jayne Cole for her monthly accounts.

We often have 'returners' to our WI. Way, way back it was Mr Beavers, who remembers him, he gave us tours round the National Trust properties using a projector slide show presentation.

And so periodically Julie Clark returns with tales of her farming life, her B&B business and meeting the Queen and at the same time she is delivering a cookery demonstration. We mustn't forget these stalwart members of the WI who have dedicated a long lifetime to the movement. Tonight Julie cooked spinach roulade, orange glazed chicken with citrusous couscous and a mango and raspberry desert. Wow!

March 2019. Keith Wilkinson gave us a facscinating history of Harrogate around 100 hundred years ago. He had original photos showing many beautiful gardens and a variety of entertainment halls. In contrast how different the town looked just about the time of the outbreak of the First World War, images of groups of men heading off to war - very thought provoking as the world was about to change forever.

Our suppers are renowned for their variety of content and flavours. Sometimes we work really hard for our supper, for example the night Morris Dance instructors and their musical support players came to McG, May 2019 The group made a pretty good show of making arches, crossing diagonally and a reasonable attempt to remember left from right!

Mark, who leads the WI Federation Rock Choir and Andrea, his partner came in October 2019 to drum up interest and possibly increase numbers to join the Fed. Choir who meet regularly at Alma House. The evening became a social sing-a-long event, giving great gusto to many Sound of Music songs.

2020

For many of our present members we are now moving into familiar territory re. meeting content and yet 2020 was the year McG WI group was challenged to maintain meetings of a very unfamiliar nature. We're speaking of the arrival of ZOOM meetings, due to COVID. Here we needed the skills of technophiles to set up a Zoom call and members, bless them, to fathom out being present, being seen and being heard - two out of three of these achieved was a victory! The advantage of Zoom was that we accessed speakers from all over the country.

So

It all started so well.

Had a coach stopped at Marton cum Grafton the second Thursday of January 2020 and spilled out its occupants into the village hall?

No, but the WI in McG is experiencing a 'Moore's Law' effect on membership numbers. There is now 40+ membership, and the average age is definitely going down - all signs of a healthy and vibrant group in the village.

To start Jan.2020 a local resident of Marton, Lizzie, gave a talk and presentation, illustrating her career and life long interest as a professional landscape, nature and travel photographer. Lizzie sees magic in the mundane, the scenes we might ordinarily just walk by. It reminds us to find the time to stand and stare, listen and wonder at our beautiful landscape, especially on our own doorstep. (We'd soon know how prophetic this mantra would be!)

Ness and Helen both attend Sophie's Yoga class nearby at Arkendale and Ness felt strongly enough to think that Sophie would provide an entertaining and memorable evening for our member's - and Sophie didn't disappoint. Not only entertaining and informative, Sophie displayed humour, and a big dollop of non - judgemental tolerance for some 'duff' moves!

Here, I have to admit that as the guest speaker is introduced I'm usually scribbling away, writing relevant notes to then remind member's of their unforgettable evening. However this time, donned in 'cat' socks and fleece bottoms I joined some more appropriately dressed yoga practitioners on their mats on the floor. Suffice it to say each time I got myself into 'Down Dog' position and then lifted my head everybody else was performing a different pose!

And so the world ended as we knew it - temporarily we'd hoped!

I think it's really important to have a record of this time.

There's a 'C' word we don't like to mention, well not until November at the earliest. But that 'C' word now has a rival, that we don't wish to mention at all, especially as it had such an impact on our March meeting. Member number's had been down (15 apologies) - member's staying away to protect themselves, to protect others - all very understandable. Enough said.

The original 2020 programme was about to be abandoned.' 'Live' meetings ie ending with a fabulous supper were suspended.

In these strange and scary times we all adapt to do things differently.

So we used a tally system of sorts to register member's present for April 2020's McG WI meeting. We counted faces only, in rows of five, across our screens, whether, PC, laptop or mobile. Total eventually with late arrivals was about 23.

So if we were able we'd logged onto Zoom, our new best friend, just before the meeting to get our greetings, to one another, by wave or cheer completed before Vanessa, as Chair, began the meeting. As our meeting time on Zoom was limited at this time, it mainly consisted of notices of all the cancelled arrangements for the foreseeable future.

We heard that one member had joined a group called 'For the Love of Scrubs and has set up a 'cottage' industry in her home to make scrubs for frontline NHS staff. Hurrah we say!!

So in April we were logged on to listen to Lucy Stewart, who then took centre screen, literally, to tell us about the very important work of the Harrogate District Food Bank.

HDFB is part of the Trussell Trusts network of 428 foodbanks working to tackle food poverty and hunger here in our own area.

Daily we now hear of the struggle that Food Banks nationally are having particularly with the COVID-19 outbreak, to be able to tackle food poverty and hunger effectively in our local communities.

Lucy praised the generosity of local people who even in this difficult time were prepared to help others in their time of need. . .

. . . which gave some members just enough time to go outside and clap and cheer and show their appreciation for

the frontline workers working to save lives and provide services for us all. Strange times for all!

And so the strange times carry on and so does life. WI are known to be resourceful and supportive of its members and so it continues..

We conducted our May 2020 WI meeting for members once again using Zoom.

It was an opportunity for members to have a quick catch up and greet those they have not had the chance to do whilst in lock down. For the first change to the planned programme Helen Barton gave a professional performance as a Bingo Caller for twenty five attentive members.

Members of a certain age were able to shout out the bingo calls from years gone by '11 - legs 11! - and some slightly dodgy ones in these days of political correctness! And a few Helen was advised not to use! Maybe, '56' - "Was She Worth It?" During the 1950s, the cost of a marriage license was five shillings and sixpence. Women players traditionally would shout back "every penny!" in response to the call.

Still the strangeness continues into June 2020 but perhaps tiny cracks and skewed views are emerging. Besides the bird songs there is children's laughter and whilst the sun was out there was adult laughter, in pairs or threesomes - the clinking of glasses too. Baby steps! It's wet now, and it doesn't know when to stop ofcourse, so a blip, but maybe we've had a peek at a shift in what we might do!

June 2020 was another Zoom Meeting with twenty nine members attending, providing a quick banter opportunity til we settled to an evening of quizzes.

Jo Appleyard had a first class excuse for not attending - baby Adah. Hopefully baby and mother are sleeping and feeding in unison.

As this format may continue til July, maybe a member has an idea for what we can do in the zoom meeting next month.

For now, keep safe and remain sane at all times!

Four member's were brave enough to offer stories for the evening's topic, 'Joyful July' - a wide enough theme to cover a bucketful of tales from recommendations to memories of royalty.

I was scribing as usual and I became aware that we'd veered from books, charms, items of needlecraft to knickers, but that's another story for another occasion!

Member's knew the routine now - September 2020 was another Zoom Meeting. You can see the pattern being set up for the foreseeable future.

We had some apologies but nevertheless sixteen members logged on to listen to an inspiring talk from 'homegrown' resident, Karen Parker. Karen took centre stage on Zoom to talk about the Boroughbridge & District Community Care Group where she is the General Manager.

If you remember I was otherwise incapacitated during at least six months of 2019 with a broken ankle and a dear gentleman named Terry Hassell drove me in his car to Harrogate General Hospital on many occasions, to the Fracture Clinic. Terry was one of the many volunteers from BCC who undertook to take people to various appointments. He was good company and kept my mind off the once more 'pot change' on my foot and then he spent the time whilst I

was there handing out sweets to the nurses in the department! A really lovely man.

Oct 2020 Helen Neave, founder of 'Make it Wild.' www.makeitwild.co.uk

The Zoom experience for members, Nov 2020 was elevated a couple of notches. We were able to watch a 'live' cookery demonstration, led by Sophie Bagley and then switch to each of the participant 'cooks' plus helpers to see exactly how they were getting on in their respective kitchens. Our ladies cooked Scotch Eggs and Arancini, under Sophie's guidance using prepared ingredients including mince pheasant. Think 'Ready, Steady Cook!' - if you're old enough!

Sophie is a home grown member of McG and founder of Glorious Game, set up in 2018. Her aim is to promote pheasant as a healthier alternative to other meat products that may have higher cholesterol levels and lower protein content.

Postscript written originally 2020 but still relevant today.

I'd like to say thankyou to our cohort of 30+ & 40+, some just into 50 years old members. You do have the energy, humour and technical know how to have kept our WI group going especially during this year. ie Zoom.

There's a group at the other end, 70+ years old who have had to step back to keep themselves safe, after taking various roles and nurturing the group to what it is today.

Some of us remember when we were the 'young ones' joining an older group.

I can hear the 'outsiders - what do they know!' But we blended.

I hope we injected the vigour and enthusiasm some 30+ years ago and all the years between that you're doing today. Thanks

2021

Zoom still rules!

Even the printed programme now acknowledges meetings will be currently held on Zoom due to COVID - 19.

I'm sure for the first (and hopefully the last) time in the group's history Christmas 2020 was celebrated online, ZOOM again. Thirty two members attended the online Christmas party. Some wore reindeer ears, Christmas jumpers and any assortment of seasonal attire! Before the meeting local elves, yes, members dressed as elves, were busy delivering wonderful gifts of mince pies, prosecco, a chocolate orange, a lottery ticket and a greetings card to each WI member, leaving them on doorsteps. These gifts could be saved for the Zoom meeting.

A joyous evening in a year of uncertainty and sadness. McG WI is a testament to the acts of support and kindness that a group of like minded women can give to one another.

A sign of the times, amongst the committee the 'sick visitor's description has morphed into 'Health and Goodwill.'

Jayne Cole President for the year introduced February 2021's speaker, Jo Moseley, who describes herself as 'joy encourager, beach cleaner + midlife adventurer' - sure we would add life loving, life giver and just a little bit crazy - a fervent paddle boarder and searcher of plastic rubbish - both these passions occurring at the same time! A record holder - first woman to 'stand up paddleboard' coast to coast from Liverpool to Goole.

I'm having a reminiscent chuckle now! Peter Barron, former editor of the Northern Echo newspaper tells how his first

written words for the paper came about because a colleague was absent and he had to fill in writing the weather forecast. This role was short lived - Peter stuck his head out of the window and predicted 'cloudy now and (forecast) rain later' he was moved onto Horoscopes!

Approaching British Summertime one year, Peter now Editor, remembers a reminder on the paper's front page that should have read 'Don't forget to put you clocks back' - had the all important 'L' missing!

Remember that reference to knickers back in July 2020. Liza James opened up her home to us on ZOOM using photographs and first hand sources to illustrate and explain the different historical periods of early and later underwear items.

For example greater status was assigned to a Victorian lady whose huge bustle held the yards of skirt material away from the back of the body.

Liza encouraged members to reveal their own anecdotes around specific clothing items. Helen Barton has an hysterical poem, describing her own personal relationship with her underwear and the traumas and tribulations around one of these items! Sure we can hear it again Helen please!

In July 2021 Frances 'zoomed' us from Burgundy, France and then took us worldwide to the South Seas and China. Her interest and phenomenal knowledge now revolves around all things 'pearl' related. Members had forward notice to wear their own pearls and relate a tale surrounding their own string of pearls, whether bracelet, ring or necklace.

Just occasionally we've had exclusive 'First' appearances or guests who have achieved their own 'Firsts!' Remember the visit of three of the original Calendar Girls.

Listen up now! **October 2021** - Niki Doeg, one member of the four Yorkshire Rows, average age forty seven years, became world record holders in 2015.

They rowed across a three thousand stretch of the Atlantic from the Canaries to Antigua, taking part in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge, as the oldest women to ever row an ocean and they came from YORKSHIRE! To achieve this they embarked on a two year physical training programme, taking RHA qualifications, sponsorship & fund raising for local Yorkshire charities. Use Google to enter 'Four mums in a boat' to read and see images from their epic challenge. What an inspiring account of awesome heroism!

2022

Now we must be reaching into the most recent memories of the majority of members present today. Once again membership has rocketed, now at sixty plus. So many more ladies to offer to become President!

Our speakers during this year varied from a past governor of Wormwood Scrubs Women's Prison, to Nobby Dimon previously Artistic Director of North Country Players, from Chris Cade - Meet the Butler to Andrew Thwaite, laden with chocolates for members to sample.

There was a slight 'hiccup' in February when there was an unexpected rise in COVID cases, members either staying away with COVID or caring for family members at home.

A reduced membership were treated to our own home 'grown' Ness Quarmby, **February 2022**, who made an

appearance with her expertise hat on. If you put The Yorkshire Dietician into Google our Vanessa's name pops up first! Ness gave a resume of her career to date which has culminated in her present role as a freelance dietician, offering advice to corporate institutions and individuals with regard to general good health and

weight loss.

Supper was scanned briefly for it's (healthy?) content and then eaten eagerly anyway!

Much planning each month now about how we would celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration.

There was talk of how to recover the lost corgis that had escaped from Buckingham Palace. Helen had it in good authority that a number were hidden around the local area. She had a look-a-like knitted corgi to show members, not sure who suggested they looked more like seals or dinosaurs - shame on you!

A more secure option was to plant a rose 'Special Anniversary' in the WI garden alongside the McG Village Hall. A personalised metal plant label to be put nearby.

How quickly can a mood change. In **September 2022** it's the morning after the night before. An evening for McG members that had poignancy, deep sadness and a degree of irony. As members arrived there was obvious disbelief and sorrow at the earlier notice of the death of Queen Elizabeth at Balmoral Castle. Members held their own thoughts and feelings about the enormity of the occasion for one minute in silence.

Our speaker for the evening was Chris Cade, who dressed in Butler attire and with some original artefacts acted out a

Butler's duties, for example the post being delivered on a silver tray to his lordship. All these daily acts well demonstrated the long tradition and customs on many country estates in Victorian times.

The irony was not lost when the night before we witnessed on television a long established custom to publish a paper notice, set in a foolscap imperial sized dark wooden frame being pinned to Buckingham Palace's railings, confirming the passing of Britain's longest serving monarch, Queen Elizabeth.

Some of these meeting memories need the full account to be written to have the greatest effect but am feeling pretty tired now.

Suffice it to say who could forget the 'feather baubel' craft session in November 2022

Just let me remind you 'This craft activity caused members to spit feathers, both metaphorically and literally and others to feel that they'd added another feather to their cap as regards supreme craftsmanship!' Feather were being swept up for months after!

2023

Whilst there is once again a varied and exciting programme for 2023, members are thinking ahead and mulling over how they can best celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III for the April meeting - probably a once in a lifetime opportunity. Similarly Committee are beginning to brainstorm ideas for McG WI's 100th Celebration in 2024.

But back to the present. Remember January is very often a time to reset, reflect on what's good for our minds, our bodies, our souls. Georgina Townsend gave a talk on NuMindSet - rethinking nutrition. We liked 'Happinees is an

inside job.' As a functional nutritionist Georgina described a clear and positive link between diet and brain power and how very often the gut leads and the brain follows.

A quick look at the supper table identified many items from Georgina's lists of beneficial foods. Phew!

February 2023 provided an opportunity for members to don their dancing shoes. Watch out SCD, here we come. John led a fun evening of Salsa instruction, aided by five other volunteers. Without those volunteers the dance floor would have been carnage.

Salsa Rueda was pairs dancing in a circle, those basic steps now incorporating a twist and change of partner, lead ladies going one way and followers the other. Bit like a Ceilidh but hotter! This was John's first demonstration to a WI group and he and his team were BUZZING afterwards with the commitment and energy displayed by our ladies. Result!!

After a notice from National to honour Long service WI members, we decided as a group to award 'Long Service awards for twenty years+ WI membership. Helen Baggaley designed Certificates for eight members who's WI membership spanned twenty to sixty seven years, each recipient also receiving a bunch of beautiful daffodils.

'God Bless the King' - for the enjoyment and fun that his forthcoming Coronation brought to McG members at the April 2023 meeting.

May 2023's meeting is past the official date of King Charles's Coronation so celebrations were pushed back, but hey McG members are always ready for a party!

The Coronation theme for the evening manifested as an 'Afternoon Tea' occasion - think Bettys or Mama Doreen's

Emporium! The hall was decked out with bunting, there were vases of flowers on tables and Union flag napkins. Members brought a matching china teacup, saucer and plate - old school! Oh, and a glass for champagne. Some ladies dressed ready for a garden party at Buckingham Palace, Hazel wore a beautiful floral dress and matching blue fascinata.

Tiny chocolate brownies and cup cakes decorated with miniature iced crowns and red, white and blue drizzles of icing streaks. 'Poulet Reine Elizabeth' otherwise known as Coronation chicken, originally served at the Coronation lunch in 1953, was an obvious contender for a sandwich filling. Delicious scones served with strawberry jam and cream and topped with a fresh strawberry - and many, many more plates of ingenious sweet and savoury treats.

Members had their own royalty present at the evening. Helen Barton has recently been awarded first place in the Ann Martin award for her service to the community. Congratulations Helen.

Forty eight members attended September 2023 meeting after the summer break. The group now starts each meeting with an Eco Tip and the 100th Celebration (2024) makes an appearance aswell, mulling sharing and sifting of ideas. The (new) monthly Eco Tip for September celebrated the humble worm and it's comfy life in a healthy soil environment!

Guest speaker for the evening was Joanna Weatherall, a local Reflexologist. During the summer clients receive their treatment in a bell tent to the lyrical sounds of bird song and the gentle rustle that swaying leaves make.

Annually, November sees the change of Committee- so many talented members now to call upon. No committee experience needed just a desire to find out more about how National & Federation operate and it's crucial influence and input in topical public affairs, oh and to enjoy sitting at top table or wearing a beautiful President's brooch!

Now a reference to the last McG WI meeting of 2023, December- a memory well worth a mention! Reminders to members were sent out to bring a Secret Santa present (if you wanted to be rewarded with a present yourself). Also remember a black pen for an alternative Bingo session, a singing voice for alternative Twelve Days of Christmas, and finally an opportunity to bring out the best accessory to complete their party attire. The accessories to member's outfits were pretty good, imaginative, stylish and some downright silly!!

2024

We're now into our present membership's own memories of 2024.

So send your memory of 2024 and I'll add to this ditty!
Include Month of memory Why memorable and your name please.

You must realise this is not an official record, I haven't touched on Federation or National - this is a personal memory to you as a McG WI member.

PK 31.10.24